THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS OF AFRICAN AND WESTERN
WORLDVIEWS AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO
CHRISTIAN THEOLOGIZING: AN AKAMBA CASE STUDY
by
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has been read and approved by the undersigned members of the
Faculty of Fuller Theological Seminary.

[Signatures]

Date: June 1985
To my wife
Jeddy Kaleli
and our children
Mumbua, Mumo, Mueni and Mwelu
ABSTRACT

The purpose of this dissertation is to investigate the theoretical foundations of African and western worldviews and their relationship to Christian theologizing. The dissertation seeks to contend two propositions: (1) Christian theology results from the disciplined reflection on God's biblical revelation by the believing hermeneutical community, and (2) a disciplined hermeneutic reflection on God's Word can best be done within the context of a people's worldview.

The study adopts both a diachronic and a microcosmic approach to Christian theologizing in contemporary Africa, i.e. a non-generalizing Christian theologizing method that confines itself to a specific people, their culture and worldview. Thus, the Akamba of southeastern Kenya provide the case study through which the study is done.

Therefore, to do Christian theology within the context of Akamba worldview, we undertook an investigative examination of the western, traditional and contemporary Akamba models of reality or knowledge systems (Chapters II, III and IV). However, since Christian theology among Akamba cannot be done in a vacuum, we have undertaken an examination of not only the western missionary backgrounds (Chapter V) from
where the missionary to Ukambani was born and raised, but also have offered a critique on contemporary Akamba Christian theology (Chapter VI). The primary objective in doing this springs from the understanding that in order for the gospel of Jesus Christ to be embraced by the Akamba as God’s good news, it must be clothed with Akamba worldview conceptual garments through the dynamic process of biblical contextualization.

Besides the tools of theologizing (Chapter VII) and the case study in theological reflection given in Chapter VIII, the dissertation concludes by proposing seven different theological reflection principles that the author considers should characterize both the trained theologian and the hermeneutic community. They are seven general lessons for theological contextualization which our study has led us to see. We have presented these principles as necessary attitudes for those involved in Akamba Christian theological reflection, but the non-Akamba reader should examine how the different attitudes (principles) can be applied to his particular context.

Mentor: Dr. Dean Gilliland

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INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE AND NEED (PRIMARY OBJECTIVE)

In almost every African library one finds endless reports on missionary work both in Africa and around the world. No doubt such reports serve a vital role in providing us with much-needed information on how Western missionaries labored tirelessly in bringing the Christian gospel to Africa. For these missionaries, African Christians are grateful and are challenged to imitate such devotion and sacrifice.

The goal of this study is not to add to the literature of what Western missions have done in Africa but to investigate how African cultures have interacted with the gospel. Obviously, it is impossible to provide sufficient coverage for such a venture through a single study or by a single investigator. Therefore, I have chosen to confine
this study to one African ethnic people, the Akamba\textsuperscript{1} of Kenya, East Africa.

My main purpose is to analyze the relationship between the Akamba cultural worldview and the biblical message. The term "biblical message" is used here (and throughout the study) to refer to the supracultural revelation of Creator God. This scriptural revelation, clothed with Hebrew and Greek cultural forms, has come to us in what we call the Bible. Likewise, the term "culture" is used as "the acquired knowledge people use to interpret experience" (Spradley 1980:6) and assign meaning to life, events and things. In other words, this study is an attempt to investigate the theoretical foundations of Akamba worldview and their relationship to Christian theologizing. While there may be some who would regard the biblical inerrancy debates as deserving more attention (and certainly they are important), yet as Cornelius Van Til has repeatedly pointed out, it is "our presuppositions if left unexamined which more often affect the way we theologize than even a tight view of the Scriptures" (quoted in Conn 1984:316). It is therefore upon such recognition that the need to construct African Christian theology through an in-depth study of the African

\hfill

\textsuperscript{1} The term "Akamba" is plural, referring to the people called Akamba who are of Bantu origin (Kenya 1973:18). The singular is Mukamba. The land is Ukambani. The language is Kikamba. Sometimes the form "Kamba" is used to refer to all of the above.
worldviews is beginning to be perceived as crucial. For example, Osadolor Imasogie of Nigeria states that

... a theological curriculum that is relevant must include an in-depth study of the African world view, his self-understanding and the resultant traditional religions. Such an exercise will afford the minister an opportunity to sit where his people sit in order to see life through their eyes and thus be able to identify their deep spiritual needs which only Christ can satisfy (1983a:22).

However, before we are misunderstood by some who tend to make quick judgments, let me say that in the process of weaving a Christian theological basket by using Akamba worldview as a theoretical framework, I do not begin with the cultural fibers but with biblical ones. Scriptural revelation is used as the judge of the various components of Akamba culture. In judging the culture, Scripture condemns that which is inconsistent with God's Word and affirms what is true to God's universal revelation of his will to all mankind. Therefore, it can be stated here that our deepest motivation and concern is to investigate how the changeless eternal Word of God can be allowed to interact and transform Akamba worldview while it remains unchanged.

Such a concern is neither new nor unique with the Akamba. It is old, yet it is new. Right from her inception, the Church of Christ has asked and will continue to ask the same question. In our generation it is indeed becoming the question on the cutting edge of theological reflection both in Protestant and Catholic circles. A study published just
a few months ago by Edward Schillebeeckx shows how important the question is to contemporary Christian theologians. The same old, yet new, question is repeated: "How can this selfsame Gospel, which is given only in a societal and cultural context (even in the New Testament, for that matter) and can never be wholly extricated from any culture, be allowed to speak the language of an entirely different culture?" (1985:ix).

To my knowledge, very little study has been done in this regard, except for the work of John Mbiti on the Akamba people and certain aspects of New Testament eschatology. Linnel Davis, a missionary with Africa Inland Mission, after many years of faithful labor among the Akamba wrote a master's thesis entitled *The Use of the Bible in Kamba Tribal Setting* (1968). There is a sense in which this study is following the footsteps of those who have pioneered before me. Specifically, I am investigating the more profound questions of what Christianity means and has meant to the Akamba world. I want to examine how successfully the biblical message has interacted with what Mbiti called "the conceptual background of the Akamba" (1971:23). Mbiti's goal was to try to bring together "both traditional concepts [e.g. the Akamba traditional concept of time] and the New Testament, to see what light is thrown by each upon the other; and ... to draw some theological implications of the whole picture" (1971:23).
Mbiti investigates questions and issues from a Christian theologian's perspective, whereas I approach them more from a pastoral and missiological perspectives. The missiological and anthropological inclinations are reflective of my academic training in those areas. However, the pastoral dimension reveals my conviction in regard to the nature and purpose of Christian theology. However, this pastoral conviction should not be perceived as a parochial desire. Fundamentally, it reechoes some of the Reformers' emphasis on the pastoral nature of scholarship in which theology was perceived as a tool of pastoral edification. For example,

Calvin worked in the heat of a pastoral charge in Geneva; Augustine did theology in the stress of preserving the Church while the Roman Empire was collapsing; Luther, Athanasius, Spurgeon all were pastors. They theologized, they hammered out theology meaningful to their problems and alive to their day (Conn 1984:303).

Unfortunately, in our contemporary ways of theologizing we, as Conn says, concentrate "... on the results of their work, often at the expense of learning how they did it" (Conn 1984:303). "A biblical understanding of contextualization in doing theology can be of service in the restoration of that pastoral dimension to the work of teaching and theologizing" (Conn 1984:301). The pastoral concern should be at the heart of all Christian theology. Christian theological reflection must be filtered through the heart of a pastor. Thus, the pastoral calling of the
theologian must have precedence. What we know and teach about Christian theology should have the main purpose of shepherding God's people to grow into Christian maturity. In one of his books, *African Theology*, Charles Nyamiti expresses a similar concern when he says,

... the right notion of theology has to be determined by pastoral motives. Applied to African theology, this implies that the efforts towards its evolution and development should be motivated solely by the love of God and the Church. In other words, the pastoral motivation should permeate and determine all theological efforts (1971:5).

Indeed, the pastoral dimension in Christian theology is not primarily a concern for African Christian theology. Some western theological scholars have expressed concern over what some have termed "polemical theology" (Conn 1984:218) which tends to view theology as a strictly academic discipline. The main concern of polemical theologies is... with truth as it exists in itself. It minimizes truth in relationship to its hearers. Unbelievers are transformed from covenant creatures needing covenant renewal that only Christ can bring into infideles, haeretici, increduli, those who dispute the true knowledge (Conn 1984:218).

Harvie Conn sees this mode of theologizing in the 12th-century Church when the Church carried on a dialogue with the Jews. He says,

But the dialogue was polemical, not missionary. The goal of the Church was not simply conversion but elimination by the pen or by the sword. The scholastic polemicist pursued the truth, not sinners. And that pursuit was not intended simply to woo hearts to Christ but to do
battle with the irrational philosophi in the

However, in order to maintain its serving-shepherding role, Christian theology then must, as Gerald Gort suggests, "find its way back down from the upper regions of the towers of academia to the ground floor of human reality . . ." (1980:60). It is Christian theology at the ground floor or at the grass-roots level that should form the primary African Christian theological agenda. Besides the best-known case study in Christian theologizing, the holistic teaching of the Pauline epistles "stands," Dean Gilliland observes, "in judgment on any theology that elevates the cognitive and the reflective above the pastoral and the practical" (1983:33).

Therefore, taking the pastoral dimension in theologizing seriously will not only save Christian theology from being monopolized by some few intellectuals, but it is also in keeping with the Great Shepherd's command to feed the sheep and "not giraffes"! We are using the analogy of giraffes here with synonymous meaning with what they have called elitist theologies which takes place in the upper regions of the towers of academia. I am not suggesting that the intellectual-giraffe-like theology has no place in Christ's Church (Chapter VIII); however, if that is all that Christian theology is then it has lost the dimension of being a shepherd and servant. Traditionally, classical and evangelical theology has tended to be of the giraffe type.
It certainly reflects the traditional polemic training of most theologians. And western-trained African theologians inevitably reflect this type of polemicist or elitist theologies. Thus Adrian Hastings has a point when he observes that,

\[\text{The theology of Mbiti and Nyamiti, Idowu and Fashole-Luke, Tshibangu and Agossou remains, despite its African concern, remarkably controlled in language and methodology by its European medium and by the European academic centres and traditions where its proponents studied . . . (1976:58).}\]

Often times these theologians and exegetes trained in a mono-cultural Anglo-Saxon tradition consciously or unconsciously theologize for the western audience. However, to meet African theological needs at the grass-root level, sheep-type theological reflection is imperative. For example, the sheep-type theologies of the African Independent Churches are meeting a real need, just as are the more giraffe-type theologies of the African Christian academicians. But if a theology is to serve the people and validate their faith, it is time African Christian theologians refocus their attention more on the task of shepherding the flock of God.
SOME SECONDARY OBJECTIVES

To Provide the Missing Lacuna

It is not an overstatement to contend that most of what has been written about Africa has reflected what Europeans and Americans thought, said and done in Africa. Most books in Africa show a complete absence of the African sensations, thoughts the African had about himself, his ideas and even perceptions regarding the foreigners. Therefore, this dissertation, written by an African, aims, in a limited way, to present some material which starts to fill that lacuna.

Thus, the need for African reflections on their past is not just for the African people alone, for many non-Western cultures have to do the same. It is a need that is overdue and the West has yet to give better recognition to non-western cultural reflections in modern-day scholarship. Commenting on such need, Edward Hall, an American behavioral scientist serving as an intercultural consultant with the U.S. government, said,

On the basis of almost fifty years' experience with cultures covering a very wide range of complexity, I am convinced that the West has made a great mistake in writing off the very special knowledge and abilities of the rest of the world simply because they don't conform to our standards for scientific paradigms. There is still much to be learned from the proper study of other cultures (Hall 1983:84).
To Caution on the Limitations of Modernization Assumptions

What has Akamba Christian theologizing to do with technological development? This is a legitimate question to raise here, especially in our day when many think technology is an answer to everything. To such the desire to make the Akamba people aware of their traditional worldview may seem anachronistic. Still others may regard it as an ill-timed attempt to cling stubbornly to an increasingly threatened way of life. However, studies in worldview indicate that while societies may go through great changes outwardly, yet the deep-level world of reality remains indigenous. For example, Peter Berger notes that, "... the reappearance of strong religious impulses in the Soviet Union, after half a century of intense antireligious propaganda backed up by repressive actions of all kinds, is very suggestive on this point" (1977:78). The Akamba traditional models of reality (Chapter IV) are mainly religious in their beliefs and assumptions. In other words they tend to respond to man's ultimate questions with the Creator God as a central point of reference. However, present-day models of modern technology are fueled by secular humanistic assumptions, which are in conflict with basic worldview assumptions of the Akamba.

Therefore, while we greatly benefit from modern technology, yet we need to always remember that the pillars
that support modern theories of technology are humanistic and secularistic assumptions. Secularization is understood as "... the process by which sectors of society and culture are removed from the domination of religious institution and symbols" (Berger 1967:107). So modern technology carries with it a dominant secularizing force, and with its mechanistic orientation it has the power to depersonalize life and erode religion. Many a man in the technologically-developed world needs the advice of Edward Hall. He says, western man must be "... weaned from its fascination with technology and turn its attention once more to the study of the human spirit" (1983:85). He asserts that with all this great technology, men have yet to learn how to live with each other. He adds that

... while I have great respect for the powerful theories of physical science and what they have taught mankind about the physical world, and for the many advances that science and technology have made, I am constrained to remind myself that life itself, and particularly life for the human species, is the ultimate value against which all else should be measured. Without people, technology means nothing. If the world's problems are to be solved, it will be by human beings, not by machines; the machines are only here to help us. Technology is an inevitable result of mankind's propensity to evolve outside his body. The record on this score is impressive, but it is now time for the human race to begin again to direct attention to human beings and the social institutions that make this technology possible. By focusing our attention outward, we have been diverted from the real task of life: the understanding and mastery of life itself (1983:9).

Thus, technology and its value is not the last answer to
human problems. We hope that throughout the study the Kamba reader will be convinced that re-examining our worldview assumptions is not just a feeble attempt to cling stubbornly to traditional models which cannot stand the threat of modernity. Rather, it is intended that we see them as, indeed, providing better paradigms for the construction of a more adequate Akamba Christian theology.

THESIS

Therefore, our thesis contends that Christian theology must be constructed within the context of a people's own model of reality if it is going to equip the Christian community to grow into maturity, fulfilling effectively the cultural and evangelistic roles in society.

The term "Christian theology" is used in this study to denote the disciplined reflection on God's revelation by the community of faith, revelation being understood as the disclosure of God in creation and in scripture which has been communicated to man "in acts, in deeds, and in historical events" (Pobee 1979:32). So, Christian theology explains and interprets that revelation with the main purpose of expressing what the person of Christ means to the believing community and to the world. Such reflection takes place within the community and from its cultural context and worldview. The center of Christian theology is Jesus Christ himself viewed or understood through the worldview of a
given people.

So at the outset we suggest that the object of Christian theological reflection is Jesus Christ himself. Along similar lines John Pobee says,

... Christian theology should be concerned with a gospel and not a religion. The starting point should be the "Christ event". ... Theology should discover what that Christ event looks like when seen from within that particular world view. Thus, to some degree theology is always being written by those to whom the gospel is being communicated (1979:28).

The need to look at Christian theology from within a particular people's worldview has become more and more apparent in our day. This is due in part to the way in which the western missionary presented the "Christ event" to African people from his own worldview. Later in Chapter II of our study we shall be discussing at length the construction and role of worldview in society. At this point we can only bring to the attention of the reader that a people's worldview (which is their model of viewing reality) "must be taken with utmost seriousness by the missionary [the cross-cultural communicator] if he wants to communicate Christ in the respondent culture" (Hesselgrave 1978:124).

What is the nature or content of a people's worldview? All we can include in this introductory chapter is that a people's worldview is made up of their own assumptions of truth. All the assumptions of truth (technically called worldview central postulate) are taken for granted. They
include assumptions of what a society perceives to "exist" (i.e. existential postulates) and the nature of their existence. Most of these beliefs are philosophical assumptions which are implicitly accepted as givens. The Akamba have their own existential and ontological philosophical assumptions which make up their worldview. We must work within the context of the Akamba cultural worldview if we are to reflect adequately and effectively on scriptural revelation (biblical message). Thus, for the gospel to grow and bear fruit among the Akamba, it must respond adequately to the questions and concerns at their worldview level.

Some Akamba Christians may even wonder about the purpose of all this, since Christianity seems to have taken root in Ukambani. How could a Church that was described ten years ago by one of her ministers as having over three-hundred-thousand Christians (Mbiti 1971:22) and which today has over thirty cross-cultural missionaries, be regarded as having an inadequate Christian theology?

Certainly we must praise God for such faithfulness and we aim to say or write nothing that will hinder church growth in Ukambani. However, while from the outside things look very impressive, yet at the core there resides questions, fears and concerns with which we have not yet dealt. About two decades ago, Mbiti rated Christianity among the Akamba as "very shallow," affirming that "Beneath the surface there lie many Akamba beliefs, fears, and concepts
which have not been reached or seriously challenged. For example the fear of witchcraft still exists among almost all Akamba Christians, even though they may not openly admit it" (1966:19).

Deep beneath the Christianity we portray to the world are hidden questions that have yet to be exposed and be allowed to interact with the biblical message. Deeper still are implicit worldview themes around which an adequate Akamba Christian theology could be woven. Such a theology should allow the biblical message (or gospel) to interact with Akamba worldview in a way which will cause the members of the society to see Christ as the fulfillment of their deepest existential concerns. An adequate theology will make God's people willing to submit their allegiance to Jesus Christ as the ultimate model of ideal humanity revealed for them and for all mankind.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Literature on the Subject

Christian theologizing within the context of Akamba worldview is a new field of study. Very little study has been done on the subject. Above we have made reference to John Mbiti who was the first Mukamba to investigate how the Christian faith interacts with the Akamba concept of time. Although writing for the Akamba, Mbiti claimed that his
ideas were applicable to many African peoples. His major work, entitled *New Testament Eschatology in African Background*, published in 1971, bears witness to the generalization about which we are talking. However, Mbiti was probably among the first to recognize the limitations of the term "an African theology" and suggested "African systems of theology" (1971:2) as a way to refer to the diverse nature of what we are calling today African Christian theologies. Africa is a continent of cultural diversity and multiple worldviews. To speak of one African Christian theology is to assume a universal African worldview. For this reason the consultation on "African Theology and Church Life" meeting at Makerere University, Uganda in 1972 affirmed that, "... the multiplicity of African traditional cultures will lead to a plurality of Christian theologies; therefore the complexities of contemporary African societies must be properly evaluated in theologising" (Fashole-Luke 1981:27).

Linnel Davis's master's thesis on *The Use of the Bible in Kamba Tribal Setting* (although from an etic perspective) was right on target. His goal was to establish "... Principles regarding the use of the Bible in the Kamba tribal setting which are biblically correct and culturally relevant ..." (Davis 1968:20). Davis, who is well known to this writer, is a missionary with the African Inland Mission. He spent twenty-nine years of missionary service
among the Kamba (1968:20) and his writing reflects the best
etic analysis of the Kamba culture available. He has
attempted to establish biblical principles for gospel
communication from Akamba traditional values. To my
knowledge Mbiti and Davis stand alone as those who have
looked at Akamba culture from a Christian theological
perspective.

Literature on Akamba Prior to 1910

The earliest written records about the Akamba are in
the form of ethnographic reports, monographs and histories.
Johann L. Krapf, a missionary with the Church Missionary
Society, was the first to write to any extent about the
Akamba. His book, written in 1860 and translated under the
title, *Travels, Researches, and Missionary Labours during an
Eighteen Years Residence in Eastern Africa*, offers some of
the earliest records on Akamba. Krapf was deeply impressed
with the Akamba and longed to establish a mission station
among them. However, his goals were shattered after the
sudden death of Kivoi, his new-found Mukamba friend. Prior
to 1909 all records about the Akamba were in British
government files, articles, mission reports and a few
individual ethnographies.

A few works have been published in German: for example,
J. M. Hildebrandt's "Ethnographische Notizen über Wukamba
und Ihre Machbarn" in *Zeitschrift fur Ethnologie*, 1878; J.
Hofman Geburt's *Heirat and Tod bei den Wakamba*, 1901; and E. Brutzer's *Begegnung mit Wakamba*, 1902. However, this study has relied heavily on the English editions or translations of such works. Rachel Watt's book, *In The Heart of Savagedom*, records her family's experiences with the Akamba as from 1892, while the Africa Inland Mission reported their Ukamba experiences in *Hearing and Doing* (Hurlburt and McConkey), which was their official magazine dating from 1896. All these monographs and articles, coupled with Hobley's *Ethnology of the Akamba and Other East African Tribes*, published in 1910, provide us insights and early impressions which the Western ethnographer had about the Akamba. However, for a more analytical study of the tribe, anthropological studies became necessary.

**Anthropological Research on Akamba**

Analytical studies about the tribe were attempted first by Charles Dundas who was a British government official serving as a District Commissioner among the Akamba. He was regarded as an authority on native law and during his term of office studied Akamba laws and wrote the first description of Akamba law in 1915. He also wrote "History of Kitui."2 However, the most extensive study on the Akamba was

2. Kitui is one of the two districts inhabited by Akamba. The other is Machakos.
done in 1920 by a Swedish anthropologist, Gerhard Lindblom. Lindblom, a graduate of Uppsala University, undertook to learn the Kikamba language which later enabled him to research Akamba institutional and private life. His book entitled *The Akamba* and published in 1920, which served as part of his doctoral dissertation at Uppsala University, "... has remained the standard reference work on the Akamba through the years" (Jacobs 1961:19). Lindblom also wrote a *Kamba Grammar* published in 1926.

Other works that have shed some light on the early customs of Akamba include D. J. Penwill's book on *Kamba Customary Law* (1951) in which he examined Akamba law from its social and religious dimensions. John Middleton and Greet Kershaw's book, *The Central Tribes of the North-Eastern Bantu*, is purely descriptive ethnography, while H. E. Lambert's discussion of "Land Tenure among the Akamba" (1947) records probably the first tribal gathering that the Akamba ever made as a people in opposition to British rule. Forbes Munro's book on *Colonial Rule and the Kamba* (1975) is really a history of social change among the Akamba of Machakos from 1889 to 1939. He "... explores the colonial situation in the Machakos district through the twin themes of mobilization and allocation" (Munro 1975:4).

Besides Mbiti's works, other emic studies have been done by Ndeti of Nairobi University, Kimilu and Muthiani. Ndeti has done a superb job in examining the deep level
beliefs of the Akamba in his book *The Elements of Akamba Life*. Along with Mbiti, he affirms that traditional Akamba are so religious in every aspect of their lives that they can be described truly as "homo religious." This is true to the extent that "in the traditional social order, to be non-religious was inconceivable" (Ndeti 1972:172). The other two (i.e. Kimilu and Muthiani) have tried to describe Akamba from the observer's point of view without venturing into the deep-level worldview beliefs. However, their descriptions are emic analyses and have to be taken seriously.

Donald Jacobs's work on *The Culture Themes and Puberty Rites of the Akamba* has influenced this study a great deal. Using Morris Opler's method of determining a society's cultural themes, Jacobs became the first person to explain Akamba culture by use of cultural themes. We shall be saying more about Jacobs's work under methodology. Hence, it is a modification of his Kamba theme analysis that offers the basis upon which this study examines and constructs Akamba worldview.

**METHODOLOGY**

The purpose of the study has been stated above as an investigation concerning "the how and the what" of Christian theology in the context or framework of Akamba worldview. More particularly, it is an attempt to investigate the theoretical foundations of African (Akamba) and western
worldviews and their relationship to Christian theologizing. Therefore, the basic methodology is the case study method. Thus, as a Mukamba by birth and upbringing, I have taken data written about the Akamba of Southeastern Kenya, and then from an emic analysis I have tried to:

(1) expose or make explicit Akamba worldview beliefs and

(2) using their worldview as a theoretical framework, I have ventured to examine how the biblical message can be communicated effectively within present-day Akamba socio-cultural historical contexts.

By effective communication we mean responding to the biblical message of salvation as God's voice speaking to them in their own cultural situation. In order to communicate the biblical message effectively, we must then know the Akamba cultural situation. Among other things the Akamba cultural situation is built around a worldview. We have already mentioned in our thesis statement that a worldview is made up of a people's assumptions of truth or models of reality. So part of our job in the process of constructing an Akamba Christian theology is, first of all, to discover what occupies that worldview.

What methodology should we follow in discovering Akamba worldview? Undoubtedly the study adopts what may as well be called a microcosmic approach to Christian theologizing in contemporary Africa, i.e. a non-generalizing Christian theologizing method that confines itself to a specific
people and their worldview. However, it is hoped that its observation and conclusions will be capable of extension and so contribute to a wider understanding of Christian theologizing in Africa and in the world if you will.

It was Jacobs's who did the first study on discovering Akamba worldview. He used Morris Opler's method of analyzing a culture by the use of cultural themes. In 1945 Opler proposed a theory in which he thought of cultures as being unified by several interacting themes. He defined a theme as "... a postulate or position, declared or implied, and usually controlling behavior or stimulating activity, which is tacitly approved or openly promoted in a society" (1945:198). Opler's starting point was the assumption that cultures are poly-thematic. Donald Jacobs, who was the first to explore the subject of Akamba cultural themes, referred to Opler's conceptualization as "... a landmark in theory because it produced, in a logical fashion, a theoretical construct which, if employed, would encompass the cultural materials of any community" (Jacobs 1961:12).

Opler's theoretical model divided culture into four parts. The associated body of ideas, symbols, artifacts and behavior he called components. Then he referred to:

... the total group of components which are activated by an event and are considered appropriate in coping with it or referring to it, I have named an assemblage. ... [The] more closely linked and persistent aggregates of components
within assemblages, I call nexus. . . . The link between the culture and the assemblage is the theme (Opler 1959:962-964).

So Jacobs took Opler's theoretical construct and using data from printed Akamba ethnographies and studies, he analyzed Kamba culture into seven different themes, which are:

(1) Maintenance of cosmological balance; (2) Promotion of egalitarianism; (3) Maintenance of hierarchy; (4) Maintenance of sexual vigor; (5) Extension of association; (6) Transparency; (7) Human dignity, intelligence and self-control. We have to ask if these themes have changed amidst the changes of our day. Are the themes exhaustive of the Kamba cultural situation?

There are certainly great explicit changes as one observes the Akamba of the 1980s. According to Davis, Jacobs used sources which were "twenty years old and older . . . [and] the themes that have emerged from his analysis do not reflect the changes of the post-war period" (1968:26), not to mention the explicit modern social, economic and cultural changes that have swept Ukambani during the last twenty-one years of Kenya's independence. But as the Akamba proverb says, "Mundu oaa nzoka na kila ukwete kwokoni (a person kills a snake with whatever he has on his hands)." In other words, one gets a job done or accomplishes a duty using the resources accessible to him.

And so my approach in examining Akamba contemporary models of reality is to analyze from an emic perspective
elements of continuity at the implicit Akamba worldview level. Therefore, the theoretical foundations for the study are based primarily on field anthropological studies done on the Akamba by men like Lindblom, Jacobs, and Jackson; indigenous theologians and linguists like Mbiti and Ndeti; historians like Munro and Tignor; and missionaries like Davis and Alexander Gration. In addition, library research at the University of California at Los Angeles, the University of Southern California and McAlister Library at Fuller Theological Seminary have all provided good resource material. Technical journals and articles, along with books on Kenya related to the subject, have also been extremely helpful.

The writer has submitted Jacobs's Akamba theme analysis to a group of Akamba informants to do a continuity/discontinuity analysis. Therefore, the following is a list of modified Akamba worldview themes or models as they will be referred to throughout this study: (1) The cosmological interdependance model; (2) The supernatural model; (3) The semi-individualistic model; (4) The human posterity/survival model; (5) The temperate disposition model. I am using the concept model as Ian Barbour defines it, as "a symbolic representation of selected aspects of the behavior of a

3. An expansion and analysis of these models is given in Chapter IV.
complex system for particular purpose. It is an imaginative tool for ordering experience rather a description of the world" (1974:6). Thus, models (mental sifters or mental eyes) can be thought of as a people's imaginative devices for perceiving or ordering experience.

Also, the study approaches the subject of Akamba culture and worldview from a theoretical diachronic model. A diachronic study of a culture seeks to examine a given culture with particular emphasis on history and change. Bock defines it as "an examination of cultural systems at two or more points in time emphasizing history and change" (1974:448). Or to quote Harvie Conn, "The diachronic approach moves through the levels of history in search of change. . . . [It is] a search for the future in the present and the present in the past" (1984:21). A diachronic analysis of the Akamba cultural situation is extremely vital. This is primarily because most of the literature we have reviewed above would be described as synchronic ethnographies. They resemble, as Strayer observes, "the early colonial history which regarded Africa as a stage on which Europeans of all kinds played out both their interests and their fantasies" (1978:1). Studies which did not fit this category could as well be placed among a few others whose major concern was to discover the patterns and structures that made up the Kamba culture. A great deal of the literature reflects an era in the development of
anthropology when ethnographers would, as it were, freeze a culture and describe what they observed before it melted. Cultures were described like a photograph or as a motionless anthropological curio in a city museum. This reflects literally all anthropological studies done all the way through the Malinowski and Radcliffe-Brown era.

Within less than half a century most Akamba explicit indigenous structures have been replaced by modern ones. What distinctive ethnographers, like Hobley (1910), Dundas (1913), Lindblom (1920) and lately Jacobs (1961), described about the Akamba has drastically changed. Usually the greatest changes are at the explicit level; and it is rather unfortunate that Jacobs, writing as recently as 1961, would lavish his book with quotes from his predecessors as if the Akamba culture had been frozen for fifty years! Little attention was given to their history and the changes they have undergone. I contend, therefore, for a diachronic methodology that takes seriously not only the Akamba cultural patterns and structures but also seeks to interpret how these tribal structures interacted (functioned) with the environment in different historical contexts.

Thus, the study seeks to go beyond the structural analysis approach (i.e. the synchronic) which is rather descriptive and static, to a more diachronic approach which capitalizes on interpretation and explanation of cultural processes. In other words, besides examining the pattern/
structure of Akamba models of reality both in their implicit and explicit components in a synchronic manner, we seek to give an interpretive and explanative analysis of the function of Akamba worldview to show whether or not it enabled the society to adapt effectively to its own environment. Such an approach is what anthropologists like Ruth Benedict affirmed so strongly when she said,

> If we are interested in cultural processes, the only way in which we can know the significance of the selected detail of behaviour is against the background of the motives and emotions and values that are institutionalized in that culture. The first essential, so it seems today, is to study the living culture, to know its habits of thought and the functions of its institutions, and such knowledge cannot come out of post-mortem dissections and reconstructions (Benedict 1934:49–50).

Such an approach is indeed in agreement with Pobee's admonition when he exhorts us to "consciously find out how and to what extent African countries and African people have changed, lest we waste time preparing to evangelize the Africa of 1800, which no longer exists" (1979:19). Fashole-Luke echoes similar warning when he urges African Christian theologians to avoid the

> . . . over-reaction and the tendency to overcompensate by passionate pleas for the recovery of a dead past. What we must aim at is the discovery of how the Christian Gospel can best be interpreted and taught in Africa, so that African Christians can hear the authentic message of Jesus Christ in their particular circumstances and local situations, without western cultural accretions and without a preoccupation with a dead past (1981:36).
So, it is the Akamba worldview of the 1980s that should be allowed to interact with the gospel. While I greatly respect the theological traditions of the western Church, yet I feel that the African Akamba Church should be allowed to theologize without feeling she has to submit to the western theological yardstick. An African proverb reminds us that "A bee does not start a new home with honey." So, just as a bee starts with the raw material and produces honey, so Akamba Christians must take the biblical message (gospel) as the raw material and using their own culture should make (manufacture, weave) a Christian theology capable of responding to Akamba's deepest concerns and questions. I am convinced that the essence of Akamba worldview is in tact and still begs for a relevant theology. Bruce Nicholls thinks it is too "idealistic to suggest that the Asian, African or Latin-American Christian theologian can free himself from all Western interpretation [theology] and begin again on the basis of his own culture. The cultural factors are too interrelated for this" (1979:41). Granted the western influence is great, but it is the outsider who says that building theology on African themes is "idealistic."

However, this does not mean that Akamba Christian theology should close its eyes to theologies done by Christians in other parts of Africa or of the world. Instead, Akamba Christian theologians must be willing not
only to learn from other theologies but also to subject their theological ideas, reflections and insights to the blessing and scrutiny of Christ's universal Church. Certainly we should heed Fashole-Luke's advice of preserving "the creative tension between the particular and the universal and the cross fertilization of ideas [which] must lead to the mutual enrichment of [the Church's] various theologies" (1981:32).

**OVERVIEW OF STUDY**

While the study takes seriously the whole matter of theologizing within the context of a society's worldview, yet at the deepest level it is not a cultural worldview which dominates our endeavor. More than anything else, it is God's revelation both in the Bible and in Christ the living Word that we seek to communicate.

For this reason, having stated the purpose of our work in this introductory chapter, we move on in Chapter I to declare our stand on the Bible. It is here where we register the absolute convictions of the Akamba Church on how she must use God's biblical revelation in her efforts in Christian theologizing. In this chapter we also record what we consider to be evangelical hermeneutics for Akamba Christians.

In the next chapter we return to our theme of worldview
theologizing. However, our main purpose here is to examine how societies construct worldviews and their role in society. It is here where the theoretical basis on how societies construct models of reality is provided. This section of the study is built on studies done by anthropologists like Morris Opler (1945), Kluckhohn and Strodbeck (1961), A. Wallace (1961), P. Hiebert (1976a, 1983), P. Berger (1967, 1977), Thomas Kuhn (1962), E. Hall (1983), Michael Kearney (1984) and others. The leading purpose is to show that the explicit culture we observe in society is really an externalization or physical manifestation of the internal mental structures and meaning systems which are implicitly hidden at the level of a society's worldview (Berger 1967:9).

So, the people's worldview is their only model of reality and forms the framework within which all effective communication and dialogue should be done. Theoretical studies done on worldviews show that a society's worldviews are made up of the ideas and conceptualizations that house people's assumptions of reality (truth). However, it is impossible within our objective to look at how many different cultures have developed their worldview. Therefore, in this chapter we undertake to examine—although briefly—how western culture as one dominant society has constructed her worldview(s).

To examine western society as a case study in worldview
construction is a choice we have purposely made. It is primarily helpful not only because of the influence western worldview has had on African education and culture but also because the ineffectiveness of traditional Christian theology in Africa is primarily blamed on the inability of western worldview (through which traditional orthodox Christian theology had been developed) to penetrate the African world. A notable African theologian, Osadolor Imasogie of Nigeria, has the following to say:

... traditional Christian theology has been ineffective in Africa because it is conditioned by a quasi-scientific world view which blinds it to, and thereby makes it unresponsive to, the reality of the African's self-understanding within his own world view (1983b:47).

It is therefore out of such concern that it becomes imperatives for African Christian theologians and educators to understand the tenets of western worldviews.

Chapter III ("Understanding Traditional Akamba Worldview") offers an analysis of the seven Akamba worldview themes (models) as developed by Jacobs. It is also here where the impact of modernity on traditional Akamba worldview is examined. The reader will find that our concern is more on the implicit theoretical dimensions of worldview change and less on external cultural changes.

In Chapter IV we diachronically and emically examine the whole range of Akamba cultural themes at our disposal which results in their modification to what I have referred
to above as "contemporary Akamba mental models of perceiving and ordering experience." The cosmological interdependence model has been suggested as the dominant Akamba model of reality. However, because of the heavily religious inclination present in every dimension of Akamba worldview, we have found it appropriate in this chapter to look at the relationship between religion and worldview. Indeed, the six contemporary Akamba models of reality discussed here cannot be understood in their proper cultural context without taking seriously Akamba religious or transcendent beliefs. We have undertaken a lengthy discussion on contemporary Akamba worldview because, as already pointed out, Christian theologizing cannot be done out of a vacuum.

Indeed, it is understanding the role of worldview in theologizing that has led us to examine not only the receptor's worldview (Akamba) but also the communicator's worldview (i.e. the western missionary). This is the subject of Chapter V where the contextual background of the missionary who brought the gospel to Ukambani is examined. We contend that proper understanding of the contextual background of the western missionary and the forces which accompanied the launching of the Church in Ukambani are prerequisite for a well-balanced Akamba Church theological contextualization.

However, before we make the statement on what can be
considered as a "relevant Akamba Christian theology" (Chapter VII), we have undertaken a lengthy discussion that is aimed at giving one person's critique of contemporary Akamba Christian theology (Chapter VI). In the critique of Akamba Christian theology, we have pointed out that our primary goal is not to be judgmental to the faithfulness of missionary or national efforts but rather to provide an evaluative assessment of the theological situation in the Ukambani Church. We have called our critique a necessary surgery for a proper diagnosis if the contemporary theological sickness in Ukambani is going to be healed. Besides, our examination of the theological situation in Ukambani has shown us that even though western missionaries were predominantly ill-equipped by their secular-mechanistic-humanistic worldview which is primarily blamable for their many blunders, yet God in his grace has through them and in spite of them built (is building) his Church in Ukambani.

But while the Church has grown and Christianity can be embraced by probably a half million members of the tribe, yet as described by John Mbiti, one of her theologians, it is a Church without a theology or characterized by a shallow theology. It is shallow because it was ready-made and brought to them pre-packaged. As the chapter on the critique of Akamba Church theology shows, Christian theology in
Ukambani has not primarily arisen as a result of indigenous (contextual) theological reflection. And like several of our proverbs say, "Sya kunewa ni mutui iyusuaa ikumbi (that which comes from your neighbor is not sufficient to fill the grainery)", or another that says, "Mundu ndakolawa too ni kithuma kya ngombe ite yake (a person cannot sleep soundly with his/her neighbor's blanket)" (literally a cow-hide not from the owner's herd). These proverbs and others show how Akamba Christians are indigenously equipped to engage in the theological reflection which we have advocated here.

The seventh chapter of the study, "Constructing a Relevant Akamba Christian Theology" is an attempt to set the ball of Akamba indigenous theological reflection rolling. Besides proposing an Akamba Christian theological reflection continuum, the chapter deals with some of the essential tools for Christian theological reflection. In this chapter greater emphasis is placed on the concrete dimensions of Christian theologizing. However, the final chapter provides a case study in Christian theological reflection using Akamba supernaturalistic model as the basis. Certainly I do not claim finality, neither in principles nor in the theologization that I have done here. All that I have presented here is, to quote our brother John Mbiti,

... an expression of a creature about the Creator. As such, it is limited, inadequate, and ridiculously anthropocentric. God [and the way he operates] is still beyond our human imagination, understanding, and expression. Here then is only
one scene of man's groping after his Creator, the voice of a stammering child . . . [seeking to understand the wonder and the love] of the Parent (1970:xiv-xv; author's emphasis).

May this his child learn to know and to love the Parent more.
CHAPTER I
AKAMBA CHRISTIAN HERMENEUTICS

INTRODUCTION

The English word "hermeneutics" is derived from the Greek noun hermeneia or from the verb hermeneuo (Liddell and Scott 1966:691). Within the milieu of classical Greek literature the term was primarily used to mean "interpretation" and only secondarily did it mean "explanation". Today the term is used to denote the process of interpreting texts. Thus, in a general sense, Bleicher would define it as "the theory of the interpretation of meaning" (1980:208).

However, the task of hermeneutics in our day has become so vast that any discussion on the subject must begin by setting its boundaries. Commenting on its vastness Lapointe noted that "Not only is the present hermeneutics characterized by its almost unlimited compass, but it has become too complex to be mastered by one scholar" (1972:107).

Therefore this writer's particular interest is to probe
the nature of an appropriate hermeneutic model for the Akamba Church. Certainly this is not a study on hermeneutics itself. In the introductory chapter the goal of the study was stated as an attempt to investigate the relationship between the Akamba cultural worldview and the biblical message. So here we raise the hermeneutic question at the outset in order to register our convictions regarding some of the irreducible and the non-negotiable components responsible Christian exegetical scholars must take seriously. However, a reader looking for a detailed study on contemporary debates on Christian hermeneutics should consult other works. Our discussion here is confined to those questions which the writer sees as having direct bearing to the main objective of the dissertation.

For this reason, I have limited my observations on hermeneutics to three areas. First is a look into some of the basic concerns of Christian hermeneutics. Here I look at modern Christian hermeneutics as it relates to the biblical message, the new-hermeneutic model and a society's worldview.

Second, I shall look at the Bible and hermeneutics. On this I am particularly concerned with how the modern

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1. The Akamba make 1.2 million out of Kenya's 18 million people. Thirteen years ago Mbiti had an estimate of three hundred thousand Christians (1971:22). With the incredible church growth that has been occurring in the last decade I estimate about one-half million Akamba Christians.
biblical interpreter understands not only biblical authority but also biblical historicity. Christological and kingdom hermeneutics are also briefly discussed here.

The final section of our discussion deals with culture and hermeneutics. Of particular interest to the writer are the roles of the receptor culture in modern hermeneutics, the Church as the hermeneutic community and certainly the whole field of theological contextualization. All three statements and concepts will receive further treatment in the course of the study.

**SOME BASIC CONCERNS IN MODERN CHRISTIAN HERMENEUTICS**

**Biblical Message**

Christian hermeneutics can best be understood as a science that deals with the interpretation of Scripture. It has as its major task the goal of making biblical revelation (message) clear and understandable. Thus a Christian theology has, as Paul Hiebert says,

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... one foot in biblical revelation and the other in the historical and cultural context of the people hearing the message. The first task is to remain faithful to biblical truth. This begins with exegesis, in which the message of the Bible is understood within a particular cultural and historical context. The second task is to make that message relevant to the listener. This involves hermeneutics, which is the task of helping persons understand the relevance of the biblical message for the quite different linguistic and cultural settings of today, and of determining the appropriate response for the believer. The message of the Bible is supracultural--it is above
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all cultures. But it must be understood and applied in all cultures (1978a:xvii).

Do the terms "Bible" and "biblical message" mean the same thing? While we will be responding later on to the question on biblical authority, we however need to point out at this juncture that the Bible in its sixty-six books is the canon of God's scriptural revelation. We can speak of it as the form that carries the biblical message. God's words and deeds constitute his supracultural revelation which, being clothed with Hebrew-Greek cultural forms, has come to us in what we call the Bible. It is the canon of Scripture that the worldwide Church of Christ has down through the centuries affirmed as the authoritative record of God's will for all mankind.

I am aware of some evangelicals who insist on maintaining "an inseparable relationship between content and the form of the word of God," arguing that

God in His sovereignty chose a Semitic Hebrew culture through which to reveal his Word. If he had chosen a Chinese or an Indian cultural form, the content [message or meaning] of the Word would have been different, for to radically change the form which carries its own world view and set of values is to change the content (Nicholls 1979:45).

To these evangelicals the cultural forms through which God's supracultural message was revealed to the world should be viewed as unique cultures. Bruce Nicholls's adds that "... there is a uniqueness about the Hebrew culture of the Bible, both Old and New Testament. It is not just a culture
alongside any other culture, but it became a unique culture that carried the marks of the divine-human interaction" (1979:46).

While I respect Nicholls's convictions, along with those of similar persuasions, yet this study has thought it best to distinguish between the Bible and the biblical message. The Bible is the form that carries the biblical message. The biblical message is God's eternal Word which was (is) inscripturated in the Bible. God's Word is eternal; but the language and culture of the inscripturated Word is not. So the inscripturated Word is the written word. It is the Bible. It is the form through which God's message or the biblical message is revealed to the world. In other words, the Bible as form is not the message but the tool or the channel through which God's message flows. The inscripturated Word is not the Master (for ultimately a master cannot be a thing but a personal being), not the authority although it reveals the Master— even Jesus Christ, God's Living Eternal Word.

So the Bible is the form that carries the biblical message. It is the biblical message that must interact with a people's cultural situation. The biblical message is clothed in biblical forms, and therefore, it must be seen apart from the biblical forms and then be communicated in the worldview of the people. Charles Nyamiti, a Tanzanian theologian, reflecting along similar lines, warns against
equating the fundamental content of scriptural revelation with its cultural expression. We need to separate the kernel of revelation (message) from its cultural expression (forms). It is the kernel, not its cultural expression, that should be made to respond to the quest implied to African culture (1971:1). Although certainly the two cannot be fully divorced, we cannot know the biblical message apart from the concepts of the Hebraic culture. However, it is the kernel of Scripture, that is the biblical message, is equipped with the capacity to address the ultimate concerns of any culture (Heb 4:12).

The New-Hermeneutic Model

Traditionally classical hermeneutics, which has been referred to by some as the "scientific approach" (Padilla 1979:86) to biblical interpretation has been heavily loaded with the concern of understanding the biblical message in its original text. In so doing, it has tended to lay less emphasis on the meaning of the text to the historical present. What the new-hermeneutic is attempting to do is to remind the modern biblical interpreter that the contemporary historical context is equally important.

Primarily, Christian hermeneutics aims to interpret God's revelation to contemporary context. Simply put, it is making the ancient documents of God's inscripturated Word address the present to cause equivalent impact on the
present hearers as it had to the original.

In order to do this adequately, the Christian interpreter must first of all understand the Bible, God's scriptural revelation. God's message is in the Bible, and the interpreter should read and study the Bible with his mind, soul and heart tuned to the Holy Spirit's illumination. God is the speaker in the Bible, and as the interpreter reads God's Word what he hears is not man's words but God's voice in human language (Heb 3:7). This is what Christians mean by scriptural inspiration. James Packer described it as "an activity whereby God, who in His providence overrules all human utterance, caused certain particular men to speak and write in such a way that their utterance was, and remains, His utterance through them, establishing norms of faith and practice" (1975:4).

Therefore as an interpreter, God's inspired Word helps me to understand myself better. Then, in turn, I use my enlightened understanding to interpret the Bible. Reflecting on this kind of interaction, Lapointe makes the observation that as long as I, the interpreter, "have not understood myself better with the help of the Bible I have not yet really and totally understood the Bible" (1972:153). Thus, Ernst Fuch's words are right on target when he says, "The

2. My affirmation of E. Fuch on this particular point does not mean I agree totally with his one-sided, heavily subjective hermeneutic model.
texts must translate us before we translate them" (Thiselton 1977:313). So, the Christian interpreter must be submitted to God's Word.

Secondly, the Christian interpreter must understand the historical contexts in which God's revelation was given. As mentioned above, this is the main strength of classical hermeneutics or the traditional western theological model (Imasogie 1983b:30-31). Harvie Conn points out that in traditional hermeneutics,

... "context" in exegesis is usually defined narrowly in terms of the language of the text. As a result of the challenges of the Tübingen school in the nineteenth-century and its attention to the text's Sitz im Leben, the traditional definition was broadened. But even so, the classical evangelical model, exemplified by men like J. B. Lightfoot and B. F. Wescott remained heavily programmed towards lexicography, etymology and syntax (1984:185-86).

This traditional historical-grammatical method is still held very high among evangelicals today. Certainly it should not be undermined by any means, for no one should expect to adequately interpret the biblical message without first understanding the context in which the various scriptural revelations were given. The modern interpreter should always aim to understand the Scripture in its own original situation before explaining and applying it to the present situation. However, the classical claim that the meaning of words in sentences or languages should be derived from their etymological and grammatical structures is an assumption
that needs further investigation. Suffice it to mention here that exegetical scholarship in the Christian community is filled with commentaries on biblical text which are made virtually by moving through a text word by word to find the meaning (Conn 1984:72). This pattern of finding meanings in words can be traced back to the 19th-century anthropological linguists who saw words as "brute facts, straightforward formal correspondences of reality" (Conn 1984:71). But linguistic studies also show that "biblical language as language can only be understood with reference to its extralinguistic situation" (Conn 1984:71-72).

Thirdly, the Christian interpreter must seek to understand the contemporary historical context. While the original biblical contexts must be taken with ultimate seriousness, yet our main goal is to theologize for contemporary contexts. All we need to know about the original biblical context is to understand how certain words, customs and phrases were used and the meanings they had within the environment or the extralinguistic situations in which they were used. The modern biblical interpreter should not be carried away and be overly fascinated by the past! He should remember that he is not contextualizing the gospel to an ancient Jewish or Greek audience. Even if he were to work among modern day Jewish-Greek people he would

still need to contextualize for their present historical contexts.

This is what A. C. Thiselton means when he urges for the need of a meaningful dialogue—meaningful engagement—between the past and the present. To him hermeneutics is the fusion of two horizons, the one of the text and that of the interpreter. Like Padilla and others, Thiselton recognizes that

Traditionally hermeneutics entailed the formulations of rules for the understanding of an ancient text, especially in linguistic and historical terms. . . . Traditional hermeneutics began with the recognition that a text was conditioned by a given historical context. However, hermeneutics in the more recent sense of the term begins with the recognition that historical conditioning is two-sided: the modern interpreter, no less than the text, stands in a given historical context and tradition (1980:11).

Thus the need for the new-hermeneutic has arisen in part due to the fact that classical hermeneutics—the grammatical-historical approach—has tended to be one-sided. By seeking to define the original meaning of the text under the assumption of a very high degree of "objectivity," classical hermeneutics made the interpreter "assume that the only historical context he has to deal with is the ancient one related to the text, as if he himself were above history" (Padilla 1979:87). So one of the main concerns of the new-hermeneutic is to strive to do justice to the original historical context of the biblical text as well as the historical context of the modern reader or
hearer. The interpreter's desire is to ensure that a meaningful dialogue takes place between the past and the present.

Since in biblical hermeneutics we are dealing with an ancient document (the Bible), it seems there will always be the need to recognize the inevitable tension in bridging the chasm between the original context and the present. Thus, biblical hermeneutics like theology must move "back and forth between two poles, the eternal truth of its foundation and the temporal situation in which the eternal truth must be received" (Tillich 4 1951:3). The contemporary biblical interpreter should always aim to reclothe the gospel message with the contextual historical garments of his generation. The 1st-century biblical interpreters and writers did the same. Through the Holy Spirit's illumination and interpretation, they understood the meaning of the biblical message as or before they conceptualized it in the Hebrew and Greek languages.

It is probably this prerequisite understanding of the historical "spiritual" meaning of the biblical message by the contemporary interpreter that accounts for the phenomenological dimensions of the new hermeneutic. In other words, it is an attempt to affirm the need for the

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4. Although the author finds it fitting to endorse Tillich at this point, yet I do not condone his theological methodology.
transcendental preparation of today's biblical interpreter for his task.

For example, a pastor's concern in doing biblical hermeneutics is to find out how the message recorded in ancient documents can be interpreted in a way that feeds the flock of the 1980s. In the use of language, for instance, the original usage and meaning of a word should be looked at first in the light of its original context and then its contemporary historical context. This is mainly due to the fact that language changes with history, and words and phrases should only be seen in the light of their contemporary contexts. It is the emphasis placed on the contextual dimensions that makes the new hermeneutic a more appropriate hermeneutical model for explaining the meaning of Scripture than relying solely on the traditional historical-grammatical model. Christian meanings are more than simply taking the semantic context seriously. But in the process, the initial meaning has to be guarded.

One good example of this would be the word "Ngai," which was one of the traditional Akamba theistic terms. Traditionally, the term was not a proper name to express the concept of Supreme God. But the Akamba used the term "Ngai" in

5. They used the terms Mulungu and Mumbi to express their concept of Supreme God. The two concepts offer the best theistic equivalents of Yahweh. For a more detailed examination of Akamba theistic concepts, see pp. 493-504 of this dissertation.
its plural form when they wanted to refer to ngai sya musyi (homestead gods), ngai sya muviti (traveler's gods), ngai sya kiima (mountain gods), ngai sya awe (gods for priest doctors) (Kimilu 1962:ix,56,58). This usage was confirmed recently by John Somba when he asked his aged father to tell him the difference between aimu and ngai and the response was, "Normally it means the same thing" (1979:25). However, modern Akamba use the term to express their concept of Supreme God. What has happened is that the term has earned through prolonged usage in gospel communication and in Kamba Christian literature both the monotheistic status and the contextual credibility of the other two terms. The point we are trying to make here is that language changes with history, and meanings of words, terms and concepts should only be seen in the light of their own historical contexts. This fact should not only be taken seriously but Akamba Christian theologians should, as Olson advises, "... welcome semantic and cultural change as dynamic factors which save theology from becoming fossilized in final form" (1984:77).

A Society's Worldview

The process of interpreting God's revelation requires not only a clear understanding of the biblical message--the need to do justice to both original and present historical contexts--but also includes an understanding of how the
hearers themselves look at reality. Humans are part of societies which, over the generations, have constructed certain specific ways of looking at life. These mental ways are basically assumptions on what life is all about. They use them to assign meaning to life. It is these assumptions that missiologists and social scientists have defined as a people's way of seeing or perceiving reality (Hesselgrave 1978:125; Nida 1960:169; Benedict 1934:53). Thus Nida would say, "We cannot expect to communicate with a person unless we know some things about how he looks upon the world and why he responds to it as he does" (1960:169). For this reason Chapter II of the dissertation is devoted to the whole matter of worldview, that is, it's construction and role in society.

And so we are suggesting that a society's worldview must be taken seriously in modern biblical hermeneutics. Communication theory has also brought to our awareness that the meanings of the words we use are supplied by the hearer (receptor) from his own worldview assumptions and values. Thus, it is not possible to interpret, or theologize, in a vacuum, simply because all of us approach scriptural revelation from our own cultural worldview assumptions. For example, western scientific epistemology, with its dependence on empiricism and scientific rationalism as core pillars, is but one society's cultural way of interpreting and giving (or assigning) meaning to reality. To argue for
its universality is to attribute to it a culturally-derived conceptual tool, a role it cannot serve adequately. There are many aspects of reality which refuse to submit to the western scientific epistemological paradigm. It is, therefore, presumptuous to make western epistemology the only way of explaining the Bible. Actually the Bible is essentially a non-western document.

Meaningful theological reflection must take place within the context of a people's worldview. Do Kenyan Christians have the "right" to interpret Scripture without first going through the eyes of the western worldview? Do they even need to know the assumptions of the western worldview as a prerequisite to proper biblical interpretation? Could western-trained African Christian theologians interpret Scripture without being biased by the western worldview which has shaped much of their academic thinking? These questions and others flood my mind as I look at hermeneutics from a Kenyan Christian context. And in fact, I would admit that it is out of this concern that the whole dissertation is devoted to Christian theologizing within the context of the Akamba worldview. It was Charles Taber, who in a discussion of hermeneutics and culture, said,

... the whole history of Christian interpretation of the Bible shows that there is no such thing as guaranteed, infallible passage of information from the Bible to human minds. If there were, Christians equally competent and honest and committed would come to identical interpretations; but we can clearly see, they do
not. For reasons which seemed good to God, and which I am therefore bound to accept, he did not choose, when he gave us the Holy Spirit to help us understand the Bible, to by-pass normal human approaches to interpreting messages, but to use them. And these approaches are conditioned, colored, and limited by our own finiteness, by our human sinfulness, and our human cultural, social, and historical contexts (1979:109-110).

It is because of the diverse cultural contexts in which human beings live that some measure of Christian theological diversity becomes inevitable. The Apostle John tells us that "The Word became flesh and lived for a while among us" (Jn 1:14). God's written Word and living Word must enter the different worlds where people live. It must become flesh in those worlds. It is God's written Word interacting with the people's faith in Christ within a given socio-cultural context that results in Christianity. Thus, Mbiti would refer to Christianity as being equal to Christ's gospel plus culture plus faith. That is, Gospel plus culture$^6$ plus faith equals Christianity (1978:274). So biblical hermeneutics that takes a society's worldview seriously will produce a version of Christianity which, while maintaining allegiance to the one gospel (Christ), will bear outward cultural expressions which will differ from society to society. Thus, the beauty of our unity in Christ is

$^6$ It is important to point out in Mbiti's equation that culture as a product of fallen man is not perfect and as such accounts for the evils sometimes portrayed in Christianity. Ultimately our allegiance is not to Christianity as a system of belief, but to Jesus Christ and the cultureless gospel. See Kraemer 1969.
expressed best in diversity other than in uniformity.

Commenting on the reason for the many expressions of Christianity, Imasogie of Nigeria says,

... in terms of detail the Eastern Orthodox Christianity is different from the Western version of Christianity. Within the Western sector, the Roman Catholic expression of it differs from the Protestant's. In the same way, within each of these groups the theology of one specific confession, say, in Germany, is different from the same confession on the other side of the Atlantic ocean. In other words, the Word must always become flesh in a particular culture before His glory can be recognized existentially as the glory "as befits the Father's only Son, full of grace and truth" ... (1983a:21-22).

Thus, Imasogie would add that, "... if Christ is to be the Lord of a particular people, the Word must become flesh anew in the culture and the concomitant thought-pattern of the particular people; otherwise Christianity remains a foreign religion transplanted on a foreign soil" (1983a:20; emphasis added).

Hermeneutics' Global Dimension

Beyond our cultural concerns in seeking for appropriate hermeneutic models suited for the diverse cultural contexts, there seems yet to be an emerging need that requires the attention of all of us.

Both the diversity and the rapid changes of cultural situations in today's world make it imperative for Christ's Church to be continually seeking for an appropriate global hermeneutic model(s) for the worldwide evangelical
contextualization of theology. For example, issues like the threats of a nuclear holocaust, modern international economic crises and ecological pollution of our world are no longer the exclusive concerns of the western Church but, indeed, have become global concerns. So while the growth of African Church selfhood is a big need in the Church's maturity, yet the greatest agenda is not (at least for me) the establishing of the "three self Churches." The missiological focus seems to be shifting from the desire to establish "three self Churches" to building an international interdependent Body of Christ committed to being faithful stewards of God's world along with ministering love, grace and truth to a perverse generation of humanity.

This is a global question for Christ's global Church. It is, unfortunately, outside our present purpose. Suffice it to say that it is a need that Christ's Church around the world cannot afford to ignore. And as such, the cry for an appropriate global hermeneutic model of Christian theological contextualization stands at the crossroads. It is an agenda to which Christ's universal Church cannot afford to ignore.

However, we must turn now to our discussion on the two major sections. Akamba Christian hermeneutics must examine these considerations with ultimate precision and carefulness. These are the relationship between the Bible and hermeneutics and the relationship between culture and
hermeneutics. If the Akamba Church believes in any non-negotiables in the Christian faith, then here is the place to register them.

THE BIBLE AND HERMENEUTICS

In this section we are particularly concerned with how the modern Akamba biblical interpreter understands not only biblical authority but also biblical historicity. Christological and kingdom hermeneutics are also briefly discussed here.

The Authority of Biblical Revelation

As evangelicals we begin with the assumption that the Bible has its own God-given authority, and as such it should be understandable on its own terms as its own most faithful interpreter. We affirm 2 Timothy 3:16-17 and 2 Peter 1:20-21 as Scripture's classic claim on biblical authority. "All Scripture is God-breathed." And "... no prophecy of scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit."

God's people across the centuries have affirmed the authority of the Scriptures because of its inspiration (2 Tim 3:16-17). And in 1974 at Lausanne, Switzerland, God's people once again reaffirmed their belief in scriptural
authority. The Lausanne covenant states: "We affirm the
divine inspiration, truthfulness and authority of both Old
and New Testament Scriptures in their entirety . . . as the
only infallible rule of faith and practice" (para. 2).

The Akamba Church cannot afford to have a different
view of Scripture. Indeed one of the leading Akamba
Christian heroes, the late Bishop Wellington Mulwa was among
those who signed the Lausanne Covenant. God is the main
speaker in the Bible. He used the canonical writers to speak
and write his message through them. Thus, the Akamba Church
must affirm the Bible in its sixty-six books as God's
authoritative Word.

Therefore, in doing biblical hermeneutics we must begin
by affirming a high view of Scripture.

The high view holds that the entire Bible--
the canonical Scriptures of the Old and New
Testaments--is the Word of God. It is authorita-
tive and demands faith and obedience to all its
declarations. It is inspired and infallible and
contains everything that is necessary to the faith

And so the Bible must remain unchangeable. No form of
knowledge, science, art or the philosophies of men, whether
from the Akamba themselves or not, should be allowed to
replace the canon of Scripture. The Akamba as an ethnic
people have no body of knowledge traditional or contemporary
that can be compared with the finality of biblical
canonicity. No human society has any substitute for the
Bible is a revelation of God and not of human construction
(2 Pet 1:20-21). It is only as we accept the Bible as God's Word that we can proceed to use it as our only authoritative canon of truth.

The Bible as a Unique Revelation

The questions are often asked, "Does the Bible contain the unique revelation of God, or when we read the Bible, are we exposed to some religious ideologies coined by human beings? Can Christianity, that claims the uniqueness of biblical revelation be placed alongside other religions?" These are some of the questions for which Akamba Christian hermeneutics and biblical theologizing must provide adequate responses.

The canonical books as we know them were written mainly in the Hebrew and Greek languages. The Bible's own testimony, as noted above, is that "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Tim 3:16-17). God breathed all Scripture and it was submitted into writing through human languages. But was the revelation of God (or the biblical message) confined to the Hebrew-Greek languages so that what we have in the Bible is a culturally and linguistically-bound message? In other words, was God attempting to do his best in expressing himself in the Hebrew and Greek languages and somehow all he could manage
to offer was a limited, distorted, partial picture which would fit the limited minds of those ancient people?

While there may be some who consider the Bible as a culturally bound book and incapable of addressing people today in the contemporary world, yet the Akamba Church must take the testimony of Scripture just as it is. That is, God, using the Hebrew and Greek contexts, revealed his will for man as recorded in the Bible. God the Father Almighty who stands above all cultures and judges them, so indwelt the Hebrew and Greek writers of the Biblical books so that in Hebrew and Greek languages they wrote down exactly what He intended for all mankind to hear (McGavran 1981). What we have in the Bible is God's message to all mankind.

For example, when the Bible says "Love one another" or "show hospitality to others, to strangers," are those statements just for the Hebrew people or are they universal revelation of God's will for all mankind? While we must accept that the Bible has its origin in specific historical-cultural contexts, yet its message is supracultural and timeless in meaning and application for all generations of mankind.

Thus, the Bible is a unique revelation in that it is supracultural: God's perfect communication of unchanging truth to all mankind. The Hebrew and Greek languages and cultures served as the original forms that God used to reveal an eternal message. Its message is applicable at all
places and at all times. God's goal is that all may come to know his will whether they live in the decade of the A.D. 50s or in the 1980s. Likewise, the gems acquired through the use of an indigenously constructed theological hermeneutic model should be shared with hospitality to its worldwide Church.

The Historicity of Biblical Revelation

Both the authority and uniqueness of biblical revelation must be accepted by the Akamba Church before any proper biblical hermeneutics and contextual theologizing can take place. However, there is another question we must raise. Is the Bible made up of abstract timeless concepts which have no historical validity? Can the Bible be relied upon when it speaks historically?

We live in a day when the matter of objective reality brought is increasingly under scrutiny. Both existential theologians such as Paul Tillich and humanist anthropologists like Levi-Strauss appeal to the subjective "inner witness" as the final way to authenticate truth. Furthermore, since the rise of Bultman's demythologization of Scripture as a theologically viable hermeneutic, the historicity of biblical revelation could no longer simply be taken for granted. And so, evangelical Bible scholars of our day find it necessary to affirm that
The raw material of [Christian] theology [or biblical hermeneutics] is not abstract, timeless concepts which may be merely taken over from Scripture simpliciter as the Word of God, but rather a message relative to historical events, a message whose narration and interpretation are colored by the Semitic and Graeco-Roman cultures of the biblical authors (Padilla 1979:86).

Thus, the words and the events recorded in the Bible must be traced back to its historic context. The biblical records are but an historical witness of God's dealings with man and with the world. Thus, biblical witness is, in actuality, a record of what God said and did. He acted in events and spoke through prophets. The words and the events should be understood as "intrinsically conveyors of God, at least in the light of Israelite faith. . . . [And] the prophets are empowered to articulate the Word of God" (Lapointe 1972:144). So when we are dealing with Scripture, we are handling an historical document.

Harvie Conn has advised that any Christian theological reflection that fails to take seriously the historicity and normative nature of the canon of Scripture "runs the risk of losing itself in the concrete situation" and likewise, ", . . . without the concrete situation, the Christian faith runs the risk of losing itself in cultural irrelevancy or ethnocentricity" (1978:44). What Conn means is that the Bible is not the record of speculative thoughts but that events took place in time and space and individuals as the Spirit's interpreted these events.
Certainly we respect the role of the "inner witness" which some reformers like Calvin spoke about or recent neo-orthodox and existential theologians (e.g. Niebuhr and Tillich) have emphasized, bringing it to the attention of the evangelical world. But we must strongly affirm that the Bible is God's Word not because of some "inner witness," but, finally because it is an historically inspired document of scriptural revelation. Of course, this is a statement that no one can prove. Hence, no one can reason another into accepting the Bible as God's Word. But a Christian believes it to be so because the same Spirit who inspired the Word indwells the believer's heart and bears witness to him/her that the Bible is God's Word. Certainly, our belief in Jesus Christ is based on more than the conviction of an "inner witness" but rather it is grounded on belief in Jesus Christ, God's son who was revealed in history. Our faith in Christ is not "a leap in the dark," but is firmly rooted in history. Without affirming the historicity of biblical revelation, our belief in Christ's existence has no foundation.

Francis Schaeffer, in his last book The Great Evangelical Disaster, argued that as Christians we "know that Christ lived, and that Christ was raised from the dead, . . . not because of some subjective inner experience [alone], but because the Bible stands as an objective, absolute authority" (1984:55). Therefore, adequate Akamba
Christian hermeneutics must affirm the historicity of biblical revelation, not only because the evangelical Church believes it, but more so because of Scripture's own testimony. It bears its own witness that it is neither of subjective origin nor is it of existential subjective interpretation (2 Peter 1:20-21). Early Church leaders such as John, Paul and Luke all testify that their records were based on eye-witness accounts (cf. 1 Jn, Acts 1, Luke 1). The Bible is an objective record of God's words and deeds.

**Christological Hermeneutics**

Valid Christian hermeneutics is essentially making a statement about Jesus Christ. John Pobee of Ghana who states that the starting point of any Christian theology is the "Christ event" (1979:28). Also, E. W. Fashole-Luke states the goal of Christian theologizing as being "essentially conversations about Jesus Christ, the 'Human Face of God'. African theologians must therefore move from the peripheral and wrestle with Christological ideas, so that genuine African Christologies may emerge" (1981:38-39).

What does the book we have accepted as God's inspired, authoritative Word teach us about Jesus Christ? This, and not other man-constructed Christologies, should be our starting point. In Akamba Christian hermeneutics we go to Matthew 16:16 and respond to the central question, "Who do you say I am?" This question provides the appropriate
starting point in our efforts to make a statement on Akamba Church Christology.

Is Jesus Christ a central person in human history? If so, why? But who is Jesus Christ? What manner of person is he? After all, why should a Mukamba person bother to relate with Jesus of Nazareth, a man who does not even belong to his clan, family, tribe or nation? In search of the Kamba Logos, Akamba Christian hermeneutics must provide appropriate responses to these questions. It is primarily what we say about Jesus Christ that defines the authenticity of our Christian faith.

The Church of Christ in every generation and every culture must respond to the question, "Who do you say I am?" The Nicene Creed, for example, was an attempt of a predominantly Hellenistic Church to articulate and register her Christological convictions in terms of the linguistic forms, symbols, thought patterns, analogies and concepts of her day.

So I contend that valid Akamba biblical hermeneutics must begin by affirming the testimony of Scripture that Jesus Christ is God's son given to the world to reconcile humanity to God through his death and resurrection. With this as central, the Akamba Church should then ask, "What statement about Christ should we make when his person and work are seen and reflected upon from within an Akamba
culture?" This is not the place to make such a statement. All we are trying to do here is to register the claim that Christology is central in Christian hermeneutics. As was mentioned earlier God's eternal word must "become flesh" and dwell among every people.

Therefore, Jesus Christ is the agenda of Christian hermeneutics. He is the central question of history. So we can state without any apology that the major goal of Christian hermeneutics is Christology.

However, in the process of making our Christological statement we should avoid being confined only to Christ's ontological claims, particularly because the question, "Who do you say I am," is both ontological and relational. It is relational in the sense that the one whom we theologize about is our Saviour, our Lord and our God. We theologize for him, in him and through him. All Christological hermeneutics "should [be the] transforming of the believer into conformity to the image of God in his culture" (Conn 1978:43).

Again, God calls all people to follow Christ. It is a call to follow "a person," not an ontological given. That which set the disciples free was not a Greek ontological category but their personal relationship with Jesus Christ,

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7. For a more detailed analysis of Akamba Church Christology, see pp. 504-15 of this dissertation.
the man of Galilee. Harvie Conn says, appropriately, that, "The truth that sets us free is not a Greek ontological category, but Jesus, the fleshed-out expression of the Father's covenantal faithfulness..." (1978:44). Concepts do not set us free, but a person does. Man's ultimate needs are met through this personal relationship. Therefore, Akamba Christian hermeneutics at the deepest level must affirm not only Christ's ontological being but also his lordship in the life of his people. Thus, the Holy Spirit's purpose for inspiring men to write about God's Son was not to provide a basis for Christological/theological systems but ultimately to shape a new humanity created in the image of Jesus Christ.

Thus the editorial of the new East African Journal of Evangelical Theology is right on target when it affirms at the outset that

The African evangelical has, as the very heart of his theology, not a theory, abstraction, philosophy or axiom, but a person—the divine-human mediator, Jesus Christ. He rejects all speculative approaches to theology which do not recognize the centrality of Christ. Thus African evangelical theology can never be merely academic. Its aim is intensely personal—to follow, exalt, serve, worship and proclaim Jesus as Lord and Saviour (1983:1-2).

Kingdom Hermeneutics

We have said that the major goal of Christian hermeneutics is Christology. However, we want to add that
Christological hermeneutics (i.e. interpreting the Christ event) should always take place within God's greater activity. What is God's greater activity? Without side-tracking our purpose too far, we can safely say that the Kingdom of God motif is becoming increasingly accepted "as the hub around which all mission work revolves. One can almost speak of a consensus developing on this point" (Johannes Verkuyl quoted by Glasser and McGavran 1983:32). Thus, the mission of the Church to evangelize and theologize can be seen as functioning within the Kingdom of God as the larger frame of reference.

When we talk of God's Kingdom in this sense, we are referring to the universal kingship of God over all creation. In Genesis we read of God who created the world, filled it with his creatures and established control over his creation. "This can be described as His universal kingship. He is the source of all authority and He has decreed His ultimate triumph over all things, particularly the nations" (Glasser and McGavran 1983:32). God's power and sovereignty over the nations is something the Church must affirm. In the Old Testament God's activity was not just confined to Israel, his chosen people, but we see God using the Egyptians, Assyrians, Babylonians and Persians. Although these nations were not within Yahweh's convenantal rule, yet they operated within his universal sovereignty. Today we live in a world characterized by wickedness and lawlessness,
and yet the Creator God is on his throne as the eternal, supreme, moral governor of the universe.

However, it is needful to recognize the

... differentiation and intimate correlation between God's universal kingship and His kingly rule over His people. As Creator and Redeemer He will finally and fully triumph in human history. As Yahweh, faithful to His covenants, He will bring His people to their golden age of salvation. . . . First, the Israel of God must be a redeemed people. And second, the peoples (goyim, 'ammim) that have long resisted God's will must be totally divested of their pretensions, their autonomy, and their dominion (Glasser and McGavran 1983:34).

In the gospels, the message of God's kingdom is the theme that unified Christ's teachings. For example, when Jesus sent out the twelve, he "sent them to preach the Kingdom of God" (Lk 9:2). As one reads the New Testament, he realizes that the theme of the Kingdom of God is the central core running through the gospels and the epistles (cf. Mt 3:2, 23; 24:14; Mk 2:14-15; Acts 8:12; 19:8; 20:25; 28:31; Rom 14:17; 1 Cor 4:20; 15:24,50). Thus, Bible scholars like DeRidder would affirm that

One does not have to search for the theme that unifies his [Christ's] teaching; it is thrust before the reader throughout the whole of the gospel: the Kingdom of God.

... [furthermore] the whole New Testament message is good news, the good news about the Kingdom of God (Mark 1:14; Matt. 24:14). Small wonder then that at the time of the Great Consummation revealed in Revelation this message is proclaimed: "the kingdoms of this world have become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ" (Rev. 11:15) (1971:136,137).
So the Church of Christ in the world is not the Kingdom of God, but it serves as the gathering of the Kingdom community as she awaits her coming Savior who is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Proper biblical hermeneutics, therefore, should take place within the context of God's greater activity. God, the supreme ruler of the universe, is working not only in and through the Church but also through the kingdoms of this world. Certainly it is through the Church that the Kingdom community finds its best expression; however it is equally important to affirm that the works of the universal Church of Christ are not exhaustive of God's activity. The sovereign Lord of the universe is doing much more in this world than the Church is aware of, and as such, Akamba Christian hermeneutics should interpret Scripture within the context of the Kingdom of God.

We have taken time to register our convictions regarding the authority of biblical revelation, the uniqueness of biblical revelation, the historicity of biblical revelation and the place of Christological and Kingdom hermeneutics. Obviously, there is much that can be added to each one of these different dimensions of biblical hermeneutics; however, we must move on to our last section and discuss culture's impact on hermeneutics.
When a person visits another country, one of the shocks he or she encounters comes from the foreignness of the people and their way of life. Some of the things which appear strange may include the clothes they wear, the foods they eat, the way the people talk to each other and even their apparently-senseless beliefs and values. All these peculiarities can be described as aspects of a people's way of life or culture.

We are living in a day when the concept of culture is becoming increasingly important. Anthropologists, in their study of the ways of mankind, have had a great deal of discussion on how to define the term "culture." There exists no universal consensus on the definition of the term. Therefore, for our purposes we are going to define culture as "the integrated system of learned patterns of behavior, ideas and products characteristic of a society" (Hiebert 1976b:45). What have these cultural aspects to do with biblical hermeneutics?

Earlier on in the first section, we talked about the importance of understanding the worldview of those to whom we are interpreting the biblical message. Therefore, in this section we take the concepts of worldview and culture a little further. However, in our discussion of culture and hermeneutics we are going to confine ourselves to four
cultural aspects which Akamba Christian hermeneutics must take seriously. We begin by advocating for the need of a receptor-oriented hermeneutics which serves as a basis for a disciplined communal reflection (hermeneutics) on God's Word by the believing community. To be able to do this effectively, however, we contend for the use of what we are calling contextual hermeneutics which acts as the theoretical rationale for the inevitability of Christian theological diversity. Let us discuss briefly each of these aspects.

Receptor-Oriented Hermeneutics

"Receptor" is a concept from communication theory that refers to the receiver of the message being communicated by the speaker. So the receptor culture is the listener's way of life. Intercultural communication theorists tell us that for effective communication to take place, the receptor culture must be taken seriously. Certainly all the three elements essential in effective communication are vitally important. That is "the source (S), the message (M), and the receptor (R), which may be diagrammatically represented as follows: S --> M --> R. Without these three basic elements there is simply no communication" (Nida and Reyburn 1981:5). Our main concern here is the receptor, and advice on this aspect of communication from such anthropologists as Charles Taber, David Hesselgrave and Charles Kraft should be
So what we are saying is that Akamba Christian hermeneutics must seek to understand the receptor culture in order to communicate the biblical message in the most relevant way. This is a call to both the missionary and the national Christian worker; the biblical interpreter must enter the receptor culture in order to interpret Scripture meaningfully and effectively. A key element in relevant interpretation of the biblical message will include the ability to wisely discern and select familiar cultural analogies capable of sustaining the meaning of the original text to the contemporary hearers. Thus, the primary purpose of receptor-oriented hermeneutics is, as Conn says, to "reencode the original message within the hearer's frame of reference. And it is done in such a way that both communication and response are dynamically equivalent to those of the original situation" (1984:229).

The New Testament records examples of how original interpreters of the biblical message wisely selected familiar cultural analogies capable of communicating and sustaining the intended meaning. For example, the outsider Paul, communicating the biblical message to the Athenians, chose the analogy of the "unknown God" (Acts 17) as a Greek religious cultural form to communicate the gospel. The Apostle John chose "logos," a theistic conceptual analogy to communicate the Christ of the gospel to the Greek receptor
culture (Jn 1:1). To the Hebrew, John chose the analogy of "sacrificial lamb," a cultural analogy with which the Jews were very familiar. The writer of the book of Hebrews knew the High Priest analogy would best communicate the office of Christ to the Jews.

Today, contemporary examples are like the torop tim (peace child) of the Sawi people in New Guinea which Don Richardson used to communicate the gospel to head-hunting cannibals who at first acclaimed Judas as the hero in the gospel story (since in their culture they idealized treachery). In a sense, the Creator God has made all things to serve as forms in communicating some aspect of his gospel.

Thus, receptor-oriented hermeneutics within the Akamba Church must seek to interpret the biblical message using familiar cultural analogies capable of communicating the meaning of the original text to contemporary Akamba.

Communal Hermeneutics

Akamba Christian hermeneutics must affirm the Church--God's people--as the hermeneutical community. For example, when the Akamba biblical interpreter writes or explains the meanings of the biblical message, he should do so representing the people of God, the Akamba Church. His wise selection of familiar cultural analogies serve to communicate the Church's disciplined communal reflection on
Reflecting on a similar line of thinking, Rene Padilla of Argentina contends that

If the Gospel is to become visible in the life of the Church, the whole Church has to be recognized as "the hermeneutical community," the place where the interpretation of Scripture is an ongoing process. . . . Biblical hermeneutics is a concern of the whole Church for it has to do with God's creation of a community called to manifest his Kingdom in every area of life (1979:104).

Christian hermeneutics should not be the monopoly of a single theologian in any given culture but rather a communal reflection. Thus, Bruce Nicholls states, "The hermeneutical task is not a private or purely individual one; it is the responsibility of the whole body of Christ and must be undertaken within the framework of the believing community" (1979:51). This communal dimension to the hermeneutical task coincides in an absolute way with the African Church, because community is an affirmed reality in most African indigenous worldviews.

For example, several Swahili proverbs strongly address the importance of communal efforts in society: "Mkono mmoja haulei mwana (one hand cannot nurse a child)" and "Mkono mmoja hauchinji ngombe (a single hand cannot slaughter a cow)" (Farsi 1975:27). Basically, African worldviews ascribe greater credibility to communal efforts than to individual achievements. As Allan Boesak states in his book *Farewell to Innocence*, when quoting the wisdom of an African proverb
which says "... One is only human because of others, with others and for others. This is Black [African] Theology. It is authentic; it is worthwhile. It is, in the most profound sense of the word, gospel truth" (1977:152).

Therefore, to Kenyan peoples the pursuit after communal credibility and allegiance is as indigenous to African thinking as Mount Kilimanjaro itself. Of course, the key dimension in Akamba Christian hermeneutics is not just the involvement of the community into the task of theologizing. The task of the hermeneutical community must go beyond both the communal effort and the effective communication of the content of the gospel into the Akamba cultural thought forms meaningful to the felt needs of the people at that given time. These dimensions are but part of the hermeneutical spiral. The primary calling of the hermeneutical community is to ask,

... How shall the child of God, as a member of the body of Christ and the fellowship of the Spirit, respond with integrity to the Scriptures in his or her culture in order to be able to live a full-orbed kingdom lifestyle in covenant obedience with the covenant community? (Conn 1984:231-32).

This is why it should be pointed out that theologizing is the task of the hermeneutical community of each generation in its own particular moment of history.

It is this calling that behooves the hermeneutical community, besides having the knowledge of God's written word, to learn to wait upon the Lord in prayer, in humility
and in faith. All these qualities are part of the hermeneutical package. This is why we contend that good hermeneutics is not a duty solely confined to academicians and biblical scholars, but rather it involves the disciplined reflection of men and women on the text of Scripture as they seek to walk close with God under Christ's Lordship.

Recognition of Christian Theological Diversity

To understand the inevitability of Christian theological diversity is vitally important for Akamba Christian hermeneutics. Differences in Christian theologies are not rooted solely on cultural reasons, but the essential nature of Christianity presupposes some measure of theological diversity. For example, as Christians our fundamental allegiance is to Christ. However, the Bible as the infallible record of divine revelation and the priesthood of all believers are two theological convictions that Christians take very seriously. Commenting on these two, Paul Hiebert, a noted Christian anthropologist, says,

The former [i.e. the record of divine revelation] lays the foundations of our faith. The latter forces us to differentiate between biblical revelation and theologies that are human understandings of that revelation in different cultural and historical contexts. Thus we speak of one Bible but of the theologies of Calvin, Luther, and the Anabaptists (1978a:xvii).

Thus, the theological conviction in the priesthood of
all believers accounts for some measure of theological diversity in Christ's Church. On a similar wavelength, Imasogie states,

... God's attributes and what he is to his creatures are open-ended and inexhaustible. It is, therefore, presumptuous for any theologian to hold that his perception of God in a particular context represents an absolute understanding of the living dynamic God, the Creator of the ends of the earth (1983b:83-84).

It is needless to say that all Christian theologians should adhere to the primary calling which is to strive for unity in Christ's Lordship within the diversity of Christian theologies (Eph 4:1-13).

Theology as a reflection on the record of God's divine revelation from within a cultural-historical context should anticipate reflectional cultural differences.

For Christian theologizing in Africa, it is becoming increasingly clear that Africa cannot be generalized about any more. To write an African Christian theology, like Mbiti's *New Testament Eschatology in African Background* (1971), presupposes a single African culture and worldview. It assumes that all Africans are one people, that they are asking the same questions which spring from identical problems and that a continental Christian theology provides the answers and solutions. Certainly there are some elements which seem to be common to all African people. For example, Fontus Fritz sees African commonality in four areas. That is, "... they have the same conception of the
relationship between cause and effect, they conceive of space and time in the same way, they have the same view of knowledge, the only valid knowledge is a practical one and for them community is very important" (Tienou 1979:189). While these aspects may enable us to speak of African culture in the singular, yet there is enough diversity that forces us to speak of African culture in the plural. The 1883 languages spoken in the continent are but one example of the inevitable diversity.

Therefore, an adequate Christian hermeneutic in Africa should not assume a single culture and certainly not a single Christian theology. Africa is a diverse continent both culturally and linguistically. For this reason recent, African Christian theologians have begun to warn against "Homo Africanus" (Pobee 1978:18). John Pobee contends that we

... would expect to find African [Christian] theologies rather than one African theology which purports to speak to all conditions of homo Africanus. We make no apologies for pleading for African theologies because this is in fact how theology has been evolved over the years. After all, theology emerges from, among other things, a historic community and a people's experiences. Since there are diverse, these are bound to be diverse theologies (1979:19).

Recently Ambrose Moyo has expressed similar concerns,

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8. Mbiti gives the latest count of African languages as 1883 languages. Where some of these languages are counted more than once (because of being spoken across political boundaries) the total figure comes to 3052 (1984:35).
contending that

From the beginning of the early Church, Christian thought was very diverse in its manifestations. Different theologies emerged, and even today there is no uniformity of theology among modern theologians. This means that even in Africa we cannot in the final analysis talk of one African Theology but of theologies (1983:96).

As pointed out above, the reasons for the diversity are not just theological, cultural and linguistic, but also that the continent has inherited foreign political, educational and socio-economic differences. It is becoming increasingly clear that "Western theologies do not deal with the problems and questions raised by African Christians; particular theologies, shaped and produced in different parts of Africa, are therefore inevitable" (Fashole-Luke 1981:32).

Further, the African Church has inherited denominationalism with its differing theological traditions transmitted through missionary theological education. The Akamba Church is made up of many of these denominations, in addition to which are the numerous seven or so independent African Churches that have arisen within the tribe in the last four decades. All these factors force the African Church to enjoy, or to tolerate, (whichever the case may be) not only different Christian theologies but also different theological methodologies. The dilemma may indeed tear the Church or end up to be a kind of blessed inheritance!

So, Akamba Christian hermeneutics cannot afford to interpret the biblical message unaware of the diverse world
of the African. Thus, on one hand, such an awareness frees us from feeling that we have to construct a Christian theology for the whole world; yet, on the other hand, it challenges us to construct a Christian theology that does not undermine the universal claims of the gospel. Thus the balance and tension between the particular and the universal should always be maintained. Certainly it is my hope that out of hospitality the Akamba Church would be willing to share her "theological dish" in the international "potluck" of the world Christian theological menu.

Contextual Hermeneutics

In modern Christian theological circles today, it is recognized that Christian theologies must be loyal not only to the faith they seek to express but also be relevant to the cultural, political, historical and socio-economic milieu in which they are produced. Such a recognition then implies that "... no single theological system can be valid for a continent or the world; it also underlines the point that all theologies are culture bound, relative and tentative" (Fashole-Luke 1981:31). This new wave of understanding is particularly helpful, especially for the Third World Church. The recognition has particularly helped to correct the "mistaken view that western theology constitutes universal theology, and that any theology that does not conform to its categories and patterns of thought

It is neither a sign of good health nor of theological maturity when many theologians refuse to recognize the monocultural and monolinquistic conditioning of western Christian theologies. One key western evangelical Christian theologian who is continually alerting his fellow colleagues in regard to the limitations of their theological methodology is Harvie Conn. Addressing his colleagues in his superb book, *Eternal Word and Changing Worlds: Theology, Anthropology and Mission in Triadlogue*, he says, "A static view of cultures and of language reduces our range of visibility and our acceptance of developing theologies as a legitimate response of the Bible to the problems within each culture" (1984:122).

In quoting an example of the average western evangelical theologian, he cites Robertson McQuilkin (President of Columbia Bible College) who, in a recent article entitled "Limits of Cultural Interpretation," affirmed the vital importance of cultural tools for the "understanding (i.e. of culture and human language) helps both in interpretation and in application; yet the two activities are distinct." Conn argues that it is this "static view of cultures that helps in keeping distinct the line between interpretation and application. Interpretation gives us 'theology.' Application makes it 'black' or 'African' or 'Asian'" (1984:122), and to this can be added
"American," "British" and others.

It is, therefore, out of this recognition that we suggest for the Akamba Church the use of what we are calling contextual hermeneutics. In other words, while the gospel is one (i.e. God in Christ restoring a lost world to himself), yet it is (was) always addressed in specific contexts. As Taber says, the gospel is never addressed "to whom it may concern" (Conn 1984:197). However,

The gospel "sameness" (oneness) is not eroded by the gospel's particularization when presented to Nicodemus in terms of being born again or to a rich young ruler in terms of giving away his wealth. It is simply being made specifically appropriate. If the gospel, in fact, is not big enough, wide enough, enduring enough to speak to each dimension of the human condition in human cultures, it is not universal enough to take away the sins of the world (Conn 1984:197).

Several terms have been used to denote the process through which the biblical message is made meaningful in a given culture—terms like "accommodation," "adaptation," "indigenization," "enculturation" and today "contextualization." Hesselgrave thinks, "There is no ideal term" (1978:82). However, for our purpose we are adopting for a working definition the term "contextualization" to denote the process by which the biblical message is

9. In examining that which constitutes the gospel core, Harvie Conn makes the distinction between the concepts of "core" and "center." He states that the language of the term "core" ultimately "demands that we think in terms of gospel irreducibles," while "'center' language demands that we think in terms of gospel expansions" (1984:197).
communicated to a receptor culture so that the listeners embrace it as God's good news for them. The biblical examples for this are numerous.

To illustrate the need for contextual hermeneutics, let us use three examples--two from the Bible and one from Akamba worldview. First is an example from God's incarnational model: God's word in the Old Testament is revealed to us clothed with Hebraic cultural garments. God wanted to be understood by his Old Testament audience. So he used Hebraic cultural forms--language, symbols and analogies which were capable of communicating his message to the people within their own historical socio-cultural context. Thus, in the Old Testament God contextualized his message, while in the New Testament he contextualized his person. It was necessary for man's sake for God to clothe himself with contextual historical garments. How could God who is Spirit present himself in person for humanity to see without dressing himself with humanity? Thus, the eternal God (Spirit) in order to reveal or unveil himself to humans, he had to veil himself with humanity. As Ambrose Moyo rightly observes,

He [Jesus Christ] did not appear in some unknown heavenly form because humanity could not have been able to comprehend Him in that foreign form of being. He had to "empty Himself", to take "the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of man. And being found in human form he humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even death on the cross" (Phil. 2:7-8). In order to reveal Himself God had to identify with humanity; He had
to enter into culture and history. He had to concretize and contextualize His revelation: He took a form that is tangible to people, a form that we could all grasp, that is the human form. Thus St. Paul emphasizes that Jesus was "born of a woman" and that he was "born under the law" to redeem those that were "under the law" (Gal. 4:4-5) (1983:102).

Indeed in a very concrete way, he covered his eternal deity with the body of a first century male Palestinian Jew. Thus, Christ's humanity was God's dress for man's sake. For our own sake (due to our sin), God could not appear "naked" in our presence. It was for man's sake that God in Christ clothed himself in human garment. Thus, in the human Jesus of Nazareth dwelt "as much God" as there can be in human form (Col 1:9).

The incarnation of God in the man Christ Jesus is the deepest and greatest demonstration of theological contextualization. There can never be a better model. This example of contextualization is so supreme that we can refer to the ideal mission theologizing as "incarnational theologizing" rather than "contextual theologizing." And so in Akamba Christian hermeneutics the goal is to allow the Christ event to deeply penetrate the Akamba world, just as Christ has eternally penetrated the human world. The Akamba biblical interpreter has Christ as his supreme allegiance. It is this Christ whom he must present in a way that allows him to penetrate the very core of Akamba culture.

Another example to illustrate the need for a contextual hermeneutical model can be found in Jesus' teaching on
servanthood which we referred to earlier. Let us take the passage that records the event when Christ washed the disciple's feet (Jn 13:1-17). In this scriptural passage, and indeed in all other passages, the Akamba Christian interpreter should distinguish between interpretation and application. In the interpretation of a given biblical text we look for the biblical message conveyed in the words or acts recorded in the scriptural passage. So what is the biblical message in this passage? Is it "to wash each other's feet" or "to serve one another," with the washing of others' feet as a practical demonstration of serving one another within the first century A.D. Hebrew cultural context?

To me, Jesus was teaching the principle of serving one another; and this is, itself, the interpretation of the passage. The act of washing others' feet then becomes the application of the principle (or biblical message) within a particular concrete historical context. Thus, in interpretation we are looking more for the biblical message being communicated. In its interpretational dimension the biblical message is timeless, cultureless and universal, while in its practical applicational dimension it is cultural and historical. It needs to be affirmed that the universal dimensions of the biblical message are "much more remote form the surface level of verbal and symbolic expression than was previously acknowledged. Every language
is inextricably part of a culture and is used in an irreducibly particular context" (McCurry 1979:145).

A fine line that may be worth noting here is that we contextualize the communication of the gospel, "not" the gospel itself. Thus, interpretation is the principle, while application is the concrete cultural application of the principle. So, the application, as important as it is, should not be allowed to replace the interpretation. The modern biblical interpreter or the hermeneutical community of the faith must distinguish between these two dimensions as they approach Scripture under Christ's Lordship in the illumination of the Holy Spirit.

For the third example to illustrate the need for a contextual hermeneutical model, we shall take one of the Akamba worldview's central assumptions. The Akamba belief in a cosmological equilibrium has been exposed as the central postulate in their worldview assumptions (Davis 1968:38; Peng 1962:151). To the Akamba, cosmological equilibrium (or cosmological interdependence) is a given which expresses how things should be. A typical Mukamba believes that man, nature and the supernatural were created by Mulungu (God), and all must co-exist peacefully. So evil, drought and sickness are all enemies which tilt the cosmological balance/harmony. For this reason, the goal of every Mukamba is to live at peace with other humans, creatures and nature.
And so through a contextual hermeneutical model, the Akamba Church should interpret the Bible in a way that responds to the questions raised at the worldview assumptional level. The Christian theology constructed should also reflect the other central assumptions of Akamba worldview. For a Mukamba to embrace Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, he must be presented as Mulungu's Son (Mulungu = Akamba monotheistic term for the Uncreated Creator), who is not only able to hold all things together in a perfect cosmological equilibrium but also whose power promises to offer to them a more satisfying life than the best of their traditions. In Chapter VIII of this dissertation we discuss how Akamba theistic yearnings are all met in Christ. However, here we contend that for the Gospel of Jesus Christ to be embraced by the Akamba as God's Good News, it must be clothed with Akamba worldview conceptual garments through the dynamic process of biblical contextualization.

CONCLUSION

This has been a brief examination of some of the basic concerns in modern Christian hermeneutics. We have looked the way in which some of the non-negotiables to which Akamba Christian hermeneutics should submit its allegiance without wavering. More particularly, we have stated our commitment to the authority and historicity of biblical revelation and to Jesus Christ as the primary agenda of all Christian
hermeneutics and Christian theologizing. Also, we have talked about the role of culture in Christian hermeneutics and have emphasized particularly the receptor-oriented approach to hermeneutics. We have contended that appropriate Christian hermeneutics is the result of the Church's disciplined reflection on God's Word as the hermeneutical community.

The key in our whole discussion on Akamba Christian hermeneutics has been the emphasis to take the two horizons seriously, both the horizon of the original biblical context and the horizon of the contemporary hearer or reader. Certainly, these two horizons should be given sufficient balance. However, a concern needs to be expressed here. It is this. While the Church of Christ should respect the place of Christian ethnotheological hermeneutics that takes seriously the two horizons, yet there should be within the global Body of Christ the desire to strive towards a metacultural Christian hermeneutical model that provides the basis for our unity in diversity. In fact, with the modern stress on indigenous Church and autonomy within the myriad of cultures of our world, the question of how to cope with Christian theological diversity may be setting the stage for an international congress on global Christian theologies. But until that day, may God keep his Church nourished and protected by his Spirit through the shelter of his inspired Word.
CHAPTER II
WORLDVIEW AND SOCIETY

INTRODUCTION

A study that is concerned primarily with Christian theologizing within the context of Akamba worldview must of necessity take the concept of worldview very seriously. In the introduction we referred in passing to the concept of worldview and mentioned that Akamba worldview was to provide the structural framework for the study. However, in Chapter I, we purposely set aside our worldview discussion to register the non-negotiable convictions of the Akamba Church as to how she must use God's biblical revelation in her efforts in Christian theologizing. We have gone on to record what we consider to be evangelical Akamba Christian hermeneutics.

Now in this chapter, our main concern is to look at the concept of worldview more closely. Primarily, our goal here is to examine the theoretical basis of the term "worldview" and its place in society. Some leading western
missiologists and theologians, along with some African Christian theologians, affirm the concept's vital place in understanding other cultures. For example, Hesselgrave writes in *Communicating Christ Cross-Culturally* that the worldview of a people must be "taken with utmost seriousness..." (1978:124). While Hiebert states that among the cultural differences found in human societies "...none seem so great or so difficult to bridge as the differences among worldviews" (1976a:363). John Pobee contends that the starting point of Christian theology should be to "discover what that Christ event looks like when seen from within that particular world view" (1979:28). And speaking on the same wave length, Osadolor Imasogie, Principal of the Nigerian Baptist Theological College, argues that a relevant Christian theology in Africa "must include an in-depth study of the African world view" (1983a:22). Others like John Mbiti of Kenya have expressed similar concerns (1978:273ff).

These men, and others as well, have emphasized the need to know a people's worldview not only to understand other cultures but also for the development of relevant Christian theologies. Needless to say, it is the attention given to the concept of worldview that compels us to want to look at it more closely. In doing so we must probe deeper into the meanings anthropologists, missiologists and theologians have in their minds when they use the term. What is the
rationale for attributing to the concept such a vital role? Is understanding a people's worldview really that crucial?

To respond to these questions we are going to undertake a brief discussion in three areas. First, we want to look at the concept of culture and its relationship to worldview. We follow our discussion of culture by responding to the question, "What comprises a people's worldview?" Our response includes a brief historical survey of the development of the term and establishes a theoretical working definition for the concept of worldview. Second, we want to address the question of human universals. In other words, what is it in humans that causes them to need and construct worldviews. It is particularly this matter of universal equipment for worldview construction that leads us to the third area of our discussion, which is devoted to how societies construct worldviews.

Here our consideration is not so much concerned with how one group, say, the Akamba, has constructed its worldview, but rather our main interest is to find out how societies, in general, construct worldviews. (The question of how and what of the Akamba worldview is is the subject of our next two chapters.) Here we look at the factors and forces that are in operation in the construction of worldviews. Building on the hypothesis that worldviews are essentially epistemologies, we are going to use western epistemology as an example of how one dominant society has
constructed its worldview.

The discussions in these three areas and the responses provided by their appropriate questions are by no means exhaustive. However, they provide some central ideas and insights for our study without which the attempts of Akamba Christian theologizing will be impaired.

CULTURE AND WORLDVIEW

Culture is an anthropological concept which is one of the key analytical tools in the discipline of anthropology. In its common usage the word "culture" is "... defined in terms of the behavior patterns of the rich and elite, a meaning derived from the German Kultur. It denotes the proper sophisticated, refined way of acting" (Hiebert 1976a:25). However, the discipline of anthropology has broadened the definition of the term and purged it from value judgments. While there does not exist a consensus among anthropologists as to the appropriate definition of the term (Segal 1984:153), yet most would favor a position that views "... culture as the integrated system of learned patterns of behavior, ideas, and products characteristic of a society" (Hiebert 1976a:25).

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1. Marshal H. Segal, a professor of social psychology in the Maxwell School at Syracuse University, regards the struggle to come up with a universally acceptable definition of culture as unworthy (1984:153-63).
A major part of culture falls under the category of observable behavior. When a person observes and listens to members of a society, he discerns certain observable behavioral patterns. For example, an outside observer among the Akamba will soon discern that Akamba youth do not maintain continual eye contact when talking or conversing with their parents or other adults. Are the youth being rude or is the behavior a sign of respect for the elderly? Also, in greetings, the observer will find too that only the adults are expected and allowed by society to take the initiative in greeting the young with the greeting "Wakya". 

All these aspects of culture fall under observable behavior. It was the late professor of anthropology at Harvard University, Clyde Kluckhohn, who made the distinction between explicit and implicit cultures. He referred to the observable behavior as the explicit aspects of culture while the non-observable dimensions fell under implicit (tacit or hidden) culture. The explicit behavior which our senses observe (perceive) in others is but a manifestation or an externalization of hidden values and meanings inside people's minds. "Cultures then are not material phenomena; they are cognitive organizations of

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2. The term "Wakya" is an Akamba greeting which is primarily used by the elderly in greeting youth and children. It has the equivalence of "How are you"; and "aa" as the response just means "I am fine."
material phenomena" (Tyler 1969:3). From a similar perspective Keesing looks at culture as "a system of ideas" (1958:8). It was Charles Frake who said that, "Culture does not provide a cognitive map, but rather a set of principles for map making and navigation. Different cultures are like different schools of navigation designed to cope with different terrains and seas" (quoted in Spradley 1980:9). However, it is from a psychologically sensitive anthropologist Ronald Rohner who contends that culture should be defined

••• as a "symbolic meaning system." •••

[Or] as the totality of equivalent and complementary learned meanings maintained by a human population, or by identifiable segments of a population, and transmitted from one generation to the next (1984:119-20).

It is the "cognitive organizations of material phenomena" which show human creativity. They reveal man's ability to transcend his biological limitations. Of course, this does not mean animals do not have the capacity to adapt effectively to their environments; however, their modes of adaptation do not manifest the creativity found in humans. For example, the monkeys in Nairobi National Park—like all other monkeys—are instinctively programmed to move by jumping from one branch to the other. Over the years they have not developed better traveling habits, and given the next one hundred years, there is no reason to believe they will. They lack the creative ability to invent, say, cable
cars; hence, they are locked into behavioral modes by the nature of their instinctive constitution.

While human beings have certain similarities with animals, yet they have within their biological make-up the ability to create worlds that best respond to their environment in serving their needs. Every individual human in society has a built-in biological ability to be creative in adapting to his/her environment. And so, culture becomes the corporate construct of people in a given society in order to respond effectively and meaningfully to their own environment. Culture begins as different members in a society think and plan effective ways of adapting, and then through interaction with other members (the socializing process), certain individual or group ideas, habits or plans receive society's approval. Over a period of time, that which began as ideas in individual minds acquire not only corporate acceptance but also become the society's objective reality. The objective reality then becomes the world of the society and becomes structured into explicit institutions. Reflecting on this Peter Berger says,

The humanly produced world becomes something "out there." It consists of objects, both material and non-material that are capable of resisting the desires of their producer. Once produced, this world cannot simply be wished away. Although all culture originates and is rooted in the subjective consciousness of human beings, once formed it cannot be reabsorbed into consciousness at will. It stands outside of the subjectivity of the individual as, indeed, a world. In other words, the humanly produced world
attains the character of objective reality (1967:9).

The quality of objective reality in culture has historical validity by being grounded on the fact that it antedates the biological life of the members of society. Thus, the traditions of all the dead generations form part of this objective reality and weigh heavily on the memory of the living. They look at the traditions as something that existed before their time and certainly will continue after they die. It was Berger and Luckmann who noted that the history of the traditions "of the existing institutions has the character of objectivity" (1966:60). It is this objectivity that makes the members of a society take their social and cultural world seriously.

**Cultural Diversity**

The fact that humans live in a world characterized by cultural diversity is a thesis that needs no argument. So while all humans are made of one blood (Acts 17), yet their interactions with their different environments lead them to construct worlds which are culturally different. Edward Sapir was right when pointed out that, "... people in different cultures do not simply live in the same world with different labels attached, but in different conceptual worlds" (Hiebert 1976b:49). What accounts then for this cultural diversity? A society's explicit world (culture) is built on their conceptual world which is different from
culture to culture. Thomas Kuhn, while discussing such an important subject as perception, pointed out that humans normally perceive what their conceptual world has trained them to see (1962:113). This explains why people from different cultures will have some difficulties in communicating with each other. It is not because they do not like each other but simply because they come from different conceptual worlds. It was Jung who said, "We cannot visualize another world ruled by quite other laws, the reason being that we live in a specific world which has helped to shape our minds and established our basic psychic conditions. . ." (1973:300).

Therefore, it is human reflection within the context of people's different environments that accounts for differences in conceptual worlds and that results in behavioral diversity. An example can be cited here. When President Ronald Reagan of the United States of America made a joke about the Soviets in a radio broadcast. He said, "I just signed legislation that would outlaw Russia forever. We begin bombing in five minutes" (Eaton 1984:6). Such a joke led Soviet authorities to an uproar while the average American hardly took note of the statement. The Soviets said the joke, which they described as "unprecedently hostile to USSR" (Hill 1984), should never have come from the lips of a president. Without undermining the military nature of such a joke, we can say that the whole episode was
but a reflection of the different conceptual worlds of the two nations. Studies done on the processes of perception have demonstrated that peoples' conceptual worlds are different. As pointed out above, what people perceive is very much a function of what they have been trained or have learned to see in the process of growing up. "Each person sees a slightly different world than everyone else, and if the people are from different cultures, the worlds can be very, very different" (Hall 1983:145). Edward Hall is an anthropologist serving as a USA consultant in international relations. His words need to be taken seriously when he advises that human beings cannot, 

... afford the luxury of ignoring the reality of the many different cultural worlds in which humans live. ... As long as human beings and the societies they form continue to recognize only surface culture and avoid the underlying primary culture, nothing but unpredictable explosions and violence can result (1983:8).

Thus culture as the pattern of observable behavior is rooted in the subjective conscience of human beings. In other words, the external behavior in persons has its origin in the governing conceptual world of the inside. It is this hidden conceptual world that we call worldview.

Later we shall be discussing how societies construct worldviews; however, now let us attempt a definition of the concept.
Worldview Definition

Like culture, worldview is a conceptual tool in the discipline of anthropology and philosophy. More specifically, it falls under cognitive anthropology, which is the branch in anthropology that seeks to research the nature of knowledge, meaning and the more conceptual aspects of a culture. The main objective of cognitive anthropologists is to seek to understand the conceptual worlds of various peoples. However, we must agree with Michael Kearney, a key cognitive anthropologist in our day, who has observed that,

"Worldview has occupied an important place in anthropology, but surprisingly no comprehensive model of it has been formulated prior to this effort," which I regard as a preliminary attempt that I hope will engender further work (1984:ix).

In seeking to define the concept of worldview, we begin with the words of Bronislaw Malinowski, a British social anthropologist. He used the term "Weltanschauung" which he described as the natives' "outlook on things, his Weltanschauung, the breath of life and reality which he breathes and by which he lives. Every human culture gives it members a definite vision of the world, a definite zest of life" (1922:517). Over the years, different anthropologists have

3. The effort Michael Kearney is referring to here is his newly published book on the subject of worldview. In the book he attempts to provide a more comprehensive discussion of worldview. For Kearney, worldview is a discipline in its own right.
coined other terms or phrases to describe the nature of a peoples' worldview. The different words used in defining worldview bear witness to the conceptual and historical development of the concept. Luzbetak, a Roman Catholic missiologist, while reviewing some of the pioneering terms, found concepts like "Geist, genius, philosophy of life, mentality, psychology, Weltanschauung and inner logic" (Luzbetak 1970:157). Other terms and phrases used include "unconscious system of meanings" (E. Sapir 1949), "unconscious canons of choice" (C. Kluckhohn 1949), "configurations" (Ruth Benedict 1934), "culture themes" (Opler 1945, 1968). Still another more recently formulated concept is that of "worldview" (Redfield 1953), (Kluckhohn and Strodbeck 1961:1-2). Redfield, whom Kluckhohn referred to here, was an American anthropologist who struggled to come up with a term that described the central cultural core of a people. He defined the cultural core as "the ethos of a people" which is made up of,

... organized conceptions of the Ought. The national character of a people, or its personality type, is the kind of human being which, generally speaking, occurs in that society. The "world view" of a people, yet another of this group of conceptions, is the way a people characteristically look outward upon the universe (Redfield 1953:85).

It must be pointed out that most of these
anthropologists were primarily Boasians\textsuperscript{4} following the American historicists school whose study of cultures was to look for the underlying pattern. Ruth Benedict (a student of Boas) called it, the "cultural configuration." Classical anthropology, and particularly that of the American school, was concerned with discovering the organizational unity in culture. It was less interested in cultural change and diversity, which was typical of the British diachronic structural functionalist school. No wonder, then, the majority of the Boasian anthropologists were groping for a term or a concept that would best describe a society's model of viewing reality.

Today the concept of "worldview" is accepted as that "unconscious system of meaning" which resides at the center of a culture. It is described as being made up of "... the basic assumptions the people have about the nature of reality and of right and wrong. Taken together, they are referred to as the people's worldview" (Hiebert 1976b:49). Thus, a people's worldview is her own mental assumptions of

\begin{itemize}
\item[4.] We should, however, mention that Redfield (1897-1958) was exempt from those of the Boas tradition. While Boas and his students were associated mainly with Columbia University where Professor Boas himself founded the Department of Anthropology, Redfield on the other hand was associated with the University of Chicago and had closer affinities with American sociology and British social anthropology. Indeed, Redfield's theoretical framework reflects that of the British social anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski rather than that of Boas, father of American anthropology.
\end{itemize}
seeing and perceiving reality. A society's mental or cognitive assumptions form the grid through which the experiences of the people are interpreted, analyzed and given meanings. It is what Edward Hall has lately described as,

... an underlying hidden level of culture that is highly patterned—a set of unspoken implicit rules of behavior and thought that controls everything we do. This hidden cultural grammar defines the way people view the world, determines their values and establishes the basic tempo and rhythm of life. Most of us are either totally unaware or else only peripherally aware of this. I call these hidden paradigms of primary level culture (1983:6).

However, it must be pointed out that cognitive organization by an etic cognitive anthropologist will reflect more the conceptual world in his mind than the conceptual world of the people. This is particularly so because humans from different cultural worlds will perceive the same world differently (Tyler 1969:5). Thus, at the strictest level only an emic cognitive anthropologist can provide a more adequate and accurate reflection of his/her people's conceptual world. It is like in individual humans where a person is his/her own best critic. For example, I know more about myself than anyone else except God. Others who know me must describe me from what they have watched in me; hence, primarily outward behavior will dominate the descriptions. If some were to psychoanalyze my personal conceptual (mental) world, they would discover before long
that I am the only one who can provide much of the mental data.

Likewise, the conceptual hidden world of human cultures can best be represented and reflected by an insider. And cognitive analysis by outsiders should be submitted to emic examiners for critique, confirmation and approval. However, it is important to point out that emic worldview definitions or descriptions should not be regarded as containing an exhaustive explanation of a people's conceptual world. This is primarily because as humans, "Our view of reality is an abridged version of the world that has been edited by our language" (Conn 1984:111). It was the anthropological linguist, Edward Sapir who argued that "Human beings do not live in the objective world alone, nor alone in the world of social activity as ordinarily understood, but are very much at the mercy of the particular language which has become the medium of expression for their society" (quoted in Conn 1984:111).

A society's conceptual world, or its worldview, is unconsciously learned through cultural transmission. Edward Hall says that most people are unaware of their conceptual world or their worldview assumptions; hence, they are not only what he calls the "implicit underneath culture of a people" but are the assumptions that are taken for granted and accepted unquestionably as cultural givens. These worldview assumptions fall under the category of what Robert
and Helen Lynd, in their classic studies in *Middletown*, referred to as "of course statements"—statements that the people take for granted to such a degree that if questioned about them they will preface their answer with "of course." These "of course" or taken-for-granted assumptions have been referred to by such descriptions as "non theoretical factors in the creation of our worlds" (philosophical historical scientist Thomas Kuhn 1970) or William Dyrness's "fundamental pre-theoretical orientations called variously faith commitments or presuppositions" (quoted in Conn 1984:327).

An example of an "of course" statement among the Akamba would be the belief in the reality of the spirit-world and spirit-beings. Traditionally, the reality of spirit-beings was a self-evident fact of everyday life. People "met" and "saw" spirit-beings. And so, for independent verification the doubting etic observer need just to check with other Akamba who have seen spirit-beings. Hence, such is a primary test for empirical data. It is such "of course" statements of belief and thought patterns which "provide the individual with . . . his basic reality kit—the cognitive and normative tools for the construction of a coherent universe in which to live" (Berger 1977:xii). The cognitive reality kit which forms a people's worldview does not exist like a detached philosophical garment which a society uses sporadically. But it should rather be viewed, as Wallace suggests, as "the very skeleton of concrete cognitive
assumptions on which the flesh of customary behavior is hung" (1961:143).

The concept of worldview seems to have earned the discipline's credibility as the term that seems most appropriate in expressing that which resides at the center of a culture, although Wallace suggested the term "mazeway" which, he said, refers to "the entire set of cognitive maps of positive and negative goals of self, others and material objects (and of their possible dynamic interrelations in process) which an individual maintains at a given time" (1961:15-16). He also adds that

Mazeway is to the individual what culture is to the group. Just as every group's history is unique, so every human individual's course of experience is unique. Every human brain contains, at a given point of time, as a product of this experience, a unique mental image of a complex system of objects, dynamically interrelated, which includes the body in which the brain is housed, various other surrounding things, and sometimes even the brain itself. This complex mental image is the mazeway. Its content consists of an extremely large number of assemblages, or cognitive residues of perception. It is used, by its holder, as a true and more or less complete representation of the operating characteristics of a "real" world (1961:16).

In other words, Wallace is advocating this term for an individual's mental construct of reality. It is an individual's unique conceptual model of the world around him. However, Wallace did not probe the question of similarities in individual mazeways in order for communities to maintain social order. Hiebert observes that
... it is only when large portions of people's mazeways are similar—when they share the same culture—that social and cultural behavior become possible. Individual creativity and expression are meaningful in a group, only as there is a great deal of common structure within which these can be mutually understood (1976a:443).

It is questionable whether Wallace's concept will eventually replace worldview. From this writer's perspective, Wallace is but introducing another term for an individual's personality. And to individually-oriented societies, the concept may be appropriate, particularly in shedding some light in understanding urban populations. However, in community-village cultures, the emphasis of a person's mazeway will be detrimental to communal solidarity. No wonder the concept was coined by one from a heavily individualistic society; hence the thought processes in a community-oriented people would most likely repel the idea. For them the group in the community is more important than the individual, which also agrees with our primary objective: to know the society's worldview other than individual mazeways. Likewise, the calling of the gospel communicator or the Christian theologian is to contextualize the biblical message within the context of the society's worldview. For the Church of Christ, while it is technically made up of individual believers, it is joined by God's Spirit into one body. The fruit of the Spirit is expressed best within the context of community. It is to the community of faith, to the whole Body of Christ and to
the flock of God that we are called to shepherd and to minister. While we take the individual member seriously, yet priority should be given to the care, health and maturity of the whole Body.

Thus, from a Christian theological perspective, the idea of individual mazeways is not as appropriate except for those individual mazeways which edify the community and as a result earn communal credibility.

Now we would like to move to the second area of our discussion in this chapter, and that is examining the question of human universals.

**HUMAN UNIVERSALS**

In our discussion of human universals, we are responding to questions such as, "What is it in humans that causes them to construct worldviews?" Or "Are there human universals that provide the framework for worldview theory?" And also, "What would be the contents of such a meta-model?" More specifically, our discussion is concerned with what societies are universally equipped with for their construction of models of reality. Thus, in this chapter we aim to expose what Michael Kearney calls the necessary aspects of any human worldview or the "universal . . . assumptions which are part of any world view . . ." or worldview universals (1984:10,37). In other words, we are investigating the universal abstract or conceptual
components of human culture. It was Sebeok who said,

... any two cultures are seen as superficially different representations of one abstract structure, namely, of human culture; ... The search for universals thus once again turns out to be a search for the "psychic unity of mankind," that mankind, that is, for the fundamental laws which govern human behavior (Sebeok 1968:4).

The question of worldview universals is not a new development in contemporary cognitive anthropology. Rohner traces the investigation back to Tylor (1871) when he wrote about the "psychic unity of man," and to Morgan (1877) who spoke of "germ ideas," to Bastian (1895) who wrote of universal "elementary ideas," to Wissler (1926) who spoke of "universal culture pattern," to Malinowski (1944) who talked of "universal institutional types" and of "universal needs," to Murdock (1945) who spoke of the "common denominators of culture," to Kluckhohn (1953) of "universal categories of culture," to Keesing (1972) who wrote of a "universal culture design" and to Rohner who talked of the "context free and context dependent universals" (1984:126). In the early 1950s Redfield, an American anthropologist (referred to above), wrestled with the question of

How do a people characteristically look outward upon the universe? His aim was to be able to make comparative statements about different world views, and so in order to do this he set about identifying their common features (Kearney 1984:37).

Others who have undertaken the investigation of underlying universal categories of human thought include Claude
Levi-Strauss, a French anthropologist, Jean Piaget, a Swiss psychologist, and now Kearney, an American cognitive anthropologist whose views reflect (like Redfield) those of the British social anthropological school.

My examination of worldview universals draws much from Kearney's theoretical basis in which he identifies seven universal human categories of thought. His book entitled *Worldview* is devoted to the examination of worldview theory. For Kearney, worldview universals include the notions of self, other, relationship, classification, causality, space and time. However, he admits that the worldview universals of his choice are not the only valid ones. It should indeed be pointed out that those who have undertaken to examine worldview as a discipline in its own right, other than a branch in cognitive anthropology, do admit that there exists an "unavoidable relativism inherent in the selection of the world-view universals" (Kearney 1984:207). That is, how does any cognitive anthropologist select worldview universals given the fact that there are no culture-free methods of analysis?

It is the recognition of this "unavoidable relativism" that has led anthropologists like Kearney to assert that "Any attempt at world-view study can utilize only categories that are historically available to it at the time of analysis" (1984:207-208). Even after a cognitive anthropologist has done what is suggested above, he should
also admit to the cultural conditioning of his choices.

I think this is what Kearney is doing when he admits that the worldview universals in his study are "certainly artifacts of the Western intellectual tradition" (1984:208). Not only are they epistemological expressions of western intellectual tradition, but they are consistent with genetic psychology (a branch in western epistemology) which tends to build heavily on the interactionist approaches. In other words, anyone reading Kearney cannot fail to see that he is primarily an advocate of the epistemological assumptions of historical materialism. In this sense, he is different from classical American anthropologists who, as pointed out earlier, were more synchronic in their approaches.

We recognize this unavoidable relativism inherent in the selection of worldview universals. As an African I am grappling with the same question of "underlying universal human categories of thought." This relativism therefore allows me to propose the figure of universal worldview container as a theoretical (yet pragmatic) concept of expressing different notions of worldview universals. For me the figure of "container" is a neutral "culture-free" concept which provides the objectivity needed of universal worldview category. Too, we propose that while worldview "containers" are universal, it is the content in the "container" supplied independently by each culture that accounts for worldview and cultural diversity. More on this
We shall, therefore, examine briefly seven of these worldview universal containers. These include the containers of causality, cognition, meaning, relationship, classification, space and time.

Before we examine each of these rather conceptual categories of worldview universals, we need to reaffirm the biological oneness of human beings. Earlier in this century (the 1920s), anthropologists and scientists advocated phenotypic differences in humans. In order to justify the dominant ideologies and practices of their day (colonial, slavery), earlier anthropologists argued for a polygenesis origin of man. Those whose physical appearances were non-European were described as savages, primitives with a lower genetic structure than the European civilized peoples. In other words, the primitive savages were the illogical species of mankind due to an innate, supposedly

5. Differences based wholly on similarities in appearances where such similarity is by no means proof of underlying genetic equivalence (Kluckhohn 1949:107).

6. The debates on the origin of the human species have been divided between monogenesis vs. polygenesis. Thomas Aquinas argued for the monogenesis position saying all people have come from the same source (one parent). Thus, while surface differences exist, yet deep down we are all the same. However, some of the key western philosophers were polygenists, e.g. Locke, Hume, Hegel. These argued that man comes from different species. And so as pointed out in Chapter V, earlier anthropologists, and sometimes missionaries, could not escape being victim of ideologies of the leading philosophers of their day.
inferior and lower genetic structure. For example, anthropological scientists observed Negroids' skin, hair, nose, lips and head sizes and concluded that they were closer to apes (Kluckhohn 1949:118-19; Curtin 1981:56-57). Little did they realize that to use, say, head sizes--like long head, oval head, and round head--to describe a racial group is a scientific impossibility. And so, later western scientists found that humans are found with all kinds of heads across mankind and had to conclude that there is no scientific model for determining the Caucasoids, Mongoloids, Negroids and others. Therefore, human racial categories are cultural and not biological.

What has this to do with our examination of worldview universals? We primarily reaffirm the biological oneness of the human species, because the pseudo-scientific claims of evolutionary ideologies have influenced our views about the nature of man, probably deeper than we are willing to admit. For example, a few weeks ago while watching t.v. news, the announcer reported about a white lady who said, "Black people in the U.S.A. lack the intellectual capacity to vote." If nothing else is depicted by such a statement, it reflects the unfortunate belief of some whites that blacks have not yet reached the top "human" rank in the evolutionary ladder. The present white minority rule of South Africa bears witness to the same pseudo-scientific claims. Thus, to reaffirm the biological equality of the
human species is not necessarily a retreat into anachronism.

Of course, we must mention that as Bible-believing Christians we do not accept the sociological equality of all humans because of some claims from human scientific research; our basis is God's scriptural revelation. The Bible declares very categorically that God "hath made of one blood all nations of men" ( Acts 17:26 KJV). What this means is that all living peoples, regardless of their level of technological development or their social organization and customs, possess innate human qualities and potentials endowed unto them from our common Creator God. Thus, the racial categories of our world are not determined by biology but by society. And so in our studies on worldview, and especially in the different ways members of a society perform cognitive tasks, we argue that the diversity reflects cultural/environmental differences and not biological. Hence all humans share the same genetical makeup.

We now turn to investigate the nature of man's theoretical make-up or what we are calling human worldview universals. We begin with causality as the first of the suggested seven worldview universal containers.

Causality

The notion of causality exists in all societies. It is almost impossible to conceive of a people who do not have
any ideas or beliefs about how they and the world they see came into being. Too, each society has its own way of explaining causality. For example, the Akamba have their own way of explaining the cause of sickness, death and accidents which will differ from the way Americans will explain similar experiences. While the Akamba would include the role of spirits and the gods in their explanations, the American would tend to be more mechanical in their explanation. Probably this is why Jean Piaget's psychological study on causal thinking among children of different cultures led him to speak of different "contents" of causality amongst which he named animistic and mechanical causality (1969:262). Thus, the container of causality is a worldview universal, but the contents of the container are supplied by each society from its own worldview assumptions. Christian theologians doing theological reflection among people with Hindu background will certainly give more attention to the question of causality. However, among Akamba the question is not a prominently vital one, and so we shall now move on and discuss the nature of human cognition.

**Human Cognition**

Cognition is basically concerned with how the mind works. The question here is whether human minds or human thought processes work in the same way. In other words, is
the container of cognition, like that of causality, a human universal? Are mental processes the same in all humans or is there genetic variation in human cognition? It was evolutionary theories that were mainly responsible for the pseudo-scientific claims of biological and racial differences in humans. Kluckhohn says there were fantasies without scientific warrant (1949:120). However, today the biological oneness of the human species is an unquestioned fact. The debate is now on the universality of human cognition or human thought processes. The Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget was among the first to pioneer studies in human thought processes. He conducted clinical studies on thought structures of children in different cultures. In his search for the universality of human cognition he identified "seventeen principles of causality that appear to be implicit in the reasoning of children of various ages" (Kearney 1984:85). According to Piaget's developmental psychology, a child's mental development shows itself in the formation of a greater degree of objectivity in which the fragments (or adherences) which forces the child to "cling to the external world" (Piaget 1930:244) drop away in the "general process of evolution which leads the child from a dynamic to a mechanical view . . ." (Piaget 1930:246).

Piaget's universal claim that a child's mental development shows itself as the child reflects greater
degrees of objectivity in which the child grows from a
dynamic to a mechanical view must await later comment.

We turn our attention to the French anthropologist,
Levi-Strauss (1963, 1966) who explicitly denies that there
are lower and higher levels of mental development. He
devoted his life to structuralism, and just as evolutionary
theories played a significant role in the development of
theory of biological human differences, structuralism in the
humanities has greatly contributed to the search for the
common mental principles underlying human cultural
diversity. Levi-Strauss maintains that "... there are no
differences in how the mind works from one culture to
another or from one historical epoch to another" (Cole and
Scribner 1974:26). For Levi-Strauss, all peoples' cognitive
processes seek equally to understand the universe and how to
best adapt it to their own environments. The differences in
human cultures do not, therefore, lie on the cognitive
processes but on the material for those cognitive
processes. Paul Hiebert talks about "biological processes
underlying perception and thought" as similarities which
serve as "a kind of human common denominator" (1976a:366).
However, Hiebert observes that while we hold to the reality
of philosophical or cognitive principles underlying all
human thought, yet we must admit that to date we don't know
how to discover those universal principles.

While the universality of common cognitive processes
cannot be scientifically proven or falsified beyond doubt, yet the reality of their existence cannot be denied, as different cognitive anthropologists have already affirmed (Piaget, Levi-Strauss, Hiebert). From a communications perspective, it can also be argued that for communication to take place between and amongst humans of different cultures (not species!), there must be in man's intrinsic make-up underlying universal fibers in human cognition. Along a similar wavelength, it must be pointed out that the universality of human cognition (i.e. human ability to think or to have thought or mental intellectual processes) must be distinguished from cognitive structures or cognitive competence. Cognitive processes fall into the category of human universals. In other words, it is a way of affirming that all humans are capable of thinking: that is, carrying on in their minds a mental process. Thus, cognition is, itself, a universal category in human thought. To use our terms, it is a universal worldview container. Therefore, the difference in worldviews are not in human cognition as a container but in the content of cognition.

For example, Jean Piaget, who refers to himself as a genetic epistemologist, makes tremendous contribution to the nature of mental processes (cognitive processes). However, he did not distinguish (at least for this writer) between cognition (thought) as a human universal and cognitive performances which are culturally defined. One of the key
criticisms raised against Piaget's universal claims of human cognition is whether "... Piaget's theory does in fact identify universal thought structures or whether it simply builds a universal theory out of an examination of the logical structures of Western thought" (Cole and Scribner 1974:29). In other words, is Piaget's analysis perhaps culture-bound and only representative of a "French Swiss world view as manifested in the children who were Piaget's experimental subjects" (Kearney 1984:87).

It is obvious that the tasks used in Piagetian clinical tests on human intelligence in children were based on culture-bound presuppositions; hence, there are no culture-free presuppositions. However, we must point out that there is nothing wrong with culture-bound presuppositions. Their inadequacy comes when we attribute to them universal credibility. For example, when Piaget said that egocentrism is a universal characteristic in the cognitive development of all children, he is attributing universal credibility to his culture-bound model of thought analysis. Studies done by P. M. Greenfield and J. Bruner show, for example, that,

... Eskimo children don't exhibit egocentrism and have concluded that this characteristic is not universal, but rather dependent upon cultural conditions and values. Eskimo society, they point out, emphasizes collective group values whereas the more capitalist system like the U.S. emphasizes the individual" (Bensley 1982:157).
And so while the sketchy studies done on worldview do point to the existence of human cognition as a worldview universal, yet we must admit as to the absence of a meta-cognitive criteria of human thought processes. Jean Piaget's criteria is western. It is supported by western-designed psychological tests which represent the western understanding of human intelligence. The best Piaget tests can do is to test cultural differences in cognitive performances between western and non-western cultures. They cannot test universal cognitive processes. Western definitions of intelligence are not universal. Also, there is nothing in the western scientific view of the world that makes it offer for mankind a truer picture of reality than other worldviews. This is why it would be unwise to judge, say, Akamba cognitive competence by the use of western-made intelligent tests.

For example, if we test Akamba children on what westerners have come to define as the signs of a mentally developed child at a given stage of cognitive development, they cannot be expected to pass the test, and their failure cannot be interpreted as lack of cognitive competence. Likewise, their passing the tests is not a sign of cognitive competence but reflection of western/modern acculturation.

Tests for cognitive development for any people must be based on their cognitive needs, requirements and tasks relevant to that given cultural context. Thus, while the
container of cognition itself (the capacity to think and analyze) is a human universal, yet the content or material of cognition is supplied to humans by their worldview assumptions as their minds interact with the environment within their own socio-cultural historical context. It is the content of thought—as Levi-Strauss calls it, "the material used for thought"—that accounts for difference in worldviews and cultural diversity among peoples. And so just as we had to reaffirm the universal biological equality of all humans, we likewise must affirm the universality of human cognition.

**Meaning**

Above we have examined causality and human cognition as worldview universals. We now focus our attention on the need for meaning as a human universal. It is important to be reminded that worldview universals are like conceptual tools which every society uses to construct an explanation of reality that fits her environment. It is probably the need for meaning that offers the most basic rationale for the construction of explanation systems. Paul Hiebert, a missionary anthropologist states that,

... people are concerned with meaning. Unlike animals, they are not content simply to live. They spend a great deal of their effort in trying to understand and explain life. They construct explanatory systems such as religions, sciences and philosophies that provide this meaning (1976c:80-81).
Here the understanding is that beyond the universal biological needs of humans is a universal need for the meaning of human life that transcends the need for food and shelter. Each society desires to make sense of life and the world around it. It was Aristotle, the Greek philosopher, who said that "all men by nature desire to understand." Humans everywhere seek for meaning, and as Kearney says,

... all people need to understand not only the world as matter existing in space and time, but equally important, they need to understand one another. These common understandings evolve day-to-day through generations, adapting to and shaping ... their social and physical environment (1984:66-67).

Thus, the need for meaning is not something at the periphery but at the core of what it means to be human. It is a deep and essential dimension within the human psyche, whether we talk of the sophisticated habitat of Los Angeles city, or Nairobi or even the nomadic Turkana of northern Kenya. All humans desire to have meaning for life and the world(s) around them. Therefore, it is out of this universal human need for meaning which is deeply embedded in the psyche that humans are caused to construct explanation systems or worldviews.

The primary purpose is essentially to construct some model of reality out of which meanings of life could be assigned and organized. Such explanations of reality are imperative in order for any given people to adapt successfully and meaningfully to the changing demands of
their environment. Thus, Bensley, reflecting on a similar conviction, suggested that to deny the need to construct a model that offers some form of meaning is in essence "to deny part at least of what it means to be human" (1982:59). Therefore, the desire to make sense of one's life, of other's lives or of the environment is part and parcel of what it means to be human. Man's need for meaning is a human universal, and the quest for economic survival alone cannot account for a society's need to construct a meaningful explanation system for her existence and the world. And so, while the container of meaning itself is a human universal, the content is supplied to humans by their worldview assumptions as their minds interact with the environment within their own socio-cultural, historical and geographical context.

Relationship

The universal worldview containers of causality, cognition and meaning do not exist as independent islands in a society. They interact with each other. Likewise, individuals in society do not live as independent islands but interact and relate with each other. It was Kearney who referred to the relationship between "... Self and Other ... [as] the primary poles of a world view" proposing that "The world (universe) consists of two dynamically interrelated parts--the Self and the Other" (1984:63). For
Kearney the categories or containers of "self and other" are the fundamental human universals. From a western perspective he looks at "self" as a fixed entity that acts upon the "other" (1984:153); and so relationship in his basic theoretical orientation is between "self and other," both of which are perceived as independent and primarily opposing entities.

Kearney's understanding of relationship reflects the individualistic and dualistic orientations typical of western epistemology, in which diagnosis of reality is done best by isolation, dichotomization and compartmentalization. To be dualistic is as natural to the westerner as the spirits are to the African. Anthropologist Edward Hall refers to duality as

7. nothing more or less than the way in which AE cultures categorize virtually everything. . . . duality is, as Einstein put it, something which one "imbibes with one's mother's milk." . . . duality comes naturally if one is an American of North European heritage and that it will be less natural for him or her to look for multiple causes than for people brought up in cultures that take a pluralistic view (1983:124).

It is, therefore, out of this dualistic orientation that Kearney looks at the relationship between the independent "self" and "other" as being the primarily poles of worldview. Probably it is here where the cultural

7. AE is Hall's way of referring to American-European cultures.
conditioning of the selection of worldview universals shows best. Certainly there are many societies which do not look at reality from the vantage point of self. However, Kearney is fully excused for what he has done, since at the moment we do not have a well-proven cross-cultural criteria (a meta-cultural criteria) for judging that which constitutes worldview universals. Most likely this is what Hiebert has in mind when he says that while we hold to the reality of philosophical principles underlying all human thought yet we must admit that to date we don't know how to discover these principles (1983a:366).

However, we contend that the notion of relationship as a worldview universal is based on the assumption that humans in their particular social and geographic environments must of necessity learn to relate with each other. As the members of society relate to one another and to the environment, they develop certain perceptions about what life is all about. It is these perceptions and assumptions which combine to reflect a society's best notions of reality or worldview. "This worldview in turn becomes the basis for socially and physically relating . . ." (Kearney 1984:121).

Thus humans must interact and relate with each other and with their environment. It is accepting the necessity for the need of human relationship that translates the assumption to a worldview universal. It joins causality,
cognition and meaning as a universal worldview container. Then as seen above, the content in or for the container is supplied by humans from their worldview assumptions as their minds interact with the environment within their own socio-cultural historical contexts. The example of Kearney's understanding of "self and other" is a case in point.

For African cultures the question is not so much how "self" relates to the "other," but rather self in most of Africa is seen more as part of the other. Most likely, Lowery-Palmer is making reference to such unity when he talks about Yoruba creation myths. He observed that,

To the Yoruba while particular persons (or entities) appear outwardly different behind surface appearances they are only manifestations of an underlying power which unites all creation. As in the Yoruba image of self-other, in which the self is completely identified in an undifferentiated way with the group so is person/not person is not qualitatively different from all life, it is a visible aspect of the underlying process of interactions and interdependence of all living systems. Living beings--man, plants, animals, spirits are viewed as a continuum of beings differing only in amounts of power (Lowery-Palmer 1980:84).

What Lowery-Palmer says about the Yoruba I suspect is reflective of many African cultures. For example, among the Akamba it would be appropriate to refer to relationships not in terms of "self and other" but rather as "self in society or even self in nature." They both share a sense of kinship and are, therefore, both interdependent and interrelate with
each other. Akamba view of "self" differs categorically with American view of self, which Kearney describes as "the Self . . . [that] seeks not only mastery over its body and mind, but over all other aspects of the Other, . . ." and is epitomized in such phrases as "the struggle against nature" (1984:153). It is more than obvious that the "self" in American-European cultures is concerned with control, primarily because the self is perceived as distinct from the other "and therefore able to act on it" (Kearney 1984:153). With this outlook, the dominant relationship becomes one of master and servant rather other than each serving and interdepending with each other.

Traditional Akamba portray an obvious attitude of humility and respect toward nature and society. The thought of an interdependence relationship with nature in which we are at peace with all is central in Akamba concept of reality (see Chapter IV). To a Mukamba it is unfriendly to be aggressive toward reality. Indeed, Akamba worldview assumptions warn us against being aggressive toward nature, toward reality either in desiring to control or exploit it. Therefore, to traditional Mukamba his relationship with nature is one of intimacy and mutual interdependance. These traditional worldview assumptions provide the much-needed bricks for the construction of a Christian ecological theology.

And so while the notion of relationship is a universal
worldview container, yet the contents of that container are supplied by humans from their worldview assumptions as their minds interact with the environment within their own socio-cultural, historical context.

Classification

It was Kearney who said that, "The study of world view is to a great extent the analysis of the major categories of reality recognized by a people and the criteria by which they group the contents of these categories together" (1984:78). In other words, it is an attempt to understand how different societies classify reality into categories. In the West there are those who advocate that the ability to classify reality originates from "an innate capacity of the mind" while others say it is "acquired from the outside world" (Kearney 1984:78). These two possible origins reflect rationalism and empiricism which, as we shall see later, are the dominant western epistemological predispositions. However, there is a third option which regards the origin of the ability to classify as arising out of the mind's interaction with the external world. To this writer, this third assumption seems to be the most convincing. In other words, as the human mind interacts with the external world, it responds by classifying human experience into some kind of order. Thus, the assumption of classification as a human universal appears to spring from the human need for order
and identification. Humans cannot afford to live in chaos. Reflecting on the human need for order, Gombrich says that without some order,

\[\ldots\text{some initial schema, we could never get hold of the flux of experiences. Without categories, we could not sort our impressions. Paradoxically, it has turned out that it matters relatively little what these first categories are (1969:88).}\]

The ability to classify reality (or nature and human experience) into domains and categories is not cultural but is part and parcel of what it means to be human. It has sometimes been argued that the critical and systematic attitude of mind is specifically western and that it is intrinsically different from the African mentality which is essentially concrete, intuitive and symbolic. But to this writer, such arguments have no epistemological validity whatsoever. If they had any, it would be but an expressive tenet in western dualistic (dichotomistic) epistemology. This is probably why a well-known African theologian and thinker, reflecting on similar arguments, finds it necessary to state that "\ldots a critical and systematic altitude of mind is a universal human phenomenon based on the very nature of the human intellect. \ldots In fact such an attitude is due to the logical capacity of our intellect" (Nyamiti 1971:9).

Above we talked about the container of relationship as a human universal. We pointed out that among Akamba
worldview it is more appropriate to talk of the wholistic interdependent nature of "self and other." Hence, self is not perceived as distinct from "other." However, we should not over-emphasize that the Akamba (Africans) are so wholistic in their cognition that the ability to classify and categorize reality is alien to their mind. In fact, I am not so sure whether it has been proven beyond doubt that the ability and need to make boundaries, compartmentalize or segmentalize, is primarily of western creation. It seems most reasonable to regard the conceptual ability to group reality into classifications as a human worldview universal. Therefore, following our figure of container-content model, we propose classification as a universal human container. However, the content in the container is culturally determined.

The contents of any worldview universal accounts for the difference found in worldviews. This has to be so, particularly because the contents are shaped within the socio-cultural, historical context as humans seek effective ways to interact and adapt meaningfully to their environments. Too, a society's epistemological presuppositions influence her classification of order. For example, the contents of classification as a worldview universal may include assumptions on what Kearney calls common domains such as "real" and "unreal," "natural" and "unnatural" (1984:81-82). Kearney's cross-cutting dichotomies are not
universal "common domains." As pointed out earlier, they reflect the dualistic orientation typical of western epistemology. Thus, it is not epistemologically unwestern for Kearney to state that, "Within a cognitively differentiated universe the most fundamental classification categories are Self and Other . . ." (1984:80).

However, among the Akamba it is likely to find natural and supernatural phenomena as components of human experiences in this world; hence to them the category of humanity transcends the physical world. And the order in which each society classifies categories of reality is determined by what the society's worldview assumptions regard as real. Therefore, the classificatory ability as a society's ordering system is a worldview human universal, and as indicated above, it primarily springs from human need for order. Thus, while the order each society places on reality will differ from culture to culture, yet the ordering-classifying ability is universal for all humans.

**Space-Time**

The complex nature of the notions of space and time has down through the generations baffled philosophers, theologians and even modern-day physicists. It was probably Augustine's famed cry as he wrestled with the definition of time that provides us with a glimpse of the nature of the problem. "What then is time? I know what it is if no one
asks me what it is; but if I want to explain it to someone who has asked me, I find that I do not know" (quoted in Sherover 1975:35).

It is outside our present purpose to devote much attention to the notions of space and time. However, in order to establish their universality we must offer some brief examination of each one. Let us look first at the notion of space. The term "space" "is used to refer to many different concepts ranging from an easily measurable space to more metaphorical usage such as psychological life and mathematical space" (Downs and Stea 1973:5). However, when dealing with a people's assumptions of space from the standpoint of worldview, we are concerned with the relationship between their spatial images and their concrete environmental or physical space. For example, we can observe how people utilize their physical space when talking to each other or in settlement patterns, in house construction, arrangement of tools or furniture in a house and in dances. The way a particular people does any of the above portrays the diversity of concepts of space. For example, Edward Hall talks of how people in the U.S.A. use physical distance to communicate social distance.

In casual situations they feel free, even obliged, to speak to persons within about twelve feet of themselves; therefore, they readily introduce themselves to strangers next to them in buses and planes. On the other hand, people outside this "social zone" can be ignored as if
Among traditional Akamba, environmental space is extremely important. Indeed, space, place, land and cosmogony are all linked together. Traditionally, a person's home village provided for his future burial place regardless of where the death occurred. Today when a Mukamba dies in the city, the body must be transported for burial at the deceased's home village, thus affirming the importance of place/space among Akamba culture.

In comparison to space, time is a more complex and abstract concept. Kearney sees the major difference as being "... due to the fact that whereas perception of spatial relations is dependent upon immediately sensed information (object location, body position, motion), time as a percept is not so directly tied to objects" (1984:94). A cross-cultural study done by Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (1961) on the perceptions of time which different cultures possess has shown that various cultures implicitly consider one area of time—the past, the present or the future—more important than the other two. For example, westerners are primarily future-oriented, although some economists say the recent decline of American habits of saving money indicates that they are becoming less future-oriented and more present-oriented. People with a future orientation will take seriously such things as savings, investments, future schedules and appointments. But aspects such as history and
tradition are given shallow attention.

Kearney argues that it was the Puritans who gave western Europe its future orientation, while the factory owners and managers of early industrial capitalization were the ones responsible for mediating the transformation of time into a commodity\(^8\) by buying labor in units of days, hours and minutes (1984:103). Later a president of a capitalist society, Benjamin Franklin, would express this commoditious notion of time by saying that time is money: it can be bought, spent, saved and wasted. Of course, this view of time can no longer be confined to the western world; hence, through industrialization it has become the language of modern man.

However, for societies that are still past-oriented, modern man's view of time is not taken very seriously. For example, like the Chinese, the Akamba of Kenya are traditionally a past-oriented people. So when John Fairbank refers to the Chinese past as their "model for the present and the primary source of information on human society . . ." (quoted in Kearney 1984:97), he is echoing a presupposition which is so dear to traditional Akamba

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8. The understanding is that in the middle ages European clocks did not have minute hands and people were less concerned with organizing their affairs so accurately. However, around 1345 A.D. hours were commonly divided into sixty minutes and minutes into sixty seconds. Thus, time began to be viewed as a commodity.
people. To traditional Akamba the past is but a "master" of the present. Life's meaning is found not in the present but in the past. History and tradition are taken seriously.

Besides societies being more or less inclined to a past, present and future orientation, they also possess, although mostly implicitly, contrasting images of time. For example, for most western cultures the linear image of time is dominant and agrees with their future orientation. The other contrasting view of time is what has been referred to by some as oscillating images of time. It has frequently been referred to as a cyclical sense of time, although according to a British anthropologist, E. R. Leach, "a zig-zag image is more appropriate" (1966:125). From a worldview perspective we can say that these contrasting images of time are but different contents of the notion of time as a human universal worldview container. Thus, while the orientations and images of time and space will differ from culture to culture, yet the notions of time-space themselves are worldview universals.

We have examined what we have called seven universal worldview containers. These have included causality, cognition, meaning, relationship, classification, time and space. Our primary purpose of examining worldview universals was to investigate the conceptual tools with which societies are commonly equipped for constructing worldviews. And so, we turn now to our last main area of
discussion in this chapter and examine how societies construct worldviews.

**SOCIAL WORLDVIEW CONSTRUCTION**

As pointed out earlier, studies on worldview fall under the sub-discipline of cognitive anthropology. This young discipline, however, has not yet established formal scientific cognitive processes as to how individuals or societies construct worldviews. Questions as to whether a society has one worldview that caters to the needs of the different domains such as religion and politics or whether each domain in society functions under its own worldview model, still remains unanswered.

However, the absence of a universally developed cognitive theory on worldview construction does not mean that no studies have been done on the subject. Cognitive anthropologists have carried out extensive research in their attempts to understand the organizing principles underlying human behavior (Goodenough 1957). Primarily the question is not one of whether humans construct models of reality but of how they construct them. However, as we begin exploring the processes involved in constructing societal models of reality, it is imperative that we elaborate briefly at this juncture on what we mean by the concept of reality and its relationship to worldview.

When anthropologists say that each society has its own
unique way of viewing or perceiving reality, they mean at least four things. First, they mean that each society's view of reality includes its own assumptions on what it perceives to exist. Such existential assumptions (or postulates) can be described as a society's assertions on that which exists in the immediate environment or in the universe in general. In other words, a society's existential postulates are responses to the question of "what is." For example, the unquestioned belief in the existence of God (Mulungu) is an Akamba existential assumption and therefore forms part of their worldview central postulates.

Second, a society's view of reality includes ontological assumptions which have to do with the nature of that which the society acknowledges or believes to exist. Thus, ontological assumptions have more to do with the essential nature of the objects of existence. An example of the Akamba ontological assumption of reality is their belief in the spiritual bodies of their departed ancestors.

Third, a society's worldview includes teleological postulates which have to do with a people's perception of how the things perceived to exist interact with each other. And the fourth assumption is what has been referred to as normative postulates. Normative assumptions form the society's "taken-for-granted" hidden codes of conduct. In other words, normative postulates seek to spell out the
nature of normative behavior that follows as a consequence of the society's views of reality. For example, the explicit values (moral, social, attitudinal and others) exhibited by a society can all be traced back to some implicit worldview normative assumptions.

Therefore, when we talk about a society's view of reality we have in mind its existential, ontological, teleological and normative assumptions. All these form, as we pointed out earlier, the "of-course statements," the unquestioned beliefs and the taken-for-granted normative codes of the people. Most of these assumptions are implicit, and as Berger (1977) points out, most members of the society may be only vaguely aware of them, if at all. How then are these views of reality developed in the minds of people? In exploring the factors involved in the construction of a society's worldview, we begin by pointing out that when we talk about worldviews we are basically talking about "idea systems" or knowledge systems or, as Tyler calls them, "cognitive organizations" (1969:3). It is the ideas in the people's minds that make up their mental structures or their mental models of reality. In this sense then a people's worldview becomes the ideas or the conceptualizations that house the society's assumptions of reality. In other words, it is the society's conceptual assumptions of its own models of reality. Therefore, it appears that we cannot talk about worldview without bringing
into the discussion terms like "perception," "conceptualization," "cognition," "idea systems" and other similar expressions which are all related to knowledge.

What then does this tell us? Such terms as mentioned above point out that the concept of worldview occupies a vital place not only in anthropology but also in psychology, philosophy and epistemology. Kearney also states that, "Since a world view is knowledge about the world, what we are talking about here is epistemology, the theory of knowledge" (1984:10). Expressing similar concerns is Bensley when he states, "... epistemological questions are not only relevant, (but as I would want to suggest) central to any discussion of what world views are and how they are formed" (1982:26). It is therefore out of this conviction that our discussion on worldview construction forces us to raise certain epistemological questions. For example, if a society's worldview is made up of ideas or conceptualizations that house a people's assumptions of reality (truth), then are we not talking about epistemology? And as such, are cultural worldviews not essentially epistemologies?

We cannot afford ourselves the luxury of entering into
the current epistemological debates without doing injustice to the objectives of our study. However, we must address—although briefly—how cultures construct their epistemologies or knowledge systems. It is impossible within our objective to look at how many different cultures have developed their worldviews, and so we are going to use western culture as our main case study in analyzing how one dominant society has constructed her worldviews. Such an approach is primarily helpful not only because of the influence western knowledge systems have had on African education and culture, but as pointed out above, the ineffectiveness of traditional Christian theology in Africa is primarily blamed on the inability of the western worldview (out of which traditional orthodox Christian theology was constructed) to penetrate the African worldview. A notable contemporary African theologian, Imasogie of Nigeria, has the following to say:

... traditional Christian theology has been ineffective in Africa because it is conditioned by a quasi-scientific world view which blinds it to, and thereby makes it unresponsive to, the reality

9. The epistemological revolution taking place in the sciences paints a picture of uncertainty in western epistemological paradigms. Kuhn's analysis in his landmark examination on western intellectual history, The Structure of Scientific Revolutions and Morris Kline's study in Mathematics; The Loss of Certainty, denying the once-held infallibility of mathematical reasoning may indeed be preparing the west (if not the world) for an epistemological paradigm shift!

It is therefore imperative that we understand the basic tenets or the epistemological constitution of western worldview(s) in this chapter. And so we turn now to examine--although briefly--the conceptualization which house western assumptions of reality.

**Birth of Empiricism in Western Epistemology**

Based on the assumption that a society's worldview is made up of ideas or conceptualizations that house a people's assumptions of reality, we begin our discussion by the questions, "Where do ideas come from? What is the origin of ideas?"

The history of ideas shows us that since time immemorial many philosophers have arisen and argued that either ideas results from the mind's interaction with the environment or they are innate in the human mind. We shall discuss first the position that argues for the mind's interaction with environment as the origin of ideas. The central thesis in the argument is that the external or environmental stimuli have much to do with the construction of idea systems in people's minds. In other words, the environment is vitally instrumental in the development of the culture's ways of knowing or epistemological systems.

The embryonic thinking on this was done by Aristotle (384-322 B.C.), a Greek-born student of Plato who believed
that "ideas existed only as they were expressed in individual objects" (Brown 1968:16). Plato, whom we shall be referring to later, taught that the world of our senses was but a world of shadows. His goal was to explain reality ideologically. However, his student Aristotle sought to modify his teacher's idealism by laying more emphasis on the importance of observation. His goal was to explain reality not in the form of ideas like Plato but in the form of cause and effect. Epicureaus (342-270 B.C.), who followed Aristotle, argued that we have no knowledge of anything except that which comes via the senses. To him the senses provided man's sole criteria of truth. These approaches to epistemology were central in classical Greek philosophy.

However, while there were key epistemologists who made amazing contributions during the medieval period, men like Anselm (1033-1109 A.D.) and Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274 A.D.), it was the Aristotelian emphasis on objectivity that laid the basis for empiricism in the 17th century. The empiricists contended that experience through the senses proves reality. John Locke (1632-1704) was a medical student in the university of Oxford who, instead of practicing medicine, devoted his life to theorizing on empiricism. He also wrote to refute Plato and other pre-1600 A.D. Platonian thinkers, like Descartes, who claimed that certain basic features of knowledge were innate in the human mind. Locke denied innate knowledge in humans and talked of the human
mind as being a clean slate which gets knowledge via the 
senses. Writing on the origin of ideas in his famous Essay
on the Human Understanding, John Locke explained his thesis
in the following way:

Let us then suppose the mind to be, as we
say, white paper, void of all characters, without
any ideas; how comes it to be furnished? Whence
comes it by that vast store which the busy and
boundless fancy of man has painted on it, with an
almost endless variety? Whence has it all the
materials of reason and knowledge? To this I
answer in one word, from experience; in that all
our knowledge is founded, and from that it
ultimately derives itself. Our observation
employed either about external sensible objects,
or about the internal operations of our minds,
perceived and reflected on by ourselves, is that
which supplies our understandings with all
materials of thinking. These two are the
fountains of knowledge, from whence all ideas we
have, or can naturally have, do spring (1853:75).

Thus, in Locke's thinking humans cannot conceive of or
perceive aspects of reality except by their senses. The
mind perceives data conveyed to it by the senses upon which
it reflects. No wonder this type of epistemology came to be
called "sensationalism," meaning that man's knowledge of
reality cannot be acquired by reason alone without the
senses. Others who sought to enhance the empirical
tradition include men like David Hume (1711-76) and his
contemporary, the well-known British scientist Sir Isaac
Newton (1642-1726). David Hume was an empiricist whose
attempts to modify Locke's claims is said to have pushed
Locke's empiricism to skeptical conclusions by mixing
empiricism with logic (rationalism). Newton, who formulated
the laws of gravity, believed that the world was run by physical laws and the role of science was to determine those laws. This was the beginning of a mechanistic worldview which has had such a firm grip on western epistemology and worldview.

Critique on Empiricism

It is not difficult to see that the world of sensory perception has had profound influence on the formation of knowledge. Yet we would ask the questions: "Is this all it takes to generate human knowledge?" "Are ideas totally dependent on matter?" "How exhaustive is the world of sensory perception in generating human knowledge?" "Also, is knowledge not too complex to be confined to the avenue of sensory perception alone?"

Theories on the nature of human knowledge cannot afford to ignore these questions, nor should theory of knowledge adopt a reductionalist position, i.e. reducing all claims to one level of analysis. Thus, as Laudan argues, social-cultural environmental factors alone cannot be regarded as an adequate causal explanation of the emergence of ideas (1977:199ff). To look at knowledge primarily from an empirical perspective is to be naive realists. The naive realist's approach to knowledge functions under the assumption that by the use of the senses one may acquire an accurate or an unbiased knowledge of reality. Thus,
empirical observations provide us with literal pictures and accurate descriptions of the world. Ian Barbour points out that, "With a few exceptions, most scientists until the present century assumed that scientific theories were accurate descriptions of 'the world as it is in itself'" (1974:34). It was only recently that social scientists (in their studies on human perception, thought and the relationship of these to different social-cultural environments) have begun to question the assumptions of naive realism.

For example, one does not need much convincing to accept that there are no unbiased observations. Nor are there presuppositionless observations. It is Harvie Conn who said that "Neutrality at the heart level [at worldview level], is never possible for the sons and daughters of Adam, whether they function as anthropologists, missionaries, or theologians" (1984:50). Human observations and new experiences are filtered through the eyes of our conceptual world, and as Kuhn points out, a person observes "what his previous visual-conceptual experience has taught him to see" (1962:113). Kearney affirms the same when he says, "The way in which new experiences are perceived and conceptualized depends on how they can be related to or fitted into existing images and assumptions" (1984:44).

In other words, a new experience is interpreted and given meaning from the already-existing store of meanings in
people's minds which has been collected from previous experiences. The mind cannot be perceived as just a passive recipient and reflector of sensory information, since humans do not have innate mental categories with which to organize sense experiences. Of course, the mind plays an active role in ordering and giving meaning to empirical experiences, but the meanings exist in the mind of the observer other than "out there." Thus, knowledge becomes the interpretation of sense-experiences by the mind within a socio-cultural context.

The naive realist's view of looking at knowledge as something "out there" is based on a mechanically-static epistemological paradigm. Such a view has dominated the nature of knowledge for so long that today's more enlightened idea of viewing knowledge as a process is not easily welcomed in all educational circles. For example, Spradley describes perception and concept formation as nothing more than a one-way process beginning in an object or event passing through some medium to a sense organ, then through nerves to the brain where it registers as percept. Percepts are then described as being abstracted and confined into concepts (1972:8-11). Kearney, who favors the view of knowledge as a process, regards Spradley's model as "consistent with the epistemology of idealist anthropology" (1984:46). Jean Piaget has suggested that today we must of necessity begin to regard knowledge as a process more than a
state. This is why educationists like Beryl Geber who favor the idea of "knowledge as a process" support a kind of dialectical epistemology in which,

\[ \ldots \] the subject and the object define each other and can alter their nature in the process thereof. \ldots

This perspective, which implies that objectivity is in no way an initial property, demands the notion of knowledge being constructed out of the interaction between subject and object. The structures so constructed are not given in the objects, nor in the subjects, but in the interactions between them (1977:3).

Thus, epistemological systems cannot afford to be represented by mechanical or static models, the primary reason being that static models view knowledge as a fact other than an interacting process. Humans are always in the process of knowing. As Geber says, "Knowledge develops, it is a dynamic process, influenced both by the social environment and the process of maturation" (1977:6). It is from this non-mechanical orientation to the phenomena of knowledge that Piaget and others have suggested that a developmental perspective is essential for understanding intelligence and epistemology. In the same way, Gregory, a neuro-psychologist, asserts that "Perception is not determined simply by the stimulus patterns; rather it is a dynamic [interaction] \ldots searching for the best interpretation of the available data" (1966:11).
Birth and Growth of Rationalism in Western Epistemology

The construction of knowledge systems takes many shapes. First, we have talked about human universals as the conceptual tools societies are commonly equipped with for the construction of worldviews or mental models of reality. Then we talked about what actually constitutes reality, focusing our attention primarily on its relationship to worldview and to epistemology. We concluded that worldviews are essentially epistemologies or idea or knowledge systems. In examining how ideas or knowledge systems are developed, we have purposed to look at the birth and growth of empiricism in western intellectual history. Now we would like to direct our attention on rationalism, another main root of western epistemology.

As we have seen in our discussion on empiricism, there are philosophers--again from time immemorial--who have contended that ideas about reality are innate in humans. In other words, reality is perceived to be in people's minds or that it could be attained through human reasoning. The embryonic ideas for this model of viewing reality can be traced back to Plato (428-347 B.C.) whom we referred to above. He was a student of Socrates. As a Greek philosopher he developed many theories on government, education, truth, etc. He taught that,
the world which we see with our eyes and touch with our bodies was in reality only a world of shadows. It was a copy of the eternal world of spiritual Forms to which the pure soul could attain by philosophic contemplation (Brown 1968:15-16).

Plato's major goal was to explain reality ideologically. His ideological model became key in classical Greek philosophy, in medieval thought and certainly as the foundation for Descartes' rationalism in the 16th century. Rationalism in the 16th century is best represented by Descartes (1596-1650). A Frenchman and a Roman Catholic by training, Descartes argues that reality is rational at heart, and he became responsible for the phrase "I think, therefore I am" (quoted in Brown 1968:51). He has been regarded as the "father of modern philosophy" (Hick 1964:66), while others have described him as "The first of the great rationalist philosophers . . . " (Brown 1968:49).

He argued that inside the individual's consciousness lies "the final criterion of truth" (Brown 1968:53). In the rationalist tradition we see another main root or basic axiom of western epistemology. Its triumph reached climax in Kant (1724-1804), who has been described by some as the "personification of modern man's confidence in the

10. Others who followed Plato's thinking include Philo--a Jewish thinker of Alexandria, Clement (c. 150-215) and Origen (c. 185-254). However, the most important thinker of this early period who greatly influenced the Church and philosophy of his day was Augustine (354-430) who was also the Bishop of Hippo in North Africa.
power of reason to grapple with material things and its incompetence to deal with anything beyond" (Brown 1968:91). Emmanuel Kant represents the era of Enlightenment in western society when the worship of human reason was at its peak. "Dare to use your understanding" (Brown 1968:91), being the motto of the enlightenment period, bears witness to the value given to human reason.

Critique on Rationalism

In rationalism we see reality being confined to human reason (logic). No doubt there is much that the human mind can know through reasoning alone or through rational-logical processes, but is there not more to reality than the best use of the mind? Also, how dependent on human reason is the development of any knowledge system? Or can the construction of a people's mental model of reality be confined to human reason? In other words, is the development of epistemological systems dependent on human rationality? To such questions, most present-day psychoanalysts would say, "Yes"; hence, as Geber asserts, "... reality is subjective and resides within the perceiver. Searching the external world for that which is 'real' does not necessarily reveal answers" (1977:15).

Both empiricists and rationalists posit two perennial antagonistic positions. As seen above, each has its own explanation of the origin of ideas. Both are epistemo-
logical systems or axioms of the western worldview. Primarily western worldview demands that knowledge is only genuine if it is arrived at through critical empirical or rational analysis. I endorse Kearney's concern that rather than the debate being centered on how much reality or mind determines the structure of thought, should not the proper question be, "How do reality and thought shape each other?" (1984:4). The origin of knowledge is not from "either-or" but from a dynamic interaction of both. It is probably the mechanistic dualism of western worldview that blinds western ethnophilosophers from seeing the pluralistic and process nature of knowledge.

Other Western Epistemologies (or Worldviews)

Besides empiricism and scientific rationalism, the West has also developed other epistemological systems which we can only mention in passing. For example, idealism is the view that spiritual reality is the only reality there is. It was a kind of metaphysical movement in western epistemology. German philosophers were responsible for the development of what came to be referred to as absolute idealism. Men like Fichte (1762-1814), Schelling (1775-1854) and Hegel (1770-1831) were key personalities in advocating this type of epistemology. Hegel is regarded today as the greatest of 19th-century German idealists.
Using the German word "Geist" (mind or spirit), he said "Spirit alone is reality." After Hegel's death two groups emerged: the Hegelian right--those who wanted to preserve Hegel's system (cf. Soren Kierkegaard); and the Hegelian left--those who wanted to modify Hegel's system (cf. Karl Marx).

In his attempts to modify Hegel, Karl Marx became disillusioned, and rather than seeing reality as the outworking of the Spirit (Geist), he saw reality as the outworking of matter or the material world. He associated the material world with the social world and claimed that the ideas are not rationally but socially determined. In other words, "One of the basic axioms of historical materialism is that ideas in a society are to a great extent a result of their social origin within that society . . ." (Kearney 1984:2). While the social determinism theory of knowledge presents a weak epistemological model, not only because of its weak view of man's freedom to think independently of society but also because the nature of knowledge denies the monopoly of any one single epistemological paradigm. At any rate, we see in Karl Marx' thinking as the beginning of social determinism and Marxist dialectical materialism.

On the other hand, Kierkegaard attempted to preserve Hegel's idealism. In doing so, he deprived Geist of its objectivity (historicity) and argued that reality was not
something objective that can be handed out like a plate but rather something that is discovered personally and subjectively through a sometimes-painful process of self-analysis. Kierkegaard described his work as corrective to the dry religion of his day. To him it was "just a bit of cinnamon" (Knight 1959:157). Little did he realize that a hundred years later he would be regarded as the great grandfather of theological existentialism. In his 1835 journal he writes, "The thing is to understand myself, to see what God really wishes me to do; . . . to find the idea for which I can live and die" (quoted in Brown 1968:126).

Some have viewed Kierkegaard's existentialism (or subjective epistemology) as representing the bankruptcy of western philosophy. And so those who were skeptical of idealism could not wait for the arrival of logical positivism and linguistic philosophy. If idealism was a metaphysical movement in western philosophy, then logical positivism "was an anti-metaphysical movement in [western] philosophy" (Brown 1968:168). While its roots are both in England and France, its beginning can be traced back to David Hume's empirical skepticism in the 18th century. The logical positivists' goal was to come up with a modern scientific philosophy (i.e. a more empirical philosophy) which would discredit what they regarded as pseudo claims of metaphysics. Proponents of logical positivist philosophers include men like Schlick (1882-1936), Wittgentein
However, the movement gained tremendous momentum after A. J. Ayer published his book, *Language, Truth and Logic* (1946). The chief weapon of the movement was what they called "the Verification Principle" which logical positivist advocates claimed could distinguish between genuine and pseudo statements.

To logical positivists a statement was meaningful and genuine if it "could be verified in a manner comparable to the way in which scientific hypotheses are tested by public experiment" (Brown 1968:170). A statement which could not be verified would be regarded as "either meaningless, or that it meant something rather different from what the speaker intended" (Brown 1968:173). And as such, the logical positivists (or logical empiricists as they can well be described) regarded religious language and statements as meaningless expressions of one's attitude toward God himself or other people, since none of the statements would be empirically verified. But as we would expect, the premise began to receive reaction from those who questioned whether the verification principle had itself been verified. Besides, humans know that they have found meaning in all kinds of metaphysical and theological experiences which cannot be empirically verified.
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

At the beginning of our discussion, we established a twofold hypothesis that: (1) worldviews are made up of ideas in peoples' minds and (2) worldviews are essentially knowledge systems or epistemologies. We undertook to examine how cultures develop or construct their worldviews. At the outset of our examination, we proposed seven human universals which we have described as the conceptual tools all societies are equipped with for the construction of worldviews or models of reality.

Based on the hypothesis that worldviews are essentially knowledge systems or epistemologies, we undertook—as an example—a brief survey on how the West has constructed her knowledge systems. Most of the dominant claims on the primary sources of ideas have been discussed, with particular interest to their relationship to the construction of epistemological systems. We have talked about empiricism and rationalism and have touched briefly on idealism, existentialism, social determinism, logical positivism and linguistic philosophy. All these "-isms" represent the best efforts of western attempts to construct knowledge systems. They can be regarded as forming the western mosaic of epistemological paradigms.

Had we probed the question of a more adequate cross-cultural epistemological paradigm, we may not be surprised
to find out that today's dialectical interactionalism is paving the way towards that end. Dialectical interactionalists view knowledge not only as a process but as resulting from an interactionary necessity. In other words, instead of cognition theories being based on either empiricism (priority given to the environment) or rationalism (priority given to the mind), they are perceived as operating under the assumption that, "... knowledge arises from the organism interacting with and changing its environment. Thought and language both have their origin in motor action" (Kearney 1984:35). What Michael Kearney is advocating here was indeed echoed by the genetic epistemologist Jean Piaget in one of his well-known essay on the relations between organic, regulations and cognitive processes in which he said,

   Indeed, knowledge does not start in the subject (through somatic knowledge or introspection) or in the object (for perception itself contains a considerable measure of organization), but rather in interactions between subject and object and in other interactions originally set off by the spontaneous activity of the organ as much as by external stimuli (1971:27-28).

   As such, the process of knowing must of necessity be interactionary. However, it appears that worldview studies at this time in history are slowly undergoing the transition that the study of comparative religions went through earlier this century. Among worldview scholars (Piaget, Levi-Strauss, Kearney and others) one senses the dichotomy
between some form of primitive non-literate cognition patterns vis-a-vis the advanced or developed cognition forms of developed literate cultures. For example, the emerging discipline of worldview (like other disciplines in the social sciences) is still in many ways a victim of the evolutionary model. The seeds of evolution are scattered throughout the most thorough study done on the subject by Michael Kearney. Kearney himself says,

The . . . most appropriate theoretical framework for seeking an explanation is that of general evolutionary theory. . . . According to the tenets of Darwinian evolutionism, upon which modern thinking of biological and cultural evolutionism is based, the selection of morphological and behavioral traits is by virtue of the adaptive advantage that they confer to the species in question. Following from this principle we would assume that the development within the genus Homo of the capacity for seeing reality in markedly different ways enhanced survival by allowing local groups to develop world views appropriate to their particular habitats (1984:110).

It seems to me that proper theoretical justice to the analysis of cognition schemes or processes across cultures cannot be possible until: (1) contemporary worldview studies are freed from the domination of the evolutionary paradigm and (2) the freeing of most western and non-western researchers from their apparent over-fascination with the supremacy of technological development and its undeserved role as a cross-cultural yardstick for judging between the so-called simple and complex societies. When shall scholars in the social sciences apply the discoveries of their
studies to themselves and admit that the terms "complex and sophisticated" are but cultural descriptions? All societies are complex and sophisticated regardless of the level of technological development. The description simply depends on the viewer. Human societies will manifest different types of complexities depending on what in the society is being examined.

Finally, we had manifold reasons for choosing to examine western worldview epistemological positions. First of all, our goal was to use the West as an example to show how human societies within a given socio-cultural, historical context construct worldviews or knowledge systems. The worldviews developed in the West were reflective of the different historical, socio-cultural, economic and sometimes philosophical and religious contexts in which the people found themselves. For example, the origin of Kierkegaard's subjective epistemology was an attempt to put some life into what seemed a dry form of philosophically-reasoned-out religion. Whether in doing so he went overboard is not our concern; here the point we are making is that worldviews as knowledge systems (epistemologies) can only be constructed as societies respond to their different realities in their own socio-cultural, historical contexts. It is obvious that Karl Marx' historical materialism (the social determinism of knowledge) was his attempt to respond and challenge the intellectual and philosophical idealism that dominated
German academic life in the mid-19th century. For this writer, all epistemological or philosophical systems constructed by any people of any culture should have at least one aspect in common: to provide for the people a coherent view of the universe and offer a satisfactory explanation to the fundamental meaning of human life. Simply put, the task of an adequate philosophical system should be to point people to the way, the truth and the life.

Secondly, we chose to examine western worldviews in order to expose to the Akamba reader the implicit western worldview assumptions which are gradually being communicated to our youth through the schooling system, westernization, urbanization, individualization and modernization. In order to function adequately within the context of modern Ukambani (or modern Kenya), it is imperative to know the assumptions responsible for the "civilization" transmitted to us through our interaction with the European world. And finally, as we shall see later, the Akamba have assimilated to the alien values, not only to make sense of their British experience during the earlier period but also for their own economic survival. Therefore, to theologize effectively, the Akamba Christian theologian must know something about the western worldview (its assumptions and values) through which the dominant Christian theology in Ukambani is primarily built.
CHAPTER III
UNDERSTANDING TRADITIONAL AKAMBA WORLDVIEW

INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter our primary goal was to examine how societies construct worldviews. We have contended that the universal human containers of cognition, meaning, and relationships are some of the conceptual tools each society is equipped with for the construction of worldviews. Examining the subject from the perspective that worldviews are ways or views of perceiving reality, we have been led to equate worldviews not only with ideas or knowledge systems but primarily with epistemologies. Our study has shown us that worldviews are essentially epistemologies. Thus, the primary process in worldview construction is the interaction of human minds with different environments within the context of a given historical, socio-cultural situation. It is such interaction that results in the construction of implicit mental models of reality through which humans interpret and assign meanings to the world around them.
To illustrate the process of how human minds interact with the environment in the construction of knowledge systems, we have used the West as a case study. We undertook some brief surveys on western conceptual models. We started with rationalism and empiricism as the key roots holding western epistemology and touching on idealism and dialectic materialism; we moved on all the way to examining some of the more recent models, such as logical positivism and linguistic philosophy. This spectrum-mosaic of epistemologies form the West's mental models of reality. In other words, if their different conceptual tools would be placed in one box, we could refer to it as the carrier of the West's reality kit.

Our main purpose in examining that which constitutes the West's reality kit was primarily based on the fact that western epistemological paradigms have had—as we shall see below—such a tremendous influence not only on African peoples but also have increasingly become the dominant language of modern man. Thus, to some degree, no academic work could be conducted today from anywhere in the world without coming to terms in some way with western epistemological paradigms. Modern technology and industry, both begot and primarily fueled by western epistemology, have been powerful promoters or salesmen of the product all over the world.

And so, while we at times write and speak to challenge
the massive sale of western epistemological perspectives to the African world (the Third World) through science, technology and industry, we do so in recognition of its inevitable influence on, say, African ways of knowing.

It is, therefore, the main objective of this chapter to seek to understand the traditional worldview of the Akamba, a Kenyan tribe. Our discussion on understanding traditional Akamba worldview is going to center on two areas. First, we will endeavor to understand traditional Akamba worldview as it used to be. We will look into pioneer Akamba ethnologies and ethnographies by men like Hobley (1910), Lindblom (1920), Jacobs (1961) and others. Our second area will focus primarily on the change in Akamba traditional worldview. More specifically, our concern is to look at the impact of modernity on traditional Akamba worldview. Questions regarding how Akamba traditional worldview conducted itself amidst changes both from within and without will be considered. Of primary interest to our discussion on the impact of modernity is to find out whether external changes have succeeded in eroding traditional and implicit Akamba worldview beliefs about reality.

Since the primary objective of this dissertation is

1. The term "traditional," when used in connection with the Akamba, should be understood as synonymous with indigenous. Thus is its dominant use whenever it is used throughout this chapter.
Christian theologizing within the context of Akamba worldview, it should then be regarded as of vital importance to seek to understand, first of all, the Akamba worldview. As already mentioned, we have purposed to examine traditional Akamba worldview in this chapter, while the next will deal with contemporary Akamba worldview.

TRADITIONAL AKAMBA WORLDVIEW

Our primary concern here is to find out what occupied the hidden conceptual world of traditional Akamba. We have already established in the previous chapter that worldviews are made up of a people's mental models of reality. The term "model" is used as "an imaginative [or conceptual] tool for ordering experience . . ." (Barbour 1974:6). Therefore, a society's mental models or theoretical constructs are imaginative devices which humans use for selecting, classifying, interpreting, structuring and assigning significance and meaning to life experiences.

In our examination of the Akamba traditional worldview, we begin by making a statement on Akamba cosmogony. While historiography is specifically not within the study of a people's worldview, yet we cannot center our discussion upon the Akamba without saying something about their socio-historical origins as a people. Second, we will look at Akamba traditional beliefs, with particular reference to the work of Donald Jacobs.
Akamba Cosmogony

The African population in Kenya has been divided into linguistic groups. The largest of them is the Bantu group which "belongs to the 'Niger-Congo' linguistic family" (Kenya 1973:18). The Akamba are part of the Bantu people. Studies conducted on the origins and migrations of the Bantu indicate that, "The group reached East Africa from a dispersal centre somewhere in the Nile-Congo watershed. By the 15th century much of East Africa appears to have been covered by this ethnic group" (Kenya 1973:18).

Today the Akamba have taken residence on the eastern slopes of the Kenya highlands between the Tana river on the north and the railway line on the southeast of Nairobi, Kenya's capital city. The terrain of Ukambani, which is made up of clusters of hills and plains, covers an area of 25,000 square miles. The Athi River flows from northeast to southeast and serves as the common boundary between Machakos and Kitui--the two Ukamba districts. The Akamba are divided into over twenty patriarchal clans. Also, some scholars of Akamba cosmogony claim that proto-Akamba were a matrilineal

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2. The exact number of Akamba clans is not known with certainty. Studies done by a British administrator during the colonial period record twenty-one clans with an additional ten from Kilungu (Jackson 1971:59), while Lindblom (1920:136) and Jacobs (1961) claim the exact number to be twenty-three to twenty-five (Jacobs 1961:44).
community, i.e. clan members trace their ancestry back to a woman clan-head (Lindblom 1920:128; Lambert 1947:23). Jacobs contended, too, that among present Bantu the entire spectrum can be studied: from matriliny, on one hand, as among the Bemba of Northern Rhodesia, to a patriliny as found among the Baganda of Uganda, on the other, adding that, "The Akamba present the picture of a tribe in midpassage" (1961:123).

Historically, the Machakos district was settled first (Lindblom 1920:13), while the Kitui districts was "simply an overflow area in which members of different clans in search of land began to move into around the early part of the eighteenth century" (Johnstone 1902:263).

There are about five traditions that attempt to establish where the Akamba lived prior to their occupying Machakos. We can only afford to mention them in passing. First, there is the Nile-Congo tradition to which we have made reference already. This tradition centers on the Nile-Congo as the original home for the Bantu than it does on the Akamba.

Second, there is the Nyamwezi-Chagga tradition proposed by Ludwig Krapf (1860) and Gregory who associate Wumo wa Akamba (Akamba origins) with the southeastern part "of Lake Tanganyika [where] there is a district called Ukamba" (Lindblom 1926:7). The name "Ukamba" also appears as a place name in Unyamwezi (Jackson 1971:186).
Third, there is the Singwaya (also written Shungwaya in Swahili) tradition of which Brian McIntosh writes,

... it is possible to suggest that the order of departure from Shungwaya of the ancestors of the Eastern Bantu peoples was as follows: first, at an early stage, the Pokomo, Kamba and Kikuyu; then, during the period of the Galla invasions, the Digo, the Segeju and Meru, followed by the Giriama and Taita" (1968:209).

The link of Akamba to the Shungwaya tradition has been questioned by some East African historians (like Munro 1967) who claimed that people like the Digo and Pokomo are opposed to the Akamba, especially in their bilateral descent system, while the Segeju show very little linguistic similarity with Akamba. However, the authoritative History of East Africa by Huntingford contends for the Singwaya tradition, stating that,

According to oral tradition the ancestors of the North-eastern Bantu ... migrated to the coast, ... [and] went northwards as far as a region called in their traditions Shungwaya, which was somewhere between Tana and Juba rivers. This became a second dispersal area, and they began to move away from it ... about A.D. 1200-1300, ... From this centre they broke up into the groups which became known as the Pokomo along the Tana, and Nyika down the coast southwards, and much farther inland they became the Kamba and Kikuyu in the region of Mount Kenya. ... The Kamba and Chuka were perhaps the first to leave the coast, the former up the Athi, the latter along the Tana (1963:89-90).

There is a fourth tradition, which considers the Kilimanjaro area as the original home of the Akamba people. J. M. Hildebrandt, one of the earliest writers on Akamba,
noted that,

The Wakamba assert that they have come from Kilimanjaro an area from which the Wanika also came and settled first at Kilibassi, a mountain in Taita. From there they made hunting trips into the wilderness which is now Ukamba. The name Wakamba means to "travel" from Ku-hamba (1878:348).

The Kilimanjaro origin is the dominant tradition of the original home of the Akamba people. It has been affirmed by others like Krapf (1860), Lindblom (1920) and even Forbes Munro (1975) who in his recent research affirms the Kilimanjaro tradition. Jackson, who was the first to do a scientific ethnological study of oral Akamba tradition, suggests that,

... no other area ever appears in the traditions as a place of origin for the Akamba with quite the frequency that the territory surrounding Mount Kilimanjaro does. Occasionally, persons say that some of the community originated near the coastal areas, but they are quick to add that the major portions of the society trace their ancestral history to Kilimanjaro (Jackson 1971:169).

Kilimanjaro is a dome-like mountain located at the southwest border of modern Kenya and Tanzania to which the Akamba give the name Kayolaa or Kiima Kya Kyeu. The name can be translated as "that which decorates itself" (Jackson 1971:170) or the mountain of whiteness. Besides Mount Kenya, Mount Kilimanjaro prides itself as the only other place with snow in East Africa.

The last tradition places Akamba origins at the coast. Some historians think that the Akamba moved inland from the
coastal area where they once lived among the Giriama. For example, Lindblom talks of those who fixed the earliest home of the Akamba as being "down the coast in the vicinity of Giriamaland" (1926:6). Traditional Akamba used to refer to the Giriama people as "aswi, their language, kisui, and their country usuini" (Lindblom 1920:21). Even today one may hear some Akamba speakers saying, "I am going to Kisuani," meaning to Mombasa, Kenya's main coastal town, historically located at the heart of Giriamaland. The possibility of Akamba origins being traced back to some northeast coastal Bantu like the Giriama is also supported by the use of certain Kikamba words. For example, words like "ukanga (ocean)," "mukunga (whale)," "ngalawa (ship)," "matalu (canoe or boat)" and "ngome (harbor or castle)" all bear witness to a people with a coastal Bantu origin. However, some may argue that such words could still be accounted for through the Akamba mobile disposition which was noticed by early travelers to East Africa.

By 1850, when the Akamba were first contacted by European travelers and explorers,

... they were occupying their present territory, having successfully maintained themselves against the military pressures of their neighbours, principally the Galla to the north and east and the Masai to the west and south. Moving first into the hills of Machakos and later across the Athi River into Kitui, the Kamba probably occupied their present territory sometime before 1700 (Edgerton 1971:77).

All the different traditions agree that at different
times in history large portions of this nomadic people c. 1650 A.D.) moved further in a northeastern direction and established a central settlement area at the fertile Mbooni hills. Thus, as H. E. Lambert believes,

... in the Mbooni hills the [Kamba] community exploited for the first time the advantages of relatively high rainfall belt, fertile soils, and a variety of naturally-produced staples. It became an agricultural community, with secondary investment in the keeping of livestock (Jackson 1971:196-97).

Probably this is why Jackson, as a modern-day Akamba ethnologist, contends that, "The real history of the Akamba migrations ... can rightly be called the history of the movement from Kiima Kya Kyeu [i.e. Mt. Kilimanjaro] to Mbooni" (1971:179). Besides the tribe's mobile disposition, it is obvious to see that the search for a better place to live was also a key contributing factor in Akamba migrations. After they found a fertile place to live, we would expect them to settle down and build a permanent continuing community. Indeed, they did so, but their mobile disposition was not weakened with the passage of time, for it was only four decades ago that thousands of the Akamba population migrated to the fertile Shimba hills of Kenya's coastal region. But who knows if they are not going back to their traditionally cherished original home!

With this brief ethnographical word, we have described a people who were once wandering nomads—but live today in plains and clusters of hills, having established themselves
in agricultural village communities scattered all across Ukambani. We now undertake an investigation of their traditional worldview.

**Akamba Traditional Views of Reality**

We have pointed out above that a society's view or models of reality are not explicit either to the outsider or to the insider. Indeed, an outsider observing a society will not easily recognize a people's worldview from their actions. This is why Hohensee contends that a people's worldview is "arrived at by reasoning back from the cultural components to the deep levels from which this actions springs" (1980:13). And so, Akamba explicit traditional behavior and customs, as expressed through their different cultural institutions, offer for us the necessary starting point in investigating their "deep levels from which action springs" (Hohensee 1980:13).

For example, let us start by citing a few examples of what some outsiders observed about Akamba social, political, educational and religious life. Johann Ludwig Krapf, a German Lutheran missionary with Church Missionary Society, was the first person to write to any extent about the Akamba. His book, written in 1860 and translated under the title *Travels, Researches, and Missionary Labours*, bears the earliest record on the Akamba by an outsider. Krapf regarded the Akamba as "peaceful but conservative" (1860).
He was impressed with their ability to "travel long
distances "in caravans of from 200 to 300 persons into the
interior to fetch ivory . . ." (1860:144). Little did Krapf
know that the etymology of the tribal name "Akamba" is
rooted in the concept of "travel," thus giving a clue to
their mobile disposition.

Peter Cameron Scott, the devoted young man who founded
the African Inland Mission in 1895, was impressed by Akamba
friendliness and hospitality. His first contact with them
was on November 28, 1895 when he and his caravan, traveling
inland from the Indian Ocean coast, arrived at
Masongolene--a transport station of the Mackenzie Company.
From the station Scott and his group visited a nearby
village, and he wrote, " . . . [We] were treated kindly.
They gave us eggs, and milk, and to Wilson a goat as
presents. They belong to the Wakamba tribe . . ." (Scott
1896:7). Charles W. Hobley, in his Ethnology of the Akamba
and Other East African Tribes, was intrigued by the
conservative behavior of Akamba and concluded that, "The
A-Kamba are probably the purest Bantu race in British East
Africa" (1910:2).³ Dundas, in his research three years

³. However, a careful historical study of most East African
peoples reveals a pattern of heterogeneous and diverse
origins very far from notions of ethnic purity. Cf. Muriuki
(1974) and Lawren (1968).
later, said that, "In respect to intelligence the Akamba are very much in advance, of other tribes" (1913:490).

Gerhard Lindblom, a Swedish anthropologist, was deeply impressed by what he saw among the Akamba and described them as proud people who "consider themselves too good to be in the service of the white man as workers" (1920:551). He added that, "Without doing them an injustice one may assign to them the position of the aristocrats among the Bantu tribes of East Africa" (1920:551). Lindblom undertook research on the Kikamba language which led to a thorough study of Akamba institutional and private life. His research, which he presented as part of his doctoral dissertation at Uppsala University in 1916, was published in 1920 in a book entitled The Akamba. This book has, as Donald Jacobs observes, remained the "standard reference work on the Akamba through the years" (1961:19).

A more recent anthropologist to study the Akamba is Donald Jacobs who observed that the Akamba "are on the whole a peaceful tribe, and thus, they made friends with the traders of different races who came inland from the Indian Ocean to trade with interior peoples" (1961:15).

Politically, many outsiders observed that, unlike other Bantu peoples, the Akamba never had any form of centralized political government. For example, they had neither kings nor tribal chiefs. Political tribal unity was a dream among Akamba. And watching how they conducted their affairs,
Dundas concluded that the Akamba: "could never submit to a common chief, or join to oppose a common enemy. Above all the Mkamba prizes his independence, to be subject to anyone or bound by anything beyond mere family ties is hateful to him" (Dundas 1913:487). Such a trait was much to the disappointment of the many anthropologists who were left with little to justify their anthropological descriptions of a tribe.

Akamba religious beliefs, on the other hand, were not hard to spot, particularly through their many rituals. For example, John Krapf observed that "... the Wakamba have a feeble idea of a Supreme Being, whom they call Mulungu...." (1860:356). Later on Lindblom, a trained student of culture, observed the Akamba use another theistic form, Ngai Mumbi (Creator God), to refer to their concept of supreme God. He said that the Akamba God is looked upon as "the creator of all things, and therefore [they] call him also mumbi 'the one who fashions, the creator'. ... More seldom is found mwatwangi, 'the cleaver' ... since he

4. Imasogie of Nigeria observes that

... the concept of a remote God is an invention of the Westerner who does not understand the extent of the cultural influence on the African expression of his religious beliefs. ... That the concept of a remote God is foreign to the African is borne out by his prayers and the meanings of the names he gives to his children. These bear eloquent testimony to his awareness of the omnipresence of God in every aspect of the universe (1983b:84).
originally formed all living beings . . ." (Lindblom 1920:244). The Akamba observed different kinds of religious rituals. Some of these include the rituals of birth, circumcision, Mulungu worship, drought, harvest and death. Educationally, traditional Akamba used the home, along with the different initiation rituals, as their main channels of cultural transmission.

And so as can be seen from these brief examples, all these customs represent samples of explicit Akamba traditional behavior, particularly as observed by outsiders. There were some who chose to reason back from these externals with the aim of discovering the deep worldview levels from which the explicit behavior springs. The first to carry out any extensive research on Akamba worldview is Donald Jacobs, whose works we shall briefly examine now.

Jacobs's Analysis of Akamba Traditional Worldview

Donald Jacobs took upon his shoulders the task of examining Akamba traditional views of reality. He decided to use a thematic analysis. The idea of cultural themes was first introduced by Morris Opler in 1945 who, as we have already seen, defined a theme as "a postulate or a position declared or implied and usually controlling behavior or stimulating activity which is tacitly approved or openly
promoted in a society" (1945:198). In his theory, Opler thought of cultures as being unified by several interacting themes. His starting point was the assumption that human cultures are poly-thematic. Using his theoretical model, Opler divided culture into four parts. The associated body of ideas, symbols, artifacts and behavior he called components. Then he referred to:

... the total group of components which are activated by the event and are considered appropriate in coping with it or referring to it, I have named an assemblage. ... [The] more closely linked and persistent aggregates of components within assemblages, I call nexus. ... the link between culture and the assemblage is the theme (1961:962,964).

This poly-thematic approach to examining human cultures began to be used by others besides Opler. For example, Barnouw developed the concept further and saw cultural themes as dynamic affirmations "which are found, in limited number, in every culture and which structure the nature of reality for its members" (1973:61).

In the early sixties it was becoming increasingly acceptable among cultural anthropologists that cultural components could not be integrated around a single all-encompassing culture theme. It is out of such a recognition that Luzbetak stated that, "Cultures do not have one [theme], but several closely-related and interrelated 'themes,' which give direction and thus unite the various culture elements into an integrated whole" (1970:159). It is
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this kind of understanding that allows us to talk about a cultural worldview as being made up of several themes or mental models of reality. In other words, each society has a cognitive cluster of worldview themes which together serve as the people's mental models of reality. Again, this cognitive cluster of worldview themes is not explicit; it is hidden, remaining at the tacit level of knowledge. As James Spradley points out, "It is more likely that a culture or a particular cultural scene will be integrated around a set of major themes and minor themes" (1980:142), adding that usually people of a given culture

... do not express them [their themes] easily, even though they know the cultural principle and use it to organize their behavior and interpret experience. Themes come to be taken for granted, slipping into that area of knowledge where people are not quite aware or seldom find need to express what they know (Spradley 1980:143).

And so, using data from printed Akamba ethnographies and studies, Donald Jacobs took Opler's theoretical construct and analyzed Akamba traditional worldview into seven different themes. His goal was to examine Akamba traditional themes from the vantage point of her rites de passage. The primary hypothesis he determined to test was that "the rites of passage do contain the culture themes of a particular culture" (1961:14). Latent in this hypothesis is the assumption that rites of passage also sustain a society's cultural themes. Of particular interest to this
investigator is to question whether the ability and strength of the rites of passage are able to contain and sustain cultural themes amidst the pressures of modernity. What about the whole generation of modern-day Akamba who know nothing about the rites of passage? We shall respond to this question later in our discussion on the impact of modernity on Akamba traditional worldview. In the meantime we must give credit to Jacobs's analysis of Akamba traditional worldview. However, since we will provide a more detailed treatment on most of these themes, we can only afford here to give short summary statements on each of the following.  

**Akamba Cultural Themes**

The first in the list of Jacobs's analysis of Akamba traditional themes was what he called **maintenance of cosmological balance**. Donald Jacobs observed that, "Perhaps the most salient feature of the Akamba's cosmological view is the belief that the world, both natural and supernatural, is a delicately balanced system, and that the highest duty of man and spirits is to maintain this balance" (1961:101). This is certainly a central Akamba theme which we will have much to say about later on. It suffices to point out at this juncture that traditional Akamba believe there is a

5. For a thorough examination, refer to Jacobs 1961.
kind of built-in cosmological order in the universe. In other words, there is a cosmological status quo which must be retained. And anything which offsets the balance or interferes with it is considered a threat to the entire cosmological system and is therefore looked upon as morally wrong. Furthermore if and when disruptions of the status quo do take place, steps must be taken at once to set things in order again (Jacobs 1961:101).

For example, death is thought of as a phenomenon that brings disruption to the cosmological balance. And so after death, rituals aimed at restoring the balance or equilibrium were an absolute among traditional Akamba.

The second Akamba traditional theme is what Jacobs calls the promotion of egalitarianism. While the cosmological equilibrium theme argues for a vertical status quo, the egalitarian one is man's attempt to level all men along a horizontal axis. It is this theme which is responsible for the promotion of a sense of human equality among all members of the tribe. Traditionally, egalitarian behavior was obvious among the Akamba. For example, Jacobs found out that the theme of egalitarianism was very evident in housing. He says,

If one were to walk through Ukamba he would become aware of the similarity of the houses. Every hut is built exactly the same regardless of whether the owner is a chief or a beggar. It would seem as though the houses were built expressly to remind the inhabitants of the equality of all men (1961:124).
While egalitarianism in Akamba housing is an outdated example, yet in the past it seemed to communicate Akamba belief in the intrinsic value and worthiness of everything. For example, each tree and plant in the forest was understood to have its own intrinsic role. Some trees and plants provided medicine, while others provided agricultural tools and others were used to make weapons for defense. In the areas of labor, egalitarianism was also evident. There was labor distribution and no one person did everything.

Jacobs observed that in traditional Akamba labor distribution, "One man makes chains, another knife handles, while another makes chairs for sale and still another makes only a certain kind of stool for domestic use" (1961:116). Even in the area of treatment of disease traditional medicine men were never general M.D.s or practitioners. Hobley observed that among the andu awe (medicine men), "no particular individual is competent outside of his limited proficiency area (1922:36). Earlier, Lindblom, reflecting on this Akamba trait, recognized the unique contribution of each person by saying, "The individual medicine man does not seem to be able to treat many different kinds of illness; he appears rather to be what one might call a specialist . . . for different illnesses one must consult different people. It is said that the Mundu mue cannot cure his own children nor can a man skilled in ngondu do this" (1920:269). "Akamba is almost a society of experts. One can cure eyes, another
love-sickness, one can prophecy and another can remove makwa and not thabu" (1920:271).

Third, Jacobs talked about the maintenance of hierarchy as another of Akamba traditional themes. The traditional hierarchical theme among the Akamba was primarily for defining and establishing the limits of social roles. "Perhaps, it could best be summarized by saying that the Kamba hierarchical system establishes rights but not duties" (Jacobs 1961:125). For example, Akamba life used to be characterized by a series of stages, many of which "are marked by special ceremonies denoting newly acquired privileges. And at each level of advancement symbols are given to denote the fact that a new social level has been attained" (Jacobs 1961:125).

Traditionally, hierarchical systems were based on sex, circumcision, age, etc. For example, a junior brother could not marry before his senior brother; otherwise "the father would refuse him the bride-wealth" (Jacobs 1961:126). Also, a person's position on the hierarchical "ladder" determined his hierarchical social status. Meat eating was particularly used as a social control mechanism. For example, after a person had advanced to higher hierarchical

6. Mikwa is a Kamba word to describe the condition in a person who portrays childish characteristics, while thabu (thavu) was traditionally used to refer to a kind of soul or spirit uncleanness.
status he would receive "more freedom in the eating of the various parts of the animal. When the highest grade is reached no part of the animal may be denied the person" (Jacobs 1961:127).

The fourth Akamba traditional theme in Jacobs's analysis is what he called the maintenance of sexual vigor. Traditionally, sexual potency among Akamba was given vital consideration in their minds, not for the purpose of emotional sexual fulfilment alone but, "They were primarily concerned with perpetuation of the family, the clan, and the tribe" (Jacobs 1961:132). Akamba traditional views on sexuality were particularly linked to life and fertility, and the ancestral spirits were believed to be "the third party to a sexual union" in order to promote conception. Death in the family was believed to bring sexual sterility and was only "removed through the proper ritual cleansing" (Jacobs 1961:131). Traditionally the ritual of cleansing required that, "The bereaved who was most closely associated with the deceased must participate in sexual intercourse with someone of social standing equal to that of deceased" (Lindblom 1920:106).

The fifth Akamba traditional theme in Jacobs's analysis is what he called the extension of association. Thus, while the theme of hierarchy was concerned with defining social roles and boundaries, the extension of the association theme was concerned with the extension of one's social
friendships. There are several reasons why such a need was certainly important for the Akamba. One obvious reason was that,

... due to the uncertainties of life, misfortune could befall ... [a person] at any time in which case he would need help. Because famine is a constant threat to the Akamba, it is an act of wisdom to enter into a mutually obligatory association with others upon whom a person could depend for food. Many times the very physical life of a family is threatened because there are not enough people obligated to help it in time of need. Therefore the head of the family, in order to avoid such a fiasco, uses his material wealth and influence to increase the number of people in his associative group (Jacobs 1961:134).

We shall discuss later how among traditional Akamba it is a virtue to have many friends. Indeed, having children was traditionally linked with this theme. For example, a person needed children so that "he might build bridges to other families and clans, thus insuring for himself a secure position in life and an extended existence in the world to come" (Jacobs 1961:137). This explains the reason why impotence among the Akamba is viewed in horror, particularly "because an impotent man finds it extremely difficult to enlarge his associative groups" (Jacobs 1961:138). So, Akamba traditional society greatly valued marriage (particularly for procreation) and also established "institutions called blood-brotherhood or blood covenants" (Lindblom 1920:141) through which a person could enlarge the number of his relatives and friends. Also, the free
formation of social clubs, which carried some measure of mutual obligation, bore witness to this extension of association theme. About the social clubs Jacobs said that, "Since these clubs are fairly easy to get into, the Akamba enter them as a matter of course. It is a rather inexpensive means of widening the circle of association" (1961:144).

**Transparency** was the sixth traditional Akamba cultural theme in Donald Jacobs's analysis. He observed that

To the Akamba, the most hated kind of person is the one who goes about with a secret. . . . Anyone who keeps something to himself . . . is considered to be withholding something from his brethren and pressure is brought upon him to reveal his innermost thoughts. Secrecy is hated above all faults of character. For this reason a theme runs through the Akamba culture which virtually requires openness and transparency of life (1961:145).

Traditionally, a Mukamba person would always talk to anyone whom he met on the way. Thus, Jacobs correctly observes that,

Upon meeting someone, though a stranger, along a Kamba trail it is proper that you should begin to talk to him as he comes into hearing distance, exchanging greetings and informing him of the state of your health and welfare and also telling where you have come from and where you are going and why. . . . The talking continues until the parties are so far apart that they cannot hear one another. Then you are free to return to your own thoughts. To meet someone on the path who does not divulge everything like this would arouse the greatest suspicion because it would be suspected that he is no doubt on an errand of witchcraft or some other dark and evil adventure which he is unwilling to talk about. A silent Mkamba is indeed a highly unpopular fellow and
when anything happens in the community of a catastrophic nature, he will be suspect as a witch, for witches are quiet (1961:145-46).

We have quoted Jacobs at length here because there is much about the Akamba traditional theme of transparency that, as we shall see, has much to do with a proper understanding of their modern worldview. Traditional Akamba abhored privacy; hence, a private or secret life was synonymous with a wicked life. To them, ideal life was lived in transparency. Nothing was done in a corner, but transparency was required in all, even in sexual relations. For example, Jacobs recognizes that, "A certain shamelessness about sex prevails among the Akamba. They take for granted the sexual development of the body such as the appearance of pubes, the enlarging of breasts and the appearance of pregnancy" (1961:148).

It is primarily from this theme that openness with each other in communication was regarded vital for the life of the society. In any given village, it was expected that the affairs of each member be known by all. This is why Akamba naturally do not like surprises; hence, they desire

... to know explicitly the details of one's [affairs]. ... for one man's business is everyone's business ... .
... Everyone is expected to be frankly honest and candid about his affairs. And if he expects this of others he must be open himself (Jacobs 1961:148-49).

The last traditional theme in our brief survey is what Jacobs, due to the lack of a comprehensive word, called the
theme of human dignity, intelligence and self-control. It appears that Jacobs's research confirms Lindblom's description of the Akamba as a "proud people" (1920:531). For example, Jacobs says, "... indeed the Akamba are a proud people but they are proud, not in the selfish sense in which their attitudes may be taken, but because they believe basically that all men are equal. This was clarified in the theme of egalitarianism" (1961:150-51). It is in this pride that the theme of dignity is rooted. As observed by others, the assertion of dignity is not primarily for self-aggrandizement but rather is "for the dignity of the family and the clan" (Jacobs 1961:151).

Each Mukamba is expected to maintain his dignity through the practice of restraint and perseverance. Thus, to be unrestrained is to fall short of the ideal. For example, among traditional Akamba, "... the drinking of beer was formerly preserved for the old men, for they were the only ones able to practice enough restraint to avoid getting intoxicated" (Jacobs 1961:152). Members of society were expected to bear pain, hunger and thirst without complaining. Personal greatness was never portrayed through wealth or a person's physical strength; rather, performing one's duties in a dignified manner, displaying mental prowess and self-control were qualities which describe a traditional ideal Mukamba.

Those were, therefore, the seven Akamba traditional
cultural themes which Donald Jacobs examined as constituting Akamba worldview. They consist of the maintenance of balance, promotion of egalitarianism, maintenance of hierarchy, maintainence of sexual vigor, extension of association, transparency and human dignity, intelligence and self-control. Later on we shall discuss whether or not Akamba traditional cultural themes have been able to hang on against the threat of westernization and modernity. However, now we must turn our attention to the impact of modernity on traditional Akamba worldview.

**IMPACT OF MODERNITY ON TRADITIONAL AKAMBA WORLDVIEW**

To say that humans are living in a day of fast change and transformation is but to affirm the obvious. Modern change in all its many forms is an experience of all humans everywhere. In 1973 Alan Beals and George and Louise Spindler observed that

> There are . . . virtually no cultural systems left in the world that have not experienced massive input from the outside, particularly from the West. This is the age of transformation. Nearly all tribal societies and peasant villages are being affected profoundly by modernization (1973:239).

Among the Akamba, for example, there is no doubt that modern changes have had a profound effect on their traditional life. Likewise, change from within has affected many aspects of Akamba life. However, our primary concern at this point is to look at the impact of modernity on Akamba
traditional worldview. There are some who have done studies on Akamba culture and described it like a curio in a museum. This synchronic approach, typical of certain cultural anthropologists, is found lacking in the light of the inevitability of change. Therefore, in our discussion on the impact of modernity on Akamba culture (worldview) we begin by first denouncing the static orientation to culture as unacceptable. Second, we examine the theoretical basis (i.e. rationale) for change, and building on it, we provide an argument for our third point which suggests that the clash of western and Akamba traditional worldview is primarily the one that made change inevitable. Our fourth point contends that while such external change was inevitable, yet implicit in Akamba traditional worldview are elements of continuity that have remained unchanged.

Static View to Culture
Unacceptable

We have pointed out that in investigating the subject of Akamba cultural themes Donald Jacobs borrowed his basic theoretical framework and rationale from Opler's theories on theme formation. However, Jacobs's particular hypothesis leaves us with some questions. For example, he set out to test that, "... the rites of passage do contain the culture themes of a particular culture" (1961:14). Latent in this hypothesis, however, is the assumption that rites of
passage also sustain a society's cultural themes.

Of particular concern to this investigator is Jacobs's freedom to justify his list of Akamba traditional themes by using extensively explicit examples from Lindblom's works of the 1920s. Linnel Davis observed the same limitation, commenting that Jacobs used sources which were "twenty years old and older. . . . [and the Kamba] themes that emerged from his analysis do not reflect the changes in the post-war period" (1968:26). Thus, Jacobs did not take seriously the inevitable changes that had begun to take place even prior to Lindblom's day. For example, Jacobs's references to Akamba traditional uniformly built huts (1961:24), homestead traditions and their accompanying rites of conduct, novice's circumcision and initiation rituals (Lindblom 1920:42ff) all give the impression of one describing a culture that can be represented by a motionless photograph.

However, it should be remembered that the static view of culture reflects 19th-century anthropology as an armchair science. To these armchair anthropologists, society was viewed as a static organ. Even when referring to the so-called primitive cultures they spoke of "primitive culture," not "primitive cultures" (Conn 1984:32). (It may be of interest as background information to ask how culture could possess a monolithic character in the minds of scholars whose theoretical model was predominantly the evolutionary/developmental paradigm. Does not this reflect
theoretical inconsistency?) Besides, from a more concrete level, we can ask whether amidst the inevitable pressures from modernity "unobserved" traditional rites of passage and initiation ceremonies are capable of sustaining a society's cultural themes. To claim that rites of passage possess the strength to sustain Akamba worldview themes is like insisting that Akamba continue thatching their modern-day houses--which today are made of all kinds of materials, have varying shapes and range from grass huts to brick and stone-tile thatched houses--with nyeki ya nthande (a kind of indigenous grass). And so, if we rely upon rites of passage or initiation ceremonies to sustain our cultural themes, what happens when those rites and initiation ceremonies are no longer observed? Today there are generations of Akamba who have not gone through the traditional initiation ceremonies in the process of becoming adults. For example, in the early 1950s most Akamba boys in Machakos were having surgical circumcision in modern medical hospitals and dispensaries.

Therefore, a proper view of culture cannot afford to be static. Oliver observed rightly that, "... no culture can be so rigid that alternatives within the system do not exist ..." (1965:422). Even to argue, as Huntingford

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7. Nyeki ya nthande is a kind of indigenous grass which traditional Akamba used for building and thatching their grass huts. Today it is almost a vanished species.
(1963) and Prins (1952) did, that the common cultural forms found among many African peoples—which include such practices as cattle keeping, descent, age-set and circumcision, councils of elders, use of the bow and arrow, milking by women, making of butter and tattooing—demonstrate a common origin is not far away from advocating a static (synchronic) view of culture. It was Thomas Spear who contended that such common practices cannot be "used to assess cultural propinquity. Such practices are determined as much by climate and ecology as by culture and when people move they adjust their economy and culture accordingly" (1982:8). An Akamba Christian theologian or educator cannot afford the luxury of some western cultural anthropologists who continue to treat the African like a museum piece. Time has not stopped in Africa. And so, synchronic orientations should be avoided, for not only are they enemies to history and change but they underestimate the ability of people to innovate as their minds interact with the inevitable changes of their different environments. Change in society is inevitable and must be reckoned with. At this juncture, we need to establish the theoretical rationale for change.

**Theoretical Rationale**

Earlier in the study (Chapter II), we talked about the need for order and meaning as a universal human container. The sociologist Peter Berger argues that,
Thus, for humans meaning in life is deeply rooted in orderliness. However, we must also point out that what is orderly and meaningful is a definition of society. Each society from its own worldview assumptions knows when their society is in a state of orderliness or equilibrium. In other words, order in society means members are able to sense that things are not only under control but that they are functioning in accordance with the expectations of all. It is in this sense that order can be perceived of as a kind of sociological status quo—simply the accepted normal (automatic) way of living for a given society. This is what Clyde Kluckhohn means when he states that,

The smooth working of all societies depends upon individuals not having to think about many of their acts. They carry out their specialized functions better if much of their behavior is or less automatic reaction to a standardized situation in a socially appropriate fashion (1949:213).

However, when this order, or smooth working of society, gets threatened by forces from within or without, then change becomes inevitable. Change, regardless of its source, is perceived as a threat and challenge to the status quo and the existing model of reality. When change threatens any society, it is the role of the society's model
of reality to provide adequate explanation concerning the change. Thus, any form of change in society is an attack to the society's worldview. For example, in the decade of the 1890s some Akamba, under the guidance of Kimatu of Mwala, Machakos, using the weapons of magic, witchcraft, bows and arrows, launched a battle against the invading British who at that time were using sophisticated firearms. Previously, the Wakamba had fearlessly fought the neighboring Masai and won great victories. With similar assumptions, they approached the British with confidence and trust in their shrewd weaponry. However, in the presence of the British, the Akamba warriors were like flies on the back of an elephant. In great power the British marched into Mwala, burnt the villages at Kimatu's residence and took away cattle and goats. The British also led other military expeditions with the consequence that "Kilungu, Mukaa, Mbooni, and Kangundo as Machakos district was brought effectively under British overrule" (Tignor 1976:20).

After the conquest, Akamba beliefs in the power of magic, witchcraft and bows and arrows were greatly affected. Thus, the external military power of the British was not only an attack on Akamba bows and arrows but much more on their worldview. And since change in people always begins in their minds, the Akamba began to be suspicious of their worldview. In other words, they began to doubt the ability of their mental models of reality to deal adequately
or respond efficiently to new phenomena. In a sense, the Akamba worldview paradigm was being faced by what Thomas Kuhn, talking about scientific discoveries, refers to as "anomalies or counterinstances" (1962:77). An anomaly is understood as a crisis phenomenon which an existing model of reality is incapable of explaining or assimilating. The awareness of anomaly in a society "opens a period in which conceptual categories are adjusted until the initially anomalous has became the anticipated" (Kuhn 1962:64).

And so change is bound to occur when a society's equilibrium is under threat and the members of society feel that the existing model is inadequate to explain the anomaly in a way that results in evoking behavioral responses which meet the community's felt needs. Secondly, changes in the people's worldview may be precipitated by external changes in the ecological and social environment. Among the Akamba drought and famine have remained among the primary ecological and socio-environmental changes. These enemies of the environment force changes at the worldview level. And so, in order to maintain cultural equilibrium under which society can continue to interact effectively and meaningfully with the environment, the worldview must readjust itself to handle the change. However, when ecological and socio-environmental changes occur more rapidly than the modification of the worldview, it results
in what can be described as "cognitive dissonance" between the demands of the environment and the ability of the society's worldview to respond adequately.

Thirdly, change in people's worldview may occur as a result of logical and rational tensions within the cognitive structure. Increased rational tensions may lead to a foundational breakdown in the existing model(s) of reality. However, we must point out that the presence or creation of a new mental model of reality (or paradigm) which is logical and rational is not all that is required for a new model to succeed. In other words, logico-structural integrity of a cognitive model is not sufficient credibility.

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8. The term "cognitive dissonance" was coined by psychologist Leon Festinger to mean the tendency of a person to reject or deny information that challenges his preconceptions. Normally as humans we don't want to hear ideas or consider things that may upset our carefully worked out structure of beliefs. Cf. Toffler 1970:314).

9. The classic study on the nature and formation of paradigms has been done by Thomas Kuhn, 1962). Reflecting on Kuhn's discussion on the subject, Harvie Conn has described paradigms as

... theoretical agendas [frameworks] created by the interaction of our worldviews with a particular field of science in a particular culture and time by a particular community. Paradigms flow out of our worldviews. They come closer to the surface-level of reality and, of necessity, exist farther away from the worldview core. Their links with the particular worldview are clearer in one thinker than in another, read between the lines more easily in one place than in another. Paradigms are organizations of a theoretical sort in terms of which their proponents perceive reality (1984:49).
for the new model to earn societal approval. Hence, theoretical integrity is not final, but the field test is. Thus, changes in "human thinking are not created by new information but by new paradigms that allow more information to be fitted more fully and adequately" (Conn 1984:54). The new paradigm(s) must be tested on how it/they enable members of a society to meet the demands of daily life in meaningful adaptation. Thus, success of the new paradigm is judged by its ability to establish order and meaning in the context of societal equilibrium. In other words, for a new paradigm to be accepted, "... it must show that it can solve the problems that led to the crisis of the old paradigm, without creating a larger set of problems to solve" (Conn 1984:171).

Primarily change in worldview occurs in the processes of assimilation and accommodation. Assimilation is a concept borrowed from the field of biology. For example, biologists talk about "genetic assimilation," which refers to the "incorporation into the genetic system of characteristics which were initially allied to some interreaction with the environment" (Piaget 1971:4). In a

10. In the past psychologists and physiologists as well used the term "association" rather than "assimilation." For example, Pavlov's dog associates the sound of a ringing bell with getting food and then begins to salivate as though the food was already there. However, the term was later found lacking, hence the conditioned reflex was nothing else but a single process picked from the center of a much wider and more complex process.
wide sense, the concept refers to the integration of external elements into a previously existing structure. It is Jean Piaget who used his biological orientation to contend that assimilation is a vital part in the process of knowing. For example, society's mental structures may respond to new ideas by assimilating them to its own structures. When such happens, the previous structures

... may remain unaffected or else be modified to a greater or lesser degree by this very integration, but without any break of continuity with the former state—that is, without being destroyed and simply by adapting themselves to the new situation. . . .

Assimilation, thus defined in very general functional terms, plays a necessary part in all knowledge (Piaget 1971:4-5).

The term "incorporation" has also been used to carry a similar meaning as assimilation.

Closely tied to the concept of assimilation is the term "accommodation." While assimilation can be viewed as the process of grafting external elements (ideas) onto an existing structure, accommodation, on the other hand, is used to mean the modification of a structure by the elements it assimilates. For Piaget cognitive adaption consists of an equilibrium between assimilation and accommodation. To explain the relationship of the two concepts, he says that a new element is assimilated if it is integrated to a previous structure without destroying it. However, if instead of the new element destroying the old structure it ends up modifying the new, then in this we shall say that there has
been an accommodation in the assimilation process. "The accommodation is thus inseparable from the assimilation, and it might be said by reciprocation that every assimilation is accompanied by accommodation" (1971:172).

For our own purposes Piaget's concept of accommodation seems to be best represented by terms such as "modification" or "reconstruction." In other words, if changes cannot be assimilated into existing models of reality, the next option is for society to modify or reconstruct a model capable of handling the changes. This is commonly what is referred to as a paradigm shift or worldview change. Paradigm shifts become necessary when the culturally-patterned perception of reality in any given society is deemed incapable of serving as an adequate explanation system of the crisis in question. Thomas Kuhn puts it thus:

The decision to reject one paradigm is always simultaneously the decision to accept another, and the judgement leading to that decision involves the comparison of both paradigms with nature [reality] and with each other (1962:77).

Before leaving this point of the theoretical rationale for change, it needs to be pointed out that valid justification of any discussion on worldview change is the assumption that worldviews are dynamic and elastic, as opposed to static and mechanical. This organic assumption of the nature of worldviews, accompanied by a society's conviction that an existing model of reality is incapable of maintaining the internal consistence offer the necessary
conditions for worldview change. For example, the
geocentric astronomic paradigm which existed in Europe
before Copernicus and Galileo provides a case in point.
Given the development of astronomy at that time, the
geocentric model was an adequate explanation of the universe
as society understood it. However, as the paradigm was

... applied to more and more astronomic
phenomena it had to be continually tinkered with
to make it conform to them. It became so
cumbersome by the end of the mid-Renaissance that
some astronomers began to doubt whether the
Ptolemaic model was in its broad outline
isomorphic with nature and they began to seek
radically different solutions to explain astrono­
mic and related terrestrial events such as the
movements of the sun, the stars, the planets
especially, and the changes of the seasons. The
result was a shift to a new heliocentric
astronomic paradigm (Kearney 1984:54).

The medieval Church branded as heretics and burnt alive
some of those who adapted to the new heliocentric paradigm;
hence it seemed incompatible with other aspects of Christian
teaching. Today we can look back at the medieval Church and
say that she, like the majority of her contemporaries, was
always open-minded to new ideas. However, as Christian
sociologist Peter Berger observes, "Ideas do not succeed in
history by virtue of their truth but of their relationship
to specific social processes" (1977:27), or put differently,
"Ideas neither triumph nor fail in history because of their
intrinsic truth or falsity" (1977:58). Looked at from this
perspective, then, the behavior of the medieval Church was
not out of touch with this sociological truth!
Furthermore, the shift to heliocentrism meant a threat to the established geocentric position. Geocentrism was the status quo of the inhabitants of a ptolemaic universe. No wonder the majority of the people were terrified of the insignificance they would have in a Copernican heliocentric universe. Indeed, many a man and woman holding onto the geocentric position could not help being scared to death by the thought of themselves getting lost in such a large heliocentric universe. One of the first books to popularize heliocentrism, *Conversation on the Plurality of Worlds* (1769), Fontenelle speaks of a French lady who, after hearing that it is the earth which revolves around the sun and not vice versa, expressed her shock and said, "In such a large universe I would be lost, no longer knowing where I am; I would be nothing. Such an earth is so terribly small" (quoted in Kearney 1984:132).

The shift to heliocentrism had tremendous impact not only on the Church, as mentioned above, but also on the average person. Galileo, whom the medieval Church branded as heretic, was forced to recant his "new heresy;" and also, the Church went further in trying and burning at the stake Giordano Bruno. If such action tells us anything, it is that worldview change or paradigm shifts are not to be taken lightly. It is like asking people to let go the only world they know, and for sure, they are not going to do so unless they are convinced that their existing model(s) of reality
is (are) incapable of providing adequate explanation of the world as they know it. This is why many of the changes in traditional Akamba worldview can best be understood as primarily resulting from a clash with the western worldview.

**Clash of Worldviews Make Change Inevitable**

We have already pointed out that worldviews are primarily idea systems. However, when one society interacts with another, the initial contact point is not at the ideological level but rather at the explicit institutional level. In other words, a society enters another by introducing into the host society the institutions the society has developed using its own implicit theoretical worldview assumptions. However, it needs to be pointed out that foreign institutions are not independently transferred to another context without their accompanying supporting idea systems. I even wonder whether a given society can use institutions from another without buying into or borrowing the other society's theoretical structures that produced the institutions in the first place. For example, at the turn of the century medical and educational schooling institutions were brought to Ukambani from the western world. Initially, the Akamba reluctantly accepted those as new additions to their institutional life. Little did they know
that some day they will have to choose whether to accept not only the new institutions but also the underlying worldview (theoretical structure) that brought, say, the school system to them. Other new institutions introduced to traditional Akamba include western technological and economic institutions. Those included new ways of utilizing man's resources, especially in production.

A social institution which employed the use of police people for social control was introduced when the British built police stations in Ukambani (cf. Mbiti 1966:18). At the surface level, these new institutions were primarily seen by the Akamba as a way to "civilization" and better ways of living. And indeed, looked at from certain perspectives, they were. However, the foreign institutions were not just introducing change at the explicit levels of the culture, since for their survival as institutions they must be reinforced or supported by the society's idea system. Thus, the introduction of any new institutions to a culture is an attack on that society's worldview. Also, the continued presence of a foreign institutions in any society is the best way to reinforce and maintain some--if not all--of the major aspects of the foreign worldview.

Therefore, when we talk about a clash of worldviews we are not so much concerned with the West's introduction of explicit cultural institutions to Ukambani, but rather we are probing beneath these outward changes in an attempt to
understand how the respective worldviews interacted with each other at their fundamental implicit levels. For example, Jackson observes that in the course of the 19th century, the cultural outlook of the Kamba people was altered by such new factors as the contact of societies and exchange of ideas (1971:19). As a result, several Akamba traditional views of reality have been greatly influenced by their clash with western worldviews. Most of these are discussed below in some detail in Chapter IV, "Contemporary Akamba Worldview." However, for our purpose at this juncture, we refer to two of these traditional Akamba views as examples.

First, there is the traditional Akamba view of a supernaturally-run universe verses the western secular humanistic view of a universe run by scientific natural laws. The Akamba live in a universe controlled by spiritual powers. As Odhiambo Okite observes, the belief in a spiritually-controlled universe is not unique for Akamba but is mainly a traditional

... African world-view, in which human events are seen to be primarily controlled by spiritual forces. Birth, death, health, harvest, road-accidents, thunderstorms, political elections, are not merely physico-natural phenomena, but purposive acts of spiritual powers, evil or benevolent (Okite 1973:122).

Living in a universe where everything is under the control of supernatural powers is in direct contrast to most western worldviews. One can imagine what went on in the minds of
the Akamba as their weaponry of magic, witchcraft and bows and arrows could not withstand British firearms. The confrontations of Akamba with the British, both in 1895-99 and the destocking uproar of 1937-38,\textsuperscript{11} ended in submission and surrender. The two incidents led them to doubt the models of reality they were functioning with. For them a defeat from the British was a demonstration of the superiority of the British gods. Most likely the British viewed their victory as resulting from the use of more advanced and technologically developed military weapons, irrespective of the role of the supernatural.

Secondly, there is a worldview conflict in regard to the Akamba and western views on the relationship between "self and other." Earlier we saw that the West perceives "self" as primarily distinct from "other" (Kearney 1984:153) while traditional Akamba would refer to the relationship between "self and other" not in terms of "self and other" but rather as "self in society" or even "self in nature." Anthropologist Edward Hall argues that the dichotomistic duality comes naturally if one is of an American-European heritage (1983:124). Probably this explains why sociologist Peter Berger cannot seem to see the process of modernization

\textsuperscript{11} The uproar in reference here resulted from a campaign launched by the British colonial government to help (force) the Akamba people to reduce their livestock. For example, the land commission decided that "... a family of five needed six head of cattle ..." (Munro 1975:220).
taking place without dichotomizing social life between the remote impersonal megastructures (e.g. the state, large economic corporations and labor unions) and the private sphere in which an individual finds meaning (1977:133). But to traditional Akamba, reality is best perceived within the context of an interdependence relationship. For example, while the West dichotomizes between the secular and sacred, traditional Akamba see no dichotomy between the two. To a traditional Mukamba all of life is lived in the sacred domain; hence, as pointed out above, the universe is believed to be controlled by supernatural powers. And so, the presence in their midst of a foreign people who differ categorically in their views of the relationship between "self and other" posed both a conflict and a problem to traditional worldview which is primarily characterized by supernaturalism and interdependence.

With the clash of worldview we undoubtedly expect traditional Akamba worldview to come up with ways of responding to the conflicting forces. And just as a society touches another first through its explicit observable institutions, so the host society begins to assimilate the new explicit institutions, even though the two societies may be ideologically miles apart. For this reason, changes in explicit Akamba traditional culture became inevitable, particularly as regards their survival as a people.
Change in Explicit Culture Inevitable

It is almost needless to argue for the inevitability of explicit changes among the Akamba, first because meaningful adaptation within the context of their environment must of necessity involve adequate response to the external forces. Second, Akamba traditional worldview has been found flexible enough to assimilate necessary changes.

The Kikamba language is itself a good example of the flexibility inherent in Akamba traditional worldview. For instance, the modern-day Kikamba language has numerous words that have been assimilated (incorporated) as a result of the tribe's contact with English culture. Words like "kavati (cupboard)," "lelu (railway)" and "mutokaa (motorcar)" are obviously rooted and transliterated from the English language. Other words have been assimilated into Kikamba via Swahili. For example, "kisiko" ("kijiko" in Swahili, "spoon" in English) and "mundu" ("mtu" in Swahili, "person" in English) are primarily rooted in Swahili. Of course, it needs to be pointed out that the language of any people cannot afford to be static; neither can it be.

Unfortunately, the 19th-century anthropological linguists (e.g. etymologist Max Mull, 1823-1900) with their static views of culture had their influence on language. Harvie Conn observes that they focussed their attention "on words rather than on speech-acts-in-context. A sharp contrast was assumed to exist between thought and its symbolic
expression. Words existed as brute facts, straightforward formal correspondences of reality" (1984:71). However, this synchronic view of language cannot be accepted any more. Of course, synchronic linguistics which take seriously the etymological constructs of words should have priority when we are thinking in terms of history; however, when we are concerned with contemporary meaning diachronic linguistics should have more priority. This is because giving preeminence to the etymology of a word is not necessarily a safe guide to meaning. To illustrate our point here we refer to Harvie Conn, who uses some examples from the English language. For example, he asks,

Does "person" basically mean "mask," since the English word "person" derives from the Latin term persona ("mask")? When Englishmen say "Good-bye," do they "basically" mean "God be with you"? The etymology of a word . . . is not a statement about its meaning but about its history (1984:114).

Besides, a people's language is not merely a society's verbal means of communication but is indeed the philosophical carrier of a people's culture. As an anthropological linguist Clyde Kluckhohn states that,

Any language is more than an instrument of conveying ideas, more even than an instrument for working upon the feelings of others and for self-expression. Every language is also a means of categorizing experience. . . . A language is, in a sense, a philosophy (1949:144,146).

And so through their language, and in other areas as well, the Akamba have shown that they are capable of
assimilating change. A study done on cultural adaptation among the Akamba led Oliver to conclude that, "The Kamba are not resistant to change unless the change is phrased in terms of coercion; indeed, in many areas, they welcome it. It is profoundly unusual for a Kamba to talk about the 'good old days,'..." (1965:424). While Oliver feels that it is "unusual for a Kamba to talk about the good old days" yet almost every Mukamba elder knows that there are certain aspects of life today that are worse off than what they used to be in the olden days. But in no way can the tribe be described as one that is heavy-laden with nostalgia anytime they remember the good old days.

It is true that many adults do remember a time when village communities were more supportive and neighbors were more candid and transparent with each other; however, it would be a bit too presumptuous to regard such times as having been characterized at all times by happiness. There is no time, nor experience, that misses its share of sorrows. Peter Berger's comparisons of the sufferings of traditional people with that of modern makes an observation which I think is applicable to the Akamba. Berger isolates one kind of suffering which he says was not part of the experience of traditional people; this is the suffering that "moderns have come to know as alienation" (1977:61). He observes that,
Community was real and all-embracing, for better or for worse. The individual was thus rarely, if ever, thrown back upon himself. There were few, if any, uncertainties about the basic cognitive and moral framework of life, hardly any crises of meaning, practically no crises of identity. Individuals knew their world, and they knew who they were. Institutional order, collective meanings, and individual identity were firmly and reliably integrated in the sacred order provided by religious tradition. Human beings were at home in reality—even if, perhaps especially if, this home was often a less than satisfactory place.

Modernity, by contrast, is marked by homelessness. The forces of modernization have descended like a gigantic steel hammer upon all the old communal institutions—clan, village, tribe, region—distorting or greatly weakening them, if not destroying them altogether (Berger 1977:60-61).

Even though the impact of modernity upon the Akamba may not reflect Berger's description at every point, yet there are sufficient resemblances to make the claim undeniably applicable. In many ways, the Akamba portray a society characterized by loose cultural commitment on the part of individuals; instead they have "a relatively high degree of cultural adaptability" (Oliver 1965:423). To many of them, the society has provided for them a built-in willingness to absorb new ideas. For example, except for some few ones, most Akamba have left their initiation schools and adapted to the western schools. We pointed out earlier that in traditional life the evenings were the prime times for education. Normally,

12. For a fuller examination of the homelessness of modern society refer to Berger 1974).
the men and boys sit outside in the thome, with a fire in the middle. Women and girls stay inside the houses to do domestic work. Each group has time to tell news, narrate stories and instruct the young while the food is being prepared. Story-telling and setting riddles are never done during the day-time, but always at night. This is the most important time for giving traditional education, and story-telling forms an integral part of life (Mbiti 1966:7).

One method of education, particularly the traditional mathematical puzzles called milimano, were particularly aimed to provide training in cognitive competence. But today, most Akamba boys and girls spent their whole days at school. The modern educational school has replaced the traditional thome and story-telling schools. As Alan Beals and George and Louise Spindler say, the present western schooling system is preparing many Akamba young people to

13. Thome was an outdoor fireplace in the traditional Akamba homestead. It served, particularly for the males, as the primary center for education and cultural transmission.

14. Milimano (plural)—We hereby define milimano as Akamba traditional methods of training in different problem-solving techniques. As a young lad, our moments of recreation included competing to see who would be the first to entangle or solve a given milimano (singular). For example, one common Akamba traditional milimano goes like this: "Imagine that you have the responsibility of providing a boat-ride to three passengers, namely, a lion, a goat and muio wa ukwasi (a bundle of sweet potato vines) across a flooded river. However, as you begin to plan how to carry out your task, you discover that the boat can only take one or two passengers at a time (with the crew captain included). Furthermore, if you choose to take the lion across first, by the time you return the goat will have eaten the ukwasi. Or if you decide to take across the ukwasi first, then by the time you return the lion will have eaten the goat. How, then, do you get "your passengers across," remembering that in your absence the lions eat goats and goats eat ukwasi?
"take their places in a very different kind of world than the one their parents grew up in" (1973:239).

In the area of economy, basic changes have begun to show. While modern-day Akamba continue to maintain a mixed economy of farming and livestock, yet a cash economy is gradually taking over. Also, Christianity, although a newcomer to Akamba traditional life, is increasingly claiming the allegiance of more people than traditional religion. However, one of the areas where changes are highly noticeable is in the political area. Kenya's political independence from the British has had profound impact upon Akamba social life; hence, the spirit of nationhood, not tribalhood, must now regulate social behavior. Also, most of the old customs of child rearing—especially the grandparents' way of story-telling sessions—have become almost irrelevant to present-day parents. One would scarcely ever hear parents using traditional lullabies. It is along these lines that John Mbiti observed among the Akamba that,

The impact of rapid social change is being felt in the country, and more and more people (especially among the younger generation) find themselves torn between the world of traditional life and the world of paid labour and technology. They are searching for new foundations which cannot be found exclusively in either world, and some form of religious and cultural syncretism seems inevitable during this period of the blending of civilizations (1966:20).
CONCLUSION

The impact of westernization, Christianity and modernization among the Akamba is highly noticeable. However, most of it is largely in explicit culture, and we can still say there are many implicit aspects of traditional worldview which have been able to hold on up to the present. In other words, there is evidence of unbelievable continuity in traditional Akamba worldview. The flexibility in Akamba traditional worldview is primarily responsible for the continuities.

It was Oliver who observed that,

It is noteworthy that the capacity of the Kamba to handle new cultural elements has impressed observers... The Kamba culture... has been a culture undergoing constant change... a culture on the move... The Kamba were middle-men in the old coastal ivory trade, and they were, of course, strongly affected by the colonial enterprise after that. They have dealt with changes in crop types, changes in settlement patterns, changes in almost every facet of their culture. The Kamba have in fact adapted. They have done so, moreover, with a minimum of stress and strain. Despite the changes that have taken place, despite the substantial variations which exist within areas, and between areas the culture has shown great tensile strength. It has yielded, but it has not broken (1965:425).

Thus, despite the noticeable cultural changes, there is much traditional Akamba worldview that continues to survive. It is primarily, the elements of continuity in Akamba traditional worldview that provide the best framework for our Christian theological contextualization. This is why we
must move on now and examine in our next chapter the traditional in contemporary Akamba worldview.
CHAPTER IV

CONTemporary AKAMBA WORLDVIEW

INTRODUCTION

We need to state again that the need to examine the traditional in contemporary Akamba worldview is already overdue. For over a century now Akamba traditional culture has continually interacted with westernization and modernization. As already pointed out, it was Oliver who observed that, despite the many challenges from external forces, "... the [Akamba] culture has shown great tensile strength. It has yielded, but it has not broken" (1965:425). Therefore the question we raise now is, "Why has the culture not broken?" There is no doubt that the processes of westernization and modernization have resulted in drastic changes within explicit Akamba behavior. As pointed out above, modern Akamba no longer gather around their ititu na mathembo (traditional altars) of worship for prayers and the offering of sacrifices, they no longer go through traditional rites of passage be they initiation or
puberty rituals, nor do they any longer use the traditional homestead thome (p. 206) as their main educational center. Citations making reference to the breakdown of Akamba cultural institutions could go on and on.

But has the breakdown in Akamba traditional institutions resulted in the destruction of traditional assumptions of reality? Here we want to contend that the implicit assumptions of reality continue to hang on in spite of revolutionary changes which the society has gone through. It is the discovery and the understanding of the elements of continuity in Akamba traditional worldview that shall posit the necessary framework for effective Christian theological contextualization. Earlier in the study, we pointed out that the worldview assumptions in which western modern technology is built are primarily rooted in secular humanism and are therefore incapable of providing an adequate framework for an Akamba Christian theology.

However, we do not want to undermine the influence of westernization and modernization of Akamba traditional worldview. Indeed, modern-day changes are forcing Akamba to ask and respond to questions which never faced their ancestors. Akamba, like other Kenya ethnic peoples, face the need for guidance, especially in identity verification. "Who am I in a changing world?" is a crucial identity question in Ukambani today. Perhaps this is why the cultural analyst Guy Arnold says,
Kenya's greatest cultural problem is that of selection—and selection both ways: what, for example, to retain from western cultural influences; and what earlier African customs have to be rescued from partial eclipse, revived or possibly modified so they may make their full contribution to the country as it consolidates its post-independence identity (1981:6).

Certainly, there may be those who may ask whether what is known about traditional Akamba worldview is not sufficient for our Christian theological needs. Without undermining the studies on the Akamba done by men like Lindblom (1920), Jacobs (1961), Davis (1968), Jackson (1971) and Munro (1975), it needs be understood that these were but etic perspectives, observations and interpretations. Such perspectives are necessary for comparative purposes. However, the need for an insiders analysis of Akamba cultural worldview is desperately overdue. Therefore, as a Mukamba who has known Akamba culture for over thirty-five years, I will take what has been written on the Akamba and will emically and intuitively\(^1\) analyze what I consider to be the contemporary Akamba worldview.

In our examination of Akamba contemporary traditional worldview there is much that will sound like common knowledge. Some Akamba readers may even wonder why I should take the pains to bring out the obvious. However, part of

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1. Intuition here is used as Clifford Geertz (1983) and Thomas Kuhn (1962) defines it "as knowledge or wisdom gained through experiential living amongst one's people."
my aim is not so much to increase or diminish misunderstanding (which may even be more important) as it is to enhance appreciation of the underlying traditional cultural beliefs, if perchance some Akamba may be motivated to be more inquisitive about those things we take for granted. It was Edward Hall who said,

The analysis of one's own culture simply makes explicit the many things we take for granted in our everyday lives. Talking about them, however, changes our relation with them. We move into an active and understanding correspondence with those aspects of our existence which are all too frequently taken for granted or which sometimes weigh heavily on us. Talking about them frees us from their restraint (1959:140).

Therefore, an analysis of contemporary Akamba worldview has led to the identification of eight mental models of reality, six of which are going to be our central concern in this chapter. However, before we examine these contemporary Akamba mental models of reality we must clear some clouds that have befallen the Akamba (and indeed many other African tribes) in regards to their being described as "an animistic community." The average western cultural student, whether he/she is an ethnographer or an anthropologist, will tend to define animism as a non-monotheistic religious system which is built on a people's assumption that the whole universe is permeated by various kinds of supernatural forces. In such a universe man's life is shared with the life force that activates all living things. In his daily interaction with an environment is believed to be filled with spiritual
supernatural forces, therefore, man is forced to develop a social worldview that has a heavily dominated sacred orientation.

Indeed, this is the experience of the Mukamba with the exception of his belief in Mulungu. The Mukamba world is but a religious universe, and his deepest desire is to live in harmony with the whole creation in a state of cosmological equilibrium. It is then out of this background that the term "animism" is re-defined, this time from an African perspective as nothing else but a worldview system that has religion as a model of reality. Indeed, the relationship between religion and worldview is so important for our whole discussion that we must, of necessity, look at it before examining Akamba contemporary models of reality.

RELIGION AND WORLDVIEW

As we begin our examination of the relationship between religion and worldview, we cannot go far without finding the need to respond to questions from the field of science and philosophy. This should not surprise us. From our discussion in Chapter II we found that worldviews are essentially epistemologies, and so it should not be

2. Mulungu is the official traditional term the Akamba use to refer to "the one supreme God" (Kimilu 1962). This and other Akamba theistic terms are discussed at length in Chapter VIII.
difficult to see how religion and science are closely related. While each aims to respond to its set of questions, each has dimensions that concern us in our worldview study.

Therefore, in our examination of religion and worldview (or rather of religion in worldview), we will center our discussion on two areas: (1) the relationship between religion and science and (2) the role of religion in society.

Religion and Science

The concepts of religion and science represent two large domains which Alfred Whitehead described as "the two strongest general forces which influence man" adding that, "When we consider what religion is for mankind and what science is, it is no exaggeration that the future course of history depends upon the decision of this generation as to the relations between them" (1925:260). In light of this, our statements about the relationship between religion and science is but a tiny scratch at the edges of an exhaustive field of study.\(^3\) However, for our purposes at this juncture, some rather general definitions of the two concepts should serve our goal.

For example, religion broadly defined "is total

\(^3\) For an exhaustive analysis of issues in science and religion the reader is advised to refer to Barbour, 1966.
life-orientation in response to what is deemed worthy of ultimate concern and devotion" (Barbour 1966:10). However, science as a concept is a more difficult term to define. Stephen Toulmin refers to the central aim of science as the "search for understanding—a desire to make the course of Nature not just predictable but intelligible—and this has meant looking for rational patterns of connections in terms of which we can make sense of the flux of events" (1961:99).

In a similar vein, Ian Barbour states the primary goal of science as "to understand nature" and adds that "the empirical confirmation of predictions is only one element in the testing of theories" (1966:149). It seems obvious that these two general definitions of religion and science are reflective of a western platonic dualism/dichotomy. In other words, religion is hereby understood as the domain which is involved with matters deemed worthy of ultimate concern: whereas science's primary task it to understand nature.

It was Bufford (1981) who suggested that with the increased acceptance of a platonic dualism—this on one hand is a secularized scientific theory based on materialistic naturalism and on the other is the domain of transempirical phenomena—then a two leveled worldview began to emerge (quoted in Bensley 1982:304).

In this case, then, religion and science have traditionally been perceived by the West not only as different domains but also as systems, each with its own assumptions and seeking
to respond to its own set of questions. For example, questions that spring from the world of sensory perception are within the jurisdiction of science. Traditionally, such questions have been dominated by empirical experience within the natural realm. Questions that have to do with, say, God, spirits, faith, miracles, sacred, origins and destiny are transempirical and therefore other-worldly. In western epistemologies questions like these are almost under the exclusive domain of religion.

Traditionally the West tended to divide life experiences (reality) as either empirical or transempirical with nothing in the middle. This type of thinking can be traced back to the time of Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) who is regarded as "The philosopher who systematized the Enlightenment mentality . . ." (Conn 1984:24), even though it was Emile Durkheim (1853-1917), the father of sociology, who dichotomized reality into two categories—the sacred and the profane. He saw the sacred domain as a "unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say things set apart and forbidden . . ." (Durkheim 1915:47).

Over the years science (the domain of empiricism) continued to receive acceptance within the western world to the point that religion (the sacred domain) was being overruled and to the minds of some replaced by science. This is what one perceives at least through the eyes of
sociologist Peter Berger who argues that,

"... little is gained, in my opinion, by
calling, say, modern science a form of religion.
If one does that, one is subsequently forced to
define in what way modern science is different
from what has been called religion by everyone
else ..." (1967:177).

The value credited to industrial technology and
scientific rationalism by the West has created for them what
would be referred to as a mono-empirical perspective to life
experiences. Indeed, there are some who, under the
conviction that life can be described wholly in physical
terms, have concluded that "... man is essentially a
complex deterministic mechanism explainable in physico-
chemical terms" (Barbour 1966:6). However, this type of
reasoning cannot be pushed too far without jeopardizing
something that is extremely fundamental in human life. It
seems to me that the role of religion in human life is
indispensable.

Role of Religion in Society

Religion, as that domain that concerns itself with the
transempirical realities in human life, must be awarded a
special role in society. From a strictly human level, it
can be argued that human beings are more than empirical
entities. Man's hopes, experiences, spirit and aspirations
cannot be confined exclusively to the empirical domain.
There are many dimensions of human existence that cannot be
reduced to the empirical level. An African theologian Osadolor Imasogie describes man as a

... link between the physical and the metaphysical and he is not complete unless the two levels of his existence are kept in balance. Man transcends the natural order and he knows this in his self-transcendence, and yet realizes that the very core of his being is immersed in the natural order. In it he moves and has his being but it is not the sum total of his being. This tension must be kept and any attempt to reduce man to any one of these levels or to ignore any of them misses the mark and does not treat man as he is in real life (1983b:33).

In other words, there is a transcendental or transempirical dimension in human life. When, say, a physical scientist talks about human needs such as the origin of man, the human spirit or the destiny of man, he is addressing questions that are outside the theoretical and professional competence of science. These are questions which are beyond scientific capability.

There are dimensions in life that defy scientific explanations. Take, for instance, the issue of death (Berger 1967). Regardless of the most sophisticated devices the best of human technology⁴ has ever developed for the

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⁴ And as I write this, two of the most sophisticated and complicated cardiological operations are taking place. One at Loma Linda University Medical Center (Los Angeles, U.S.A.) where Dr. Leonard Bailey, Director of the Cardio-Thoracic Surgical Research Laboratory, has finished transplanting "the heart of a young baboon into the chest of a 14-day old girl" (Greenwood 1984:1). The second is the "insertion of an artificial heart to William Schroeder (the second human being ever to use an artificial heart after Denny Clark of Salt Lake City, Utah, U.S.A."
preservation of human life, death continues to reign over all mortals. It can be asserted unequivocally that the claims of science to offer ultimate security to man are basically presumptuous, and there is no way modern "enlightened" man can do without religion. It was Hans Reichenbach who stated that,

The Period of Enlightenment . . . did not abandon religion; but it transformed religion into a creed of reason it made God a mathematical scientist who knew everything because he had perfect insight into the laws of reason. No wonder the mathematical scientist appeared as a sort of a little god whose teaching had to be accepted as exempt from doubt (1969:43-44).

The process of transforming "religion into a creed of reason" is but a way of ascribing to human reason the authority to handle the transempirical dimensions of life. It was then when man began the attempts to take God's place, and before long aspects of life that were once under the domain of religion began to be increasingly under the reign of secular humanism. But much of the attempts are futile if not convincing. Great realist thinkers in history, men like Carl Gustav Jung (1875-1961), could not afford to dismiss the vital role of religion in human experience. To Jung, religion is key to the proper understanding of mankind. He used the concept of myth which to him means the "intermediate stage between consciousness and the unconscious" to point out that it is from the unconscious that "... man draws on the archetypes and verbalizes them
into the great images and symbols of myth. They lead the
individual out of time into timelessness" (Conn 1984:99). Jung's influence of Mircea Eliade's (b. 1907) analysis of
myth and religion could not be denied. From Jung, Mircea
Eliade saw collective unconscious and religious experience
as forming

... an integrating, goal-providing function
of the self. The study of the history of
religions for him was not simply a historical
discipline. It was the study of man as a living
symbol, a "metapsychoanalysis." Man must be
understood as a myth--making creature. Man seeks
meaning in a "nostalgia for eternity," a mystical
equivalent to a journey back to origins, illo
tempore, to the Golden Time (Conn 1984:99-100).

However, in spite of all, secular man continues to wrestle
with dimensions in life that are primarily religious in
nature. Modern science, with its mechanistic approach to
life and reality, have little respect for man's religious
orientation. It tends to secularize man's religiosity. But
does not man's essential nature and experience transcend the
confines of science?

Therefore, in order for humans to live in a way that
agrees with their essential make-up, they must have within
their models of reality a dimension that caters for their
transempirical needs. Hence, to deny man's religious nature
is in essence to deny part of what it means to be human. It
is this religious dimension that has been referred to by
some as a sacred model of reality (Berger 1967) which is
essential for human nature and existence. Commenting on
man's innate capacity to construct a sacred model of reality, Beattie notes that,

Everyday existence is surrounded by unpredictable and sometimes terrifying hazards, and there exists no adequate body of empirical knowledge which might enable man to cope with these hazards, or even to hope to cope with them, by means of practical, scientifically proven or provable techniques... (quoted in Bensley 1982:320).

It is due to such observations as this one from Beattie that social scientists have argued that a society's worldview must of necessity possess within its model(s) of reality an element of the transcendence that responds to people's ultimate concerns. A people's worldview must go beyond the field that science claims to cover. It must respond to questions that defy empirical and rational reasoning. As Alan Beals and George and Louise Spindler say, a people's worldview should

...provide answers to questions that have no answer. It must do this because it must succeed in convincing the membership of the cultural system that what they are called upon to do is worth doing...

The most vital portions of any system of worldview have to do with fundamental philosophical and theological questions which cannot be resolved by the methods of science. Science cannot tell us the meaning of life... (1973:116,130).

In other words, the meaning of human life has dimensions which are outside the capabilities available in scientific methods. Human life "touches on," as Berger points out,
... [two] boundaries. On this side of the boundaries is the world of everyday events, practical activity, and reason, a world in which one is at home in a self-evident way. On the other side of the boundaries is the world of the uncanny, of the "totally other," in which the assumptions of ordinary life no longer hold (1977:209).

Berger adds that,

In the secularized world view there is only one reality, pervasively rational and (at least in principle) ordinary. There are no more boundaries and the mystery of what lies beyond has been abolished. ... I believe that such a world view without transcendence must eventually collapse, because it denies ineradicable aspects of human experience (1977:210).

Thus, a society's worldview must take the inevitable transcendent dimension of human life seriously not only to avoid "eventual collapse," but also as an essential component without which it shall be ill-equipped to serve as an adequate explanation system. Indeed, the contemporary western renewed craving for metaphysics, mysticism, occultism and witchcraft is primarily indicative of the failure of western mechanical worldviews to respond meaningfully and adequately to man's transempirical needs.

And just as a person cannot conquer hunger by denying its existence so no matter "how much or how long man may try to repress his spiritual need by overwhelming it with the glamour of materialism, it will inexorably surge forward for attention" (Imasogie 1983b:86). Human religious dimension is central (if not the dominant human worldview!) in man's intrinsic constitution and must be recognized. It is,
therefore, the value given to the role of religion in Akamba worldview that accounts for its fundamental difference from the western worldview which is predominantly built on scientific rationalism and secular humanistic assumptions.

Religion in Akamba Worldview

As pointed out above, the Akamba people are meticulously a religious people. It is indeed this very reason that we as Akamba do not have to apologize for our firm belief in what the West (for lack of a better term) has described as an "animistic world," which, as pointed out above, is but a worldview that takes seriously the transcendental dimensions in human life. Therefore, as we examine the models that constitute contemporary Akamba worldview, it must be borne in mind that at the deepest level the world of the Akamba is predominantly a religious one.

Indeed, to talk about the Akamba religious world is unfair since it isolates religion as a separate department or system. However, when such things happen, it is primarily as an analytical tool for study purposes. Donald Jacobs correctly observed that, "... the term 'religious'

5. It is important to point out that if it would be possible to confine the study to/for Akamba readers—without finding itself in the hands of the West with its dominant allegiance to a dichotomistic-mechanistic epistemology—then such an isolation of religion would not be necessary.
is in itself misleading. The Bantu [Akamba are Bantu] have no concept of 'religion' as the Western man thinks of it, that is, as a theological system separate and distinct from other considerations" (1961:69). For the Akamba the closest word to religion is the functional term "kuthaitha (to worship)" or "uthaithi (worship)." Hence, practically everything a Mukamba does is a religious act. Dundas, who has been described by some as an authority on Akamba law, found out that, "... the tilling of the fields, the building of a house are practically acts of religion ... religion enters into the most insignificant departments and acts of the the Mukamba life" (1913:538).

It is certainly true that most of the explicit ways traditional Akamba used to carry on their religious life have been greatly influenced by westernization, modernization and Christianity. However, Akamba traditional religious beliefs continue to hang on at the implicit level. They (i.e. Akamba traditional religious beliefs) are so dominant that it may even be accurate to talk of religion as being at the center of Akamba worldview. The idea of viewing religious beliefs as constituting a people's worldview receives support from the well-known missionary anthropologist Alan Tippet. Also, Donald Jacobs, the anthropologist who pioneered study on Akamba worldview, made the observation that, "The German expression, Weltanschauung, comes much nearer to defining the concept of
the Akamba's 'religion'" (1961:69).

I affirm that the Akamba are primarily a religious people, yet I contend that for study and analytical purposes, we should regard Akamba religious beliefs as constituting the dimension in their worldview which caters for the transcendental needs in human life. It is then, with this religious background in mind, that an analysis of contemporary Akamba worldview has led to the identification of at least eight mental models of reality.6

CONTEMPORARY AKAMBA MODELS OF REALITY

We shall examine Akamba contemporary models of reality in the following order. First is the cosmological interdependence model.

Cosmological Interdependence Model

What we are referring to as the Akamba cosmological interdependence model is similar to what others like Donald Jacobs (1961) and Davis (1968) have referred to as Akamba belief in cosmological balance. In his study on Akamba cultural make-up Jacobs says,

6. There is no claim that many aspects inherent in Akamba models of reality are not explicitly or implicitly taught in Christianity. Neither do we suggest that they are not found in other African worldviews.
Perhaps the most salient feature of the Akamba's cosmological view is the belief that the world, both natural and supernatural, is a delicately balanced system, and that the highest duty of man and spirits is to maintain this balance (1961:101).

Most of the historians, anthropologists and missiologists who have studied the Akamba came to regard this theme as one of the main ones, if not the central one. However, Edgerton stands alone in his claim for "property" as the central theme of Akamba. He contends that the theme of property is the dominant one, stating that,

... they [i.e. Akamba] saw themselves and they saw others primarily in property terms. ... Of course, there are other themes that run through Kamba culture, but none explains so much of Kamba behavior as this one. These Kamba of Ngelani are African Babbitts, pursuing property and security, and apparently unable to separate the two (1971:99-100).

He adds that when "Akamba men are drinking, all they talk about is property, women gossip about property, all desire is property." Edgerton's claims have not only failed to earn the approval of other authoritative works on the Akamba, but his study on less than 126 informants reflects poor demographic sampling.

However, the place assigned to the theme of cosmological balance in Akamba everyday life makes us want to regard it as the main model of reality in Akamba worldview. For example, both traditional and modern Akamba see their lives as inseparable from nature. The drama of life involves all that which is created, and so, for a
satisfying life all creation must live together in some form of cosmological equilibrium. 7 John Mbiti observed that a Mukamba person,


... plays his part in Nature, not as a master over other creatures, but as an equal member of a vast 'community'. He can therefore establish a dialogue with them, so that he can feel their pain and joy; he can hurt them and they can take revenge on him. Such is the universe man lives ... (1966:23).

With this view of the universe, it is not difficult to see why some outsiders misinterpreted the Akamba as an animistic community. Yet as we have seen above, a more accurate image would be to represent them as a society that longs to live at peace with all creation. To a Mukamba, the whole cosmos exists in majestic balance, a well-designed harmony which must be preserved at all costs. In other words, there is a built-in interdependence in nature.

Therefore, while further examination and understanding


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7. Note that we prefer to use the concept "cosmological interdependence" to "cosmological equilibrium" primarily because the concept of equilibrium used by functionalist anthropologists like Bronislaw Malinowski (1881-1942) and A. R. Radcliffe-Brown (1882-1955) seems to perpetuate aspects of the old views of static culture from 19th-century anthropologists. There is no doubt that functionalism sought to destroy static concepts of culture by emphasizing the role of social structures in meeting man's needs. But the question we can raise is whether the view of static culture was not just replaced by a view of static social structure? This is why analysts like Harvie Conn would ask, "What realistic place did functionalism allow the dynamic aspects of social change? Functionalism placed its emphasis on cultural equilibrium; was it essentially a theory of no change rather than a theory of change? (Conn 1984:103).
of the Akamba world will soon reflect other models, yet looked at very closely, the cosmological interdependence model is central. Indeed, all other models (as we shall soon see) are but servants to work towards the cosmic harmony. Down through the centuries the Akamba have lived with one single purpose of maintaining cosmological harmony. Their view of the world is not one of exploitation but one of relationship and ecological interdependence. For example, every tree, plant and animal in the forest is perceived to have its own role to play (Jacobs 1961:116). Thus, the unity and harmony in nature is served best when everything in an interdependence fashion serves each other as it carries out its assigned role.

To the Akamba, therefore, nature is a unity, not a dichotomy. Had ethnic natural science been allowed to have its "natural" cause among the Akamba, it would not be unusual for a Mukamba naturalist (or a physicist for that matter) to exclaim, "Why split (or dichotomize) the atom? Please give it a chance! Leave it to fulfill its divinely assigned role." To the West it is primarily a dichotomistic view of nature that led to the splitting of the atom and finally to the isolation of the individual as the only one that counts. All this is rooted on Descartes's celebrated axiom, "Cogito ergo sum ('I think, therefore I am')" (Brown 1968:51). Akamba African thought would probably replace Descartes's axiom with, "I participate therefore I am."
Hence, a Mukamba is "himself" only as he serves as part of nature, being caught up in the totality of life.

However, as we contend for the centrality of Akamba belief in cosmological interdependence, we do so with the understanding that a monothematic analysis of culture has been termed inadequate by anthropologists since Opler's time (1945, 1968). Opler's inclination to a polythematic analysis of culture led him to criticize Ruth Benedict's classic monothematic configurational paradigms. But we need to point out that Ruth Benedict and other monothematic configurationalists (Mead 1949, Kroeber 1963) looked for a culture's pattern from a stylistic and aesthetic configuration (Kearney 1984:31). In other words, their goal was to analyze a culture from the vantage point of its needs and emotions rather than variations in the logic, cognition and logic of thought systems. A more recent successful use of the monothematic analysis was done of the Mexican peasant cultural behavior by Foster (1965, 1967). Foster approached Mexican peasant culture from a strictly cognitive orientation without putting too much emphasis on people's external behavior.

As for the Akamba the theme of cosmological interdependence runs throughout all cultural institutions. For example, famine in the land results from cosmic imbalance, and the only thing that can release the cosmic forces which withheld rain "is the reinstatement of cosmic
symmetry" (Jacobs 1961:109). Traditionally, religious rituals were carried out in order to maintain this cosmological interdependence. Radcliffe-Brown also affirms the use of rites of passage as one way a society uses to maintain a cosmological interdependence. He states that, "... in the performance of the rite, man has made that small contribution (which is both his privilege and his duty to do) to the maintenance of that order of the universe of which man and nature are interdependent parts" (1979:48).

One of the ways in which the interdependence of man and nature is displayed among Akamba is the way they treat animals, especially in their mythologies. Mbiti observed that the animal and human worlds are very close to one another and in the stories, fables, myths and tales, the animals often assume human characteristics (1966:4). Thus, the puppet shows in the West are to the Akamba not a new modern discovery but their old art. To them, humans share this world with animals, birds, insects, woods, stones, mountains, rivers, spirits (aimu). But that is not all, or else they would be "animists" of the worst kind. Above all they share this world with Ngai Mumbi (creator God) whose existence every Mukamba recognizes. Akamba stories show that man can "converse and establish a dialogue with other creatures. But they are subject to him, and he can do with them as he likes. All this is reflected in the stories"
(Mbiti 1966:6). Also, the Akamba use of animal names for people does not suggest that they regard animals as ontologically equal with humans but it is rather an affirmation that: (1) man is not created an isolated creature, and (2) animals possess qualities which humans can relate with. For example, some of the animal names given to people include Munyambu (lion) and Nzou (elephant), both male names.

With all the modern changes that have occurred in Ukambani, there still exists in the average Mukamba a strong belief that there is a built-in pattern in the universe that calls for cosmological equilibrium. For example, prayers for rain from both Christians and non-Christians are still directed to Ngai Mumbi (Creator God) (Mativo 1977). Some proverbs and sayings used by average Akamba adults reflect the existence of this implicit cosmological interdependence model of reality. For instance, one will hear in average

8. Akamba names are a reflection of: (1) the times, events or incidents surrounding the infant's birth, e.g. Kyalolo--a name of a male infant born when parent(s) are on journey, Mumbua--name of a female infant born during the rainy season; (2) a family's choice of a name of an elderly relative whose name they want to remember, e.g. my uncle named a son Kiia who is my fathers grandpa; (3) a behavioral trait the parents (family) would like to see become or not become the character of their grown-up child, e.g. Ngumbau--the courageous one (positive)--or Nzoka--snake (negative); (4) a name that reflects the character or physical appearance of the born infant, e.g. Muia--name of a male infant who cries a lot--or Kanini--a female name meaning small/tiny.
conversations sayings like, "Ikunda ya mundu iyosawa nungi" (literally, "a person's turn to sip cannot go to someone else") or the one we referred to earlier "Kyaa kimwe kiyuaa ndaa (one finger cannot kill a louse)." In both of these commonly used sayings one senses, especially in the latter, a belief in some cosmic order, while the former reinforces the belief in interdependence. Thus, the traditional belief in cosmic order has remained mainly unchanged and provides us with a rich base for Akamba Christian theologizing. The next Akamba implicit model of reality which is closely related to the one we have been discussing is the supernaturalic model.

**Supernaturalistic Model**

Earlier we made reference to Odhiambo Okite who stated that the African world is one in which "human events are seen to be primarily controlled by spiritual forces. Birth, death, health, harvest, road-accidents, thunderstorms, political elections, are not merely physico-natural phenomena, but purposive acts of spiritual powers, evil or benevolent" (1973:122). Similar words can be used to describe the words of a Mukamba who live in a universe where everything is under the control of supernatural powers.

According to the Wakamba the supernatural powers are mainly from the spirit world. And so our analysis of the Akamba supernatural model of reality is primarily an
examination of what they call uimuni (spirit world). To them the spirit world is part of the present and does not exist independently as a realm or a phenomena outside this world. Thus, the phrase "unseen world," meaning a realm outside our universe which is not empirically testable, would not be a precise designation of uimuni. Hence, the "world" called uimuni (spirit world) is believed to be real and is not only home to those who live there, but it can be perceived by those who have the power that penetrates uimuni. Therefore, for a Mukamba it is not accurate to talk of the spirit world as the unseen world. In this case I would recommend the use of the word "perceived" in the place of "seen," since empiricism does not exhaust perception.

For the purpose of our study, we shall attempt to discuss traditional Kamba beliefs in regard to the nature and the inhabitants of the spirit world. As we have hinted earlier, the belief in the existence of the spirit world is taken for granted. However, to conceptualize its nature has not been felt to be a necessity. John Mbiti describes the spirit world (uimuni) as "a complete copy of the physical—with mountains, rivers, fields and, cattle," and the inhabitants whom we will be discussing shortly "live in houses like ordinary people . . . or in caves. . . . They cultivate fields . . . , keep cattle, sheep, goats, and chickens . . . , and have families and propagate their race . . ." (Mbiti 1966:16). This view of the spirit world
is not unique to the Akamba.

Van Gennep observed that in many tribal peoples the spirit world is perceived as a world analogous with ours, even to the point of viewing a deceased person as one who has re-entered "again the categories of clan, age group, or occupation that he had on earth" (1960:152). It must, however, be understood that it exists at best as a conceptual world in people's minds and beliefs. And like all conceptual worlds in the mind and hearts (beliefs) of people, it influences immensely their experiential world.

Is there a "real" spirit world somewhere out there? To this question the average Mukamba would say, "yes." The reality of its existence is not verified through empirical testing but through human communion with those inhabitants who live in uimuni and also through belief which to them goes beyond empirical verification. They do not have to locate geographically the world of the spirits, but if they were required to point it out, they would respond probably like Mbiti, "... it is simply here, there, and everywhere..." (1966:16).

Pius Wakatama of Zimbabwe echoes similar words when he says, "Africans have no problem accepting the supernatural ... because their culture is not built upon scientific rationalism. To us the world of the supernatural and the world of the natural are one world" (1976:101). This is a good example illustrating one fundamental difference between
African and western epistemological assumptions.

The inhabitants of uimuni (spirit world) would be divided into about three different kinds of aimu (spirits, superhuman beings or gods). The first kind of aimu (spirits) are the first creatures which Mulungu created. The Kamba myths recognize these as being higher than man since they are "closer in time to origin" (Ndeti 1972:31). I would prefer to look at these as something similar to angels, even though traditional Kamba did not have the term "angel" in their language. In fact, one of the earlier Kamba national ethnologists points out that aimu can be referred to as gods. He talks of one iumu called Nthambi which he refers to as the traditional Kamba main goddess.

Iimu yitawa Nthambi yila niyo munene wa aimu, yitalawa ta ika . . . kwondu wa uu Akamba me ngai yoo nene yitawa Nthambi na me ngai ila nene nume yitawa Mulungu . . . ula uthaithawa mathe-mboni . . . (Kimilu 1962:126).

These aimu are believed to be the first creatures of Mumbi and therefore the first inhabitants of uimuni. They are the ones Munro has referred to as the "non-ancestral spirits" (1975:111). Traditionally some of these kind of aimu were/are regarded as capricious spirits (Lindblom 1920:214), and none dares to relate to any of them. If one has to relate with these, then the priest-doctor has to be consulted to do it on an individual's behalf.

The second kind of aimu inhabiting uimuni are made up of the spirits of the dead humans who are no longer
remembered by any of their closest living relatives. These are the ones Mbiti says have departed (died) "five generations or so" and have passed "beyond the horizon of memory" (Mbiti 1966:15). So the departed, together with the race of the spirits, populate the spirit world. It is believed that those of our old Akamba ancestors who can no longer be remembered have joined the first creatures of Mumbi and become part of the race of aimu (spirits or gods). There is a sense in which we can refer to these as the living-dead spirits who were once living humans. Kamba stories have a lot to say about these kind of aimu. They dwell in the spirit world although at times they are believed to congregate in one spot, like a high mountain, a river or by a tree. This belief in the continual existence of the soul supports Kamba belief in the immortality of the soul and the disintegration of the body (Ndeti 1972:115).

The third kind of aimu inhabiting uimuni are what have been commonly referred to by Mbiti as the living-dead of up to four-to-five generations. We may separate these from the first two groups by referring to them as the living dead "humans" to distinguish them from the living-dead spirits. This third kind of aimu is the most important group among traditional Kamba people. They are well remembered by their physically living relatives. In fact, they are not thought of as gone out of the community but as part of the community. Kamba believe that when a Kamba person undergoes
biological death he joins with his relatives and friends who have gone before and continue to live in another world (i.e. the spirit world). Unlike the Navaho Indians of North America who have no desire to establish contact with the dead (Bock 1974:377), the Akamba want to continue to relate with the departed. For the Akamba, only the bodies of humans are capable of dying since the soul continues to exist in the spirit world. Thus to the Akamba, a person's existence does not cease with physical death. This is why a statement like the one from Morton Kelsey that "Physical life and history usually provide the basis for the uniqueness of the ongoing development of human beings, but the physical existence does not exhaust human existence" (1981:37) is but common sense to the average Akamba. So any generalization about "primitive man's irrational fear of death" should be taken with a grain of salt.

According to the Kamba beliefs, members of the living dead are very powerful since following the biological death of their bodies, their continuing spirit-bodies (beings) are believed to acquire a greater knowledge of life (reality). It is believed that such knowledge uniquely equips them to give help, guidance and warnings to the living. For example, it is believed that they assist in "the process of reproduction and the forming of the foetus in the woman" (Davis 1968:48). Traditionally Akamba "sought to draw general guidance and help approaching them on such communal
matters as defense or rain through sacrificial ceremonies conducted by senior elders and women at the tree shrines (mathembo)" (Munro 1975:99). It is because of this unique and vital relationship with the living dead that makes the people feel the obligation of venerating them through certain gifts. This is what has been misunderstood by the outsider as ancestral worship. Lindblom, who observed this rightly, reports,

The sacrifice is a gift which the aimu [living-dead] need; by it also the connection with them is maintained and strengthened. The least inattention in this respect is avenged by the sending of all sorts of misfortunes down upon the negligent one, such as diseases of both men and domestic animals, and even death (Lindblom 1920:214).

The living are expected to continue the friendly and respectful relationship they shared with their departed relatives and friends before biological death claimed their bodies. They consult the living dead in matters of piety, worship, sacrifices, and family affairs. The desire of the living to want to consult the living dead does not spring only from a service-oriented secondary relationship but also from the result of a continual fine expression of a previous primary community relationship. Such a relationship cannot be regarded as worshipping them but as venerating (respecting, honoring) the living dead as part of the living community. So according to "the Kamba the libation and giving of food to the departed are tokens of fellowship,
hospitality and respect" (Mbiti 1969:12). As Akamba we may be accused of worshipping our ancestors, but we know whom we worship. True, our knowledge of the Creator God may not be complete, but at least it is a step in the right direction.

Another observation that can be brought out here is that the desire of the younger generation to want to learn from the older generation, and from the more experienced ones, should be a virtue for every human society. Among the Kamba the young learn from the older. And since biological death is not believed to destroy the unity of the community, why then should the living not continue to learn from the departed living-dead? Also looking at the process of learning from this perspective, we can understand why in a culture where biological death is perceived to be the end of a person's active involvement in communal affairs, then books written by dead members of the society continue to be used. Does not the creation of libraries affirm the human desire to want to learn from those who lived before us?

For the Kamba, our ancestors do not have to leave behind books! The living continue to benefit from the advice and experience of the living-dead as both groups continue to share a continual communal existence. Their physical bodies do not need to be present with us in order to share in the life of the community. Our discussion in Chapter VIII investigates whether Jesus Christ can be understood as our greatest ancestor who although he died
lives forever for and with the community of the redeemed.

The question regarding the "life-span" of the inhabitants of uimuni (spirit world) has hardly been addressed. Do the inhabitants of Uimuland die?! But what is meant by death in this realm? Obviously, it is not biological since that was their gateway to uimuni. If death is perceived as change of existence from one realm to another, then we may talk of the living-dead moving from their realm of existence to the second or even the third kind of aimu as we have discussed above. We must, however, admit that this was a question that the traditional Kamba never bothered to ask. Mbiti speculates that when a person moves into the world of the aimu he "can still die" (whatever he means by death), but he continues on to say, "... death is temporary for him and he can return to life [in the same realm] as often as he dies. Finally, he 'disappears' into the unknown 'Past' (Tene) ..." or mingles "with other Aimu, some of whom were once human beings but others belong to the 'race' of Aimu" (Mbiti 1966:15).

Therefore, the spirit world which serves as the traditional home of the departed, the aimu (gods or spirits), the power source of traditional medicine men and witches, all these must be taken into consideration in Akamba Christian theologizing.

We would now like to turn to our third Akamba mental
model of reality which we are calling the semi-individualistic model.

Semi-Individualistic Model

Besides the cosmological interdependence and the supernaturalistic model, the Akamba portrayed a disposition which from a distance looks unusual for a Bantu people. Bantu tribes are known primarily by their strong tribal solidarities. This was (is) not true of the Akamba. Instead, the Akamba was (is) a tribal society that affirmed the worth and dignity of individuals without falling prey to the rugged individualism of most of western culture.

"... individualism as an image of self" (Kearney 1984:76) is supported and fueled in the West by worldview assumptions that view "self" as distinct from "other." Thus in the West the disposition for privacy (private ownership) is sustained by this western worldview assumption.

However, in a society where "self" is not viewed as distinct from "other" the chances for a person to be characterized by complete independence of self are very minimal. Akamba views of "self" (as seen earlier) is not perceived as distinct from "other." However, strange as it may sound, studies done on the Akamba portray a tribe with individualistic tendencies. For example, Oliver observed that, "It is also characteristic of the Kamba that they show a strong emphasis on individualism and freedom of
choice..." (1965:423). Is it not a paradox to talk about individualism among a tribe which belongs to the community-oriented Bantu?

Therefore, in our efforts to explore this unique phenomena of individualism among the Akamba, we are going to focus on four areas. First, we want to look at Akamba individualism as a Bantu surprise! Next, we examine some of the factors that led to the birth and growth of Akamba "semi-individualism." The latter of our two final points investigates some of the strengths and weaknesses of the tribe's semi-individualistic behavior while the former explores areas of unity among contemporary Akamba.

Akamba Individualism!
A Bantu Surprise

In 1908, the district commissioner at Machakos observed that the Kamba "prefer every man to go his own way," and Dundas, writing five years later, said,

... this [i.e. the preference for every man to go his own way] is a very common experience with the Akamba, no matter how sacred an act may be to them, despite all supernatural terrors which one would suppose sufficient to bind them to a common interest, the discordant spirit is yet stronger, and nothing lacks more in their composition than a unanimous feeling. ... they never could submit to a common chief, or join to oppose a common enemy. Above all the Mkamba prizes his independence, to be subject to anyone or bound by anything beyond mere family ties is hateful to him (1913:487).

Dundas's further studies led him to regard the Mukamba as
too "mistrustful and suspicious to make it possible for him ever to work to any extent in combination with others" (Dundas 1913:48). Akamba unwillingness to submit to a human leader was portrayed, for instance, when Pfitzinger, a missionary with the Leipzig Mission, wanted them to refer to him by the title "Bwana" (Swahili name for master) and they said, "... Among the Akamba there is no master!" (Lindblom 1920:151). Kikamba language does not have the word "master"; the closest is "mwiaii" from the verb "kwiaa" or "iae" which was traditionally used in reference to exhortations, especially from an elderly person who is about to die.

There is no evidence that the Kamba ever had a central government or a centralized form of leadership like that of a chief. Earlier in the century some Bantu ethnographers like Levy-Bruhl who, after studying the Bantu social structure, tried to force community among the Akamba by stating, "The individual does not exist in Bantu society" (Levy-Bruhl 1928:51). While Levy-Bruhl's observation may apply to some Bantu groups, yet for the Akamba it is different. Their history does not show any institution which promoted tribal ethnocoherence. The Akamba's two nearest Bantu neighbors (Meru and Kikuyu) have tribal and political features which promote tribal ethnocohesion. For example, their "political and social systems based on kinship and age-sets" (Jacobs 1961:48). Even though
traditional Akamba did practise three different kinds of circumcision, yet the institution did not have jurisdiction beyond the boundaries of different ivalo (villages).

It was Donald Jacobs who, after carrying out a study on Akamba traditional themes, made the observation that, "... the Akamba have no central authority, no chief, no parliament, and no binding institution which knits the tribe together as one finds in many other Bantu tribes" (1961:45). This aspect makes them resemble the Nilo-Hamites. Jacobs adds that,

The Akamba have a disinclination to invest any one or any group with extraordinary power. They rather emphasize the worth of the individual. ... [for they] not only believe in the reality of the individual but they openly promote the concept (1961:113-14).

In other words, it is a society that regards power as misused when it is invested on one tribal leader. Thus, for the Akamba the best kind of unity is what would be called a mystical union. Donald Jacobs seems to have caught this insight when he wrote, "The central feature of the Kamba culture is the mystical union of the tribe. This binds all of the the tribesmen together, whether they be the living, the dead or those yet unborn" (1961:98-99).

Akamba individualistic behavior captured Charles Oliver so strongly that he wrote an article on it entitled "Individuality, Freedom of choice and Cultural Flexibility of the Kamba" (1965). Like Jacobs, Oliver confirmed,
The Kamba have no tribal chief—indeed they have no indigenous chiefs at all—and no tribal council. Each local community known as utui is in theory autonomous and in fact there are few occasions in Kamba life which require the joint effort of persons from more than one utui.

(1965:421)

He also observed that Akamba culture is one that is characterized by tremendous cultural flexibility that allows a shallow or loose cultural commitment on the part of the individual (1965:423).

Therefore, it is the absence of tribal chiefs, central government, the emphasis of the individual's worth and loose cultural commitment that led Akamba ethnographers like Lindblom, Jacobs and Oliver to describe the tribe as an individually oriented society. However, to speak of the Akamba as primarily individualistic in orientation is rather misleading. Individualism, as understood in the western world (and as defined by those who have used the term in reference to the Akamba), refers to the right of a person (an individual) to lead his/her own life in his own way.

For example, in any individually-oriented society the percentage of those who would choose to carry out their own individual projects irrespective of the approval of others is much greater than in community-oriented societies. For the Akamba, while individual worth is emphasized, yet individual rights that isolate and alienate a person from the community are discouraged. Proverbial sayings like "Kyaa kimwe kiyuua ndaa (one finger cannot kill a louse)"
destroys the belief in complete individualism among the Akamba. It is this trait of the Akamba to have the best of the two worlds (i.e. the communal and the individualistic worlds) that we have used the term semi-individualism to describe another of the Akamba mental models of reality.

Still another way to look at individualism among Akamba would be to view it as a continuum. (See Diagram A.)

Diagram A

A Continuum on Akamba Semi-Individualism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Limited</th>
<th>Clan</th>
<th>Extended</th>
<th>Unity or Mystical</th>
<th>Household or Individualism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tribal Unity</td>
<td>Family Unity</td>
<td>(Village) Unity</td>
<td>Nucleus Unity</td>
<td>Individualism</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The continuum spectrum begins from a limited type of tribal unity which can be described as a kind of mystical unity. Next comes some form of loose clanical unity, then extended family unity, village unity, household unity, semi-individualism, and finally individualism. We should not be surprised why present-day Akamba cannot unite for any tribal function. Indeed, with the invasion of the individualistic West, the Akamba (who traditionally can best be described as semi-individualistic) have uncritically assimilated western individualism to the point that any traditional traits from communal living have been greatly weakened.

In order to understand the nature of Akamba
semi-individualism, we need to make reference to some of its possible causes. In other words, what led to the birth and growth of Akamba semi-individualism?

**Birth and Growth of Akamba Semi-Individualism**

We should keep in mind that worldviews are primarily knowledge systems which are developed as human minds respond to different environments in the process of meaningful adaptation. And so our concern here is to explore which factors were (are) responsible for the formation and maintenance of the Akamba semi-individualistic mental model of reality.

The shift from nomadism to agriculture began to reinforce individualistic tendencies among the first Akamba farmers. At first Akamba pastorists felt no need to own land; however, after settling in the Mbooni hills, strong individuals began to emerge by the end of the 18th century (1770s--1800 A.D.). H. E. Lambert, a British working as an administrative officer in Machakos, suggests that it was during the proto-Mbooni settlement, that strong Kamba individuals "braved the Masai threat and settled in the weu (land hitherto unoccupied except sporadically by nomads)" (quoted by Jackson 1971:200). At the Mbooni settlement agricultural communities began to form which were committed to kinship ownership of land and property.
Second was the formation of *utui* (village) communities which went beyond kinship boundaries. Members of different kinship groups began to be united, sometimes as a marriage device since one could not marry from his own clan. Also, different property holders in the same community would (for defense purposes) choose to cooperate in the formation of a *utui* (village). Thus, the formation of *utui* social structure, which went beyond kinship lines, undoubtedly weakened the grip of clan monopoly or kinship and family allegiances. This is what Lambert called the "kin-land synthesis" (Jackson 1971:201), because the *utui* system of residence arose "based on territorial propinquity not on common kinship" (Lambert 1947:23). *Utui* formation was a quiet force that gradually weakened blood ties and reduced kinship obligations. Traditionally the *nzama* (council) of elders in the *utui* served as the governmental unit to the local community. Today Kenyan government assistant chiefs and their *atumia ma ndua* (village elders) serve the governmental needs of the local communities.

The third factor which appears to have contributed to the breakdown of communal solidarity was the tribe's clash with the British in the decade of the 1890s. Earlier we pointed out that the war with the British was not only a battle between arrows and firearms but was indeed an attack on Akamba worldview. The defeat of Akamba fighters from Mwala, Kilungu, Mukaa, Mbooni and Kangundo by the British
forces brought enmity within Akamba groups. For example, the British used Akamba from Mukaa to fight those living at Kilungu (Tignor 1976:20). Therefore, if there was an explicit configurational character among the Akamba of these different areas, then it should have died in the 1890s. There is no doubt that both the British conquests and their future colonial rule fragmented Akamba society. This is why Oliver and his colleagues, while expecting to study the Akamba as a traditional people, were surprised to find that they were "studying people who had in varying degrees adopted European practices and had altered their patterns of life to the new context provided by colonial government" (Edgerton 1971:2).

A fourth factor that undoubtedly brought societal disintegration seems to be the continued ecological instability and weather unpredictability. Indeed, drought and famine could as well be used to explain the experience of every single Mukamba. Krapf, one of the earliest travelers to East Africa, observed that drought leading to famine created within the Akamba a desire to venture for better farmland (1860:284). Severe droughts have ravaged Ukambani for as long as any Mukamba can remember. It forced them to scatter all over the land and build small communities for survival. And since the tribe could not find a fertile land well replenished with rain, they have kept scattering ever since. This partly explains why
pockets of Akamba can be found all over the republic. The Akamba mobile disposition mentioned below may indeed be closely related to their struggle for economic survival. Also, their loose cultural commitment reflects a people whose lives are lived in an economy of scarcity.

The four factors mentioned above do not by any means exhaust the list, but they were (are) primary forces in reinforcing individualism and discouraging tribal solidarity. It is these factors and others that we suggest were (are) responsible for giving the Akamba their semi-individualistic approach to life. However, in spite of their desire for individual freedom, Akamba continue to portray certain areas of unity that warrant our attention.

**Areas of Unity in Akamba**

**Semi-Individualism**

As pointed out above, the Akamba portray very little explicit tribal unity. However, there are at least four areas where some degree of cooperativeness is noticeable. First, regardless of their semi-individualistic approach to life that dominates much of their institutional life, the Akamba still continue to show some unity when it comes to the maintenance of family ties. As early as 1913 Dundas observed that it was hateful for Mukamba "to be subject to anyone or bound by anything beyond mere family ties . . ." (1913:487). The clan which traditionally was made up of
several extended families was central. However, today the clan does not bear upon the family or the individual any legal or socio-economic obligations. In 1965 Oliver observed that "All Kamba agree on the basic importance of the clan, and all give the same reason for its importance: the clan will help a man if he gets into serious trouble" (1965:427).

If Oliver's observation was partly true in 1965, twenty years later it is hardly applicable. Today clan cohesion is too weak to sustain any values. At times one may find from among the older generation some who may be very clancentric, but these are just a few who are clinging grimly to a vanishing lifestyle. Presently, the only requirement a clan expects from its members is to remember the name of their clan! And even one should not be surprised to meet a Mukamba teenager who does not know his/her clan and could care less. This is why we suggest the maintenance of family ties as one of the main areas in which modern-day Akamba continue to portray some degree of unity. Even though the traditional extended family is becoming less and less extended, still the married sons continue to take care of their old parents and grandparents.

However, the nuclear family among the Akamba is increasingly becoming the basic unit of production. Today the preferred living arrangement is for a couple and their children to live in their own household. No wonder, then,
that Akamba village social structures are increasingly being represented by a seemingly seamless network of individual households. This was not so forty years ago.

The second area in which today’s Akamba continue to show unity is what we would call utui or neighborhood unity. Earlier we made reference to utui (village) formation as one main factor that contributed to the development of a semi-individualistic approach to life. The observation we want to make here is that utui formation was not only the force that discouraged kinship unity but also enhanced a different kind of unity that went beyond the confines of kinship ties. This less non-kinship utui or neighborhood unity has existed in Ukambani since the earliest settlement. Therefore, while the Akamba abhor tribal unity, yet village and family unity and cooperation are highly prized.

For example, no Mukamba family would slaughter a cow or goat and eat it alone, without inviting some of their neighbors to join. In case a person fails to share some of the meat with his neighbors, then we say he is as gluttonous as a hyena. This is because the hyena represents the "meanest animal in Akamba folklore" (Mbiti 1966:40). Although the Akamba value the individual very highly, yet selfishness is among the worst dispositions for a typical Mukamba to have. Sharing with each other’s family and neighbors has its basis primarily in the need for economic
survival within a drought-stricken environment. In such an environment survival for any includes sharing with one another. It is this aspect of individuals sharing with one another that relates this model with their concept of the cosmological interdependence model. Hence, all creatures must share together in order to survive and live at peace, which also is an appropriate way of responding meaningfully and effectively to an unpredictable external environment.

Also, neighborhood unity is expressed at times through individually-formed clubs. Traditionally there were "men's and women's clubs, the membership of which was determined by age, marriage, and the fulfillment of club conditions" (Mbiti 1966:8). The western idea of women's guilds, Boy Scouts, and other such groups would sell very well among Akamba. However, these clubs do not grow into large voluntary corporate associations. Indeed, the economic history of Akamba shows that the most effective business enterprises operate along family or individual lines but not as business companies or associations. Some present-day examples include Musau Mwania and Sons Limited of Machakos Town, Deon Musau (an individual operating a lucrative public transportation bus system) and the Mwendwa family of Kitui district. Thus, today in order to adapt effectively to the difficult economic socio-cultural environment the individually-inclined Mukamba is taking over!

The third area of unity is what we would term religious
unity. Being a religious community, the Akamba have shown tremendous unity in religious matters. In the past, symptoms of religious unity were seen in the function of traditional medicine men. For example, "In their knowledge and techniques, derived from sources transcending human control, they commanded a resource which gave them some independence from the small-scale lineage and territorial groupings in which Kamba society was organized" (Munro 1975:99). Traditional medicine men were the only individuals who commanded respect beyond their local villages (motui). Indeed, if there is any one single area where the Kamba have portrayed tremendous unity, it would be in the religious realm—more particularly in their response to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Fourth, Akamba manifest some unity when it comes to supporting the national government, particularly as they fulfill their civil duty in the election of district councilors and parliament members. Even here, the Kamba cannot unanimously rally behind one candidate (cf. Kilungu constituency elections). Usually on election day the average Mukamba who votes does so as a mark of obedience to the Republic's requirements, not as an act that springs from an inherent desire to choose a tribal leader. A tribe which had no tribal leaders is probably least or best equipped to choose leaders for national positions: least qualified because they do not know from experience what it means to
have a leader go before them; best, because their lack of tribal pride may enable them to elect a person with national interests in view.

Again we must point out that the four areas in which the Akamba portray some degree of cooperativeness are suggestive rather than definitive. Our primary interest was not only to explore Akamba individualism but also to investigate the different factors that led to its birth and growth. A careful analysis of the strengths of Akamba semi-individualistic disposition show that the Akamba were (are) traditionally equipped with the capacity to assimilate change without fear of destroying tribal mystical solidarity. It was their quality of "being flexible enough to adapt" (Bismarck 1975:12) that the British took advantage of (Strayer 1978:5).

Also, their weak tribal unity has enabled them to adapt to western ways without feeling guilty that they are selling their way of life to an alien model. Although the adaptation has not happened without its share of cultural pains and wounds, yet above other things, their worldview has proved to be elastic enough to assimilate change. As Oliver observed, the loose cultural commitment of Akamba enabled them to yield without breaking. It can also be said that their semi-individualistic disposition freed them to travel without feeling they had to be tied to one community. In 1915 Dundas made the observation that,
When for any reason it has become necessary for a settlement to move elsewhere, one would suppose that they [i.e. Akamba] would all move together to one place, but quite the contrary is the rule, as if tired of being together, and fearing that they risk becoming dependent on each other, they will disperse all over the country (1913:487).

Even today Akamba families choose to leave their extended families, clans, villages, church home, and establish their residence in an entirely different part of the community. In Chapter V we shall examine how this loose cultural commitment provided the needed preparation for the planting of the gospel of Jesus Christ. As regards the limitations of the Akamba semi-individualistic disposition, we can but affirm that tribal projects continue to be a dream in Ukambani. As a tribe there is not one single project that the whole community has unanimously carried out to completion. Probably the continuing delay in the construction of U.K.A.I. (Ukamba Agricultural Institute) in Machakos bears witness to this uncooperative nature in the Akamba mental make-up.

Now we must turn to examine our fourth Akamba mental model of reality which is what we are calling an immortal posterity model.

**Immortal Posterity Model**

Traditional Akamba believe that the soul of a person lives forever through his descendants. To them this belief
is not a thesis to be proven but rather a worldview ontological and existential assumption. Ndeti of the University of Nairobi observed that even though traditional Kamba believe in the immortality of the soul, yet they "do not believe in reincarnation" (1972:115). This is primarily because when a person dies, he enters not only a non-physically confined ancestral world but also becomes capable of using any media in communicating with the living relatives and friends. For this reason, Akamba do not see the reason for the living dead being reincarnated, since to do so would limit their power.

However, the key point is that in order for an ancestor to be immortalized, his descendants and friends must venerate him at least for four generations. In other words, immortality among traditional Akamba is achieved primarily through one's posterity. It is, therefore, out of this background that aspects like marriage, children and the friendship network serve a main root in supporting this model of posteritized immortality. Let us look briefly at each one of these.

Marriage and Immortality

John Mbiti states that, "For the Akamba, it is through marriage that society is immortalized and life overflows from one generation to another. Many of the [Akamba
traditional] stories reflect the value the Akamba attach to marriage" (1966:31). One of the highest social priorities for a Mukamba man is to have a wife. Marriage was (is) so important that,

To remain unmarried is suicidal to the individual and the nation, so there are no [hardly any] able-bodied spinsters or bachelors. The wife is extremely valuable and young men will make almost any sacrifice to find a wife (Mbiti 1966:5-6).

However, in the marriage bond the key thing from the husband's perspective is the children and not his wife. Certainly, the female spouse, whom Mbiti calls the "link between life and death," was of great significance. But it seems to me that the ultimate motives of a Mukamba male in seeking a wife is to secure for himself a mother and less a partner to enjoy married life together. In a patrilineal society which is concerned with self-perpetuation, such a view of marriage seems reasonable. Traditional Akamba believed that if a person died without leaving a child survivor to continue his life, then that person's soul was denied immortality. And so, while marriage was (is) the initial starting point, yet it was not the end in itself. Children, as we shall see below, hold the greatest priority in a marriage bond.

9. For example, the numbers 1, 17 and 20 in Akamba Stories by John Mbiti center on the importance of marriage in Akamba society.
Children "Guarantee" Immortality

For the Akamba a person must have children in order to guarantee the immortality of his own soul. The belief in immortality through one's posterity was so strong that traditional Akamba parents used to make marriage arrangements even for their own unborn children. Indeed, when Akamba use the proverb "Kwaanga mana to musyi uathite mbiti" which is translated "to become useless (or get lost) like an arrow that has shot a hyena," they are primarily making reference to a man who dies without a child survivor to continue his life. This is why the most miserable thing that can befall the life of muntu (man) is sudden death that leaves the deceased without posterity (Mbiti 1966:31-32). At times, the father of a deceased childless man would obtain a wife for him. The girl would be married to the name of an unmarried man who has died. She bears him children, usually by his brother as genitor (Jacobs 1961:65).

Children are so important among the Akamba that, "From birth a child is looked upon as a potential parent of other Akamba" (Jacobs 1961:132). Thus, every Mukamba child must grow and bring forth other children. It is in this light that impotence among Akamba is viewed with great horror and a man who finds himself impotent usually gets another man to impregnate his wife, for he must have children in order to guarantee the immortality of his own soul. We may need to
point out at this juncture that "children and their role in guaranteeing immortal life" is a belief at the implicit worldview level. Otherwise, the explicit reasons for having children include working on the farms, looking after cattle, man's pride in having a large family and taking care of parents when they get old. Also, the pride of a man being the biological father of his own children is esteemed very highly among the Akamba. This is portrayed best when a married couple happen to be biologically incapacitated to have children. Instead of the couple adopting a child, the man (taking for granted his wife's incapacitation!) usually marries another wife in order to father his own children. Here one would wonder what becomes of the immortality of the barren wife. Even though this was a question which traditional Akamba did not bother to address, yet it is obvious that in a patrilineal society no attention was given to women ancestors. 10 It was Jackson who observed that "The imbalance--between remembered male ancestors and females--is directly attributable to the centrality of the large

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10. I personally sensed this neglect in December, 1983, when my father and his two brothers, all former government school teachers, remembered with much difficulty the male names of their great grandfathers. They could remember the names of the male ancestors but could not remember those of their wives! A contemporary Akamba ethnographer gets the impression that Akamba women ancestors outlived their usefulness in childbearing, because the women marry into the male family line of descent and therefore it is the husband's family name that counts.
patrilineages in Akamba society" (1971:82+).

For the Akamba, children are truly the glory of marriage and many parents do their best to have as many as possible (Mbiti 1966:6). The society also exercises tremendous pressure on a newly married couple to have children. It is an unwritten law that a newly married couple must at least have a child during their first year. Until that child is born, adult members of the husband's family address the childless wife by her father's name. However, after she brings forth her first-born, a different teknonym is used which bears the child's name as suffix. For example, my wife's name changed from Ng'a Mutiandyia (daughter of Mutiandyia) to Inyiaa Mumbua (mother of Mumbua) after the birth of Mumbua, our first-born. Note again that the emphasis is put on the child, especially on the male child.

The traditional desire to have many children is so engrained in Akamba traditional values that the modern forces of education, limited cash economy and even Christianity are not primarily succeeding in convincing them otherwise. For example, modern day state-run seminars on family planning have barely succeeded in convincing the majority of Akamba couples to reduce the size of their families. The failure to respond positively to different family planning approaches has been blamed on illiteracy and poor economy. However, it appears to me that modern ideas
on family planning are perceived by the majority as tampering with matters that are strictly divine. In other words, for a couple to have the say of who is or is not born is tampering with supernatural matters. Thus, the family planning campaigns among the Akamba are an attack on the tribe's traditional worldview. For them to embrace family planning whole-heartedly, it would require a shift in their worldview.

Therefore, the high birth rate among the Akamba is rooted at their worldview, and to use economic and illiteracy explanations as the reasons for large families is but dealing with the periphery. The question of having children is at a people's worldview. For example, it was not a surprise to meet an Akamba couple who, after years of education in the United States, told me (as a response to a question on family planning) that their desire is to have "as many as God plans to give to us." However, modern influences are beginning to show their impact on the Akamba family. While the traditional desire was to have as many children as was physically capable, yet today there is emerging a new Akamba generation of parents that are doing their best to limit the number of children to between three and five.

Also, the matter of aging parents and the elderly was traditionally taken very seriously. Usually
a man's children were judged by his neighbours and relatives on their behaviour towards older people. Even when a man's children grow up and establish their own families, they still must show great respect to their parents and older members of their society (Mbiti 1966:6).

While this custom continues to remain predominantly unchanged, yet in the last twenty years we have begun to see children who after they grow and establish their own families have begun to ignore their traditional responsibilities of caring and honoring parents. Although those moving in this direction are a minimal fraction of the people, yet it is a foretaste of some of the modern western ideologies capable of eroding Akamba traditional values. The idea of a "nursing home" or a convalescent home for the elderly, like the case in the western world, will hopefully take many centuries before being accepted by the Akamba community.

In addition to the children's role in "guaranteeing" immortality, there was what Jacobs referred to as "extension of association" (Jacobs 1961:155) or what we are calling Akamba friendship networks.

Akamba Friendship Network

Akamba are primarily a friendly people. We observed earlier how different explorers and missionaries have traditionally been impressed by the Akamba friendly disposition. A typical Mukamba is one who values friendship
very highly. Several Akamba proverbs are precepts that teach the society concerning the importance of maintaining good friendships. Indeed, there are many friendship networks that go beyond the clan and family bonds.

To the average Mukamba and to the outsider, the friendship networks point to the image of a people who value good relationships with others. However, according to Akamba traditional values, the friendship associations carry a deeper implicit meaning. To be friendly and live peacefully with others is (at the human relational level) another way of maintaining cosmological interdependence. But for our immortal posterity model, the friendship networks are rooted on the belief that a person must have some friends in case the relatives fail in their duty of remembering the departed ancestor. Thus, the role of friends in Akamba traditional society goes beyond the assistance in the socio-economic needs of this life. Since ultimate meanings for a traditional Mukamba are linked with life in the next world (i.e. the spirit world), the spirit world, as pointed out above, is the home of the ancestors, and to be there is to have a more powerful and fulfilling life.

Of course, the next life from a Mukamba perspective is not in the future but in the past. (Refer below to the Akamba event and past orientation time model, page 280). For him the meaning of life is derived from past experiences,
not future promises. One cannot listen to Akamba traditional stories of life in the spirit world (the mythological world) without getting a sense of the ideal. To traditional Mukamba, the best life is "to return to the home of life," the home where I came from, even the spirit home of the ancestors, and the gods (aimu ngai) even to Ngai Mumbi (Creator God). Therefore, at their worldview level friends were believed and expected to be involved in the process of the soul's immortalization.

The matter of the soul's immortality is firmly established at the tacit level of Akamba culture. At the surface level the social processes of marriage, child bearing and friendships may seem void of any implicit meanings. However, as one begins to examine the beliefs around each one, he soon discovers that all these explicit processes are rooted at the society's worldview. Thus, to understand the role and meaning of marriage, children and friends in Akamba society, a person must penetrate deeper into their underlying systems of logic (Hoebel 1960:88-89) or mental models of reality (their index of meanings) which form their traditional worldview.

For the Wakamba, our examination of these processes have led us to what we have called an immortal posterity model which forms part of the Akamba underlying systems of logic. It is within this context that the view of a British anthropologist, Bronislaw Malinowski (1881-1942) in which he
claimed that the "primitives'" intense emotional fear of death was responsible for their belief in immortality, should be regarded as unfoundational and outdated. For this writer, belief in immortality is simply an expression of man's deepest desire to live.

We must now move on and examine the fifth of the Akamba underlying mental systems of logic, which we refer to in this study as the temperate disposition model.

Temperate Disposition Model

What we are calling the Akamba temperate disposition model is primarily what Jacobs has described as the Akamba theme of "Human Dignity, Intelligence, and Self-Control" (1961:150).

It is evident that those who have studied Akamba in the past have made similar observations, especially in regard to their gentle or temperate way of looking at life. Therefore, under this model we want to look at four aspects through which Akamba display their temperate disposition. These four ways are not exhaustive of this model; neither are they considered in their order of priority.

First, the Akamba express their temperate disposition through thayu wa wumiisyo (a life of patience). It was Donald Jacobs who observed that Akamba men and women are "taught to bear pain, hunger, thirst without complaining" (1961:152). To the average Mukamba, Jacobs's observation is
common knowledge. It is highly impolite for a Mukamba to complain of hunger or thirst. It needs to be pointed out that famines are common among the Akamba, at least recurring "about every seven years and may last for three or four years," and so for them, "It is the height of folly to complain about something which is unchangeable." The occasional drought and famine in Ukambani have begun to be perceived as "a given" to live with always.

Several Akamba traditional stories give credit to the characters who manifest the best qualities of perseverance and endurance. Proverbs such as "Mundu utewaa manga me uu (one who does not sense the taste of bitter cassava)" make reference to a community that regards endurance and patience as vital values in life. Akamba parents raise their children to endure constant hardship in their daily lives. Due to the continual drought and famine, children must be raised/taught to survive the drought of life. When I was a little boy, I would at times stumble over something and fall down. To my surprise (if not to my encouragement) my father would say, "Ukila, no ukuthooa nthi (get up; you are just paying some of your dues for occupying the earth)." In other words, it was like saying, "Son, get up; pain and a tough life are normal parts of human existence."

Closely related to patience is another aspect of Akamba

temperate disposition which is expressed through thayu wa witingo (a self-controlled life). The value traditional Akamba gives to the importance of self-control is much more than we can cover here. Suffice it to state that self-control or self-restraint is traditionally one of the key qualities which earns a Mukamba person a life of dignity.

Therefore, out of their belief in the maintenance of a cosmological balance, they have developed a model that prizes self-control. For example, it is "highly unbecoming for a Mukamba to be excessive in anything, and he is not given to making quick or rash decisions. . . . anyone who loses his temper is suspect. . . . Any excess is frowned upon" (Jacobs 1961:111). A typical Mukamba is a person who should be characterized by a high degree of self-restraint. It was Dundas who observed that Akamba was a tribe of "dignified ladies and gentlemen," while some European rulers, expecting them to "act like inferiors" (1913:551), misinterpreted their temperate disposition as ignorance.

However, a person's dignity is not an unconscious passive possession but is largely maintained by "a person's ability to practice restraint and to persevere. A person can lose his dignity in a moment by failing to restrain himself" (Jacobs 1961:152). This probably explains why in the olden days the drinking of beer was preserved for the old men who were regarded as being capable of practicing
"enough restraint to avoid getting intoxicated" (Jacobs 1961:152). In everyday life, moments of greatest pain call upon those involved to exercise endurance and self-control. For example, "Even at the deathbed of a close friend, ... [a man] is not allowed to weep" (Jacobs 1961:153). For the men, the society's pressure to live self-controlled lives calls upon them to grow tough and by all means avoid showing their emotions. For example, it is shameful for a man to cry. There is nothing that depicts this male stoic image more than the Akamba proverb which states, "Methoi ma mundu ume malovotaa nda (a man's tears drop inside)."

Women are also expected to maintain a high degree of self-control, even at times of immense pain. For example, at childbirth the traditional expectation is that the mother should "joke and smile as always" (Jacobs 1961:152). At the death of close friends women may cry, however. In the past if a woman lost her "son through the tortures suffered during the initiation rites, she must bear the loss without tears" (Jacobs 1961:153).

As pointed out earlier, there is every reason to believe that Akamba life in a dry and famine-stricken environment precipitated the development of a model of reality that regards suffering and pain as part and parcel of being human. Thus, their beliefs on patience, self-restraint and pain are but survival techniques of adapting meaningfully in a suffering world.
Third, Akamba express their temperate disposition through *kiliko* (mental prowess) or brain intelligence. Earlier in this century Dundas said that, "In respect to intelligence the Akamba are very much in advance of other tribes" (1913:490). Indigenous Akamba give very little value to the virtue of physical strength; instead, traditional folklore glorified that which showed mental prowess and intelligence. This is why many of the traditional stories picture the hare "who gets into one scrape after another with animals many times his size but succeeds in outwitting every one of them" (Jacobs 1961:154).

Indeed, among the Akamba a person who manifested some clear devices, cunningness, trickery or craftiness, and shrewdness was not necessarily unliked, but the community expected him to exercise his disposition with discretion. To them, bigger is not necessarily better, but the superiority of the brain over muscle is of great value. John Mbiti, after analyzing several Akamba stories, found that in the stories of animals (such as the lion, rhinoceros and leopard) all pled with the hare, for "The smaller in body is, however, the cleverer" (1966:37).

In traditional life adults and children are expected not to allow their minds to assume a spectator's role in life. Jacobs observed that,

It is expected that . . . [a Mukamba] will take an interest in law and jurisprudence; will develop his powers of erudition and logical
thinking; will enlarge his experience in the fund of knowledge. He is expected to take pride in his ability to influence people through the talents which he has developed. The ideal Mkamba is not the priest or the medicine man, but the judge who listens to cases and pronounces his adjudications in the properly dignified manner. The more arguments he can bring to bear on the reasons for his judgments, the more highly is he respected (1961:153).

In order to develop mental powers, traditional Akamba used nthimo (proverbs), ndai (riddles) and milimano (Akamba traditional puzzles). The use of riddles and traditional puzzles were particularly aimed at helping cognitive development. During the former part of this century, the average Akamba homestead was dominated by these mental games. However, while they served as traditional games for our minds, they were primarily used as communicational and educational devices for enculturation. Jackson observed that, "... the Akamba have accumulated over the generations an expertise at using the various devices at the appropriate moment, and at transforming a drab piece of lore into an accomplished performance" (1971:37; emphasis mine). Akamba interaction with the European world has also resulted in the development of modern day riddles. For example, a modern Akamba riddle asks, "Asungu mooniwe kwova tai (kitheka) nuu? (Who showed Europeans how to tie neckties?)" The response is "kitoli" or "kitali (grasshopper)." The presence of this riddle (and others like it) in contemporary Akamba folklore reflects a tremendous degree of assimilative ability, not only in explicit cultural forms
but also in their cognition. Thus, in their attempts to adapt adequately and meaningfully to the environment the Akamba have not left their minds behind. Indeed, we would like to propose that the way Akamba have interacted with westernization and modernization suggests the existence or presence of an assimilative capacity within their mental models of reality.

By Akamba assimilative mind we mean the presence of a flexible capacity within their worldview that enables them to incorporate new experiences. This flexible component in Akamba intellectual disposition may indeed be the central reason that has enabled the society to, as Oliver said, yield without being broken (1965:425). In any society new experiences are given meanings only as the existing models of reality are able to assimilate them. Thus, through the Akamba assimilative mind, the circle, say, of their indigenous or traditional models of reality is increased to assimilate new experiences. This assimilative capacity is beautifully illustrated by an Akamba proverb we referred to earlier which states, "Mundu oaa nzoka na kila ukwete (a person kills a snake with what he/she has on hand)."

This Akamba proverb points to an assimilative principle already present in our mental models of reality. What it means in worldview language is that a person responds to new situations or experiences by seeking first to integrate them into the pre-existing mental structure (mazeway or
worldview). For the Akamba the proverb quoted above not only portrays their open-minded, pragmatic approach to life but also exposes a mental psychological reinforcement inherent in their worldview that affirms the need for assimilation. In understanding the cognitive implications of the proverb, however, we must remember that life in the drought and famine-stricken Ukambani has forced the people and their worldview models to stay on the alert. To survive in a land of economic uncertainty, their models of reality cannot afford to be static or mechanical.

It is more than obvious that a myriad of uncertainties in Ukambani have put the tribal worldview under continual cognitive conflicts. We pointed out in Chapter II that cognitive conflicts, besides creating stress and anxiety in society, also motivate intellectual or cognitive development. Therefore, among the Akamba, as a result of continual cognitive conflicts, the tribe has over the years developed an assimilative mind. It is through assimilative mechanisms that societies are able, as Bensley says, "to effectively integrate newly encountered phenomena into the existing mental structures, [through which] the amount of anxiety, cognitive and emotional stress is kept within the tolerable range and the organic system [society] is kept in a state of equilibrium" (1982:300).

Fourthly, Akamba temperate disposition is expressed through thayu wa muuo (a peaceful life). For a typical
traditional Mukamba life is at its best when it is at peace. Donald Jacobs observed, "A slow, deliberate, cautious personality is highly valued among the Akamba. . . . one of the worst traits of character a man could possess was 'haste'" (1961:119). To the Akamba it is a sign of inferiority for a person to be characterized by "haste." Traditionally, it was their love for peace that led some ethnographers to describe the Akamba as "polite and hospitable" (Lindblom 1920:553).

Akamba peaceful disposition appears to be rooted in their worldview assumptions on cosmological interdependence which expects man to have a peaceful non-hostile co-existence with nature. It is a recognition that all humans are part of nature and must seek to maintain the orderly symmetry intrinsic in the cosmos. Therefore, to live at peace is to live a balanced life, which means a person is fulfilling his cosmological assignment. To live at peace with all people is the way of Ngai Mumbi (Creator God). Traditional and modern Akamba believe this, and even in the olden days when Masai stole cows, Akamba relied on their medicine men for guidance. Seeking guidance from the medicine men was a recognition that the imbalance caused by the loss of cattle had cosmic implications, and as such, it required "divine" guidance from those experts of the transempirical world. The primary goal, however, was to restore a peaceful cosmological balance.
There are many examples which affirm the Akamba peaceful disposition, especially in connection to the different roles they have served in colonial and post-colonial Kenya. Some of these include the larger percentage in the Kenya army, both during the British rule and also in independent Kenya. Within Kenya's short political history, the Akamba have produced the two\textsuperscript{12} army generals that have served the nation, and also, out of the three\textsuperscript{13} Kenyan Attorney Generals two are Akamba. These are but two political examples which show that the qualities of patience, self-control, intelligence and a peaceful life which spring from the Akamba temperate disposition have not died through their clash with westernization and modernization. The same can be said of Akamba concepts/notions of time, which we would like to examine as the sixth Akamba model of reality.

\textbf{Akamba Time Model}

The different human concepts and notions used in explaining and interpreting time show how man has been puzzled by this phenomena. Presently the concepts of time and space are among some of the outstanding landmarks

\textsuperscript{12} Late Major General Mdolo and the present Major General Mulinge.

\textsuperscript{13} Attorney General Kitili Mwendwa and Attorney General Justice Matthew Muli.
dominating the scientific activity of modern man. Despite the research into the phenomena of time, the concept is still unclear. However, it appears that in spite of the modern scientific push to perceive "time as a physical entity" (a succession of events in a motion), every people's concept of time seems to be closely related to their other views of reality. For example, an examination of Akamba traditional notions of time show that they constitute an integral part of the tribe's overall belief system.

Therefore, for our purposes here we would like to look at three Akamba notions of time—a neutral, an event and a past orientation view of time.

**A Neutral View of Time**

Throughout the generations, Akamba have cherished a neutral view of time. By neutral, we mean a traditional Mukamba cannot ask the question, "Do you have time?" or "How much time do you have?" Such questions would be meaningless, for traditional Mukamba time is not of a measurable quantity. Traditional Akamba talk of time for planting, harvesting, singing, eating, story telling and worshipping. And since he does not live according to "clock time," he therefore lacks an explicit abstract category of time. Thus, to traditional Akamba, the abstract view of time which dominates modern industrial culture is absent. What Evans-Pritchard said about the Nuer of Sudan in regard
to their perception of time has much that reflects Akamba traditional views on time. He said,

Certainly they [i.e. the Nuer of Sudan] never experience the same feeling of fighting against time, of having to co-ordinate activities with an abstract passage of time, ... There are no autonomous [abstract] points of reference to which activities have to conform with precision (1939:208).

John Mbiti, reflecting on Akamba views of time said that to the Akamba time is of little or no value (1971:16)

In other words, Akamba people cannot sit down and discuss the theory or abstract nature of time. The "clock time" and "watch time" that now "seems to regulate life" in modern day Ukambani is but a new assimilated value in modern Ukambani. Today's schooling and modern industrial culture which operates around "clock time," has been accepted uncritically by almost every Akamba family. The wrist watch on the hands of thousands of Akamba probably gives us some indication in regard not only to their assimilative mind but also to how the theoretical abstract view of time is taking over.14

Regardless of the meaning of "clock time," it is "the event" which, as we shall see, has the greatest priority.

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14. Although it needs to be pointed out that the wrist watch is not necessarily worn by the Akamba primarily as a time-measuring instrument. Indeed, for the most part of it, the wrist watch is a symbol of one being modern, if not western or "civilized."
An Event Orientation to Time

As pointed out above, the traditional Akamba concept of time is not only neutral, but it is also relative. It cannot stand alone, hence it has no objectivity but acquires objectivity or meaning from the event. This is why traditional Akamba talk about "ivinda ya mbua (time of rain)" and "ivinda ya kuvanda na kuketha (time for planting and harvesting)." Time is spoken of primarily in terms of the events that take place. This is why a traditional Mukamba talks about the names of different events and happenings when someone asks about his/her age. Thus, Evans-Pritchard's idea of "structural time" in which a society carries on a dating system around major historical happenings or institutions is applicable for the Akamba (1940:96-104). For example, William Langer affirmed too that the periodical famines in Ukambani were great events which had "long-range psychological repercussions" (1963:96). The famines as events provide reference points to people when they talk about the past.

It is, therefore, the events of history that give meaning to time. The central focus in the Akamba notion of time is the "what" (the event) that gives meaning to the "when." The event has priority over the "when" or the time it takes place. For example, getting a job done has priority over the length of time it may take. The key thing
is to experience the event. In any experience, a
traditional Mukamba will be more event-oriented and less
time-oriented. Traditionally, it was not as important to
talk about how long it took a person to get a certain
job/task completed; hence central emphasis was on what
happened. It is the Akamba interest on "what has happened
before" that adds a past-oriented dimension to their notions
of time.

**Past Orientation View of Time**

(Or Lineal Past Orientation
View of Time)

A cross-cultural study done by Kluckhohn and Strodbeck
(1961) on the perceptions of time which different cultures
possess has shown that various cultures implicitly consider
one area of time—the past, the present or the future—more
important than the other two. For the Akamba it is the past
dimension of time that is more important than the other
two. Akamba refer to "past time" as ivinda ivitu or ivinda
va tene. John Mbiti observed that among the Akamba the
events of everyday life are moving "back into the Tene
period, and past events constitute Time. As a result, the
Future is virtually non-existent since no events have
occurred. History moves 'back' rather than 'forward', and
life is anchored on Tene" (1966:17).

Traditional Akamba folklore is dominated by myths and
stories that are said
... to have taken place in the 'Past' (Tene, ...). By setting the stories in the period Tene, man is recapturing the 'Past', and making it both relevant and alive in the 'present'. History is therefore being constantly reshuffled by man, ... The 'Past' is made contemporaneous with man's life at every historical phase (Mbiti 1966:28).

However, today's modern changes have drastically weakened the explicit custom of telling stories; but their past-orientation notion of time (though implicit) is much alive. For example, we can talk of Akamba existential quest as that which seeks to bring the past to the present. Hope for a Mukamba does not come from the future but from the past. There is in our tradition the belief that normative behavior existed in the past and today's events acquire or gain credibility only as they are viewed in the light of the past. Therefore, history (the story of the events of time) moves from present to "the past tene," rather than from the lineal forward motion of past, present and future. The future does not hold hope, for it has not yet become time or it is no-time. Only the past holds hope, for it is like returning to the paradise epoch which was characterized by cosmological equilibrium and perfect interdependence.

Indeed, it is this Akamba past-orientation notion of time that Ndeti of Nairobi University sees as stretching to mythical or primordial time. While using Emile Durkheim's concepts of "sacred and profane time," Ndeti states that Akamba view of time should be conceived
in terms of sacred and profane. Sacred time reccurs when a cosmological Akamba re-enacts the primordial archetypes. Archetypes are the paradigmatic models, instituted in the beginning, which have been repeated by all cultural heroes in the tradition (1972:184).

According to Eliade (1963), sacred time refers to the mythical time which transcends historical or temporal time. It is the time of origins or, as called by others, cosmogonic time. It is this cosmogonic sacred time of ivinda ya tene that constitutes real time and gives meaning to daily experiences. Thus, in today's language the Akamba are not too excited with a progressive view of time in which moderns hope to move forward and reach a "utopia" but would rather move backwards and recapture the original paradise.

Thus, from an Akamba view of time, it is primarily appropriate to talk about man looking or seeking for the meaning of life in what some have called "'a nostalgia for eternity,' a mystical equivalent to a journey back to origins, illo tempore, to the Golden Time" (Conn 1984:99-100).

Therefore, from Akamba traditional worldview perspectives on time, hope for humans is only possible through the recapturing of mythical time--thus transcending historical temporal time--and entering into sacred time which is the abode of meaning and happiness. In other words, ultimate peace in human life is achieved by "returning to the origins of reality itself" rather than reaching a kind of reality through progress. So in what
some may call archaic language, we can say that to a Mukamba, man progresses as he returns to the origins.

We do not want to overlook the fact that some of these notions of time are changing; due to its assimilation with western culture's lineal view of time, however, there are aspects in the tribe's traditional worldview notions of time that have continued to the present. There are two other Akamba mental models of reality which must await further study. These include what we would call the mobility disposition model which, along with other things, accounts for the reason pockets of Akamba can be found scattered all over the republic. During the 19th century this Akamba disposition enabled them to establish trade with the coastal people. Such a disposition is particularly affirmed by Robert Strayer when he says that

... the major motor of historical change and regional integration [in East Africa peoples] during the nineteenth century lay in the elaboration of an extensive Kamba commercial system, a pattern of trade that closely linked for the first time the economies of the interior with those of the Swahili coast and the world beyond East Africa. When Arab and Swahili caravans penetrated the interior later in the century, it was for the most part along routes that had been pioneered by the Kamba (1978:4).

The other model can be referred to as the Akamba generosity disposition model which accounts for the binding norms of reciprocity and hospitality expressed not only within extended family members but also extending to all peoples.
CONCLUSION

It was our primary objective to penetrate the hidden world of the Akamba. We made it clear at the outset that even though "religion" can accurately be used to describe the central core of Akamba worldview, yet for the purposes of study and analysis we have proceeded on and identified eight other interdependent Akamba models of reality.

The six of which we have discussed include the cosmological interdependence model, the supernaturalistic model, semi-individualism, the immortality posterity model, temperate disposition and the contemporary time model. A key observation that needs to be pointed out here is that, except for the explicit changes in Akamba culture, the tribe's traditional worldview (as our study has revealed) continues to stay predominantly the same. This is indeed not surprising, since, as pointed out, worldviews take generations to change. Therefore, what we have explored here form Akamba continuing models of reality or knowledge systems with their supporting epistemologies. In worldview language, then, these contemporary Akamba models of reality constitute the implicit mental processess which enable the people's minds to interact dynamically with the external stimuli in ensuring meaningful adaptation.

They form what Harvie Conn has likened to "... eyeglasses through which we observe and interpret reality. They are the principles of hermeneutical order by which we
evaluate a cosmos" (1984:165). These Akamba interdependent models of reality are, as it were, the mental grids, or the mental eyes or conceptual structures, which combine together to form what could be called Akamba epistemological paradigms. They continue to provide intergenerational continuity of the tribe's symbolic meaning systems. In other words, they are the roots that hold Akamba knowledge systems and possess the elements of continuity in Akamba traditional worldview.\(^\text{15}\) They have remained flexible (elastic) enough to handle change in Ukambani.

Indeed, one cannot examine these models of reality and fail to notice the built-in flexibility present in Akamba worldview. It is so evident that one can very easily be tempted to describe the Akamba as possessing a "flexible or pluralistic epistemology," i.e. a worldview made up of dynamic cognitive models capable of assimilating change as society seeks to adapt meaningfully in their own changing geographical, socio-cultural historical context.

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\(^{15}\) It is argued that "Paradigms flow out of our worldviews. They come closer to the surface-level of reality and, of necessity, exist farther away from the worldview core. . . . Paradigms are organizations of a theoretical sort in terms of which their proponents perceive reality" (Conn 1984:49). It is Kuhn who argues that a paradigm is tacitly imposed ". . . upon those entering the science. The paradigm is theoretical, yet it is more: It is metatheoretical. Those who function within its orbit perceive their work as altogether rational, self-evident, and obviously true" (Conn 1984:50). For a fuller exposition of the nature and use of paradigms, particularly in scientific studies, refer to Kuhn, 1962.
These are, then, the mental hermeneutical grids of the Akamba. It is through these mental grids (eyes) that their experiences are filtered and assigned meaning. New experiences report to the grids (index of meanings) and are given meanings. It is out of these mental grids that an adequate evangelical Christian theology that takes seriously Akamba contemporary worldview should be constructed. Understanding a society's mental grids is among the primary reasons that causes contemporary African and western theologians and missiologists from both Roman Catholic and Protestant circles to contend that in the construction of adequate Christian theologies. "We need to locate those paradigms of thought in a culture which shape meaning and affirm it in the culture" (Schreiter 1985:78). However, before we examine how such a theology should be developed, we need to discuss in our next chapter the background of where the missionary to Ukambani was born and raised.
CHAPTER V
MISSIONARY BACKGROUND AND PLANTING
OF THE AKAMBA CHURCH

INTRODUCTION

At the beginning of our study we set out to contend two propositions: (1) Christian theology results from the disciplined reflection on God's biblical revelation by the believing hermeneutical community, and (2) a disciplined hermeneutic reflection on God's Word can best be done within the context of a people's worldview.

In order to explore these presuppositions and put our discussion in its proper perspective, in the first chapter it was necessary to register our hermeneutic convictions on what we perceive to be the appropriate, contemporary, evangelical, hermeneutic agenda. This was then followed by an examination on the role of worldviews in society (Chapter II) with particular reference to how worldviews are constructed. Since our specific task is to do Christian theology in the context of Akamba worldview, we undertook an investigative examination on both the traditional and
contemporary Akamba models of reality (Chapters III and IV). The primary objective in doing all this springs from the conviction that if the gospel of Jesus Christ is to be embraced by the Akamba as God's good news, it must be clothed with Akamba worldview conceptual garments through the dynamic process of biblical contextualization. This is what Osadolor Imasogie and other contemporary evangelical African theologians are contending when they say, "If Christian theology is to be relevant for the African his world view and self-understanding must be taken into account" (1983b:12).

Therefore, in preparation for the task of clothing the Christian faith with the conceptual garments of Akamba worldview, we underscore two things in this chapter. First, upon realization that contemporary Akamba Church theology is primarily the result of western missionary influences, we undertake to explore the contextual historical backgrounds from where 19th and early-20th-century missionaries came from. We are of the opinion that in order to understand missionary theologizing in its proper perspective, one must look at the different contextual situations which characterized the missionary homeland. For example, what was the the intellectual climate out of which the 19th-century missionary came? Did the dominant intellectual theories of the missionary homeland influence the way he contextualized or theologized the gospel?
Secondly, after examining some of the missionary contextual backgrounds, we focus our attention on how the Christian gospel was brought to Ukambani. Particularly, our concern here is to look back and examine how Akamba people and the missionaries interacted with each other and with the British colonial rule during the launching of Christianity in Kenya. In other words, the drama of events discussed in this latter part is taking place in Ukambani, while in the former the focus is primarily on the missionary homeland. Understanding both the missionary backgrounds and the launching of the Church in Ukambani is an essential ingredient in the whole process of theological contextualization. We must know where we have come from in order to be properly prepared for where we want/need to go.

**CONTEXTUAL MISSIONARY BACKGROUNDS**

In order to understand today, we must first of all look at yesterday. For example, to understand the dynamic processes of modernization taking place in Kenya today, and throughout the world, one must look at the history of what has gone before. In like manner, to understand the views and descriptions most pioneer western missionaries had of non-western peoples, cultures and religions, one needs to understand the dominant ideologies which permeated the western missionary background. Certainly, this is not a venture that can be covered adequately here. However, we
must of necessity examine—although briefly—some of the background ideologies which, like wind, were blowing across Europe and America during the latter part of the 18th century and continuing into the first half of our century. We would, first of all, like to look at the intellectual religious background in the western missionary homeland.

Intellectual-Religious Background

It has already been contended above (Chapter IV) that the intellectual (scientific) and religious domains in human experience could not be dichotomized without jeopardizing something extremely fundamental in human experience. We examine the two domains together, because during the period of Enlightenment, western philosophers, physical scientists, theologians and, even later on, anthropologists had much to do in creating the religious vacuum in the missionary homeland. How did this happen? We shall look at two factors which seem to have dominated the intellectual, religious background: (1) the transformation of religion into a creed of reason, and (2) the increasing uncritical acceptance of Darwinian epistemology.

First, religion became a creed of reason. Earlier we made not of was Hans Reinchenbach who stated that,

The period of Enlightenment . . . did not abandon religion; but it transformed religion into a creed of reason, it made God a mathematical scientist who knew everything because he had perfect insight into the laws of reason. No
wonder the mathematical scientist appeared as a sort of little god whose teaching had to be accepted as exempt from doubt (1969:43-44).

This was the era when religion in the West was transformed into a creed of reason. Human reason began to be perceived as being capable of handling the religious or transempirical dimension of life. Man, as it were, began the attempt to take God's place, and before long, aspects of life that were once under the domain of religion began to fall increasingly under the reign of human reason. It is therefore of vital significance in examining traditional mission theologizing to understand the intellectual religious background of the 18th-19th century European world. These centuries, which house the era of Enlightenment (a period hard to define precisely), represent the period in European history when the worship of human reason became a celebration.

It is a period typified in Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), a man who has been described by some in the West as the primary systematizer of the Enlightenment mentality. For Kant, Enlightenment meant "the maturity of man, man's emergence from his self-inflicted reluctance to use his own understanding" (Conn 1984:24). The period of Enlightenment was the era in which human experiences began to be viewed strictly from a human-rational point of view. Man began to perceive himself as having responsibility over his own destiny, and hence, why was there the need for religion, let
alone the belief in God? One critic said of the Enlightenment period that,

... a rumour, originating one knew not where, had at length grown too persistent to be ignored any longer. The rumour was to the effect that God, having departed secretly during the night was about to cross the frontiers of the world and to abandon humanity (Hazard 1965:59).

With this kind of climate, the Christians of the Enlightenment Era had to find ways of responding to the secular themes of their day. Deism, which we shall address later, was one of the ways Christians responded to the existential questions and concerns of their day. And so, pioneer western missionaries to Africa and to other lands were coming from cultures which, for the most part, had exorcised God and religion from amidst them. Western cultures did so by dethroning God and enthroning human reason.

Darwinian Epistemology

Bernard Fontenelle (1657-1757), a philosopher of the Enlightenment, in examining the making of mythology and the origin of belief in gods, came to the conclusion that it was the nature of primitive mentality,

... to exaggerate, to image, rather than to observe, to render everything marvelous. The earliest myths of the gods were thus unintentional errors, the faulty perceptions of infantile reason. "They were simply erroneous understandings of causality, because primitives were like children that had not yet had the
experience of adult life, and were thus unable to think in abstract terms" (quoted in Conn 1984:30).

Fontenelle's ideas are inevitably reflective of the Darwinian evolutionary paradigm (epistemology) which was a dominant ideology at the time. In this ideology the western man saw himself as the most mature and enlightened "species" in the human evolutionary development, whereas the non-western man was seen as "an infant who has yet to grow and experience adult life." To the "enlightened," the term "primitive" meant, "less rational, pre-scientific and prelogical." In this sense, intellectuality for that day and age was the monopoly of western enlightened man.

How about the religious experiences found among non-western peoples? Since the West had somehow exorcised religion from amidst them, then in order to be consistent, the West had to explain out the religious notions found in other peoples. Therefore, religious beliefs among non-western peoples were seen as resulting from primitive man's fear of nature (not God!), due to his faulty naive understanding. Indeed, the argument was that because of the primitive's faulty perception and fears he had to,

... conjure up creatures great enough to explain earthquakes, fire, and wind. ... Thus the gods came into being as magnified anthropomorphomorphic projections. Fontenelle rejected the notion that the idea of God could be derived even from a rational contemplation of the natural order of the universe. A primitive in the infancy of reason was incapable of such discernment (Conn 1984:30-31).

These secular, humanistic, intellectual and religious
ideologies constituted part of the climate in which the western missionary was born and raised. And, as we shall see, many western missionaries, like the prophet Isaiah of old, "living amidst men of unclean lips" (and minds) could not afford to come out from similar backgrounds unspotted. The thinking of most missionaries could not afford to escape the intellectual pollution of the Enlightenment Era. As we shall see later, this pollution will influence the way he would perceive non-westerners. But now let us proceed on and look at the missionary's Christian theological background.

**Christian Theological Background**

Osadolor Imasogie observes that the era in which the western missionary arrived in Africa was one in which, 

... the biblical world view of the Christian faith had been eroded in Europe by successive waves of historical, scientific and philosophical ferment. A vital biblical world view is predicated on the acceptance of interaction between man and spiritual forces of both evil and good. Prior to and including the medieval period when Christianity came into its own in Europe, there was no serious problem in accepting the reality of the spiritual realm. Visions of angels, other spiritual beings, demon possession, witches and wizards were commonplace topics of conversation. Church teachings and practices reinforced the belief in the reality of the involvement of spiritual forces in human affairs (1983b:48).

Thus, within the Church prior to and including the medieval period, the reality of spiritual forces interacting
with human affairs was hardly a matter of debate. Christians lived in a world where they affirmed the presence of God and his divine interaction with man in history. The Christian religious symbols, like the eucharist signifying God's incarnational interaction with human affairs, was a daily ritual for the medieval Church. However, an attack was launched on this medieval religious worldview by the dawn of the Renaissance with its subsequent industrialization and technological breakthrough; and from now onwards, the European worldview will never be the same again.

Beginning with the Renaissance, people began to see God as removed from nature; thus a mechanical worldview was being born. By the time of the Enlightenment, Miller observes that God had "become a Deus absconditus, hidden somewhere behind the silence of infinite spaces, and our literary symbols can only make the most distant allusions to him, or to the natural world which used to be his abiding place and home" (1965:6).

Christianity, which in its essence is a faith that depicts a lifestyle lived under Christ's Lordship, can philosophically and religiously be perceived as a belief system that claims to respond to man's ultimate questions and concerns. However, during the Enlightenment Era, Christianity in the West lost its faith dimension and began to be viewed by many scholars in purely scientific terms. Reflecting on such, Harvie Conn observes that, "In the
nineteenth-century debate it was rationalism, not Christianity, that shaped the agenda... The role of reason as a judge of religion in isolation from revelation was retained and reinforced" (1984:36). Thus, the intellectual climate of the 19th century affected the way Christians interpreted and understood the biblical message. It seems that the angry dialogue between science and theology can indeed trace its tensions back to the Enlightenment Age of Reason. "There, in the Enlightenment mentality and its animosity toward biblical supernaturalism, man built ultimate\(^1\) presuppositions—those beliefs over which no other takes precedence..." (Conn 1984:10).

It is this mentality that must be reckoned with if a proper understanding of traditional mission theologizing is going to be seen in its proper historical contexts. Adequate critique of traditional mission theologies is impossible outside the light shed on their contexts by the happenings of the Enlightenment centuries. But it is also for our purposes in understanding the Christian theological background to know not only how the western Church theologized but also how she trained both her clergy and

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1. An "ultimate presupposition" is used by John Frame and Harvie Conn as "a belief over which no other takes precedence" (Conn 1984:15). Harvie Conn adds that what theologians like Cornelius Van Til and others have called "presuppositions" is similar to what social scientists call "worldviews."
missionaries.

Anthropological and Scientific Models of Theologizing

One cannot examine the western Christian theologies of the Enlightenment Era and fail to see in them the powerful influence of secular anthropological and scientific theories. Christian theologians employed different means in their attempts to respond to the intellectual (scientific and mechanistic) and religious ideologies of their day. In our examinations of what we are calling anthropological and scientific models of theologizing, we would like to single out three different paradigms employed in theological reflection. Or, in other words, since Christians must always respond to the intellectual climate of their own generation, what we have here are Christian theological responses to the intellectual climate of the Enlightenment centuries.

First, we shall observe deism. The term "Deiste" was coined by Pierre Viret in 1564 in which he sought to distinguish a group who were neither Christians nor atheists. However, as early as 1660, Pascal used the term "deisme" to describe the opinions of men who believed in a religion that could be achieved by reason apart from Christian revelation (Sullivan 1982:206). Later, deism came to refer to the "shutting [of] God out of the empirical
world of space and time" which "emerged from the new cosmological dualism of Newtonian science and which was reinforced by the epistemological dualism of Cartesian-Kantian philosophy" (Torrance 1975:46). The Christian theologians of the Enlightenment Era were faced with at least two challenges. Either they would compromise and accept the dominant mechanical view of the intellectual world of their day or stand up to challenge the Newtonian scientific mechanical worldviews which was launching a coup on God.

The Enlightenment thinkers took upon their shoulders the responsibility of not only shutting God out of the empirical world of space and time but also deprived both God and the spiritual forces of their inevitable roles in interacting with nature and human affairs. The dichotomy of sacred and secular came into being. The universe, which was previously the arena of the spiritual-human encounter, began to be perceived as running independently as a machine without any further intervention of its Cosmic Engineer. It was the challenge of this kind of teaching that forced the Christian theologian of the Enlightenment to respond,

... with the development of a deistic theology. Deistic theology was a rational theology that does not require that there be immediate interaction between man and the spiritual forces immanent on the earth. The doctrine of the incarnation was not seen by deists as a necessity, for a special revelation is not essential to deism. Besides, the traditional place of the Bible as the inspired witness to
God's activities in history was relegated to the background. For the eighteenth century theologians God could only be inferred from the existence of the world on the basis of causal analogy. By causal analogy they implied that just as you can infer an intelligent purposeful agent behind any work of art, for example, so you can postulate divine intelligence behind nature. In view of this, the Bible was seen as superfluous; hence the biblical world view and the theology fostered by it could be discarded without any loss (Imasogie 1983b:49).

Thus, through deistic theology, the "enlightened" secular humanistic Christian theologian of the Enlightenment Era, welcomed and embraced the mechanical worldview. "And through deism," Harvie Conn states, "Christian theology accepted the Enlightenment view of the sufficiency of human reason as a way of evaluating 'natural religion'" (1984:10).

Next to diestic theologies is what we may call developmentalist theologies. While deistic theologies were the reflection of the gospel within the context of a scientific mechanistic worldview, developmentalist theologies were the reflection on the gospel from Darwinian evolutionary ideology. Developmentalism as a 19th-century anthropological paradigm was linked closely to the concept of progress as with the ideas of Darwin. Conn observes that "the developmental model approached religion as history of upward theological mobility" (1984:62). Building on Darwin's biological evolution, the developmentalist anthropologists began with the assumption or the pre-understanding that all peoples have to pass through the stages of social, mental and religious development. And so, Julius Wellhausen
(1844-1918), using Tyler's (1969) idea of developmental structure, applied it to Hebrew religion and proposed a documentary developmental hypothesis.

He argued that Hebrew religion underwent a historical development from simple to complex from polytheism to monotheism. For Wellhausen the Hebrew religious growth to monotheism was an evolution marked by three stages:

1. the animistic stage, which the Hebrews were said to have inherited from their nomadic background;
2. the Mosaic development of a form of monolatry (not a denial of all other gods but a choice of one God alone for Israel);
3. the monotheistic stage, reached through the interaction of monolatry with the cultic practices of the Canaanites. The formative power in this final transformation was not the Mosaic law as traditionally assumed, but the teaching of the prophets: in the course of their polemic against ritual worship, there was said to have arisen the concept of a transcendent deity. The deity's relationship to man was thus changed in this process from a national into a universal and ethical one (Conn 1984:61).

A key observation we need to make here is that even though theologians like Wellhausen were theologizing under the pressure of a developmentalist model of evolution, yet we see reflected in their theologies the rule of secular humanism. The emphasis on the adequacy of human reason, as mentioned earlier, produced a vacuum that was characterized by a dreadful religious bankruptcy. It was Strayer who observed that,

Industrial England, based ultimately on a scientific rationalism that left increasingly little room for the supernatural, seemed to promote material over spiritual values while it
destroyed those rural communities in which the church had played an important social as well as religious role. But it was higher criticism of the Bible that came to symbolize for conservative churchmen the modern assault on the faith. . . . (1978:87).

Most of these higher criticism theologians (who later would come to be called liberal because of their relative view of Scriptures) were unquestionably unwilling to submit their allegiance to the authority of God's scriptural revelation. The adequacy of human reason in dealing with the Scripture is all too obvious to these 19th-century developmentalist theologians. Of course, there were others who felt that the unique authority of biblical revelation and Christianity should be defended, although, like their contemporaries, their problem was that of equating Christianity with western culture. Hence, for a Christian "evangelical" to study other cultures and other religions was looked at with great skepticism. Eric Sharpe, in his book *Comparative Religions*, argues that non-western religious traditions were "regarded as at best worthless, at worst the work of the devil" (1975:144).

The third theological response came from what has been referred to as the diffusionist school of thought. The diffusionist model was a 19th-century anthropologist way of analyzing how religious beliefs and ideas spread from place to place. It can even be referred to as an attempt to describe the presence of religious ideas among peoples from a geographical model. In other words, while the
developmental model saw religion (although on evolutionary criteria) as growing from simple to complex, the diffusionist model saw it as moving from complex to simple.

Wilhelm Schmidt (1868-1954), a Roman Catholic priest, ... tried to explain similarities and relationships by diffusion from one or more center of culture. He found three such basic centers (Kulturkreise he called them). And in each, he continued, there existed a primordial form of monotheism (the high-god concept), which degenerated through diffusion. Animism, polytheism, mana belief, and magic are later accretions through corruptions of imagination" (Conn 1984:63).

However, as could be conjectured, Schmidt's hypothesis of primeval monotheism at the beginning of religious history was not attractive to many theologians and anthropologist; hence, as Eliade argued, it required a little more logic to figure out God than could be afforded by a primitive. Again, it can be observed that the diffusionist theologies, like the developmentalist ones, were deeply influenced by Darwinian evolutionary theories.

Indeed, to some early 20th-century theologians (who were strongly developmentalist in perspective), Christianity was still viewed as the supreme religion, not because of the divinity of its scriptural revelation, but, as Conn says, "... chiefly because of its civilizing contribution, as evidenced by its many close bonds with Western culture" (1984:75). To some theologians (like Ernst Troeltsch,
1865-1923), Christianity was the best product of western cultural evolutionary development. He even argued that Christianity should not be regarded as absolute; hence, "a new revelation of a still higher form might be given to us. In that unlikely case, the Christian religion would vanish completely" (Conn 1984:75). Most likely, this is why a diffusionist paradigm arose to challenge evolutionism, which claimed to be the dominant possibility for explaining religious development, but in so doing its own generali-
izations did not provide satisfactory substitutes. Unfort-
unately, diffusion was not going to die without leaving its mark on biblical studies. It did influence studies both in the Old Testament and in the New.2 Among other things, a diffusionist New Testament scholar, Herman Gunkel (1862-1932), saw Christianity as a syncretistic religion which borrowed religious themes derived from the Oriental and Hellenistic worlds.

Therefore, as pointed out above, the deistic, developmentalistic and diffusionistic approaches were all different means (models, if you like) the Church of the

2. Panbabylonianism has been said to be one of the spin-offs of diffusionistic thinking. The panbabylonian model of diffusionism argued that the discovering of cuneiform texts from Mesopotamia in the early 1870s (containing the Babylonian flood narratives and creation accounts, the Tel-el-Aman tablets of whole Near East in 15-14th century B.C. showing great civilizations) suggest that Israel's religions are but a part of a more-developed Babylonian worldview. Consult Heidel, 1942 and 1946.
Enlightenment Era used to interact actively in responding to the intellectual realities of their day. To get a more rounded picture of the Christian theological background, however, we need to make two more observations, particularly in reference to how the Church of the Enlightenment centuries trained her clergy and missionaries.

Clergy Ministerial Training

In order to understand the nature of ministerial training which the western missionary was trained under and which he in turn brought to Africa, we must trace briefly the concept of ministerial training back to the first centuries of the Christian Church.

Kenneth Latourette observed that,

As early as the beginning of the second century a distinct cleavage had begun to appear between clergy and laity and this in spite of the fact that in the first century every Christian was held to be a priest unto God. By the end of the second century the clergy had clearly become a separate "order," that designation having probably been derived from the designation given to Roman magistrates in a tightly stratified society (1975:133).

However, during the 2nd century, the distinction between clergy and laity was not so much based on theoretical training as on their experienced credibility in being faithful guardians and guarantors of the apostolic
At this time, Christianity was not a majority religion; however, by the 3rd and 4th centuries, mass conversions took place within the Roman Empire, and "Before the close of the fifth century the overwhelming majority of the citizens of the Roman Empire were professing themselves to be Christians . . . " (Latourette 1975:221). The mass conversion led to a laxity in Church discipline, and few lay-people concerned with the ideal in Christian experience revolted the undisciplined ecclesiastical structure to seek for a deeper relationship with God. This was the beginning of monasticism, at first a lay movement that had little to do with the clergy. However, before long, monasteries became not only centers of intellectual development but institutions for training the clergy. The monastery as a model of training,

... so captured the churches that in the East eventually the bishops were normally, indeed almost if not quite universally, drawn from the monasteries. In the West many bishops were monks. Before the end of the sixth century Pope Gregory I, one of the strongest men to sit on the throne of Peter, was drawn . . . from his monastery (Latourette 1975:222).

In a sense, then, the monasteries were the Bible colleges of the Middle Ages. Thus, the clergy went to the monastery to

3. An example of one faithful clergy at the time would be Irenaeus, who was a native of either Syria or Asia Minor. He said that he had seen Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna. Polycarp had "been instructed by the apostles and had talked with many who had seen Christ" (Latourette 1975:131).
study and live holy lives in isolation, then later to serve the laity and penetrate the pagan society of their day. Later on, the seminary model of ministerial training would be built along similar educational goals and concepts. Thus, the origin of a ministerial training that delights in higher levels of abstraction can be traced back to the monastic era. How did the conceptual orientation to ministerial training come about? Harvie Conn observes that,

The formulations of the Alexandrian theologians in the second and third centuries of the church's history made this shift even more permanent. Clement of Alexandria (d. c.215) combined the concepts of a priestly hierarchy and of the pastor as gnostic, placing cognitive knowledge at the pinnacle of the ecclesiastical ladder. Origen (d. 253) solidified this by transforming the catechetical schools for new converts into advanced theological schools. The long road toward identification of theological education with schooling, and of schooling with the intellectual defense of the gospel, had begun (1984:273).

Through the intervening centuries, all the way through the Middle Ages and the Protestant Reformation, higher academic scholarship for the clergy was required.

According to Robert Schreiter the western desire to

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4. The original meaning of the term "seminary" is "seed-plot" and was coined in 1593 by the Roman Catholic Church in their 23rd session of the Decree of the Council of Trent. The Roman Catholic Church started the seminary for the training of clergy. They were to train males who were fourteen years old (R. C. Encyclopedia). The seminary was used to refer "to the special formation of certain persons for the special role of the priest or ordained minister" (Winter 1969:382).
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train in abstraction was preceded by a shift between theology as wisdom (sapientia) that tries to discern the unity of the world, and theology as sure knowledge (scientia) that tries to construct a system to explain it. He contends that,

The training and teaching of persons for this more complex society moved away from rural monasteries to new centers in towns and cities. Those teachers were organized into guilds as was the case in other occupations. The university was born.

The development of the Western university is perhaps the most significant factor for theology as sure knowledge. It provided a new environment and offered protection of the guild to the magistri. For the first time a larger numbers of persons reflecting on faith came together on a full-time basis. . . . the university offered not only an environment but some measure of protection to the guild of theologians from the rural bishops and from the hierarchy in general. . . . The flow of communication in theology was no longer between monasteries and episcopal palaces so much as it was among the universities of Paris, Oxford, Cologne and Bologna. Aristotle's philosophy provided the analytic tools and even the framework for the reconstruction of the experience of faith. These tools were shared with other faculties in the university, initiating new dialogue partners for theology.

All of this had some important influence on what theology was to become: (1) Theological reflection came to be understood as the work of full-time, trained professionals. They were teachers who engaged in theology, rather than persons who taught because they had reflected theologically (such as bishops and novice masters). (2) Training in theology emphasized more strongly intellectual discipline, sometimes at the expense of the spirituality so central to wisdom theology. (3) Since theologians were primarily teachers, theology came to be seen as a school enterprise. This led to an important shift in audience. While theology was still intended for illumination of the experience of the Christian community, its language was directed
more and more to students, to other professors of theology, and to other disciplines of the school (1985:89-90).

For example, during the Protestant Reformation and the Enlightenment centuries, it became increasingly reinforced that excellence in ministerial preparation was defined in terms of scholastic standards. This, indeed, is why Niebuhr and Williams observed that, "The gown of the secular scholar, commonly worn by the men of learning among the burghers . . . became the outward sign for ministerial vocation and social status, the garment of the Protestant minister" (1956:147). At times, there arose some who questioned the idea of an educated clergy, but such voices were too weak to reverse the trend. By the latter half of the 17th century, Harvie Conn observes that,

. . . the predominant pattern for England and the fledgling colonies in America remained the university as the seedbed of the clergy. It became increasingly the normal expectation that a minister should possess a university degree. . . . Between 1807 and 1827 no fewer than seventeen permanent institutions arose [in America] to train a professional clergy in a professional way (1984:275-76).

As already pointed out, the key element in this type of ministerial preparation is the cognitive input. This school model, by its very nature, evaluates the students' performance and program in terms of how students perceive certain knowledge. It is a model that takes pride in an . . . obsessive interest in abstract reality on the part of professor and student, a reveling in the delights of conceptual debate withdrawn from the daily life of the culture and the
church's response to that culture . . . " [its curriculum places emphasis] on the digestion of packets of knowledge rather than on bringing each student to spiritual maturity and effective ministry" (Savage as quoted in Conn 1984:276).

Conn adds that, "Within this network, the teacher-student relationship moved from that between brothers to that of father and son, from fraternal to paternalistic. Measurements were taken in terms of cognitive input rather than ministerial gifts" (Conn 1984:276). It was this model of ministerial preparation that the 19th century missionary to Africa was accustomed to. It was a model for training the clergy; but the question we want to raise is whether the missionary to Africa was perceived as a Church clergy who required similar training.

Missionary Ministerial Training

It is clear from our discussion above that the homeland of the 18th through the early 20th-century missionary was one of great intellectual reflection. However, an examination of pioneer western missionaries going to Africa shows that the majority did not receive any extensive ministerial formal education. The primary factor which contributed to this reluctance of missionary ministerial preparation seems to be the pervading assumption in the West that Africa was occupied by a pagan people who lived in the darkness of superstitions, and therefore, one needed no academic training in order to serve such people.
For example, at Islington, where a third of the Church missionary societies trained their missionaries prior to 1910, it is said that, "... it was not until 1905 that any systematic study of comparative religions was initiated and even then African religions, regarded as 'mere superstitions', were excluded" (Strayer 1978:7). With this kind of view, most missionaries coming to Africa did not see the need for much academic training. For example, Handley Hooper, a missionary with C.M.S., was asked how he prepared himself for missionary service and his reply was, "I have tried to gain as much experience as possible in children's and boys' work ... because it seemed quite probable that a native African processes of thought would run on childlike lines" (quoted in Strayer 1978:9). Hinchliff, commenting on the missionary's academic standard, said, "... most of the missionaries who left Britain for service overseas in the first half of the nineteenth century were hardly figures to hit the headlines" (quoted in Conn 1984:77). The London Missionary Society,

... sent four missionaries to South Africa. One of them was encouraged to continue his studies—in spelling! Many of these early pioneers were barely literate. ... They were largely members of the working class—skilled mechanics, carpenters, day workers (Conn 1984:77).

As the Scriptures teach, God was not pleased to draw many of his servants from the cream of society. Few, if any, were drawn from the key universities of the day. Does this not
affirm God's word in 1 Corinthians, chapter one, where it speaks of the preaching of the gospel as being foolishness to the intellectuals of the world? It is true that God's servants may not be men and women of great minds (cf. most of the Apostles, Acts 4:13). Yet God is pleased to use them. Among those who came to work with Africa Inland Mission, most had not gone beyond high school. Part of the reason for this was that the A.I.M. field was not seen as one needing much formal education since Africa had:

... no Mars hill with its philosophers, no Ephesus with its learning; but only sin, darkness, ignorance, barbarism. To meet these, men need not so much specific scholastic and theological knowledge and that wisdom, energy, zeal, devotion, and close walk with God ... (Hurlburt and McConkey 1896a:3).

Thus, most western missionaries, being prejudiced regarding the nature of the African, were blinded from taking advantage of the academic institutions of their day. And the few who went through formal education, being trained through the western schooling academic model (a model developed to respond to western contextual needs), assumed it "... to be usable anywhere in the world... in 1847 the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. called it the great instrumentality appointed by Head of the Church for the conversion of the world" (Conn 1984:276).

Formal schooling mode of education was perceived as the ideal, yet it seems that the implicit assumptions of a mechanistic worldview inherent in the system have
discredited the model. For example, most western theologians of the 19th century paid lip-service to the biblical teaching on spiritual reality. Thus, the Christian theological background of the 19th-century missionary mistrained him for penetrating African religiosity. Now we must turn our focus and examine the last part of the contextual missionary background, the socio-cultural background.

**Socio-Cultural Background**

We have seen above that the intellectual climate of the Enlightenment centuries transformed religion into a creed of reason and how that led to the birth of a western mechanistic worldview. However, to understand further the contextual backgrounds of pioneer missionaries to Africa, we need to focus on the socio-cultural climate in which the western missionary was born, raised and educated. Several socio-cultural features could be used to describe the western society of the pioneer missionary era; however, three of these features stand out, namely: (1) a status-conscious society; (2) a racially and culturally ethnocentric society; and (3) a society that equated Christianity with western civilization.
A Status-Conscious Society

The industrial and technological break-throughs in the western world during the Enlightenment years were part of the process which contributed to the formation of western social-class structures. Adam Smith (1723-90), a famous economist and a central figure in the Scottish Enlightenment, "wished to become the Isaac Newton of the social sciences and was acclaimed as such by his contemporaries" (Campbell 1981:93). He spoke of the emerging of new social class structures arising out of the whole new economic system which was being born. The bulk of the people included the lower-middle class which included clerks, printers, grocers, mechanics and carpenters. What has this to do with those who were attracted to the missionary force? Max Warren, in his book Social History and Christian Mission, says that the missionary movement was an expression of a far wider development—the social emancipation of the underprivileged classes (1967:37-55). His studies showed that the majority of missionary recruits came from the aristocracy of labor. For them, a missionary career gave hope of a change in status towards that great middle class.

For example, Robert Strayer's examination of the ministry of Church Missionary Society found that,

Between 1870 and 1910 sixty-nine male missionaries were appointed to the East Africa Mission . . . [and] fifty-seven percent indicated occupations that might reasonably be regarded as
'aristocracy of labour' or lower middle-class, including clerks, carpenter, shipwright, mechanic, grocer, printer, leather-cloth worker, tailor, bootmaker's manager and several curates without university training (1978:5).

To quite a majority of these, the missionary career offered an opportunity to a better social status. It was found that among the attractions for such people was the possibility of ordination with much less vigorous examination than prevailed at home. The big game hunter, Sir John Willoughby, wrote that most missionaries were:

... manufactured out of traders, clerks and mechanics. The process is not a difficult one: a man, thinking he can improve his position by missionary work, has only to go to school for a year or two and learn a certain amount of medicine and carpentry, flavoured with a little theology, and he is turned out a full-blown missionary... (quoted in Strayer 1978:5).

The social class consciousness was a phenomenon which the western missionary was going to wrestle with for many years. Added to the problem was the already-inherited dichotomy between the sacred and secular roles of clergy and laypeople and the tension it would bring to groups of status-conscious missionaries. For example, studies done on the lives and ministries of earlier missionaries in Kenya show that they were very status-conscious, and the women missionaries, although for the most times outnumbered the men, were "clearly treated as second-class missionaries" (Strayer 1978:6). We shall discuss later how some of the tensions in the social class struggle came to the surface in the way missionaries treated the native converts; however,
for now we must move on and examine the racial and cultural backgrounds.

**Racial and Cultural Ethnocentrism**

Earlier in our discussion on human universals, we reaffirmed the biological one-ness of human beings. However, without repeating what was said earlier, we bring out again the subject of human biological equality in order to locate it in its proper historical setting. It was secular anthropologists of the 19th century who—in order to justify the dominant ideologies and practices of their day (colonialism and slavery)—described people of a non-European descent as having a lower genetic structure. There were several depersonalizing debates held on whether the discovered Pygmies of Central Africa were humans or apes. For example, the anthropological society of London, ". . . was an outgrowth of a debate over whether African blacks were mentally and morally capable of civilization. The Society doubted it. To the anthropologists, 'primitive man' became something closely resembling pre-man" (Conn 1984:78).

As it is understood today, such depersonalizing debates were based on Darwinian theories on biological evolution in which the theoreticians perceived themselves as being of a superior race. In the 19th century, this pseudo-superiority
of the white western race was primarily accepted by many missionaries. Strayer observes that,

By the 1880s, ... missionary thinking was much more pessimistic about African capabilities, for it was conditioned now by the pseudo-scientific racism of the day ... and the growing thrust of European imperialism in Africa. 'Paternity was the rule', wrote Max Warren in describing the new missionary mentality, 'barely masking a complete scepticism as to the capacity of the African to take any form of responsibility. ... A recrudescence of puritanism, especially in evangelical circles, reinforced the doubt as to the moral capacity of Africans and Asians for leadership' (1978:8-9).

Again, such attitudes of racial superiority were going to affect mission theological methods a great deal.

Closely tied to white mission beliefs in racial superiority was their cultural ethnocentrism. Western industrial technology was used as the standard yardstick to determine whether a culture was primitive or civilized. Social and cultural anthropologists in the 19th-century viewed non-western cultures from an evolutionary developmental model. They saw them as being at different levels of development. However, in examining much of the anthropological literature of the time, we cannot fail to see the paradox in describing cultures in strictly static terms!

This is probably why Harvie Conn suggests that it may be too simple an answer to blame all of western cultural pride on ethnocentrism. "Was there," Conn asks, "a static view of culture behind nineteenth-century missionary
ethnocentrism, a view that the missionary took for granted?" (1984:131). Whatever the source of their ethnocentrism may be is not our concern here. All we are pointing out here is that it was part of the missionary cultural contextual background that was going to condition the way he would carry out his theological task.

Probably the greatest weakness of the West was not her being culturally ethnocentric (for in some sense all cultures are ethnocentric) but rather it was the lie of equating Christianity with western civilization.

EQUATING CHRISTIANITY WITH WESTERN CIVILIZATION

As noted above, the 19th-century anthropologists were convinced of the superiority of their culture. However, the West pushed their ethnocentrism too far. One way of doing this was by regarding it as "far superior to the cultures of Asia and Africa, even superior to the advanced Hindu and Chinese cultures" (Kasdorf 1980:106). Such views were not just held by the non-Christian West, but also by Christian churchmen like Gustav Warneck (1834-1919) who has been described as the father of missiology. Almost all were convinced of the superiority of western values. However, a deeper problem, points out Paul Hiebert, is when "... they did not always differentiate this [i.e. western culture] from their faith in the superiority of Christianity"
(1978b:166). In other words, their strong cultural ethnocentrism did not always allow missionaries to separate Christianity from the process of western civilizing.

Besides, we need to point out that the 19th and early 20th-century missionary era was one in which the West enjoyed a climate of economic and political stability. This inevitably gave the West some measure of political and economic pride. Such economic and political power, coupled with a frontier spirit, caused many westerners to want to press on to the farthest frontiers. It was Johannes van den Berg, in examining the origins of the missionary awakening in Great Britain between 1698 and 1815, who said that the,

"..."calm broadminded optimism, characteristic of the Eighteenth Century Briton" saw no distance between civilization and the bringing of the Christian message, and it saw the Kingdom of God in alignment with the culture of Western Europe. ... (Christian knowledge had to be spread, the "poor natives" had to be converted from barbarism), a feeling of cultural superiority pervaded the whole attitude towards the heathen nations with which British missionary activity came into contact ... (Van den Berg with quote from Trevelyan 1956:61).

It was in David Livingstone where we see the equating of Christianity with western civilizing. "Twice, in those last few months before the expedition sailed [in 1858], David Livingstone had publically uttered his stirring cry about opening up a path to commerce and Christianity in Africa. ... [Livinstone said,] 'I hope ... it may result in an English colony in the healthy high lands of Central
Africa" (Moorhouse 1973:135). Without overdoing the point, we need to add a word from William Carey, the one regarded as the father of modern missions. While writing out of a deep sense of the superiority of 18th-century English civilization, he said,

> Can we hear that they are without Gospel, without government, without laws, and without arts and sciences; and not exert ourselves to introduce amongst them the sentiments of men and to Christians? Would not the spread of the Gospel be the most effectual means of their civilization? Would not that make them useful members of society? (quoted in Warren 1965:46).

It is for this reason that contemporary western theologians and missiologists from both Roman Catholic and Protestant circles are affirming the westernization of the Third World Church by using statements such as, "We now know that what had often been called Christianization of a people was in fact their Westerization, depriving them of their own past" (Schreiter 1985:75-76).

**Interpretive Summary**

We have examined—although briefly—the intellectual, religious, the Christian theological and the socio-cultural backgrounds of the pioneer western missionary. Our primary purpose was to understand what kind of winds were blowing in the missionary homelands and how their accompanying climates would influence missionary theological methods.

Among other things, our study has shown us that the
19th-century western missionary came from a world which, for the most part, had sold her religiosity to a secular humanistic and mechanistic worldview. The Enlightenment centuries ushered for the West an era of theological and religious skepticism. The dominant worldview of, say, the 19th-century missionary homeland paid lip-service to the biblical and once-held traditional Christian beliefs on spiritual reality. For example, the intellectuals and theologians of the day provided a mechanical view of the universe in which, once set in motion, was able to go on eternally without any interruption or intervention from its cosmic engineer.

The activity of God and the spiritual forces on nature and on the affairs of men was not only becoming increasingly questionable, but the belief itself was becoming less and less acceptable. In fact, by the mid-1800s, the once-held dynamic orientation to spiritual reality had been radically diluted.

It can be asserted primarily that it was these mechanical ideologies that were the background forces behind the industrial and the technological revolutions in the western world. Is a mechanistic worldview an ideological necessity and essential ingredient for a secular humanistic industrial society? In other words, can modernization in any culture be possible without secularization? Do we have any contemporary case studies? Also, what can be said of
the role played by rationalism in an era when the worship of human reason was at its peak?

Besides, most western theologians borrowed their theologizing models from the secular humanistic intellectuals and anthropologists of their day. Deism, developmentalism and diffusionism were all different ways in which Christian theologians responded to the contextual background of their day. Training of clergy and missionary alike could not escape the intellectual, religious and theological ferment of the day. And so, western missionaries came to Africa with the gospel which, for better or for worse, was hidden in their intellectual-religious-technical baggage. All these, added to their feelings of racial and cultural superiority, would have profound influence on their Christian witness.

Therefore, we now observe how the different western missionary backgrounds influenced Christian theologizing in the Akamba Church. First of all, we start by examining how the Christian gospel was brought to Ukambani.

**CHRISTIAN GOSPEL BROUGHT TO UKAMBANI**

Communication of the Christian gospel never takes place in a vacuum. Therefore, our primary purpose here is to understand how the Christian gospel was brought to Ukambani. In other words, it is an attempt to understand diachronically the Kenyan-Kamba context during the planting of the
Christian Church in their area. For example, what was the historical and political milieu? More particularly, we are concerned not only with the roles of the British colonial force and the pioneer missionary but also with the ways that the Akamba people interacted with them. Each of those three groups had her own contribution to make, and none should be ignored in any attempt to explore the historical milieu.

Also, in this section we will try to deal with aspects of the Akamba Church that have been ignored by traditional mission Church historians. For many years, Church historians, writing on God's activity in Africa, have tended to put more emphasis on the roles of western missionary heroes with little attention given to the African heroes of the Church. African Church historians should not fall victim to this type of misrepresentation of what God has done and is doing in the building of the African Church. The need to bring to public attention the untold stories of what God has done and is continuing to do in and through Christians in Africa has never been greater. So in some small measure, this section is an emic attempt to construct for the first time an Akamba early Church history.

However, in our attempts to explore what we are calling Akamba early Church history, we would like to start by, first of all, underscorng the rationale for the global dimensions of any history. Second, we look into the historical-political climate in Ukambani during the time the
gospel seed was being planted. Our third area of discussion focuses on the evangelistic strategies of different western pioneer mission groups.

**History's Global Dimension**

As we proceed to discuss the early history of the Akamba Church, we are compelled by the conscious or unconscious undermining of Third World histories by western historians to make a statement about the global nature of the history of any people, regardless of whether it is Church history or not. It is now a little over two decades since the Norwegian Church historian Bengt Sundkler made the observation that, "... African churches everywhere should be made aware, ... of the need now for thorough research and study of their own local history" (Sundkler 1960:223). His words show how desperately overdue such a need had become. P. D. Curtin, writing four years ago, hit the nail on the head when referring to the role of African history. He said, "For Africans, to know about the past of their own societies is a form of self-knowledge crucial to a sense of identity in a diverse and rapidly changing world" (Curtin 1981:54).

Certainly, in order to put African Akamba history in a

5. This is what a Kenyan historian Ali Mazrui calls history's role of "identity formation" (1970:xv).
broader perspective, it needs to be pointed out that the history of any people is not just some kind of parochial or esoteric story valuable enough only for a particular people's self-knowledge, but rather it is a vital contribution to the understanding of world history. Older historical traditions considered history to be a semi-private possession. It saw the history of any particular society as valuable to itself but irrelevant to others. Curtin says that "History was consciously mythical, designed to build national pride and willingness to sacrifice for the national cause" (1981:56).

For example, the North American "history-of-civilization" approach (and its European equivalents) is ethnocentric, asking questions like, "How did we come to be as we are?" This is not wrong to do. Each society needs to know the historical path(s) on which it has trod. However, it should not stop there. Why? Because, neither society nor individual persons live for their own sake. Societies, like individuals, must grow from selfishly-oriented approaches which are egocentric and ethnocentric. The bigger and more important questions to ask as society "matures" are questions such as, "How did mankind come to be as we find it today?"

While it is important to have an ethnic history (or an ethnology) of a people, yet such should be freed from both
ethnocentrism and esotericism. The history of any people has a global scope, and therefore, it should be allowed to serve its rightful international role. No history is for itself alone. The story of any people, any person, is a story for the whole world. God's activities among a people (which is his story) are the blessings of the whole world, for God always has the world in view in all his works (Jn 3:16). African history (or Kamba history, for this matter) has an international role to serve, besides providing a self-knowledge and a sense of identity. And so, Kamba history, be it political, religious, ecclesiastical or cultural is a contribution to world history.

We must affirm at the outset that the best way to look at African history (or any people's history) is within the framework of world history for self-identity is too narrow an objective.

This is why the African university needs to readjust and reorient history curricula in order to maintain an appropriate balance of local, national, regional and world history. Much of the history curricula in African universities will have to be decolonized, both in Francophone and in Angiophone Africa.

The final victory of history will come, as Curtin says,

6. Note that we are defining history as the story of the events in time.
"on a broadening of international social science to the point where scholars in other disciplines will have to consider African data as a relevant basis for any generalization about human society" (1981:71). If all human beings are essentially the same, out "of one blood [God made] all nations of men" (Acts 17:26 KJV), then why is it so hard to see the story of any people as having global applications for mankind? At any rate, before we reach that final victory, we must start by studying the particular story of a people. For our case, it is God's ecclesiastical activity among the Kamba.

Think about a Church that has been in existence among a tribe for nearly a hundred and twenty years and to date the gospel of Christ is being embraced by about five hundred thousand of its members. Yet no literature is available to survey the story of God's activity among them! Is this not hiding God's light under the bushel?! A Church which, over a dozen years ago, was described by one of their ministers as having 700 to 800 congregations each with from a few dozen people to two or more thousand believers. It would seem that an estimate of about 300,000 Akamba Christians, catechumens, 'adherents', and 'enquirers', gives a fair picture of the numerical impact of evangelization in Ukambani. This means that about 30 per cent of the population may be considered 'Christian', in the broad sense of that term (Mbiti 1971:22-23).

From the above observation, are we then not in debt before the Lord and his universal Church regarding telling of his
dealings among the Kamba? We are at least obligated to tell how the Church began. Besides, if God’s activity through first-generation Christians are not recorded, we may soon find ourselves desperate for eye witnesses. In a sense, every time an old first-generation Christian dies, a library is lost. Therefore, while this is not an exhaustive coverage of everything that took place during the first decades of the Akamba Church, it is a needed, overdue attempt to place before the hands of Akamba Christians and the worldwide Church a brief history of how the Christian gospel was brought to Ukambani. However, we do so by examining next the historical-political climate in Ukambani during the time the gospel seed was being planted.

**Historical-Political Situation**

Earlier in the cosmological examination of our study (Chapter III), it was pointed out that during the "second half of the 17th century, the Kamba migrated northwards in small groups from the present north-eastern region of Tanzania into the southern position of modern Ukamba in search of areas that could support settled life" (Kenya 1973:26). By the turn of the century the nomadic Kamba had reached the fertile Mbooni Mountains and had begun to establish agricultural villages. Having been used to travelling, they did not want agricultural life to lock them up. So between 1800 and 1850 the Kamba were involved in
trading operations which put them into contact with people in central, northeastern and coastal Kenya.

In fact, there is every reason to believe that the first contacts of Akamba with peoples of the western world happened as a result of these long-distance business trading trips. Up until 1880 they had no "idea" of a people who would invade them and disturb their much-cherished peace, although earlier some of the Kamba prophets had talked about a people who would come "carrying fire in their pockets" (i.e. match box). Nevertheless, the Kamba as a people did not look forward with excitement to the fulfillment of this prophecy!

British Rule among the Kamba

In the 19th century, western colonial powers poured themselves into Africa like rain. Some political historians have described the century as "the last full century of Western global colonialism . . . 'the longest, most determined and most brutal gold-rush in history.' Gospel and gold, ointment and guns, oppressor and oppressed--these were the twin agents of Western empire in the nineteenth century" (Conn 1984:55). Kenya fell under British hands.

History seems to suggest that the British had no intention of ruling Kenya. However, the country of Uganda was of strategic importance to the British, and if it was
going to be "developed," then Kenya had to be occupied. So, the first claim on Kenya by the British was started out by a commercial firm named "Imperial British East Africa Company." This company operated in what was referred to as British East Africa. The company's grip on Kenya began in 1889 when it moved an office from the coast and established a station at Machakos, the heart of Ukambani. Thus the Akamba became the first tribe to house the British in a country which was later to be named Kenya. The company placed a man by the name of John Ainsworth to be in charge of this station, beside serving as the principal officer for the company.

As early as 1893, the I.B.E.A. Company had established another station in Kitui. And in 1895, the I.B.E.A. Company sold their rights to the British government and from that year onwards Kenya was declared a British protectorate until 1920, when it became a colony. The British government divided Ukambani into two administrative districts, on the west Machakos and on the East Kitui.

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7. Between 1895 and 1919 the phrase "British East Africa" was used to refer to what is presently called Kenya. Later the term "Kenya" "was adopted to eliminate confusion when the greater part of the former German East Africa became the British mandated territory of Tanganyika" (Oliver 1952:xviii).
The Kamba are not known to have raised any major resistance against British rule. However, we must mention about Kimatu of Mwala, Machakos, who in 1894 launched a movement of resistance against the British. Although his contingent did their best, before the British military, they were like flies on the back of an elephant. In great power the British marched into Mwala, burnt the rebels' villages and took away cattle and goats. As was mentioned earlier (page 189), the British led other military expeditions with the consequence that "Kilungu, Mukaa, Mbooni, and Kangundo" and "Machakos district was brought effectively under British overrule" (Tignor 1976:20). It is then not surprising to see why in 1903, when part of their land was taken by the British and allotted to European settlers, "there was no furious outburst from the people" (Mbiti 1966:5). By 1910, the Akamba had lost Kikumbulyu, Mua Hills, Kima Kiu and Yatta Plains to the British settlers. To the Kamba, the colonial government was looked at as a powerful force invading them, taking their land and disturbing their peace and tribal stability. The British military guns were the most devastating weapons the Kamba had ever seen. What is the use of bows and arrows against such weaponry? Along with the colonial government came the pioneer missionaries who brought Christ's Good News to Ukambani. And now, let us
move on and examine briefly the foreign mission agencies which came to Ukambani and consider the evangelistic strategies they chose to employ in their task of gospel communication.

**Missionary Evangelistic Strategy**

Let us begin by looking at the different pioneer foreign missions.

**Pioneer Foreign Missions**

Missionary literature present at the time would suggest that there were at least five different missions which started (or attempted to start) work among the Akamba during this period, i.e. 1840-1920.

First, there was the Church Missionary Society, represented by John L. Krapf, a German Lutheran. As far as we know, Krapf was the first foreign missionary to bring the Christian gospel to the Akamba. He did this through two visits which he made in 1849 and 1851. Prior to his coming to Mombasa, Kenya, Krapf had worked faithfully but with little fruit in Ethiopia (formerly Abyssinia) from 1836 to 1844. He was "Frustrated in his attempt to work among the Gallas in the Kingdom of Shoa . . . " (Oliver 1952:6); and so the Home Committee granted him permission to give it another shot but this time from a south-eastern base. So, his visit among the Kamba was on his way to look for a
remnant of Christians whom he had heard were still living in Ethiopia. He met the travelling Wakamba in Mombasa in 1844.

It appears that the first decades of the 19th century saw groups of Kamba, especially those who lived east of the Masai, opening regular contacts with the coastal Mombasa. Some records show that the famine of 1836 (to which Krapf is making reference), brought the Kamba to the west, although earlier reports indicate that "Kamba tribesmen were trading at a place called Kwa Jomvu near Mombasa more than ten years before" (Boteller 1835:205,211-12). At any rate, Krapf met a group of Kamba travellers in Mombasa, most likely at Rabai Mpio (Munro 1975:22). Rabai Mpio is a spot twelve miles northwest of Mombasa which served as a resort site for Kamba traders and which Krapf's strategic mind regarded as a good site to begin mission work; hence, it would serve as a stepping stone to the interior.

While at the coast, Krapf shared the gospel with his friends from the interior. Besides, he learned the Kamba language from them and in 1850 he was successful in translating and publishing St. Mark's gospel, the first Kamba gospel literature. Excited about the possibilities which lay ahead in regard to the evangelization of this "friendly people," Krapf decided to move inland and visit the Wakamba. Arriving in Ukambani should have been a great
privilege both for him and Chief Kivoi, an influential and powerful Kamba elder in whose hands Krapf enjoyed gracious hospitality.

The people Krapf met inland were very friendly and he would have been thrilled to stay and develop a mission station among them had he not been overtaken by despair due to the sudden death of his friend Kivoi on August 27, 1851. Kivoi's brutal killing by enemies made Krapf feel that his mission among the Kamba was in jeopardy and any "further stay was impossible" (Krapf 1860:344). Whether this was a temptation he yielded to is difficult to tell, although his words on the day he left Ukambani reveal a man with mixed emotions. He said, "Can I be blamed if I renounced for the time the Ukambani mission, and returned to the coast whilst an opportunity was still afforded me?" (Krapf 1860:343). At any rate, he left Ukambani, and due to health problems, he never got to return. We have no way of telling whether there were any Kamba converts out of Krapf's ministry.

Second was the East African Scottish Mission. It is most probable that the reports of Kivoi's brutal assassination, along with Krapf's being broken in health in

8. Earlier references to Kivoi as an Akamba chief may be sociologically misleading; hence, such a label does not agree with Kamba traditional sociological structure. The term elder fits better. Even the contemporary reference to Kivoi as "a Kamba 'merchant prince'" by Robert Strayer (1978:34) connotes an alien hierarchical social structure.
1853 should have lessened the flow of western missionaries to East Africa. Forty years had to elapse before any other missionaries would gather the courage to walk on Krapf's footsteps. The last decade of the 19th century stands out as a monumental break-through in missions to East Africa and to Ukambani. Out of the nine or so missions which began in East Africa during this period, five of these laboured among the Kamba. The East African Scottish Mission was closely linked with the Imperial British East Africa Company.

The use of agriculture as a means to evangelism was a priority among missions about this time. So the Scottish Industrial Mission bought land in Kibwezi, a spot in the lowlands of the southeastern region of Ukambani, and established a mission station. Cameron Scott, writing five years later, says, "... the mission, established five years, has many European vegetables, bananas, pineapples, mangoes, coffee, oranges, rice, oats, corn, and many other things very desirable" (Scott 1896:7). The land at Kibwezi was, however, not good farming land, and so the mission was to be transferred to Kikuyu where there was better farmland.

The third mission to enter Ukambani about the same time was the Leipzig Evangelical Lutheran Society. It opened its first mission station at Ikutha in 1892. They labored faithfully in planting the seed of the gospel, although later they had to hand over their work to the Africa Inland
Mission.

The fourth mission to come onto the scene during the same decade was the Africa Inland Mission. This is the mission which will have the greatest impact in evangelizing the Kamba. For this reason, our references to this mission throughout the remaining part of this dissertation will be more exhaustive than the rest. The mission came into being in 1895 through the vision and faithful, sacrificial life of a dedicated young man, Peter Cameron Scott. Again, we would wish it were within the purpose of our study to carry on an exhaustive examination of his life in order to mine, dine and be nourished by one whose life was characterized by a deep love for God and for people. Scott was born in Glasgow, Scotland in 1867, but at the age of twelve he moved with his family to Philadelphia, U.S.A.

Early in his life, he committed his life to God, and at the age of twenty-three, the Lord compelled him to sail to the Congo (now Zaire). With his brother John, they left for the mission field where their early months were spent battling sickness. Two years had not passed before Peter had to bury his brother. With a broken heart, as well as broken health, he was "carried out from the country unconscious, and at death's door, from the ravages of fever. For some time his life hung in a balance, but after a year or more of rest and recuperation in his native Scotland his health was restored and he began again to turn
his eyes toward Africa" (Hurlburt and McConkey 1896a:3). In the summer of 1895, he went to Philadelphia where he generated sufficient interest among a few friends who were interested in missions and "disclosed to them God's leading in his life with reference to Africa" (Hurlburt and McConkey 1896a:3). Soon a group of willing and devoted young men and women banded together with him and set sail for East Africa from New York in August, 1895. A prayer council with the name "Philadelphia Missionary Council" was organized to serve simply as "a committee of Christian workers, constituting a Prayer Council who shall be the home representatives of the mission" (Hurlburt and McConkey 1896a:5). A very capable and Godly man, Charles E. Hurlburt, served as the council's first president.

In about three months a group of five men and three ladies sailed to Africa and arrived in Mombasa on October 27, 1895. Hurlburt and McConkey described Scott, the leader of the group, as:

...wise, careful, experienced in African mission work, and deeply taught of God. The members of the band, numbering eight, are trained, consecrated, ardent workers, each one conscious of a distinct call to Africa. We believe the work to be of God and that which is of God cannot fail. Hardship, toil, journeyings, perils by land and sea, tremendous obstacles—all these it will doubtless meet, but the purpose of God in it can never fail (1896a:4).

After two weeks of getting their inland caravan ready, the five young men left the coastal luxury, and leaving behind
the three ladies, journeyed to Ukambani, a journey of 250 miles. Like Gideon's soldiers, "weary yet pursuing," the pioneer group travelled through hot tropical heat, jungles and fevers. Amidst all that, the Lord granted them travelling mercies, and on Thursday at four in the afternoon, December 12, 1895, the pioneer group reached Nzaui, the heart of Ukambani. Scott records in his diary: "Reached Nzoai at 4 P.M. very tired" (Scott 1896:10). That day the future Africa Inland Church--Kenya was launched by men of vision, dedication and determination. Within ten days Scott and the band had finished putting up their residential house.

Stuart Watt, an independent missionary whom we will discuss later, heard about the spot Scott had chosen for a mission station and invited him to "come further inland, near to our district, where the population was more dense and the climate less trying" (Watt c.1916:257). Scott did not ignore Watt's advice, and in the following year, he and his band opened another station at Kangundo. By about 1920, the mission had stations located in different parts of the protectorate. However, the majority of these stations were in Ukambani: for example, in Machakos, 1902; Mbooni, 1908; Mukaa, 1909; Kilungu, 1917. At first, Mukaa was founded by the Church Missionary Society in 1903 which handed it over to Africa Inland Mission in 1909 (Munro 1975:102).

The last mission to begin work in Ukambani during this
period was the Holy Ghost Mission. It explored and began work in Machakos in 1912. It is Tignor who suggests that "... perhaps in order to keep the Kamba from falling under the exclusive sway of the Protestant Africa Inland Mission, they began work among [the Kamba]" (1976:114).

**Pioneer Mission Strategies**

Each foreign mission was comprised of its own particular breed of missionaries, sometimes distinguishable through their particular theological and doctrinal emphasis. There is, indeed, a sense in which missions are, to a considerable extent, expressions of theologies. Thus, missionary strategies are primarily reflective of the different missions' theological positions. And at times, when those theological positions change, we should expect the change to be manifested in their mission strategies as well. Our concern here is to examine the different missions' evangelistic strategies. There were basic commonalities which characterized pioneer missions' evangelistic strategies. H. R. A. Philip, in his book entitled *A New Day in Kenya* (1936), discusses the different methods of evangelism used by mission societies. Although he writes in 1936, yet the methods he suggests are traceable back to the pioneer days.

The first of these methods was the "agricultural method." Between 1891 and 1898, the Scottish Industrial
Mission tried their best to establish a firm in Kibwezi, Ukambani. The main goal in setting the "mission estate" was to teach the African by being practically involved in better farming methods: for example, in the use of the plow to which the Kamba had not been previously exposed. It also provided a place for Christian refugees, especially those who had been ostracized by their own family or societal members for accepting the new faith. Ostracism is "normal" for first generation Christians in a tribal society.

Almost every foreign mission coming to Kenya during these pioneer days had farming as one of its priorities. For some like Stuart Watt, they wanted to use farming to establish a self-supporting ministry, although the dry Kamba country did not offer good farming opportunities for most missions. Some pros and cons have been raised in relation to the validity of this approach, but suffice it to note that one overall feeling was that by so doing, the missionaries were not different from the colonists. However, this is a very general statement, and we will respond to the mission-government relationship later.

The second approach was the medical approach. Mbiti notes that this approach "became by far the most successful and impressive from the very beginning, especially in a country with many and great medical needs" (Mbiti 1971:16). The A.I.M. would be most noted for their superb job in this respect. They made it their goal to establish many
dispensaries during this period. Their medical services were offered to the people and to God who cared for their physical needs as well as their spiritual needs. As Bangert writes in 1899, "... it is through healing the sores and sicknesses of the natives that you most easily gain their confidence and are thus enabled to present the gospel medicine for their deeper disease ..." (quoted in Hurlburt and McConkey 1899:6).

Third was the educational approach, which although at first appealed to no one, later earned credibility. The pioneers' goal was to reach the Kamba children and young people through education. However, what parent would allow his child to be taught strange manners by the white stranger in their midst? So, most parents refused to let their children go. Even when some missionaries tried to give gifts to the parents in order to dispose them to allow their children to go to school, some parents still refused. Gration observes correctly when he says, "The Kamba tribe was resistant to the first offers of education ..." (Gration 1974:27). Thomas Allen, a pioneer missionary with A.I.M., wrote from Nzaui in 1898, saying,

We have been praying for some Wakamba children to teach. One bright lad of eleven or twelve years of age, who would like to come to us, I tried hard to get, even offering his father an amount of cloth per month equal to the wages of a Wakamba porter, but he refused to let his boy come (quoted in Hurlburt and McConkey 1898:5).

Later this resistant attitude changed and the
educational approach became one of the most effective and revolutionary methods in bringing the Christian gospel and change to Ukambani. For example, in 1899-1900 the C.M.S. gathered thirty orphaned and stray Akamba children along the railway line and sent them for care and education at their Freretown school in Mombasa. After 1909 they were returned to the Machakos district, to the Mukaa station (which by then was under the A.I.M.), where they continued schooling and "as they grew into adulthood, became the first Kamba teachers and evangelists" (Munro 1975:108).

The first two decades of this century show a number of schools beginning in Ukambani, for almost every A.I.M. station was accompanied by a school. In fact, it was the school which was launched first. Also, the predominantly French Roman Catholic mission of the Holy Ghost Fathers had a school in Kabaa in 1917. And in 1920, in spite of fierce opposition from A.I.M. it opened a mission station and school at Kilungu. It seemed that some Kamba from Kilungu who had received some education in Nairobi encouraged the mission to open a station and school at their own home area.9

9. I am a product of their efforts as a son of one who went to Kilungu (presently called Kikoko) Holy Ghost Mission School in the late 1920s. "Chief Malu of Kilungu welcomed the Holy Ghost Fathers to Kikoko, helped to select the site of their station, and secured labour to construct the mission and transport equipment from Kabaa (Munro 1975:106).
Fourth was the industrial approach which gained no success in spite of all the effort and energies spent in launching it.

Mission-Government Relationship

Missions arrived in Kenya at the same time as British colonial rule. As we have seen earlier, it was in 1895 when the Imperial British East Africa Company sold their rights to the British government. Also, by the same year about four missions were being launched in Ukambani. Gration points out that "... throughout the entire colonial period there was an inter-dependence between missionary societies and the Crown" (1974:47). Such a relationship tended to regard the missionary as an agent of the colonial government. There were those in Kenya who saw missionaries, as Delano writing from the Nigerian context referred to them, as "the front troops of the Government to soften the hearts of the people and while people look at the Cross the white men gather the riches of the land" (Delano 1945:15). Bear in mind that the two parties had similar cultural heritage, were white, shared certain common goals and mutual interests; probably such an alliance was inevitable.

There were several ways in which the alliance between the mission and government expressed itself. For example, there were missionaries who accepted work in government administrative positions. When such happened, Gration
observes that, "The native chiefs . . . could not help but realize that a portion of their authority over their own tribal people had been transferred by Government decree to the missionary" (1974:62). Such an alliance in administrative roles made the mission be involved with cultural decisions which most missions were not equipped to do. A number of missionaries in Ukambani served as officers in the colonial system.

Munro, who has done a very exhaustive study of the Kamba and the colonial period, comments on the administrative role the Africa Inland missionaries took. Note what he says:

Some A.I.M. missionaries carried the 'sub-imperial' role even further. The A.I.M. was a loosely-structured organization, bringing together a heterogeneous collection of individuals whose qualifications for mission field were simply personal faith and financial support from home churches. These men, arriving ill-advised and ill-prepared for the task of living and working among African communities, sometimes yielded to a temptation to take on local temporal authority. In the early years of the A.I.M. station in Mbooni, for example, G. W. Rhoad set himself up as a kind of 'chief' . . . in the same fashion as the Kamba 'upstart' chiefs and headmen, to hold his own courts for the arbitration of Kamba disputes . . . but the American missionaries were no more capable of handling the intricacies of Kamba law than were British officials . . . (1975:104-105).

The basic desire of both the missions and the colonial regime was to, as Gration quotes, " . . . join forces . . . the Government and the mission are like two bullocks hitched to a cart. We are pulling together to help your cart go
forward" (1974:65). For example, the governor of Kenya in 1910 suggested that the "... natives [should] not be allowed or be taught, to think that the Government and the Missionaries are not one and all working for their common good" (McIntosh as quoted in Gration 1974:48-49). The alliance between the two was strong, since in the previous year a resolution had been unanimously adopted affirming that "'in the work of uplifting native races Christian Missions and a Christian Government are mutually dependent'" (Gration 1974:51).

This alliance is seen best in the war years when missionaries helped in recruiting natives for war along with reporting those who evaded military service. As a result mission stations were offered military protection by the government while some missionaries kept personal guns to protect themselves from animals and hostile natives. "I had always carried a powerful six-chambered revolver in my belt, fully loaded, but this was covered by my jacket and did not appear" (Watt c.1916:186).

Today, it is very possible to look at these and regard them as failures who yielded to the "arm of the flesh" for their protection. However, given human nature and the way it operates, there is no guarantee that we ourselves would have been different. Nevertheless, after saying so, we must quickly point out that it is only Christian grace that dictates to us against being critical of their
enthnocentrism. For example, the temptation to rely on military power does not receive scriptural sanction; hence, the sword, gun and missiles have no contribution to make to the Kingdom of God: "Seeking the shelter of one's flag is hardly compatible with the person whose boast is in the Lord Who has 'all authority in heaven and on earth' (Matt 28:18)" (Glasser 1984:6-7).

**Inter-Mission Relationships**

Here we look into the way different missions related with one another during this early period. As far as we can tell, pioneer missions in Ukambani expressed some inevitable form of inter-mission cooperation. Probably it was best for their survival during this pioneering stage.

At the launching of the work, earlier missions offered hospitality to the arriving missions. For example, the Watt family regarded it as privilege to stop by the station of the East African Scottish Industrial Mission at Kibwezi about 1893 on their way to Ngelani. Also, Peter Cameron Scott and his group enjoyed the welcome and hospitality offered to them by missionaries of the Church Missionary Society when they arrived in Mombasa in October of 1895. Scott reports that Reverend W. E. Taylor and Reverend H. K. Burns of the C.M.S. welcomed them and gave them two houses to use, "... one of them a very pretty house belonging to Bishop Tucker, in which our three ladies were housed . . . ."
In 1901, the comity agreements brought together the Church Missionary Society, the Church of Scotland Mission and the Africa Inland Mission. The Church Missionary Society established a mission station at Mukaa in 1903 and in obedience to the comity agreements, it handed the station over to the A.I.M. in 1909; hence, "... arrangements between the Protestant missions in Kenya left the Machakos district as an A.I.M. 'sphere of influence'" (Munro 1975:102). At other times, some of the major missions would be called by the government for an alliance to formulate policies regarding native administration.

Other aspects of "inter-mission cooperation" would be seen in translation work where, for example, both the African Inland Mission and the British and Foreign Bible Society jointly finished translating the Kamba New Testament in 1920. However, as seen above, the inter-mission cooperation was strictly confined to the Protestant missions working in Ukambani. The predominantly French Roman Catholic Mission of the Holy Ghost Fathers did not participate in the comity agreements and their ministry in Ukambani with the Protestants existed under no friendly terms.

INTERPRETIVE CONCLUSION

Our task of examining how the Christian gospel was brought to Ukambani was, as said earlier, an attempt towards
meeting a missing lacuna of Akamba early Church history. We have looked at the historical-political climate during the time the gospel was being planted. It was our purpose to get some idea as to how the different groups—namely, the British colonial government—the missionaries and the Akamba interacted with one another. Each group played a different role with its own responsibility and expectation, although at times all are seen overlapping each other in the dynamic process of cultural change. The decision to carry out some lengthy historical explanation confined to the more explicit dimensions of cultural interaction was a conscious one on our part.

For example, we have talked about the British colonial rule and the controversy it raised among the Akamba. Next, we have examined the introduction of the school, plough farming, medical dispensaries as some of the different evangelistic strategies employed in pioneer mission groups. We did not choose to raise questions concerning the validity of, say, the western schooling, farming and medical models. All that we were concerned with was to register the fact that western missionaries came to Ukambani and introduced institutions without the slightest idea as to the nature of the psychological turmoil these explicit institutions were injecting on the receptors' worldviews.

Earlier in Chapter III we argued that a society normally meets another first through its own explicit
institutions, but the ideas or logical foundations from which the institutions germinated drag behind. And so, when the British and missionary societies came into contact with Akamba, what the Akamba saw and touched were explicit institutions like the school. For traditional Akamba, the school meant a new way of collecting boys and girls together, clothing them and teaching them to memorize meaningless sounds and write strange symbols and signs. The ecclesiastical institutions, which were symbolized by a sky-high-raised-cross-stippled buildings, were probably the strangest man-made structures that had ever pierced their sky. They were told it was a house for God! Their God? What would such words mean to a people who believe that Ngai ekalaa ituni (God dwells in heaven) and cannot live in a man-made wooden house.

The mission's medical institutions were symbolized by its method of healing disease in which a nurse (usually a woman) gave a patient either some tablets to swallow or pushed a long painful needle through the skin of the patient's arm or buttock. Traditionally, the healing of disease was administered by the elderly through the use of medicinal herbs accompanied by appeals to God and/or to other spirit powers. The new means of healing had no appeal to the supernatural. The political institution was another explicit structure in which the missionary and the British
colonial officer were perceived as working together towards accomplishing a *musungu* (European or white man) agenda which the Akamba did not understand.

All these different institutions formed part of the package which the western missionary to Ukambani consciously or unconsciously brought as excess baggage. Would some of that excess baggage influence his gospel witness?

What about his contextual background and its accompanying worldview which the majority did not know? For example, how could the 19th-century western missionary, coming from a worldview that had been deprived of its supernaturalism, be expected to be sensitive to a people with a supernaturalistic worldview? In the Akamba Church today, does the average western missionary and the national Akamba Christian know how much of the missionary's contextual, intellectual and secular humanist backgrounds he brought with him to the field? Do national Christians know why the missionary theologized the way he did? As an Akamba Christian theological student, I get the impression that many veteran and contemporary western missionaries do not know the worldview out of which missions from the West have proceeded. Therefore, it is the purpose of our next chapter to critique the methods of how missions theologize(d) within the Akamba Church. We will seek to point out that mission theologizing in Ukambani was (is) done within a western
mechanistic-dichotomistic-rationalistic-individualistic and deeply ethnocentric worldview. Our critique on Akamba Christian theology below will elaborate on what we mean.
CHAPTER VI

CRITIQUE ON AKAMBA CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

Primarily, the question that concerns us here is, "How has the contextualization of the biblical message been handled in the Akamba Church in the past?" We focus more on the non-contextualization of mission and national theology in the Akamba Church. However, at the outset of the chapter, we must point out that our intention is not judgmental when, say, we expose areas in which missionary and national gospel communication failed to do adequate contextualization. An Akamba critique of mission theology (Christianity) is not an attack but rather an effort to perceive clearly how the previous and present missionary-national task of theologizing was (is) carried out.

So, this chapter should be understood as providing a necessary constructive critique of past and present Akamba Christian mission theology. All that we are concerned about in a critique is to expose those cultural aspects which, if
not carefully judged by the authoritative Word of God, have the potential of blinding us from seeing how the timeless gospel of Jesus Christ can be communicated to the Akamba and to our generation in the most effective way.

We begin our critique by examining five examples of ready-made mission/Christian theologies. Our discussion on each of the examples is intended to expose the degree of western worldview conditioning in Akamba Church theology. This is imperative if Akamba Church theology is going to be "dewesternized." Or, to borrow a medical analogy, we can speak of our critique as the needed surgery for a proper diagnosis of Akamba Church theology.

Next, we direct our attention to some few historical examples of what could be termed valid mission Christian theologizing within Akamba. This is what we are calling God's remnant exceptions. However, in anticipation of our next chapter, we direct our discussion to the examination of some contemporary mission and national Christian theologies. As it shall be observed, such theologies only portray the cry for a more adequate contextual Christian theology. It will be the purpose of Chapter VII to provide principles and guidelines necessary for the construction of a relevant Akamba Christian theology. But for now we must know where we are theologically.
Overemphasis of the Natural vis-a-vis the Spiritual

The mission overemphasis of natural vis-a-vis the spiritual could be understood as originating from western dichotomistic or dualistic tenets of the western worldview. In the previous chapter, we have pointed out that the 19th-century western intellectual and religious background was one that was primarily characterized by an increasing acceptance of a belief that dichotomizes between the natural and the supernaturalism that was later to dominate western epistemology. And so as we shall see shortly, the western missionary working among the Akamba people was not immune to, or excluded from, the secular mental corruption which accompanied the humanistic (naturalistic) views of his day.

For example, during the first decades of this century, there were many occurrences of spirit-possesson among Akamba men and women. In July, 1922, for instance, Ndye Wa Matelo testified that:

Ndonye claimed that God, whom he called Ngai, appeared to him in a dream and announced that he, Ndonye, had been selected to lead the people in a New Age about to come to this earth. This God, to whom Ndonye owed allegiance and on whose powers he drew, was recognizably the Christian God . . . in a white robe who had created the world in six days . . . (Munro 1975:119).

Ndonye, a man who came from Kauti (present-day Kilungu), was
a man who evidenced tremendous spiritual power and charisma. Further testimony about him shows that his claims were probably revelatory and especially when we discover that he was "neither a member of a Christian congregation nor a pupil at a mission school" (Munro 1975:119).

The westerner (both the colonial personnel and the missionary) working among the Akamba interpreted such spirit-possession with skepticism. Their background's naturalistic orientation had ill-prepared them to handle the supernatural. The best they could do in such occurrences was to provide natural explanations. And so, to the supernaturally skeptical westerner, Ndonye's claims were perceived as reflective of an insane mind. But great numbers of Akamba people were responding to him, which made the westerner particularly unhappy. Had he been a small man with no impact upon the society, then the British would have ignored his claims. However, Ndonye was a phenomena to handle with care, and since they could not respond to his spiritual claims, they used their natural power to remove him from his people. In 1923, they banished him in the island of Lamu some four hundred miles away from where he lived in exile until his death.

The overemphasis of the natural vis-a-vis the spiritual is also supported by the pioneer missionary's overemphasis in medical healing. The means of treatment used by the missionary did not appeal to the Akamba as having any appeal
to the supernatural. The missionary worldview forced him to see healing only from its physiological dimensions. And so, mission Christianity in Ukambani (like in many other African peoples) struggled to respond to traditional religious sensibilities. Thus, the examination of Robert Mitchell in regard to the origins of the Aladura movements of western Nigeria shows their rootage in the inability of mission churches to provide an adequate religious response to practical problems of life, like healing and witchcraft.

The Africa Inland Mission, which was the dominant mission working among the Akamba, too often failed to see Akamba religious beliefs as valid traditional bridges for the construction of a more culturally-relevant Christian theology. How could they do so if, like their western contemporaries, they were not only supernaturally skeptical but also regarded all non-western religious beliefs as superstitions? The impact of such skepticism among the Kamba Church has been profound. Although Akamba traditionally live a life of continual spiritual awareness and the belief in divine powers is primarily as strong as among our ancestors, yet a person should not be surprised to find some Christians in Kamba churches who have become naturalists in their faith. A good example of this is probably the way the African Inland Church of Kenya is treating the young boy
Samuel Muthini, whom God has raised as a prophet to serve the Body of Christ.

Traditional mission Christian theology in Ukambani have frequently emphasized the natural dimensions of Christian witness and taught that our religious beliefs are nothing but mere superstitions. Instead of taking advantage of this and emphasizing the omnipresence of God in whom all things are bare and naked (Heb 4:13), they have, by regarding Akamba traditional religious beliefs as superstition, succeeded in creating a spiritual vacuum which has yet to be filled by an appropriate functional substitute. But the question we raise is whether the western missionary who comes from a worldview dominated by empiricism and secular humanism can be expected to develop a religious theological system capable of ministering to a transempirically-oriented people?

**Overemphasis of Outward Conformity to Foreign Institutional Christianity**

What we mean by this is that mission theologizing within the Akamba Church has tended to emphasize the mechanical other than the relational. In other words,

1. Samuel Muthini is a young 17-year-old man whom God has given the prophetic gift of ministering to his Church. He comes from A.I.C. Nzaui, the first Africa Inland Church in Kenya founded by Peter Cameron Scott in 1895. Muthini's prophetic messages are available on tape.
Christianity was presented and symbolized by outward explicit change and less by the inward change of allegiance. Such kind of mission theologizing was in line with western mechanical views of reality in which structural systems take precedence over relationships. It is what Paul Hiebert has identified as operating by the principle of bounded-set logic. One central principle in bounded-set logic is the need to distinguish objects from others by defining the observable "characteristics that an object must have to be within the set" (Hiebert 1979:220). For example, if we define a Christian using bounded logic,

We would define "Christian" in terms of a set of essential or definitive characteristics. Because we cannot look into the hearts of people, we generally concentrate on external characteristics that we can see or hear; that is, we apply tests of orthodoxy (right beliefs) or orthopraxy (right practice) or both.

For example, some define a Christian as a person who believes (gives verbal acknowledgment to) a specific set of doctrines such as the deity of Christ, the virgin birth, and so on. Some make such lists quite long and add on specific doctrines of eschatology or soteriology. Others, convinced that true belief is more than a mental agreement with a set of statements, look for the evidence of belief in changed lives and behavior. These often add certain behavioral changes to the characteristics that define a Christian. A
Christian, then, is one who does not smoke or drink alcohol, and so on (1979:221).

The mechanical western worldview is more prone to bounded-set logic than a worldview that prizes relationships. Often missions in Ukambani presented Christianity from a mechanical worldview and the result was an overemphasis on outward behavior. Not that we undermine the importance of changed behavior as a result of a person's

2. One alternative to the bounded set logic is the center-set logic in which a criteria of assessment is formed in our minds by creating and

... defining a center and the relationship of things to that center. Some things may be far from the center, but moving towards the center; therefore, they are part of the centered set. On the other hand, some objects may be near the center but moving away from it; so they are not a part of the set. The set is made up of all objects moving towards the center.

... Some may be near the center and others far from it, even though all are moving towards the center. Each object must be considered individually. There is no single common uniformity within the category.

... Centered sets are dynamic sets...

What happens to our concept of "Christian" if we define it in terms of centered set?

... A Christian would be defined in terms of a center—in terms of who his god is. A Christian has Christ as his God. The critical question is this: To whom does the person offer his worship and allegiance? This would be judged, in part, by the direction towards which a person faces and moves. Christ is his center if he moves towards Christ—if he seeks to know and follow Christ (Hiebert 1979:223-24).

For a fuller discussion on the whole idea of bounded-, centered- and fuzzy-set logic and how they relate to Christianity, read Paul G. Hiebert, 1978).
interaction with Jesus Christ, but our concern is the form of outward behavioral change which was expected of Akamba converts. Akamba converts were primarily known by the different clothes that they wore, the western-translated hymns that they sung, the places they gathered for worship services and so on. Indeed, since missions in Ukambani were closely linked to the school, the Christian began to be referred to by the term "Asomi" (literally meaning "people who read," but the equivalence meaning was "people who had identified themselves with mission Christianity").

For example, in traditional Ukambani to be a Christian meant "... not only the end of worship at the Mathembo, and consultation with andu awe, but also the abolition of Sunday work, beer and tobacco consumption, dancing, polygyny, [and] bridewealth ..." (Munro 1975:106). Mission conversion strategy involved a determined effort to change Akamba institutions and replace them with western "Christian" institutions. Forbes Munro observed that, "The A.I.M. missionaries, with their puritanical backgrounds and frequent experience of culture shock on arrival, strongly condemned a wide range of Kamba institutions, practices, and values" (1975:106). This is why contemporary African Christian theologians like Ambrose Mavingire Moyo contend that,

Christian proclamation in Africa in the past made the mistake of believing that to become a Christian the peoples of Africa must be removed
from their indigenous cultures. This has resulted in the majority of the African people suffering from what Bishop D. Tutu has described as a form of schizophrenia (1983:103).

Thus, the whole mission emphasis to have Akamba converts conform to a foreign institutional Christianity was also compounded by the missions' understanding of conversion as a clear-cut act that takes place in a moment in time instead of viewing it as a process. This clear-cut understanding of conversion based on a mechanistic worldview caused missionaries to expect converts to make complete changes. In the Akamba Church,

Newcomers to the Church were torn between the demands of the new faith and their own cultural background, and they faced a comprehensive range of Church laws whose transgression could bring suspension from 'fellowship' or, in the case of at least the Kangundo Church, public humiliation on the 'black seat' reserved for 'sinners' at Church services. A strict code of personal behaviour, easily enforced when congregations were tiny and closely dependent on the missionaries, resulted in conflict when Church membership spread more widely (Munro 1975:152).

As already pointed out, the missionary background ill-equipped him to know Akamba implicit worldview. Could the missionary be expected to encourage indigenous converts to manifest Christian outward lifestyles which reflected adequate grappling or interaction with indigenous worldview? The only Christianity the missionary knew was his/her own home Christianity which resulted from the interaction of his mechanistic worldview with the gospel. Therefore, it can be argued that the missionary's home mechanistic worldview
ill-prepared him to deal with the dominantly religious Akamba worldview by its overemphasis on the outward, seeable, observable (empirical) dimensions of human experience. The fact that external or explicit institutions of a society are built on implicit worldview foundations makes institutions of one culture transferred to another appear senseless and meaningless.

So what happened to the 19th and early 20th-century western missionary is that, since he did not understand implicit Akamba worldview, he could not tell what Christianity resulting from the interaction of the gospel with indigenous Akamba culture looked like. Besides, indigenous Akamba culture was perceived by the average missionary as pagan and primitive and therefore unworthy to even bother to know. If explicit indigenous culture was pagan, then the underlying implicit worldview that produced the culture must also be pagan. It was, therefore, from the influence of such false assumptions that most missionaries felt fully justified to uproot the "pagan" Akamba culture and replace it with the "Christian" western culture. No wonder, then, the average missionary could only interpret observable Christianity in terms of how it resembled that of back home.

Primarily, everything done in the Akamba Church was to be patterned after home patterns. For example, at the implicit worldview level, to be converted meant to be
"rational," since as seen above the natural person without Christ meant to be "irrational man" (Conn 1984:81). At the explicit level, conversion meant the manifestation of rational behavior which was to be assessed on how-like-at-home it was. Most missionaries understood Christianity to be an institution rather than a principle of life. Of course, the majority were from institutionalized churches. This is why Roland Allen, writing in 1927, reported that Church newspapers in the western world were flooded with frequent appeals,

... for organs and bells, cassocks, surplices and candlesticks, and such like for mission stations in India or in Africa. [For missionaries would ask,] "How can we teach the new converts the majesty of worship without the materials for dignified ceremonial? Dignified ceremonial is ceremonial as practised in the best churches at home. The best churches use these things. The natives cannot supply them. It follows that we must take these gifts to our converts" (1962:53).

Those and other externals of western Christianity were introduced to the Akamba Church with the assumption that the converts would replace their pagan beliefs with the appropriate Christian beliefs. However, as Forbes Munro observed, these externals were primarily challenges at the explicit levels of Akamba culture, and "... the majority of people remained unimpressed by Christian teaching, stuck to their older cultural and religious loyalties, and continued to look to andu awe for help in securing their needs and treating ills ..." (1975:149). So when about a
decade ago a Mukamba Christian theologian spoke of Africans living under "borrowed . . . imposed" Christianity (Mbiti 1978:276), he was but bearing witness to a reality that cannot be denied.

**Overemphasis of non-servant-leadership model**

Like our previous discussion on mission overemphasis on the natural vis-a-vis on the spiritual, the non-servant-leadership model can be traced back to a western dichotomistic, or dualistic, epistemology which differs fundamentally with an Akamba interdependence model. The former is rooted in a worldview assumption that regards self as distinct from other, while the latter is based on a worldview assumption of self as part of other (see Chapter II on worldview and society). God's ideal is that all Christians are servants to God and to each other. However, the Christian ministerial model presented to Akamba by western missionaries was one in which the missionary paternalism dominated.

Earlier we pointed out that during the colonial period both the mission and the government were "... in the work of uplifting native races ... mutually dependent" (Report of the United Missionary Conference quoted in Gration 1974:51). The Church in Ukambani, and in Kenya for this matter, has perceived the missionary as a part of the
colonial force. It was, for example, the treatment most missionaries gave to the natives of the land that made people like the Kikuyu coin the statement, "Gutiri muthungu na mubea (there is no difference between the missionary and the white coloniser)" (Temu 1972:2). The example of pride, prejudice and paternalistic behavior among missionaries in Kenya are too numerous, and some too horrible, to quote extensively. However, we must bring this out in order to correct the "big-boss model" that has characterized many missionaries' attitude toward national Christians in Kenya.

The desire of western missionaries has been to have the Church under their control. Indeed, the trend to frustrate capable national Christian workers and leaders to move out of the denominational structure has been a strong dominant mission practice in Kenya for almost a century now. To an outsider, such a claim may not strike him as being a dominant mission practice; however, to the national Christian it is one of the greatest diseases that has befallen western mission organizations in Kenya. The practice can probably be traced back to 1882 at the Church Missionary Society freed-slave settlements. The Bombay Africans who worked together with the missionaries in ministering to the needs of the freed slaves had similar (if not higher) training with the missionaries. However, the white missionaries, being victims of the dominant pseudo-scientific beliefs which awarded them false racial superiority, regarded the
Africans as creatures of a lower human species. It mattered less to the missionaries that the Bombay Africans were qualified,

As catechists, teachers, interpreters, preachers and artisans, they had been in large measure responsible for the successful establishment of Freretown and Rabai. By 1882 they numbered some 145, equally divided between the two settlements. . . . They represented an aspiring mission-trained middle class, confident of their abilities . . . (Strayer 1978:16).

Usually when some of these Bombay Africans were perceived to be aspiring to a more equitable economic status, the missionaries would accuse them as "... evidence of a 'love of money' and a lack of spirituality" (Strayer 1978:17). The understanding is that most of these Bombay Africans wanted to work with the denominational structure, but the missionaries could not withstand the credibility they had with the people. The C.M.S. mission leadership frustrated them to the point of leaving the denomination, and Strayer observes that at least twenty fled the Freretown restrictions and racism and "... found their way to Zanzibar where they obtained work with UMCA" (1978:18).

The examples we have quoted so far happened about one hundred years ago and are within one mission organization. However, the "boss missionary" pattern of C.M.S. missionaries has been adopted (consciously or unconsciously) by many mission structures in Kenya. It is indeed the observation of Church historians in Kenya that the frequent
unwillingness of educated Africans to accept careers in many denominational Church structures can be traced back to this unfortunate mission practice (Strayer 1978:23).

The story of the African Inland Mission and the Akamba Church is not immune to this practice. For example, right from the inception of Africa Inland Church among the Akamba, God has raised many powerful leaders who could not endure the control and paternalism of missionary domination. The majority of the members who founded Africa Brotherhood Church were from the Africa Inland Church. John Mbiti is a brilliant man, teacher, thinker, theologian and pastor whom the Lord has raised from the Akamba Church. But the Africa Inland Mission could not accept him as a man whom God had raised to serve the theological needs of the Church. The mission told (and tells) the Church elders that John Mbiti is a liberal theologian and therefore unfit to serve in the Church. Through subtle and cunning ways, the mission frustrated John Mbiti to the point of leaving the African Inland Church. Finally he could stand it no more. When the elders asked their son why he had left them, he said, "What I have done, you do not know but your children will know" (Mbiti 1983). John Mbiti is presently serving a parish in Burgdorf in German-speaking Switzerland and lectures on

3. One of the earliest large independent Churches formed in 1945 out of members of the Africa Inland Church, Salvation Army and other bodies. See Barrett et al. 1973:230.
religious studies at the University of Bern. My visit with him at his Burgdorf home in the winter of 1983 was a thrill as my heart was deeply touched by the sense of Mbiti's close walk with God.

Another Christian Kamba leader who was frustrated by the mission almost to the point of despair was the second bishop of the Africa Inland Church, the late Reverend Wellington Mulwa. After his theological training in England (1960-1962), he returned to Kenya and,

... he worked as a pastor of the Africa Inland Church.

Together with his church work, Mr. Mulwa was secretary of Machakos Christian Education Association. He was highly respected in the Machakos district for his energy in starting and supervising Harambee secondary schools (Africa Inland Church 1972:50).

The African Inland Mission saw in him a person who had the people's credibility and began their subtle ways to frustrate him to leave the A.I.C. denominational structure. For example, at the Machakos mission station, he was allocated to live in a tiny house built for African staff who worked with the Church, regardless of their academic training. The fancy homes were for the white people. One day, the Reverend Wellington Mulwa told me that he would take a bus to travel to Kangundo, some twenty miles from Mumbuni mission station, while missionaries driving to the same place would not give him a ride. However, Mulwa had a clear vision of what God wanted him to do and refused to be
discouraged.

Bishop Mulwa faithfully and sacrificially served in the Church with many discouragements but fixed his eyes upon Christ. His credibility as a leader was affirmed in 1970 when the Baraza Kuu (the A.I.C. central council) chose him as the Bishop of the Africa Inland Church, Kenya. He served in that position for about ten years and among many achievements was his being the central person in the October 16, 1971 transitional A.I.C. historic meeting held at Machakos station. "Its purpose was to effect the turnover of the Africa Inland Mission in Kenya to the Africa Inland Church in Kenya" (Africa Inland Church 1972:7). According to the agreement, the mission was going to function as a department of the African Inland Church.

However, the mission's subtle control of the national Church did not die immediately. The signing of paper agreements was too mechanical to bring about relational changes. And eight years later, Bishop W. Mulwa, speaking at the mission annual conference in December, 1978 said, "In spite of signing of the so-called African Inland Mission and Africa Inland Church working agreements several times . . . the two distinct organizations are like oil and water; they cannot mix" (Mulwa 1978). About a year after the delivery of this address, Bishop Mulwa went to be with the Lord. My wife and I were deeply shocked and saddened when some A.I.M. missionaries wrote to us while we were at Denver Theological
Seminary and expressed a measure of joy at the home-going of one whom they described as "troublesome to the church"!

There are many cases of frustration of national Christian leaders by the missions in Ukambani that can be told. We can talk of Joseph Silla, the present General Secretary of Africa Inland Church Kenya whom the majority of A.I.M. missionaries in Kenya continue to describe as a "liberal," simply because they cannot succeed in pocketing him. Their treatment of this servant of the Lord is too painful to tell. This author's experience, too, is no different. And, I am rather convinced that there are many Akamba Christians who, along with other Third-World Christian nationals, would unfortunately find the prayer in Clark's book appropriate:

"Oh, Lord" agonized one brother
"Deliver us from the missionaries."
"O Lord" cried another, "Break their pride and smash their palaces!"
Others prayed more humbly, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do"
(Clark 1971:40).

It is, indeed, difficult to know what it is that makes a good number of western missionaries fail to work with humility with national Christians of non-western cultures. Probably the words of Roland Allen, written some sixty years ago, sheds some light on this problem. He described the besetting sin of western missionaries as being their love for administration, adding that,
• St. Paul's method is not in harmony with the modern Western spirit. We modern teachers from the West are by nature and by training persons of restless activity and boundless self-confidence. We are accustomed to assume an attitude of superiority towards all Eastern peoples, and to point to our material progress as the justification of our attitude. We are accustomed to do things ourselves for ourselves, to find our own way, to rely upon our own exertions, and we naturally tend to be impatient with others who are less restless and less self-assertive than we are (1962:6).

Roland Allen also spoke of the disease of frustrating national converts as being a dominant pattern in the Chinese mission Church. He observed that it was:

• almost impossible to imagine that a native 'prophet' could remain within the church system as it exists in many districts. If a prophet arose he would either have all the spirit crushed out of him, or he would secede. The native Christian ministers who remain are those who fall into lifeless submission to authority, or else spend their lives in discontended misery, feeling that they have lost themselves not to God but to a foreign system. Thus the community is robbed of its strength: its own forces are weakened . . . (1962:82).

Down through the years Akamba Christians have not perceived that the majority of western missionaries are humble servants of the Lord. For years, the average Akamba Christian has perceived the white missionary as more holy and more superior. Why? The white race was presented to us (as well as to all other Africans) as the Lord's masters of history, or, as John Pobee of Ghana describes them, as:

• • • the automatic heirs of the chief seats in the great parliament of humanity. . . . [While] Black is the symbol of evil, sin, wretchedness, death, war, famine, bad luck, and ugliness, i.e.,
it stands in contrast to the white, the symbol of justice, truth, virginity, and beauty (1979:34).

We, therefore, expose these aspects of non-contextualization within the Akamba Church in order to understand the background that provides our starting point. The task of Christian theologizing in Akamba Church cannot start in a vacuum. Akamba Christian theologians cannot deny their history and especially the missions' non-servant leadership model which, as observed above, have spoiled Church-mission relationships in Ukambani.

The fourth example of ready-made mission theology is what we are calling "weak body theology."

A Weak-Body Theology

The weak-body theology that dominates mission theology originates from an individualistic model present in western worldview. Earlier in Chapter IV, we discussed the Akamba semi-individualistic model and pointed out that it differs from western individualism in that it emphasizes family and village community interdependence.

We want to point out that western individualism played no meager role in the development of mission theology in Ukambani. For example, A.I.M. missionaries, coming from an individualistic background coupled by the fact that they were not committed to one denominational allegiance, found themselves at a disadvantage when it came to their theological understanding of community discipleship. In
1911, an A.I.M. missionary at Kangundo, a Mr. Harrison, could not keep his individualism under control when negotiating with other missionaries, some elders and the British officials. Instead of seeking to maintain the unity of the brethren, Harrison felt the best solution was to break away from the mission Church. He did so and "... established a small, independent station, called the British East Africa Mission at Kamuthanga, near Ngelani" (Munro 1975:105).

Division within the mission community in Ukambani served as an open letter to the national converts. The young national Christians saw a loosely united mission force and began to learn how not to tolerate one another. Most missionaries perceived Christian conversion from an individualistic orientation and required new converts to break away from their heathen parents. For example, in the early part of our century some Akamba youth, especially the boys,

... broke with their families when A.I.M. missionaries forced a choice—for example, forbidding young men to carry out the filial duty of making beer for their fathers. Youths found themselves denied the aid of the mba [extended family] in amassing livestock for bride-wealth, or even formally disowned and disinherited by their fathers. They became just as dependent on the missionaries as did the 'refugees' (Munro 1975: 109-110).

Later, as the Akamba began to grow and groups of Christians began to form local congregations, missions
introduced individually-oriented disciplinary procedures. We have records of several missionaries who took upon their shoulders the role of administering discipline to individual members in the body and ignored the role of the local community of believers. Other than allowing the community of believers to exercise their mutual responsibility in administering discipline, a number of western missionaries yielded to their individualistic ways. Mission practice during these early years shared many similarities. Roland Allen, in the early 1920s, aware of western individualistic tendencies which are especially revealed in Church discipline, said the following to fellow missionaries:

The difficulty with us is that we cannot appreciate this doctrine of mutual responsibility. If a member of a church commits a serious offence we cannot hold the church responsible for his action. We are so individualistic that we cannot understand the practical meaning of St. Paul's doctrine of the body and the members. Mystically we accept it; but when it is a question of a single man's crime we ourselves cannot realize, and we cannot bring home to others, their real unity. To punish the society for the offence of the one would seem to us almost unjust (1962:123).

There is a sense in which many a western missionary in Ukambani could not do theology differently. To disagree and divide from each other, to individually separate new converts from their heathen parents and to take the initiative in playing the role of the Church in disciplinary cases were all consistent with not only his individualistic worldview but also the pietistic tradition of which many
were raised. It is Harvie Conn who points out that:

Pietistic revivalism concentrated on the individual in its message of redemption. But even here the focus was on the individual as a recipient of blessing. Whether Calvinist or Arminian, the evangelical focus was on the [individual] benefits of redemption. . . . Justification, adoption and sanctification lost their biblical sense of eschatological history, their reference to the sweep of God's dramatic history in the coming and coming again of Christ. The center of their reference became individualized by the push of Western individualism. And in the process of the global dimensions of the gospel were reduced to "Jesus loves me" . . . (Conn 1984:84-95).

However, it is important to observe, too, that even though the emphasis was placed on individual rights, yet beliefs in white racial superiority blinded many missionaries from recognizing the individual rights of the non-white members of the human family. While a weak-body theology is primarily from the western worldview belief in individualism, yet pseudo-belief in racial superiority overruled the spirit of individualism. Thus, to most missionaries in Ukambani, the category of individual rights was not for everyone but was set aside for those of the white race.

Certainly, most western missionaries came from cultures that accepted black segregation. Indeed, very few of them had ever been involved with ministries among black people in their homelands. So, in coming to serve among black Africans, the missionary had to develop new ways of handling his racial attitudes. Should he/she worship with black
converts? Mission literature in the pre-colonial and colonial Kenya shows that for most Europeans it was not possible to make the shift. For example, in Nairobi Europeans resisted Africans worshipping in the same building as themselves and insisted on holding their Sunday service at the unusual hour of 9:30 A.M. to avoid sitting on forms and chairs recently used by Africans (Strayer 1978:104). At times, attitudes of bigotry became so tense that the white C.M.S. missionaries had to yield to the European demands and allow them to have their own "rights" at the Mombasa Anglican Cathedral.

In particular they wanted to appoint their own chaplain rather than accept the one CMS gave them, to have sole control over the organ they purchased for the cathedral and reserve certain church furniture for their exclusive use for reasons of 'cleanliness, wear and tear'. In the face of a virtual threat to secede and withhold financial contributions to the cathedral, the CMS and Bishop Heywood capitulated to European demands on the organ and church furniture and took pains to appoint as chaplain a missionary acceptable to the European congregation (Strayer 1978:104).

This European behavior cannot be confined either to the Anglican Church or to the pre-colonial period alone. As late as the 1960s and 1970s, I personally witnessed missionaries who frequently drove forty miles away from the rural area for a Sunday worship service in Nairobi city. Unable to develop one-ness with the local congregation, some missionaries have been known to drive from Machakos to attend the Nairobi Baptist Church with the excuse that they
are attending an English worship service, even though it would not be hard to find an English-run Kamba service in Machakos. Thus, mission individualism and life-style have presented before the Akamba Church a weak-body theology. As such, a Christian theology that models the cost of community discipleship has not been one of the strengths of mission theology.

A fifth limitation that has characterized mission theology is over-emphasis on western doctrinal orthodoxy (right beliefs).

Overemphasis on Western Doctrinal Orthodoxy

The over-emphasis on doctrinal orthodoxy originates from the rationalistic dimensions in western worldview which takes great delight in higher levels of abstract conceptualizations. However, before we point out how mission theology in Ukambani Over-emphasizing doctrinal orthodoxy, we need to state that any faith must have both the components of faith and practice. The Christian faith is certainly no exception. Traditionally, western Christian theology has tended to emphasize the intellectual aspects of Christianity, sometimes at the expense of practice or worship. Not at all am I suggesting the existence of one without the other, but rather, the goal should be to maintain the tension (balance) and shun the temptation to
yield to either extreme. There is, as Brian Hearne says,

... an inescapable tension between abstract truths and concrete realities, and the temptation is to allow one of these to dictate to the other--a dictatorship of the concrete, leading to "situation ethics" and the like, or of the abstract, leading to dogmatism and irrelevance (1984:33).

However, when we express concern about mission theology in over-emphasized doctrinal orthodoxy, it should be understood clearly that the problem is not just "doctrinal orthodoxy" but rather western doctrinal orthodoxy. It was (is) western Church doctrinal orthodoxy in which converts of Akamba mission churches were (are) schooled in catechumen classes. For example, as baptismal requirements, converts in the African Inland Church have to memorize doctrinal formulations which we have inherited from the African Inland Mission. As a new convert, I went through two years of doctrinal teaching in the catechumen classes. In order to qualify for baptism and be allowed to partake of holy communion, I had to be tested and pass an intellectually-oriented exam. To pass the exam, a baptismal candidate was (is) expected to satisfy his or her examiners by feeding back the right answers as formulated in the catechumen book. The questions and answers in the catechumen book are aimed at teaching doctrinal orthodoxy as the Africa Inland Mission understood it. The questions do not address existential issues raised in Akamba worldview. This is why we say that mission theology in the Akamba
Church has tended to over-emphasize western doctrinal orthodoxy. Another contemporary African theologian describes mission theology as

> a theology that is inevitably given to abstraction and definitions, and that is suspicious of subjective involvement, hailing objectivity and detachment as great virtues. This latter emphasis is associated with the written (text-to-eye) tradition of Western culture (Chima 1984: 61).

For example, in anticipation for water baptism, I memorized the questions and answers of more than thirty different questions. I never understood the meaning, but I did it anyway. Later on as a pastor in a local church, I taught the same to baptismal candidates who, like their teacher, neither saw its meaning or its purpose. Of course, who should ever dare question these sacred things?! Likewise, the creeds, like the Nicene Creed, are dropped to us by the custodians of truth and are expected to be accepted, memorized and believed without question. You see, mission theology as western Church theology has over-emphasized the doctrinal and the intellectual aspects of the Christian faith. The intellectual or, in this case, the rational is consistent with western worldview which is the theoretical framework through which western Christians undertake their theological reflections: doctrinal and creedal formulations. By over-emphasizing the intellectual aspects of the Christian faith, the West has historically reduced the
Christian faith to a set of philosophical propositions, such as the Nicene Creed, which is couched in the philosophical language of the third and fourth centuries A.D. and which today is not meaningful to many even in the so-called sophisticated societies (Pobee 1979:550).

The West, with their epistemological roots dating back to Plato, Socrates, and Aristotle, has built into her "... culture assumptions that the only natural and effective way to present ideas is by means of a Greek invention called 'logic'" (Hall 1983:59). There is, of course, nothing wrong with holding to a cultural way of knowing and communicating ideas. However, problems arise when a given culture begins to absolutize its ways and attributes to them universal credibility. For example, the Greek invention of "logic" has been helpful to the West which claims ancestry from the Greeks; however to the other people like, say, the Japanese, the...

... syllogistic method and its deductive reasoning [is seen] as an effort to get inside their heads and do their thinking for them. It was for this as well as other reasons that many European missionaries had poor results in Japan compared to other cultures (Hall 1983:59).

Understood from a worldview perspective, then the deductive model of presenting ideas is but a western educational spoon-feeding device.

It will be pointed out in our next chapter that Akamba use of proverbs, riddles and stories which are not direct to the point constitute a better educational device for
communicating ideas that build peoples lives. They are consistent with Jesus' use of parables.

The western doctrinal and creedal formulations which the average Akamba Church has inherited needs evaluation. Thousands of Akamba Christians in their doctrinal classes and worship services submit allegiance to creedal formulation and doctrinal presuppositions which they do not understand. These western creedal formulations were constructed in the western Church to respond to their own socio-cultural religious and intellectual needs of 16th-century Europe. A contemporary western evangelical theologian states:

Our creedal formulations, structured to respond to a sixteenth-century cultural setting and its problems, lose their historical character as contextual confessions of faith and become cultural universals, having comprehensive validity in all times and settings. . . . The Reformation is completed, and we in the West wait for the churches of the Third World to accept as their statements of faith those shaped in a corpus Christianum by a Western church three centuries ago. . . . The creed as a missionary document framed in the uniqueness of a historical moment has too often been re mythologized by white paternalism into a universal essence for all times" (Conn 1984:221).

All this type of reasoning comes from the western theologian who continues to view theology as the queen of the sciences, the watchdog or the chief inspector of the academic world. This type of thinking combined with western ethnocentrism produces "The tacit assumption . . . that the Christian faith is already fully and properly indigenized in
the West" (Bosch 1982:16-17) has been disastrous in sustaining western theological paternalism. I wonder whether Akamba Christians should continue submitting their faith allegiance to these fossilized western theological creedal formulations? Is it really necessary to keep on owning these creedal formulations as curio pieces for our inherited theological museum, just to remind ourselves of our place in the historical-theological continuum? Is this not a major cry of the Third World Churches which are "not satisfied to repeat the tradition as it has come to them in rote fashion. They are anxious to take their place alongside the Churches of older origin in contributing their response to the gospel to the great stream of Christian tradition" (Schreiter 1985:xi).

Therefore, how could we continue to keep these western theological formulations (in whichever form) without being stuck or even blinded with foreign images borrowed all the way from 16th-century definitions of the Church? After all, is this not what some contemporary missiologists are calling an evolutionist and starkly paternalistic fallacy when the western Church (or mission theology) requires the national Church "to repeat the doctrinal development of the older church before it is allowed to vary from it in any form" (Schreiter 1985:100)?

Also, is repeating such foreign doctrinal formulations not essentially contrary to the very nature of theology
itself as a continuing reflection? Do we not need to come up with historic Church creeds that emerge from the history of the Christian movement among the Akamba? Creeds, formulations and confessions that Akamba Christians can relate to and identify with? Should not contextual creeds be based on the disciplined reflection of God's dealings with us by the hermeneutic community in response to historic questions and concerns? For example, the Akamba Church needs to weave together a creed addressing the relationship between the believing and ancestral communities. By so doing, the Akamba Church will produce a creedral formulation that reflects the interaction of the Gospel with our cultural worlds.

So when we undermine the role of mission theology in overemphasizing western doctrinal orthodoxy, we uplift the importance of giving doctrinal and creedral attention to ancestral relationships, polygamy, witchcraft, westernization and modernization. Until such is done, we cannot expect Akamba Christians to formulate their own creedral and theological confessions if they are complacent with parroting the western Church's responses to the gospel a couple of centuries ago.

The mission-theology superimposition of their doctrinal orthodoxy on the Akamba Church is also evidenced through the way they train and ordain for ministry. The ten-or-so Bible schools located throughout Ukambani continue to use
curriculum based on western theological foundations.
Indeed, the struggle for Akamba national Christians with the
problems of foreign curriculum used in schools can be traced
back to the early 1920s. It is no wonder that

African independency movements, dramatically
breaking with missionary-dominated churches and
schools, are complex phenomena, expressing the
dissatisfaction of African Christians over a wide
range of issues, among which resentment at
missionary control of school curricula and finance
has frequently been of great importance (Munro
1975:151).

For many years now, western doctrinal indoctrination
has permeated Ukamba Bible schools and the few Christian
bookstores sell Christian literature that continues to
communicate the gospel clothed in western garment. Thus,
the incredible theological dependence of the Akamba Church
is worsened by an almost total reliance on western-developed
Christian literature. In the Bible institutes and colleges,
the case is similar to the Asian situation which Bong Rin
Ro, a respected evangelical leader describes with the
following words:

Schools that link up with foreign
institutions to grant degrees have to follow the
foreign curriculum. At many points this
curriculum is irrelevant to the situation in Asia.
For example, in Western Evangelical theological
schools, students study defenses against liberal
theologians. But most Asians have no questions
about accepting miracles, supernaturalism and the
authority of the Bible. Asians shouldn't have to
spend the time answering questions that aren't
being asked in Asia. But they do need to
concentrate on questions concerning suffering,
parents, demon-possession, urbanization,
Communism, and other living Asian religions.
Therefore we must contextualize our curriculum (1977:2-3).

It is, therefore, for this reason why we say that western rationalistic approaches and deductive methods continue to be the dominant models for training Bible school and college students. While in most schools western missionaries are absent, yet this is so only in body, because they are present through their theological offspring who serve as national teachers. Indeed, much of the problem in contextualizing such curriculum may be from the westernized Mukamba who is much firmer and harder. Indeed, the greatest hindrance to theological contextualization in Africa may be, as Ambrose Moyo says,

... the African successors of the white missionaries. Many of these have perpetuated the neo-colonialist structures, and many of them seem to have no vision as to where they are leading their Churches. Until [these successors are dewesternized in their attitudes and] the Churches are restructured we cannot expect any changes. There will continue to be frustration, repression and oppression (1983:99).

The five examples of ready-made western Christian theologies which we have examined above expose aspects of western worldview conditioning in Akamba Church theology. As already pointed out, many western missionaries besides being children of their day were victims to their own worldview. This is why some African leaders like Bishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa in reflecting on the nature of Christianity in Africa concludes that
... the African Christian has suffered from a form of religious schizophrenia. With part of himself he has been compelled to pay lip service to Christianity as understood, expressed and preached by the white man. But an ever greater part of himself, a part he has been often ashamed to acknowledge openly and which he has struggled to repress, he has felt that his Africanness was being violated. The white man's largely cerebral religion was hardly touching the depths of his African soul; he was being redeemed from sins he did not believe he had committed; he was being given answers, and often splendid answers, to questions he had not asked (1978:366).

What Bishop Tutu describes here is indeed a grim picture. But the wonder of our God is that in the midst of all our human failures, he never leaves himself without a witness. And so, we now turn our focus to look at some few missionaries who were enabled to see beyond their day. They form what we are calling God's remnant exceptions.

**GOD'S REMNANT EXCEPTIONS**

The purpose of our discussion here is to show that even though there were many missionaries of the late 19th and early 20th-century who fell victim to the dominant secular humanistic ideologies of their day, yet God never leaves himself without a remnant. For example, mission literature of old field-notes and missionary diaries reveal that there were, here and there, some who were respectful to the people, the cultures and the viewpoints of the people God entrusted to them to serve. And as such, our critique of Akamba Christian theology is incomplete until it gives
credit to these faithful remnants of the Lord.

In our examination we would like to confine our example to personalities in two missions—namely, the Africa Inland Mission and the Stuart Watt Mission.

**Peter and His Sister, Margaret Scott**

We know from our study that Peter Cameron Scott was the founder of the Africa Inland Mission in 1895. Charles E. Hurlburt, the first president of the Philadelphia Missionary Council (the council that sent Scott), described him as "... wise, careful, experienced in African mission work, and deeply taught of God" (Hurlburt and McConkey 1896a:4). Peter Scott, in a band of eight men and women, arrived at Nzaui, a spot in the heart of Ukambani, to plant the most precious of all seeds—the gospel of Jesus Christ. The description of the sending council that Peter was a man "deeply taught of God" was not just some nice words said about a leader. His life bore witness to that description. We begin to sense some special qualities in the life of Scott in his November 8, 1895 letter which he wrote to his sending council, less than thirteen days after his arrival in Mombasa, Kenya. His opening words are filled with praise and thanksgiving which symbolizes a person whose eyes are fixed upon the Lord. He addresses the council, "Brethren beloved of the Lord."

There are, indeed, many qualities in Peter Scott's life
that were real marks of the work of God's grace in him. For example, how does one tell between a missionary who had been deeply taught of God and those who fall victims to secular human ideologies? One sure way was the view the missionary had towards the natives of the land. We should remember that the dominant anthropological description of the non-western man at the time was primitive, illogical and to the blacks it was even worse; hence, he was regarded closest to the apes. While many western missionaries adhered to these secular anthropological descriptions, others like Scott were different. Listen to his words when he saw the natives. He said, "Their happy disposition and ingenuity is something to be marvelled at. I simply love these people and long to tell them of the love of Christ that passeth knowledge" (quoted in Hurlburt and McConkey 1896b:5).

Certainly, there were among the missionaries of the time those slaves of the evolutionary paradigm who would refer to the natives as a "brute species of less than human"; however, those who learned from the Master saw God's glorious image in the natives. So while others saw the native as humans of a brute creation, Scott saw in their faces the image of God. While the group of eight could as well be addressed as characterized by vision, dedication and determination, yet there are two fundamental qualities that distinguished Scott from the rest.

First, there was his love for the people. This, he
demonstrated through his affirming spirit. He affirmed his teammates. He affirmed C.M.S. missionaries whom he met at Mombasa. He served the role of an encourager not only to the missionary crew but also those he met. Also, he demonstrated his love by his acceptance of the natives. As already mentioned, he saw in them God's image. The story of his discussion with the Akamba regarding a place to build a house reveals so much about his love and acceptance of the people.

What happened was that, since he could not understand Kikamba language, he talked with Akamba elders through Faraji, a personal Swahili cook he had befriended from the coast. The discussion lasted for two-and-a-half hours and Scott reports the proceeds of the meeting with the following words: "... as far as I can judge, we are the best of friends and thanks are due to Faraji and the headmen for faithfully interpreting our story to them" (Scott 1896:11). In this comment we can see that he treated people with dignity. He gave credit to whom it was due. He was quick to note little acts of kindness, especially in affirming the faithful contribution of his servant. Scott's behavior was rare for the time.

Second, fundamental quality that opens a window for us to see the secret source of power for this man was his faith in God. Scott lived a life of great dependence in God. Several examples of how he demonstrated his faith permeate
his diary; however, we cannot afford to talk about them here without side-tracking a great deal. Suffice it to refer to the December 4, 1896 incident. On that day Scott and three of the men in his crew were very sick. This left only Lester to take care of the group; however, he too got sick the next day. Scott, though sick, was encouraged in the spirit to encourage the rest. Amidst a moment of physical pain he reached out to his diary and made the following entry:

... all things work together for good. The Lord is good to all; "He knoweth our frame, He remembereth that we are dust." My heart is full of praise.

... how very little we have to bear, when compared to the "Man of Sorrows," ... May the Lord grant unto us His own love and patience, that we may be living examples of all the virtues of His life (Scott 1896:8-9).

Scott's life of love and trust in God was a worthy model, not only before his fellow missionaries but also before the native elders and friends whom the Lord had entrusted to him. His life, though short-lived, was like a shining star. And the footprints of his life were (are) an example that deserve the attention of all.

Before we move on to the Stuart Mission, let us make an observation about Peter's sister, Margaret Scott, for like her brother, Margaret's words of wisdom deserve our attention.

During an era when female missionaries were regarded as "second class," Margaret Scott earned her credibility as a
woman who enjoyed an intimate walk with God. Certainly, God has his remnant amongst all the genders! Margaret Scott was among the band of eight missionaries who are the pioneers of Africa Inland Mission. While the mission's journal at the time did not allow us to get a broader glimpse of the life of this devoted and discerning woman, yet the few words we have from her lips give us some idea as to the way she related with God and viewed the natives and their culture. For example, one day she saw a sick woman lying in a bed and she described what she saw in the following manner:

... a sick woman [lay] in a bed which consisted of a frame raised from the ground one-and-a-half feet and a network of palm fibre was the mattress. And yet she is a woman made after the same pattern as ourselves, the image of God, and why should she suffer for the lack of what so many at home are simply throwing away (quoted in Hurlburt and McConkey 1896c:5).

Margaret looked at the sick Mukamba woman and saw God's handiwork on her face. She refused to be conformed to the pattern of the world of her day. While the typical attitude of missionaries at the time was one that reflected their "ethnocentricity and ... superiority" (Gration 1974:36), Margaret Scott chose to deny the spirit of the day.

Indeed, while the majority of the male leadership were
quick in formulating hasty judgments about the natives, Margaret in a very discerning manner said, "I have no doubt that as we become better acquainted with the people many of our ideas may be changed, and perhaps we shall have to correct some of our former statements, therefore I am careful not to write anything merely from supposition" (Hurlburt and McConkey 1897:11).

So Peter and his sister Margaret Scott set a worthy model by their love for God, their respect of the people and the sensitivity they showed towards their culture. They were indeed God's remnant exceptions.

The second example we want to talk about now is from the Stuart Watt family.

Stuart and Rachel Watt

Stuart Watt has been described as an independent missionary who "with wife and family, walks from coast to central Kenya, settles at Ngelani in Ukambani" (Barrett et al. 1973:22) in 1893. The Watts were uniquely devoted to their work, and I wish we had the time and space in this

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3. C. F. Johnston wrote a letter to Mr. Heyhoe, published in Hearing and Doing IV,2 (1900):4-5. He talked about how difficult it was to work with the Akamba people. They were building an animal stockade, and he describes the natives as "so stupid and undescribably lazy. If one is set to work, no matter what the work is he must be watched or he will either go to sleep or to picking jiggers out of his feet" (1900:4).
study to record their experiences with the Akamba. We can only refer to bits of their experiences here and there. (However, those who would like to have their spirits nourished by the devoted life of this one pioneer missionary family who genuinely loved the natives should read In the Heart of Savagedom by Rachel Watt, c.1916).

Stuart Watt and his family worked among the Kamba probably from the early 1890s. Against great opposition, he established the mission station in Ngelani. At first the Kamba were curious of his motives, and for some time they remained reluctant and skeptical in regard to his good intentions. A few times some Kamba behaved in a hostile manner and organized coups to spear the Watts family, but God miraculously delivered them. It probably took the famines which ravaged the country during this time for the Watts and the natives to earn each other’s credibility. During the famine he identified with the Kamba tribesmen, going out with them to the savannah to hunt for food.

It behooves us to give credit to Stuart and Rachel Watt who denied military protection and lived in the jungles at their own risk. The Kamba tribesmen wanted to spear them out of their Ngelani home. But the Watts continued to be hospitable to the Akamba, allowing them opportunities to come in and out of their house. Yet every day they lived with great anxiety of Akamba warriors. The British government, aware of the danger of living in a militarily
unprotected station sent a band of thirty armed soldiers to bring the missionary family to the Machakos fort for safety. However, the Watts were determined to look unto the Lord for their protection. Note how their reply to the British Commissioner Ainsworth manifests their love and trust in God.

We were intensely grateful to Mr. Ainsworth for his kindness; but we felt that we must decline the offered protection of the Government fort, and stand or fall in the position to which God had called us, being assured that He would, in His own way, direct the issue of affairs in accordance with His will (Watt c.1916:219).

The rationale behind their refusal of military protection was that, had they identified themselves with the fortification,

... the natives could not but come to the conclusion that we were allied with the Government... and the savages might therefore be greatly prejudiced against us and all future Missionaries, and the progress of the Gospel of Christ immeasurably retarded (Watt c.1916:219).

The Watts worked for ten years without furlough; the Akamba nicknamed Mr. Watt "Bwana Kivila" (Watt c.1916:346) because he carried his chair to all places. Day by day the Watts family poured their sacrificial love to the Wakamba and finally they handed over their work to the Africa Inland

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4. Nicknames are interesting indications of how the receptors perceive the communicator. Such emic perceptions should not be taken lightly. At college we had a missionary nicknamed "Jogoo," meaning a rooster. I wonder what I would like to be nicknamed!
Mission. At the moment of handing over, Mrs. Watt writes,

> With mingled feelings we bade farewell to scenes which shall ever haunt us as long as life shall last: scenes of terrible conflict, of impending peril, of wily treachery, of persistent opposition, of tentative friendship and of unfeigned love: scenes of untold hardships, of inconceivable trials, of sickness, hunger, famine, and death: scenes of deep contrition, and, thanks be to God, of soul emancipation! (Watt c.1916:396-97).

Despite the opposition, the Watts were neither ashamed of the gospel, nor prejudice to the people. As a family they labored lovingly and sacrificially until at last the land of Ngelani was not ashamed to pride itself as providing the home for the worn out bodies of father and son. "... unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds" (Jn 12:24). The blood shed in the place where they served has watered the seed of the gospel, resulting in the phenomenal growth of one of the healthiest A.I.C. churches in the country of Kenya. Blood shed for the cause of Christ is worth it all.

**Summary Response**

These then are some of God's remnant exceptions during those pioneer missionary years in Ukambani. Although they lived in a dark, human-exploiting, perverse world of their day, yet their love for God and for the people enabled them to discern the subtle devices of the evil one. In doing so,
they were able to transcend beyond their time. They refused to be conformed to the pattern of their world. As we look back and see the acceptance they had for the people and their cultures, we are not ashamed to refer to them as sharing among the forerunners of modern-day missiology.

However, these remnants were but a handful. They form a handful of men and women who did not just come to live in our country but came to live with us. The first generation Christians struggled together with them in the day-by-day hurts of life.

They remind me of E. Stanley Jones' comment on the ministry of the prophet Ezekiel. He says,

Ezekiel said he went "in the heat and bitterness of my spirit" to the captives by the river, to tell them their sins. But instead, for ten days, "I sat where they sat." Ezekiel went through what they were going through. Now when he spoke, it was out of sympathy—the sympathy of experience. Now people listened, for "wounds were answering wounds." Deep was speaking to deep (1968:15).

So, like Ezekiel, these remnant exceptions sat where the people sat. They were touched with the feelings and hurts of the people. As it were, the first Christian convert in Ukambani saw the Word of God in the mouths of these, God's remnant exceptions, become flesh in their lives. Had their experience been duplicated in the succeeding generations by a greater percentage of the missionary force, then both missionary and national converts would mutually work together to produce a more relevantly adequate Akamba
Christian theology. Together, national Christians and missionaries would share and help in each other's blind spots. Together, they would grow into Christ likeness. Together, they can be salt and light in a dark and perishing world as they faithfully serve God, and each other, in the bond of Christian love.

Unfortunately, this is not what happened. The majority of western missionaries yielded much too often to the arm of the flesh for their own physical and emotional protection. Others relied too heavily on the colonial government. Missionary behavior often modeled a lifestyle characterized by attitudes of pride and racial superiority and before long, phrases like "Gutiri muthungu na mubea (there is no difference between the missionary and the white coloniser)" (Temu 1972:2) became the dominant description of the situation. Had the spirit and love of these remnant pioneers become the primary objective of the missionary force, then Akamba Christian theology would have been off to a good start.

However, as has already been observed, the best most missionaries would do was to ship ready-made Christian-mission theologies to Ukambani. I know that there may be some, if not many, of the A.I.M. missionaries who after reading what we have discussed here may say, "We have not been part of the western secular humanism, for we have always stood on the evangelical side." However, it may be
helpful to remember that secular humanism is an unconscious ingredient of the western worldview. Besides, worldview assumptions are unconsciously engrained in people's knowledge systems. Historical theological studies have shown that evangelical orthodoxy born of the 18th and 19th century reflects old western epistemologies which were primarily rooted in secular humanism. It is for this reason we have argued that western-made theologies have not succeeded in responding to the existential needs of the Akamba. Now, the question we would like to focus on for a little while is whether contemporary, western-missionary theologies are any different. In other words, are there some areas or some issues that present-day mission theologies should take seriously if they are going to share positively, effectively and constructively in the task of Akamba Church theological formulation?

CONTEMPORARY WESTERN MISSION THEOLOGIES

In our discussion on God's remnant exceptions, we have observed that amidst the disobedience of human nature, God never leaves himself without a remnant. There is, in every historical era, always a remnant of faithful witnesses, whether we talk about the period of the Genesis flood when Noah served as God's faithful remnant (Gen 6) or the faithful remnant during our perverse generation.

There is much progress that has been done in terms of
communicating the gospel of Jesus Christ cross-culturally. For example, mission strategies in the 1950s and 1960s began to ask more realistic questions about religious differences. How does a Christian relate to non-Christian religions? Are non-Christian religions totally evil and therefore to be wiped out? Do they contain any bridges on which a missionary could build? (See McGavran 1955; Kraemer 1956; Neill 1961.) As we examine contemporary western-mission theologies, we should not ignore God's remnant exceptions. In our examination we must overcome the temptation of stereotyping any age. Furthermore, it is a biblical mandate to give credit to what God has done in and through his people.

Most of the development in the western Church understanding of mission theory has resulted from the interaction between missions and anthropology. Paul Hiebert surveys the development in the following way:

Since the Second World War there has been a growing interaction between missions and anthropology. This has been on a much broader scale than just the interest in linguistics that characterized the period between the world wars. Some church-related colleges such as Wheaton had already introduced anthropology courses into their curricula earlier, and Journals like the Anthropological Quarterly (Catholic) and the International Review of Missions (mainly Protestant) had carried a few articles on broader topics of anthropology and missions. But the real impetus in bringing anthropological awareness to missions came largely through the work of Eugene Nida and the members of the American Bible Society translations team.

Nida drew from his work in cross-cultural
translations but broadened his interest to cover the whole range of socio-cultural anthropology. For a number of years he lectured widely in schools and churches throughout the country [i.e. the U.S.A.]. In the process, he wrote Customs and Cultures (1954), and Message and Missions (1960), two pioneering works that have contributed a great deal to the current interest in mission anthropology.

A second major impetus came through Practical Anthropology, a journal edited by members of the translation team and other interested colleagues. This served as a forum for anthropological studies of the mission process from 1953 to 1973 (1978a:xxiii-xxiv).

At present there is much creative thinking being done on the whole new discipline of missiology. The School of World Mission (Pasadena, California, U.S.A.) is on the cutting edge in missiological reflection. There is no doubt that the western Church has pioneered in missiological theory, and emerging Third-World-Church theologians and missiologists must, as a sign of Christian maturity, give credit to her faithful efforts. Besides, the Third World Church cannot deny the role of the western Church in the planting of Christ's Church in many lands.

However, for the global Church to grow into maturity in Christ, the participation of all members of the body is necessary. All members within the international Body of Christ must be willing to learn from, and to be interdependent with, one another theologically and missiologically. To serve and enrich each other, the West and the non-western Church must learn to listen actively to each other.
It is, therefore, with this in mind that I propose (from a Third-World Christian perspective) some three areas of potential danger which the western Church needs to take seriously if she is going to play her faithful brotherly and sisterly role in contributing positively to the development of Third-World-Church Christian theologies. Certainly, these three areas are not exhaustive but rather suggestive.

The Cultural Conditioning of Christian Theology

It is evident that within the past decade the evangelical Church has begun to take the whole concept of culture seriously. Both in the 1974 Lausanne Congress for World Evangelization and in Bermuda 1978, the global Church met to make a statement on the relationship between gospel and culture. However, the keynote presentations on mission theory came from the western Church. Too, the present academic disciplines within christendom that are offering graduate training in anthropology and missiology are primarily located in the western world. And the few that are based outside the West are often struggling with a westernized theological and missiological curriculum. In terms of mission publications, the non-western Church continues to be very thin, while the West is almost overweight with mission literature. In order to balance the flow of mission literature, Third-World mission
anthropologists (and there are but a handful) must engage in serious missiological reflection from within their own cultural contexts.

Nevertheless, the primary purpose for supporting the need for the western Christian theologians to take non-western cultures more seriously is because there are still many in the western Church who have not yet been convinced of the cultural conditioning of Christian theology. The need to take the cultural milieu into account in the task of formulating Christian theology in the "foreign fields" was not officially recognized until a couple of decades ago. Imasogie pinpoints the year as 1952 when the International Missionary Council meeting in Willensen 1952 expressed its awareness of this need in the following declaration:

> While the church of Christ in any place and at any time must exhibit the marks without which it will not be a Church, it has the responsibility to exhibit them in a distinct way, incorporating into the service of Christ whatever heritage of cultural values it may have been given by God's grace. This is not being rooted in the soil but related to the soil. The Church can only be rooted in Christ. But the Gospel must be so presented to the men and women that its contemporary and compelling relevance is recognized. It cannot be recognized as long as it disappears in a foreign guise, imitating and producing the characteristics of a church in some remote and alien land. Foreign, in one sense, the church must always be; its citizenship is in heaven and it is an agent of transformation (Desai as quoted in Imasogie 1983b:19).

In this declaration the International Missionary
Council recognized the need to make use of any society's cultural heritage in the process of communicating the Christian faith. In other words, the need for contextualizing the faith began to penetrate the minds of a few within the evangelical community. However, the majority in the western Church were skeptical of contextualization. Hence, the idea of incorporating aspects of cultural heritage in the process of theological formulation would set in motion a chain of theological reflections which would eventually dethrone the western Church from her self-appointed theological monarchy. And in such, she would lose the privilege of being the chief custodian of theological formulation in the world.

Therefore, concerned western Church theologians like Stanley Gundry, formerly president of the Evangelical theological Society, began to express concern in regard to the future of what can be called "western evangelical theology." In an article entitled "Evangelical Theology: Where Should We Be Going?" Gundry said,

I wonder if we really recognize that all theology represents a contextualization, even our own theology? We will speak of Latin American theology, black theology, of feminist theology; but without the slightest second thought we will assume that our own theology is simply theology, undoubtedly in its purest form (1979:11).

However, the strange part of all this is that, even with such a vivid recognition by one who would be representative of the western evangelical community,
Christian mission theology from the western Church continues to be culturally conditioned. It continues to be perceived from a monocultural perspective. It seems that western dichotomistic epistemological paradigms have created for the western Church (and the rest of the culture as well) a deeply ethnocentric mind-set. Harvie Conn makes the observation that western dichotomistic epistemology has led her to:

... expect both a single right answer to every question and the superiority of answers developed by Western academicians to the answers developed by the members of any other culture (or by nonacademicians within our own culture).

This is abundantly evident in the theological realm, and our cautious, at-arm's-length approach to Third World theologizing, or to black theology closer to home (1984:331).

The western dichotomistic epistemological pride weakens the western Church from playing her faithful brotherly role in contributing positively to the development of Third World Church Christian theologies. It is a sin that requires humbling in order to seek God's forgiveness.

Added to the problem to which we make inference here is the continued negative attitude towards the insights from anthropology that a number of western missionaries continue to hold. This is what Paul Hiebert has described as the love/hate relationship (1978b). We noted earlier that traditionally missionaries have at times shared, "... in a heritage of anti-intellectualism that predisposes them to skepticism about the knowledge gained by anthropology" (Conn
1984:134; emphasis mine). But unless missionaries take the
time to learn from the insights of anthropology, how can
they be equipped to meet the cross-cultural challenges?
Missionary anthropology (a new discipline exploring further
the question of cross-cultural gospel communication)
underscores the need to know a society's worldview. The
western Church out of necessity must seek to know the
worldviews of the people of non-western societies if she is
going to provide her positive brotherly contribution in the
process of Third-World theological formulation.

Paul Hiebert in illustrating the importance of knowing
the society's worldviews, gives an example by comparing the
western and Indian worldviews. He says,

For example, behind the Christmas story lies
a view of reality that assumes not only the
uniqueness of human life and its eternal
existence, but also a linear view of time in which
human beings live but one life and then face a
judgment. The human goal is heaven in which the
individual is fulfilled. But the Hindu worldview
assumes that time, like the seasons, repeats
itself endlessly, that human beings die and are
reborn innumerable times, and that the goal of
life is to merge back into the source of life and
lore its individuality. The Westerner, influenced
by Christianity, believes in progress, and points
to modern technological developments as evidence
that this is taking place. The traditional Indian
sees modern technology as a sign of the increasing
depersonalization of life, and therefore a sign of
the loss of true values and the decline of
civilization.

The basic assumptions a culture makes about
reality are often so taken for granted that they
are not made explicit by its members. But it is
upon these assumptions that people build their
concepts of the universe and their social orders.
To understand people, we must understand their
worldviews. Only then can we communicate with a minimum loss of meaning (1978a:xxi).

As seen here, the need for missionaries to benefit from the insights of mission anthropology cannot be underestimated. It is true that today we can speak of the gradually shifting missionary attitudes toward anthropology as moving from judgment and rejection to one of cooperation. This is evidenced by the fact that a number of Bible colleges in the West do offer courses in cultural anthropology. While the number of seminaries with anthropologists teaching as full-time faculty is increasing, yet the small number indicates that the western Church has yet to take non-western cultures more seriously. There are many western seminary institutions who do not yet regard the studies in cultural anthropology as pivotal in missionary training.

It is an observed fact that among western evangelicals there continues to be a fear of cultural anthropology which has resulted not only in the rejection of the use of social sciences in the role of ministerial formation in their own seminaries, but also in the mission-founded seminaries overseas. Indeed, a survey done in 1957 on retired Protestant missionaries shows that "... 83% of them had gone to their fields of labor without any cultural orientation training, while 72% of them had no training in a foreign language" (Conn 1984:74). Further on, Harvie Conn observes that the same problem is reflected in the
curriculum of Christian colleges adding that, "In March 1980, Moody Monthly published a survey of 135 Christian institutions of higher learning; only two indicated the offering of cultural anthropology as a major" (1984:74; emphasis mine).

This negative attitude towards the insights of anthropology is not helping the western Church at all. Indeed, many of us who have pioneered (from mission-founded Churches) to study theoretical missionary anthropology have done so with great opposition from the founding missions of our mother Churches. This probably explains why some missionaries in Africa Inland Mission have been known to discourage Kenyan Christian national leaders from studying at the Fuller School of World Mission. Such is an unfortunate commentary on their part in a day when theologians and missiologists from both Roman Catholic and Protestant circles, or from evangelical and conciliar perspectives affirm that,

Churches in cultural settings vastly different from those of traditional Christianity in the North Atlantic area were [are] not only raising new questions, but asking questions that traditional frameworks of theology could not answer. It was [is] becoming increasingly evident that the theologies once thought to have a universal, and even enduring or perennial character (such as neo-scholastic Thomism in Catholicism or neo-orthodoxy in Protestantism) were but regional expressions of certain cultures.

... There is now a realization that all theologies have contexts, interests, relationships
of power, special concerns--and to pretend that this is not the case is to be blind (Schreiter 1985:3,4).

Furthermore, the western Church's fear that theological syncretism will creep into Third-World Christian theologies is an aspect worth mentioning here. It seems that one of the key concerns of contemporary western mission theologies is about syncretism in the Third-World Church. The thing that worries western evangelical theologians is their absence in contemporary Third-World-Church theological efforts (although it should be pointed out that in reality, western theologians are not absent; if anything, they may even be too present!). However, the issue we are raising here is provoked by those western theologians who consider that involvement in Third-World Church theological reflection is inevitable if the latter's theologies are going to be freed from theological syncretism. Usually, syncretism is said "... to occur when critical and basic elements of the Gospel are lost in the process of contextualization and are replaced by religious elements from the receiving culture; there is a synthesis with this partial Gospel" (Douglas 1975:1227).

It is certainly appropriate for every Bible-believing Christian to be concerned about syncretism. And, as such, the concerns of western Church theologians are indeed legitimate. However, one of the questions that may need to be pondered is, "What is it that makes western Christian
theologians feel that their presence in Third-World Church theological formulation is a guarantee against syncretism?"

But in the past, western theologians never feared syncretism as they made their formulations in the absence of non-western theologians! Is it true that these concerns are reflective of "fear," not pride? Or do they spring from a caring heart? What guarantees that their presence or contribution in Third-World-Church theological formulations will keep national Churches from formulating syncretistic theologies? Just where does this fear of syncretism come from? Western pride? From Third World Church leanings toward the "new hermeneutic"? For example, is this the fear that seems to be inherent in John Parratt when he says that D. N. Wambudta's (1980) biblical hermeneutical model

\[ \ldots \text{seems to veer too much towards the new hermeneutic} \ldots \text{in which less emphasis is placed on the actual and original meaning of the text} \]

than on its application to the immediate needs of the reader. While there must be a dimension of the text of the Bible which speaks to the human situation, hermeneutics has traditionally addressed itself to the prior question; what did the text mean when it was originally written? To by-pass this stage can lead to arbitrary uses of biblical texts to suit the whim of the interpreter (1983:92).

But even if the fear of the western Church was the Third World Church tendency to lean towards the new-hermeneutical model of biblical interpretation, is it then not the primary concern of the new-hermeneutic to remind the modern "classical" biblical interpreter that the contemporary
historical context is equally important? Isn't such a concern legitimate in the light of classical hermeneutics which had "been heavily loaded with the concern of understanding the biblical message in its original text?" (Padilla 1979:87).

A notable evangelical western theologian says,

Too often we in the white West . . . [have] deep suspicion of the efforts to create an African theology (or theologies) or a black theology (or theologies). Fearful of syncretism from "their side," we minimize that possibility in us. "Too often it seems to be expected that such theologies will merely substitute African/Asian categories as counters in the same Western-style word game. Behind such expectations are the racist assumption of the automatic superiority, even normativeness, of our Western approaches, and our perpetual tutelage over Christian thinkers of other societies" (Conn with quote from Taber 1984:247).

As Third World Christians, we get the impression that the western Church regards her presence in Third-World theological reflection as almost indispensible if Christian theologies are going to be free from syncretism. But I wonder whether it has even occured to the western Church that even if full presence and participation were granted to her, how would she monitor the syncretistic notions of, say, the supernatural religious realities of most non-western cultures? Has not the materialistic mechanistic western world view blinded and dis-equipped the western Church from discerning the transcemiprical? Is there not evidence of the inability of many western theologians in discerning the syncretism in transcendental yoga, a mystic eastern religion
sweeping millions of Americans?

Therefore, western theologians should not be surprised if at times some voices from the Third World Church express their doubts concerning the capability and the innocence of western motives in Third-World-Christian theological formulations. If a chicken had been hit once before by an eagle, does it not behoove it to be careful? The meaning of the Akamba proverb, "Kimanyi miti ya unguu" seems to depict this unfortunate western disposition. It speaks of those individuals who consider themselves as experts in every field. They claim to know "all" the answers and so can respond to all questions! The English equivalence translation would refer to a person who claims to have monopoly over truth. As such, it may be used to denote the self-ascribed role of many western theologians. Simply because the colonial powers invited themselves to Africa, it does not mean western theologians and missionaries may do likewise.

From the foregoing discussion, it is clear that the western Church has yet to accept the cultural conditioning of all Christian theologies. To do this, her Church theologians and mission strategists will have to do hard-core reflection on anthropological theory in the light of how it can best enrich gospel communication. After all, is not cultural conditioning a phenomena that "all" disciplines and especially the arts and the social sciences
have to deal with? Are we not also talking of a fundamental
dimension of cultural conditioning of the very paradigms of
thought themselves, out of which scholarly disciplines are
shaped and organized?

Also, the question of the western Church fear of
syncretism in the construction of Third-World Christian
theologies should be dealt with better if she approaches us
as brothers and sisters but not as sons and daughters. It
is legitimate for, say, a one-hundred-year-old national
Church to relate with her founding mission as brothers and
sisters. The father-son and mother-daughter relationship
has, in the past, been prone to theological racism and may
indeed be an inadequate model for Third-World-Church
theological formulation. Therefore, the role of culture in
Christian theologizing must be taken seriously.

The next area of potential danger which the western
Church must take seriously in order to make her positive
contribution to the construction of Third-World Christian
theologies is to stop viewing Christian theology as a
finished product.

Christian Theology: A
Non-Finished Product

As has been alluded to over and over again, theology in
the West has been perceived as,

... an academic discipline ... a
metaphysical science of speculation, dependent to
a considerable extent upon the secular concepts of *philosophia*. Thus theology saw its task as a universal one of ontology. And as a result of that ontological self-understanding, it spent its time on abstracted definitions, affirming God as Being with a Capitol B. It transmitted the Aristotelian distinction between an object's "essence" and its "accidents" into the assumption that subjects can gain "objective knowledge" of given objects, in this case God (Conn 1984:217-18).

This type of abstractionism is consistent with the western rationalistic worldview. The danger as can be expected in this kind of metaphysical speculation is that it develops a craving desire to understand and define things as existing in themselves without taking into consideration how they relate to other things. And as such, it delights in philosophizing about God. It also reflects a static model of theologizing and has tended to produce fossilized theologies. It kills the dynamism in God, and as such, it has been typical of western Christian theology to deny God any movement and describe him in such static terms as immutable, external, infinite, invisible and so on. We are not suggesting that those qualities are not true descriptions of the God of the Bible, but rather the point we are making is that western Churches have traditionally over-emphasized those as the primary essentials of Christian theology. It is this ontologizing dimension in western Christian theologizing that has been responsible for the so-called "pure essentials" in many western theological traditions.
With this essentialist quest, then, it is not hard to see why the western Church has primarily perceived theology as a finished-product. In the formulation of most doctrines, little attention was not given to the contextual backgrounds and how God interacted with them. Harvie Conn is making reference to this when he states that,

Most of the doctrinal developments have been analyzed without sensitivity to the transcultural backgrounds that surely played a role in their shaping. . . . Much of this may have happened, if we believe the thesis of Peter Toon, because within the evangelical community of the last hundred years we have operated with a model for the development of doctrine that favored a homogeneous evolution of doctrine. Doctrine, on this model, was seen as merely a continuous, cumulative growth in understanding. With this model went a lack of sensitivity to historic situationalism, to the humanity of doctrinal statements of faith, shaped not only by the Bible but also by historical and cultural conditioning (1984:204).

It is therefore the lack of sensitivity to what Peter Toon calls "historic situationalism," or simply cultural context, that has often weakened the dynamic dimension in western theologizing. Should Christian theology be set free from the bondage of the ontological or essentialist approaches? Must not theology be done in the praxis of life? Is this not what Jesus and Paul did?

In his efforts to define "the kind of theology that motivates and energizes the church to witness" (Gilliland 1983:30), a contemporary western mission theologian, Dean Gilliland, advises that we need to set aside,
the idea that theology is a science, a rational logical construct, a defense for God, or an exercise for the few. [And instead look at theology as] a reflection upon, and an explanation of, convictions that grow out of real experiences in which people have encountered a living God. Paul's theology could be described as a "theology on the move, . . ." (1983:31).

It is a rather unfortunate western-Church belief that continues to see theology as closed instead of open-ended. Theological reflection in the West along a static paradigm has been primarily responsible for the preparation of such a view. Imasogie observes that western-Church, dogmatic, theological formulation,

. . . came to be regarded as if it were a fossilized distillation of the deposit of divine revelation. Such a concept of theological formulation beclouds the dynamic nature of Christ who promises to continue to reveal God to us in every situation through the continuing activity of the Holy Spirit. Lack of sensitivity to the dynamic nature of the theological enterprise made most missionaries unresponsive to the world view and self-understanding of the Africans they encountered, as well as the role of culture in perception that results from that world view. The result of this failure is that, underneath the appearance of acceptance and understanding, Christianity, for many Africans, remains a foreign religion. The sad implication is that many Africans have not accepted Christianity completely as the all-sufficient religion that meets all human needs. The truth of this assertion is borne out by the fact that in times of existential crisis many respectable African Christians revert to traditional religious practices as the means for meeting their spiritual needs (1983b:23).

It is for this reason then that much of traditional western theology could not be described as a "theology on the move." Therefore, in order for our western Christian
brethren to make their contribution the development of Third-World Church Christian theologies, they need to be freed from their static theologizing models. The Church of Christ in any land or generation cannot afford to theologize using a static model. Besides whatever model of theologizing is employed, the Christian community should be on the alert lest she too gets imprisoned to the model. Hence, models as contextual ways of viewing reality should not be overemphasized, for to overly "... promote a particular model is to impose limitations on ones' perspective. Preconceptions become handicaps when the model is unable to handle new information" (Conn 1984:162).

It is for this reason that Christian theologians should discard models/paradigms that outlive their usefulness. In other words, when a model which had been developed within a specific context for a particular purpose cannot handle/assimilate the overload of data for which it is not equipped, then a remodeling or reconstruction should take place. Certainly, this is why we have proposed in our critique that western Christian theology made for the European-American context has been found lacking when applied in the African Akamba situation. Primarily, Christian theology understood as the gospel responding to contemporary changing contexts should be judged by the fundamental test of how it causes people to submit their allegiance to the authority of the living Christ as well as
sustain the changeless eternal Word amidst the flux of changing worlds.

The third potential danger which the western Church needs to take seriously in order to be better equipped to offer her contribution in Third-World-Church theological reflection is to stop using industrial technology as an adequate criteria for judging human society.

The Inadequacy of Industrial Technology to Judge Society

To most Americans, when they think of Africa, they imagine a land of jungles, huts and naked savages. These views are not confined to the non-Christian people in the society but are shared by the average American Christian. During my stay in the United States, I have talked to many Americans who honestly believe that the heathen and barbarians cannot be found in the major western cities like New York, London, Paris and others, but live far away in the jungles of places like Africa or Papua New Guinea. The false ideology that primitive and backward people live outside the western world has blinded even some present-day western peoples. This type of thinking, as mentioned in our introductory section, is built on industrial technology as the criteria that divides human societies as civilized and non-civilized.

So the Americans, for example, continue to view Africa
as a backward and primitive land of jungles. Yet, such backward and hostile environments are but a bizarre caricature of the real Africa. Those who are familiar with Africa know, for instance, that

... jungles make up only about one seventh of Africa; huts are almost impossible to find in modern cities; and Africans—despite what Tarzan movies tell us [Americans] are no more savage than anyone else. In fact, if we were to judge people by the number of their fellow human beings they have killed in wars, we would have to conclude that Europeans and Americans are far more savage than Africans (Clark 1969:3).

This is why we must affirm that industrial technology alone is not a sufficient criteria to judge human society. To a westerner, modern technological development is evident that society is making progress. Thus, we pointed out that it is a worldview difference based on the westerner's view of people live outside the western world has blinded even some present-day western peoples. This type of thinking, as mentioned in our introductory section, is built on industrial technology as the criteria that divides human societies as civilized and non-civilized.

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This is why we must affirm that industrial technology alone is not a sufficient criteria to judge human society. To a westerner, modern technological development is evident that society is making progress. Thus, we pointed out that it is a worldview difference based on the westerner's view of time. Paul Hiebert reports that, "The . . . Indian sees modern technology as a sign of the increasing depersonalization of life and therefore a sign of the loss of true values and decline of civilization" (1978a:xxi).

The western Church may not know how deep her views of other peoples have been influenced by western industrial technology. We do not need to mention that superiority in technological advancement, whether in the form of the MX-missiles or of the handy micro-wave oven to help the lady of the house in handling her cooking needs in a matter of seconds, are not signs of spiritual progress. The electric light is different from the light of the gospel. It seems unfortunate that simply because the West has excelled in making machines, she tends, as Leon Clark says,

... to judge other people by the number of machines they have. We conveniently forget that Nazi Germany had very sophisticated machines. And we overlook the air pollution, water pollution, and general destruction of nature that our machines and factories have wrought, not to mention our possible destruction of all mankind.
through nuclear war. The hydrogen bomb may be the ultimate in war machinery, but dropping it might be considered the ultimate in human backwardness (1969:3-4).

Certainly, industrial technology has blinded modern man, and the term "civilization" as it stands today needs re-defining. There are many non-western peoples who have bought deeply into this pseudo-criteria of judging progress in human societies from a technological criteria. Indeed, in Kenya there are many who view industrial development as the key to civilization. Of course, we should not be understood as totally denouncing modern industrial technology, for technology of itself is neutral, but our concern has been the western misuse of modern technology. God's people are called upon to use all for God's glory, and modern technology is not an exception. Like western Christian theology, western industrial technology does not portray a mark of superiority, but rather the best that western efforts have been able to come up with. It behooves us to share humbly with the human family what God has given to us.

Therefore, for the western Church to be better equipped to make her brotherly contribution to Third-World-Church theological formulation, she should take seriously not only the cultural conditioning of Christian theology, but also stop viewing her theological formulations as the fossilized distillation of the deposit of divine revelation, for such a concept of theology is indeed an antithesis of the dynamic
nature of our God and his dealings with people.

However, as we conclude our critique on Akamba Christian theology, we must in anticipation of our next chapter focus attention on some aspects of contemporary Akamba Christian theology.

**PROBLEMS IN CONTEMPORARY AKAMBA CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY**

Because of the transference of "uncensored" western theological curricular to most African Bible schools and colleges, the African Church cannot be expected to have developed a theology that interacts deeply with her different worldviews. The African who has been trained in those theological institutions is not equipped adequately to wrestle with worldview questions. As seen above, most African Bible colleges and schools have to adhere primarily to a foreign theological curriculum in order to be granted accredited degrees by a western theological institution.

This writer remembers discussing this question with a member of the faculty of a theological school in Kenya who argued that the theological curriculum the school was using was "made in Kenya." I looked through the curriculum, and it bore the marks of an American Bible college. Had the name of the institution been removed from the front cover, any typical western Bible college would as well use the same curriculum with hardly any changes. It is primarily this
reason that contemporary African Christian theologians like E. W. Fashole-Luke states that "The possibilities and potentialities of African Christian theologies must remain in the clouds of uncertainty, if the stimulus for theologising is external, and if theological education is left under the control of non-Africans" (1981:40).

Therefore, to say the least, African Christians are not theologically in charge of both the leadership and theological training in their schools. The few African who are beginning to theologize for the existential needs of the African Church are primarily doing so from a western model. This is why Alex Chima of Malawi, a former teacher in a philosophicum laments the situation when he says,

Today's seminary curricula, at least in Eastern Africa, do not seem to promise any great changes in that line, at least not in the near future. In any case, those who go to the seminary are among the priviledged few. The bulk of the Africa population will have to keep groping in an attempt to hear God's voice and see his mighty deeds through "borrowed" ears and eyes, in a language they are not even given the chance to learn—a strenuous task indeed! (1984:60-61).

It is certainly time for some new direction. It is almost fifteen years ago when Charles Nyamiti expressed this similar concern. Look at what he said:

... time is now past when the African theologian had simply to wait for Western theologians to produce such works before taking them and using them as they stand, or adapting them superficially to the needs of his students. In spite of the efforts to adapt them to the modern world, such manuals are always determined by Western problems and mentality. As such, they
are not the best preparatory treatises for pastoral work in Africa, and can hardly stimulate the minds of the students for African theology (1971:32).

In spite of Nyamiti's advise a decade and a half ago, very little change has occurred towards contextualizing theological training curricula. If fifteen years ago Nyamiti said, "... it is true to say that in Africa, especially that of today, a theological institute that is not deeply oriented towards African theology is anachronistic and pastorally deficient" (1971:33), then what would he say today? The situation with our Ukamba Bible schools is no different from what we are discussing here. If the Bible schools and colleges use similar foreign curricular and manuals, how could the Church be expected to be different? What shall we do?

Right from the founding of the Church in Ukambani, converts were expected to conform to an explicit foreign brand of Christianity. And so in examining contemporary Church theology, we want to focus our attention on: (1) the shallowness of Akamba Christian theology, (2) the difficult task of Akamba theologians, and (3) the challenge for the Akamba Church.

**Shallow Christian Theologies**

The shallowness of Christian theology in Ukambani is not obvious until a perceptive person observes carefully. We pointed out earlier how John Mbiti has rated Christianity
among his people as "very shallow," affirming that,

Beneath the surface there lie many Akamba beliefs, fears, and concepts which have not been reached or seriously challenged. For example, the fear of witchcraft still exists among almost all Akamba Christians, even though they may not openly admit it (1966:9).

These witchcraft beliefs reside deep beneath the outward Christianity we portray, and must be allowed to interact with the biblical message. The primary source of the shallowness is the fact that right from the beginning Akamba Christians did what they were told to do. They obeyed to Christianize which to them was synonymous with westernizing, yet as Imasogie says about the Edo of Nigeria, "... deep down in the subconscious dimension of their beings, their cultural conditioning remained intact to determine their behavior in moments of life-problems" (1983b:69). As already mentioned, Akamba Christians were outwardly identified by the way they dressed. For example, western-style clothes were one major way of identifying a person as musomi (literally "one who reads"), but used to describe those who had converted to Christianity. The presence of many foreign forms of worship today point that Christianity was equated in the minds of many Akamba people with western education and civilization.

The need to embrace Christianity intellectually was not perceived as essential, since the forms of Christianity were more of the outward type. Indeed, to the average Mukamba,
the God of the western Christian missionary is perceived as a different God from Mulungu. Personally, I have met many Akamba people who, although Christians, do no look at Christ as the all-powerful, sufficient God. What I am talking about here was demonstrated so vividly when, in August, 1982, at Kyangala, thousands of Akamba men had met for their annual men's Africa Inland Church conference when the Honorable Gerald Muia, the then Assistant Minister for local government, expressed his dissatisfaction for what he called the Church's replacement of Ngai Asa Mulungu ula aaithe maitu mathaithaa na kwikia vandu vake Yesu Kilisto.6

While many Akamba Christians love and worship Jesus Christ, yet at times of extreme crises, some revert to former traditional beliefs and practices. In my pastoral ministry among the Akamba, I have counseled with several Christians who at times of crises consulted a traditional medicine doctor. What this tells us is that the Word has not become flesh in the hearts of every Akamba Christian, and Jesus the eternal Christ has yet to be perceived as the one who saves to the utmost. In other words, the Lordship of Jesus has not been allowed to control the center of every Mukamba Christian.

6. The equivalent translation of Honorable G. Muia's words is, "The Church's replacement of God the Father with the Son Jesus Christ." Afterward, I talked with the Honorable G. Muia about his dilemma, which I suspect is a common dilemma among many Akamba Christians.
A western visitor to a typical Akamba local Church would see all people dressed in western-type dress; most men will have jackets, shirts and ties, pants and shoes, while women wear head scarves, dresses, shoes and even a few wear pants and western-made make-up! In some meetings the service will be conducted in the English language. (Of course, those explicit forms of dress are no longer the monopoly of the Christian community but have become normal wear for practically every Mukamba). And so, having seen all these, it is very likely for the western visitor to conclude that all those people who dress as they do (and many speak English) must then share the same undergirding Christian presuppositions. Certainly some do, but the majority do not.

While Akamba traditional worldview, as examined in Chapter IV, has been influenced greatly by westernization and Christianity, yet it has not changed much. The explicit forms are different from those of the 19th and early 20th-century but the implicit traditional Akamba conceptualizations of reality are primarily the same. This is why I would support Imasogie in challenging African ivory-tower theoreticians who continue to claim that westernization and Christianity have changed African worldviews. Such idealizing is
out of touch with African ways of thinking and perceiving. It may be good for them to come down to where the action is and mix with the people to learn the truth from them. The experience of a typical African pastor who sits where his parishioners sit during the weekdays is that the worldview described here [in this study] is very much alive today. It determines the very being of the average African no matter what level of his sophistication may be. It must be conceded that not every African Christian's reaction is determined by this worldview. Exceptions certainly exist but they are too few to be of significance or to effect the case made here (1983b:69-70).

Therefore, shallow Christian theologies is a phenomenon with which the Akamba Church will have to wrestle. But the task of theologizing at the worldview level for the Akamba Christian theologian is a difficult one.

A Difficult Task for Akamba Christian Theologians

The superficiality of the average Akamba Christian commitment to Christ is primarily the failure of mission theology to take the Akamba traditional worldview seriously. Our study of the cultural differences between the western worldview and Akamba worldviews has confirmed that western Christian theological reflection scratched the Akamba where he did not itch.

A number of Akamba Christians have at different times made this attempt to think in relevant ways, but it was met with little enthusiasm from both the founding missions and, at times, the leadership of the national Church. It seems
that the traditional Christian negative attitude towards other religions and other cultures is responsible for the lack of enthusiasm in this matter. And except for John Mbiti, the other Akamba theologians who have ventured in this field have done so primarily as children of the western worldview. For John Mbiti who, despite what I regard as his "universalistic speculations," was the only Akamba Christian theologian who wrestled with Akamba existential questions from their worldview perspective. His book on *New Testament Eschatology in African Background* (1971), which was the basis of his doctoral dissertation, is really an attempt to interpret the gospel of Christ within the framework of time as an Akamba mental model of reality. His book is a major contribution in Akamba worldview theologizing.

But because Akamba-Church mission theology could not relate at similar theoretical wavelengths with the arguments Mbiti raised, he was labelled a liberal and frustrated to the point of leaving his "mother" mission Church. So the dilemma for the Akamba theologian is a difficult one. At least we have identified the reason of our superficiality. Yet those like Mbiti who choose to challenge and expose the inability of contemporary mission theology in addressing the existential questions of the Akamba are met with opposition by western missionaries and western-brainwashed nationals. It is Moyo who contends that it is a
... fact that some Christians and theologians in Africa are very reluctant to accept or are even opposed to the whole idea of an African Theology or indigenization of the Church in Africa. Where attempts have been made especially in Protestant Churches, to introduce African music in Church, opposition has been expressed by many pastors and a good number of the laity (1983:95).

For example, Mbiti's new way of interpreting the eschaton from an Akamba time perspective was perceived as a threat to traditional western theology. New Third-World-Church theologians are certainly perceived as a threat to traditional western theologies. It is no surprise then that the few emerging Third-World-Church theologies are not taken seriously by the western Church. Going through Bible college in Kenya, Mbiti's book on New Testament Eschatology in African Background was introduced to us not as a major contribution in the African theological reflection but rather as the words of a wayward son of the Church who was somehow missing the mark. Is it not a legitimate concern for an African theologian to theologize without outside pressure? Furthermore, does not such a treatment of an Akamba-Church-theologian pioneer effort by mission theology continue to reaffirm the fossilized views of many traditional western-trained theologians? It is an undeniable fact that there are still many among western theologians who continue to regard western theology as universal.

However to avoid any misunderstandings, we need to
point out that an Akamba Christian theologian should not be understood as opting for his/her own unique parochial way for the development of an Akamba Christian theology. This is because the Akamba Christian theologian, like all other members of Christ's Universal Body, adheres to one scriptural revelation, one God and one faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. These elements, as it were, make the universal "container" (Chapter II) and help us understand what it means to be Christian. However, the "contents of the container" in this case represents the Akamba worldview models.

All that we are saying here is what Imasogie has recommended if theology is to be authentic, it must participate in universality. However, we must

... stress that no theology is authentic and universal if it does not meet the integrated needs of a particular people in a particular historical context. For the Word must become flesh in a given culture and context in order to be genuinely and meaningfully apprehended wholeheartedly. It is only as theology responds to the existential needs of a people within the specific cultural and historical milieu of their self-understanding that the universal of it can be enhanced and enriched. After all, what is universality if it does not mean relevance for people concerned? Relevance has meaning only in terms of meeting the vital needs of a people. This cannot happen in a contextual vacuum. This concept of universality is a far cry from the often lopsided theology that masquerades as universal. This is so because most theologians

7. See Chapter II, Container-Content Analogy in Worldview Construction Theory.
are not even aware of the underlying forces that shape the theological formulations that they wrongly assume to have universal application (1983b:19-20).

So as Akamba Christian theologians carry out their theological reflections, they should be aware of the universal dimensions of theology as their reflections weave through their theoretical worldview and biblical presuppositions. (This was covered in more detail in Chapter I on Akamba Christian Hermeneutics.) It must be reiterated again that no Christian theological reflection is done outside the framework of certain presuppositions. Usually the problem is that most theologians may not always remember the presuppositions under which he/she may operate. But whether a Christian theologian knows his presuppositions or not, the fact remains that, "... his methodology is shaped by his cultural up-bringing, his traditional convictions and his intuitive insights. All these subtly condition his choice of norm and hermeneutical principles in his theologizing" (Imasogie 1983:21).

It is out of this understanding that we can contend that there is no such thing as presuppositionless theology. All Christian theologies are presuppositionally conditioned. This is why Mbiti, in theologizing under different worldview presuppositions, produced a theology that was different in some fundamental ways from typical mission theology with which we are accustomed.

Joseph Silla, a leader in Africa Inland Church--Kenya,
explains the dilemma he perceives as facing the Akamba Christian theologian by using an analogy from the story of David and Saul in 1 Samuel 17. He explains that David had a mission from God to deliver the children of Israel from Goliath, the Philistine. Saul the King dressed David in his own coat of armor and a bronze helmet on his head, but David said, "I cannot go in these... because I am not used to them" (1 Sam 17:39). David put them off, took his staff and, in his hand, a sling and five smooth stones.

As the story goes, David approached the Philistine with a sling and a stone, and God gave him victory. The comparison of the story to Akamba Christian theology, says Silla, is that, "The Church cannot move and accomplish the mission God had assigned for her." Her theology is borrowed and cannot penetrate and respond to Akamba existential questions, like Saul's clothes which were too large and unsuited for what God wanted David to do through him. To be used by God, David had to be himself and allow God to use what he had in his own hands. The same can be said of Moses when God asked him, "What is that in your hand?" (Ex 4:2).

Therefore, it is time for Akamba Church theologians to allow God to use what we have in our culture and what God has given to us (the Scriptures) in the development of a relevant and culturally-sensitive Akamba Christian theology. The foreigners' western iron-armor and helmet theology has primarily failed, and it is time to allow God
to use the traditional slings of our worldview, for the battle is the Lord's. We have amidst us the necessary tools for the proper construction of a relevant Akamba Christian theology. Indeed, does not our own proverbs confirm the importance of such a venture? "Mundu ndakolawa too ni kithuma kya ngombe ite yake (a person cannot sleep soundly with a borrowed blanket)." Despite the frustration and opposition, Akamba Christian theologians should undertake the task of biblical theologizing as imperative, if the Church is going to be delivered from its contemporary state of shallow theology. Of course, the challenge is not just confined to the Akamba Christian theologian, but the challenge is also for the Akamba Church as a whole.

The Challenge for the Akamba Church

In her efforts toward a more relevant Bible-centered and culturally-sensitive Akamba Christian theology, the Akamba Church, as well as her theologians, has her own role to play. For example, it is the duty of the Akamba Christian community to begin to distinguish the borrowed externals in present Church theology. In other words, within the explicit aspects of contemporary Akamba Christianity, the Akamba Church needs to distinguish between the genuine non-negotiable elements of Christianity from European and western culture.
For instance, as a minister in the Akamba Church there would be a great uneasiness if I were to deliver the Sunday message without a tie and a jacket. To be proper and acceptable, I must preferably wear a two-piece suit. John Pobee of Ghana, commenting on the whole matter of Ghanaian Methodist ministers being required to wear suits, says,

One needs no knowledge of theology or history to agree that a suit is not of the essence of the ministry of the church. It is a European garb. Jesus himself never wore a suit, so far as we know. This is a clear case of European culture being confused with Christianity (1979:56).

While we are not suggesting that ministers of the gospel should disregard using coats and ties, the point we are making is that such externals are not part of essential Christianity but a European cultural garb. In every place where Christianity has spread, it has taken with it the cultural garb of the gospel communicator. The spectrum of cultural garbs transported unconsciously by the gospel communicator may stretch from explicit aspects (like clothes, books and watches) to implicit worldview beliefs.

For example, as Christians we have received incorporated in Christianity the Jewish cultural garb of a

three-decker universe—earth, heaven above the earth, and Sheol. Today few people will seriously maintain that there is a geographical location in the skies called heaven. Be that as it may, most Christians today still talk as though
there were a heaven up in the skies. That is a Jewish heritage (Pobee 1979:57-58).

Christianity picked up the Hellenistic cultural garb through Platonian and Aristotellean ways of thinking. The Greek garb shows itself particularly through the Nicene Creed.

All that we are saying here is that Christ's Church is like a long river that flows across the centuries. Through different peoples, cultures, countries and while the biblical message stays unchanged all the way, yet through different terrains as it acts with different land, the Church takes on her external characteristics in different cultural garbs which reflect the color and shape of the land through which the river flows. As a "river" with eternal life, it extends beyond time and reaches "back" to the eschatological ocean in Paradise that God has created for its final glorious destination.

Therefore, while the Akamba Church should never deny the long tradition of Christ's Church of which we are a part, yet we should not confuse the cultural garb with the eternal message of God's love in Jesus Christ. Therefore, the Akamba Church must discover where and how God is speaking to us today. God in Christ wants to speak to us directly in our own context as he did to they boy Samuel (1 Sam 3). We can do no better than to respond like Samuel, "Speak, for your servant is listening" (1 Sam 3:10).
INTERPRETIVE CONCLUSION

In the critique on Akamba Christian theology, it was our purpose to investigate the role played by western worldview. The examples of ready-made mission Christian theologies were not intended to criticize the work of missionaries but rather (to use medical analogy) to be open even to surgery if a proper diagnosis of the contemporary theological sickness in Ukambani is going to be healed.

Earlier in the study (Chapter IV), we pointed out that Akamba worldview is fundamentally religious. Therefore, for mission theology to effectively reach Akamba with the gospel, it must be religiously inclined. However, as discussed above, the 19th and early 20th-century western background did not equip the missionary for his religious tasks abroad. Those who came to Ukambani were not only unaware of the implicit Akamba worldview but the majority would not recognize it as legitimate even if they "saw" it. Their religiously skeptical home backgrounds had ill-equipped them to recognize a culture with a non-mechanical worldview. It is evident that the western scientific-rationalistic and mechanistic worldview has no room for that which is religious.

Morton Kelsey, a contemporary western theologian and psychologist, exposes the emptiness of the western materialistic world when he says,
Most of us have been totally immersed in a worldview that is entirely materialistic, leaving no place for spirit. And this worldview has taken over our western world—its culture, its thinking, its living, its academic institutions, its governments and even many of its churches. This materialism has its roots in the thinking of Aristotle who stated that we humans have no direct contact with a spiritual world. . . . The nineteenth century with its dramatic successes of physics, chemistry, medicine and other hard sciences convinced many thinkers that science had final truth about all reality and the physical world was indeed pure illusion. . . . This point of view is so much part of us Westerners that we fail to see how it affects nearly every part of our lives (1985:33-34).

It is in this worldview that western missionaries to Ukambani were born and raised. Therefore, growing up under a materialistic worldview, the western missionary was (is) unconsciously ill-equipped to deal with supernatural and religious realities. Indeed, by neglecting the religious dimensions of human experience, the western worldview has made western missionaries the least equipped for ministry among Akamba of whom religion is the fundamental core in their worldview. This was the case brought out by our examination of the ready-made mission Christian theologies in Ukambani. We found that even with the few remnant exceptions, Akamba Church theology is dominantly foreign.

Foreignness in the Akamba Church is not unique but is indeed reflective of primarily the whole Third-World Church. The non-western Church has, for many years, lived under "borrowed theology." Voices from the Third World Church in Asia, Latin America and Africa have all affirmed that the
Third World Church is a Church without its own theology.

Harvie Conn discerns rightly when he says,

> Long under the covert domination of Western theological colonialism, the non-Western church accepts the psychodynamics of colonialism's division of the world into "settlers" and "natives." "The natives," long accustomed to withdrawing "theology" from the "educational bank" (the language of Paulo Freire), come to believe the self-image imposed by the missionary "settlers." They become spectators without a theology of their own, robbed of any free relationship with the Word and the world. They accept the identity created for them by the missionary language. They are "younger churches," passively dependent on the "mother church." So, Third World church leaders like Rene Padilla can speak of the Latin American church as "a church without a theology of its own" (1984:247).

The strange element amidst the inevitability of Third-World Church theological bankruptcy is the continued shocking western Church ethnocentrism. It is this same ethnocentrism that continues to blind many western evangelicals from accepting what is being stated here. For example, the uproar of western missionaries in PACLA\(^8\) when a Third-World African Christian theologian expressed his concern for the theological bankruptcy of the African Church affirms this continuing blinding ethnocentrism. It is difficult to know whom western evangelicals will listen to!

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8. PACLA was a "Pan-African Christian Leaders Assembly" which met in Nairobi, Kenya, December, 1976. Its purpose was expressed by Bishop Festo Kivengere of Uganda when he said, "Africa . . . is a bleeding continent--socially, politically, economically, racially, tribally. Only God can change this. That is why we are calling Africa's Christian leadership together" (quoted in Osei-Mensah 1978:22).
Hopefully, Harvie Conn will be given a hearing by his fellow colleagues. Conn perceives rightly when he says that,

The objections of Third World church leaders are not to theology per se but to the Western nature of their borrowed systems. Does the gospel require them to become Western Louis Berkhofs and John Murrays before they can be themselves? Their agony is not usually so much over theology as over the construction of a logically coherent system, organized around a Western historical agenda insisted upon as universal by the Western church. . . . Intuitively the Third World church is making a discovery. Systematic theology is not simply a coherent arrangement of supracultural universals. It is a compilation, of the Western white history of dogma. And that history, in the process of compilation has lost its missiological thrust (1984:222-23).

And so the cry of the Akamba Church is the cry of the whole Third World Church. The Third-World Church agenda of the need for theological contextualization is reflective of a cry that is very deep in the hearts of her theologians.

However, there is another dimension that is equally surprising. And that is, in spite of the borrowed mission theologies and blunders that accompanied the communication of the gospel in Ukambani, God has built and is building his Church. The fact that we have argued that most missionaries in Ukambani were children of their day does not mean God did not use them in spite of their attitudes of superiority and ethnocentricity.

As a national Akamba Christian who has taken time to research the historical, socio-economic and educational background of pioneer missionaries to Ukambani, I am deeply
moved (intrigued) by what God was able to do through them. As Stanley Jones says, they were ordinary people doing extraordinary things. It was Stephen Neill who says about 19th-century missionaries that even though they managed to break most of the commandments (1957:722), yet in their weakness, ignorance and sometimes pride, God in his grace remained faithful.

Looking back at their efforts, we see the unparalled selfless dedication, heroism and sacrifice of those remnant exceptions. Yet in others we see a rather frequent disobedience to the law of love and the admonition to always speak the truth in love (Eph 4:15). "They," as Arthur Glasser points out in reference to Chinese Protestant missionaries of the 19th century, "rarely saw issues clearly. They made every conceivable mistake in methodology" (1984:8). Through their diligence and weakness, God's grace has enabled them, along with first-generation Akamba Christian converts, to plant Christ's Church throughout Ukambani.

However, it is appropriate to mention in passing that the amazing growth of the Church among the Akamba should not be confined to the role played by western missionaries and the first-generation Christians. There were (are) worldview and ecological factors, such as their belief in God, their flexible epistemology, belief in the after life, persistent droughts in the land and the resultant famines. All these
and others provided a handy bridge for gospel communication. The gospel of the suffering God in Christ has become to many Akamba a message of hope. John Mbiti feels there are among the Akamba,

... many devout Christians who have found in this new faith not only an answer to their problems but a new type of life for which they would be willing to die if necessary. Every Sunday thousands of church-goers flock to places of worship, which include buildings, school classrooms, people's houses, and gathering places under the trees. They sing with joy and interest and literate worshippers diligently study their Bibles (1966:19).

For example, together they translated God's Word into the vernacular and by 1956 the Akamba Church had the whole Bible in the language of the people. The Kikamba hymnbook, although a translation of a mission hymnal, is a precious possession for first-generation Christians. The hymns are sung in their original western tunes, and first-generation Christians continue to treasure the "foreign tunes" which the majority have come to associate with their conversion experiences. This writer cannot forget the impact such hymns had on my grandmother Tabitha Ngenyi who day-by-day used to sing "Osa syitwa yii ya Yesu (take the name of Jesus with you)" (Mbathi sya kumwinia Ngai 1940:32). Those first-generation Kamba Christians also composed their own traditional Christian songs which they sung with their ethnic traditional tunes. Examples of such songs include,
Certainly these were pioneer efforts in Akamba Christian ethnomusicology; but the mission climate of the day was not conducive to their growth. The dominant songs continued to be translations from mission hymnals. However, we have a new generation of Akamba Christians who are concerned not only with the foreignness of Church liturgy but are questioning the very foundations out of which the liturgy, the creeds and the theology were made.

Many Akamba Christians today are questioning the validity of the many western religious forms which continue to characterize the Akamba Church. These third and fourth-generation Akamba Christians do not have any heathen/pagan connotations linked with the drums, the leopard skins, the traditional tunes as such. Indeed, for most of them it is exciting to return to the roots. But how far back should they return? Is it possible to return too far? Who would tell when they have gone too far back?

It is out of this understanding that we say a new agenda is being born. Indeed, it is at hand. The Akamba Church needs to move on beyond her boundaries and be strengthened to make her own specific contributions to her Lord in world evangelization. However, to do so effectively, she must be equipped to face the theological and
missiological challenges of her day. Akamba Christian theologians must emically give a fresh reflection of the biblical message within their own socio-cultural context. This is why we must now turn to our final chapter and submit our proposal on Akamba Church theological contextualization.
CHAPTER VII

CONSTRUCTING A RELEVANT AKAMBA CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

Throughout the foregoing part of our study we have sought to contend that in order for Christian theology to serve its rightful role, it must respond to the questions and concerns people ask or have within the context of their own worldviews. It was, therefore, out of such understanding that the dissertation set out at the beginning to contend two propositions: (1) Christian theology results from the disciplined reflection on God's biblical revelation by the believing hermeneutic community, and (2) a disciplined hermeneutic reflection on God's Word can best be done within the context of a people's worldview.

In order to explore these presuppositions and put our discussion in its proper perspective, it was necessary to register in the first chapter our hermeneutic conviction of what we perceive to be the appropriate contemporary, evangelical, hermeneutic agenda. This was then followed by an
examination of the role of worldviews in society (Chapter II) with particular reference to how worldviews are constructed. It was here where we argued that worldviews are basically "idea systems" or knowledge systems or, as Tyler calls them, "cognitive organizations" (1969:3). In other words, it is the ideas in people's minds that make up their mental structures or their mental models of reality. In this sense, then, a people's worldview becomes the ideas or the conceptualizations that house the society's assumptions of reality. It was our discussion (pp. 135-37) on how concepts such as perception, conceptualization, cognition and idea systems relate to knowledge that led us to conclude that worldviews are essentially epistemologies.

As an example of how societies construct worldviews, we carried out a lengthy examination of western culture as our main case study in analyzing how one dominant society has constructed its worldviews. We purposely chose the West as our case study in worldview construction, not only because of the influence western knowledge systems have had on African education and culture, but also because the ineffectiveness of traditional mission theology in Africa is blamed primarily on the inability of the western worldview (out of which traditional orthodox Christian theologizing was constructed) to penetrate the Africa world (Imasogie 1983b:47). However, since our thesis is addressing the task of doing Christian theology within the context of Akamba
worldview, we undertook an investigative examination of both the traditional and contemporary Akamba models of reality or knowledge systems (Chapters III and IV).

The primary objective in doing all this springs from the understanding that in order for the gospel of Jesus Christ to be embraced by the Akamba as God's good news, it must be clothed with Akamba worldview conceptual garments through the dynamic process of biblical contextualization. This is what Osadolor Imasogie and other contemporary African Christian theologians are contending when they say, "If Christian theology is to be relevant for the African his world view and self-understanding must be taken into account" (1983b:12).

But as we contemplated on the whole question of theologizing within the context of Akamba worldview, we found that Christian theologizing among Akamba cannot be done in a vacuum. The Akamba Church as part of the universal Body of Christ makes it part of a long historical theological tradition which contemporary Christian theologizing cannot afford to overlook. This is why we compared the whole of Christ's Church as a long river that flows across centuries of time through different peoples, cultures and countries, and yet while God's eternal Word (biblical message) remains changeless, it takes on its explicit outward dimensions different characteristics and shapes that reflect the color and terrain of the land
through which the river flows. Thus, for the Akamba Church to deny the western Church is to deny herself, for she is indeed part and one with the western Church.

It was, therefore, the need to explore the river of the history of our theological tradition that necessitated us to examine in Chapter V the contextual background of the 19th and early 20th-century western missionary. We contended that a proper understanding of the contextual background of the western missionary and the forces which accompanied the launching of the Church in Ukambani provide prerequisite background information for a proper understanding of contemporary mission theology.

In the previous chapter we provided a critique on Akamba Church theology. We pointed out that our primary goal was not to be judgmental to the faithfulness of missionary or national efforts, but rather to provide an evaluative assessment of the theological situation in Ukambani Church. We have found that although western missionaries were predominantly ill-equipped by their secular-mechanistic-humanistic worldview, yet God in his grace has through them built his Church in Ukambani. However, while the Church has grown and Christianity has been embraced by probably half a million members of the tribe, yet as described by Mbiti, one of her theologians, it is a Church without a theology or is characterized by a shallow theology. It is shallow because it was ready-made
and brought to them pre-packaged. As observed, Christian theology in Ukambani has not primarily been the result of indigenous (contextual) theological reflection. And like several of our proverbs say, "Mundu ndakolawa too ni kithuma kya ngombe ite yake (a person cannot sleep soundly with his/her neighbor's blanket, or literally, cowhide)." Or another proverb is "Sya kunewa ni mutui iyusuaa ikumbi (that which is comes from your neighbor is not enough or sufficient to fill the grainery)" (see p. 34).

It is out of this understanding we contend that for the Akamba Christian Church to discover her servant role of adequately shepherding the Lord's flock and be equipped to make her own theological contribution to the international Body of Christ, she must do her own theological reflection within the context of her worldview. The need for the construction of a relevant Akamba Christian theology is long overdue. It is therefore the primary objective of this chapter to project what could be termed one model in Akamba theological reflection. The thoughts presented here are suggestive rather than definitive.

We begin our discussion by exploring first the question of tools for Christian theological reflection. It is here where we reaffirm the sources (tools) of the Christian theological reflection and the format that can be followed. In other words, we are making a proposal on what steps can be followed in actual worldview theologizing. Next in the
third area of our discussion we would like to address the question of concrete theologizing in which we propose four different approaches to do Akamba Christian concrete theological reflections.

**ESSENTIAL TOOLS FOR CHRISTIAN THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION**

In examining essential tools or sources for Christian theological reflection, there is much that falls within our first chapter on Akamba Christian hermeneutics. Therefore, what we expose in our discussion here should be considered supplementary. We begin our discussion with the assumption that the Church of Jesus Christ in any *ethne* is equipped by her Lord with sufficient tools for theological reflection. Our first duty is therefore to identify what those tools are. Our concern first is to identify the tools for Christian theological reflection with which the Akamba Church been equipped. Identifying the tools or sources for African Christian theological reflection has not been one of the strengths of contemporary African theological efforts. Alex Chima, a priest of Mzuzu Diocese, Malawi, expresses similar concern when he says that most of the discussions about developing African theologies have tended to concentrate on the content of such a theology, e.g., "secular theology", fecundity and person-in-community. Very little attention seems to have been paid to the "sources" or the media for its formulation or communication (1984:53).
And so our concern with Akamba theological tools (or "sources," as Chima calls them) illustrates an absolute theological need in the quest for African theologies. Therefore, at the outset and as a matter of high priority, the Akamba Church should claim the Bible as their basic source for Christian theological reflection.

The Bible as Primary Source

There can be no proper Christian theological reflection without God's biblical revelation. This is, as it were, the starting point in Christian theological reflection. Indeed, it was for this reason we undertook in Chapter I a discussion on the Bible and hermeneutics (see pp. 54-67). The authority, the uniqueness and the historicity of biblical revelation must be accepted by the Akamba Church if she is going to engage herself in proper Christian theological reflection. It was the recognition of the role of the Bible in theological reflection that led the Pan African Conference of Third World theologians to issue the statement that "The Bible is the basic source of African theology, because it is the primary witness of God's revelation in Jesus Christ. No theology can retain its Christian identity apart from Scripture" (Appiah-Kubi and Torres 1979:192). Other contemporary African Christian

theologians have affirmed the vital place of the Bible in theological reflection. In 1974 E. W. Fashole-Luke said that the first item on the agenda in the quest for African Christian theologies should be

... "the interpretation of the Bible in the African context by competent and well equipped biblical scholars. Biblical Theology has made great advances in the Western churches, but African scholars are weak on this aspect of the quest. If we are to combat biblical fundamentalism, and give sound doctrinal teaching to our people, then more emphasis should be placed on the training of Old and New Testament scholars (1981:37-38).

Recently, Osadolor Imasogie has made a similar affirmation when he stated, "The Holy Scriptures, being the inspired book or the primary record of human witness to the divine self-disclosure in history, is the primary objective source for theology" (1983b:72). Therefore, as we pointed out in our hermeneutics section, we of the Akamba Church affirm with our fellow African brothers and sisters that in the Bible we have our basic source (tool) for proper Christian theological reflection. We praise God for the faithfulness of those who translated God's precious Holy Word into our mother tongue. While in the future the need may arise for a revised edition of the Kikamba Bible, yet at the moment the present translation is adequate for our theological reflection needs. Indeed, God's written word and the Living Word symbolize the greatest gifts God has given to us.

The second tool for Christian theological reflection is
the hermeneutical community.

The Hermeneutical Believing Community

We have discussed this earlier (pp. 71-74). Suffice it to add here that it is now the duty of contemporary Akamba Christian scholars to study and interpret God's scriptural revelation in the African context. Throughout this study we have been identifying that African context, i.e. the African Akamba worldview. It is, therefore, the calling of Akamba Christian scholars to reflect on Scripture in light of the African context and, say, write Bible commentaries which will shepherd the Lord's flock with the milk and meat that comes only through a disciplined reflection on the scriptural text. It must be remembered that the Holy Spirit is a major subjective source in the whole task of Christian theological reflection. We remember the words of Jesus Christ to his disciples in John 16:12-15 when he said,

> I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak of his own, he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you. All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you.

> These words tell us how vital it is for a Christian theologian to be in tune with, and sensitive to, the Holy Spirit as the primary source of Christian theology. The
Akamba Christian theologian will need to underscore, as pointed out earlier, the role of culture in hermeneutics, whether he is dealing with the Old or New Testament documents or is concerned with the application of Christian meaning in contemporary Akamba contexts. At least he should understand that these documents of God's revelation are products of specific cultures and were originally addressed to specific people who understood the message conveyed in the documents through categories of thought and symbols derived from their own cultures. A contemporary Africa theologian, sensitive to what I am speaking about here, asks the question:

- Does the fact that Jesus' message about God has been mediated to us through these documents or through ancient cultural expressions mean that that message is communicable only through those ancient cultures and no other? This of course would mean that to become a Christian one would have to become a first century Jew or Greek or Roman. This is obviously against the spirit and the letter of Acts 15, and Paul's insistence that Gentile Christian must not be subjected to Jewish law and ritual. From the beginning of the early Church, Christian thought was very diverse in its manifestations (Moyo 1983:95-96).

Besides, it is important to point out that as the Akamba Christian hermeneutical community seeks to interpret the original text, she should accept her own worldview limitations, just as the western Church and her missionaries are limited by their worldviews. There is no Church in any culture that does not see God's biblical revelation as through a glass darkly. Thus, all God's people must
recognize their worldview limitations in their best efforts in theological reflection. Earlier we made reference to the importance of the pastoral dimension of Christian theological reflection. Akamba Christian theologians must avoid the kind of high-tower theological reflection in which the theologian delights in theological contemplation and sometimes speculation. Christian theological reflection, as Charles Nyamiti has contended, should be done with the people's needs in view, although the conceptual dimensions of Christian theologizing should not be regarded as outside the realm of theological reflection. Later we shall discuss philosophical theologizing as meeting real conceptual needs at the other end of the Akamba theological reflection continuum. We have seen how Christian theology in the West has been put into the bondage of deduction by linking it with an essentialist approach to theology. Akamba Christian theologians must resist this temptation.

Primarily, theology must be done in the praxis of life. This is what Christ did. It is what Paul did. Indeed, it is what we are called to do. Is there not a sense in which the greatest theological statement is the one the believer makes daily by his/her own life? Is this question belittling, say, in the minds of western essentialist theologians, the profound nature of Christian theology? But to be more realistic, should we not ask, why do we as Christians seriously seek to know the meaning of
Scripture? Does such need simply arise from some form of essentialist interests? Or are we not deeply concerned with the meaning of Scripture as it relates to the different areas of human life? It is this shepherding concern in seeking the application of Christian meaning in real life situations, that will prevent the Akamba Christian community and her theologians from developing speculative theologies.

The third and fourth set of tools that the Akamba hermeneutic community has been equipped with in her task of theological reflection is what may be called "explicit and implicit traditional cultural tools."

Explicit and Implicit Traditional Cultural Tools

These explicit traditional cultural tools include Akamba proverbs, myths, prayers, riddles and songs. These form part of the sources for concrete theologizing (see below, pp. 465-77 and Appendix A). The implicit traditional cultural tools are the Akamba epistemological paradigms which were discussed extensively in Chapter IV of this dissertation. Indeed, they are the main thrust of this whole study. These provide the framework for Akamba philosophical theology which, as mentioned above, can meet some vital conceptual needs at the end of the theological reflection continuum. Indeed, it is that level of
epistemological theologizing that we have chosen to do a
case study in Akamba worldview theologizing (Chapter VII).

The fifth tool that the Akamba Christian hermeneutic
community has been equipped with for the task of theological
reflection is our Akamba mission theological tradition.

**Akamba Mission Theological Tradition**

We have examined this theological tradition above in
our critique on Akamba Christian theology (Chapter VI). We
observed that Akamba contemporary theological reflection
cannot be done in a vacuum. As the Akamba Church reflects
on our mission theological heritage, we should remember, as
E. W. Fashole-Luke has reminded us, that

Some aspects of this heritage are useful and
valuable, and we must retain them; others we will
have to discard. But one thing is clear, while we
must aim at achieving a synthesis between our
African and Euroamerican heritage, we must not
allow the agenda to be set by western Christians,
by constantly asking what is the state of play in
the theological games of the West; nor must the
parameters of discussions be delimited by those
living outside Africa.

It is also becoming increasingly clear that
African Christian theologies must be essentially
vernacular theologies; otherwise the distinctive
categories of African thought will be lost, if
they are expressed in English or French (1981:38).

The place of our mission's theological heritage is
important, and Akamba Church theological reflection will be
impaired if it assumes its absence. Also, any forms of
Akamba Christian theological heritage embodied in our
vernacular language (e.g. first generation indigenous Christian songs) provide valuable sources for Akamba Christian theological reflection.

Therefore, all these tools—the biblical revelation, the Akamba hermeneutical believing community, the explicit and implicit traditional cultural tools and the mission theological heritage—must interact together in praxis in the construction of Akamba Christian theology.

**Christian Theology**

Christian theology then results from the dynamic interaction of all of the above. Thus, Christian theology equals Christ's gospel plus a society's worldview plus a dynamic reflection on the gospel by the disciplined hermeneutical community. Earlier we defined Christ's gospel as God's supracultural revelation of himself in the Bible and through the Living Lord Jesus Christ. In short, the Gospel is *The Word* becoming flesh and dwelling among man (John 1:14). The gospel must be allowed to become flesh in Ukambani. Moyo warns us against the tendency on the part of Christians to want to protect the gospel. He says,

> There is fear that by entering into African culture it will be polluted. There is fear that by letting it die in that culture it may not rise. There is fear of the unknown. But God in Christ took that risk of dying in order to live. The Gospel is powerful enough to protect itself. Unless it enters and dies in African culture it will always remain foreign to Africa (1983:104).
Therefore, the Gospel of Christ, like a seed, must be allowed to fall down and die in every Akamba generation. The Akamba pastoral-minded theologian as part of the hermeneutical community should engage in the kind of theological reflection that God's people need, not only to understand the meaning of God's scriptural revelation but also to provide practical guidance on how to live meaningful lives in loving obedience to God. The pastorally minded Akamba theologian should have no separation between theology and spirituality. Hence, all Christian theological reflection misses the mark when it fails to inspire the flock to grow into the Shepherd's likeness.

Now we must proceed to explore the nature of theological reflection format through which Akamba worldview theologizing can be done.

A THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION FORMAT

I hereby propose a fourfold theological reflection format for Akamba Christian worldview theologizing.

First, Akamba Christian theologizing should identify the worldview theoretical model. This identification is important, for, as pointed out above, worldview models are the people's standard criteria for meaning and for interpreting life experiences. In our study we have identified eight of these Akamba worldview models, (Chapter IV). Akamba Christian theologians and the hermeneutical
community should, as a first step in theological reflection, identify the worldview theoretical model.

Second, Akamba Christian theologizing should allow the model to interact with biblical revelation. The primary purpose in doing so is to identify which elements in the model are consistent or inconsistent with biblical revelation. The parallelisms and differences in the two should be pointed out. And in all probability one would notice, as Charles Nyamiti has observed, that "... from these similarities and divergencies that African themes [models] or values exist also in Christianity, but in a far more perfect way and on an essentially different and infinitely higher level" (1971:6). As observed in our discussion on Akamba Christian hermeneutic, God's revelation is absolute, and so the primary concern of the Christian theologian should be to adhere to the Bible as the standard judge of Akamba cultural worldview models.

However, the theologian must be cautioned of the primitivist fallacy of wanting to produce a model New Testament Church. In no way does this statement undermine the witness of the New Testament. Hence, Christian theological reflections must be informed by what Christ and the New Testament writers said and did. But the fallacy we are making reference to here is what has been traditionally perceived as an ideal New Testament Church, for there is "no such ideal type of the Church in the New Testament {there
are only New Testament churches) . . ." (Schreiter 1985:100). Indeed, there is a growing consensus among New Testament exegetes that we should speak of New Testament Churches, other than a single model New Testament Church² (Schreiter 1985:76). Robert Schreiter, reflecting further on this, states,

A harmonization of first-century realities does violence to the data and reflects a homogenization that came much later in history. . . . When one creates the ideal type, one must ask who does the harmonization and what principles are at play, emphasizing some aspects and playing down others. Any reading of a series of texts as diverse as those of the New Testament will have to call for principles of selection. Those principles usually have more to do with the contemporary situation than with first-century circumstances. . . . The New Testament churches themselves represent different cultural and social circumstances. Why would those circumstances be read differently from the way in which we try to read our own? (1985:76).

And so New Testament scholars have not succeeded in finding one ideal first-century-Church model that all should mimic. We can even speak of the existence of New Testament Christian theologies!

Third, Akamba Christian theologizing should allow the worldview theoretical model (which has interacted with Scripture) to confront the particular Church theological tradition. This is where the need for professionally trained theologians becomes necessary. Their function is to

assist the local hermeneutical community in linking their particular Christian theological reflection with the universal Body of Christ.

The contemporary "emphasis on the role of the community as theologian" (Schreiter 1985:17) is a correction to the traditional pattern of high-tower professional theologians thinking that they are the only ones capable of engaging in theological reflection. Such correction is appropriate and timely. Nevertheless, in cultural contexts where a sensitive, trained theologian is the pastor and lives in the midst of the local hermeneutic community, then such an emphasis may not be applicable. However, it must be pointed out that no single Akamba Christian theologian can or should create a theology in isolation from the community's experience. All that we are saying here is that both the Church as the hermeneutic community and the trained theologian have vital roles to play. It is the role of the trained theologian to do the actual shaping of the theological reflection and guide the insights of the believing community. He captures the spirit and reflections of the community and puts them into shape.

The Akamba Church, as part of the long theological historical heritage of the universal Body of Christ, cannot deny the role of the trained theologian. This reality is hard for the Akamba Christian community to challenge, especially when we consider the knowledge the Church needs
today to be properly related with the international Body of Christ. This is why some contemporary theologians, reflecting on the role of the trained theologian in the construction of contextual theologies, have stated that

To ignore the resources of the professional theologian is to prefer ignorance over knowledge. . . . In the development of local theologies, the professional theologian serves as an important resource, helping the community to clarify its own experience and to relate it to the experience of other communities past and present. Thus the professional theologian has an indispensable but limited role. The theologian cannot create a theology in isolation from the community's experience; but the community was need of the theologian's knowledge to ground its own experience within the Christian traditions of faith. In so doing, the theologian helps to create the bonds of mutual accountability between local and world church (Schreiter 1985:18).

Therefore, Akamba Christian theologians should assist the Akamba Church to relate with the past and the contemporary Body of Christ. Of course, this is not a call on the Akamba Church to repeat the twenty centuries of theological history. It is Robert Schreiter who, in his recent book entitled Constructing Local Theologies, argues that,

. . . it is the older church's idea of what constitutes the New Testament church that almost always provides the criterion for encounter with the [theological] tradition. . . . always using the criterion of the New Testament Church can be a subtle way of telling the new Church that it will have to repeat twenty centuries of history before it can be considered an equal of the older Church (1985:100).

The Akamba Christian theologian should remember that
while God is concerned with the unity of his universal Church, yet he is not in the business of making duplicates. Thus, Christian theological reflections have not been exhausted either by the New Testament Churches nor by the theological history of the Christian Church. The Holy Spirit, who is the primary source in theological reflection, never runs short of theological expression but indeed longs to manifest infinitely the manifold wisdom of God in and through the Church of every generation. It is indeed through trained Akamba Christian theologians that the theological gems which Akamba Christians will mine through their disciplined hermeneutical reflection on the biblical text (and their devout walk with God) will be shared in humility as a sign of Christian hospitality (obligation!) with the worldwide Body of Christ. However, in doing so we should remember the western Church's misuse of Christian theology by superimposing their own culturally conditioned theological reflections on non-westerners. What they have done has bred a spirit of skepticism regarding theological exportation and importation! But this skepticism has run its course! It is now time for a theological initiative and a conversion in attitude in regard to the way Christian theology was used in the past. The misuse of an automobile by someone should not lead another to condemn wholesale the vital role of automobiles in our modern industrial world!

Fourth, Akamba Christian theologizing should allow the
worldview theoretical model to interact with the contemporary cultural context. One major context of our contemporary world which every Christian must respond to is modernity or modernization. Modernization, which has been defined by Marion Levy as "the ratio of inanimate to animate sources of power" (quoted in Berger 1977:70), is no longer a local but a global phenomenon. Its impact, although certainly felt deepest in the West, has spread like fire to all peoples of the world. The myth of progress which has crucially shaped western thought since the Enlightenment leads people to believe that modernity is

... intrinsically superior to whatever preceded it—the opposite of being modern is being backward and it is difficult to entertain the notion that backwardness may have something to say for itself. And ipso facto, it is a distinctive belief because such a perspective makes it very hard to see modernity for what it is—a historical phenomenon, in principle like any other with empirically discernible beginning and set of causes and therefore with a predictable end (Berger 1977:70).

Peter Berger's analysis of the five dilemmas that

3. (1) The dilemma of abstraction. Given the fact that modern man must live in a number of inevitably abstract structures (notably those given with technology and bureaucracy), how can there be room in society for the rich concreteness of human life? (2) The dilemma of futurity. This is a profound change in the temporal structures of human experience in which the future becomes a primary orientation for both imagination and activity; the future is perceived by modern man as precise, measurable (at least in principle) and subject to human control. (3) The dilemma of individuation—modernization has entailed a progressive separation of its individual from collective entities and, as a result, it brought about a historically unprecedented counterposition of individual and society. This
modernity has imposed on the West and which are spreading with increasing rapidity all over the world show how vitally Akamba Christian theological reflection should respond to the phenomenon. According to sociologist Peter Berger,

... the critique of modernity will be one of the great intellectual tasks of the future, be it as a comprehensive exercise or in separate parts. The scope is broadly cross-cultural. It will be a task that, by its very nature, will have to be interdisciplinary; ... The task is also of human and moral urgency. For what it is finally all about is the question of how we, and our children, can live in a humanly tolerable way in the world created by modernization (1977:79–80).

It is primarily because of those observations that Akamba Christian theologians must of necessity allow the models of Akamba worldview to interact dynamically with biblical revelation, Church theological tradition and modernity. This then is a sample of a theological reflection

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individualism weakens the communities which sustained the individual in premodern societies. (4) The fourth dilemma is liberation. An essential element of modernization is that large areas of human life, previously considered to be dominated by fate, now come to be perceived as occasions for choice by the individual. Modernization entails a multiplication of options. One of the most seductive maxims of modernity is that things could be other than what they have been. This is the turbulent dynamism of modernity, its deeply rooted thirst for innovation and revolution. Tradition is no longer binding; the status quo can be changed; the future is an open horizon. (5) The dilemma of secularization is a massive threat and weakens the plausibility of religious perception of reality among large numbers of people, especially at the worldview level where secularity has come to be "established" by the intellectual elites and in the educational institutions of modern societies. Put differently, modernity at least thus far has been antagonistic to the dimensions of transcendence in the human condition (Berger 1977:71–80).
format that can be used in theologizing for both the conceptual (cognitive) and concrete needs of the Akamba community.

We have contended above that central in the whole matter of Christian theological reflection is the shepherding of the Lord's flock. In other words, any Christian theological reflection misses the mark when it fails to inspire God's flock to grow into the Shepherd's likeness. Therefore, for a Christian theology to be a shepherd theology, it must respond to the needs of the flock. But what constitutes the needs of the flock? For example, what constitutes the needs of God's flock in Ukambani? To respond to this question, we must introduce what we are calling the Christian theological reflection continuum. We would like to talk about concrete theologizing as a vital dimension in Akamba Christian theological reflection continuum.

**CONCRETE THEOLOGIZING FOR THE AKAMBA**

This author's pastoral ministry in Ukambani has led him to begin to see Akamba spiritual needs as stretching across a spectrum. At one end of the spectrum are the explicit concrete needs which demand daily pastoral care. On the other end of the spectrum are the implicit conceptual needs of an emerging Akamba generation that are represented, for example, by Kyalo. In 1982 this young man asked me, "Why do
we continue to use bread and grape juice in the Lord's table? Why can't we use meat and beans? Isn't bread and grape juice a western cultural transplant?"

Kyalo is representative of an emerging Akamba generation who are expressing dissatisfaction with blind adherence to meaningless ecclesiastical practices. Among these are even Akamba men of dignity who are asking more profound questions, like Honorable Gerald Muia whom we referred to earlier on (p. 424). The Hon. Muia voiced his complaint in regard to what he perceived to be the Church's failure in replacing Mulungu God the Father with the Son Jesus Christ. The Hon. Muia's concern and the young man's questions about the elements of the Eucharist spring from a realm that contemporary Akamba Christian theology is not serving adequately. Our critique on Akamba Christian Theology (Chapter VI) showed that responding to the cultural and existential needs of the people was not one of the main strengths of mission theology. The reasons for such neglect were discussed above. Should these intellectual needs of the Akamba Church be ignored? Is it not appropriate to say that Akamba Christian theological reflection should aim to serve a spectrum of needs? It should serve the needs that are concrete and should also respond to whatever needs there may be at the theoretical or intellectual end of the theological spectrum. For our final chapter, we have chosen to respond to an Akamba need at the implicit conceptual
level of the theological reflection continuum. But now we would like to make a brief examination concerning the concrete level of Akamba Christian theologizing.

When we talk about Christian theologizing at the concrete level, we mean the construction of pastoral theologies which weave together the conceptual and the concrete together in the miracle of life experiences. Such theologizing is necessary for the daily care of the flock. This type of theologizing cannot be learned from theological seminaries. A pastor learns it as he lives and walks with the flock in the dusty villages, in market places, in visiting the sick, in town and city streets or even in riding matatus. Pastoral theologians, like the Apostle Paul, should love the Lord’s flock to the point of testifying, "We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well, because you had become so dear to us" (1 Thess 2:8). It is through the giving of one’s life to the flock that a pastorally sensitive theologian learns how to model Christ’s likeness concretely and relevantly. His life in the midst of the flock in sharing in their hurts, sorrows and joys, equips the pastorally sensitive theologian to model and give guidance in life’s concrete needs and problems. For indeed,

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4. Matatus are vans used for public transportation. They are usually overloaded since in a matatu there is always room for one more!
how can an Akamba Christian theologian write or speak to heal wounds of others he cannot feel? Or how can he know when the hurt is deep if his eyes are always dry? This praxis theology so learned through the theologian's direct involvement with the community is constructed and expressed through forms of the local media. Among the Akamba, then, such types of concrete theologizing may fall under different categories.

**Proverbial Theologizing**

First is (mythical) proverbial theologizing. Akamba mythical stories and proverbs provide a precious heritage for Christian theologizing. Unfortunately, those tools have been represented through western influence as useless and serving no other purpose than entertainment or amusement. Even to appeal for their use in Christian theological reflection we are expected to survey what different western anthropologists like Malinowski, Levy-Buhl have said about myths, stories and proverbs. But why should that be necessary? Do we need to understand western, anthropological, culturally conditioned reflections in order to decide whether or not we are going to use our myths, stories, proverbs, sayings, tales and fables in Christian theological reflection?

When a person studies Akamba mythical stories, their structure, the way they are presented or recited, their
contents and their function, he is bound to conclude that they are not merely role stories without thought or logic which are devised simply as means of entertainment. African myths, as Alex Chima of Malawi describes them,

... try to answer ultimate questions about the meaning of life and death, and about the human experience of being alienated from God, the source of life. Drawing from facts and ideas already familiar to the people--their environment, pattern of life, and ideas of God and of the mystical forces which influence human life--they are valued as authentic vehicles of religious truth (1984:55).

The Akamba myth of creation (which we wish we had the time to tell in its entirety) talks about how Mulungu (God) first created the spirits and then created man and woman whom, according to one version, tossed them from heaven to land on Mt. Nzaui (Ndeti 1972:29). Another version says Mulungu created the first pair (or two) of husband and wife and brought them out of a hole in the ground (Mbiti 1966:14). The tradition that emphasizes "two pairs" is based on the belief that incest is the worst sexual evil, and since God hates it, he would not have created one couple to procreate. Donald Jacobs observed that, "Where other Bantu peoples have the creation of one man and one woman, the Akamba believe in the simultaneous appearance of two couples" (1961:115). There are other myths that address the questions of death and evil (e.g. the chameleon and the weaver bird story) (Mbiti 1966:14-15), which provide response to vital existential questions.
Akamba myths are not just transcendental in nature but serve the function of explaining to people how to live life in those dry Ukamba hills. They provide starting points as we allow them to interact with scriptural revelation. Despite the impact of modernity on their role in society, they still provide us with a rich traditional heritage which narrates or tells in a simplified manner a very complex phenomenon. A myth goes beyond the limitations of human attempts to rationalize the existence of reality. Although they are primarily concerned with the transcendental dimensions of human experience, they also serve needs at the concrete human level.

Likewise, the Akamba traditional proverbs which exist by the thousands are an inherited asset in our efforts in Christian theological reflection. Chima calls them a . . . precious vessel of the African heritage, not only because people stored up their wisdom and centuries-long experience in them, but also, and especially, because of the witty and wise way that they teach about life. Proverbs, says Bishop Kalilombe, "are a mirror in which a community can look at itself, and a stage on which it exposes itself to others. They describe its values, aspirations, preoccupations, the particular angles from which it sees and appreciates realities and behaviour. What we call 'mentality' or 'way of lie' is best pictured in them" (1984:56-57).

Throughout this study we have found it best to refer to different Akamba proverbs from time to time. Among the
middle-aged, proverbs continue to be used to admonish, warn, guide, praise, encourage and reprove. While their impact in everyday use is weakening, especially among the young, yet their content provides gems that the Akamba hermeneutic community will do well to utilize in their theological reflection efforts. Both myths and proverbs provide tools for Christian theologizing at the concrete levels.

"Walk" Theologizing

The second type of concrete theologizing is what we may call biographical theologizing or "walk theologies." This approach to theologizing is primarily concerned with telling by word of mouth and lifestyle the way a believing hermeneutic community is interrelating with God, with each other and with the world in their daily life experiences. It is members within the Body of Christ in a given community telling stories about their walk with God. Such "walk theologies" should be basically testimonies of how we walk daily with God on our way through life. Christians are but a people on the way. For example, an Akamba pastor's Sunday morning message should not be concerned with "a neatly memorized three-point message" but should be filled with

5. During this author's research, a collection of over four hundred Akamba proverbs were gathered which will be published for public use at a later date.
stories of what God is doing in his life and amidst the community. When a pastor or a pastorally sensitive theologian does this, he is handling the concrete dimensions of the theological task appropriately. This is what Brian Hearne means when he describes this type of theologizing as

... the ways in which we, using all our human creativity, experience, insight and love, try to bring together our personal and community 'stories', relate them to the story of Jesus, and thus discover ever anew the story of God living among his people, a Story, that, like our stories has yet to be lived out in its fullness ... (Hearne 1982:17).

Certainly, biographical theologizing has tremendous pastoral and spiritual implications, although, as we shall see in our final chapter, propositional theologizing is a necessary compliment. However, propositional theologizing must always be

... in continual and intimate contact with the lived experience which the proportional doctrine by turn collects, orders and informs. Without such living contact, the [propositional] theological doctrine becomes (in a performative sense objective) remote from actual Christian life (McClendon 1974:178).

Also, walk-with-God stories have tremendous biblical attestation. The Bible is full of them. In fact, the greater part of it is but a collection of stories about people—the Israelites and the early followers of Jesus—whose outlook on life and the surrounding world was very familiar to the Africans. Indeed, most of their stories about their journeys, sufferings and wars can be paralleled
by similar stories in African tribes (Chima 1984:63). Is the
call to consider "story" as an available tool in communicat-
ing Christian theological reflection an anachronistic per-
suasion? But do we not all know how uncomfortable are our
Akamba leaders, both churchmen and politicians, when they
are expected to read their speeches? The majority have
found, as well as others in Africa, that

The text-to-eye-to-mouth-to-ear' journey is
just too long to keep the message alive. One can
see how relieved they feel when they throw the
script aside and start addressing the people in an
oral-aural fashion. And they are still good
orators when they do this (Chima 1984:63-64).

Therefore, there is no better way to do concrete
theological reflection among Akamba but to tell stories and
sing songs (below) on how we have walked (walk) with God.
Theology on the move cannot be an ivory tower theorizing!
The Bible is full of "theologies on how God walked with man
on earth. Probably this is why Robert Schreiter is thrilled
by some Africans who were fascinated not by the "fall of
man" in the garden of Eden story but rather by the wonder of
man being able to walk with God. Walk theologies are
down-to-earth theologies. They are testimonials of how the
living dynamic God has walked and is walking with his
people. They do not lack in concreteness. Indeed, by
involving the hermeneutic Akamba community in story-telling
theological reflection, theology becomes the property of all
and is not confined to the elite, as has been the case in
the past. Even the few western Christians who are on the cutting edge of contemporary evangelical theological reflection are beginning to see that traditional theology "had put too much stress on the 'essentialist' mode of knowing, and needed to broaden its scope to contain the 'existentialist' and 'psychological' modes also" (Hearne 1984:43). Would not, therefore, a theology of story not enable us to direct our attention more carefully to experiential realities of ordinary life and, as Hearne says, to the "mysterious dimension of our human pilgrimage" (1984:43).

**Song Theologizing**

A third form of concrete theologizing that involves a great part of the believing community is what would be called song theologizing. What this means is utilizing the Akamba musical talents for constructing and expressing their own theological reflection. We do not need to say much about this approach of theological reflection because it is happening all over Ukambani churches. Mission theology is either not aware of it, or it chooses to ignore such music as a viable tool in the construction of a culturally relevant Akamba Christian theology. Indeed, it

6. This may be something similar to the lyrics sung by Indian Christians whom P. Y. Luke and John B. Carman discuss in *Village Christians and Hindu Culture* (1968:73, 184).
was the African Brotherhood Church, the largest African independent church in Ukambani, that pioneered the use of Christian ethnomusicology as a tool in the construction of a more relevant Akamba Christian theology. In 1970 and 1971, attempts to utilize Akamba and other Kenyan traditional musical instruments were undertaken in Scott Theological College under the gifted efforts of Reverend and Mrs. Cecil Christian (Christian 1973:70-73). Although the Scott Theological College student efforts in Christian ethnomusicology were not continued after the "quick" departure of Reverend and Mrs. Cecil Christian, yet local Christian churches throughout Ukambani have mushroomed with their own fashion of composing Christian songs sung in Akamba traditional tunes.

For most Africans to express oneself in song is natural. Idowu has expressed as a typical disposition in the traditional African.

Africans are always singing; and in their singing and poetry, they express themselves: all the joys and sorrows of their hearts, and their hopes and fears about the future, find outlet. . . . When they [songs] are connected with rituals, they convey the faith of worshippers from the heart—faith in Deity, belief in and about the divinities, assurance and hopes about the present and with regard to the hereafter (1973:85).

Therefore, encouraging the use of African musical talents in Christian theological reflection is not only involving the hermeneutic community in theologizing, but it is respecting a treasure which is already present in their
own traditions. For example, in October, 1982, at the Bomani Africa Inland Church campus, I witnessed about a dozen choirs from all over Machakos district, who had gathered to present a musical on the story of King David’s anointing in 1 Samuel 7. Each choir composed using their best-known creativity a four-to-five stanza song which they sung in beautiful African tunes. Among the things adjudicators looked for were: (1) accuracy and interpretation of the historical narrative, (2) creativity, especially in the choice of traditional musical instruments, and (3) contemporary spiritual application. As I sat there and worshipped with each choir as they performed on the platform, it dawned on me that before my eyes was a vivid demonstration of Christian theological contextualization in which the whole hermeneutic community was involved. This approach to theological contextualization has produced great results and should be continued.

**Power Encounter Theologizing**

The fourth type of concrete theologizing is what we would call power-encounter theologizing. The Akamba, as was

7. It was a big thrill for the audience to see a portable village-made amplifier which reinforced further the inherent genius that awaits to be tapped (Choir of Grace Kyengo, Machinery, *Pongenzi!*).
examined in our worldview analysis, live in a world where spiritual powers dominate. For a Mukamba to live victoriously, he/she must know how to handle the spirit world. This is why many Akamba (even today) take the role of the traditional medicine doctor very seriously. And so to illustrate one of the ways through which power-encounter theologizing can be done, I have in Appendix A a story about my encounter with Dr. Wavinya, a Mukamba traditional medicine doctor.

CONCLUSION

Besides centering our discussion in this chapter on the essential tools and on the format for doing theological reflection, we have also given some specific examples of actual concrete theologizing within the Akamba Church. However, in order for Akamba Christian theology to adequately shepherd the Lord's flock, it must address not only the concrete but the intellectual needs as well. This is the subject of our final chapter which provides a case study in Akamba worldview theologizing.
CHAPTER VIII

A CASE STUDY IN AKAMBA WORLDVIEW THEOLOGIZING

INTRODUCTION

Earlier in our critique on Akamba Christianity (Chapter VI), we expressed our disappointment about the overemphasis of mission-type doctrinal orthodoxy in the Akamba Church. However, we pointed out that it was not primarily doctrinal orthodoxy with which we expressed dissatisfaction but rather doctrinal orthodoxy formulated along western worldview concerns.

Christian theologizing at a theoretical level has a part to serve in responding to the intellectual needs of society. While the balance between the concrete and the conceptual is a difficult one to maintain, yet neither one should be ignored.

Theoretical theological reflections must respond to needs at the people's worldview. In other words, such theological reflection should respond to concerns and questions that spring from a society's worldview. As we saw
earlier, western theologians did nothing wrong in responding to the intellectual needs of their society, such as wrestling with and responding to questions raised by a Newtonian mechanistic worldview. The problem came only when such theological reflections (responses) were absolutized and universalized. Western theologians were rightfully engaged in legitimate theological reflections based on the needs of their society. But as children of their day they failed to recognize the cultural conditioning of their theological reflections. Our study has shown us that all theological reflections are culturally conditioned, regardless of where they fall in the theological reflection continuum.

What we are saying here is that Christian theology and philosophy cannot be separated; hence, the Christian faith as such is not against reason. This is why some contemporary African theologians concerned with the potential danger inherent in overemphasizing the concrete dimensions of African Christianity find they must reaffirm the importance of African philosophy in theological reflection. Nyamiti says,

This is mainly due to the important role which philosophy has in systematic theology, and also because philosophy involves a deep, critical and systematic reflection on the entire African mentality and Weltanschauung. For without such reflection it is impossible to employ the African system of thinking to build up genuine systematic theology (1971:28-29).
Nyamiti proposes four questions to which the African should respond. One of these is, "What are the ideas of the African about God?" (1971:11). As already pointed out above, the question of God falls on the Akamba supernaturalistic model of reality (Chapter IV). Our case study in Akamba worldview theologizing will address the question of God. Again we must remember that the question from the Hon. Muia (page 424) and others like him, makes our disciplined hermeneutic reflection on God a contemporary need for an emerging Akamba generation. The pastorally minded theologian must respond to this contextually felt need.

And so, we address the domain of Akamba Christian conceptual theologizing because we sense a need implicit in Akamba worldview which contemporary Christian theology is not meeting. In other words, it is theologizing at the worldview level that aims to meet the intellectual needs of the Akamba Church. This is theologizing at the foundational level and as such can be referred to as Akamba philosophical theologizing. As in the case of concrete level of theologizing (above), this too is a vital need that an Akamba pastorally minded theologian should take seriously.

Ambrose Mavingire Moyo makes reference to this dimension of African theologizing when he says,

... African Theology is an attempt by Christians in Africa to reflect systematically on God's revelation in Jesus Christ and to articulate the results of that reflection through categories of thought which arise out of the philosophy of
the African people". . . . it is the task of specially trained persons to reflect critically and systematically on the proclamation of God's revelation in Christ in an African Church, examining that proclamation in the light of the witness of the prophets and apostles in Holy Scripture. It is an attempt to reflect critically on Christian perceptions of God within an African cultural setting (1983:96-97).

Therefore, an adequate Akamba Church theology cannot afford to ignore the intellectual needs of the society. And our emphasis on the pastoral dimensions of theological reflection is inclusive of the intellectual needs as well.

**CHOICE OF A THEOLOGICAL MODEL:**
**SUPERNATURALISTIC**

What criteria is being used to choose the model for which we have purposed to exercise a disciplined Christian theological reflection? We would like to call it a Pauline model of Christian theological reflection. Paul's theological responses in the New Testament reflect the principle of selectivity. In his theological responses there were many aspects of the Gentile world that he would have addressed. However, the Holy Spirit, whom we have pointed out as the chief source in all theological reflection, guided the Apostle Paul to offer theological responses to issues which had contemporary application. Paul knew the Gentile world well, and in seeking God's guidance in regard to how he would make clear the meaning of Christ's gospel, he was led to respond to different
contextual needs.

Of course, it should be pointed out that there is no theological reflection that will equal God's biblical revelation. However, the Pauline theological model of responding to contemporary needs should be taken seriously by Christian theologians. Earlier we made reference to Gilliland's description of Pauline theology as a theology on the move. Therefore, adequate Akamba theological reflection cannot do less even in philosophical theologizing! As a Mukamba theological student, I not only understand the Akamba people, but also my pastoral ministry within the Akamba Church has sensitized me to certain theological needs. Also, our study of the Akamba worldview and the Holy Spirit's guidance have shown us that theological responses to existential concerns are long overdue.

Therefore, we engage ourselves now in a theological reflection on Akamba idea of God (deity) within the framework of the Akamba supernaturalistic model of reality. As pointed out in our analysis of the model, a "Mukamba lives in a universe where everything is under the control of supernatural powers" (page 233). We examined the different beliefs we had in regard to the nature of the spirit world.

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1. In the succeeding discussion the writer assumes an insider role, carrying on a dialogue as a participant in the hermeneutic community.
We have Mulungu, the God we believe created us and gave us the land where we live. Mulungu is the God our ancestors worshipped. But when we read in the Kikamba Bible Genesis 1:1, it says, "Mwambililyoni 'Ngai' niwatwikithisye matu na nthi."\(^2\) It does not say "Mwambililyoni 'Mulungu' niwatwikithisye matu na nthi." What happened in the translation? Is it Mulungu or Ngai of the Akamba who is the God of the Judeo-Christian heritage? What about Jesus Christ? Most of us Akamba believe him to be God's Son. But what does this mean to us? Can God have a Son? Which God has a Son? Mulungu or Ngai? As Christians we worship Jesus Christ and pray to him. Our ancestors worshipped Mulungu.

When the Hon. Gerald Muia expresses his dissatisfaction with what he called the Church's replacement of "Ngai Asa Mulungu ula aaithe maitu mathaithaa na kwikia vandu vake Yesu Kristo (the Church's replacement of God (Mulungu) the Father with the Son Jesus Christ)," is he expressing a need that we all share? Is he asking Akamba Christian theologians to explain how the shift came about? What about our ancestral spirits? Can Jesus Christ be equated with one of our great ancestors?

In our case study, we want to carry out a disciplined theological reflection and respond to the questions we have

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2. Gen 1:1: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."
raised here. The Bible, which we claimed in Chapter I as our guide, must be allowed to challenge our beliefs in regard to God. First, we shall attempt a historical linguistic-translational identification of the Judeo-Christian God and how the concepts of Mulungu and Ngai relate with the essence of Yahweh. Next we shall look at Jesus Christ and examine whether the ancestral concept can be used to replace him.

**HISTORICAL IDEAS ON GOD**

**Concept of God: Definition**

It was not a concern among the Akamba to provide a conceptual definition or description of God. However, that day is gone! The impact of modernization, especially through education, is breeding a whole new generation among the Akamba who are even beginning to question, of all all things, God's existence. And so, for Akamba Christianity to be credible to the emerging religious skeptics, its theological reflection must address questions and issues which traditionally were regarded unnecessary. Such questions even include a definition or a description of the concept of God. The concept of God or "theism" seems to imply "a non-existent Greek θεός and an equally non-existent verb θέω" (Hastings 1934:261). The term can appropriately stand in the place of the English term "God."
However, in human attempts to define the term "theism" or "God," it needs to be borne in mind that the best man can do is to attempt to give a description of the term rather than a definition. Hence, how can anyone give what would be referred to as a technico-logical definition of God? It was Mascall, writing during the first decade of our century, who said,

"... it is impossible to give a definition of God. For logical definition proceeds by the method of genus and differentia; it singles out the being (or beings) with which it is concerned from some larger class by attributing to it some specific character which is felt to belong peculiarly to it (1934:8)."

So in our attempts to define God, we are technically at a disadvantage. Hence, we cannot put God in a class of other gods and then differentiate the qualities of one God out of a class of many gods. For the God of the Bible who is the Creator of the universe is "Wholly Other" and bears an essence of a different sort, unlike anything else about which humans know or can know. And so, the best man can do is to describe something about God. Down through the centuries men have observed nature and using their reasoning ability have attempted to describe the source of observable reality. Different philosophical theologians down through history have described (defined) where or what they thought to be the source of all reality. For example, Anselm described God as "id quo maius cogitari non potest--the being than which no greater can be thought" (Hastings
1934:268). Such a definition or description of theism is incompatible with polytheism. Hence, to suggest or believe in the existence of plurality in theism is to assert the notion of the possible existence of other independent and equally ultimate realities, although such may exist within certain dualistic positions which we cannot examine here without sidetracking our present purpose.

Also, the idea of God as

... 'that than which no greater can be conceived' may lead, as some have argued, to a belief in philosophic monism, which is the "theory that there is only one existent, the Absolute, and that this single existent is the true subject of all significant propositions (Hastings 1934:268).

Such a description of theism would make God the source of evil which would be inconsistent with a Being of absolute perfection and one from whom all else that exists derives its being. And so from Anselm's observation we can talk of God as the absolute Supreme Reality, which is the source of everything other than itself and one with the characters of being intrinsically complete.

Thomas Aquinas, who was greatly influenced by Neo-Platonism and partly by Aristotelianism, found it satisfying to speak of God as "some first cause, prime mover or great designer of all things. Otherwise they would not have come to existence at all. And this is what we mean when we speak about God" (Brown 1968:27). While such reasoning sounds attractive, over the years other
philosophical theologians, like Hume, have realized their own objections, asserting that "in the case of the Unmoved Mover, the argument leans heavily upon an outdated, Aristotelian pre-scientific view of the world," while Colin Brown, although with great respect for Aquinas, talks of the "problem of demonstrating that the first cause is the same as the prime mover and the great designer, and that both are the same as the Christian God" (Brown 1968:27).

As can be seen above, men have struggled to describe and define God, but not without difficulties. The examples referred to above have shown us that, above anything else, the best man can do is to attempt to describe some aspects of the Being of God. For any philosophical theologian to claim to have defined the Being of God is to assert a proposition beyond human capability.

An example is the "personal descriptions" of God. In both the Old and New Testaments references to God are given personal terms. In Exodus 3:6 God says, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob." The Psalms also address God in personal terms. "Hear my cry, O God; listen to my prayer" (Ps 61:1). And the prophets speak of God in personal terms. For example, Isaiah 59:1 says, "Surely the arm of the Lord is not too short to save, nor his ear too dull to hear."

Also, in the New Testament the metaphors used to refer to God by Jesus Christ in the gospels are personal terms.
For example, Jesus spoke of God as his Father, King, Lord, Master and Husband. Of course, all these references to God in both the Old and New Testaments should be understood as anthropomorphisms, and none of them should be taken to portray the whole essence of God. When we say God is personal, we are using a statement which is "intended to imply that God is 'at best personal', that whatever God may be beyond our conceiving, God is not less personal, not a mere It, but always higher and transcendent divine Thou" (Hick 1964:11).

Different western philosophical theologians, in attempting to look for different terms besides the analogy of a person in reference to God, have used terms with questionable notions. For example, there are those, like Francis Abbot, who have argued that "... God and the universe are one..." (Abbot 1886:169). Tennant, in his *Philosophical Theology*, also said, "... God without a world, or a Real other, is not God but an abstraction..." (1930:168). Later comes Paul Tillich who does not regard God to be "a being" but rather "Being Itself" and refers to God as the Ground of Being. To Tillich God is not a person, because the term "Personal God" does not mean that God is a person. It means that God is the ground of everything personal and that he carries within himself the ontological power of personality. ... Ordinary theism has made God a heavenly, completely perfect person who resides above the world and mankind. The protest of atheism against
such a highest person is correct. . . . God is not a God without universal participation" (1951:245).

These three examples show us how some, like Tillich and Tennant, do not want to affirm a God who is distinct from the universe. However, the world exists as a created phenomenon, and to say that God and the universe are one is not only to attribute eternal qualities to the creature, but worse still, it makes God a contingent Being. For Tillich to say that God is not God without universal participation seems to suggest that he sees God as part and parcel of the created order or as one of the operating principle in the universe. But to me God is more than the power that operates in the universe. He is, as it were, before and beyond the universe. His operation in the universe is but an expression on his pure potentiality. To run the universe is but one of the multi-activities of a heavenly, perfect, personal God who, as it were, resides outside the universe.

God is, as Thomist doctrine would affirm, the only self-existent Being. Hence, he cannot come into existence, for he is but Necessary Existence. And so, we can assert with Mascall that "whether God creates this world, a different world, or no world at all, his own infinite perfection is unaffected, or that God and the world do not 'add up.' . . . [and] God without the world is still God . . . ." (1943:175,186).

Therefore, we can claim that God is the creator of the universe, yet lives before and beyond the universe. Also,
we assert that for God to be self-revealing and
self-expressing he must be a personal being, although his
pure potentiality undoubtedly goes beyond personality.

God as Yahweh: A Historical
Linguistic Theology

God in the Judeo-Christian heritage revealed himself as
Yahweh (YHWH) to the Hebrew people (Ex 3). This name was
(is) his personal and covenant name. It was translated
Jehovah in English and appears in our Kamba Bibles as Yeva.
Did the term need to have been transliterated that way (i.e.
from YHWH to Yahweh to Jehovah to Yeva)? Are there no
suitable equivalents of Yahweh in the languages of mankind?
Do we have a suitable equivalent of Yahweh in the Kamba
language? As part of our linguistic response to this
question we need to examine briefly how this personal name
of the Creator God translated across ancient cultures.

Let's begin with Abraham, the father of the Hebrew
people. He evidently knew God as Yahweh, the one who called
him from the land of the Chaldeans (Genesis 12). Abram (as
his name was at first) traveled into Canaan and found a city
which took its name from the Canaanite word for
"Peace"—Salem. The city of Salem stood on the original site
of Jerusalem. The king who reigned over the city was
Melchizedek, whose name combines two Canaanite words
"melchi" (king) and "zadok" (righteousness). Without
entering into the mystery around the personality of Melchizedek—a king of righteousness in the midst of idolatrous Canaanites—we do best to affirm the witness of the Creator God in the midst of a pagan people. In Genesis 14, Melchizedek is reported as meeting Abram and blessing him saying, "Blessed be Abram by God Most High [El Elyon], Creator of heaven and earth. And blessed be God Most High [El Elyon], who delivered your [Abram's] enemies into your [his] hand" (Gen 14:19-20). Melchizedek referred to God as "El Elyon." Where do these words come from and what do they mean? Were they capable of sustaining the meaning of Creator God? Would Abram be comfortable with such terms to refer to his Yahweh God? Don Richardson, an anthropological linguist, says

Both El and Elyon were Canaanite names for Yahweh Himself. El occurs frequently in ancient Ugaritic texts. This Canaanite name El even worked its way into the Hebrew language of Abram's descendants in such words as Bethel—"the house of God," El Shaddai—"God Almighty," and Elohim—"God" (a pluralized form of El which nevertheless retains a mysteriously singular meaning).

Elyon likewise shows up as name for God in ancient texts written in Phoenician—a later branch of Melchizedek's old Canaanite language. And even the compound form El Elyon appears in an ancient Aramaic inscription found recently in Syria. Compounded together, the two terms El and Elyon mean something like "the most God God," or "the God who is really God." Translators usually render it, "God most High" (Richardson 1981:8).

The amazing thing we see in this incident is that Abram did not resist Melchizedek from using his Canaanite El Elyon as
a valid name for Yahweh. Was Melchizedek's concept of the Almighty tainted with pagan notions? We really cannot tell; all we can do is to affirm with the evidence of Scripture that somehow Yahweh in His own way made Abram know that Melchizedek was a worshipper of the true God, just like he was. Both were workers in Yahweh's vineyard (cf. Heb 7:4-10; Ps 110:4). The point we are trying to make here is that Jehovah God of the Bible has not left himself without witness among the children of men, and the languages of the peoples of the world have terms which are suitable equivalents for Yahweh.

Probably we can mention in passing the Septuagint use of the Greek term "Theos" for the Almighty God instead of the name Zeus "... though Zeus was called king of the gods, ... the offspring of two other gods, Cronus and Rhea. An offspring of other beings cannot equal Yahweh, who is uncreated" (Richardson 1981:23). The term "Theos" as we know it was commonly used by the Greeks not as a personal name but as a general term for any deity, although the Greek philosophers (Xenophanes, Plato, Aristotle) used Theos as a personal name for the one Supreme God.

When the early Church apostles took the gospel of Christ to the Greek culture, they affirmed the scholarship of the Septuagint in their theistic choice of "Theos" instead of "Zeus." They did not feel a transliteration of Yahweh was necessary to communicate the meaning of the
Creator God. The Greek theistic terms of "Theos" and "Adonai" (for "Lord," coming from the Helenized Jews) were accepted as suitable equivalents of Yahweh. The goal was to use a theistic term that expressed the God who is the uncreated creator. They had to choose between Theos and Zeus; likewise cross-cultural communicators of the gospel must do the same as they take Christ's gospel to the myriad cultures of mankind. Did the first missionaries among the Akamba succeed in looking for a Kikamba theistic term which was (is) capable of sustaining the meaning of Yahweh—the God who is the uncreated creator?

**Kamba Theistic Equivalents of Yahweh**

The concept of God among the Akamba is shared by three theistic terms. The first one is the term "Ngai." This is the term most present-day Kamba use in reference to God. Most contemporary Kamba regard it to be the only theistic term in describing their concept of God.

However, for traditional Kamba the term "Ngai" was not a proper name to express the concept of Supreme God. They used two other theistic names which we will examine shortly. Ngai, like the Greek Theos, was traditionally used as a general theistic term for any deity. Usually it was used in its plural form. For example, traditional Kamba would talk about *ngai sya musyi* (homestead gods), *ngai sya muviti* (traveler's gods), *ngai sya kiima* (mountain gods),
ngai sya awe (gods for Kamba priest doctors) (Kimilu 1962:ix,56,58). As can be seen through these references, the term was used in its plural form to denote some local gods. These gods were different from the Creator God. In fact, some Kamba ethnologists have equated these gods with aimu (first creatures of the Creator God or the living dead relatives) (Kimilu 1962:ix,56,58). For example, when John Somba asked his aged father to tell him the difference between aimu and ngai, the response was, "Normally it means the same thing. aimu are the spirits of departed ancestors" (Somba 1979:25).

As concerns the origin of the concept, our oral tradition teaches that the concept can be traced back to the first Kamba settlement at the mountain of Mba in Kisauni, Machakos district, although lately some have suggested that the term was borrowed from the Masai (Munro 1975:19). Akamba traditions tell us that when they were dissatisfied with the drought at Mt. Mba, they decided to leave for a better place. Between Mt. Mba and the other mountain where they wanted to immigrate was a thick forest where leopards were known to tear in pieces the bodies of those who attempted to cross. However, the drought of Mt. Mba became intolerable and Akamba had to leave by the way of the valley in spite of the ferocious animals. When they succeeded in immigrating safely to this other mountain, they knew beyond doubt that the gods (ngai) of the fertile mountain had protected them,
and so they called the mountain Ngai; "hence the mountain gods had helped them (nundu wa utangiio wa ngai sya kiima kiu)" (Kimilu 1962:60). Probably this might have been the first time the term was used in its singular form. As we leave our discussion of this term we need to mention that it also carried other meanings in its different tonal usage. For example, it can be used to refer to a rodent or a jaw, depending on the context (Ndeti 1972:50). There was no doubt in the minds of traditional Akamba that the theistic term "Ngai" used alone did not provide a good candidate for contesting the seat of ultimate reality.

The second Kikamba theistic term we want to look at is the term "Mulungu." It comes from the same word root as "Mungu" (God) which is common to Bantu languages. This was the official term traditional Akamba used to refer to "the One Supreme God" (Kimilu 1962:126; Muthiani 1973:98). As already pointed out, the existence of this supreme God is taken for granted and no person needs to defend his belief in God. Every Mukamba person simply knows and acknowledges the existence of God who is known as Mulungu (Mbiti 1966:14). Thus, the aged Mzee Somba affirms, "Our God is Mulungu. He is a supreme being. We prayed and made offerings to Him in times of drought" (Somba 1979:24). To the traditional Akamba, Mulungu was (is) the supreme being; thence, they did not conceive of any other God greater than Mulungu. It would be immaterial to ask when the Kamba
started using the term or believing in the existence of Mulungu, for they would say, "We have always believed in Mulungu." Unlike "Ngai," its beginning cannot be traced.

The third Kikamba theistic term is "Mumbi." "Mumbi" means "Creator," and it is precisely a synonym of "Mulungu," like the Akan name of "Supreme Being Oboadee, i.e., Creator" (Pobee 1979:75). It is this Mumbi (Creator God) whom Lindblom, the Swedish anthropologist to whom we referred earlier, affirmed. He observed that the Kamba love the one they looked upon as "the creator of all things and therefore call him mumbi 'the one who fashions, the creator' . . . More seldom is found mwatwangi, 'the cleaver' . . . since he originally formed all living beings . . ." (Lindblom 1920:244). If traditional Kamba would be asked to fill the blank space of the following sentence. "In the beginning _______ created the heavens and the earth." They would without exception put Mumbi or Mulungu, but never would they have used the general term "Ngai," at least not without the suffix "Mumbi."

For us as Akamba, Mulungu or Mumbi is the Creator God, the sustainer of the universe. Our myths, stories and tales attribute to Mulungu the role of creator of all. He is the one with final ultimate authority with power over life and death. Within this context, then, it can be affirmed that atheism and polytheism are foreign to the Akamba, for our own worldview affirms the existence of a Supreme God
(Mulungu) who rules and sustains all life. It is true that Akamba believe in the existence of many spirit beings or divinities; however, none of these creatures are perceived to be co-equal with Ngai Mumbi or Mulungu. Like the Edo of Nigeria, Akamba believe that the divinities have been created by God for the purpose of assisting him in the theocratic governance of the world, [and] each of the divinities is believed to have been assigned a specific department of nature over which he had authority, subject only to the veto power of God (Imasogie 1983b:76).

To the Akamba Church, Mulungu is Yahweh of the Judeo-Christian heritage.

Present-day Kamba ethnologists like Mbiti, Kimilu, Ndeti, Muthiani and others would agree with Lindblom's observation in regard to the function of Mumbi (Creator God). However, in regard to the ontology of Mumbi, these Kamba emic ethnologists would differ slightly with Lindblom's personal orientation. Mumbi (Creator God) is understood to be the source and center of reality. The notion of referring to Mumbi as a personal God is naive to the Kamba. Their concept of Mulungu or Mumbi transcends the use of a personal category.

From an African Akamba philosophical and religious perspective the idea of personality or the category of personality is too narrow or too shallow to contain God. If we were to refer to God beyond the language of our familiar analogies we would speak of God as the "suprapersonality."
To the Kamba, to say that Mulungu—the Supreme God—is a personal God is to decrease the ontological qualities of Mulungu. For them, God as the source and creator of all reality (phenomenon of personality included) must be higher than a personal conceptual category would be sufficient to represent. While the Being of Mulungu was something that the Akamba did not see the need to discuss, yet what they believed about the ontology of Mulungu should not continue to remain unexposed.

A Word on the ontology of Mulungu

It is outside our purpose at the moment to indulge in any lengthy discussion on the personality of the Creator God (Yahweh). Suffice it to mention that Akamba Christian theologians need to explore the ontological constitution of the Creator God in case a time will come when they will need to explain the "nature" of Mulungu. My personal word of advise about this is to begin by accepting that when we deal with the nature of God we are dealing with ultimate reality. And at the strictest level, ultimate reality is beyond any personal intellectual formulation.

Whatever linguistic socio-cultural philosophical and theological terms man can come up with in his attempts to describe the nature of God, he should bear in mind the unexplainable nature of the phenomenon and mystery of God. God as a supranatural divine mystery is beyond the
speculative and rational explanation and comprehension of any religious or philosophical system. God as Ultimate Reality is a mystery beyond the ability of any human cultural logic.

God is infinite and humans are finite. In Isaiah 55:8-9 God says, "'For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,' declares the Lord. 'As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.'"

Down through the ages the best minds of the prophets, apostles, saints, hymn writers, poets, theologians and homileticians have despairingly groped for words to describe the phenomena of God. I think this is why an Akamba Christian theologian, John Mbiti (in his book Concepts of God in Africa), as an expression of that awesome task of describing God, makes the following statement:

May God forgive me for attempting to describe him, and for doing it so poorly. . . . it is at best only an expression of a creature about the Creator. As such, it is limited, inadequate, and ridiculously anthropocentric. God is still beyond our human imagination, understanding, and expression. Here then is only one scene of man's groping after his Creator, the voice of a stammering child calling unto the Parent (1970:xiv-xv).

Mbiti's words reflect a theologian from a non-essentialist worldview. Western essentialist theologians are by nature prone to define God who is by definition undefinable. Probably this is why western Christian theologians
(particularly those who have begun to see and deny the static philosophical assumptions of western epistemologies--such as rationalism and empiricism--have begun to challenge their traditional view of the nature of God and biblical revelation. For example, concerning the biblical revelation, Eugene Nida says, it "is absolutely true; but it is not absolute, in the sense that there is nothing more or that we know everything about God" (1960:225). It is true that God has revealed himself in nature and in Scripture; but it is equally true to say that all of God or all about God is not in Scripture. God is greater than all the descriptions he gave about himself in the Bible. A static view of language, of culture, of revelation and of epistemology forces some to be skeptical or even deny those words. As humans we should submit our static epistemologies to the omniscient, continually dynamic revealing God, and then we shall stop assuming that truth is knowable or revealable in its entirety.

I know there may be some western theologians, particularly those of the inerrantist school, who would like to insist that a person like Charles Kraft freeze the meaning of the term "revelation" and allow it to rest frozen with the Bible as the finished product of that activity. But would the essence of such a call not be a denial of what it means to be living persons, whether we talk about God or humans? As finite creatures our knowledge of God is
limited. Indeed, this is why Creator God (Mumbi Mulungu) made a revelation of himself in the Bible using earthly and human analogies. And as a result, any society's description of God must be done through models and analogies. Hopefully, this is what Bernard Ramm means when he says that God's revelatory acts "must truly enter our world and take the form of our world in order to be comprehend by us" (1961:17). Even having made the preceding observations about the mystery of God's revelational ontology, we look at the Bible and find that the creator God did not leave us without a witness. Through the Person of Jesus Christ, the Supreme God, creator of heaven and earth clothed/revealed himself as a personal being for humanity to see him. Mulungu's ontology is no longer hidden, for we know him through the Son whom he sent to the world. (We shall be talking about Jesus Christ later).

The Kamba idea of creator God is too awesome to be directly approached by a person. In traditional ritual or religious experience where Mulungu had to be approached, a mundu mue (traditional priest-doctor) had to be present. The priest-doctor had to divine for the people in consultation with ancestors (the living dead), who would mediate the affairs of the living to Mulungu through live aimu (first creatures of Mumbi) (Ndeti 1972:175). Except for the mundu mue, other individuals did not have direct access to Mulungu. At the mathembo (sacred altars for worship),
they met to worship Mulungu, not Ngai. So from what we have discussed above, it can be seen that the terms "Mulungu" and "Mumbi" are the suitable Kamba theistic equivalents for Yahweh. They represent the God who is the uncreated creator. Did the first cross-cultural missionaries among the Kamba choose to use any of them?

**Ngai as Theistic Equivalent of Yahweh**

As pointed out earlier, when the gospel of Christ was brought to the Akamba people, Bible translators and gospel communicators chose the term "Ngai" over against the terms "Mulungu" or "Mumbi." From what we have discussed above, it is obvious that the term "Ngai" does not offer the Kamba the suitable theistic equivalent for Yahweh. So what do we do? My suggestion is this: we should be grateful that the Kamba Christians have contextualized the term "Ngai" to incorporate the term "Mulungu."

At the same time, we must admit that the ontological richness and linguistic precision of the term "Mulungu" would have been a more suitable Kamba theistic equivalent of Yahweh than Ngai. Today Kamba people, both Christians and non-Christians, talk of Ngai as the Supreme Being. At times the term "Ngai" is used as a prefix for the other two theistic terms, for example, Ngai Mumbi (Creator God) or Ngai Mulungu. To me this is the most accurate usage of Ngai
if it has to be used to denote the Supreme Being. But used alone, the term "Ngai" does not have the ontological quality for candidating the seat of Ultimate Reality.

However, from a gospel communicational perspective, I recommend the maintenance of the term "Ngai," not because it is indigenously the most appropriate equivalent of Yahweh, but because it has earned through prolonged usage in gospel communication and in Christian Kamba literature both the monotheistic status and the contextual credibility of the other two terms. So for all contextual practical purposes, the terms "Ngai" and "Yeova" (Kamba transliteration of YHWH--Yahweh--Jehovah) should continue to be used to refer to the only God of our worship and our supreme allegiance. To advocate a return to the use of the terms "Mulungu" and "Mumbi" as the official theistic equivalents of Yahweh would impair our efforts in gospel communication and hence do more harm than good.

Ngai Mumbi (Creator God) is Yahweh of the Bible, and he is our creator. Like the Hebrews of old, we must take heed to his words when he says, "Turn to me and be saved, all you ends of the earth; for I am God, and their is no other" (Isaiah 45:22). "You shall have no other gods before me" (Exodus 20:3). The Kamba Church must make her own theological statement on who is her God. As we do so, we may be helped by the insights of other great saints, especially in reference to what we have just cited. Note especially
the comment of Donald McGavran about Exodus 20:3 in which he adds,

This position [i.e. I am God and there is no other. You shall have no other gods before me], so impressively stated in the Old Testament, is diametrically opposite to pantheism, universalism and the easy opinion that all concepts about God are about equally right. This position grates on the ear of secular relativistic men. They do not like it. It sounds narrow and exclusivistic. But there it stands, like a rock. God is a jealous God. He tolerates no other conception of God than the one he has revealed (McGavran 1975:238).

How do we know Him, the God who tolerates no rival? We must now turn and engage ourselves with a theological reflection on what we understand and mean by the term/name Jesus Christ.

JESUS CHRIST

"Who Do You Say I Am"
(Matthew 16:16)

This is the big question that demands an answer from the Kamba Church. And as such, it provides us with an appropriate starting point in seeking to understand and make a statement on Akamba Church Christology. But who is Jesus Christ? What manner of man is he? After all, as we asked earlier, why should a Mukamba person bother to relate with Jesus of Nazareth, a man who does not even belong to his clan, family, tribe and nation? Our serious appropriate responses to these questions will determine and define the
authenticity of our Christian faith.

Towards the end of his public ministry, Jesus Christ posed the question to those who were going to be the apostles and pillars of the Church:

"Who do people say the Son of Man is?" They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets." "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?" Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God" (Mt 16:13-16).

Time had come for the disciples to state in their own words and language whom they thought Jesus Christ was (is). This question was not posed to them when they were young converts. At least some degree of spiritual growth and maturity was necessary in order to respond to the question. Likewise, all those who come to pledge their supreme allegiance to Yahweh as their heavenly Father and the God of their worship (which is what so many of the Akamba people have done) must make their own confession of who Yahweh's Son is. Jesus Christ asks, "Who do you say I am?" This is a question for all humanity. Every people, and every person in every ethnic group, must be given the opportunity to respond to Jesus Christ's question. This is the global question. The Church of Christ in every generation and every culture must respond to the question. The Nicene Creed, as pointed out earlier, was the attempt of a predominantly Hellenistic Church to articulate its belief in Jesus in terms of their linguistic forms, symbols and
thought patterns of the day.

I believe the time has come for the African Church to do so. This is the day to make our confession before him and before the world. Are we going to deny him. I almost hear him say, "As for the western Church, I know what she has said about me; but as for you, whom do you say that I am?" This is the central question. Pobee affirms the need for such a response when he asks, "... what statement about Christ can be made when his person and work are seen and reflected upon from within an African culture?" (1979:40). In a day characterized by so many conflicting theological ideologies, we must make our christological statement loud and clear.

Have we grown and attained the spiritual maturity necessary to respond to the question or are we still spiritual infants? Of course, we should never think of the confession as something that should wait and be done just once and for all; but rather the response to this question should be a periodical or generational reaffirmation by the Church. However, the timing element should not be overlooked. Even the Nicene and Chalcedonian confessions did not come out of young indigenous Churches! At least several generations—with their accompanying heresies—had to pass before the early Church was necessitated to put down some apologetic statements/confessions about her faith. It is now time for the Akamba Church to do so.
Is "Great Ancestor" a Suitable Term?

All over the world the Church of Christ in different societies has always struggled to come up with a term suitable for Jesus Christ. Christians have come up with terms which relate to their own concrete struggles for life, health, wholeness and salvation. For example,

In India Jesus is pictured by some as the Avatar. To us this means practically nothing, but in India possibly a great deal. In many parts of the Third World, Jesus is the liberator. Liberation has become the focal image of a whole new christology. To us it may also mean something but not exactly the same as to people suffering the conditions of poverty, exploitation and oppression (Braaten 1980:28).

It seems that as the contexts of our world become more and more diverse, different terms picturing certain aspects of Christ will be coined all around the world, thus making Christ a multipersonality to the multiplex nature of our world. For example, in the western Church some have looked at Christ as the "advocate," or as a "delegate," or even "deputy," and sooner or later someone may suggest "chairperson" (Braaten 1980:28) as an appropriate title! But are these adequate responses to the question? No doubt that any of these names may tell us something of how modern people think of Christ. They are terms which refer to some of the functions Jesus Christ may fulfill, but isn't the question referring more to Christ's ontology than to his
functional roles?

An African graduate student at the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago was once asked by Carl Braaten (a professor of systematic theology at the school), "'If you were to appropriate a religious symbol of the highest significance from the framework of traditional African religious experience, what would you call Jesus?' His answer was, 'The ancestor'" (1980:27). In our own African worldview the ancestor is a very crucial figure. Those societies which adore good human relationships, human posterity and genealogies think very highly of the human heroes in their past history. They interpret and give meanings to present phenomena by reaching back to their past. The student's response was a good cultural answer. Maybe there is some truth in this! Let us attempt to explore the possibilities. According to our worldview, our ancestors continue to live after biological death has claimed their bodies. These ancestors as we have observed are the ones whom Mbiti, has named "the living-dead" of "up to four generations" (Mbiti 1966:15).

According to our Kamba beliefs, members of the living dead are very powerful, since following their biological death they are believed to acquire greater knowledge of life (reality?). It is believed that such knowledge uniquely equips them to give help, guidance and warnings to the living. It is because of such unique and vital
relationships with the living dead that people feel the obligation of venerating through certain gifts. The Akamba community is believed to be made of both the dead and the living. The living-dead ancestors are concerned with the well-being of the living community. And in traditional African society, libations were poured for a purpose, namely to secure the good will of the ancestors (Pobee 1979:65). The theory behind libration was that Mulungu (the Supreme Being) is so great that he cannot be approached directly; in man's relationship with him, the Supreme Being has delegated authority to the ancestors to deal with the relatively trivial affairs of men.

Pioneer missionaries rejected the idea of libation on idolatrous grounds. No doubt it borders on idolatry, but it is not idolatry. African acts or rituals of libation could as well be analogous with the western rituals of placing flowers on the graves of loved ones, although the views of the role of the dead are so different. To western society the dead are not in reality part of society. This is what outsiders have misunderstood as ancestral worship. Did traditional Kamba ever worship their ancestors, or was worship always directed to Mulungu? Today we know that the idea of Kamba worship of our ancestors was a great misunderstanding. However, we know they did venerate or respect them. John Pobee affirms for the African what we have always believed: "... the ancestors are not
worshipped but are rather venerated as elder brothers of the living" (1979:66)

Ancestor for Veneration But Not Ontological Equivalent

In 1974 the Association of Theological Institutions in East Africa met in Nairobi, Kenya to consider the theme of "The Ancestors and the Communion of Saints." The meeting, consisting of theological teachers from Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda and Zaire, agreed that

... Africans venerated their ancestors in a manner similar to the way saints were venerated by some Christian churches; thus there is a sound basis for developing African doctrines of the Communion of Saints. The formulation of these doctrines will have to take account of fundamental issues concerning the mediatorial role of Jesus vis-a-vis the ancestors and the saints; particularly the issue of prayer for the departed and the possibilities of the departed praying for us. The Holy Eucharist provided that point at which the Church militant and the Church triumphant are in constant touch with her living Lord, and in reflections upon the Easter event, we will be able to discover the significance of death and the resurrection of the body. It was felt that in developing the doctrines about the Communion of Saints, African Christianity can make significant contributions to global Christianity (Fashole-Luke 1981:29).

I certainly endorse the continuous effort to grapple with the question of ancestral veneration.

The Akamba Church must wait upon God in prayer and seek his face concerning which specific and concrete ways they can venerate their ancestors while still maintaining the allegiance of their worship to Ngai Mumbi. The Church must
first of all accept that the Bible is clear concerning praying for those of our ancestors who died before they became Christians. We cannot pray for them to be saved while in the spirit world. A person's eternal destiny is determined during historical time (Heb 9:27). Individually and corporately, Kamba Christians should obey God the Holy Spirit through their conscience concerning how to handle the matter of ancestral veneration. Denominations which constitute the Kamba Church should seek God's face in regard to how they can introduce functional substitutes which will fill the void and carry with it Christian meaning. Some of the great Christian heroes of the Kamba Church should be remembered or honored by naming a Bible school after them, or instituting a memorial scholarship using the name of some first-generation Kamba convert or pioneer in sending the gospel outside our own tribe. Certainly we remember the names of some of the missionaries who donated church pews by writing their names somewhere on the pews. Is this venerating the missionaries? Like Abel, although dead (or absent from us), he speaks (Heb 11:4). Do missionaries encourage the use of names of departed national Christians?

How about the title of Great Ancestor being given to Christ? Can Christ really be viewed like a Great Ancestor who died and lives forevermore? Jesus Christ in his ontological qualities cannot, and should never be represented, by the best of our Great Ancestor. However, in
the sense of his continuing presence with us, the Kamba Church may be justified in their notion of enjoying the presence of those from among the Kamba Church who died in Christ! Does Christ need to be present here in his biological humanity in order to touch us with his love? Do the Christians constitute both the dead in Christ and the living, believing community? "'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob' . . . [for God] is not the God of the dead but of the living" (Mt 22:32). Do we as Christians pray to Christ who died and lives forevermore? Can I pray, or have the ability to pray, with those of God's devoted servants who have already finished their race in time? What is the biblical meaning of death: end of earthly physical existence or end of all existence or continual existence in a different realm?

These questions need the biblical, theological and prayerful response of Kamba Christians. On which side are the souls of our dead great ancestors—comforted in Abraham's bosom with Lazarus or in agony with the rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury every day? Shall we see them again? To this I would say no man knows but God knows who are his (LXX on Num 16:15; 2 Tim 2:19).
Jesus Is the Christ, the Son of the Living God

The Kamba, like all Africans, are people who respect ancestors. The past is very important to us. It houses the genealogies and the ancestral heroes of our different clans and households. And so it is both natural and cultural to look for the human historical analogies in our ancestors when expressing a truth which we regard to be of highest religious significance. The past offers us the roots of our heritage and as such assists in giving meaning to present experiences. And so for the African graduate student to think of Jesus as our "Great Ancestor" was not very un-African! Like the Kamba, the Hebrews respected their genealogies. Ancestral heroes in their own history were always honored. No wonder they equated Jesus Christ with their "Ancestor" Elijah or their "Ancestor" Jeremiah (Mt 16:13-14). Their response to Jesus' question not only confirmed their own cultural worldview but also shows the typical answer of the natural man. As people who "adored" genealogies, history, heritage and roots, they could not help but equate Jesus with one of their dead ancestors. In this sense, they were good Kambas!

To call Jesus Christ, Ancestor Elijah, Ancestor Jeremiah, Ancestor Kasema or Ancestor Watuma are all typical answers of the natural man. However, the true answer to the question must be given through revelation. No ancestor of
any culture can equal Jesus Christ the Son of the Living God. He is God's unique Son, and no one else can be him among the sons of men. And even if the Akan Christians in Ghana suggest that Nana, the name of their "Great and Greatest Ancestor" (Pobee 1979:94), could be used to refer to Jesus Christ, yet it needs to be pointed out that such a term can only be used functionally and analogically. I think this is the way Pobee uses the term. Just as the Old Testament talks of Jesus as a priest (but a superior kind of priest), non-Christian societies will find ancestral heroes and personalities who had some Christ-like functional qualities.

In comparison, then, Jesus becomes a superior ancestor, for he was (is) the model, ideal humanity. But it needs to be emphasized that African, or for that matter any cultural analogies of Christ can only be functional and never ontological. For there is only one Christ, the Son of the Living God. All men of all cultures must know him through revelation. Hence, God's revelation in Christ is not common knowledge to any people. It is foreign. The revelation of Yahweh's works, Mulungu's mighty works of creation, are clearly known among the Kamba, but not so much with Christ. He must be revealed to us by the heavenly Father.

It is only when the Father chooses to reveal the Son to a people that they will be able to respond like Peter. Jesus Christ, after hearing the natural, cultural, human responses
to his question turned to Peter and said, Simon, Son of Jonah, your answer is different. It was not natural (i.e. from man, flesh and blood). It was not cultural, but "My Father in heaven" revealed it to you. The ontological nature of Jesus Christ can only be revealed to man by his heavenly Father. That nature cannot be matched by any human ancestor, and there is no people on earth who can have a substitute for the Son of God. Biblical theologians talk about "types" of Jesus in the Old Testament but only in a limited, finite, functional sense. His ontology is divine and no creature can be equated with him. Kamba Church Christology will be faulty (or is faulty) unless it is hinged on this one central truth: Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God. This is revealed truth.

While we respect our ancestors and are willing to learn from their wisdom (and especially those who knew Christ as Savior and Lord), yet like Ancestor Elijah, Ancestor Jeremiah, Abraham, David, Ee Kasema and Ee Watuma, and others are all part of the great cloud of witnesses which surrounds us as we run the race set before us (Heb 12:1). Our eyes should never be fixed on any one of them, but we should always "fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and the perfecter of our faith" (Heb 12:2). For he (Christ) is the way, the truth and the life and no one can know, love and worship the true God save through Jesus Christ (cf. Jn 4:23-24; 14:6; 17:3).
His Life and Work

This is not the place to provide a detailed examination of the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. However, we must affirm the need for the Kamba Church to study the Bible and understand what God's scriptural revelation says concerning the life and work of Christ. By making a statement on the life and ministry of Jesus, we are providing a further response to the question, "Who do you say I am?"

There are timeless universal truths about the life and ministry of Jesus Christ that Christ's Church has always affirmed. The key to these timeless, universal truths about Jesus Christ includes an affirmation of his virgin birth (Mt 1:18f; Lk 2:1f). And this, like many other aspects of our Akamba supernaturalistic worldview, assists us in accepting the miracle of Christ's virgin birth. Also, we must affirm his deity (cf. Jn 1:1f; 20:28; Titus 2:13) and his humanity (Phil 2:6f; 1 Tim 2:5). His atoning death on the cross for the sins of all humans is a non-negotiable biblical truth that the Church of Christ among any people must affirm. The death of Christ on the cross was so dramatic that all the four Gospels talk of it in much detail. But there is still a deeper and a more startling insight about the wonder of Christ's incarnation in that

If Christ came only because Adam sinned our response is one of gratitude towards our Redeemer. But if Christ would have come even if Adam had not
sinned our response to him is to welcome a friend. He came because we were made for Him and his presence makes us holy and we delight ourselves in Him. He came primarily because He wanted to, not because we need him. This is the reason of a friend whose presence brings dignity and worth (McClendon 1974:128).

This is the mystery of God's foreknowledge in that he ordained for man to be like Christ even before the Fall!

Next to his death is his triumphant victory over death in resurrection. Christ's resurrection from the dead and the fact of his being alive forevermore is and must be central in Akamba biblical Christology. "A Christology that is silent about the resurrection of Jesus from the dead is not worthy of the Christian name and should not be called a christology at all" (Braaten 1980:27). While to believe in the resurrection from the dead may be easier to some cultures than others (depending on their own worldview epistemological assumptions), yet it must be affirmed that Jesus' resurrection as "the firstborn from among the dead" (Col 1:18) is not common knowledge to any people. It is unique and can only be known by humans through divine revelation.

Another truth to affirm concerning Christ's life and ministry is the promise to come again for his own. He is the coming King of Kings. He will come to judge and reward all humanity in accordance with whether they believed the gospel of God's saving grace.

Those timeless and universal non-negotiable biblical
truths were revealed to the world wearing Hebrew-Aramaic-Greek garments. However, beneath these Hebrew cultural garments resided (and resides) the eternal gospel of God's Good News to lost humanity. It is this revelation of Jesus Christ's in the Bible that the Akamba Church must affirm and express wholeheartedly within the life of the Church. To deny these truths is to deny God's revelation. As those who have submitted ourselves to Yahweh as the creator of heaven and earth, the God of our supreme allegiance and worship, we must affirm wholeheartedly these non-negotiable biblical truths concerning the life and ministry of his begotten Son. Obviously, there are other truths which could be added to the list, like the fact of Christ being the Head of his Church and the shepherd of the flock and others. But as the Akamba proverb says, "Muti wi ivosya ndwendekaa mwingi (a healing-type medicine does not need to be taken in large quantity)."

And so from the perspective of this traditional proverb, those few descriptions of who the Son of God is are, to quote John's Gospel, "written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name" (Jn 20:31). To the question from Mheshimiwa Gerald Muia, the Akamba Church responds by saying that we have not replaced God (Mulungu) the Father with the Son Jesus Christ. Indeed, Mulungu the Creator God is the one who loved us so much that he sent his
Son, who taking the form of man was born in/with a human body. This son's name is Jesus Christ. Our Akamba worldview abhors the idea of God having a Son. But as we have seen above, to know Jesus Christ as the Son of the Living God is not through the aid of any people's worldview, it is not common knowledge to any people, but like Peter, those who know him as such do so through Mulungu's own revelation.

The Bible which, as we pointed out as the record of Mulungu's revelation of himself through his words and deeds, tells us that "in Christ all the fullness of the Deity, [Mulungu] lives in bodily form . . ." (Col 2:9). Mulungu God knew that the Akamba wanted to see him, and so he came in the person of his Son who is the express image of Mulungu who is invisible. Christ is the Savior of the world. He is the one the souls of all humans yearn for. In him my soul arrives.

Therefore, we have not exchanged or replaced Mulungu with the Son, but rather Mulungu has in his love and grace come down to live with us in the person of his Son, even our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

The purpose of our case study, as pointed out earlier, was to do theological reflection under the framework of Akamba supernaturalistic beliefs or model. We have in the light of God's revealed Word allowed Akamba supernaturalistic beliefs about God and ancestors to be informed by God's scriptural revelation. Certainly the
angle from which I have allowed Akamba supernaturalistic model to interact with biblical revelation is not inclusive. And I would hope that other Akamba theological students in the future will take the models that we were not able to examine and allow them to interact with God's scriptural revelation. Only as such happens can we speak of a more fully developed Akamba Christian theology.

As we close this chapter, and indeed our study, we would like to list here some seven general lessons for theological contextualization which our study has led us to see. In other words, we propose here some principles which we regard as necessary for the contextualization process. These general principles apply to "all" those involved in theological reflection in our day. However, in order to keep alive the concrete dimension in theological reflection, I would like to refer to these as attitudes necessary for an Akamba Christian theologian. But the reader should examine how the different attitudes (principles) can be applied in his/her particular contexts.

ATTITUDES OF A N  A K AM BA C H RISTIAN T H EOLO G IAN

The first attitude which applies particularly to Third-World-Church theologians is the need to maintain a non-retaliatory spirit.
Maintaining a Non-Retaliating Spirit

As Akamba Christian theologians, and indeed the whole hermeneutic community, engage in exposing elements of non-contextualization in contemporary Akamba Christianity, they should take heed lest they are motivated by retaliation. When we expose such elements (not necessarily in criticism), we should always remember that the gospel of Christ calls us to a life of forgiveness and reconciliation. As Christians we have no right to harbor hate and bitterness in our hearts for what at times would best be described as historical accidents. Neither we nor our theological reflections have any room for bitterness. To be in Christ is to be reduced to a ministry of love and reconciliation. Whether the hurts were intentional or not, our role is to forgive, whether we are the ones responsible or our forefathers. Like Nehemiah, the sins of God's people is my sin.

Therefore, the theme of reconciliation is an essential non-negotiable element in the gospel. And God's people should refuse the use of the arm of the flesh for the battle. As the saying goes, "It takes two to make war." For if you abuse/insult me, and I retaliate, where is my maturity? There is no group, not even the oppressed, which is flawlessly righteous and without its share of inhumanity, injustice and arrogance. God deliver us from self
righteousness. We should remember that when we judge we are assuming a role that is not ours; and God's will is that we should be known as prophets of love and reconciliation: reconciliation with individuals, groups, clans, tribes, denominations, western missionaries and nations. Christian maturity as defined earlier is continual growth into Christ's likeness, and to fail to have reconciliation in our Christian theology is to defeat our purpose. It is to deny what we are in him, the God of reconciliation.

Aim to Construct a Servant Theology

A servant theology is simply a theology that meets the needs of the people. As we have seen, such needs will be spread across the whole spectrum from observable explicit needs to implicit needs at the people's worldview. Akamba Christian theological formulation should not just result in a system of logically deduced theological formulations that bear no relevance to the needs of God's people. But rather it should result in the proper use of

God's revelation to meet spiritual needs of the people, to promote godliness and spiritual health. It is not a mere description of human religious feelings (Schleiermacher) nor is it an attempt to formulate truth in some merely "objective" sense (Conn 1984:234).

The Akamba Christian theologian should always remember that Christian theology is but a tool to help the Church to be the Church, to help Christians to grow in love to God and
one another, and to help those who are not yet part of the
fold to come into Christ's fold. Any Akamba Christian
theologian has a calling to wrestle with real problems and
responds to contemporary questions. To do so he must avoid
sterile discussions and speculations and concentrate on the
felt contextual needs of God's flock. This is why we have
emphasized the importance of a theologian being pastorally
sensitive.

Accept Christian Theologizing
as a Continuous Task

Throughout our study we have argued for a diachronic
(non-static) approach to Christian theological reflection.
Therefore, adequate theological reflection in the Akamba
Church must engage in

. . . dialogue not only within the community
of believers but "dialog with the world in which
it is being evolved--the culture, the religion,
the politics, the economics, the social system.
Only in this way will theology preserve the
open-ended character it needs to do its work. As
society and culture evolve and change, issues
change. The hermeneutical spiral changes its
shape as some issues disappear and others take
their place (Conn with quote from Taber

Akamba Christian theologians must therefore deny the
static synchronic view of culture which sees theology as a
finished product. Such a view or model is not adequate for
the dynamic nature of Christian theological reflection.
Theology is not like Mt. Kilimanjaro that cannot be moved
but rather like our traditional nomadic *isukuu* (tents) or contemporary Turkana dwellings which are flexible enough to move quickly as events change. Because semantics and culture are always changing, it means then that theological symbols and analogies of any given Akamba generation will not necessarily be adequate tools for intergenerational theological reflection. This is particularly so because theological symbols, as Imasogie observed,

... lose their potency and the theological formulations [or reflections] become atrophied when the symbols around which they are built have become irrelevant. ... There is always a search for living and relevant symbols that mediate the saving Presence of God in Jesus Christ. This is what theologians mean by the concept of the contemporaneity of the eternal Christ who comes in every age and culture to every generation waiting to be apprehended in the cultural and historical life situation of a particular people (1983b:18).

Indeed, it was such recognition that this whole dissertation pressed the importance of knowing and using Akamba implicit conceptual worldview for the construction of relevant Christian theologies in every generation. Explicit and sometimes implicit cultural symbols in this day of change will not always maintain intergenerational relevancy. Primarily the core in the whole task of Christian theological reflection is to find how the Living God who

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3. Contemporary Christian theologians all over the world who recognize the tentative nature of Christian theologies contend for the importance of viewing theologies "like tents rather than like cathedrals for they must be flexible enough to move quickly as events change" (Fashole-Luke 1981:33-34).
lives above culture and his dynamic word can relevantly address humans who live in changing cultural worlds. Or as Conn says, the point at the core is

... how to do justice to the culture-boundedness of human beings on the one hand and to the freedom from culture-boundedness of God and His Word on the other, while recognizing the continuous engagement of that free Word of God as it is contextualized within human cultures (1984:202).

Thus, in order for Akamba Christian theologians to carry on Christian theological reflection that does justice to the dynamic nature of God and his living Word, they cannot afford to be victims of a fundamentalistic-mechanical view of the Bible.

Historically the missionary penetration of Africa was done in the main by Europeans with a fundamentalist view of the Bible, and this factor has tended to circumscribe biblical studies on this continent until fairly recently ... (Parratt 1983:91).

The impact of mission fundamentalism has shown itself through some African theologians 4 and Akamba Christian theologians should not fall victim. Even the Hebrews had a

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4. The fundamentalist approach to the Bible has often been an underlying assumption than a well-thought-out position (as it is in the West). However, it found a champion in the late Byang Kato.

According to Kato all non-conservative ("liberal" in his terminology) theology fails because it is at the root "syncretistic universalism", which represents a denial of the uniqueness and finality of Christ and is a perversion of the Bible. These trends Kato sees at work in the W.C.C. and the A.A.C.C. The current interest of theologians in African religions Kato condemns as
partial understanding of Yahweh for his "attributes were revealed only as the Israelites confronted the dynamic Yahweh in one human situation after another. That is to say, that God's attributes and what he is to his creatures are open-ended and inexhaustible" (Imasogie 1983b:83).

Therefore, in every generation, Akamba Christian theologians must wait afresh upon God, under the Lordship of Jesus Christ in the guidance of the Holy Spirit and they will know how to use the inspired Word contextually and appropriately in the building of Christ's Church and the furtherance of God's Kingdom.

"syncretism"; for him African religion can only "locate the problem" while "pointing away from the solution" in Jesus Christ.

Despite the fact that Kato has uncritically swallowed the views of his North American mentors and despite its sometimes uncharitable trends, his book makes some important points. It is indeed true that in Africa a large proportion of professing Christians do have a fundamentalist standpoint. And this standpoint does provide a salutary reminder . . . of the centrality of Christ in the Christian message. However the approach typified by Kato's book is faulty both on the ground of Biblical studies and also of the history of theology. Basically it imposes upon the Bible an artificial viewpoint instead of allowing the Bible to speak for itself. Secondly, it fails to make allowance for the fact that throughout its history Christianity has had to come to terms with the cultures in which it has been implanted, and reformulate itself in contemporary thought forms. Christian theology in Africa cannot avoid the same obligation (Parratt 1983:91-92).
Accept the Necessity and Place of African Christian Theologies

John Mbiti is a pioneer in Christian theological reflection within the context of Akamba culture. Although he published a book that seemed to group all Africans together, still he was among the first to recognize the inadequacy of the term "African theology." He saw the need and necessity for African schools of theology or systems of theology (1971:2). Because of the diversity of African worldviews, contemporary African theologians are contending for African Christian theologies. For example, Fashole-Luke, a well-known contemporary African theologian, is representative of many other African theologians when he says, "African theology will never be a unified movement, but will take on different colours or emphases depending upon local situations where attempts are being made to express Christianity in meaningful African forms" (1981:37).

In the continuing debates on theological reflection, it needs to be said again that there cannot be one theological reflection for the whole Body of Christ, for theology as observed is primarily the disciplined reflection by the believing hermeneutic community on the meaning of Scripture in relation to the questions being asked by society in the community's own socio-cultural context. But, just as

affirming the diversity of Christian theologies is important, so is the need to emphasize the unity of the Body of Christ. This biblically healthy balance the Akamba Church must seek to maintain. Like our analogy of the river (page 434), we are part of a long ecclesiastical tradition and no one should divide the Body of Christ. It is a paradox, is it not? It is true that "all" Christians long for a better oneness in theology; however, we need to remember that

... Christian theology cannot be universal and full until every cultural group has brought its peculiar perception of spiritual reality to bear on the doctrinal expression of man's apprehension of God through Christ. It is only as the Word becomes flesh in every cultural human situation that the "unsearchable riches of God" in Christ can be approximated, as much as it is humanly possible under the mediation of the Holy Spirit (Imasogie 1983b:86).

**Affirm the Intrinsic Limitations of Any Theology**

This affirmation is simply a recognition on the part of the theologian and the hermeneutic community that God is infinite and the best of our human reflections on him are limited. All forms of Christian theologies represent human reflections on God' revelation through the context of their own worldview under the control of the Holy Spirit for the purpose of meeting contextual felt needs. But the God we reflect on is infinite in all his ways. His logic, his reasoning is infinite; and human finite attempts to reflect on God are finitely limited.
Indeed, this is one of the main questions I struggle with in our day when the best missiological and theological scholarship around affirms the inevitability of the people's worldview for adequate theological reflection! But are not worldviews made of human mental constructs? Are they not intrinsically frail human ways of perceiving reality? Are they not the construction of those whom God describes as earthen vessels?

But it is indeed the recognition of this weakness that God wants to use. Our essential difference with the Creator God humbles us deeply when we see the pains he took to reveal himself to us. He chose to reveal himself to us through cultural forms. He knows that we are limited in our worldviews and yet he chooses to put his "treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us" (2 Cor 4:7). For example, think of the Hebrews who actually believed that

God was in the "ark of the covenant," as the ark was held before them on their way to the promised land. God knows he is not limited to a box; yet he used that Jewish form to communicate his redemptive purpose and love to the Hebrews (Wilson 1982:272).

In the incarnation Christ did something even more profound. He is fully God who became man. We believe it as Christians, but some have, over the years, found it hard to accept the idea of God confining himself and his eternal "omnipotent" being in human body. Yet God knows that we are
limited by the very nature of what we are: creatures. And to communicate to us he became like us so that he may make manifest the blessedness of his eternal thoughts to us, the salvation and the heaven-life he has prepared for us.

We understand God better now as a human being because that is what we are and a God in human form is a God we can trust for time and for all eternity. What a love God has for us that he should seek us so intimately even to the point of using the frail human form to communicate his love! This is the kind of reverence, fear and gratitude that Akamba Christian theologians face in the task of theological reflection, realizing that at best his reflections are but the frail attempt of a man groping after the creator the voice of a stammering, searching child seeking to understand him who is beyond and above human understanding. "It is, therefore, presumptuous for any theologian to hold that his perception of God in a particular context represents an absolute understanding of the living dynamic God, the Creator of the ends of the earth" (Imasogie 1983b:83-84).

Remember That the Ideal in Christian Theological Reflection is Missiological

What this means is that proper Christian theological reflection must move the theologian and the hermeneutic community to love humanity. This is what God's thoughts led
him to do. Ultimately the call from God is to love him with all our hearts (Mt 22:37). God as love has modeled in Christ the proper use of love, which is to give life for the furtherance of God's eternal purposes. The Father loved the Son and he did not spare him but gave him up to us (Rom 8:32). The Son loved us and gave his own life to us that we may become what God planned.

Thus, Christian theological reflections are evangelistic testimonies to all mankind. Therefore, Akamba Christian theologians have no other motive/purpose in engaging in theological reflection if it does not result in producing better God-lovers which leads to giving their lives to serve God and others. It is for this basic fundamental reason that I say the theology of theological reflection is primarily this hidden task that God's people grow in their ability to fellowship with him and learn to love him and others more.

Traditionally, classical theological reflections have been side-tracked to abstraction. Contemporary Christian theologies are hard to tell what direction they will take: but theologians and hermeneutic communities stand a better chance if they take heed to the simple yet profound words of the Master when, toward the end of his earthly ministry, he told his disciples, "A new commandment I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. All men will know that you are my disciples if you
love one another" (Jn 13:34). Love, therefore, is the central, primary, distinguishing factor of the Christian theologian. It was the same for our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. It was the same for Paul as he theologized for the Gentile Churches. Akamba Christian theologians and indeed the whole hermeneutic community cannot be known by anything less.

**Strive for Prophetic Contextualization**

The last and not the least attitude that should characterize Akamba Christian theologians is to strive for what could be called prophetic contextualization. Prophetic contextualization happens when the Church and her theologians allow the Holy Spirit to serve his rightful role in theological contextualization. In other words, Christian theologizing should always be done within the context of inevitable confrontation between the gospel and culture. As cultures interact or at times clash with the gospel, then the gospel must be obeyed. "Our hermeneutical quest must challenge the values and standards of the culture in which it is being done that mirror the demonic and dehumanizing forces of sin and rebellion against God" (Conn 1984:257-58).

Akamba Christian theologians should be on the alert not to support an oppressive status quo of any form. However, their goal should be, as the Scripture says, to produce
theological reflections which will be useful for "teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man [woman] of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Tim 3:16-17). In no way should the theologian be conditioned by the value system of his environment, especially toward the poor, the orphans and the needy in their midst, since these should be in the heart of the Church and the pastoral theologian.

As we carry out our theological reflections for the Lord, in the Lord and under his Lordship, God the Holy Spirit is able to lead the whole hermeneutic community to construct contextually relevant Akamba Christian theologies. And if he (the Holy Spirit) wants to share what he has given to us with others, it is up to him. Just as God defines how far a person's spiritual gift will be used (such as those people today whom the Lord has called to serve the international community: for example, John Stott and Billy Graham), so he may do the same if he so chooses with any ethnic Christian theology. Not all ethnic Christian theologies will serve the international Body of Christ. Who decides which ones cross the seas? God does. He is a dynamic, global and universal God. He is the great shepherd of his international flock, and who among humans can set boundaries for what God is able or chooses to do?

He is the Lord over all. He is in charge. The Akamba Church and her theologians must let God be God: let him have
his way and will with the Christian theology of any Akamba generation. Just as we allow him to do as he pleases with our lives, so we should let him do as he pleases with our disciplined-constructed ethnic Christian theologies. After all, are these theologies not his tools that he can use for the furtherance of his Kingdom and the feeding of his flock? God can, if he so chooses, lead the sheep of his flock to any green theological pastures.

Besides, is it not the calling of any Christian community to be involved in the building of an international interdependent Body of Christ committed to being faithful stewards of God's world along with ministering love, grace and truth to a perverse generation of humanity? It is the misuse of Christian theology in the past that makes us cautious today when we advocate what some may like to call "a neo-exportation of theology from the Third World Church," but such shows either the unscriptural nature of the "three-self theologies" or a sign of spiritual growth for the international Body of Christ. As the Third World Church moves on to share theological contributions to the older Church tradition, it is important to point out that the international role of any Christian community is one of love and humility. We all must admit that we see in part in the best of our theological reflections.

A Christian community and her theologians should not superimpose their theology on another. Indeed, all they can
do is something like what my Swiss friends told me when out of hospitality they offered me a snail-frog delicacy with the words, "Try it! You may like it!" May the Church of Jesus Christ in every nation exercise this theological hospitality, but may she do so (this time!) with humility. It is my prayer that each Akamba generation will know what it is to resubmit our man-made traditions to the Word and the Spirit of God. Also, may Akamba Christian theologians submit inherited patterns of Church life to the searching scrutiny of the Spirit. May the pre-eminence of the Holy Spirit be felt in all the work of the Church in Ukambani. Day by day, as we read God's Holy Word, may it not take long before we discover that our accustomed ideas, ways and attitudes are being questioned by a voice more searching than the word of man.

Even after Akamba Christian theologians have theologized in the context of our people's worldview and produced theologies that shepherd the Lord's flock, transforming men and women, youth and children to be more like Christ in loving God and giving their lives to others as channels of God's love, and even as our our lives blend with the lives of those who have become so dear to us (1 Thess 2:8), may we be still humble enough to heed the words of our Lord: "So you also, when you have done everything you were told to do, should say, 'We are unworthy servants; we have only done our duty'" (Lk 17:10).
APPENDIX A

CASE STUDY ENCOUNTER WITH DR. WAVINYA,
THE MEDICINE WOMAN

INTRODUCTION

We need to point out that the muoi (sorcerer) type of medicine man is not our main concern here. Traditionally, aoi (sorcerers) were hated by the people except for the few who wanted to manipulate the sorcerer for their own purposes. For the Akamba Christians, the power of aoi is no power compared with the power of God's Spirit who indwells us, "for God did not give us a Spirit of fear but a spirit of power, of love and of sound mind" (II Tim 2:7). There is nothing in a muoi that the Kamba pastoral theologian can admire. However, it is the mundu mue (Kamba traditional doctor) and the muathani (prophet) who have some qualities from which today's Kamba pastoral theologian should learn. Therefore, as an example of how the Akamba Church can do power-encounter theologizing I have decided to use a brief case study.
THE SETTING

Dr. Wavinya is an Akamba traditional doctor who grew up as a little girl at the same time as my father. In fact, her family was the same family as my grandmother's. The powers of divination began to manifest themselves very early in her life and people in the village knew that "God" was setting her aside for some future ministry among her own people. She did not know that she would grow to be a respected member of her tribe. However, at about twenty years of age, elders from her extended family, in recognition of her "divination abilities," let other older medicine men spend a night in her home performing a ritualistic beating of drums, thus ordaining her to her divination career.

When I was a little boy my father told me about her but advised me not to visit her. As a teenager, although I was a committed Christian, yet I did not feel courageous enough to visit her. I must admit that I was somewhat scared of what might happen if I visited her, although I knew that people poured into her house seeking healing and guidance. People in the village saw her as someone they can turn to in times of need. Even some people from the church where I grew up used to visit her! She was that influential.

It was in 1971 when I became the pastor of the village church that it dawned on me that somewhere down the road I
would have to come to grips with the ministry of Dr. Wavinya. I did not have problems with her prescribing to sick people different roots, herbs for medicine or even her giving practical advice in dealing with the problems which face mankind; but rather my problem was when she advised people to wear certain charms and perform certain rituals which I felt were incompatible with scriptural revelation. I knew that the members of the church who sneaked out to consult Dr. Wavinya's advice were not having their needs met through the church. This again bothered me, for I felt they should come to me instead.

It is true that for some Dr. Wavinya had more credibility than I had, and before I earned the people's trust, I thought Dr. Wavinya would probably have won all the people! I comforted myself by the fact that Christ was the one building his Church and that he would keep it form the power of the enemy. Yet at the practical level I needed help. I prayed for God to fill me more with his love and vindicate me before his church, before the villagers and even before the powers of darkness. It did not take long before God began to deal with my own heart. God reminded me, like Pastor Kefa Sempangi of the Redeemed Church of Uganda, that "My western education had taught me to question the existence of demons and the powers of their servants" (Sempangi 1979:64). Deep within my African heart I knew that Dr. Wavinya had access to some power, but I found myself
constantly fighting the temptation to rationalize. My faith in God and the belief in existence and power of demons needed to be renewed. It is unfortunate that many modern-day African pastors are increasingly beginning to have doubts about the power of the spirit world. God began to work in my heart and mind as I took time to study what the scriptures said about the spirits and those who consult them.

FORTIFIED BY LOVE

My studies of the scriptures and other readings began to overflow into the church. I planned messages for the local church expressing the superiority of God's Holy Spirit above all other spirits. Little did I know that I was being equipped together with the church for a greater ministry ahead.

I scheduled four days of the week to go visiting the different church members who lived within the village and also those in the neighbourhoods. As I talked and interacted informally with the people in their homes, on their farms and some in their offices, I discovered that it takes a pastor to walk in the same paths with the flock in order to know, feel and be touched with the needs of his people. Only then can the pastor's life and messages flow out like rivers of living water relevantly quenching the thirsts of people. As I became freer with the people, more
open in our relationships with one another, we began to grow into a family in which love knit us together as brothers and sisters. There was no doubt that it was the love shed in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. One major outcome was the fearlessness that accompanies God's love. Out of great humility and praise to God I want to affirm that it was the power of love that fortified, equipped and led me to visit Dr. Wavinya. After prayer with a group of church members, I set off to go to her house.

THE THREE-HOUR WAIT

Fortified by God's love and Spirit, I moved on to face the kingdom of Satan. Her little house thatched with grass stood alone in a central spot in the village. As I drew near, I noticed a group of about six people (two young people, the rest adults) sitting on wooden benches outside her house. To have four or five people to attend to everyday was normal for Dr. Wavinya. It was interesting to note that she had won her credibility in different age groups. As I saw the people seated outside, I knew that Dr. Wavinya was inside her divination room with one of her clients.

I walked up to where the people were sitting, and after exchanging greetings with one another, I took my place sitting under a shade tree next to the men. Usually it would take about an hour for a medicine man to attend a
patient (even though at times different needs may require a little longer). However, this time it took Dr. Wavinya over three hours. I spent the time talking with the people who about non-religious matters like the cattle, drought, children, families, etc. It was a very educational time for me. It gave me opportunity to know what occupied people's minds—potential converts!

It also gave me the opportunity of sitting where people sit, and wait. I was learning to be patient with others. I did not want the people to feel that I was coming to evangelize them, even though I was prepared in case the Spirit of God prompted me in that direction. While we should be ready at all moments to present the gospel, yet we should also avoid the instant-mentality that pushes us to spill out the precious seed of the gospel on unprepared soil. Maybe there is some truth we can learn from the African proverb which says, "Haraka, haraka haina baraka (no blessing in acting hurriedly)." Of course, we know that there are cases when acting swiftly would be the most appropriate thing to do in that moment in time; however, as I came to find out later, God had a different plan for this time.

THE ENCOUNTER

After over three hours of waiting, Dr. Wavinya came out together with her client. (Normally she should not come out
after attending each person, but this time she did.) It all happened in a very dramatic way. The door opened and the client jumped out as if she was being pushed by something. Then Dr. Wavinya appeared with a rather scary face, walked right to where I was sitting and, without saying any word of greeting to me or to the others, fixed her eyes on me and repeatedly said, "Why did you do that? Why did you do that?" At first it did not dawn on me what I had done, and so I did not know immediately how to respond. She continued to speak, saying, "The time you arrived and sat under the shade I knew. This day I have no food; you are starving me. Why did you do that?"

At this moment I knew that my Christian presence in the premises of Dr. Wavinya had somehow interfered and prevented her divination procedures. I confessed to her that I did not come intending to interfere with her work, and if that had happened, then I was sorry. However, my major goal was to come and talk to her about Jesus Christ. When I finished talking she acted rather strangely. She sat on the grass outside her house and said (in a rather low voice), "Tell me about him." I took the opportunity to explain to her and to those others who still remained about Jesus Christ's love for them and his death for this sin. We prayed together and Dr. Wavinya promised to come to church the following Sunday.

What a victory for Christ when Dr. Wavinya walked into
the church the following Sunday and sung songs of praises to God.

I am not recommending this as the ideal pattern that should be followed in reaching for Christ the Kamba traditional medicine men. Each case should be examined differently with great sensitivity to the leading of God's Spirit. Also, questions related to how much of the medicine man's profession should be maintained after conversion have not been discussed here. Suffice it to say in passing that the clear-cut "Don'ts" like the prescription of certain charms and Satan-honoring rituals he should be encouraged to avoid. However, in matters that are not clearly defined in scripture the Pastoral Theologian should consult with the elders of the church on what they feel under Christ's Word and Lordship about particular items in question.

Mainly, this was an experience which the Lord allowed for me in order to accomplish his own purposes, and from that day more people began to be convinced of the power of God. Thus, Christian theological refelction among the Akamba Church must be a demonstration of power. And in Christ the Christian community has access to this power through the indwelling Holy Spirit. It is through him that the community of faith engages in a power-encounter theological reflection.
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VITA

Jones Mawe Kaleli was born in Machakos, Kenya. He was raised in Inyokoni (Kilungu), a local church under the Africa Inland Church of Kenya. After graduating from high school, he served as a mathematics teacher in a nearby primary school, besides serving as a lay pastor of his own home church. He attended Scott Theological College, graduating with a diploma in theology.

In 1975 he married Jeddy Katule who is an English teacher by profession and a fellow graduate of both Scott Theological College and Columbia Bible College. They have four children: Mumbua, Mumo, Mueni and Mwelu. Jones' seminary/theological training includes London Bible College where he was awarded the Certificate of Proficiency in Religious Knowledge (1975), Columbia Bible College (B.A., 1978) and Denver Theological Seminary (M.A., 1980).

Jones has served as pastor in A.I.C. Tudor, Mombasa and as a Bible teacher at the Pwani Bible Institute. He came to the School of World Mission, Fuller Theological Seminary where he completed the M.A. in Missiology. He was then admitted to the Ph.D. in Intercultural Studies program. He served for two years in the S.W.M. office of academic administration as an academic advisor. He was the recipient of the David Allan Hubbard Award for academic, spiritual and professional excellence in June, 1985.

Jones is an ordained minister with the Africa Inland Church—Kenya, and upon completion of this program he will return to Kenya where he hopes to be involved with pastoral, missiological and theological training.