

THE GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT OF THE
AFRICA INLAND CHURCH IN
MARAKWET KENYA

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ABSTRACT

The primary purpose of this study was to investigate the growth and development of the Africa Inland Church (AIC), Marakwet, Kenya. Another purpose was to deal with missiological issues which have affected the growth of the Church and strive to suggest proposals for real growth.

The author followed the principles of the historical method in examining primary and secondary sources. Primary sources included Missionary letters and diaries, Mission and Church records, documents and publications, and minutes of Mission and Church Councils. Some interviews were conducted with early converts and leaders of the AIC, Marakwet.

Areas selected and described include the Marakwet people, the arrival of the AIM Missionaries and their approach towards African culture and policies regarding polygamy and traditional circumcision especially female circumcision; and the methods used by the Mission in expanding the Church, e.g. medical, education and evangelistic outreach.

The emergence of the early converts and their sacrificial services to the Church were also described. In the area of future development of the Church, the question of indigenisation of the Church e.g. development of local leadership, contextualization, and proposals for overcoming the obstacles affecting the growth of the Church e.g. polygamy and traditional circumcision were discussed.

This study should not only be valuable to the Marakwet Church but the African Church in general because it is faced by one or all of the above mentioned problems.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AIC	-	Africa Inland Church
AIM	-	Africa Inland Mission
CMS	-	Church Missionary Society
CSM	-	Church of Scotland Mission
DC	-	District Commissioner
ELGM	-	Elgeyo/Marakwet

INTRODUCTION

I. Statement of the Problem

The Africa Inland Church in Marakwet, Kenya, like many other African Churches south of the Sahara, has experienced steady growth since its inception in the 1930's.

However, the growth of the Church manifests some problems both quantitatively and qualitatively. The Church still lacks pastoral teaching; there has been no complete break on the part of many from traditional practices, e.g. polygamy, and traditional circumcision. The majority of those added to the Church are mostly young people and a few older women in some areas.

The purpose of this thesis therefore, is to investigate the development and growth of the Africa Inland Church in Marakwet with important emphasis laid on missiological issues which have affected the growth. The author will finally suggest proposals that will foster a more balanced growth.

Basic questions will be:

1. Church records show that there has been some steady numerical growth in the Africa Inland Church in Marakwet, but not so many partake of the Lord's table, Why?
2. Why have polygamy and traditional circumcision affected the growth of the Church?
3. Why have several older members reverted to the traditional ways?
4. How would we assure continuous, biblical functioning of the

Church in creating both quantitative and qualitative growth?

In order to arrive at this desired goal, the author in the first chapter will describe the Marakwet people, their land and traditional religion before the arrival of the Africa Inland Mission.

Chapter two surveys the Mission's founding in Kenya in 1895. It also considers the key personalities in its pioneer stage; the Mission's approach towards African culture, and its policies regarding polygamy and circumcision; and finally, its educational programme.

The third chapter traces the arrival of Africa Inland Mission missionaries in Marakwet, the Mission's difficult beginnings and eventually the emergence of the early converts. The growth and expansion of the Church through evangelism, education and medical work will also be examined.

Chapter four discusses the two major social problems which have affected the growth of the Church, that is, polygamy and traditional circumcision.

The final chapter concludes with suggested proposals for real growth of the Church through overcoming the obstacles and applying the principles of church growth.

II. Methodology

- A) A questionnaire to guide the interviewer to elicit some information.
- B) Other methods of unstructured interviews e.g. by asking questions when subjects of importance are mentioned.
- C) As far as growth of the Church is concerned, church records will be utilized.
- D) Library Research
- E) Africa Inland Mission Archives.
- F) Kenya National Archives.

III. Significance of the Problem

When the Africa Inland Mission (AIM) missionaries brought the Gospel to Kenya, about one hundred years ago, they first reached the Akamba, the Gikuyu, the Luo, the Nandi and then later on the Marakwet. Early converts fought against traditional practices that conflicted with the Word of God. They literally interpreted II Cor. 6:14, "come out of the world and be ye separate says the Lord," by moving and living together in one Mission station. While here, they fellowshiped, prayed, read scripture and involved themselves in outreach ministries.

The sons and daughters of these early converts went to school and later, some became teachers in mission schools. The aim of the mission was to reach them through school. An article in Hearing and Doing (the first AIM magazine) stated, "we firmly believe that if we can win the children to Christ, they will become the best propagators of the Gospel among their own people. The children will be brought to the stations and be taught, when ready to be sent out to evangelize."¹ However, several of these children never followed the footsteps of their parents. Though baptized at one time, many of them have not kept their faith. Education and development became two priorities in their lives.

When the missionaries saw that secular education did not bring the expected changes, they gave themselves to administration and medical work, and encouraged the training of pastors and teachers. This training ministry was quite slow, and also retarded the evangelistic fervour which the early converts had.

Since the early converts were in a way the enlightened ones in the society, they involved themselves also in the field of business and buying more farms. The temptation of marrying a second or third

wife to take care of the properties set in. A number of the believers in Marakwet yielded to it.

The traditional practices, e.g. polygamy and traditional circumcision, have kept on crippling the Church in Marakwet. Not only were the laity victims of it (as will be examined later), but also the first trained Pastors. For over sixty years now the Marakwet Church has had no solution to these problems. As people backslide, no one has the courage to follow them up.

Since the Church has no recorded history of her own nor anything on the growth and its development, this thesis would endeavour to investigate and research these areas. The knowledge of the Church's history will cause believers to follow the backsliden members, revitalize their prayer life and outreach ministry. It will also cause them to think of ways of securing more shepherds of the flock to ground the Church in Christ.

¹Hearing and Doing I, 7(1896), p. 5.

CHAPTER I

THE MARAKWET PEOPLE

Origin

The origins and migration patterns of the Kalenjin-speaking peoples are uncertain. But probably their place of origin was somewhere south of the present Ethiopian border, in the region of Lake Turkana. Some clans have traditions going as far as Egypt. A researcher noted, "the Kalenjins borrowed circumcision as a rite of passage from the Cushites. The Nilotes contributed the extraction of the lower incisors of adolescents (so they may be fed if they contract lock jaw)."¹

Marakwet (one of the Kalenjin groups) traditions, written by the District Commissioner as narrated by Headman Busiendich and supported by various elders, further explains the origins of the Marakwet people as follows:

1. The people who now live in Marakwet arrived in Nomadic bands from different directions over a series of years.
2. These bands were usually made up of the members of a single clan ('oret', each with its special clan animal).
3. The movements recorded were part of the general movement of the 'Kalenjin' speakers.

The limits of origin mentioned by the Marakwet clans are: Wei-wei, Galogol in Turkana, and Lake Baringo. It seems probable that this indicates a general drift via Wei-wei out onto the floor of the Rift Valley, and then southwards down the main Rift and the adjacent Kerio Valley.

4. Over a number of years bands of Kalenjin speakers had been moving across the Cherangani - West Pokot

mountains, where there are rich pastures. They reached the edge of the Marakwet Escarpment about the same time as the first bands of their kindred crossed over from east of the Kerio. The two branches settled down amicably.

5. The story of the Turr'ngeny, if it is authentic as it seemed to be, suggest strongly the memory of contact with some pigmy tribe in the course of the wanderings, perhaps in the Congo.
6. On settling down each band, composed of the members of one clan with a common ancestor, settled each in its 'koret' or 'section'. Hence such common place names as Kobil, Kap-terik, Ka-moi, Kap-siokwei, Kap-saniak, Kap-sogom, Kap-tol, Kap-iso, etc. Hence also the extremely parochial and independent outlook of each 'koret', since there is no tradition of obligation to any larger body.
7. Kipkoimet age were the moran when the first people came into Endo.²

The pre-colonial and early twentieth century history of the Marakwet is obscure. In her book Henrietta L. Moore writes, "The reference of Marakwet prior to 1910 is contained in a short passage by Thomson [an early explorer] where he mentions not the people so much as their irrigation furrows. The only other substantial reference to the Marakwet is in Beech's work on the Suk [now called Pokot], where he mentions the Endo and the Margweta."³ The Marakwet only begun appearing in the literature in the 1950's.

In describing them Ann LiliJeQuist writes, "much of Marakwet ambitions amount to living an ordinary life, to 'stay well', to be 'an ordinary man at home' as the local idioms are. This means looking after one's crops and animals, visiting the proper ceremonies and moots, keeping relations between neighbours and clansmen straight . . . Tugul (everybody) is a word charged with positive value in Marakwet - the desirable way of life."⁴

This kind of thinking kept the Marakwets at home for many, many years. No new innovations were brought in. There is no known

Marakwet Christian before 1930. The early British administrators who visited Marakwet were not Christians. Hence, no Gospel was preached.

The People

The Marakwet are part of the Kalenjin group of people. They live in the Cherangani hills and along the Kerio Valley in Western Kenya.⁵ The other members of the Kalenjin group are the Pokot, Sabaot, Tugen, Keiyo, Kipsigis, Nandi and Terik (Nyang'ori).⁶ The language of this group of people is 'Kalenjin' and together they share broadly the same cultural traditions, the most important of which relate to initiation and the division of the community into age-sets and (within these) age-grades.⁷

In her research Moore found out that prior to the colonial period the Marakwet did not exist as a single, coherent unit (tribe), and the word 'marakwet' is the corruption of the term 'markweta' which originally applied to one section of the present-day group.⁸

Kipkorir states that in later years, the "traditional Marakwet society was divided into thirteen partrilineal clans, each of which is divided into two or more exogamic sections distinguished by totems."⁹

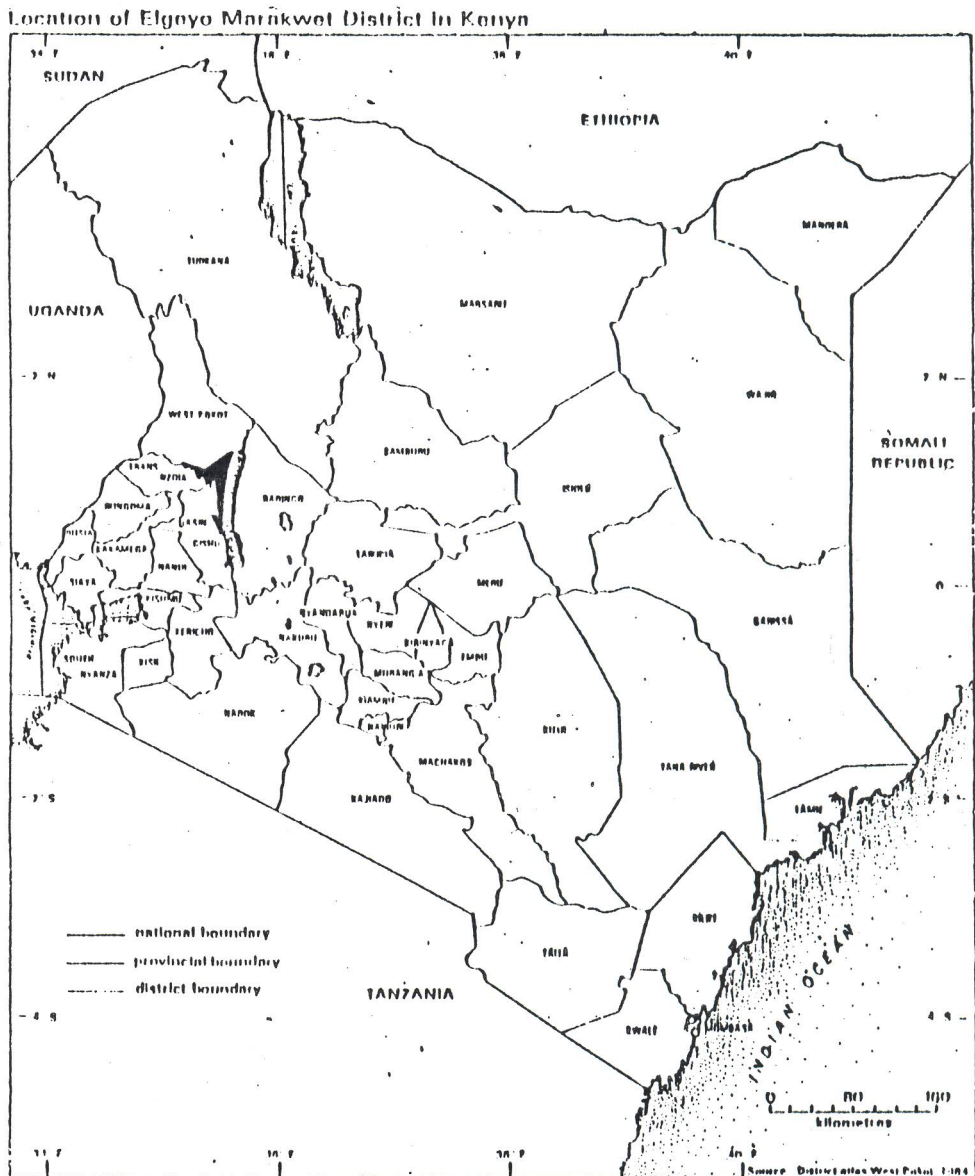
The present Marakwet 'tribe' consists of five sections (Almo, Cherangani, Endo, Kiptani and Markweta).¹⁰ Their age grades are as follows: Maina, Chuma, Sawe, Korongoro, Kipkoimet (Kaberur), Kablelach, Kimnyige and Nyongi.

The Elgeyo/Marakwet District Commissioner's report of 1938 states, "it is probably true to say that very few Marakwet live through six age-grades, and taking 60 years as roughly the normal limit of an African's life, we get about 10 years to each age-grade. From the present moran Sawe - Korongoro, to Kipkoimet, is between seven and eight years, that is roughly 70-80 years."¹¹

Since each age grade was distinct and those belonging to a particular grade saw themselves as brothers, converts would have been encouraged to go and minister to those of their own grades.

Topography and Administrative Division of the Marakwet

The Marakwet and their neighbours, the Elgeyos, form the Administrative District of Elgeyo/Marakwet in the Rift Valley Province as shown in the Map below. The present Administrative Division is the outcome of a process that started in the beginning of this century.



In 1902, the area of the Elgeyo and the Marakwet was brought under the administration of the Kenya Colony. Before that time the area belonged to the Uganda protectorate. In 1912, Marakwet station was established at Kapsowar; from here the Marakwet area was administered.¹² See Appendix A on events leading to administration of Marakwet.

The Marakwet number about 110,000 persons and occupy an area of 1,595 square kilometres.¹³ The area is distinctly divided into two, the Cherangany hills which are well-watered and the Kerio Valley which is semi-arid. The highland area has a rainfall of 1100-1500 mm per year. The residents grow maize, supplemented by potatoes, beans, cabbages and other vegetables. Most recently tea and coffee has been introduced.¹⁴ Sorghum, millet, cassava, bananas and other crops are grown in the valley. Along streams mango and citrus trees are found.

The escarpment is dry with bush and shrubs. This zone, commonly known by the Marakwets as "lagam," is dotted with the houses of the people. They prefer living here because it is cooler and there are fewer mosquitoes. The centres along the valley-road are mainly trading centres with shops, schools, churches and dispensaries.¹⁵

The topography of the land hindered early missionaries from reaching the Marakwet with the gospel. Roads were only recently constructed and thus walking was the only means of travel in this mountainous country. Needless to say, early missionaries and their converts walked long distances sharing the gospel. The few established local churches were a result of their tireless efforts.

Traditional Religion

The religious beliefs of the Marakwet are not well formulated. The supreme deity is "Asis", the sun, who dwells in the sky. Prayers

are addressed to him in moments of crisis or national disaster such as an epidemic or famine. He is acknowledged to be a benefactor and giver of all good things. As Kipkorir notes, "He is supreme, omnipotent, the omniscient arbiter of all things and the guarantor of right. He is known as 'Chebet chebo Chemataw' (Daughter of the day), 'Cheptai-lel' (the one who shines), 'Chibo him' (man of the sky) and 'Chemur him' (the one who crosses the sky). Of these, 'Asis' and the shortened form, 'Chebet', are the most common."¹⁶

This deity appears quite distant from the people though some people could make an appeal to "Asis" to help them. A man would request "Asis" to take care of his goats. In his prayer he would say, "'Asis' it is your turn to look after the goats today."¹⁷

Unlike several other African ethnic groups, Marakwet has no creation story. Since "Asis" did not create the world, some researchers have doubted whether such a concept would represent a supreme divinity. One such writer is M. G. Gillibrand who came to the conclusion that Kalenjin religions (Marakwet included) are ethical rather than theological.¹⁸ But this has not won approval from some African writers, for example J. Mbiti and B. E. Kipkorir who refer to "Asis" as the Supreme Being of the Elgeyo and Marakwet.

The traditional Marakwet religion has no cult of devotion. There are no regular worships or festivals observed, such as planting or harvesting. In time of abundance or an end of a disaster there is no evidence of a thanksgiving ceremony being performed.

Other than "Asis" there are the concepts of the ancestral spirits: The benevolent 'oi' and the malevolent 'chesawil'. Before 'Asis' is asked for help, the ancestral spirits are first appealed to. These spirits are associated with the ancestors. Kipkorir states that "the 'oi' are ghosts of initiated men and women who communicate,

in dreams, with their living kin. They ('oi') ask for food from the living, which the living place at points specified by the 'oi' and it is left for some days till it has been consumed by insects or wild animals."¹⁹ The people usually respect the orders from the 'oi' or else misfortunes might befall them.

The living consult the 'oi' because they are much wiser than the living men, and so would be able to help the people out of their current predicament - somehow. These 'oi' are constantly prevented by the people from becoming malevolent and causing trouble, when they are known as 'chesawil'. 'Oi' will turn to 'chesawil' if they are not remembered. Rememberance is usually done by spitting out or pouring down of beer before sitting down to a drinking session, in a traditional marriage ceremony or naming a child after the wrong ancestor.²⁰

When a Marakwet fell sick he would first go to the herbalist, the 'Chepkerichot', who provided medical treatment based on his knowledge of herbs. If the ailment persisted, the patient might resort to a witch-doctor - 'Chepsogeyon', who would diagnose the source. The witch-doctor might attribute the cause of the illness to a human agent of evil, the sorcerer - 'kiban', the 'evil eye' - 'konyin', a number of his ancestors - 'oi' or a natural curse - 'ngoki'.²¹

During the time of drought, people appeal to 'Ilat', thunder and lightning, who is said to live in deep pools and waterfalls. 'Ilat' is a totem of the water clan (Toyoi). The people strongly believe that good thunder brings rain, and bad thunder brings destructive lightning and rain which might kill cattle, burn huts, and ruin the crops. Kipkorir, notes, "Ilat acts as an agent of Asis administering justice in the society. He can be influenced by prayer to return children he drowned or cattle swept away by floods."²²

In Kipkorir's later writings he notes, "Asis is a formless being

who is omniscient but not omnipotent. The literal sun is used to denote the high God because of its brilliant shine and prominent position relative to the earth in the sky. Asis is not worshipped but exhorted to do the right things in times of crisis. The ancestors receive due respect."²³

Religious Specialists

1. Kipses

'Kipses' is a kind of medicine man, who cures all sorts of illnesses by blowing into a hollow bamboo and making it boom. The art passes in the family, and is said to have originated in Endo. Their services were in demand all over Marakwet.

According to Kipkorir, Kipses have two basic functions: To divine and to curse justly. Thus, it is an ill omen for a jackal to leave scratch marks at the entrance to a homestead, and if this occurs, a 'Kipses' is summoned. He calls the jackal by blowing on his reed; and the jackal comes to be killed, thus removing the ill which is injured. Before a Kipses performs his duty, the owner of the home kills a goat for him which he feasts on with elderly neighbours. He blows his reed throughout the night. The song he sings throughout the night accompanied by children (and at times elderly people) is as follows:

- | | | |
|-----|---|--|
| i) | Onei O, Onei ee,
Onei siyai, onei ee
Chebo Chepsiolo nyo kion
tega! | It chases O, it chases ee
It chases the bad, it chases ee
Daughter of Chepsiolo who was
chased by bamboo! |
| ii) | Lyeu . . . aha lyeu,
Lyeu a tiony e,
Lyeu oe lyeu
Lyeu . . . nyo ketiar
kachi
Lyeu oe lyeu | cleared oe cleared
cleared this animal
cleared oe cleared
cleared . . . that trod on
someone's house
cleared oe cleared ²⁴ |

These songs are intended to curse and drive away the offending

jackal. Kipses also curses any other offenders including undetected thieves. He may also be employed to drive away 'Kipyukuk' (an owl) whose hoot near a homestead is an ill omen.

The people had great faith in 'Kipses' to the extent that whatever he said was taken to be so.

2. Chepng'orei or Chepsogeiyo (Diviners of sorcery)

The diviners are consulted in times of sickness when herbalists (Chepkerichin) have failed to deal with the problem. They do not prescribe cures but divine the mystical cause which itself determines the further steps to be taken. In his divination the diviner might use milk; hard objects (kibarbaris) are rattled in a gourd; or a bag containing such things as feathers, pieces of cloth, and animal skin are emptied into a bowl of water in order to study their arrangement. Recent diviners use mirrors.²⁵

3. Orgoy

The 'Orgoy' are only found among the Cherang'any. The people consulted them during times of war. They are said to be extremely jealous and wealthy. They charge a lot of money for the protective charms they provide.

Presently religious specialists are not as popular as they have been in the past among the Marakwet people.

Endnotes

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¹²J. C. Cappon, District Atlas Elgeyo-Marakwet (Nairobi: General Printers Ltd., 1985), p. 8. See also Appendix A for events leading to the Administration of Marakwet.

¹³Henrietta, p. 15.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 16.

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¹⁹B. E. Kipkorir and W. F. Welbourn, The Marakwet of Kenya, p. 17.

²⁰M. G. Gillibrand, p. 2 - 3.

²¹Ibid., p. 4.

²²B. E. Kipkorir and W. F. Welbourn, p. 14.

²³B. E. Kipkorir and J. W. Ssenyonga Eds. Socio-Cultural of Elgeyo Marakwet District, p. 13.

²⁴B. E. Kipkorir, The Marakwet of Kenya, p. 21.

²⁵Ibid., p. 22.

²⁶M. R. R. Vidal, District Commissioner's Report (Nairobi: Kenya National Archives, DC/ELGM/3/1, 1919), p. 8.

CHAPTER II

AFRICA INLAND MISSION 1895 - 1971

Background

The pioneer of the Africa Inland Mission, Peter Cameron Scott, was born near Glasgow, Scotland on March 7, 1867. At the age of twelve his family emigrated to Philadelphia, U.S.A. While still in his teens his singing ability brought him offers (10 pounds a week, with all expenses) to perform on the concert stage, but because of their religious convictions his parents forced him to refuse them. At the age of sixteen he started working as a clerk in a printer's office, where he remained for two years, and then for health reasons spent a year in Scotland before returning to Philadelphia. While in Scotland, he promised God that, if his life was spared, he would dedicate it to the Lord for His service. An inner struggle from this time on regarding his musical career resulted in a complete dedication of himself to God.¹

As a result of this spiritual crisis experience he sailed for west Africa under the International Missionary Alliance in November, 1890. He laboured in the Congo for two years with his brother, John. He suffered one attack of fever after another. Later, his brother died and Scott buried him, digging the grave himself. With increased health problems, Scott returned to America and then on to the British Isles. While in England, Scott had his second spiritual crisis. Kneeling beside the tomb of David Livingstone in Westminster Abbey, he was gripped by the inscription, "other sheep I have, which are not

of this fold, them also I must bring" (John 10:16). In that same moment by Livingstone's tomb Scott envisioned a chain of mission stations stretching westward from Mombasa on the east coast to Lake Chad in the very heart of Africa.²

Dr. J. Krapf, a German Missionary serving under the Church Missionary Society (CMS) had a similar vision for a chain of mission stations. In 1850 he had gone to London to advocate in person a scheme of mission stations across Africa from East to West, in the direction of the Equator.

Kenneth Latourette states that Scott "received Krapf's dream of a chain of stations from the east coast across the continent".³ Such a dream coupled with Scott's vision and passion for the lost led to the formation of The Africa Inland Mission in 1895.

The Mission under the Leadership of Peter C. Scott
1895 - 1896

No sooner had Scott received the challenge of starting a mission than he began challenging others. Six heeded his challenge straight away. These were Miss Margaret Scott (Peter's sister), Miss Riekling, Miss Ludberg and Messrs Kreiger, Severn and Hotchkiss.

Gladys Stauffacher rightly describes the story of missions as "the story of young people and the young in heart venturing into the unknown. It is the story of romance in the setting of a strange land and joy and heartache in lonely places."⁴ This was true of the founders of AIM. The party of the seven young men and women sailed from New York in August 1895, arriving in Mombasa in October.

The declared purpose of the Mission was "not to supplant existing organizations, but to join heart and hand with them in a work of such stupendous difficulty, namely, evangelizing the darkest spot in Africa's continent of darkness."⁵ This purpose was early incorporated

into the mission's constitution: "The object shall be evangelization in Africa, as God shall direct."⁶

The Mission's overemphasis on evangelism caused some of the missionaries who had desired to introduce practical training, for example, teaching men to be carpenters, brick-makers, and farmers to leave the mission.⁷ This affected the mission's early outreach.

The early missionaries though zealous for the Lord failed to show feelings for the culture of the people. An extract from Scott's diary of 1895 is a case in point.

At 1:00 p.m. we sat down to hold our palaver with twenty-eight of the headmen of the district, and they immediately set to work by telling me that, while they were glad to have the white men among them, yet I must remove to another hill taking all my friends with me, as the one on which we now were contained the charm upon which they depended for rain. I then took the opportunity of telling them that the God who once flooded the whole earth would give them 'rain in due season' if they would love and serve Him. This news fell on their ears lightly, and they heeded not, but persisted that we must move. Yet after a certain amount of palaver, they gave us the place to do as we pleased and have promised to sell us food.⁸

Even though their persistence paid at last, the message did not bring change in the lives of the people immediately.

The early founders of the mission concentrated in opening stations. The first station was called Nzai, where a dispensary and the first AIM school was established. Other stations included Sakai (March, 1896), Kilungu (April, 1896), Kangundo (September, 1896) and Mumbuni station, where Scott Theological College is situated, was opened shortly after Kangundo. Scott would walk in a day a distance of 45 miles between Kangundo and Nzai and a total of "two thousand six hundred miles of foot travel in his one year of service."⁹ On December 4, 1896 he succumbed to fever which had racked his body for several months before he died.¹⁰ The last entry of his diary reads,

"here I am, Lord, use me in life or death."¹¹

Left now without a leader the missionaries started leaving one after another. Some returned because of ill health, while others sought employment outside the mission. Nzau station was closed in March 1897; Sakai was closed in September 1897, and Kilungu in June, 1898. Mr. Hotchkiss alone remained in the field.

Three years later another group of missionaries arrived. Rev. Charles Hurlburt was appointed the Director of the mission. He had the same vision that Peter C. Scott had envisioned in founding a chain of mission stations from the coast of Kenya to the heart of Sudan. He precisely described this in his letter written to Rev. Lee H. Downing as follows:

Need I urge you to steadfastly press upon all home workers our call to push a line of stations on to the far north west and to be undaunted by difficulties; to realize that God's blessing on our present undertakings depends not alone on our faithful doing of the work already in hand but also upon our faithfulness to the original purpose for which God called us into being, i.e. the planting of a chain of stations north west into the far interior of Africa till we meet workers coming this way.¹²

A favourite illustration of his, whenever he spoke of the work of the Mission was to liken it to the fingers of a man's hand. The palm rested on Kenya. The thumb pointed towards Tanzania; the fore-finger to Congo (Zaire); the second on Lake Chad; the others to Uganda and Sudan.¹³ The Lord has remarkably fulfilled this dream.

Conflicting Cultures

The early missionaries had little preparation for cross cultural ministry and thus frequently failed to understand and appreciate "strange" features of the African culture.

In this thesis we will endeavour to deal with two cultural issues which have in one way or the other affected the work of the church in

Marakwet. One of these issues is the mission's policy regarding circumcision. The AIM stipulated the following rules for the 'native' Church regarding this rite:

1. If a baptized Christian becomes circumcised according to native custom and with heathen ceremonies, he (she) shall be expelled from the church until there are evidences of genuine repentance. Gal. 6:15; I Cor. 15:11.

2. If a catechumen becomes circumcised according to native custom and heathen ceremonies he shall be expelled from the class until there are evidences of genuine repentance, and shall have his(her) period of probation extended at least one year, depending on the amount of instruction previously received.

3. If a baptized Christian causes or permits one over whom he had authority to be circumcised with heathen ceremonies, he shall be suspended from Church membership for a period of at least one year.

4. If a catechumen causes or permits one over whom he has authority to be circumcised with heathen ceremonies, his period of probation prior to baptism shall be extended at least one year, depending on the amount of instruction previously received.¹⁴

A few years later female circumcision faced greater opposition than that of the male.

A conference of AIM missionaries held at Kijabe in 1921, condemned and forbade the circumcision of Christian and all girls under control of Christian adherents. All transgressors were subjected to church discipline.¹⁵

AIM responded to the Alliance of Protestant Missions in Kenya which had recommended definite discouragement of the practice among all Christians.¹⁶ This Alliance of Missions (CMS, CSM, AIM and Methodist) without dissent, ruled that anyone who underwent female circumcision or any Christian parent who consented to or assisted in the circumcision of the daughter would be disciplined. They all required that Christians before baptism take a vow against female circumcision.¹⁷

Disciplinary action, and that of a severe nature, was taken against those who permitted their daughters to follow this custom. Hilda Stumpf, who was the secretary of the Mission's General Director, describes such a situation.

About three years ago Mucai along with many others was prohibited from teaching and was excommunicated forever, the sentence read, unless he was willing to confess his wrong and swear allegiance to the white man and his rulings. The confession was, sorrow for allowing his daughter to be circumcised.¹⁸

In the CMS Mission station at Kigari, John Comely was noted as having said:

In January 1931 he felt 'led by prayer to see that either circumcision must go in its present form or the church will lose its power and disappear. It is a sign of a covenant and the conditions are of darkness'. Thus on 23 January, Comely and his church elders unanimously ruled that any communicant allowing female circumcision in his or her family would be stricken from the church roll and that all candidates for baptism or confirmation had to repudiate the custom.¹⁹

Several people left the church. Those who remained loyal to the mission were subjected to intense pressure and abuse. Other CMS mission stations were more lenient to this cultural practice and thus received adherents from the stricter CSM or AIM.

As Gehman noted in his book, the AIM Mission went further to pressurize the people by prohibiting female circumcision among girls registered in mission schools. Later, girls who underwent female circumcision were prevented from attending mission schools.²⁰

Individual missionaries, however, questioned this tough stand. A good example is John Stauffacher, an AIM missionary, who wrote:

My opinion about female circumcision . . . 'the whole of Kenya is stirred up as it has now gone from the church to the government, an attempt having been made largely by the missionaries to make a civil law prohibiting it throughout the colony. There is no question in my mind as to whether or not it should be stopped. It is a brutal custom . . . but the question that is puzzling some of us is how to stop it. Some of

the churches are expelling members wholesale, so that where there was a large congregation only four or five members remain. . . .²¹

Gehman rightly states that,

. . . from our perspective today this mission policy regarding female circumcision was a tragic mistake. Instead of 'purifying' the church, the churches were emptied. Instead of strengthening the Christians, they were weakened. For instead of attending churches where the the word of God was fully taught, they became adherents of the African Independent Churches. In the place of the mission churches and schools, the African Orthodox church was established in 1928 with their independent schools.²²

The missionaries prematurely attacked this traditional rite. The imposition of their will on the people had no lasting results as will be examined later.

The second cultural issue that will be considered is polygamy. The first recorded statement on polygamy by the Africa Inland Mission was in 1903. Rev. Charles Hurlburt made the following observations:

Many problems are arising needing peculiar guidance. One is the question of polygamy. Kikuyu for instance, has several wives, all bought before he knew the things of God. He was willing to put them all away, but by our advice kept them, because to drive them away would be cruel injustice, and would force them to lives of shame and slavery. His retaining them has led all but one to a definite, public acceptance of Jesus as saviour. If driven away, they must have hated the Gospel and its teachings. A large majority of the mission feels that the only right basis is to insist that converts take no more wives, if young, that they marry but one, but the wives shall not be put away unless they are willing to go and marry another man. We may change this basis in after years, but this is our present light. While we shall set a premium on monogamy by withholding official privileges from those who have more than one wife.²³

Ten years later, at the continuation of the Kikuyu Conference of 1913, it was recommended that no person living in polygamy shall have the Lord's supper administered to him.²⁴ This was taken further by AIM so that by 1919 the following rules were drawn up for the Native Church:

1. A baptized Christian who enters into a polygamous marriage shall be expelled from the church.
2. A Catechumen who enters into a polygamous marriage shall be expelled from the class.
3. If a heathen polygamist seeks admission to the Catechumenate he may be admitted, but he cannot be received into the Church while a polygamist.
4. A polygamist shall not be allowed to put away his wives against their will and without providing for them. In response to honest, earnest prayer God will provide a way. (Ps. 50:15).²⁵

The above rules have been upheld by the Mission and the church from that time on. Some of the early converts believe that a polygamist is not saved until he puts away his wives except the first one. Administration of the above rules without proper teaching and study of God's word caused a number of people to break away from the mission church and establish some independent churches. These independent churches follow the same doctrinal beliefs as the mission church. The only exception is their approach to the problem of polygamy. Gehman notes, "none of the independent churches embrace polygamy as the Christian ideal. Nor do they allow any polygamist to hold church office. But they all agree without exception that a polygamist who is converted can be baptized and admitted to the Lord's table without being compelled to give up all his wives except his first."²⁶

As seen earlier, the above approach was first advocated by the AIM in 1903. The change of their policy came later and since then the mission has refused to surrender their ground. The national church operates on what they received from the mission church. Genuinely converted polygamists have no share in the fellowship of believers except to give their offerings, and involve themselves in church projects. This will be elaborated later in this thesis.

Missionary Attitudes

During this early period, the western missionaries acted in a superior manner. Several cases could be cited here but due to the length of the paper, a few will suffice. For example, Allen speaking of how trying his workmen were at times writes, "of course, we are in Africa and must not expect so much from these dark sons of Ham as we would from those in the homeland."²⁷

C. F. Johnston at the turn of the century affirmed that, "teaching the people, it might be said, that they are nearly as intelligent as the people at home, and also that they closely resemble the brute creation. It depends altogether from what period or standpoint they are viewed."²⁸

A short time later Johnston relates that it was discouraging to use natives in building an animal stockade "for they (natives) are so stupid, and indescribably 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."²⁹

Gration rightly says, "it is obvious that the Africans were being viewed and judged from the perspective of western civilization and culture".³⁰ It is possible that several of the missionaries were biased in their judgements. These misjudgements to some extent affected the witness of the early missionary.

The Growth of the Mission Church

As stated earlier, the first decade of the mission's work in Kenya was largely one of pioneering. A small group of African professing Christians with very little knowledge of Christian truth was realized.

Gration writes that between the years 1904 - 1924 ten new sta-

tions were added to the list, while the older stations reported considerable growth as African evangelists joined the missionaries in proclaiming the Christian message.³¹

The period of 1925 - 1934 experienced mass movements toward Christianity. The mission stations became the district centres for the surrounding local churches. In the year 1928 the first AIM Bible school for the training of pastors and evangelists was opened among the Kamba tribe. A year later the present day Moffat College of the Bible, was begun among the Gikuyu. The graduates of these Bible schools did remarkable outreach ministry. A number of them were later licensed to baptize and administer communion. However, the first ordination of an African pastor did not take place until April 19, 1945.³² Gratton hints that the reason why it took fifty years before this first ordination was that "some missionaries feared that when they ordain native ministers, they might become in the very nature of the case a church itself; in fact, a denomination."³³ Other missionaries felt that fruitful practical ministry had to be evidenced from the lives of the pastors first.

In the year 1942, the missionaries and the Africans met to draw up a uniform church organization. Their organization resembled both presbyterian and congregational forms of church government.³⁴ It was this year that the Africa Inland Church was organized by incorporating into one body all the churches that the mission had brought into existence throughout Kenya. A year later, the Church's Constitution with Rules and Regulations were ratified. The word 'mission' was dropped out of the church's name, and it became known simply as the Africa Inland Church.³⁵

This researcher is inclined nevertheless to believe that though the word 'mission' was dropped, the missionaries still played a big

role in controlling the affairs of the church. Gration rightly states that "the missionaries sat on all church councils and as late as 1955 the missionary station superintendent had the right to veto any decision of the local council. Furthermore, they often administered the ordinances of baptism and holy communion in a church of which they were not officially allowed to be members."³⁶

In late 1950's and early 1960's when there was a rise of nationalism and independence, the church requested the mission to be joined into one organization with AIC. The mission responded that "... it would be impossible for the AIM to both disappear into the AIC in Kenya and still continue to exist in the sending countries."³⁷

The mission later suggested that if the missionaries were to be considered as members of the African Church in either a 'corporate' or an 'individual' sense then, "... there must be protection against doctrine and practices that might violate mission and individual consciences; i.e. polygamy and female circumcision" ³⁸

The author concurs with Gration that the cause and relevance of this apparent concern is difficult to discern. The AIC at this time had her constitution and most of the elders were more rigid in their ethical standards (even to the point of legalism). This rigidity is carried on to this present time more than even the Mission. This was an unfounded fear because the church has not changed its stand on either of these ethical questions (polygamy and female circumcision) raised by the mission.

On June 29th, 1970 the mission agreed to become a department of the church. All church related properties (movable and immovable) were to be transferred to the church, and henceforth all stations would be called "Africa Inland Church stations." Finally, all AIM missionaries were to become, by invitation, corporate members of the

church.³⁹

In this new era of growth and ministry of AIC, Rev. Wellington Mulwa, the new President led the church to greater heights. On October 16, 1971 the autonomy of the church was officially declared.

Over 20,000 African Christians gathered at Machakos from all over Kenya together with delegates from four other African countries. They were joined by mission representatives from United States, Canada, and England. The conference was historic in that it marked the beginning of a new era for both the mission and the church. AIC was given the file of mission properties and equipment. Rev. Mulwa, the leader of AIC and Rev. Thomas, the leader of the mission signed the official documents in the presence of their lawyers.⁴⁰

See Appendix B for the agreement between AIC and AIM Kenya, October, 16th 1971.

In the 76 year period of the Mission's work in Kenya, several avenues were employed in spreading the gospel. A major avenue was through education.

Educational Programme of the Mission

The AIM was one of the first voluntary agencies to establish schools in Kenya. More of the mission's personnel and financial resources were absorbed here than any other arm of the ministry.

When the Mission started work in Kenya in 1895, it found completely illiterate people. They enticed the first learners in various ways in order to come to any kind of school. In the Mission's development, the first twenty years were solely devoted to education. They saw it as an opportunity of making converts and establishing the Church.

The growth of the educational program cannot be separated from the growth of the church. John Taylor of the Church Missionary Society has stated, "for forty years and more the advance of the Christian church in tropical Africa has depended more upon her virtual

monopoly of western education than upon any other factor."⁴¹

This can rightly be said of AIM:

The church grew out of the school room; in fact, this is where it was born. For better or worse, church and school in the early days were practically synonymous. The early school teachers were also the evangelists or catechists. The village outschool was taught by the catechist. Furthermore, both school and church were in the early days closely identified, if not synonymous with the mission. The building was located either on the mission station or on land that had been granted to the mission in the district. The teacher-catechist was often paid by mission funds and thus was considered by the field council in its employ.⁴²

In late twenties the Government subsidized Mission schools. Due to the Government's demand for greater efficiency, higher standards and permanent buildings, a number of missionaries feared that the spread of the gospel might be affected. Some missionaries even resigned from the field.

Ten years later, quoting the Field Director's summary as a result of this crisis, Gratton writes:

I believe that we have reached a turning point in the work and that we must decide which way we are going to go. Opinion is so divided amongst our missionaries that it is almost impossible to make any progress at the present time. There are some of our missionaries who would have a primary school on every station, if possible, while others think that a primary school in connection with a training institution at some strategic point in each tribe would be sufficient at the present time. There are still others who think that the mission should not have primary schools at all, and there are even some who believe that we should give up our schools entirely. As to receiving Government grants, the whole field is divided on this question. It is most important that we formulate a policy and follow it.⁴³

Six years later, the Mission met and decided upon with the following educational policy:

While the Inter-field committee recognizes that the propagation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ is the principal duty of the missionary, yet it desires a literate Christian Community and the successful

establishment of a self-governing, self-supporting and self-propagating Church with trained spiritual leadership, and feels that much may not materialize without a measure of education. As it is also cognizant of the growing and insistent demand by the Africans in all the fields of the AIM for a certain amount of education, and feels that the schools present a great opportunity for teaching the Word of God, and recognizes the danger of losing many of our adherents to less evangelical denominations unless the Mission does give our adherents some education, it therefore recommends:-

- a) That each Field Council, within the limits of its staff and funds, shall provide as many educational facilities as possible to the Africans in its sphere.
- b) That in the quality of our educational work, our goal shall be to equal or exceed government requirements, and in view of this we favour the establishment of our own teacher training courses and normal courses.⁴⁴

These recommendations were approved on December 21, 1945 by the AIM Educational Committee which met in New York. The following report was sent to the Mission field:

Since literacy is a requisite for Christian growth and development, we recommend:-

- 1) That the policy of the AIM be to maintain schools, making the Government standards the minimum requirements in the respective territories in which the Mission serves.
- 2) That in order to carry out a definite policy it becomes necessary to establish teacher training centres.
- 3) That in order to carry out teacher training, qualified Christian Educationists are necessary to maintain these training schools.
- 4) That there should be qualified evangelical Supervisors to deal with government, and see that government and Mission requirements are maintained.
- 5) That Bible Schools be maintained in conformity to our educational standards.

The Mission serves in a capacity of a trustee . . . until such time as the African Christian Constituency

gives evidence of being able to take over full responsibility.⁴⁵

On August 15 and 16, 1946 the Africa Inland Church Central Church Council met and discussed at some length the Church's interest and need of Schools and passed the following resolutions:

- 1) Schools gather the young people together as no other agency does, now-a-days; and thus provide a magnificent evangelistic opportunity.
- 2) We are working amongst an illiterate people. Christians need to know how to read in order to read the Bible for themselves. Otherwise, they will not become strong in their faith.
- 3) Many Christian homes have been started, and there are now many children of Christian parentage. We want them to receive their education under Christian auspices.
- 4) Leaders for the Church and Schools of the future are needed, and we expect to get them from amongst the children going to school now.
- 5) This is the time when there is a great educational awakening. Other Missions are making much of the present opportunity. We should do so too, and unless we do, our children will drift away from us.
- 6) We want our African ministers to be well-educated.⁴⁶

Since evangelism was carried out largely through the classroom the Mission and the Church redoubled their efforts in founding more nursery schools, primary schools, secondary schools, polytechnics and colleges. A recent report given by the AIC Education Secretary at a Kabarak Leaders Conference concerning Schools sponsored and run by the Church was as follows:

Nursery Schools	235
Primary Schools (sponsored)	1317
Primary Schools (private)	3
Secondary Schools (sponsored)	248
Secondary Schools (private)	6
Polytechnics	30
Colleges	747

Presently, in Primary Schools that the Church sponsor, three of

the Committee members come from the Sponsoring Church. There is allowance by the government that the Chairman come from the sponsor too. In the case of Secondary Schools, four members of the Committee come from the Sponsoring Church. These members are chosen by the Ministry of Education in conjunction with the sponsoring church body.

The Church has a great potential in moulding the lives of these young people. The only unfortunate thing is that the majority of the schools are run by teachers who are not Christians. Now and again we hear of strikes, pregnancies, use of drugs etc by the youth in our schools. The church needs to attach Church ministers to particular Schools within their locality to help in spiritual matters.

This could help, but an overworked Pastor who has twenty local Churches could not possibly do a good job.

The Church still faces the problem faced by the Mission some years back of lack of suitably qualified personnel to carry on the program. Nevertheless, in spite of this shortcoming, the Lord has brought young people to Himself and added them to the Church.

The AIC has a vision of beginning a Graduate Teachers' College to train men and women who can teach, counsel and disciple the youth in our schools. Usually, the further students progress in their studies, the further away they move from the Church because those teaching them are not Christians. Reality shows that in our local Churches, the majority of students are those in Primary schools, followed by those in Secondary schools and lastly those in the university. It is hoped that with the introduction of a Christian college of higher learning, the Church would be able to at least alleviate the above problem. The Mission and the Church has been anxious for their men to enter teacher training etc, but no emphasis was laid upon Bible Colleges. As a result, the Church still lacks trained leadership, disciplined

believers and theological depth. The strong growth of the Church will only be realized when the Church will invest in training her ministers well.

Many of our Pastors have a comparatively poor education and as a consequence are looked down upon by those who are more advanced educationally. A teacher will receive three times the salary of a Pastor and thus becomes more important in the eyes of the people.

Like many other Churches, the Marakwet Church growth was affected by the lack of trained leadership. This issue will be taken up in a later section by the writer.

Endnotes

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¹²Rev. C. E. Hurlburt to Rev. Lee Downing, Nov. 2, 1920, Nairobi: AIM Archives.

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¹⁴Rules for the Native Church - Within the AIM in British E.A. (Kijabe: AIM Press, 1919).

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¹⁸Hulda Stumpf to H. Campbell, May 3, 1927 (Italics in the original).

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²³Hearing and Doing VII, 4, 1903: 19.

²⁴Gehman, p.20.

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²⁶Gehman, P.21.

²⁷Hearing and Doing, III, 2(1898), 5.

²⁸Letter of C.F. Johnston to Mr. Heyhoe in Hearing and Doing, IV, 2(1900), 5.

²⁹Ibid., IV, 6(1900), 4.

³⁰Gration, p. 37.

³¹Gration, p.230.

³²1st Anniversary of the Africa Inland, 15th October, 1972. Kijabe, Kenya: Africa Inland Church Publications, (1972), p. 24.

³³Gration, p.233.

³⁴Ibid., p. 238.

³⁵1st Anniversary of the Africa Inland Church, p. 9.

³⁶Gration, p. 259.

³⁷Minutes of Joint Meeting Dec. 1, 1964. Nairobi: AIM Archives.

³⁸Minutes of Kenya Field Council, March 23 - 26, 14/3 1970, p. 4.

³⁹Gration p. 337.

⁴⁰Ibid.,

⁴¹John Taylor, The Primal Vision London: SCM Press, (1963), p. 20.

⁴²Gration, p. 157.

⁴³Gration, p.166. Letter from H. Nixon to R. Reynolds, Nov. 29, 1939.

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⁴⁵Report of AIM Educational Committee in New York Field Council Minutes, 1946. Nairobi: AIM Archives.

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⁴⁷See Appendix C on AIC Schools within its Church Regions.

CHAPTER III

AIM/AIC KAPSOWAR - MARAKWET

Arrival and Setting Up of the Mission

In the year 1929, the AIM created a new District in the northern area of their field and designated it the Eldoret District. This area comprised all the Kalenjin speaking people group. Other than Keiyo, Marakwet and Pokot, the groups had received the Gospel earlier.

As late as 1930, the District Commissioner in his Annual Report indicated that there were no Missions working in the District. Towards the close of the year two Catholic Fathers, Hartmann and Bergman, visited the Government School at Tambach (the District Headquarters) and conferred with the Principal regarding the possibility of attaching to the school a Christian (Roman Catholic) native who might give religious instruction to those who desired it.¹ A native Catechist was sent from the Roman Catholic Mission at Eldoret in 1931.

In that same year, Rev. Reg Reynolds of AIM Kapsabet accompanied by Abraham Rurie of Githumu visited Tambach and Marakwet with a view to inaugurating Mission work in this field. In October 1931, the mission sent two native adherents from Kapsabet on a short trip to Marakwet . . . 'to spy out the land'. Meanwhile, the government was moving its out-post station from Kapsowar (Marakwet) to Tambach (Keiyo). The Mission, therefore, made arrangements with the District Commissioner to purchase the Old Government 'boma' at Kapsowar. In addition, thirty acres were surveyed and granted for Mission purposes.

The Government consented to the Mission's request under certain conditions, "the chief being that a resident trained medical practitioner or nursing sister be in continuous residence on the plot and that adequate medical hospital equipment be provided."² The Mission completed the purchase in 1933. In handing over the property to the Mission the following agreement was reached with the elders:

We the undersigned elders of Talai, Marakwet so agree to hand over to the AIM the portion of land as pointed out to us by the District Officer for the purpose of building a hospital mission and housing for staff provided only such land is confined to the top of the edge.

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Kiptum Arap Cheptiot | 2. Chepkuyeng Arap Chemurmet |
| 3. Kipsewa Arap Kature | 4. Chepkochoi Arap Kimetet |
| 5. Chepto Arap Kaino ₃ | 6. Muruongwet Arap Kiror, and |
| 7. Moyot Arap Kiptoi ³ | |

The Mission was wise in involving the local elders because in the late fifties and early sixties when the sons of these elders demanded their land back, the surviving elders cited the agreement.

As soon as the property was purchased, Rev. and Mrs Reynolds took residence and as well a nursing sister, Miss Bessie Mildernhall, S.R.N., F.R.N. arrived in December, but no hospital buildings had been erected.

In 1934, a dispensary was erected and opened on the 19th of October. Brick Rondvels - formerly the police lines - were purchased and used as hospital wards. Dr. Lee Ashton had arrived in September, and was later joined by Mrs Ashton also a medical doctor. Towards the end of the year the first Marakwet woman came in for the birth of a child. Serious operations were successfully performed which won the hearts of some of the Marakwets who learned of it.

The Supervisor of the Technical Station in the year 1935 noted: "These Missionaries impressed me as keen, and efficient. The work at present includes itinerating in the villages, and minor medical treat-

ment of out-patients so far as it can be done without a hospital. Fees for medical treatment are being paid by the villagers in potatoes. A sack of potatoes cost Ksh.5/="4

In concurring with this, Mr. W. Slade Hawkins, the District Officer in his report wrote ". . . the activities of the Missionaries at Kapsowar included Evangelical, Medical and Educational, and it would be hard to find an area offering more scope in both directions."5

Difficult Beginnings

The beginning of Missionary work in Marakwet did not go without difficulties. One major problem came from Ibrahim Ali, a Somali Muslim who owned a shop next to the station. One of my informants said that Ibrahim staged a considerable amount of opposition to the Missionaries and told the local people that, if they allowed the Missionaries to settle, they would be deprived of their sons by them. This created some suspicion in the minds of the people.6

Ibrahim's opposition though, was not lasting. He died and in the long run Rev. Reynolds bought his buildings from a Mr. Guled.7 The shop was converted to be the first worship place and school.

Another problem encountered was sickness on the part of the Missionaries. Between the years 1936 and 1938 Rev. Reynolds had to return to England due to sickness. Most of the work fell on Dr. Ashton. Apart from medical services, he administered sacraments, served as superintendent of the Mission station, and was also responsible for supervising Africa Inland Mission Schools in the District.

In April of 1938 Dr. Ashton and his wife went on leave. Mr and Mrs Powley took charge of the Kapsowar Station and, with occasional visits from a visiting doctor, carried on the medical and educational work.

During the war years of 1939 to 1945 some of the Missionaries were instructed by the Colonial Government to render their services. Mr. Powley had to join an ambulance service in Nairobi.⁸

Rev. and Mrs Richardson who were assigned to Kapsowar arrived on the 1st of April 1940.⁹ Rev. Richardson valiantly tried to carry on both the medical and educational activities of the mission, but was not too successful. He seemed not to have gotten along very well with the people. Needless to say, "his strength was in expository preaching."¹⁰

At the end of 1940, the District Commissioner's assesement of the AIM Missionaries was as follows:

The resident missionaries at these places (Kapsowar and Kessup) do practically no touring in the district to gain the confidence of the people by visiting them in their homes, and such respect as they do command is entirely negatived by their anti-circumcision attitude. These AIM folk seem wrapped up in their families to the neglect of the work.¹¹

In February 1941 Dr. Ashton joined the military service and a year later Rev. and Mrs Richardson went on leave to South Africa. The station was thus left without a European.

Because of the irregularities of the Missionaries the Field Superintendent of the AIM suggested that "the Local Native Council take over at least the out-Dispensaries in Marakwet, i.e. Mokerro (Ngejer); Kobuswa (Katkook); and Sengwer (Kapcherop)."¹² This was not acted upon because the Lord honoured the work of missions by providing more workers.

In June 1943, Dr. W. B. Young and Mrs Young arrived at Kapsowar. "Dr. Young was keen and energetic, thus bringing his work added qualities."¹³ In March 1945 Miss Banks, a nursing sister joined them and four years later, Dr. Philip Morris F.R.C.S. whose skill in surgery attracted many from near and far arrived.

Through the ministry of these two doctors, by the end of 1949 about seven African women were in training for nursing and there were five male dressers. Unfortunately, none of the nurses were Marakwet.

As far as maternity work was concerned, the women were dissatisfied when they were not treated according to indigenous custom, and when attended by uncircumcised women. A Missionary nurse at Kapsowar in later years expressed this fear when she wrote:

Before I came here one of the leading thoughts impressed upon me was to get near the people, learn to live as they live, think as they think, do as they do. Yet now I could not help thinking to myself, what have I in common with them? . . . circumcision and marriage are the marks of an adult. I am but a child in their estimation.¹³

Many of the Marakwet women, therefore, resented coming to the hospital for delivery because of this traditional custom which is deeply rooted in them.

There is no way the Mission could provide needed workers for them because there were no trained Marakwet women or men. With time, this resentment died as Christians increased.

Expansion of the Church through Medical Work

Church development in Marakwet cannot be spoken of without the mention of medical work. The following principles suggested by the British Home Council as pertaining to medical policy helped to advance the Africa Inland Church in Marakwet. The policy stated:

Jesus went about . . . preaching the Gospel . . . and healing the sickness. (Matt.9:35).

(a) In obedience to our Lord's command to heal the sick as well as to preach the Gospel, medical work was instituted within the frame work of the Africa Inland Mission as an integral part of its mission.

(b) The purpose of this branch of the mission's activities is to propagate the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, to demonstrate the love of God by healing the

sick and relieving suffering and to disseminate the knowledge of hygiene throughout villages.

(c) The spiritual contribution, an opportunity for Christian witness which medical work affords, cannot be too strongly emphasized and must never be lost sight of. This is assumed as a predominant factor in the mission's policy for its medical work.¹⁴

Dr. Ashton, and later Dr. Morris, saw Marakwet as "an ideal setting for a community health programme with a well established hospital base and wide contacts with the populace through a strategically placed chain of dispensaries."¹⁵ These dispensaries would serve as centres of witness to the Gospel. This dream was realized. Presently, Kapsowar hospital is the established base with over ten dispensaries scattered all over Marakwet. The Gospel is shared in all these centres before the people are treated.

Dr. Richard Stanley Lindsay, who took over the Mission hospital at Kapsowar in November 1953 when Dr. Morris went on furlough, extended the work even further. He travelled far and wide, ate with the people, slept in their homes and spoke the language fluently.

The District Commissioner in his Annual Report commented: "The AIM medical officer, Dr. Lindsay, continued to do sterling work in the Northern areas. Due to lack of adequate roads (and a natural predilection for walking) most of his safaris are carried out on foot and his energy is most commendable."¹⁶ In the following year he wrote: "Tribute must be paid to Dr. Lindsay who is obviously a most efficient and hardworking medical missionary."¹⁷

Dr. Lindsay would travel from Kapsowar to Ngejer, a distance of about twenty five miles, minister to the sick, and preach the Word, then, stay overnight. The following day he would walk on foot to Kisigiria, then Baroko and finally Liter (a distance of about 42 miles from Kapsowar). From Liter he would go to Tot, Kabetwo, Chepkum,

Koitolial, Kapseu, Chebara and finally Kapsowar.¹⁸

Rev. A. R. Checkley did some of these trips with Dr. Lindsay especially in the early months of 1954 to encourage the few believers and witness to non-believers.

Other than medical work, Dr. Lindsay was also a gifted preacher. He administered both baptism and Holy Communion.

Mrs Lindsay was a gifted Bible teacher. She taught and disciplined most of the Marakwet Christian ladies who lived around Kapsowar. Other notable characters who combined both medical skills with Church ministerial skills included Miss Ruth Buckingham who excelled in Sunday School teaching and serving as a pianist at AIC Kapsowar. Miss Kileen Manhood was remembered for her ability in training the nurses. Her warm personality won the hearts of many nurses. Miss Grace Saunders had great capacity for organisation and getting the hospital neat, tidy, and running smoothly. Marakwet women still remember her services in their fellowships.

It is evident that wherever a dispensary was built, a school was also built and one of the classrooms was used as a place of worship.

In conclusion, the writer would say that the primary object in medical work was the spread of the Gospel to those not easily reached by other means. Medical work provided contacts and opportunities. However, for this to be achieved the professional side of the medical work needed the backing of the organized Church, and the support of lively evangelists in team effort. Kapsowar lacked this because there was no organised Church nor trained evangelists. [Yet, on one hand the early converts with their limitations were used by the Spirit of God to witness to those who came for Medical treatment].

In his report to the AIM medical committee Dr. Morris noted:

An African Christian who has received training at Kapsowar Hospital is in charge of the dispensary. He is encouraged to have his wife and family with him and living in the midst of the heathen people of his own tribe; he has the opportunity daily of preaching the word and healing the sick. The success of these very isolated areas depends upon the individual African - his spirituality and his ability. For the most part the dispensers have been of a very low standard educationally and in training and whilst they have all been Christians, prolonged isolation and lack of fellowship with other Christians have often resulted in ineffectiveness.¹⁹

He advised on having refresher courses and periods of special Bible studies for them.

Expansion of the Church through Education

Before the arrival of the AIM Missionaries, there were no educational facilities available in Marakwet. The District Commissioner's annual report of 1924 makes this clear: "There are no educational facilities whatever provided for the Marakwet, a deplorable state of affairs in a tribe which is being fully taxed and showing signs of wishing to advance."²⁰

It was only in the year 1927 that the first school in Elgeyo/Marakwet District (Government African School Tambach), was built. It is reported that this demand came from small boys who forced the elders to agree to it. They stated that all other tribes had schools but that Elgeyo/Marakwet had none and was thus at a disadvantage. This request was not granted by the Hon. the Director of Education. Later, when accepted, the following objectives were set:

The objects of the school are to provide technical education for 30 Elgeyo and Marakwet pupils a year. Reading and writing are to be looked on as necessary evils and the natives are to be educated with a view not to their being learned clerks capable of signing work tickets but artisans useful both in their own Reserves and to the Colony generally.

It is purposed to try to use and improve first the

materials and methods at present existing in the Reserve. For instance as the natives all keep bees it is hoped to introduce through the school better and more economic bee hives, to foster the bees wax industry and to obtain a sale for good honey.²¹

This view was later changed because E. B. Hosking in the year 1931 reported that the school provided the "three Rs" and in addition a five year course in masonry and carpentry, the final year being spent at Kabete (Native Industrial Training Depot).²²

In the year 1934 the AIM proposed to set up an elementary boarding school at Kapsowar, to feed Tambach (G.A.S.), and Kapsabet (A.I.M.) where they proposed to specialize in training teacher evangelists.²³ The Mission succeeded in launching this department. They began with a boys' school and later a girls' boarding school. The teachers included Mr. Joel Arap Chemibei together with his wife Jane, who had been sent by the Nandi District Church Council to open up work in Marakwet. He engaged in evangelistic work and held a small school in his house. His support came from the Nandi Church. As outreach ministry took most of his time, Reuben Arap Seronei and his wife Rebecca also from Nandi took over the education work.

The time table ran from 1:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. The subjects taught were reading and writing. A little history, geography and gardening were introduced by Reuben.²⁴ Reuben later developed some problems and misunderstandings with the Missionaries at Kapsowar. The Nandi elders discontinued him from working with the Mission because of "fighting with all Missionaries at Kapsowar and refusing to say sorry. Secondly for supporting those who wanted to break away from AIM. The elders used the following Kalenjin idiom: 'Kimwa chi kole magiume sasurwet ye maen kebet'. (It literally means, 'one cannot take a shelter under a banana plant, when the rain stops he cuts it down')." They lamented that AIM had helped Reuben in many things but now has

turned against her.²⁵

When Reuben left, the first Marakwet young man, Samuel Chepkarmit took over. He taught until 1942, being replaced in turn by Daudi Kisang and George Kendagor. Daudi left Kapsowar for Ngejer and later opened Kamogo School. In 1937 Miss Halliday was appointed to Kapsowar in connection with the girls' work on the station.²⁶ By the year 1939 the school numbers in Marakwet were about 50 which included 8 girls, some of whom attended daily from their homes.²⁷ The District Commissioner commended the Mission for spearheading female education.

In the year 1941 the Local Native Council granted a site at Sinon near Kapsowar to the Roman Catholic Mission for a new out-school despite protests of the AIM at Kapsowar. The District Commissioner "considered that a little competition would be a healthy thing especially as the surrounding population cannot muster even 1% of literate Christians."²⁸

By the year 1944 the District Commissioner stated, "the people of the District are certainly becoming much more desirous of education, but the position has been gravely prejudiced by the cessation of any teacher training by Government throughout the year."²⁹

Two years later, a teacher Mr. Job Birech who witnessed to several students at Government African School Tambach, left for Kapsabet after 16 years of faithful service at Tambach. The first Marakwet converts, Mr. Samson Chelanga and Mr. Joshua Chebobei, who were baptized in 1932, were his students and fruits of his witness.³⁰

AIM Kapsowar by this year had eight out-schools most of them attached to a dispensary. All these schools were lower primary except one full Primary school at Kapsowar. Ismael Koimur, a first class Marakwet teacher, introduced English at Kapsowar Primary School.

Education of girls at Kapsowar was basically to prepare them for

marriage. The mission felt that "the Christian African home is the corner stone of Christian civilization in Africa."³¹ Because of this the Mission sought to teach and train the girls so that they could found Christian homes as the wives of their evangelists and Christian men.

R. V. Reynolds emphasized the importance of the home. He quoted Abraham Lincoln who said, "all that I am or hope to be I owe to my mother." Napoleon also when asked what France most needed, replied, "mothers." Africa therefore stands in great need of Christian mothers and Christian homes, for she will not rise above the level of her mothers.³² The Mission took this challenge and paid special attention to the winning and training of women and girls through village work and girls schools.

In the girls' school, the courses taught other than the Government approved course of studies included "mothercraft, dressmaking, spinning, weaving, and home management."³³ These courses among other things brought many girls to the Mission Station. Mrs Richardson gives another major reason that brought girls to the station:

In Marakwet the girls found that they could not live pure Christian lives in their home and they came to us for protection from the cruel and filthy initiation rites. Often when they come on the station it is very hard for them to resist the angry threats and curses and other forms of persuasion adopted by their parents and relatives in order to make them undergo the rites.³⁴

In interviewing two mothers and especially one who ran to the station because of the above traditional rite, the writer found that they concurred with what Mrs Richardson has written. This particular lady went through terrific persecution. Her father and relatives came with bows and arrows to threaten the Missionaries if they would not allow their daughter to accompany them back home. Her mother also

came to persuade her and when she refused, threatened to go and curse her by wrapping ashes on her breasts which she sucked and her thighs which she sat on. Because of her strong faith she told her mother that "such curses have no power over her again. The one who is in her is stronger even than the curses."³⁵ She was later married to a Christian young man and has since been one of the key women leaders in the Marakwet Church.

As late as 1958, it was difficult for the Marakwet girls to receive parental consent to go to school. Mrs McMinn said of those in the school:

The majority of these girls cannot go home for holidays as their parents are against their coming to school. Three girls had to hide in our home while angry relations stormed around outside trying firstly by persuasion and then by pleading and finally by threats to make them return home. One succeeded on the second visit.³⁶

In spite of persecutions faced by the girls, solid and sure Christian foundations were laid in them for the upbuilding of Christian character and the establishment of the Christian home. The Mission succeeded in this training but not to the extent of achieving their objective of establishing Christian homes. Mrs McMinn noted this problem:

One factor is that there are fewer Christian men than girls in this tribe, so if the girl has had no offer of marriage, she can see no alternative but to accept the one who her parents favour. . . . in the ten years that I have been acquainted with the work at Kapsowar, ten girls have had a Christian wedding out of a possible three hundred or so who have been in the home for varying lengths of stay.³⁷

A good number of those who went through the girls' school did not have it easy especially when married to nominal believers or non-believers. Two examples would suffice here.

One young woman married in the Church started her married life with fair prospects but after a year or so

her husband started backsliding and going back to the old way of life, and recently he has threatened to kill her because she protested at his taking a second wife.

Another woman was mistreated by her husband; the chief fault he had to find with her was that she had only given birth to girls and no boys!³⁸

Such marriages would deprive the home of love, purity and joy. The writer feels that the Mission and the Church should have emphasised the training of the boys as they did for the girls. Their outreach ministries should have been directed towards the men and the boys because often women are easily reached. To date, there are a number of local Churches in Marakwet without male leadership. Some older folk see the Church as being for young children and women. It would take time to erase this from their minds.

Needless to say, the Marakwet Church is blessed with strong Christian women, a tribute to the Mission.

In the year 1962 the Marakwet Church Leaders felt that it was time for a Boys' Secondary School to be opened in the division. One of my informants said that some of the missionaries were against it. He quoted one who said "Marakwet children have no need for further education, they should be satisfied with the primary education they are receiving and the manual jobs they are doing."³⁹

Other Missionaries, for example Mr. McMinn and Mr. Pinaar helped to promote the School.

Chebara was chosen as the site. The ground had literally been prepared by the foresight of the church leaders. Members of the Christian community moved away from the original settlement to leave the site clear. With the discontinuance of the Primary Boarding School at Kapsowar there were buildings available in which the High School could be accommodated for the first two years of its existence, 1965 - 1967, until new buildings were erected at Chebara.

Similarly, in 1972 the same buildings at Kapsowar were again used for the beginning of a Girls' High School. It was the wish of the Church that when the Girls' School was vacated, perhaps the next use for it would be as a Church Conference/teaching centre. This never materialized because Kapsowar Hospital occupied them.

Out of the AIM Schools came our first traders, teachers, chiefs, members of Parliament, doctors (recently), etc. Most of these people were nurtured and trained in the Mission Schools. The most saddening thing however is that, quite a number of them are out of fellowship. The greatest problem especially among the men is marrying a second wife.

The first converts especially those baptized prior to 1945 seem to have withstood the above temptation. Out of the twenty one baptized members, three yielded to the temptation.⁴⁰ The number of those who left the fellowship increased later.

Other than the issue of the undisciplined believers, several members of the Church came out of the classroom, for example the first baptized Marakwets Samson Chelanga and Joshua Chebobei, were students at Tambach Government African School in 1932. As stated earlier, Job arap Birech an AIM product who was teaching at Tambach, led them to the Lord. Two years later, Elijah Kilimo and Daudi Kisang students at Kapsabet Mission School were baptized and they brought the message back to Marakwet with the first Missionaries.

Bible Training

Bible training was not implemented to go hand in hand with school education.

In 1937, "the Eldoret Field Council approved the suggestion of training boys who are not suitable for school teachers but who would

make good evangelists. They recommended that, should anyone apply to the Mission who had no other qualification (teaching, medical, etc), that there is not only scope for such a person to train evangelists, but also the urgent need that such a work be started. In due course, he might open up a Bible school for this area."⁴¹

This did not take off the ground until the year 1950, when the Mission took the challenge seriously to start a Bible School. The Rev. Kenneth Phillips wrote:

The school will provide courses of intensive Bible study and practical evangelism for representatives from the five tribes in this part of Kenya, numbering about half a million people, all of whom speak the same language. These tribes are, Kipsigis, Nandi, Marakwet, Elgeyo and Tugen."⁴²

The Bible School was begun at Kabartonjo. There were six or seven students in 1952 and all were Tugen. The academic standard for the 1952 class was Standard I and II, some of the students being taught the elements of reading and writing. This is quite startling because of the effort expended by the Church and the Mission alike in Church work against that put by them into Schools. The Church leaders of the immediate future were not taken into consideration. The Church had no men who could cope with the new young learned Africans, especially those teaching or training to teach in Church related Schools. These teachers who were more advanced academically, looked down upon the Pastors, partly because a Pastor received a much lower allowance than a young T4, the bottom grade of a trained teacher.

Some individual Missionaries saw the need for Church leaders of depth and ability. They challenged the Church and the Mission to concentrate on building up training for Pastors and elders.

In February, 1954 Mr and Mrs E. J. Andersen were assigned to the newly opened Nandi/Kipsigis Bible School at Kapsabet. Mr. Andersen

was to be the Principal.⁴³ The Bible School at Kabartonjo was closed down.

The first Marakwet ministers were sent to Kapsabet Bible School in the late fifties and early sixties. These were Loyei arap Talai, Esra, Samuel arap Yego and a lady by the name of Edith Jelimo. This first group did not last long in the ministry especially the first two. The lady did not complete her studies. Samuel arap Yego served the Marakwet Church until the year 1975 when he fell into sin and finally married a second wife. He was the first ordained minister in Marakwet.

The second group of Pastors who have served Marakwet faithfully to date includes Rev. Samuel Cheserek, Rev. Paulo Chepkieny, Rev. Edward Cheboi, Pastor Musa Chelanga and Pastor Stanley Misoi (the last two are at the moment out of Church fellowship). Some lady workers included Irene Chesum (deceased), Rhoda Musa and Nancy Kendagor.

The third group included Mr. Joshua Kwambai (Sub-Chief), Rev. Joseph Cheserek, Pastor Joel Cheron, Pastor Daniel Clement, Grace Mariko (Mrs), Mary Chelanga (Mrs) and Truphena Chepkwony (Mrs).

The majority of the above workers completed primary education before joining Kapsabet Bible School.

In the year 1974 the Lord called the writer of this paper after completing High School to join Scott Theological College, being the first Marakwet to join the College. Since then the Lord has called two other men and two ladies. One of the men is an overseas student, another one is the Pastor of AIC Kapsowar.

The scope of this paper will not allow the mention of many others who have graduated from Bible Institutes/Colleges and are serving the Marakwet Church.

In brief, the writer would say that at present, there are about twenty two workers serving more than seventy Churches in Marakwet.

Due to the shortage of workers, the Marakwet leaders are seriously considering opening an evangelist training centre. The writer was recently made to understand that an area of thirty acres has been acquired for this evangelists school.

Early Converts

The rate of conversion in Marakwet was quite minimal. This discouraged a number of Missionaries to the extent that they referred to the tribe as "degraded". In twelve years, only fifteen Marakwets had been baptized. In 1944 Dr. W. B. Young wrote:

Mrs Young and I both have felt for a long time that the Marakwet don't deserve the title "degraded". They are backward, certainly, but no more degraded than any other tribe in Kenya so far as we with out very limited knowledge can see. . . . They are cheerful friendly and show real care for their children.⁴⁴

He requested that the word "degraded" be erased from the annals of the Kapsowar work.

For the few converts, the step from traditional culture to Christianity was such a tremendous one that the young Christians had to go through a period of indoctrination.

Kapsowar Mission Station helped train the young converts in a spiritual environment. The Christians learned a new way of life (Christian culture) and education. In an annual report of 1945, Kapsowar was still likened to a little island of light in a sea of darkness. Nearly all the souls won for Christ were still congregated there. Over one hundred attended regularly on Sunday mornings. Regular preaching journeys were the order of the day. Two evangelists supported by the Church constantly travelled through the tribe, preaching the Word.⁴⁵

For the new believers, the catechetical classes afforded a period of observation during which the Missionary could see whether the convert was completely divorced from evil traditional practices.

The next step was baptism and being received into Church fellowship. The first baptized Marakwets were two school boys, Samson Chelanga and Joshua Chebobei both of Government African School, Tambach in 1932. Two years later, Daudi Kisang and Elijah Kilimo of Kapsabet Mission School received their baptism at Kapsowar. Their wives received theirs a year later. Other notable characters were Abraham Ngelech, Isaiah Cheptoo, Solomon Cheptoo, Joseph Kipkore, Philip Chepkong'a, Zechariah Kimosop, and Job Kibor (1937); Ezekiel Chebet (1944).

In the early stages of the Church, the Missionary was the prominent figure. Later he appointed elders. The first recognized elders of the Marakwet Church were Mr. Daudi Kisang, Mr. Joshua Chebobei and Mr. Job Kibor.⁴⁶ As these elders and others grew in grace and the knowledge of the Lord, they began to share with the Missionary the responsibility of governing the Church.

Preachers, teachers and dressers (dispensers) were chosen from among the elders. Mr. Job Kibor and Zechariah Kimosop, were paid by the Church to minister in Kapsowar Local Church and visit the surrounding villages to share the Gospel.

Mr. Job Kibor heard the Gospel message for the first time while serving a jail term at Eldoret Government Prison, but never responded to it. A year or so later after his release, he came to Kapsowar with a small herd of goats to seek a permit from the Missionary who was responsible for issuing passes to those who wished to journey from one district to another to sell or move goats or sheep. The Missionary

requested him to stay at Kapsowar for a little while to learn how to read. He further promised him work to do and pasture for his goats. Mr. Kibor agreed and thus began learning how to read. It did not take him long to know the alphabet and join the letters together. As soon as he mastered these he requested the Missionary to allow him to continue his journey. He took with him the book of Genesis and the New Testament text in the Nandi language. Mr. S. M. Bryson writes that:

Night by night he lit his crude lamp, a small piece of wool for a wick floating in oil in a half gourd, which gave just enough light for him to read by. He read of Abel, the good man, and of Cain, the murderer, and conviction came to his heart. As he read the New Testament especially Matthew 11:28-30; he believed and surrendered his life to the Lord.⁴⁷

No sooner did he surrender his life to the Lord than he began moving around preaching the things which God had revealed to him. The Missionaries saw the potential in him and thus enlisted him both as a preacher and an evangelist. He had a good reputation as a man of faith, a man of the word and a man of prayer. He imitated the Lord Jesus Christ in his loving spirit; he thought, spoke, and acted in a kindly manner.

As a preacher, Mr. Kibor gave very powerful messages full of illustrations and idiomatic expressions. He rebuked those who claimed to be Christians but did not show it by their actions.

His home became a place of refuge for those young Christians who fled from their homes because of being forced to undergo traditional initiation rites.

Though Mr. Kibor and his wife had no children of their own, their home was always full of young people. The testimonies which were given at his funeral by those who passed through their home bore witness to this.

The temptation to marry a second wife because of not having children by the first one never moved him from his faith.

The Marakwet Christians are grateful for having a church father that they can emulate. Mr. Kibor is not the only Marakwet elder that we can talk of. Others included Elijah Kilimo a dispenser and a preacher; Ezekiel Chebet, a teacher and a preacher; Daudi Kisang, a teacher; Samson Chelanga and Joshua Chebobei, carpenters and preachers; Abraham Ngelech, a dispenser and preacher, and a few others who are still faithfully serving the Lord in spite of their old age.

In these early days the Missionaries did all the baptizing of converts and presiding over the communion table. It was not until the mid sixties that this ministry began to be shared by the Marakwet Pastors.

As earlier stated, the council of elders was born in 1939 but it took the Mission about twenty years to transfer the offices of Chairman, Secretary, and Treasurer to the Marakwet leaders. It was in the year 1958, that Mr. Joshua Chebobei was elected the Chairman, Daudi Kisang, the Treasurer, and Henry Cheboi, the Secretary of the Africa Inland Church, Marakwet District Church Council.

Church Extension

The development of outreach work was a feature of the work based on Kapsowar. All Marakwet Christians as stated earlier congregated at Kapsowar Mission Station. Several of the early believers interviewed, praised the calibre of the fellowship enjoyed. They ate together, visited one another, helped one another and worked as children of one parent. Their unity helped quell opposition from non-Christians. These early believers met in the Church building every morning at 6:00 a.m. for prayers. On Sundays some went to surrounding villages to

share the Gospel. Sunday afternoons were used for sharing prayer requests, testimonies and praying for other Mission stations using the AIM prayer letter.

As far as Church extension is concerned, the policy in Marakwet seemed to have been - build first a dispensary, or a school and run the Christian work from these. Teachers and dispensers (dressers) were to do their regular work of teaching or healing and then serve also as evangelists and preachers during the weekends.

A Missionary with a vision (Mr. Maxwell) told the congregated believers, "It is good for you to separate or disperse because the number of believers was growing larger and the Talai people who lived around the Mission station feared that their land might be taken. They constantly fought the Christians."⁴⁸

The believers positively responded to it. Some of them e.g. Samuel Koilege, Kimuron Arap Tolkos, Ezekiel Chebet, Josiah Kipsarno Arap Yego and Marko Meng'ich moved to Chebara. A site for a school was granted to them. All Christians from Kapsowar went for a week to build the classrooms and a teacher's house. They slept in the open under a bush at night. The ladies slept in a nearby home.

While the men cut the poles and built the houses, the ladies cut the grass to thatch the roofs. Mr. S. Chelang'a remarked, "because our fellowship was great, no one complained."⁴⁹

Mr. Solomon Arap Chemwal and Ezekiel Arap Chebet became the first teachers. Mzee Ezekiel taught until his retirement. In 1986 he went to be with the Lord. The Marakwets remember him as a good teacher and a good preacher.

As Christians increased in the out-stations, services began to be organized in the neighbouring villages.

From Kapcherop services were held at Kamoi eight miles away and

at Tenden the same distance in the opposite direction.

Kamogo and Ng'ejer combined and held services at Kapchebau and Tot.

Chebara reached out to Kapseu and Chebiemit.

Kapsowar supplied speakers for Chesoi, thirteen miles away and Sowerwo, six miles away. They also began fortnightly services at Kapsumai six miles east of Kapsowar.

From Yemit, the Christians visited Chebororwa and sometimes Kimnai.

Sites for building these Churches were granted. The Mission helped with some corrugated iron sheets for roofing some of the Churches. The walls were smeared with mud. Mr. Joshua Chebobei who was a trained carpenter constructed many of the buildings. Dr. Young helped construct the Kapsowar Church.

The Marakwet Church had as yet no trained workers. Simple believers were ready to visit these places and lead the services. They held these people together. They read the Scripture, gave a simple message, led in singing and in prayer.

In her report of 1960, Mrs McMinn said:

There was an increase of small and larger meetings all over Marakwet on a Sunday. Twenty gatherings were held week by week, some with only ten attending or larger ones with one hundred and fifty folk. The majority of these are led by our African Christians, some with very little teaching themselves.⁵⁰

To achieve this growth, the Mission and the Church used Church services, catechistical instruction, school work, a hospital, itinerant evangelism and village visitation. Also the spontaneous extension of the Church from the Mission station was a feature. Several young couples moved to new out stations, to start new gardens, build new houses and invite their neighbours to little informal services.

Description of Growth Patterns

Statistics for composite membership advocated by "Church Growth" are not available.

All the AIC Churches in Marakwet had people attending the catechumen classes. But, the average attendance of these classes does not seem to have any bearing on the actual number of baptisms each year. There were those who remained in the catechumen classes for a very long time because of their marital problems or other reasons that hindered them from baptism.

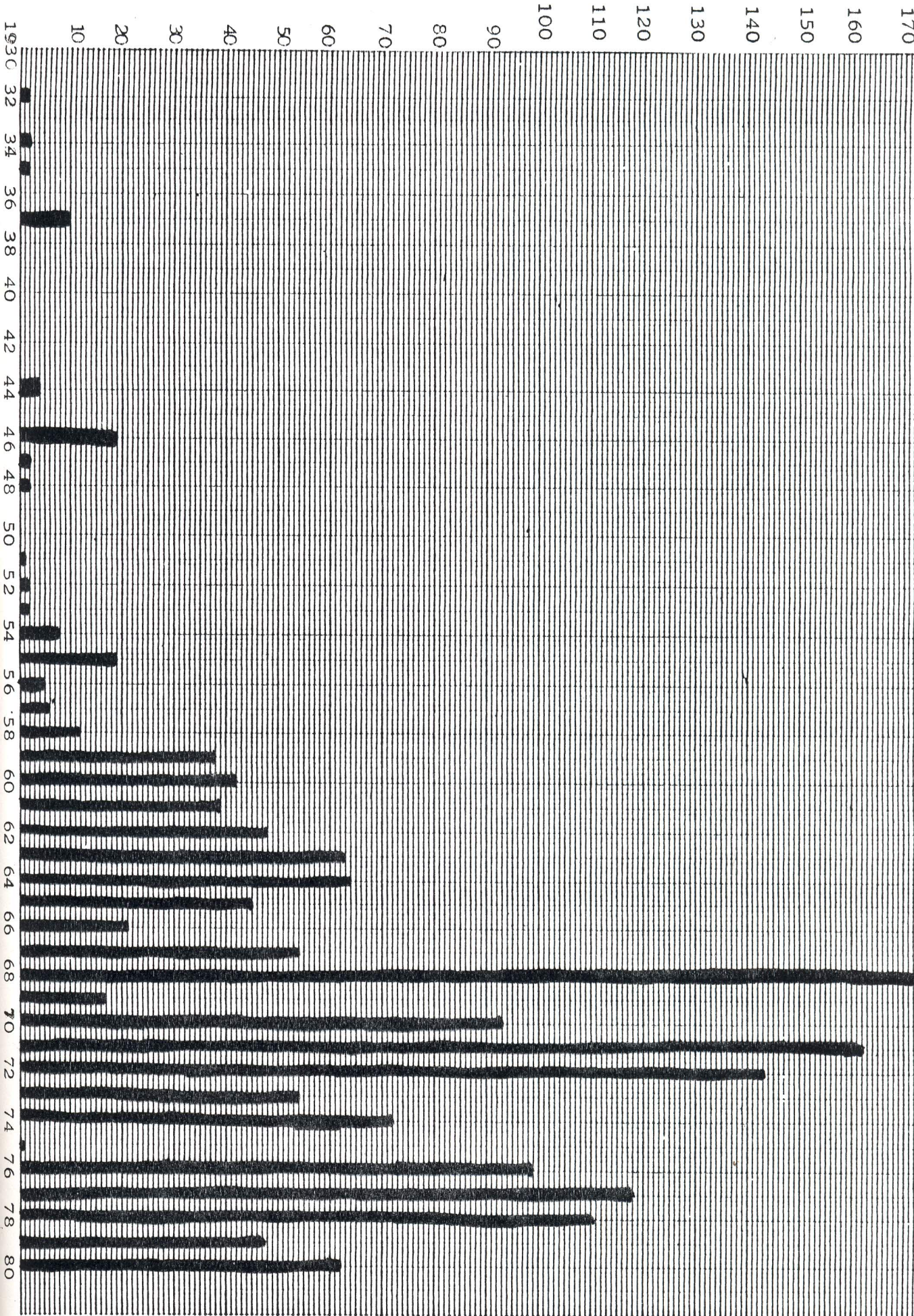
The growth of Church membership was slow but steady. This can be seen from the following figures.

Between 1932 and 1942, the Marakwet Church had seventeen baptized members. 1943 and 1952, forty one; 1953 and 1962, two hundred and twenty two. 1963 and 1972, eight hundred and eighty.⁵¹ For more clarification, see the graph on the next page.

We need to bear in mind that these baptized members belong to sixteen local Churches and few other Church centres. Also that not necessarily all baptised members are in fellowship. Some members reverted to old traditional customs by either consulting traditional religious specialists, marrying other wives or being enslaved by alcoholic drinks. Others never abandoned the custom of circumcising their children secretly by sending them to their grandparents, aunts or other relatives. Between the year 1932 and 1960, eighty six men were baptized and twenty two of these married other wives.⁵² Christians of this kind cause others to stumble and constantly wound their own conscience. They are ever guilty and lack the fruit of the Spirit - peace and joy. One of my informants counted less than ten families who had completely abandoned these traditional rite.

The Church experienced phenomenal growth in the sixties when

BAPTIZED MEMBERS



compared with earlier years. The reasons for this growth are several in number. It will suffice to mention a few here. The major reason was the Marakwet Pastors. The Marakwet Church received its first trained ministers during this period. They were quite active and aggressive in evangelism. They visited different surrounding homes and villages for one full week once a month, preaching the Gospel and inviting people to Church. Many people responded positively to the Gospel. Secondly, the newly constructed Church buildings attracted more people than when they met under shades of large trees. Thirdly, converted youth witnessed to their peers. Many responded to the Gospel. An indication of this was a youth camp of 1972 which was attended by approximately two thousand young people.⁵³

The Church has grown steadily ever since. The main thing that puzzles one is the failure to fill the constructed Church buildings. Local Churches which were constructed in the fifties are still half full. Yet there has been a continuous population increase.

Several of those interviewed thought that many baptized Christians went back because of a lack of teaching. Pulpit ministry too was not strong enough to hold the people together, thus causing some to leave the Church. Some of the other members moved to new districts e.g. Trans Nzoia and Uasin Gishu.

So, in spite of numerical growth, the expansion of the Marakwet Church was not really healthy. As earlier stated, the Mission majored on the youth and women and failed to reach the heads of families, thus hampering the real growth of the Church. They failed to prioritize in reaching men. Coupled with this were the children of the Church members. Unlike healthy Churches that receive more of their new members by biological growth, the Marakwet Church was different. It is sad to say that nearly all the children of our first

believers are out of Church fellowship. Not one entered into Church ministry. Interviewing some of the believer's children made me understand that their parents emphasized secular education. They wanted them to be teachers, doctors, engineers, etc.

Church ministry was discouraged because those who entered into it were poorly paid. The writer remembers when he received God's call to the pastoral ministry, some elders of his local Church AIC Kapsowar discouraged him a lot. Their argument was, "What shall we pay him when he returns home from College? He could as well do something else and be used of God in the Church". He pleaded with them that the one who called him would provide his needs. Mr. Job Kibor whom the writer has referred to in this thesis a few times supported him, encouraged him and daily prayed for him. He persuaded the Church elders to allow him to join Bible College. They finally agreed and sent him with their blessings. Many other Marakwet Pastors can share the same experiences they faced and also end up praising God for Mr. Job Kibor.

Since Marakwet is basically a rural area, several of the learned young Christians leave their homes to look for jobs in towns. Not many survive the temptations of town life. Those who do, benefit the Church of Christ in these places and the Marakwet Church remains the poorer.

The present leadership of the Marakwet Church needs to think of ways and means of assuring constant and healthy growth of the Church.

As already pointed out, the Marakwet Church has been affected mainly by two cultural issues i.e. polygamy and traditional circumcision. The author in the next chapter will fully discuss these cultural problems and their effects on Church growth.

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CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION/IDENTIFICATION OF PROBLEMS TODAY

Polygamy in Marakwet

Reasons for Polygamy in Africa

Polygamy in the form of polygyny is a feature of many non-Christian cultures, particularly in Africa. It is both an immemorial custom and a contemporary reality.¹ Polygamy has been at the heart of the whole marriage debate within the church in Africa and it is one of the important issues the Church has to deal with.² David B. Barrett states that "polygamy has always been a normal sanctioned institution in the majority of African societies" and that it has been the traditional norm in another 34 per cent of all sub-saharan tribes and common in another 44 per cent.³ The African Church needs to think through this cultural issue in the light of the Scripture. Though admittedly polygamy is a most difficult problem. Polygamy as C. P. Groves notes, is "a custom so firmly set in the social fabric [which] is not easily surrendered . . . the Christian church has found this its greatest obstacle."⁴

Reasons as to its persistence include, first, that some claim that there are more women than men in their locality. Men need to take more wives to relieve the surplus. Second, African men marry later in life (30 - 50 years of age). This increases the surplus of women noted above. Third, outside pressure placed on them by their families, relatives and friends. Fourth, women who have children outside marriage are considered second-rate. The solution to this

problem is to take a second wife. Fifth, Africans have a strong desire to have offspring. It is reasoned that the more wives, the more this desire can be fulfilled. Sixth, when men die leaving a wife behind, it is customary for the wife to become the eldest brother's wife. If he is already married, polygamy results. Seventh, sometimes women refuse sexual intercourse - during the period of lactation or after the menopause period. The man who is a polygamist, can move to a wife who is not nursing and thus it would save him from going out. Gerhard Limborn had earlier written "the fact that at the beginning of pregnancy, all sexual intercourse between married couples ceases, undoubtedly promoted polygamy."⁵ Eighth, wives can also become sick, physically or emotionally. A man then justifies the taking of another wife. Ninth, some assume that the male is much more virile by nature than a woman. Thus, the man must have access to more women, since he has a tremendous sex drive. Tenth, in an agrarian society, the number of farm labourers is highly important. The more wives and children a man has, the more status and income one gains. Eleventh, many feel that polygamy exists because tribal beliefs view women as property. They are like cattle in a way, because the number one has is directly related to one's prestige in society.⁶ Twelveth, "polygamy provided a form of security or a guarantee, because the children cared for the parents in their old age."⁷

Barrenness was one of the reasons that constituted polygamy.

John S. Mbiti states:

To lack someone who keeps the departed in their personal immortality is worse misfortune and punishment than any person could suffer. To die without getting married and without children is to be completely cut off from the human society, to become disconnected, to become an outcast and to lose all link with mankind.⁸

On this same note Kenyatta writes, "it is the desire of every member

of the tribe to build his own family group, and by this means to extend and prolong his clan resulting in the strengthening of the family."⁹ Polygamy could serve as one of the ways of extending this clan. Polygamy also brought a tie between the families through multiple marriage. As Eugene Hillman writes:

There is also the practical need to form an alliance between family and clan groups. Where marriage is conceptualized as an arrangement between such groups and only concomitantly between husband and wife, and the bonds of marriage, it may be seen in terms of social alliance. In other words, polygamy is a function of social solidarity on the level of the extended family, the clan and the tribal or ethnic community. Each new marriage sets up new relationships of affinity between two different kin groups - that of the husband and that of the wife, and their children are kin to both groups. A variety of new mutual assistance is established.¹⁰

The issue of inheritance of family wealth also calls for polygamy. If the first wife has only daughters the man will go for a second wife and possibly even a third looking for male children.

Those in leadership, for example, chiefs and kings, created alliances through multiple marriages. Also as Groves writes, "with the woman as traditionally the food preparer, the chief found himself almost inevitably a polygamist in discharging his duty of hospitality."¹¹

Another reason that surfaced during my interviews was, "if a man has several properties, the inclination is to have a wife manage each of the properties. This is quite evident in Marakwet where people might have two homes, one in the highland and the other on the escarpment. The highland farm was for looking after and grazing the cows while the one on the escarpment was for keeping the goats and the sheep"¹² Due to so much separation of the husband and wife, the man would resort to getting another wife to stay with him.

The View of Early Missionaries

The area that AIM moved in was an area where polygamy was widely practised. Though they believed that monogamy was the Christian norm, the director of AIM as quoted by R. J. Gehman made the following remarks concerning polygamy in 1903:

Many problems are arising needing peculiar guidance. One is the question of polygamy. Kikuvu, for instance, has several wives, all bought before he knew the things of God. He was willing to put them all away, but by our advice kept them, because to drive them away would be cruel injustice, and would force them to live lives of shame and slavery. His retaining them has led all but one to a definite, public acceptance of Jesus as Saviour. If driven away they must have hated the gospel and its teachings. A large majority of the mission feels that the only right basis is to insist that converts take no more wives, if young, that they marry but one, but the wives shall not be put away unless they are willing to go and marry another man. We may change this basis in after years, but this is our present light. While we shall set a premium on monogamy by withholding official privileges from those who have more than one wife.¹³

This first record on polygamy is identical to the decision of all the independent churches which broke away from the Africa Inland Church.

Ten years did not elapse before the change in dealing with polygamists and Church membership resulted. Gehman speculates that this change might have come through the influence of John Arthur, an "heir of Calvinism in the Church of Scotland, and prominent in the Alliance of Missions."¹⁴ Calvin had forbidden polygamy, saying the patriarchs were guilty of sin.¹⁵

AIM began formulating rules for the native Church concerning polygamy and other issues. The Missionary Conference held at Edinburgh in 1910 concluded, "polygamy is simply one of the gross evils of heathen society which, like murder or slavery, must at all costs be ended."¹⁶ The Mission's rules of 1919 concerning polygamy

read as follows:

1. A baptized Christian who enters into a polygamous marriage shall be expelled from the church.
2. A catechumen who enters into a polygamous marriage shall be expelled from the class.
3. If a heathen polygamist seeks admission to the catechumenate he may be admitted, but he cannot be received into the church while a polygamist.
4. A polygamist shall not be allowed to put away his wives against their will and without providing for them. (In response to honest, earnest prayer God will provide a way, (Ps. 50:15)¹⁷

In the first Africa Inland Church (AIC) Constitution written in 1943 and revised in 1945 and 1947, the following were added:

1. Where men living in polygamy give evidence of a desire to live the Christian life, every effort shall be made to help and encourage them, looking forward to the time when all wives but one may be put away without dishonour to them.
2. Polygamous wives, who are so bound by local custom that they are unable to remedy their state, though desirous of doing so, may be baptized if the relevant Regional Council gives its consent, but every case of such contemplated baptism of a polygamous wife must first be referred to the Regional Council.¹⁸

The Central Church Council of AIC later welcomed and commended to other regions a resolution adopted by Ukambani and Lake Regional Church Councils, stating "that if a man has two or more wives who are believers, only the first wife may become eligible for baptism."¹⁹

This has become the pattern in the AIC Church ever since for those who qualify for baptism. Early missionaries viewed the whole practice as demonic, uncivilised and thus requiring total abolition.

The practice of putting away other wives except one threatens the stability of the family relationship as well as breaking family covenants. The children suffer most. The women sent away might enter into prostitution because of the impossibility of being married

again.²⁰ Hillman sees this practice of sending away the other wives as being not congruous with the Christian spirit of love and grace.²¹ Hastings also in support of this states, "divorcing all but one wife would be detrimental to both wives and children because the marriage was contracted in good faith and sanctioned by the religious norms of their past belonging before conversion. Furthermore, each wife would have had a rightful claim over her husband and so would be the children over their father."²²

In the area of denial of a polygamist to baptism, Bishop John Colenso of Natal in 1862 in a letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury declared:

The conviction has deepened within me more and more that the common practice of requiring a man, who may have more than one wife at the time of his conversion, to put away all but one before he can be received to Christian baptism, is unwarranted by the scriptures, unsanctioned by Apostolic example, authority, condemned by common reason and sense of right and altogether unjustifiable.²³

On the other hand, some Africans have become hostile to the gospel because a number of the missionaries had no sympathy with their cultural values, attitudes and customs. Due to this cry, some "recent theologians have reconsidered the issue using a more culturally sympathetic approach to the Bible."²⁴ One example cited is that of Charles Kraft who wrote, "how the faces of Africans light up as they hear that God endorsed levirate (Deut. 24:5-10), polygamous (2 Sam. 12:7-9), arranged marriages (Gen. 24:50-51, 34:10-12) and many other customs similar to theirs."²⁵ Eitel rightfully states that God did not 'endorse' but rather allowed the above marriages and allowance here means toleration of an unacceptable practice.²⁶

We will now turn to the Biblical teaching regarding polygamy.

Biblical Perspective

A. Levirate Marriages

This custom is cited in Gen. 38:8, Deut. 25:5-10 and Ruth 4:1-7.

The aim of this marriage was to preserve the bloodline. Eitel states:

The levirate marriage . . . arose out of the intense patriarchal desire of ancient Hebrew men not to allow their bloodline to cease. If a woman was widowed without having any children (it did not have to be a male), the brother of the deceased husband was to take the woman as his own. The children of the union would carry the deceased brother's name. Thus, the bloodline would continue.²⁷

This custom was not divinely instituted. It was a tolerable practice, not a recommended one. It was not allowed by God, just as divorce was. Levirate marriage "was restricted and regulated so as not to violate the sanctity of marriage as established by God."²⁸ There was an assumption on the part of Boaz (Ruth 4:1ff) according to later Rabbis that he was not married.

B. General Polygamy

1. Old Testament Teaching

This is first recorded in Gen. 4:19 when polygamy entered history.²⁹ Lamech married two women. He was the seventh from Adam in the line of Cain. God's original divine intention was monogamy (Gen. 2:23-24). Quoting from Keil and Delitzsch commentary, Eitel states that "the sense of the passage seems to imply the motivation for this marital innovation was simply lust. The names of his wives help establish this contention. Adah means 'the adorned', and Zillah means either 'the shady' or 'tinkling'." ³⁰

Genesis 16:2 records Abraham going into Hagar which was in keeping with the customs of his day.³¹ His polygamy is reported as a criticism. No blessing rested upon it. It constituted a poor human makeshift solution, a sign of lack of faith, leading to contempt,

jealousy, quarrelling in the home and estrangement between husband and wife (Gen. 26:35).³²

Though Jacob married two sisters (Gen. 29:21-30:13), the circumstances for his polygamy were later negated by God, ". . .do not take your wife's sister as a rival wife and have sexual relations with her while your wife is living." (Lev. 18:18, NIV).

In his marital life Jacob had nothing but trouble with the two sisters he married. There was rivalry and hatred in his home (Gen 29:30-31).

From David on, the kings of Israel indulged in the practice of polygamy. "This gave them social status and enabled them to negotiate easily in political affairs."³³ Yet not realizing the danger, Solomon married foreign and pagan wives which later caused him to lapse into idolatry (I Kings 11:4-5). David's kingdom was therefore ruined through polygamy because the multiple wives turned his heart after other gods.

Earlier warning had been given for a choice of a King (Deut. 17: 17): he must not take many wives, or his heart will be led astray. The Kings of Israel were later guilty of this.

In his concluding remarks Hastings notes, "the Old Testament presents us with a number of examples of polygamous marriage, notably the cases of Jacob, David and Solomon. Israelite society of the time undoubtedly accepted polygamy and there is no condemnation of the practice as such anywhere in the Old Testament."³⁴

There is no mention of polygamy during the post-exilic period. The ideal form of marriage was monogamous.³⁵

From the foregoing Old Testament teaching, we can conclude the following sentences from Eitel:

Polygamy in the O.T. was something which arose out

of the sinful desires of men in a variety of circumstances. Nowhere does God sanction or condone the practice. The results were usually strife and displeasure. Polygamy was simply a deviation from the prototype established by God in Gen. 2:24 'for this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.' (NIV).³⁶

In his contention, Calvin as quoted by Hillman states, "polygamy was prohibited by natural law and . . . it was directly opposed to the secondary end of marriage because it hindered domestic peace and created inferiority among the wives."³⁷ Anyone who comes from such a background can testify to this.

2. New Testament Teaching

The New Testament is silent on the issue of polygamy. Christ addressed marriage issues in Mk. 10:4-9, Lk. 16:18, and Matt. 5:32, stressing the two becoming one flesh and regarding divorce. In His teaching, He stated that it was due to human hardness that Moses even allowed for divorce in the first place, and that it was not the intended pattern. He further stated that anyone who does divorce his wife, and joins himself to another, is involved in adultery. Likewise, if a woman divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery. Eitel quoting Charles Hodge arguing from the above passages states:

It may be argued that if one does not divorce his wife, he may possibly marry another without being guilty of what Christ prohibits in this passage. The entire concept of adultery comes into question. What is adultery if it is not joining one's self to a person while having a living marital partner? In this sense polygamy constitutes adultery.³⁸

Hillman in quoting Hastings objects to the above statement because according to him polygamy should not be compared "to adultery because in itself it is a responsible, caring, legal and public enduring relationship and it is accepted as such in the judgement of

people. It is a form of marriage that is a custom and not sinful (the polygamist has no guilt conscience as committing adultery). In a traditional sense, it had nothing to do with free love."³⁹

In the pastoral epistles (I Tim. 3:2, Titus 1:6) one of the criteria for an overseer or Bishop in the early church was that he be the "husband of one wife".⁴⁰ The overseer had to serve as an example to the people of God. Polygamy was prohibited to him.

These passages speak as if there was polygamy in the Church during this time. Hillman noted that:

Josephus, the Jewish historical writer of the first century, mentions it in two places that polygamy existed and was practical within Jewish communities. Not only Josephus but even Justin Martyr (165 A.D.) gave witness to the existence of polygamy.⁴¹

On the other hand Hastings states that:

It is just possible that the intention of the above passages (Mk. 10:4-9, Lk. 16:18, Matt. 5:32) was to rule out the appointment of a polygamist as elder and does, then, imply both a moderate condemnation of polygamy and the acceptance within the congregation of the church of some people with more than one wife'. It is far more likely, however, that its meaning is either simply to stress the duty of fidelity to one's wife or to exclude from office men who have had a broken marriage in the past, or even a remarried widower.⁴²

In conclusion, we can say that God allowed polygamy just as Moses allowed divorce. "The two becoming one flesh" is taken as authority throughout Scripture and Bible believing Christians must adhere to it. Marriage looked at within the wider scriptural teaching supports monogamy as the ideal.

Yet we have to bear in mind that as the gospel is taken to tribal groups where this custom is still very strong, it has to be dealt with. Polygamists have been categorized as follows: Those who become polygamists before the Christian message was presented to them and those who become polygamists when they are already in the fellowship.

The First Category. It has been argued over and over again that this group needs to be accepted into the Church. One of the reasons given is, "acceptance by God is on the basis of faith and faith alone, not on social organization."⁴³ Fountain C. Oswald continues to state that "if we believe that God has accepted this person, then we should accept him into full fellowship with other members of Christ's body. The same with the believing wives."⁴⁴

M. D. W. Jeffreys still in support of Oswald writes "asking a man to repudiate any of his wives is more legalistic".⁴⁵ Conversion is by faith alone. Their recommendation is to have an effective Bible teaching programme in the Churches so as to prevent the continuance of polygamy. "In 1963, the All Africa Church Conference in Makerere (Uganda), under the leadership of Professors Gordon Dunstan and Bolaji Idowu declared that a pagan polygamist upon conversion be received to the church together with all his wives and children, and that a case of a Christian who turned polygamous be studied carefully according to its merits."⁴⁶

As well as being accepted into Church membership, the polygamists also need some counselling. Mbiti states, "the polygamists also need to be taught how to make their marriage better in the light of their new life. This is a more positive way to help them."⁴⁷

The concensus of many writers including African brethren is to accept a polygamist convert in this category to fellowship without any condition except that he cannot attain Church leadership (I Tim. 3:2).

Failure to deal fairly with polygamists in this category is in a way implying that the only sin that Christ's power cannot penetrate is polygamy.

The Second Category. A person who enters into polygamous marriage

after accepting Christ must be dealt with differently. Church discipline must be administered. It is only after the church has seen that he has genuinely repented and abandoned his practices that he could be accepted into fellowship.

Christians are expected biblically to enjoy monogamous marriage as Henry Okullu notes, "when monogamy is clearly taught as a form of marriage which is in line with Christian teaching and when Christians are well rooted in Christ and God's word, Christ being the centre of their lives, they will be proud of being monogamists."⁴⁸

All Christians are expected to agree and abide by the canons and regulations of the church. An African Christian is expected to review his marriage custom in the light of the biblical purpose of marriage, this being (a) fellowship of the married partners (Gen. 2:18); (b) enjoyment of sex (Gen. 2:24); (c) safeguard against sin (I Cor. 7:2); and (d) bearing children (Gen. 1:28).⁴⁹

When circumstances, for example, childlessness, widowhood, or lack of male children arise, the Christian must count the cost and not resort to polygamy. The word of God must always be their norm and not their cultural demands.

The growing African Church must think of her quality and not just the quantity. Like the Jerusalem Church (Acts 15), the Church needs wisdom to sit and deal with this social problem and warn those who have not entered into polygamy to totally abstain from the practice.

C. Conclusions

The AIC Church in Marakwet has existed for more than 71 years. Evangelistic efforts have been successful to some extent. Local church organizations exist and yet a number of the earlier believers have not maintained their Christian faith. Some have turned back and

taken two or three wives and ultimately cut themselves off from Church membership. These men have no peace because their acts are in conflict with their convictions. Most of those talked to by the author are distressed and feel some remorse or shame inwardly. One Christian polygamist in particular wished he had not entered into the relationship. He is in a dilemma as to what to do with the wives and children that he has.

Since conscience is a gift of God which is innate and universal, the Marakwet Christians like other Christians elsewhere must be challenged to respect it. If their convictions are in line with God's word, they must act according to them.

Not only do Christian polygamists desert the fellowship of other believers because their consciences accuse them, but they also cause others not to draw closer to Christ. Paul warns Christians on hindering other Christians' spiritual lives. He writes "be careful . . . that the exercise of your freedom does not become a stumbling block to the weak" (I Cor. 8:9).

If a Christian takes another wife when he has doubts in his own mind as to whether it is right or wrong before God, his action does not spring from his faith or trust in God and is therefore wrong. Likewise the strong Christian (Rom. 15:1) is wrong if he causes a weaker brother to sin (by doing something while doubting 14:20), and a weak brother (Rom. 15:1,2) who goes against what he doubts also sins (Rom. 14:23).⁵⁰

Some weaker Christians who were examining the lifestyles of the backsliden Church leaders and particularly two of the first Marakwet pastors who took other wives were injured by them. The author of this paper heard one man say, "if so and so who was a very strong Christian turned back, I don't think whether (sic) I can make it." Such mar-

riages have also offended the conscience of the Christian community in Marakwet.

Polygamy has therefore taken away members from the Church, caused others to stumble and created untold problems which the Christian Church in Marakwet needs to handle.

Traditional Circumcision

In this section the writer intends to deal with circumcision generally, while laying more emphasis on female circumcision because it the 'rite of passage' which has affected the growth of the Church.

Definitions

Female circumcision has been defined as:

A form of genital and sexual mutilation of females. It involves the excision or removal of clitoris and sometimes the the labia. This is usually done traditionally by unqualified circumcisors using crude and dirty instruments such as knives and blades.⁵¹

The Kenya Missionary Council (KMC) in 1929 had adopted the above term "the sexual mutilation of women", conveying the nature of the operation rather than the customary expression "female circumcision."⁵² But those who practised this rite argued that its significance does not lie in its physical aspect, but rather it was part of the initiation rite into womanhood, rites that went deep into tribal life and custom. As Kenyatta notes, "the real argument for this rite de passage is that the operation is still regarded as the very essence of an institution which has enormous educational, social, moral and religious implications . . ."⁵³ Kenyatta is correct in his argument because examples could be cited of several young men from Christian homes who even after being circumcised at the hospital, ran to the bush (seclusion house) to be educated in the tribal way of life.

Origin and Character of Circumcision among the Marakwet

The Marakwet have no convincing theories or legends as to the origin of this rite. The only teaching given to the initiates is that this rite was given by a "kuko yab kóng" or "kuko kiburet" or "kuko museny". Some say that their first grandmother gave it to them. Johnstone Kassagam who has been assisting several researchers in Marakwet takes "kuko yabkong" to mean Yahweh and "kuko museny" to mean Moses. As for him, circumcision was instituted by Yahweh and given to Moses and other cultures borrowed from Moses including the Marakwet.⁵⁴ This interpretation is more of a speculation. But even if there is any truth in it, Yahweh did not institute "female circumcision."

A letter written to Mr. Pittway stated, "it is reported to have been begun in Egypt as a ceremony to the goddess of fertility, and is therefore a heathen practice which Christians should have nothing to do with."⁵⁵

The letter does not say who reported it nor who was the source the source of his information. Our assumption would only be that female circumcision was a later development which was meant to become comparable to circumcision of the male.⁵⁶ The writer of the article "Female Circumcision, why it should not happen" in Parents Magazine points out that "there does not seem to be any religion that recommends female circumcision."⁵⁷

The circumcision rite in Marakwet is largely a seasonal activity occurring mostly in the month of December. This rite occurs in a general festival of drinking, singing and dancing which the public attend the night before the operation, and continues before dawn when the girl is cut and the celebration ends.

The young person must remain stoic while an extremely sensitive part of her body is cut away. She is expected not to blink or make

any sign of pain. The one who succumbs to it is referred to as a coward.

This rite has undergone numerous transformations under the impact of colonial government, missions, and education. The age of circumcising the girls has declined a lot for fear by the parents that when the girls grow older they might turn to Christianity and thus abandon the practice. Today circumcision is not really a rite de passage into full adulthood for the girls involved. Girls as young as eight years are circumcised.

Reasons for the Practice

Those circumcised are prepared with months of seclusion and instruction in the ways of the tribe. The young person is subjected to vigorous discipline by the elders with an aim of removing his/her individuality and replacing it with a new identity of toughness and obedience. This culture exalts endurance especially on the part of the men.

At the seclusion house, the initiates receive lessons on the importance of belonging to one's clan and community. It is during this period that the elders legalize the age-set that the group will belong to. Before this time the uncircumcised are taught to look forward to this day when one's character and behaviour is changed into that of a responsible person who can know himself or herself and his/her environment. It is a time when one will know his/her lineage, clan and his/her rights as a man or woman. Obedience and respect for elders and tribal custom and authority are taught. Those who fail to do so later would be reminded to look back to those days when they were circumcised. There was little room left for the untaught ("cho makiar"), but the majority were expected to follow the teachings they

received.

Before one was circumcised, he had to publicly confess any wrong done e.g. stealing or committing adultery because of fear of bleeding to death. The parents of those circumcised would also confess if their daughters or sons do not progress well in the healing process. Other than the confession, the girls were expected to have kept their virginity. It was the virgins who led other girls. Those who had lost their virginity were ashamed there and then and came last after all the virgins had been circumcised.

Some say that circumcision was a means of decreasing sexual passion in the female, and thereby preserving virginity, or again, that it was a measure of necessity to preserve marital chastity by the temporary closure of the vagina.⁵⁸ The elders I interviewed concurred with this reason. They believe that a circumcised girl is not promiscuous. Those who refuse to be circumcised do not stick it out in marriage.

Since circumcision is a gateway to marriage, some conservative parents fear that their daughters might not be married if not circumcised. Others fear that their girls will remain children forever in the eyes of the tribe. Circumcision is therefore profoundly significant in the social and educational development of their young girls. There is also the general feeling on the part of the young people that they have to be circumcised. It will suffice to give a few examples here. James Ngugi, a contemporary novelist, says of a desperate girl from a Christian home who has rejected this traditional rite:

I want to be circumcised . . . look, please, I - -
I want to be a woman. I want to be a real girl, a real
woman, knowing all the ways of the hills and ridges
Father and mother are circumcised. Are they not Chris-
tians? Circumcision did not prevent them from being
Christians. I too have embraced the white man's faith.

However, I know it is beautiful to be initiated into womanhood. You learn the ways of the tribe. Yes, the white man's God does not quite satisfy me. I want, I need something more.⁵⁹

Dorothy Munyakho in an article "Circumcision: What the initiates had to speak" interviewed one, and states:

Why did you have to be circumcised? Were you forced? 'Nobody forced me, just myself', she said. But why? She insisted. 'Ni kimila (it's our custom), she said. 'If I am not circumcised, I might remain childless or be haunted by spirits'. She echoed the points of circumcision posed earlier on by her father and clans people.⁶⁰

The author learned also of a similar case of a Marakwet young girl who exclaimed, "Oh! who can circumcise me? Who can circumcise me so that I will be married? Grandma, Uncle, remember me. Do something for me to undergo this rite. My peers have all been circumcised and are getting married. For how long will I remain in this state? Please, relatives, do something for me."⁶¹

There is a strong desire on the part of the young girls to undergo this rite because the negative part of the practice is not presented to them.

An article "Africa View" by Julian Huxley sums up this section.

Initiation involves several things. It involves a lengthy but sporadic course of education in regard to natural phenomena; of 'sex-instruction' which in some respects might be copied with advantage by our own educational authorities; the inculcation of various social and individual virtues, including respect for tribal elders, tribal custom and authority. And it also involves a physical operation which is the outward and visible sign of the passage from one stage of life to the next, and the endurance of which with fortitude is a fitting symbol of leaving childishness behind.⁶²

Reasons Against the Practice

Several reasons have been put forward against the practice of circumcision, the following being some of the major ones. Economically it is quite costly. Mukanyakho writes:

Matthew Makayo, the father of one of the girls recently circumcised at Chemche (Western Kenya) spent Sh.2,500 on the bull he slaughtered on the eve of the circumcision, and about Sh. 2,000 to feed the invited guests, besides Sh.500 he spent as fees for the female circumciser. For two weeks (or more) after the girls have been circumcised, they are supposed to feed only on meat and milk.⁶³

Not many families can manage to feed, clothe, educate and circumcise their children at the same time.

Time at the seclusion house is also wasted. People become idle. They spend most of their time in the seclusion place just eating and drinking. They don't take care of their farms. Some will face famine after the ceremony especially those in Kerio valley where gardens are irrigated.

Overcrowding in these houses is also not hygienic.

Another problem is its interference with students in school. The 'education' received at the seclusion place makes the girl see herself as a grown-up woman and ready for marriage. The old see modern education as a waste of time. Giving an example from the Endo people, Kipkorir quotes H. L. Moore saying,

. . . when teachers complained to the elders and parents that the children were missing school, the parents pointed out that the various stages in 'Kap-kore' (girls seclusion house) and 'Kaptorus' (boys seclusion house) could not be hurried because (apart from anything else) of the problem of acquiring sufficient 'pombe' (local brew) and/or goats for the specific ceremonies which mark each stage.⁶⁴

There is silent approval of this ritual whose negative economic and academic implications are obvious. Except for some Church leaders, the issue is never addressed by other leaders.

The abusive and dirty language spoken at 'Kapkore' and 'Kaptorus' leave lasting effects on their graduates. It shocks one who has never gone through this seclusion house to hear them speak. A full sentence cannot be constructed without sexual parts being mentioned.

Other than the alcoholic drinks and traditional songs, the spirits of the ancestors were spoken to. In the seclusion house feathers of 'Mukarak' (francolin bird) and 'Merewo' (turaco bird) are tied to a long stick belonging to the boys. They are spotted white and black on one side and red on the other side. According to Kassagam black refers to the spirit of the living dead and white refers to the living. Red refers to tolerance and loneliness. The girls are smeared with white and red clay soil. The white soil is a mark of appeasing the spirits. The red soil refers to tolerance.⁶⁵

Recent writers have discouraged this rite as having no positive hygienic results for women whatsoever. On the social-cultural consideration, they see female circumcision "as an oppressive way of impressing on women their inferiority the suffering involved is an attack on the physical integrity of women, their freedom and their capacity for development."⁶⁶

From a medical stand-point female circumcision has faced the greatest attack. According to the Director of the Kenya National Welfare Centre, Dr. J. K. Kigodu, "the operation puts the life of a woman at childbirth at a higher risk, chances of still births are increased and the operation interferes with the sex life of the woman concerned". Doctors also cite complications such as wound infections, chronic pelvis infections, scarrings, cysts and abscesses, infertility (through chronic infections), difficulties during labour and delivery sometimes resulting in foetal brain damage, coital difficulties and lack of orgasm or sexual gratification as resulting from female circumcision.⁶⁷

There is fear also that traditional circumcisers in their use of unclean knives and blades for the operation may cause some infections due to the dirty and unsterilised instruments. Nabangela, a female

circumciser was asked her comment on this and she said, "but traditionwise, I cannot use different knives on the girls because if one of them became a prostitute, I would be blamed for having used the 'wrong' knife on her."⁶⁸ It was recommended that only one knife was to be used. This is dangerous especially with the present day diseases, for example, aids.

Deaths due to circumcision have been reported in the Daily Nation as follows. On September 4, 1989, a 13 year old girl reportedly bled to death after being circumcised by a traditional circumciser in Kitui. In Kericho District, 18 year old Agnes Chepkoron bled to death after being circumcised at Chesigot farm on Monday, November 12, 1989.

In August 1990, 18 year old Hellen Kanamu M'Riachi died after being traditionally circumcised by two women in Giaki sub-location in Meru District.

This culturally treasured rite ignores all the above harmful effects. The mission from her early beginnings fought against this rite. These fights affected the Church seriously as noted below.

Effects of Female Circumcision on Church Growth

As a result of their mission's policy as stated earlier on female circumcision, the Church attendance dwindled. One AIM Missionary, Blakestee by name, quoted by Gration described the general situation as follows:

The whole [K]ikuyu Church is practically gone! . . . the persecution is great and constant. Schools where the teacher or evangelist have signed (to abandon the rite) are left, not a soul attends. Worse still is that all those who are refusing are singing vile filthy songs cursing those in favour of the Church's firm stand . . . they even do it to me, but not quite openly. On Sunday last at this outschool we had about half the usual number.⁶⁹

The AIM Kikuyu Churches involved in the circumcision controversy

were reduced to about 10 per cent of their membership.⁷⁰ AIM Githumu and Kijabe "were reduced to two or three loyal families each"⁷¹ Ninety five per cent of the Kikuyu AIM had boycotted the Church for the year 1930.

The Maasai Church was also affected:

By early January 1930 no one attended either Sunday School or Church, and the threat of an independent, separatist Church being formed was very real. On February 8, 1930 the elders not only stated their desire to have their own Church but also their desire to take over the mission's building for this purpose. Government action kept the dissident group from occupying any buildings on mission property, but it could not keep the people themselves within the AIM Church.⁷²

Stauffacher reported that only two boys remained with the mission due to this.

As early as 1927 some missionaries had seen the dangers of imposing rigid rules on the African Church. Hulda Stumpf, quoting a passage from an article by W. C. Willoughby, in a letter to H. Campbell wrote:

To thrust upon African Christians rules of conduct that have not grown out of their own convictions is more likely to breed hypocrites than to unravel perplexities. Each case needs, not the mechanical application of an infallible formula, but the brotherly counsel of some one familiar with local thought and custom and skilled in the cure of souls.⁷³

Stauffacher also made the following admission,

I can't help but feel sometimes that somewhere we have made a tremendous mistake, when it becomes necessary for us to force out Christians (and I believe most of them are Christians) who have only recently come out of the rankest heathenism. I don't see how we can do differently, but I doubt if we should [sic] have done much harm if we had agreed that since female circumcision must go, we would be patient and work and pray against it until the natives themselves had cast an overwhelming vote against it, rather than that we should make a rule that severs them from Church membership.⁷⁴

He expressed fear that 'hundreds' of them will never return.

Colin Turnbull commenting on the "forced adaptation" of Africans to a new way of life made virtually the same observation in his statement:

The difficulties experienced in adaptation to the western way of life are not entirely due to the greatness of the difference nor even to the speed with which the adaptation often has to be made, but rather they are due to the way in which the Europeans themselves have tried to guide or force this adaptation. The African is perfectly capable of taking what he wants and needs . . . to retain of the old to preserve not only continuity but cohesion. This is a process that has to grow from within; any attempt to impose from outside is bound to be disastrous.⁷⁵

The Mission Church lost membership because of trying to bring some changes too quickly to a difficult problem which could not be tackled just on the surface.

Commenting on the Mission policy, Gehman writes:

From our perspective today this mission policy regarding female circumcision was a tragic mistake. Instead of 'purifying' the church, the churches were emptied. Instead of strengthening the Christians, they were weakened. For instead of attending churches where the Word of God was fully taught, they became adherents of the African Independent Churches. In the place of the mission churches and schools, the African Independent Pentecostal Church in Africa was formed in 1925 with their independent schools, and the African Orthodox Church was established in 1928 with their independent schools.⁷⁶

On the positive side, the element of the Church that sided with the Mission was more than ever united with those who had shared with them the common lot of severe testing and persecution, though doubtless to a lesser degree.⁷⁷

The Africans were among the equals with the missionaries in calling for prohibition of this rite. "'We find it our duty' declared a group of African Christians from Kiambu just as the crisis was breaking, 'to take up our stand on the matter and show that it is not the Europeans that make the law against circumcision of women but we

Kikuyu ourselves'."⁷⁸ This did not succeed because the Church leaders were not traditional leaders of the tribe.

When the Marakwet Church Council met in July 1959 to discuss this matter, they felt that old rules regarding the practice should not be changed. On the other hand they exhorted the Roman Catholics to try and stamp out this custom in the same way as the AIM were trying to do. Sad, to say, the Roman Catholic Church in Marakwet took no action.⁷⁹

Some of the AIM Christians also secretly circumcised their daughters and thus weakened their united stand. Instead of the Church increasing through biological growth, a number of the circumcised girls/boys left the church. Those who were left were stricken by their guilty conscience. Never again did they take an active role in church activities.

The older believers lived with suspicions towards the parents of the initiates because there was no great show of disapproval from them. These believers lacked understanding of the associated rituals and festivities which represented an occasion for unsurpassing spiritual degradation.

The Church has been losing several young people because the local Christians have not seriously discussed the side-effects of this traditional practice.

Recommendation on ways to end the Practice

Traditional circumcision died out quickly in some other parts of Kenya because local Christians stood against it. In Nandi (one of the Kalenjin-speaking groups) early Chiefs, for example, Chiefs Elijah Chepkwony of Aldai, Joel Molel of Kosirai and Willy Boit of Kabiyet became Christians and helped destroy the powers of the traditionists.

These men did so because they were the decision makers of their tribe, other than their commitment as Christians. The traditional people respected them as their leaders. Marakwets were not blessed in having strong Christian chiefs. Most of them encouraged the practice.

Since Marakwet now has some Christian Chiefs, the public can be educated in Barazas. Those who forcibly circumcise young people against their wish need to be dealt with.

The Church needs to provide a continuous systematic teaching against the rite. A forum for the preparation of the young women and men for the privileges and responsibilities of Christian parenthood, and for a higher standard of home life, needs to be created to fill this cultural void. This could take place in youth camps and special church functions. The Battalion and Cadette groups could be structured in such a way that they would serve as a substitute for the seclusion house. A special service be arranged to recognize some young people who have passed a certain age as mature adults.

The teaching at the youth camps should be structured in such a way that it addresses the agenda being asked by the people, for example, if we are not circumcised how do we insure fertility?; how do we encourage chastity among the group members?

In teaching against this rite, the evils that go on in the seclusion house need to be exposed by stronger Christians who have gone through it but abandoned it due to their newly found faith.

The custom has also lost meaning these days since when young girls are circumcised, little teaching is given and even some of those circumcised are married to uncircumcised men of other tribes, which was unheard of.

The following lessons at catechumen class need to be taught:

A. Bible teaching on Circumcision.

1. The beginning of circumcision, Gen. 17:10

Circumcision was a sign of the covenant which God made with Abraham and his seed that God would make of them a great nation and give them much land to possess. Only those circumcised would inherit this. Gen. 17:6 - 14.

2. Who was circumcised?

Only the males. Gen. 17:10

3. At what age were they to be circumcised?

When eight days old. Gen. 17:12

4. Abraham received the blessing before being circumcised.

Rom. 4:9 - 10 - Abraham's faith was counted for righteousness when he believed. Gen. 15:5, 6.

5. Why was Abraham blessed before being circumcised?

That he might be the father of those who believe not being circumcised. Rom. 4:11.

6. Why did God plan it this way?

Discuss (Gal. 5:6).

7. What circumcision is profitable to the Christian?

The circumcision not made with hands, which is spiritual.
Gal. 2:11 - 13.

B. Discussion on why traditional circumcision is evil.

1. Because it is connected with heathen practices and beliefs.
2. Because it mutilates the human body.
3. Because some die as a result of it.
4. Because it places undue emphasis on sexual matters.
5. Because it always destroys the testimony of the Christian.⁸⁰

The more the people embrace the Lordship of Jesus Christ in their lives and seek to walk with him daily, the more they will abandon such customs.

Endnotes

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- ³David B. Barret, Schism and Renewal in Africa (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 116.
- ⁴C. P. Groves, The Planting of Christianity in Africa Vol. 4 (London: Lutherworth Press, 1958), p. 345.
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- ⁶Keith Eitel, Transforming Culture: Developing Biblical Ethic in African Context (Nairobi: Evangel Publishing House, 1986), p. 137 - 8.
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- ⁹Jomo Kenyatta, Facing Mt. Kenya (Nairobi: Heinemann Education Books Ltd., 1978), p. 163.
- ¹⁰Eugene Hillman, Polygamy Reconsidered (Mary Knoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1975), p. 11 - 12.
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- ¹²Some Elders, interviewd by author, August 1991, Kapsowar.
- ¹³Richard Gehman, Doing African Theology: An Evangelical Perspective (Nairobi: Evangel Publishing House, 1987), p. 19.
- ¹⁴Ibid., p. 20.
- ¹⁵Barrett, p. 19.
- ¹⁶Benezeri Kitembo, L. Magesa, and A. Shorter, Africa Christian Marriage (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1977), p. 64.
- ¹⁷Rules for the Native Church within the AIM in British East Africa (Kijabe: AIM Press, 1919), Nairobi: AIM Archives, p. 4.
- ¹⁸The First Africa Inland Church Constitution (Nairobi: AIM Archives, 1943), p. 4.

¹⁹Central Church Council Minutes (Nairobi: AIM Archives KPW 13 April 13, 1944).

²⁰Hillman, p. 20.

²¹Ibid., p. 169.

²²Hastings, p. 11.

²³David Gitari, "The Church and Polygamy," Transformation, 1 & 2 (Nairobi: January & March, 1984), p. 7.

²⁴Eitel, p. 139.

²⁵Charles H. Kraft, Christianity in Culture, p. 130.

²⁶Eitel, p. 140.

²⁷Ibid., p. 140.

²⁸Ibid., p. 142.

²⁹Kenneth Barker Ed. The NIV Study Bible New International Version (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishers, 1985), p. 12.

³⁰Eitel, p. 143.

³¹It is probable that Sarah presented Hagar to bear children on her behalf. The following texts which date to 1st and 2nd millennium B.C. are an indication of such marriage customs.

1. A Nuzi Text: "If Gilimninu (the bride) will not bear children, Gilimninu shall take a woman of N/Lullu land (whence the choicest slaves were obtained) as a wife for Shennima (the bridegroom).

2. A Neo-Assyrian Text: (41) "If Subetu does not conceive (and) (42) does not give birth, she may take a maidservant (and) (43) as a substitute in her position she may place (her), (44) she [Subetu] will (thereby) bring sons into being (and) the sons will be her [Subetu's] sons. (45) If she loves (the maidservant) she may keep (her). (46) If she hates her she may sell her."

(Victor P. Hamilton, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament. The book of Genesis Chapters 1-17 (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1990), p. 444 - 445.

³²Walter Trobisch, My Wife Made Me a Polygamist (Downers Groves, Illinois: Inter-Varsity Press, 1971), p. 18.

³³Eitel, p. 145.

³⁴Hastings, pp. 19 -20.

³⁵Yego, p. 68.

³⁶Eitel p. 147.

³⁷Hillman, p. 182

³⁸Eitel, p. 148.

³⁹Hillman, p. 182.

⁴⁰This phrase has had many interpretations yet virtually all commentators agree that it prohibits both polygamy and promiscuity. The following are suggested interpretations: First, that the words mean simply that 'a bishop must show an example of strict morality.' (Scott) His affections must be centred exclusively on his wife (Walvoord and Zuck). Secondly, others have suggested that they enforce monogamy for Christian ministers as opposed to the polygamy often practiced in the contemporary heathen world - no Christian, whether an overseer or not, would ever have been allowed to practise polygamy (Guthrie). Thirdly, early commentators (especially second and third centuries) suggested that the passage prohibited second marriages even by widowers (cf. Tertullian), William Hendricksen summarizes as follows: "The meaning of I Tim. 3:2 is simply this, that an overseer or elder must be a man of unquestioned morality, one who is entirely true and faithful to his one and only wife; one who being married, does not in pagan fashion enter into an immoral relationship with another woman."

John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck eds. The Bible Knowledge Commentary (U.S.A.: Victor Books, 1987), pp. 736 - 737.

Donald Guthrie, The Pastoral Epistles (London: The Tyndale Press, 1964), p. 80 - 81.

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⁴¹Hillman, p. 20

⁴²Hastings, p. 8.

⁴³Fountain, C. Oswald, "Polygamy and the Church," Missiology Vol. 2, 1974, p. 111.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 111.

⁴⁵M. D. W. Jeffreys, "Polygamy in the Christian Fold," Practical Anthropology Vol. 19, 1972, p. 87.

⁴⁶Eitel, p. 23.

⁴⁷John S. Mbiti, Love and Marriage in Africa (London: Longman Group Limited, 1973), p. 82.

⁴⁸Henry Okullu, Church and Marriage in Africa (London: Longman Group Limited, 1973), p. 29.

⁴⁹Byang H. Kato, African Cultural Revolution and the Christian Faith, (Jos, Nigeria: Challenge Publication), p. 24.

⁵⁰John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck, The Bible Knowledge Commentary N.T. (U.S.A.: SP Publications, 1983), p. 494.

⁵¹"Female Circumcision, Why it should not happen," Parents Magazine No. 56(February, 1991), p. 15.

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- ⁵³Kenyatta, p. 133.
- ⁵⁴Johnstone Kassagam, interview by author, July 1990, Nairobi.
- ⁵⁵An Unsigned letter written to Mr. Pittway, dated 11th December, 1930 (Nairobi: AIM Archives).
- ⁵⁶Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics Vol.3 p. 669.
- ⁵⁷"Female Circumcision, Why it should not happen," Parents Magazine, p. 16.
- ⁵⁸Church of Scotland Memorandum, p. 3.
- ⁵⁹James Ngugi, The River Between (London: Heinemann, 1965), pp. 29 - 30.
- ⁶⁰Dorothy Munyaiho, "Circumcision: What the initiates had to speak," Daily Nation February 20, 1991.
- ⁶¹Kassagam, interview, July 1990, Nairobi.
- ⁶²Church of Scotland Memorandum, p. 74.
- ⁶³Munyaiho, "How circumcision affects education," Daily Nation February 22, 1991, Feature IV.
- ⁶⁴B.E. Kipkorir, R. C. Soper, and J. W. Ssenyonga, Kerio Valley, past, Present, and Future. Proceedings of a seminar held in Nairobi at the Institute of African Studies, (University of Nairobi, May 21 - 22, 1983), p. 134.
- ⁶⁵Kassagam, interview, July 1990, Nairobi.
- ⁶⁶Parents Magazine, No. 56, p. 17.
- ⁶⁷Ibid., p. 17.
- ⁶⁸Munyaiho, "Circumcision: What the initiates had to speak."
- ⁶⁹John Gration, "The Relationship of the AIM and its National Church in Kenya Between 1895 and 1971" (Ph. D Dissertation, New York University, 1974), p. 143.
- ⁷⁰Letter to Lee Downing, Inland Africa XV(1931), 15 Nairobi: AIM Archives.
- ⁷¹R. Gehman, quoting Sandgren, p. 17.
- ⁷²Gration, quoting Stauffacher, p. 149 - 150.
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⁷⁴Gration, p. 151.

⁷⁵Colin Turnbull, The Lonely African (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1962), pp. 249 - 250.

⁷⁶Gehman, p. 18.

⁷⁷Gration, p. 155.

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CHAPTER V

PROPOSALS FOR REAL GROWTH

I. Truly Indigenising the Church

A. Development of Local Leadership

Mission history proves time and again that, humanly speaking, whether a Church will expand or decline is vitally linked to the training and equipping of local leadership. This, therefore, calls for educating future local pastors and training the laity. J. Verkuyl recommends training for more committed theologians so that they can grapple with theological issues that can move the Church toward achieving selfhood.¹ Those who are being trained should always be encouraged to work for competence and not merely for credentials. They should always follow Jesus who acted as a master and servant at the same time. This would remove suspicions which the less educated clergy and laity usually have towards scholarship and more so within the theological context.

Paul G. Hiebert rightly states that:

It is essential that leaders be trained who can wrestle with the theological issues that emerge within their cultural context (2 Tim. 2:2). It is easier to train followers who merely believe what we say and imitate us. Since we have positions of honor, there is little disagreement. But followers are spiritually immature, and when we leave they are easily led astray by every false doctrine that comes along.²

The Marakwet Church suffered because of lack of trained leaders who could think for themselves, disagree with the missionary on some theological issues and stand on their own convictions. The Church, presently, still lacks leaders who can study scriptures and apply them

to their own lives. This, therefore, calls for developing the right kind of leadership for the Church in Marakwet. Leaders are needed who do not only survive on second-hand beliefs taught in the thirties but those with understanding that "every generation in every culture must get involved in its own Bible study, and learn to express biblical truth in, and apply it to, its own context".³

As will be examined later in this thesis inadequate training frustrates the growth of the Church both quantitatively and qualitatively.

The present leadership (pastors) needs to seriously evaluate their involvement in the ministry. A pastor would simply preach on Sunday, marry those seeking marriage, bury the dead and spend the rest of the days in money-making businesses rather than committing himself fully to the ministry he professed to have been called to.

Other than the Bible College/Institute graduates only, indigenous leaders in the society need to be sought for and trained. The saying that "wisdom is found in the elders" has not changed in Marakwet. The young Marakwet pastors are regarded by the elders as children because of their inexperience and lack of knowledge about the facts of life. Status is attained with age, and this lack hinders the young pastor from giving advice to others, especially those older than them.

The writer would recommend that Church elders, especially those who have retired from government sectors, be trained through Biblical Education by Extension (BEE),⁴ and later be teamed up with the young trained pastors. The two can complement one another.

For the Church to grow, leadership that encourages and enables it to do so is essential. It will suffice to list some qualities of such leaders given by Floyd G. Bartel as follows:

1. He has a genuine desire for growth.

2. He has faith. The leader needs a vision for the group.
3. He has love. Love for the people, the ability to affirm them.
4. He has the gift of administration. The gift is the ability to motivate and organize people to work together.
5. He keeps the leadership circle open to new persons. He is part of a team, rather than a loner.
6. Growth leaders are hard workers. He may personally become involved in the outreach ministries.
7. A growth leader must have authenticity communicated by openness, honesty, and transparency of life with those served.
8. A growth leader makes a long-term commitment - in one particular Church during times of hardships or blessings.⁵

The writer proposes that the Marakwet Church leaders need to evaluate themselves against the above list. They need to bear in mind that for qualitative growth to be realized, the leaders need to help others identify and carry out ministries which are uniquely theirs.

They should also identify, recruit and train young Marakwet women who will minister in the local Churches. The present day Church is in need of workers who combine deep commitment to Jesus Christ with a relevant high level of academic achievement. The Church also needs workers who can address questions asked by the people using the authority of the Scriptures.

This training of leadership is a process that must never stop. For this to continue the Church needs to seriously think of a training centre for Church leadership. The recently acquired land of 30 acres at Chesewew should be developed soon to meet this need. The Church could call for an harambee to raise money for putting up at least two blocks to cater for one leader from every local Church. Since the school is in its initial stages, short courses of two weeks could be given to the leaders. Christian teachers would also be given particular courses here to equip them for pastoral care in their schools since the pastors cannot simply visit them all.

Meanwhile, a portion of the land needs to be cultivated to provide food for the training centre. The surplus could be sold and the money used to run the school.

The more qualified young Marakwet men and women could be sent to more established colleges like Scott Theological College, and later to graduate schools.

The time has come for the Church to develop its own patterns of, and responsibility for, self-propagation. It needs to see that it is directly addressed by the words of the Great Commission. (Matt. 28:19-20).

B. Self-Supporting and Self-governing

Self-support has been a hindrance to some extent to the growth of the Church in Marakwet. The Church members have not known that it is their responsibility to pay the salaries of the pastors and evangelists and construct their own Churches. Alan R. Tippett is right in saying "training in stewardship should begin with the very planting of a Church".⁶ It seems as if the Marakwet Church has lagged behind in stewardship training.

The Church has been in existence for over sixty years now, yet it cannot support its programmes and workers. J. Marle Davies says of a self-supporting Church:

We believe that it is reasonable to consider a congregation as financially independent when it is paying fully for its own pastoral service and local Church activities; when it regularly supports the general work of its Church body; when it takes responsibility for the evangelization of its neighbourhood and when it assists in the missionary programme of its church.⁷

The Marakwet Church is still far from this. Though it is not supported by foreign aid, there is general laxity on the part of the members in not giving towards the ministries of the Church. The

writer of this thesis was left speechless one day when a prominent elder from one of the Marakwet local Churches asked him how much money was paid to the pastors by the government! It was quite a revelation of the ignorance on the part of the people.

The writer agrees with Davies that "a real, abounding, Christian faith leads men to give strength, time and means to maintain and propagate that faith".⁸ Because the Church has not matured enough (spiritually), most of the believers fail to see their responsibility in supporting the pastors and Church programmes.

As a result of little pay, most of the pastors have conducted private business or run ordinary farms in addition to their pastoral responsibilities. This has not helped the Marakwet Church at all nor has it helped the pastor to succeed either as a pastor, a professional farmer, or as a shopkeeper.

Davies gives examples from China which need to serve as danger signs to our pastors:

A minister near Peiping started a dairy to supplement his income. He soon gave most of his time to his dairy, or at least his people claimed that he did. They objected. He resigned his pastorate and is now running his dairy.

Another pastor in North China made a similar mistake. He had some knowledge of Chinese medicine and began practising medicine to supplement his income. He used the Church building for his office and clinic. He no doubt accomplished much good. His practice increased so much that he neglected his church. His members objected. He promised them that he would preach without salary, getting all his income from his medicine. This idea of getting something for nothing appealed to them first, but later they asked for his resignation.⁹

Since financial support is threatening the growth of the Church in Marakwet, ways and means need to be explored as to how money can be raised by the Church to keep her programmes functioning.

A few suggestions will help in this connection. First, annual

festivals, for example, Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year could be adapted by the Church as special days of contributing towards the boosting of the Church budget.

Secondly, encourage Christian Education groups in the local Church for example, youth groups, women's fellowship, men's fellowship etc, to carry out Church projects. For instance, the men of the Church may lease a field and cultivate it together and then plant some maize or beans. The proceeds could go to the Church treasury. The women may raise chickens and sell them. The youth may establish vegetable gardens, etc.

Thirdly, if the Church has enough land to feed a cow or two for milk, then they can do it. The money that will come from the milk will go towards the support of the Church.

Fourthly, since Marakwet is still predominantly an agricultural and rural area, the members of the Church need to be encouraged to give their farm produce as their offering to the Church. This could then be sold and the money go towards the support of the Church.

Finally, the members need to be encouraged to share with their pastors a little of what they get from their farms.

The Marakwet pastors, on the other hand, need to sacrifice themselves and forsake some of their privileges in order to be able to disciple the believers. As earlier stated, stewardship needs to be seriously taught and it should be done only by those who have the time to do it, and the life style and commitment to back it up. A pastor who is on the road Monday to Saturday with other businessmen of his congregation is often despised by them as doing nothing in the Church. They call on him to join his business fully or abandon it.

If the projects suggested are to materialize, efficient Church administration is needed. The pastors should not involve themselves

with the finances. Appointed trustworthy lay leaders should assume this responsibility.

It is time the Marakwet Church depended upon the Lord, His Word and her own resources in order to contribute towards the building of the Church of Jesus Christ and its extension.

The second aspect of the Church towards indigenization is self-government. The Marakwet Church has its own council of leaders. Their judgement is sound and they are spiritually mature. These leaders have all along guarded the sanctity of the Church. Policies formulated by the Missionaries/Church on marriage, polygamy and circumcision are strictly kept by them.

In spite of the spiritual maturity of the leadership, their limited education has become an hindrance in handling some theological questions being asked by the people. The first generation Christians say, "what was good enough for 'Bwana' (Mr.) so and so is good enough for us, and we need to maintain that."¹⁰

Issues that have become an obstacle to the growth of the Marakwet Church need to be examined in the light of the authoritative Word of God and not what so and so said.

II. Overcoming the Obstacles

A. Polygamy

Polygamy is a problem that Christianity has not been able to change much. It is a problem that is common in the Marakwet Church today. Unless the Church finds a good solution, it will end up losing members or promoting polygamy out of sympathy with some baseless and unbiblical reasons.

As earlier stated in chapter four, a polygamist was guaranteed baptism after putting away all his wives except the first one to be

married. Before doing so, he was free to worship in the Church and attend other fellowships but never achieved full membership status.

Other than baptism, holy communion was also denied him.

There is no doubt that polygamy created untold problems in the family and falls short of an ideal Christian home. In a brief summary, Beatrice Mageria gives ten reasons why she would not like to be married to a polygamist, which are worth noting here.

1. It is degrading: A betrayal, disorienting and lets women down.
2. The husband is unavailable: The husband operates on part-time basis.
3. It breeds jealousy: Wives live under constant strife, undue competition and humiliation. There is no equal treatment of wives.
4. The children suffer: Children's . . . [lives] are filled with uncertainties and misery. Often their father becomes less and less available for consultation.
5. Economic consequences: The children and their mother get affected economically Father uses available resources to acquire another wife . . . father shifts his attention to newly acquired wife.
6. It is full of suspicion: Fear and suspicion is common. There are threats by husband. Wives are fearful of each other.
7. Relationship and love are destroyed: A polygamist claims that he has more love than any one woman can need. Such a man's love is exhausted and the home is left for himself and his children.
8. It easily leads to divorce: As the children of first wife mature, it is likely for them to confront father's younger wife and chase her away.
9. Communication is can easily break down: Communication is a continuous process and issues should be discussed as they arise because the husband is looking after another woman communication breakdown is inevitable. [Limited communication with a specific woman].
10. I go by what the Bible says: "The Lord was witness to the covenant between you and the wife of your youth . . . take heed . . . let none be faithless to the wife of his youth." (Malachi 2:14-15).¹¹

John Mbiti adds that, "polygamy is unmanageable emotionally, socially and economically."¹² He maintains that "monogamy is ideally a better way of expression of human relationship than is polygamy."¹³

However, he notes that "the Church has made a blunder in the matter of polygamy because Christ accepted harlots, prostitutes, sinners, lepers and drunkards of his time without condoning their wretchedness."¹⁴ To him, "forbidding polygamist from enjoying some of the benefits of Church membership leads to the conclusion that polygamy was the only sin Christ's sacrifice was not sufficient to cover."¹⁵

In support of what Mbiti has said, the president of the Southern Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania argued:

The Church is right in discouraging polygamy among its members. But they are wrong in making monogamy into one of the conditions of baptism and Church membership My plea with the Church and Mission, therefore, is that the pre-baptism polygamist should be baptized together with their wives and children without being forced to divorce their wives. They should also be accepted into full Church membership. The post-baptism polygamists also should not be excommunicated from Church membership because of the wives they married besides the first wife.¹⁶

Some Churches, especially the African Independent Churches, concur with the above call.

Dr. Henry Okullu suggests, "if a polygamist has been a pagan and believes, he should be baptized with his wives and invited into the Holy Communion. When Jesus forgives a person, he forgives completely and not halfway. So, if such men and women are to be accepted, they must be fully welcomed."¹⁷

Still on the same note, Kraft seems to support polygamy as a cultural issue which has its support in the Old Testament. He writes:

God seems to work with societies according to the existing patterns with which the people are comfortable. In the Old Testament polygamy was the accepted marriage pattern and we know that many of the great leaders whom God used were polygamists:- David, Solomon, Jacob. The law even gave instructions for the polygamist situation regulating rather than condemning polygamy: 'If a man takes a second wife, he must continue to give his first wife the same amount of food and clothing and the same rights she had before', (Ex.

21:10). At one point God told David that He gave him his many wives, (II Sam. 12:8).¹⁸

If Kraft's argument is that Africans are comfortable with polygamy and therefore, need to be allowed to continue and participate wholeheartedly within the Church structure, the writer would say that he is mistaken. It has been repeatedly stated that there is no comfort in such marriages. The writer sees the Old Testament as not sanctioning polygamy but tolerating it as it does divorce.

It is worth heeding the following warning given by D. A. Carson:

Watch out that final authority does not rest in the culture but in the Bible. E.g. if a society is polygamous it may follow Abraham or David (Kraft's example), but then why not follow, in some other culture, Mosaic law regarding slaves, stoning, temple ritual and the bitter-water rite? How about wiping out entire peoples?¹⁹

Scripture therefore must be the yardstick to judge whether an alleged insight by the Holy Spirit had divine origins or not.²⁰

Having said all this, the writer recommends that the Marakwet Church reconsider the laid down policy "of polygamists putting away all wives but the first wife . . . [they] have married."²¹ Secondly, the Church needs to consider that Scripture promises the fruits of grace to all who accept the Lord Jesus and therefore, shouldn't even polygamists be eligible for baptism and Church membership? If the Church fails to incorporate the born again polygamist into Church fellowship, he might be exposed to all sorts of temptations. Christian polygamists often complain that they are lonely. Several have moved from one Church to another looking for a fellowship that might accept them but they always end up frustrated.

The writer agrees with Keith Eitel that "admission of a polygamist would partly be based on the willingness to confess the sinfulness of the practice with an effort to end it in that generation.

This would involve follow-up education and counselling for all family members."²² He cautions, "unless proper follow-up is done, the affected family may not know the seriousness of the whole issue and may think that they have just been favoured by the pastor and Church elders." He further recommends that "whenever the Church is making any decision related to polygamy or other issue affecting the Church, . . . the entire council should go into serious prayer and by the Spirit's guidance will come up with good solutions, of course, which are in conformity with the scriptures."²³

The writer would also encourage the pastors and the elders to instruct all age groups in the local Churches concerning the seriousness of falling into this trap later in life. It is certain that quite a number of Marakwet Christians because of lack of proper Biblical teaching end up backsliding and marrying more than one wife.

If a polygamist is accepted into Church fellowship, he should be allowed to enjoy all benefits of the Church except leadership and preaching, (Titus 1:6; I Tim.3:2). This would not be a problem in Marakwet because "traditionally a polygamist was not allowed to lead warriors going into a battle."²⁴

The writer hopes that this issue will be prayerfully discussed at the local level, District, Region, and eventually the Central Church Council meetings. The Church need not close her eyes and ears to those who raise this issue day by day, month by month and even year by year.

B. Traditional Circumcision

This custom is deeply rooted in the hearts of the traditional Marakwet, and of the nominal Marakwet Christians. Most of them fear that when this rite is destroyed, their tribal symbol which identifies

the age-groups and spirit of collectivism will be no more.

This rite also transforms children into adults through a ritual that often involves tests of suffering, separation from parents and village, and initiation into adult gender roles.²⁵ The girls receive instruction on how to be women and how to follow the Marakwet laws regarding sex and marriage. To the Marakwet, this was more important than the physical cut of circumcision.

Tippett states: "As initiation ceremonies are intensely educative any failure to find adequate functional substitutes will probably leave an educational void in the Christian society."²⁶ According to Ross F. Gaskin, "cultural voids occur when an integral part of an ethnic group's activities, such as initiation rites, is denigrated by the cross-cultural communicator who then fails to incorporate any corresponding rite as a replacement. This results in a void and is a failure to fulfill the 'felt needs' of an ethnic community."²⁷

Whenever the custom is suppressed, the old cultural ways merely go underground.²⁸ As stated earlier on, when the Missionaries and Church elders preached against traditional circumcision, especially female circumcision, the people secretly circumcised their daughters. The boys who were circumcised at the hospital still ran to 'Kaptorus' (seclusion house) and they were expected to pay a goat before they would be allowed to receive any instruction.

There is fear on the part of the weaker Christians and non-Christians that they cannot survive without this institution, for reasons ranging from doing away of "good tradition," losing sign of maturity, preventing immorality to retaining virginity. A recent report which appeared in the Daily Nation "Unkindest Cut of all", though not from Marakwet, explains to some extent the fear the people have.

A man in the Tharaka area of Meru District had his wife of more than 15 years circumcised "to cure [her of] her ways." Residents of Tunyai sublocation said the man had complained that his wife, with whom he had six children, was "running around with other men and that she had to be cut to cure [her of] her ways."

The circumcised woman is the youngest of the man's three wives. The residents said the man had "imported" a circumcisor from Kanjuki location of Nithi Division, about 50 kilometres away. He took his unsuspecting wife to a hotel room where he held her captive with the assistance of other people.

The hired "surgeon" then operated on her as the husband pinned her down. The sources said the man also had his eldest daughter circumcised by the same "surgeon" in mysterious circumstances.²⁹

Tippett writes that "invariably if no substitute is found, a community of Christians emerges without sex education. The parents, the pastors and the Christian school all avoid it and leave it to the others."³⁰ He calls on the Church to seriously deal with sex education with a theological undergirding.

The time has come for the Marakwet Church leaders to critically examine this traditional rite by first describing each step of the rite that makes up the ceremony and then discussing its meaning and function within the overall culture. The purpose here is to understand the old ways.

The next step is for the pastor to lead the Church in a Bible study related to the question under consideration. The pastor is to offer the exegesis of the Biblical truth, and also to suggest cultural alternatives for the people to consider.

Following this, the congregation evaluates critically their own past customs in the light of their new Biblical understandings, to make a decision regarding their use. It is important here that the people themselves make the decision, for they must be sure of the outcome before they will change.

Leaders may share their personal convictions and point out the consequences of various decisions, but they must allow the people to make the final decision. This will hinder the likelihood that the customs they reject will go underground.³¹

The leaders and the people need to bear in mind that circumcision, especially female circumcision, has no Christian origin. It is talked of as having come down from ancient times, and is probably of Egyptian origin given to our ancestors.

Female circumcision is nowhere mentioned in the Scriptures. In Genesis 17, we see that Sarah was not commanded to be circumcised like her husband Abraham was. The New Testament also never mentions female circumcision; in fact Paul does not see the importance of male circumcision so long as one has faith in Jesus Christ.

As far as the writer is concerned, female circumcision should be rejected. The educational sector of the rite needs to be substituted. Jacob A. Loewen gives some suggestions here which are worth noting. He states that "in the area of self-definition and individual status and role, both Church and school could provide recognition and community context for experiences that were formerly celebrated as rites of passage."³² Examples cited here are: School and Sunday school could provide recognition for individual achievement and instruction for baptism, Church membership, and marriage could deal with the puberty crisis. For adults, greater recognition could be given to pastors, choir directors, and teachers at special dedication services.³³

Since traditional people conceptualize baptism in terms of a Christian rite of passage, the Church needs to use it as an educational tool.

Tippett writes that baptism has the same features: "It provides an educative programme of preparation for the rite, it achieves a

change of status in the group, it is a symbolic and ritual demonstration, it receives the individual into membership and gives them a sense of belonging, and so forth."³⁴ The Marakwet value of being an individual within a group will be taken care of here, for example, "we were baptized together." Baptism or schooling creates a context of relationships greatly sought after in the culture.

In order to ensure continuous education, those young people who have completed baptismal classes should be enrolled in either Christian Service Battalion for the boys or Christian Service Cadettes for the girls.

These programmes are prepared as a service to Churches who are concerned for their youth in the Church. Those who are between the ages twelve to twenty are eligible to enter this programme. These young people are going through a period of life that determines what kind of men or women they will be: men or women who will build the Church, ignore it, or destroy it. The goal of the programme is to build young people with the desires, will, and ability to expand Christ's Church.³⁵

This period is quite crucial in the life of the youth. It is a period to choose a career and a life partner. The young man is therefore trained to make mature decisions in all these problems.

The programme, especially the Christian Service Battalion, endeavours to train the boys by giving experience in four important areas. The first area is "Christian character and the self-disciplines of a Christ centred life e.g. the use of one's time (achievements), one's actions (games, general knowledge and project), and stewardship of money. Their motto of "Bright and keen for Christ" constantly reminds them of bright living and keen speaking for Christ.

Secondly, knowledge is taught which is of value to boys in the

early years of youth, especially an understanding of how he can relate his knowledge as a Christian in his testimony for Christ, that is knowledge of skills, knowledge of occupational opportunities, knowledge of worldwide events, knowledge of Scripture and knowledge of Government and civil responsibilities.

Thirdly, the young man is taught to love God and man and to worship God and serve others.

Finally, there is the matter of leadership. Through practice in leading other boys of his own age in squad meetings, games and activities, and through teaching given by men of the Church, the boy is trained in the principles of Christian leadership.³⁶

The writer suggests that additional subjects on sex education and Christian marriage be incorporated. Chastity must be emphasized. At the age of twenty years or so a special service could be arranged by the Church to recognize the youth as adults.

In Christian Service Cadettes, the leaders teach the girls courses such as handcrafts, cookery, sewing, child care, housewifery and music.

These courses are excellent and exceed the traditional instruction given at the seclusion house.

The Church should select excellent men and women who combine both cultural and Biblical knowledge to be the instructors.

C. Contextualization

Contextualization has been defined as "the capacity to respond meaningfully to the Gospel within the framework of one's own situation."³⁷ Since culture is not static, nationals and missionaries are to let the Word of God speak to people in their own context. The Word should address the problems, needs and questions the people have. To

arrive at this, C. Rene' Padilla calls on every Church to make her own contribution by identifying the needs and questions which the people have, and by formulating a theology that answers its own need. He sees the danger of the Gospel remaining a "foreign religion" in the eyes of the people if it does not attain a profound contextualization in the local culture.³⁸

The Marakwet Church lags very much behind in theological reflection. There is no literature available in the language of the people except the Kalenjin Bible and Hymn Book. Even the Bible is not written in the Marakwet dialect. The Hymns are those translated from the English song books. The Church really has nothing of its own. This could be the reason why in spite of years of doctrinal teaching, the people still maintain their traditions and customs, whether they agree with Biblical faith or not.

The writer recommends that Christian hymns be written to traditional Marakwet melodies, or the people be encouraged to compose their own songs. In support of traditional singing, John Stott states that "this could be adapted for the purposes of Christian worship and evangelism". He therefore recommends that "contextualization be carried out with vigor and sensitivity here."³⁹ Traditional Marakwets are known for their love for singing and the Church needs not close her eyes and ears to this.

It has been recommended by several theologians that cultural substitutes be used by the communicators of the Gospel. Though this is greatly welcomed, the writer notes that excessive cultural substitutes tend to destroy the essential meaning of the Biblical practice. Therefore, it may result in syncretism. However, neutral features of a culture, not in opposition to Biblical truth, may be used by the Church. Before incorporating such features, mature Christian leaders

should carefully examine them in the light of the Scripture.

The Bible must always be taken as the final authority for Christian beliefs and practices. It must be allowed to change every aspect and levels of man. It must penetrate and change the philosophical level of man.

As earlier stated in Chapter one, traditional Marakwets, and to some extent nominal Christians, are more concerned to propitiate the spirits of their ancestors, the 'oi'. They often consider them responsible for sending some illness. Consequently, the people offer their prayers to them, pouring out milk, grain and beer saying, "Who are you, O man, whoever you are, see what we have brought, do not still trouble us."

The communicator of the Gospel must tell the people of the supreme sacrifice made once and for all: "Behold the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world", (Jn. 1:29). Their belief that the 'oi' can always see them and are therefore to be feared, should give the communicator an opportunity to tell of the Lord God, whose eyes run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward Him. The more the people abide in the Lord and His Word, the more their requests will be granted.

III. Applying the Principles

The first step is for the Church to know its purpose for existence. The leaders need to determine and formulate goals for the Church and possible ways of achieving these intended goals.

Since the term "growth" literally means increase, development, expansion, and enlargement, the second step is for the Church to draw up specific plans that will help foster this growth.

The writer suggests the following for consideration:

Firstly, the Church needs to identify groups that are receptive to the Gospel, for example the youth and women. These groups must always be kept in mind. But those who are less receptive, or who demand questions needing answers that presuppose theological reflection, must not be neglected.

Secondly, organization of smaller groups, for example, women's meetings, men's Bible studies, youth meetings, Cadettes, Battalion, Sunday schools, outreach teams, etc., must be given priority. The Marakwets, especially the older folk, feel that they belong to their age-groups and without them they are naked. A man could be heard saying, "Mi ano Korongoro tugul?", (where are all 'Korongoro'? - (age-group), most of them are dying, and what am I doing here?). Or a believer would persuade one of his age-mates to accompany him to Church so that he could act as a "cover" or literally warm up one another as they worship. Since such groups often think of themselves as enjoying a common bond of unity, the Church needs to create such forums for them. Different age-groups should be encouraged to reach out to those of their own age.

The male community needs to be tackled seriously by the Marakwet Church. Men's groups need to be established to meet specific needs of the men. For example, they should focus on Christian involvement in community affairs, farming techniques, Bible study groups, etc. The writer clearly understands that the major problem faced will be appropriate personnel. Let this not discourage the whole Marakwet Church. One local Church can begin and eventually others will learn from it.

Thirdly, the Church needs to encourage the use of familiar forms and styles that are appropriate to the Marakwet culture. For example, singing and an accompaniment that they feel at home with.

Fourthly, patterns of leadership must be given careful consideration since the basic values in Marakwet are maturity, experience and grey hair. The writer has heard older men say, "weti ng'o kanisanine bo lagoi kubat", (who will go to that Church that belongs to women and children only). Or "ndochini ng'o lakwa?", (who will be led by a child?).

The training of leadership must be built into the programme of the Church at every level. Those who are to lead must be selected based on the Scriptures and be those who are accepted by the people.

Fifthly, the Church needs to handle the problem of nominalism of second or third generation "Christians". There are many children growing up in Christians homes. Their Christian faith is not as exciting as that of their parents but rather dull. The Church must increase its teaching on the Christian family and home. One way of doing this, as Kraft suggests, is "having family camps which would focus on Bible study, emphasizing God's intent for the Christian family."⁴⁰

The Marakwet Church statistics show that the number of second and third generation Christians who have left the Church in the last twenty years or so are over one hundred. The major problem is the failure of the Church to ground them in the Christian faith. Padilla is right in saying:

The young person whose biblical knowledge never gets beyond Sunday School level sooner or later finds that his Christian system breaks down, that his faith does not have an adequate basis on which to sustain the weight of the objections raised by life in contemporary society.⁴¹

Finally, the writer would like to suggest the following plans for the future growth of the Church in Marakwet.

Firstly, Church leaders and laymen should be encouraged to assume

responsibility in witnessing in the community and teaching the Word of God to all age groups.

Secondly, the educated Marakwet Christians should be encouraged to write Christian literature in the indigenous language for distribution to the people.

Thirdly, since a number of the Marakwet Churches are in prime areas of anticipated population growth, new building developments need to be engaged in.

Fourthly, the pastors need to expound the word of God clearly, systematically and dynamically. Good preaching has always contributed to Church growth, especially in areas where people are responsive to the Gospel.

Fifthly, prayer meetings need to be enhanced with revitalized attendance.

Sixthly, the number of Christians attending the Lord's supper must be increased. The Church needs to seek God's help in bringing all believers into full fellowship with the Lord and His Church.

Seventhly, since most of the Sunday School teachers are primary school children, the Church must ensure that mature and trained teachers are appointed.

Eightly, there must be a renewed emphasis on outreach among those who do not know Christ.

Finally, there ought to be a qualitative growth in the lives of the believers who attend the Churches.

In conclusion, the author hopes that this study will stimulate greater growth of the Church both quantitatively and qualitatively. It is also his desire that the Church would seriously consider the proposals raised, especially regarding polygamy and traditional circumcision.

There is a need for the Church to study, question, examine and reexamine everything in the light of the Word. Satisfaction with custom and tradition alone is not enough. The call to contextualization must be taken seriously. By so doing, the Church will be able to reach greater depths of maturity.

Suggestions for further Study

Topics relating to the growth and development of the Church and those hindering are numerous. For further study, the writer suggests the following:

1. An investigation of the wide spread of female circumcision to try to find out its origin and reasons for the practice. Consideration should be given to what other agencies are doing in regard to this problem.
2. An investigation that would compare in depth the catholic and protestant approaches to indigenous culture in Marakwet. Special attention should be given to any possible syncretistic results.
3. The role of alcoholic drinks in traditional rites.
4. Relationship between Bible training and the growth of the Church.

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²³Ibid.

²⁴Mzee Hezekiah Kaino, interview by author, August 1991, Tot.

²⁵Hiebert, p. 180.

²⁶Tippett, p. 191.

²⁷Ross F. Gaskin. A Contrast of the KonKomba Worldview with that of the Pitjantjatjara, Towards better communication Unpublished Thesis (Ph.D.) Submitted to the Pacific College of Graduate Studies, Nov. 1989.

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²⁹"Unkindest Cut of all", Daily Nation 21 March 1992, p. 3.

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APPENDIX A

EVENTS LEADING TO ADMINISTRATION OF MARAKWET

(District Commissioner's Report/Elgeyo-Marakwet/3/3 1919)

Early 1900

H. Hyde Baker (a British sent official) from Kampala established a post on the East bank of Kerio named by him Ribo but usually known as Kolloa.

June 30, 1900

Hyde Baker being very short of grain for his men sent a sergeant major and 42 picked nubians with one porter to the Endo to gather grain that had continually been promised. These men arrived at a place called Chebilib and there happened to be a marriage feast on, all the askaris got drunk and were massacred to a man by the inhabitants of Endo helped by those of Sibow, the porter alone escaped.

Subsequently, the Endo together with the natives of Mukorra and Sibow aided by the Cheptulis pokot besieged Hyde Baker at Kolloa for 5 days taking all the government stock and inflicting casualties - eventually they were driven off by the aid of the njemps.

July, 1900

There followed the punitive expedition under Captain Gorges - The Endo and Cheptulel pokot both being punished by burning of huts and seizing of stock - apparently however the natives of Sibow and Mokorra were not touched.

The Ribo post was then abandoned.

December, 1903

W. J. M. Collyier, Collector from Baringo reported frequent raids by the Marakwet on the Kamasia (Tugen), but no measures were taken by Government.

1904

G. F. Stocker visited the Marakwet country with an escort of 30 askaris, accompanied by a trader named Ali bin Saleh and his caravan. He presumably crossed the Kerio in the Endo country. The Endo brought presents of grain and made pretence of making peace with the Government. The natives south of the Embobut did not join in this ceremony.

1906

The Collector from Baringo trekked through via Nginyang, the Kerio, the Kibas to Marich. On his return journey he camped at Chebilil in Endo and collected a small amount of hut tax in sheep, goats and grain in all amounting to 100 taxes.

1907

A. D. C. Baringo J. Leweson Gower also collected a little hut tax from the Endo, but on sending across the Embobut to call the Marakwet south of the river, his messengers did not return, and insulting messages were sent back to him. He reports that as he skirted up the east bank of the Kerio for 20 miles, a Marakwet war party followed parallel with him waiting for an opportunity to attack.

December, 1908

K. Dundas, D. C. Baringo sent Sergt. Instructor Webb with 10 rifles to Kolloa to prevent the Marakwet raiding pokot, one raid had already been attempted but failed owing to a counteract with a rhino.

January, 1909

K. Dundas, D. C. Baringo entered Marakwet country through Endo and was met with a shy but apparently friendly welcome, and once and for all discountenanced the prevailing idea that the Marakwet were the Chief offenders in the massacre of Hyde Baker askaris, and also proved that they were not quite so fierce and warlike as supposed. On this occasion he camped in Mokorra and was visited by the Marakwet as far south as Kaakisegei.

March, 1909

K. Dundas reported a raid on the pokot kataramei by the Roang presumably the Marakwet of Kabusswo and Komolwa. No measures were taken against the Marakwet.

M. W. H. Beech had interviews with Loseron at Baringo, in which Loseron headman Kaben reported that the whole of Endo was friendly disposed and would welcome a visit of Government.

November, 1909

A. Bruce, D. C. Baringo made a long safari through Marakwet country crossing the Kerio at the junction of the Arror river. Owing to a misunderstanding Legitch of Newai with his moran assumed a threatening attitude but were finally persuaded to come into camp to discuss matters.

The safari was made in a very friendly manner by nearly all the locations of Marakwet and a small amount of hut tax was collected i.e. 275 sheep and a few loads of flour. The safari passed through Newai, Samarr, Kabarsiran, Kaakisegei, Mokorra, and into Endo and it was only in Endo that Bruce met with anything approaching active hostility, and even here the hostility only took the form of refusing to pay hut tax

or to hold interviews and they were, headed by Loseron, absolutely averse to coming to terms with the Cheptulel pokot over their long standing feud.

Loseron died [later] as a convict at Nairobi.

December, 1909

M. W. H. Beech, D. C. Baringo reported the raiding of a Somali trader's caravan by the Marakwet.

April, 1911

J. Mansergh, D. C. Baringo visited Endo via Kolloa. He was met with a passive resistance attitude. Proceeding south of Mokorra at which he was surrounded by hostile moran who however were luckily dispersed without casualties on either side, from Kaakisegei he crossed back into pokot country.

At no place in Marakwet country was he met in a friendly attitude. During his safari it was reported that Loseron of Kaben had murdered a Cheptulel pokot and stolen his goats, Loseron adopted a truculent attitude and unfortunately the matter could not be gone into an account of Mansergh having to return to Baringo.

June, 1911

J. O. Hughes, A. D. C. Baringo visited Cheptulel pokot to inquire into the murder of a pokot by Loseron of Kaben in Endo. Loseron was called but refused to come sending back insulting messages and stating that he and his moran were ready to fight if Hughes crossed into their country. Hughes also stated that the southern Marakwet refused to have anything to do with Government when he safaried through there from Ravine.

December, 1911

Talbot Smith entered Marakwet with 200 Kenya African Rifles, 2 maximins, and 9 officers. 22 Marakwets were shot dead. 2 Elgeyo fled. The K. A. R. camped in Sambirir a section of Marakwet.

1912

Administration of Marakwet begun with Adams (A. D. C.) in charge.

APPENDIX B

AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE AFRICA INLAND CHURCH AND THE AFRICA INLAND MISSION - KENYA, OCTOBER 16, 1971

Preamble

The Africa Inland Church in Kenya today represents the fruit of many years of sacrificial service, by some even unto death. We rejoice that God has raised up a company of believers who, being organized under the name of the Africa Inland Church, are able to continue with the same faithful service toward the fulfillment of the Divine Commission to go into all the world and make disciples. The Africa Inland Mission wishes to continue sharing in this ministry and these two bodies now enter into this agreement.

The Africa Inland Church Kenya shall govern itself according to its Constitution and be responsible for all its activities.

1. Departments -- All departmental work being undertaken together shall be administered through committees according to procedures laid down by the Central Church Council (known as Baraza Kuu).
2. Properties -- All Church-related properties, movable and immovable, formerly held by the Africa Inland Mission Trustees shall be held by the Africa Inland Church Trustees and used according to the objectives of the Church as stated in the Constitution.
3. Personnel -- Available personnel shall be assigned by the Staffing Board according to its terms of reference. Africa Inland Mission personnel, while serving in Kenya shall be recognized as members of the Africa Inland Church and as such shall fully participate in local activities and be eligible for election to Church Councils.
4. Finance -- All monies received by either the Church or the Mission for Church work shall be administered by the Central Church Council through its Finance Committee and used according to designation.

In the spirit of Harambee individual Missionaries and Overseas Mission offices shall endeavour to make known to their constituencies the needs of the Church.

5. As a Department of Africa Inland Church in Kenya -- recognized functions of the Africa Inland Mission in Kenya are:
 - (1) To join with the Africa Inland Church Kenya in fulfilling its objectives as stated in its Constitution, namely:

- a. To evangelize according to the Divine Commission and to establish local Churches.
- b. To glorify God in all things.
- c. To establish believers in the faith.
- d. To help Christians to stand firm in the Holy Scriptures.

(2) The Africa Inland Mission Kenya shall also:

- a. Be responsible for the practical and spiritual welfare of Africa Inland Mission Missionaries in Kenya.
- b. Provide liaison with Home Councils of the Mission.
- c. Retain its legal identity in Kenya.
- d. Sponsor other international organizations and, if possible, to hold property for such bodies as requested.
- e. Provide the means of secondment to, and from other organizations.

We the Officers and Trustees of the Africa Inland Mission Kenya Registered do hereby this sixteenth day of October, one thousand nine hundred and seventy one approve this agreement and place our signature here to.

Field Secretary

Deputy Field Secretary

Assistant to the Field Secretary

Trustee

Trustee

Trustee

Trustee

Trustee

APPENDIX C

AIC SCHOOLS WITHIN ITS CHURCH REGIONS

REGION	SECONDARY		PRIMARY		COLLEGE	POLYTECHNIC	NURSARY	TOTAL
	SPONSORED	PRIVATE	SPONSORED	PRIVATE				
NAIROBI	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
NYANDARUA	5	-	28	-	-	2	1	36
CENTRAL	8	-	11	-	-	3	-	22
KIJABE	7	-	12	-	1	2	-	22
NAKURU	5	-	19	-	-	-	5	29
BARINGO	27	-	257	-	-	-	125	409
KERIO	15	1	73	-	-	-	-	89
SIRIKWA	25	1	114	1	1	2	-	143
NANDI	18	-	102	-	1	4	68	163
KITALE/ POKOT	4	-	35	-	-	1	2	41
CENTRAL LAKE	7	-	35	-	1	-	-	43

SOUTHERN LAKE	12	-	39	-	-	1	-	52
WESTERN LAKE	3	-	20	-	-	-	-	23
MACHAKOS REGION	94	2	520	-	3	7	10	636
SOUTHERN REGION	1	-	11	1	-	1	1	15
KITUI	21	1	18	-	-	7	10	57
PWANI	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
KWALE	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
SOUTHERN RIFT	5	1	10	-	-	-	-	16