RLES M. KIMWELE - CONTEXTUALIZING THE GOSPEL TO THE LELAN POKOT

NAIROBI EVANGELICAL GRADUATE SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

CONTEXTUALIZING THE GOSPEL TO THE LELAN POKOT

BY

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A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate School
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in Missions

(6 credit hours)

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July, 1995

ABSTRACT

> What should people do with their old cultural ways when they become Christians, and how should the missionary respond to these traditional beliefs and practises? (Hiebert 1985:17).

Most missionaries in the past generation answered that converts should reject all their old cultural ways because they were pagan. Anthropologists on their part answered that every culture and its customs are valuable systems and should be preserved. The former option had the weakness of making Christianity look foreign and to cause social dislocation in converts while the second compromises sinful practices and easily leads to syncretism.

This study acknowledges both the beauty and sinfulness of cultural practices, for which reason they should neither be rejected nor accepted at face value. Instead, they should be studied with regard to the meanings and places they have within their cultural setting and then evaluated in the light of biblical norms.

In this study, four Lelan Pokot enculturative rites, birth, initiation, marriage and burial, are studied and evaluated against biblical teachings to decide what Pokot Christians can retain and what they must avoid thus contextualizing the gospel for them in the area of those four rites and making it culturally relevant.

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my late parents

Benjamin Kimwele Ngusa 1917-1989

and

Laeli Malia Kimwele 1924 - 1989

To my father

who on telling of his exploits in Uganda, Sudan, Somalia, Ethiopia, Egypt and in Palestine during World War Two, and thereafter in the whole of Kenya during employment with the Directorate of Overseas Surveys, opened my eyes to the 'regions beyond'.

And my mother

who after an unbroken filial relationship throughout childhood and early adulthood, lovingly let go of me and my young family to serve the Lord as missionaries.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Sincere thanks are first due to God who has called me and sustained me and my family in missionary service and now in this missions training at N.E.G.S.T.

Then to the following for their contribution in various ways to the successful completion of this study:

To Dr. R. F. Gaskin my supervisor and current head of the Missions Department for his wise and fatherly guidance.

To. Dr. S. M. Mutunga who taught me Contextualization and Research Methods in Missions which are foundational courses in this study. For supervising the writing of my thesis proposal and for useful advice as my second reader.

To Joel Chemeltor, Sarah Ngurasia, Elizabeth Kapelicia, Andrew Choge, Mary Lomwai, Samuel Kapero, Simon Aran, Stephen Komoltudo, Emmanuel Chemekuro, Isaya Meriakol, Koko Janet, and Margaret Atudonyang, for sacrificing much time to respond to my questionnaire. To Grace Yopongiro and Kamzee Limika for proof-reading the manuscripts describing Pokot rites.

To Mr. Psinja, Education Officer at Kapenguria, for availing to me useful materials in his offices.

To the Overseas Council, Partners International, The Harding Foundation and Sister Marlies Neumann of St. Chrischona Mission, for their financial support during this study.

And lastly to my wife Zipporah and our children, Mwendwa, Muuo, Jehoshua and Kenneth, for their support and understanding during the demanding time of this study.

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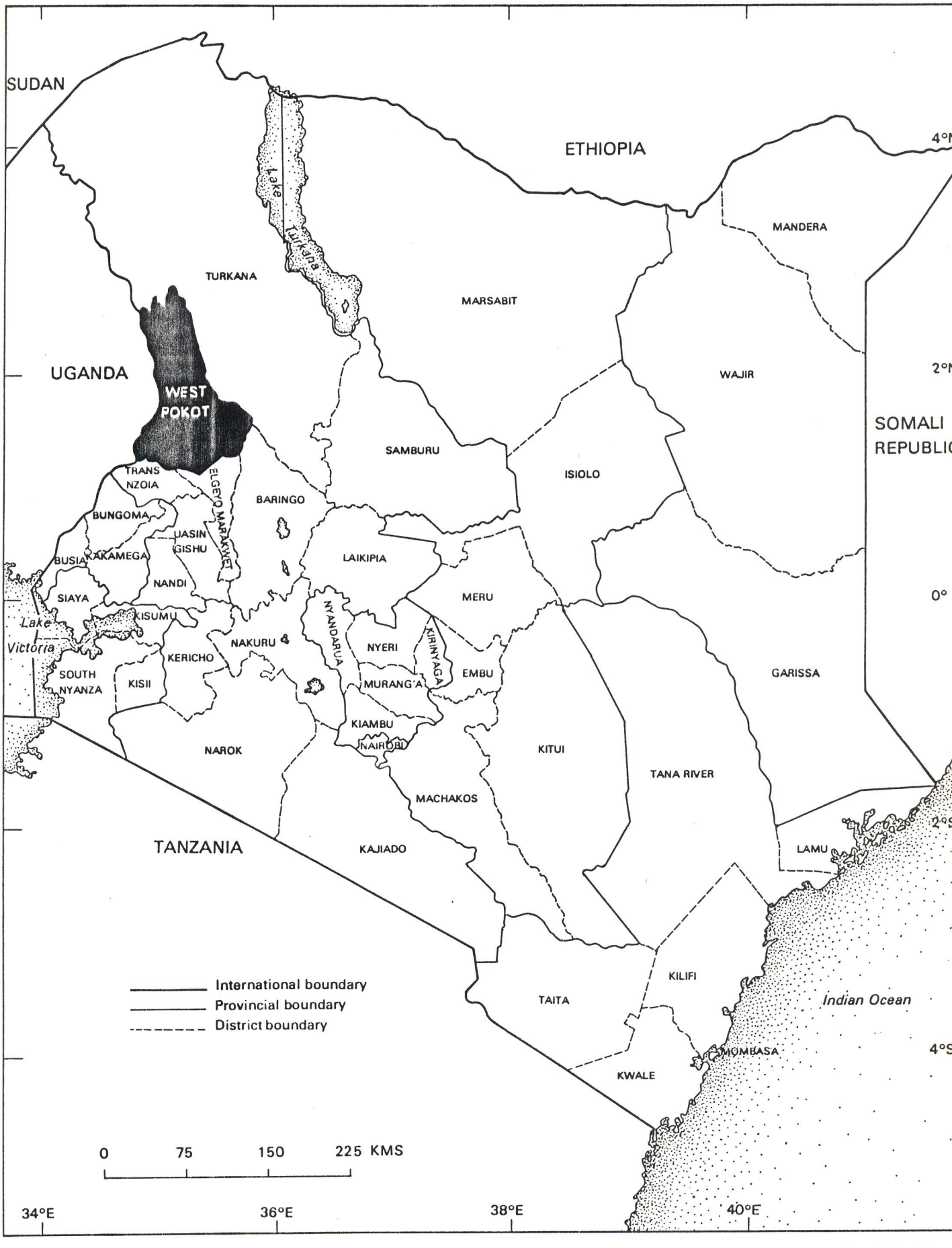


Source: Atlas of Kenya

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The Pokot are among the eight tribes generally called 'Kalenjin', the other tribes being the Kipsigis, Nandi, Keiyo, Marakwet, Tugen, Terik and the Sabaot. The Kalenjin occupy the highlands west of the Rift Valley in Kenya and are therefore called 'Highland Nilotes' distinguishing them from other Nilotes like the Luo, Maasai, Teso, Samburu and Turkana. The Pokot are in the extreme north of the highlands and are partly in the highlands and partly in the lowlands. They have borrowed much from the Karamojong and the Turkana who are lowland Nilotes and this has made them atypical in the Kalenjin group (Schneider 1975, 164). The Pokot border Uganda to the west (Sebei and Karamojong tribes), Turkana to the north, Samburu to the east and other Kalenjin tribes to the south (Nandi, Keiyo, Marakwet and Tugen).

The area inhabited by the Pokot has high mountains (Cherangani Hills) and vast lowlands as the dominant physical features. These physical features determine the climatic conditions that in turn decide the people's way of life. Those who live in the northern and eastern lowlands (Keu) are mostly nomadic because the rainfall cannot sustain them in one location throughout the year. The ones in the high mountains (Masol) though settled carry out minimal farming because it is too cold for most crops. It is the people between the lowlands and the mountains (Kamas) who successfully practice a mixed farming keeping animals and cultivating crops. The population is, however, quite mobile and has relations and interactions throughout the three climatic zones.

The British colonial government started administering the Pokot region in 1911 and the Bible Churchmen's Missionary Society opened work there in 1931 being the first church organization to reach them. The Pokot have, however, been very resistant to change in both matters of development and religion. Even with the concerted efforts of many churches (Roman Catholic Church, Church of the Province of Kenya (CPK), Africa Inland Church (AIC) and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Kenya), they were still among the unreached tribes of Kenya when research was carried out by Daystar University in 1982. If current data were available, it may show that their status has changed to that of "possibly reached." Even so, their acceptance of the gospel has been slow.

This researcher had the privilege of being part of the mission to the Pokot in the years 1989 - 1993 during which he served throughout the three climatic regions mentioned above, and therefore imbibed the Pokot way of life. That experience has given the researcher a burden for the Pokot and this paper is a small contribution to that challenge of planting and nurturing churches among them.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

This study seeks to contextualize the gospel in four Lelan Pokot enculturative rites: Birth, Initiation, Marriage and Burial, in an attempt to make the Pokot church more culturally relevant.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What rites do the Lelan Pokot perform at the birth of a child?
2. How do the Lelan Pokot perform the rite of initiation into adulthood?
3. How do the Lelan Pokot perform the traditional marriage ceremony?
4. What rites do the Lelan Pokot perform at burial?

5. What does the Bible teach:

   a) On birth rites?
   b) On circumcision?
   c) On marriage?
   d) On death/burial rites

6. What in the four rites can Pokot Christians retain?

GOAL STATEMENT

The goal of this thesis is to make the Africa Inland Churches in Lelan, West Pokot, more culturally relevant and in so doing to strengthen them.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Even after serving in West Pokot for four years, the author cannot claim to know the Pokot well; nor can he claim to have presented the gospel to them in the best way possible. Mistakes were made. This study will improve knowledge of the Pokot even if in a limited aspect of their culture. An attempt will be made to apply some missionary skills being learned to see how they can make an impact on the Pokot in their response to the gospel.

Hopefully the findings and the attempt to contextualize will be of help to other ministers and evangelists serving in West Pokot. Third, the general principles seen as applicable to the Pokot church should be applicable to any other animist and pastoral community, because such communities share many culture traits among themselves.

DELIMITATIONS

Geographically this research will be carried out in three sub-locations of Lelan location of West Pokot District. Lelan location is one of several locations in the mountainous southern region of West Pokot. The AIC started churches in this area about twenty years ago and now there are about

ten churches, divided into two branches called Kapsait and Kapsangar. This study will be carried out in the local areas of those churches.

Culturally the study will be limited to the four rites of birth, initiation, marriage and death/burial for it will not be possible in the limited scope of this paper to study any other cultural aspects.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Cattle Complex: that intense devotion to cattle and a permeation of this value into all other aspects of culture; the central, all encompassing value.

Contextualization: the process by which the gospel not only takes on the forms and idiosyncrasies of different cultures, but also maintains a critical stance and seeks to transform them.

Culture: the total life way of a people; the social legacy that the individual acquires from his group.

Cultural Relativism: the approach to an interpretation and evaluation of behaviour and objects by reference to the normative and value standards of the culture to which the behaviour or objects belong.

Enculturation: the process by which individuals acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that enable them to become more or less functioning members of their society.

Ethnocentrism: the opposite of cultural relativism; the practice of interpreting and evaluating behaviour and objects by reference to the standards of one's own culture rather than those of the culture to which they belong.

Endogamy: a sociological rule requiring a person to select a mate from within a culturally defined group of which both are members.

Exogamy: the opposite of endogamy; sociological rule requiring that potential mates come from different culturally defined groups or clans.

People Movement: the joint decision of a number of individuals all from the same people group that enables them to become Christians without social dislocation.

Substitution: the process whereby one entity of culture may be substituted for something new.

Syncretism: the mixing of elements of two religious systems to the point where at least one, if not both of the systems, loses its basic structure and identity.

Worldview: the basic assumptions about reality that lie behind the beliefs and behaviours of a culture.

DEFINITION OF POKOT WORDS

Aleput: Pokot traditional wooden milking bowl.

Aloto: betrothal ceremony.

Anopet: skin covering with straps used to carry a baby on a mother's back.

Anyieni: sweet.

Boma: a Kiswahili word for the enclosure in the homestead in which animals are kept.

Chemeri: initiated girls in confinement.

Chemnyarkil: general name given to new born babies.

Cheporusion: state of ceremonial uncleanness.

Cheriwoi: all who had `riwoi' ceremony performed on them.

Chipo koyogh: officiant at noghshio ceremony.

Kamas: escarpment.

Kama tarach or *kama icho*: traditional midwife.

Karachuna: uncircumcised boys.

Ketpowos: ceremony at which `mror' deposits `chemeri' articles at the stem of a `ketpowos' tree.

Keu: arid land, wilderness.

Kilokunoto karin: rite for purifying articles left behind by a deceased person.

Kipuno: graduation ceremony for initiates.

Kisironmpoartin: counterpart of `lapan'; reintegrative rite for male initiates.

Kiyam kindo: feast held on fourth day after burial of a pokot elder.

Kiyil tagh or kiyil ta moning: final ceremony at which bride is given in marriage.

Koko melkong: woman circumcisor.

Kokwo: council of elders.

Koroyakyon: seer, diviner.

Koyogh: engagement ceremony.

Kultutwo: white ants colony with black soil.

Lapan: ceremony performed on female initiates to partially reintegrate them into society.

Laptian: ceremonial leaf used for anointing.

Leghetio: special belt used by mothers to tie stomach after delivery.

Lopou a kama moning: purification rite for mother and baby.

Masol: mountain area.

Menjo: ceremonial hut for male initiates.

Moigut: aromatic herbs used for purification.

Mokoghony: men who take care of male initiates.

Mror: initiated lady.

Muren: initiated young man.

Mutin: male circumcisor.

Ngembasany: purification rite for male initiates in confinement.

Noghshio: wedding solemnizing ceremony at which tirim is put on bride.

Parpara: purification rite for husband and wife before birth of their first child.

Parparin: officiant at `parpara' ceremony.

Riwoi gitunga: final purification rite for twins.

Salaa: twins.

Sapana: advanced rite initiating men to married life.

Sindit: ceremonial sticks marking `chemeri' territory.

Sir: skin covering for initiates.

Sitet: ceremonial tree from which walking sticks are cut.

Soghogh: facial screen worn by male initiates.

Terema: arrow-like tool used for piercing vein of bull for acquisition of blood for food.

Tipin: uninitiated girl.

Tirim: leather wedding pledge put on a woman's right hand.

Tisa: the goat slaughtered to purify those who participate in burial ceremony.

Tiyos: initiated boys in confinement.

Yatat: the first of two purification rites performed on twins.

Yotin ndo tum: officiant at `yatat' and `riwoi' rites.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter several topics that are foundational to this study will be examined though briefly. These include the people under study (the Pokot), the area where they live and their experience with the Church. To enhance the investigation of enculturative rites that form the core of this study, culture functions and rites of passage are reviewed. Then, to safeguard the contextualization process which is the ultimate aim of this study, theories of contextualization, functional substitutes and the danger of syncretism are reviewed.

THE POKOT AND CHANGE

The Pokot lead a `dynamic' life, dynamic in the sense that they have many freedoms within the confines of their society's guidelines. Consequently, they have a reputation for resistance to change as introduced by government officials and missionaries. Schneider has given this summary:

> The Pokot's determined resistance . . . is based upon their satisfaction with their traditional culture and their feeling that it is superior to and more desirable than Euroamerican (sic)civilization . . . an attitude that varies from simple indifference to contempt of all other people . . . coupled with suspicion that outsiders' attempts to learn about Pokot culture are motivated by a desire to change it. Suspicion, reserve, indifference, contempt and the feeling of superiority are all related to their desire to resist change and maintain their culture as it is. (1959, 160)

Schneider finds this attitude to be common among the Nilotes for he continues, quoting Butt in *The Nilotes.*

> All who have come into contact with the Nilotes have remarked on the proud, individualistic and truculent behaviour that they display toward each other and particularly toward foreigners. They consider their country the best in the world and everyone inferior to themselves. For

> this reason they despise clothing and scorn European and Arab culture, and are contemptuous and reserved with foreigners so that it is difficult to get to know them. Their attitude toward any authority that would coerce them is one of touchiness, pride and reckless disobedience. Each determines to go his own way as much as possible, has a hatred of submission, and is ready to defend himself and his property from the inroads of others. They are self reliant, brave fighters, turbulent and aggressive and are extremely conservative in their aversion from innovation and interference. (1959, 161).

This description is so true even of the Pokot today that nothing should be added to or subtracted from it. European administrators and missionaries were well aware of that attitude and reacted to it by referring to them as savage, primitive, conservative and resistant . The Pokot disliked the negative attitude and mistreatment displayed by these Europeans. They were even given a foreign name 'Suk' which they did not accept (Poghisio 1987, 1). Unfortunately this is the name by which they are referred to in the book *Unreached People* (Dayton 1982, 243) which lists all the people groups of the world that need missionary outreach to get a church.

Schneider attributes the attitude of the Pokot to the 'Cattle Complex', "that intense devotion to cattle and a permeation of this value into all other aspects of culture, the central, all-encompassing value" (Schneider 1959, 165). He proposes that missions can make their task easier by making compromises with the Pokot culture (Ibid. 160).

Samuel Poghisio, a Pokot, acknowledges his people's conservatism and resistance to change. In his M.A. thesis he alleges that the communication was poor because it was not meant to penetrate the Pokot social organization. He argues that they can be effectively evangelized through their own existing traditional communication networks. One aspect of their social organization is opinion leadership by consensus with no authority vested in a single individual (Poghisio 1987, i). It is a noble step in the right direction for the gospel has to be made culturally relevant to the Pokot.

In this paper, it will be undertaken to make the gospel relevant to the

Pokot in other avenues of their lives. This may not be different from what Schneider calls 'compromise' if understood positively and bearing in mind that Euro-Americans of a past generation had feelings of cultural superiority and ethnocentrism. They tended to dismiss all of African culture as primitive. For a good communication of the gospel to the Pokot, their culture has to be understood. Since culture is so vast, only elements of it will be closely examined, that is the rites performed at birth, at initiation, at marriage and at death and burial. The study will be done on the premise that "because man is God's creation, some of his culture is rich in beauty and goodness. Because he is fallen, all of it is tainted with sin and some of it is demonic" (Willowbank Report, Winter 1981, 507). To bring a culture under the Lordship of Christ there must be radical change (Winter 1981, 508).

POKOT TRADITIONAL RELIGION

The Pokot have made their fair contribution to the African Traditional Religious scenario. Like all other African tribal communities, they are very religious and ritualistic. Religion is the core of their culture and permeates all of their life, with no division between the sacred and the secular.

Poghisio (1987, 55) has explained that the Pokot believe in a supreme deity `tororot' who is the sky God, represented by the fluid and amorphous heavens. They believe in two lesser gods, `asis' (sun), and `ilat' (lightning). `Tororot' is the father and master of both the `asis' and `ilat' gods. Mount Mtelo is believed to be `tororot's' abode on earth and it is highly venerated by the Pokot, they do not light fires in its vicinity nor scale it. When clouds cover the mountain top, they say that `tororot' has

physically descended to his abode. Elders pay homage to mount Mtelo by facing it when blessing people and when partaking of ceremonial feasts. The morning sun is believed to mediate blessings while the evening sun mediates curses.

To the Pokot `tororot' is a paternalistic God, desiring them to live in peace and therefore they call upon him for deliverance when disasters occur. `Tororot' is believed to have given the tribal order of life and therefore all deviance from it is an offence to him and punishable. This explains Pokot tenacity to adhere to their traditional customary life.

DESCRIPTION OF LELAN

Lelan administrative location occupies the central southern most tip of West Pokot District bordering Marakwet District. In this location the district has its share of the Cherangani Hills that fits in the description of Afro-Alpine highlands. The agro-climatic classification falls in zones 7, 8 and 9 with altitude ranges from 8,000 feet to more than 11,000 feet (2,450 meters - 3,355 meters). Mean annual temperatures range between 10°C-14°C, quite cold most of the year with frequent night frost. Annual rainfall is 1100-2700 millimeters, and it is wet eight months in the year so that every stream flows throughout the year. The general vegetation is characterized by temperate forests in which cedar is plentiful and open grasslands abound wherever it is too cold for trees to thrive. (District Atlas West Pokot 1985, 14,25).

About three generations ago, Pokot were not living permanently in Lelan, but another tribe, the Cherangani who were nomadic hunters and gatherers lived there. A story is told how the Pokot cunningly displaced them by convincing them that they could coexist. They told the Cherangani

that whereas they thrived on wild meat, honey and fruits from the trees, the Pokot's interest was in the grass for their cattle. Therefore, there was no conflict of interests. So the Cherangani accepted the idea and let the Pokot live in the area to graze their cattle. But eventually the Cherangani were pushed out to the lower highlands.

Before the Pokot were settled in Lelan, they reserved the area for dry season grazing when grass and water were scarce in the lowlands. By and by some families settled in Lelan, but they were occasionally taking their livestock to the saltlicks in the lowlands. It is about forty years now since people settled permanently in the mountains.

The climate favours dairy farming, sheep rearing for production of wool, and cultivation of pyrethrum, Irish potatoes, cabbage and collards. Temperate fruits such as pears, peaches and plums have also been demonstrated to do well, but have not been adopted. Maize is grown in the middle highlands but it takes long to mature, about nine months. Lumbering in the indigenous forests thrives and carpentry, too, but those occupations are dominated by people other than Pokot. For the Pokot the main occupation remains cattle herding which is now done in well-fenced estates. This gives the added advantage of setting children free to go to school which most do. Lelan Pokot are encouragingly opening to change second only to those living around the district headquarters, Kapenguria.

Lelan is accessible by rural access roads from three directions for routes served by a few public service vehicles. The road from Kapenguria in the northwest is the major access. There are also roads from Kitale in the west through Kapcherop, and from Eldoret in the south through Kapsowar. Many Pokot have risen to the trade opportunities created by the products of Lelan. They have displayed a commendable acumen for trade including transportation.

Topography of Kapenguria division in West Pokot District, 1983

HISTORY OF THE AFRICA INLAND CHURCH IN LELAN

Five major church denominations have ministries in Lelan location. The Roman Catholic Church was the first to start a ministry in 1953. By the end of 1994, they had the largest work with fourteen places of worship, five church-sponsored primary schools and two secondary schools: Kabichbich for girls and Kaptabuk for boys. Among the Protestant churches in Lelan the AIC is the largest with eleven worship centres and three church-sponsored primary schools. The CPK (Anglican) follows with six worship centres and two church-sponsored primary schools. The third is the Bible Faith Church which broke away from the AIC in 1979 and has three worship centres. Fourth, is the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Kenya with two worship centres and two church-sponsored primary schools.

The places of worship vary from permanent church buildings (mostly of the Roman Catholic Church) to school classrooms to semi-permanent buildings.

The founding of the AIC in Lelan is quite spectacular. It is credited to two laymen who had gone to Lelan to work. The first AIC congregation in Lelan was started at Kapsangar in 1970 by Samurgut Arap Maiwa from Kapsowar who had gone to Lelan for business in livestock. After establishing a congregation, a report was sent to prominent church leaders in Nandi, among them Ezekiel Birech, the present bishop of AIC Kenya, and George Kendagor, the present leader of the breakaway Bible Faith Church. These leaders visited the Kapsangar church, officially inaugurated it and organized for the posting of evangelists to pastor the church.

At Kapsait on the other side of the `Muruny' river from Kapsangar, Timothy Rimatum, an agricultural officer of Anglican faith, started an evangelistic ministry in 1968. Anglican church leaders, one of them Daniel

Tomkou, followed up the believers and established a church, baptizing the first believers in 1970. Due to alleged neglect by the Anglican church the members invited the AIC to take over in 1971. The AIC promised to send a teacher and an evangelist immediately. Thus Kapsait Anglican church was succeeded by the AIC. This was the period when factors dictated that whoever had the school had the church.

By the end of 1994, the average AIC congregation in Lelan was fifty members. Most of the congregations are pastored by untrained evangelists. There is only one trained pastor who is a native of and ministering in Lelan. The Pokot have been slow in joining church ministry making the Lelan church rely heavily on imported manpower. The researcher was one of them, based at Kapsait in the years 1991-1993.

This historical data was given by Isaya Meriakol, a leading elder of the Kokwoplekwa congregation who was among the first believers baptised at Kapsait in 1970.

RITES OF PASSAGE

It has been pointed out before that in this study four Pokot rites will be investigated: birth, initiation, marriage and burial rites. These are rites that can be called enculturative because they give the individual a major aspect of the Pokot community identity. Paul Hiebert has pointed out that these rites are associated with the biological cycle and movement from one social status to another, and are therefore found in most societies. Quoting Victor Turner he proposes that they can also be called "life crisis rituals" (Hiebert 1976, 160).

Van Gennep has ably written on rites in his book, *The Rites of Passage* (1960), in which he has investigated the occasion out of which they arise,

the underlying principles, the procedure they follow, and then has given the interpretations that he deems fitting for each type.

The occasion for rites is the separation of the sacred from the profane and their frequency in different societies is proportionate to the dominance of the sacred over the profane. Rites are derived from a society's particular feelings and a particular frame of mind in which:

> . . . so great is the incompatibility between the profane and the sacred worlds that a man cannot pass from one to the other without going through an intermediate stage . . . In such societies every change in a person's life involves actions and reactions between sacred and profane - actions and reactions to be regulated and guarded so that society as a whole will not suffer discomfort or injury (Van Gennep 1960, 1,3).

The observable pattern in the performance of rites which Van Gennep has delineated is that of, first rites of separation, second rites of transition, and third rites of incorporation. The rites of separation which can also be called preliminal, mark the point of breaking with the person's past status. The rites of transition, also called liminal, give the initiate a unique status for a limited period during which he/she is well marked as different from the society. When the desired process has been observed and the initiate has been fully prepared to assume the next status, then rites of incorporation, also called postliminal, are performed to incorporate the initiate back into society (Van Gennep 1960, 11).

It should, however, be noted that these three stages are not developed to the same extent by all peoples or in every ceremonial pattern. It has been observed that rites of separation are prominent in funeral ceremonies; rites of transition prominent in pregnancy and initiation, while rites of incorporation are prominent at marriage. These characteristics will be demonstrated in chapter four where the four Pokot rites are described and interpreted.

CULTURE FUNCTIONS

The optimism about human progress that prevailed in the world before World War One influenced the view of culture equally with other areas of life. It led to an idea of cultural evolutionism that assumed cultures to develop "from a state of overall inferiority to a state of overall superiority" (Kraft 1979, 52). European culture was considered superior and African cultures primitive and inferior. But the destruction caused by the war shattered that optimism. Research done on the so-called primitive societies also showed them to be complex. These two factors led to a transformed view that no culture can be regarded as superior in every way to every other culture.

Missionaries who went abroad under the influence of cultural evolutionism, therefore, approached other cultures with an attitude of cultural superiority. They unfairly judged other cultures by their own standards and discarded them. Missionaries equated the gospel with their own cultural background, rejected native customs in totality and imposed their own customs upon converts. This approach caused unnecessary opposition to the gospel.

The truth is that every society loves its own culture and it needs it to provide order, thus making life meaningful and possible. Culture lessens tension and provides the organization, balance, security and satisfaction necessary for human existence. Each culture, nevertheless, has strengths and weaknesses. The gospel is separate from culture and calls all cultures to change for the better. At the same time the gospel must be expressed in cultural forms understandable to members of the receptor culture.

As it has been pointed out before, the Pokot have all along displayed strong resistance to change. One reason for the strong resistance is that their

culture gives them identity as a society and contributes to their cohesiveness. Living in an environment that is hostile both climatically and intertribally, such cohesion is necessary for survival and they know that quite well.

Without compromising the truth of the gospel, evangelization should be carried out with all due regard to Pokot culture. It should be possible to incorporate them into a culturally relevant church "without crossing social or cultural barriers" (McGavran 1970, 46).

FUNCTIONAL SUBSTITUTES

When missionaries evangelize a society, they primarily seek spiritual change, but cultural change comes along with it. Conversion to Christianity produces a transformation that affects every sphere of the believer's life and being (Pentecost 1982, 136). Depending on the management of that change, it can affect the society positively or adversely. Poorly managed change can cause chaos in a society by making it lose cohesion.

Whereas missionaries aim at changing moral and ethical traits in a culture, other traits that are largely amoral and unrelated to ethics get changed also. This is due to the integrated nature of culture in which case changes effected in one aspect will affect the whole institution. The Christian agent of change should therefore endeavor to maintain an equilibrium among the institutions that together constitute the culture. The provision of functional substitutes is a commendable way of maintaining that equilibrium and the Christian agent should follow it (Pentecost 1982, 144).

The following example of the provision of a substitute will help clarify the factors that make it successful:

> . . . a Bechuanaland missionary was approached by the chief of a newly converted group. They were about to plant their principal food crop-the

first time they had done so since their conversion. They had never previously engaged in planting without some pagan ritual being done for the productivity and protection of the crop and the cultivating group. What did the new faith require at this point? The missionary had the insight to realize the consequence of his reply: did Christianity mean the secularization of agriculture or was it to be done in the name of the Christian God? He wisely judged that the visit of the tribal chief with this problem indicated a real felt need and so he prepared a Christian ritual to be memorized. Determining to give it a scriptural base he found himself driven to the Old Testament, which deals more with a people living close to the soil. The new Christian rite was addressed to God the Creator and Provider, the Lord of the harvests (Welch 1953 as quoted by Tippett 1987, 187).

The observable factors that made this substitution possible are: (1) The missionary involved had an appreciation for and an understanding of the cultural values. This earned him respect and leadership recognition within the context of the target group's perception. (2) The whole group led by their chief was involved. (3) It was soon after conversion, in less than a year. (4) The factors that were propitious for the group's conversion to Christianity were also propitious for the introduction of functional substitutes.

An evangelist to the Pokot who is interested in them and keen enough should not fail to get such an opportunity.

CONTEXTUALIZATION

Robert Schreiter has given a definition of contextualization that suits the purpose of this study. He has defined it as:

> The process by which the gospel not only takes on the forms and idiosyncrasies of different cultures but also maintains a critical stance and seeks to transform them (Schreiter 1978, 25).

Contextualization as applied in this study aims at presenting the gospel in the frame of reference of the receptors so that it makes sense to them. This is the meaning that was adequately covered by the older term "indigenization". Contextualization as generally used means more than

indigenization. Nicholls has explained it thus:

> Contextualization implies all that is involved in the familiar term indigenization, but seeks to press beyond it to take into account 'the process of secularity, technology and the struggle for human justice which characterized the historical moment of nations in the Third World' (Nicholls 1979, 21).

From this quotation we deduce the second application of contextualization as having to do with applying the gospel to be relevant to a society's needs at any given time. If we can call the first "missiological contextualization", we can call the second "theological contextualization". As stated above our involvement now is with missiological contextualization.

In the carrying out of missions in the past there has been an evident weakness in contextualizing the gospel. Nicholls' comment is true of many mission endeavors:

> Evangelical communicators have often underestimated the importance of cultural factors in communication. Some have been so concerned to preserve the purity of the gospel and its doctrinal formulation that they have been insensitive to the cultural thought patterns and behaviour of those of whom they are proclaiming the gospel (Nicholls 1979, 8).

In modern missions, most Christian communicators are trying their best to avoid repeating the same mistakes in relation to cultural frameworks committed before. The former generation of missionaries frequently rejected tribal customs as pagan, and thus closed the door to any amount of contextualization. On the other hand, when anthropologists started to acknowledge cultural relativity, some communicators swung the pendulum to the opposite side. Because of the deep respect for humans and their cultures, cultural ways are seen as basically good with no changes needed. We can call this the anthropological model of contextualization. Models of contextualization that take both the Bible and the culture seriously can be put into three broad categories, namely: translation models, adaptation models and contextual models (Schreiter 1985, 6). The "Critical

Contextualization" model which is the process applied in this thesis falls in the category of contextual models.

SYNCRETISM

Someone is quoted as having said that "missions almost inevitably leads to syncretism" (Schneider 1989, 9) and it is true that the contextualization process, which is the key involvement of this paper, borders close on syncretism.

Robert Schreiter has given a concise definition of syncretism as:

> The mixing of elements of two religious systems to the point where at least one, if not both of the systems loses its basic structure and identity. (Schreiter 1986, 144).

Syncretism is a real pitfall in the contextualizing of the gospel, but it is also elusive. Droogers has pointed out that people can be involved in syncretism unconsciously for "syncretists are always the others" (Schneider 1989, 16). Theologians have asked fundamental questions that point to the complexity of the matter:

> Who determines what is proper and what is improper borrowing? Hasn't Christianity borrowed all along? (Schreiter 1986, 150, 151).

> What are the limits to adjustments required in the spread of Christianity from one human culture to another as it takes root? How much of his culture can a convert forsake without losing identity and meaning in life? What exactly is the essential core of the gospel which has to be transmitted? What is supracultural and what is cultural? (Tippett 1979, 400, 401).

The basic fact is that whenever efforts are made to make the gospel relevant to a culture, be it called "rooting" (Kato 1957, 1224), "indigenization" (Taber, Kraft 1979, 372), "accommodation" (Tippett 1979, 402) or "contextualization" (Schreiter 1993, 145), there is always the danger of syncretism.

Some factors that lead to syncretism have been identified: (1) Adopting the Christian message to the receptor culture so uncritically that its true distinctiveness becomes lost in the process (Kraft 1979, 374). (2) Seeing old cultural customs as basically good and therefore making few changes when people become Christians, or rejecting them indiscriminately leaving a cultural vacuum (Hiebert 1985, 184). (3) A fault in evangelization so that believers do not have a correct understanding of their own identity as Christians. (4) Religion as a way of being and living is so tied up with being part of a particular culture that it is impossible to imagine living that way outside the culture (Schreiter 1993, 149). (5) Polytheistic and monistic worldviews are syncretistic by nature (Hesselgrave 1978, 191). (6) The subliminal striving for meaning since the meaning the convert ascribes to religion is an expansion only of his old frame of reference (Tippett 1979, 415).

However, fear of syncretism should not distract us from contextualizing the gospel. Whenever a church does contextualization consciously, it will likely not run the risk of syncretizing unconsciously. Active involvement in contextualization will maintain the awareness needed against syncretism.

As proposed in this paper a resolve to contextualize the gospel to the Lelan Pokot following Paul Hiebert's "critical contextualization" (1985, 186) model should make a healthy start that can avoid syncretism.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY:

STEPS IN THE CRITICAL CONTEXTUALIZATION MODEL

The foregoing material is given as a basis on which contextualization of the gospel to the Lelan Pokot can be done. In the study of the various models of contextualization, Paul Hiebert's "Critical Contextualization" model (Hiebert 1985, 186-192) has impressed the researcher as one with marked advantages for success and for strengthening the church. Therefore, the researcher has chosen to follow it in all its details in the present study.

In proposing the "Critical Contextualization" model, Paul Hiebert is addressing this crucial question:

> What should people do with their old cultural ways when they become Christians, and how should the missionary respond to these traditional beliefs and practices? (Hiebert 1985, 171).

Hiebert points out two basic reactions to traditional cultures. The first is rejection of the customs. Such reaction was common among missionaries up to the middle of this century. There are several reasons for the rejection. The first is that missionaries saw traditional customs as directly or indirectly related to traditional religions and therefore unacceptable to Christians. This reason has some validity bearing in mind the highly integrated nature of traditional cultures such that the line between the secular and the sacred is blurred, for religion is the core of the culture and permeates all of life. The second key reason is cultural ethnocentrism. Many missionaries believed in cultural evolutionism in which case western culture was considered superior to traditional African cultures. Therefore, the African cultures were judged by the standards of the

missionaries' cultures and rejected. Besides that, the missionaries ignorantly equated the gospel with their own culture, being unable to delineate what was cultural and that which is supra-cultural in the gospel. Therefore they demanded that new believers reject their culture and adopt the missionaries' culture in order to become Christians, which many did.

This rejection resulted in some bad effects. First, a cultural vacuum was created in the lives of believers who rejected their tribal culture and yet could not fully adopt the missionaries' culture. Second, Christianity was misunderstood and perceived as a threat to the culture and to the fabric of society that secured national and tribal solidarity. Prospective converts were put in a dilemma by being required to either choose the gospel or their culture and society. It is no wonder then that during that era conversions were not phenomenal in numbers, for it was on an individual basis. Donald McGavran proposes that missionaries should instead honour the social set up and plan strategies of converting people without requiring them to cross cultural barriers and without becoming alienated from their kinship group. He believes that missionaries can take advantage of the kinship group and trigger a chain of decisions for Christ within it. Instead of creating barriers they should use God's social bridges to initiate people movements to Christ (McGavran 1970, 223).

Other bad effects of the rejection of culture are that old cultural ways go underground only to resurface later among professed Christians and lead to forms of syncretism. When leaders impose demands on converts without involving them in the decision making process, they will have to enforce them on the people, thus acting as "police." In such situations new converts are not given the initiative to grow spiritually.

The second basic reaction to traditional cultures is acceptance. Several

factors have contributed to this. The first is the continued study of cultural ways that has shown them to be complex rather than simplistic as they were earlier assumed to be. The second is that with the onset of political liberation, cultural liberation came in the package. Tribal cultures began to be looked upon with appreciation, or even considered basically good with no changes needed. Third, some missionaries have opted to accept traditional customs in order to eliminate the foreignness of the gospel.

This approach has resulted in the bad effects of overlooking corporate and cultural sins and being prone to syncretism.

Paul Hiebert proposes that we should neither accept nor reject old beliefs and customs at the outset, but rather we should first examine them. In this way, old beliefs and customs are neither rejected nor accepted without examination. They are first studied with regard to the meanings and places they have within their cultural setting and then evaluated in the light of biblical norms (Hiebert 1985, 186).

Hiebert proposes the following procedures in doing contextualization following this "critical contextualization" model.

Step One

> An individual or church must recognize the need to deal biblically with all areas of life (p.186).

The researcher agrees with Hiebert that "discerning the areas of life that need to be critiqued is one of the important functions of leadership in the church . . . "(1985, 186). The researcher, therefore, out of his pastoral experience in Lelan, has taken the prerogative to decide that Pokot enculturative rites need to be examined and contextualized.

Step Two

> Lead the congregation in *uncritically* gathering and analyzing the traditional customs associated with the question at hand (Ibid, 186).

The researcher followed this procedure with some limitations due to the brevity of time that was available to gather data. He could not involve the congregation in the gathering process. It was viable for him to gather data from the members of the congregation so that he could acquire a knowledge of the rites under investigation. This enabled him to have a common understanding with the congregation.

Four separate questionnaires were made for the first four research questions. One questionnaire sought answers for one research question. The questionnaires were open-ended and were administered by the researcher himself, aiming to acquire a description and not a value judgment. A minimum of two hours was needed to complete one questionnaire, and in several cases, an interpreter was used.

The researcher publicly explained his need to congregations at Koishomu (Kalotwari) and at Kapsait. Respondents were chosen on their availability and acquaintance with the information sought. Therefore, women were not asked about male initiation and vice versa, nor were youth asked about birth, marriage and burial rites. Three questionnaires were filled for each of the rites under study, except initiation for which five were filled, so as to make a good comparison between the sexes. Respondents were interviewed during the day then the researcher sat alone at night and compiled full descriptions from the data gathered. Weakness was detected in the descriptions of `riwoi', `parpara' and `noghshio' rituals and more information was sought from particularly knowledgeable people. The descriptive exercise was carried out on the days between 16th - 26th December 1994. A total of seventeen people representing six congregations

(Koishomu, Chesupet, Kapsait, Kokwoplekwa, Sarame and Kapsangar) were interviewed.

The descriptive manuscripts, written in double space (thus leaving spaces for correction and supplementary material) were offered to competent persons to read and ascertain their accuracy. No serious flaws were detected in any of them. Once back in the college, the researcher edited the manuscripts before they were typed, giving anthropological interpretations of the information gathered about the rites. Van Gennep's book, *The Rites of Passage* (1960), was invaluable in that area. The full descriptions make up chapter four of this thesis.

The limitations of this study did not allow for the description of songs, dance and recitations made during the performance of the rites.

Step Three

> The pastor or missionary should lead the church in a Bible study related to the question under consideration (Hiebert 1985, 187).

The researcher requested the congregation, drawn from three churches which met at Kapsait on Christmas Day, to give him a date when they could come to the Kapsait church for a contextualization seminar. The church elders proposed Tuesday, 27th December 1994, for that purpose. Four men and four women showed up at midday, the researcher making the ninth. Because of the time factor, there was no study. Since those who attended were known to the researcher to be Christians with a fair understanding of the Bible, we moved on to the fourth step.

Therefore in this thesis, step three which answers research question No. 5 ("What does the Bible teach on birth, initiation, marriage and burial rites?") is the researcher's learned biblical understanding of those rites and the findings are provided in chapter five.

Step Four

> The congregation to evaluate critically their own past customs in the light of their new biblical understanding and to make a decision regarding their use (Hiebert 1985, 187).

In pursuit of achieving this the researcher led the participants of the seminar in a lively systematic discussion of selected matters related to the four rites until evening.

Paul Hiebert has elucidated the advantages of involving the members of the church as a "hermeneutical community" (Hiebert 1985, 192) to decide what to do with their old customs. First, this procedure affirms the priesthood of all believers by allowing the converts to make the final decisions. Second, by making a corporate decision on any matter, the Christian body will enforce it and thus save the pastor or missionary from taking the role of police. Third, there will be little likelihood that any rejected customs will go underground to resurface later in a syncretistic situation. Fourth, this procedure draws upon the strength of believers and opens the avenue for them to grow spiritually by learning to apply scriptural teachings to their own lives. Such a congregation should contextualize by means of modifying old practices to give them explicit Christian meanings and by retaining pagan religious objects but secularizing them. They can substitute Christian symbols or rites borrowed from another culture for those in their own that they reject. Finally, they can add foreign rituals to affirm their Christian spiritual heritage (eg. baptism, Lord's Supper, etc.) and create new symbols and rituals to communicate their culture (Hiebert 1985, 189).

Our evaluations at the seminar were carried out on the above guidelines and decisions were reached. By so doing, research question No. 6 was answered: "What in the four rites can Lelan Pokot Christians retain and

what must they drop?"

Hiebert has proposed that after the analysis and evaluation by the church body, the pastor or missionary should help the converts to arrange the practices they have chosen into a new ritual that expresses the Christian meaning of the event (1985, 189). The researcher has taken that initiative and that arrangement is given in Chapter Six under the topic of Contextualization.

The researcher's own appraisal of the resolutions made at the seminar is given in the conclusion of the thesis. This arrangement is chosen so as to remain true to the "critical contextualization" model which does not allow an individual to make decisions for the Christian community as to what should be done with the old customs.

In that sequence then, descriptions of Lelan Pokot practices in regard to the four rites under investigation are given in the following chapter.

Administrative boundaries West Pokot District, 1983

CHAPTER FOUR

DESCRIPTION OF LELAN POKOT RITES OF PASSAGE

The descriptions of rites practiced by the Lelan Pokot which follow are the fruit of the field research done. These descriptions are the first step in contextualization following Paul Hiebert's "critical contextualization" model. The descriptions, however, are uncritical because he proposes that this first step be "in *uncritically* gathering and analyzing the traditional customs associated with the question at hand." (Hiebert 1985, 186).

The descriptions are limited to Lelan, bearing in mind that the entire Pokot population has a lot in common, but that there are minor variations of practice from area to area. Comparison of practice in the various areas is outside the scope of this paper. Whereas the present tense has been used throughout the descriptions for convenience it should be noted that much change has occurred in the Pokot way of life. Some ceremonies described are rarely performed, and if at all, the procedure has been modified.

PREGNANCY AND BIRTH RITES

Like most tribal societies, the birth of children is important to marriage among the Pokot. Failure to acquire children can lead to the annulment of the marriage and to divorce. Following Van Gennep's categorization, although the Pokot consider a marriage valid even before the birth of the first child, the rites of pregnancy and childbirth are considered as constituting the last act of the marriage ceremony (Van Gennep 1960, 48).

In cases where children are lost in childhood with none surviving, divorce can also occur. Therefore, the pregnancy of a new bride is anxiously anticipated.

The Lelan Pokot consider it abnormal for a woman to conceive without having previously menstruated. If she does conceive in such circumstances, a cleansing ceremony called `riwoi' has to be performed after delivery. Traditionally a menstruating woman is considered as `cheprusion' - unclean, and she is not allowed to do her household chores, but she can collect firewood, fetch water or work in the garden. In her uncleanness she does not cohabit with her husband and neither is she permitted to take milk, for it is believed that the contagion of her uncleanness will be transferred to the cows and affect them.

Pregnancy

To the Pokot, pregnancy implies either impurity or magico-religious danger (Van Gennep 1960, 169). Therefore, taboos are imposed on pregnant women. Indications are that a pregnant woman is in a state of separation from the community until her post-delivery purification when she is reincorporated. There is however no rite to initiate the separation; instead it comes gradually on evidence of pregnancy.

A pregnant woman ceases sexual relations with her husband approximately at three months of pregnancy. Such separation is one factor that has contributed to polygyny which is common among the Pokot. The Pokot believe that extended sexual relations with a pregnant wife will result in the birth of an unhealthy child, with a whitish skin. When such a child is born, some taboos must be observed.

Added to the state of separation is the high value the Pokot have on children, resulting in various taboos and regulations on a pregnant mother to ensure physical, social and maybe spiritual health. She is not allowed to eat the meat of a sick animal or one that dies of disease or by accident, nor can she eat wild game freely. Only a few animals like the buffalo, the wild pig

the rabbit and the bongo are considered safe for her to eat. Fat meat is also considered unhealthy.

Milk from cows suffering from all manner of diseases including foot and mouth disease, coughing, palpitating, snoring, or skin diseases is avoided. So is milk from a cow that has difficulty in delivering the afterbirth, from a fierce cow, or one which has been attacked by a hyena or a snake. Whenever there are locust or other pest invasions which eat grass and vegetation, the expectant woman avoids milk altogether. Goat milk and vegetables are highly recommended.

Because of the numerous taboos which she has to observe, she uses separate utensils for cooking and serving her food. There is the possibility, as Van Gennep supposes, that a pregnant woman is considered physiologically and socially to be in an abnormal condition, and therefore she has to be isolated (Van Gennep 1960, 41).

As the woman approaches maternity of her firstborn child she has to undergo a purification rite called `parpara.' In this ceremony, which is performed in advanced pregnancy, all the parents of the couple accompanied by many relatives attend.

The ritual specialist called `parparin', brings a Pokot traditional wooden bowl called `aleput', used for milking. He collects saliva into this bowl from the two families represented. For the Pokot, like many other African societies, the spitting of saliva communicates a blessing to the recipient. For this occasion the collecting of saliva also shows their common intent to confess and be reconciled. In this act, blessings and good will are conferred to the couple. This ceremony fits what Van Gennep has said: "favour was obtained from all those present for the child to ensure safe delivery and as a sign of welcome into the family" (Van Gennep 1960, 50).

The `parparin' dilutes the saliva with water treated with soil from a

white ant colony, `kultutwo', which has young ones or eggs. The use of this soil may be meant to identify the couple with "Mother Earth" (Van Gennep 1960, 52). It could also be meant to confer to them productivity like the ants, on the principle that "like produces like" (Van Gennep 1960, 4). A ceremonial leaf called `laptian' is immersed in the solution overnight. People sing and dance throughout the night taking beer.

The next morning the husband and wife are seated on a ceremonially clean cowhide (i.e., from a cow which was slaughtered rather than died of other causes). They sit stretching out their legs with the wife's legs crossed over her husband's. The specialist anoints their legs and the woman's stomach with the solution using the `laptian' leaf. As he does that he invokes forgiveness and cleansing for their past sins, and blessings for their future. Van Gennep thinks that a rite like `parpara' may constitute the last acts of the marriage ceremony (Van Gennep 1960, 48).

This ceremony is crucial for ensuring the safe delivery of the child. The Pokot believe that a mother who does not undergo this ceremony is in danger of losing her life and that of the baby at childbirth. A girl who gets pregnant out of wedlock also has to undergo this ceremony, thereby divulging the names of all the men she had relations with before the pregnancy. Even a married woman who gets pregnant out of an adulterous relationship has to undergo a `parpara', though secretly, to be cleansed in preparation for delivery.

As the day of delivery approaches, the expectant woman collects much firewood assisted by friends. She also preserves much milk and other foods, especially finger millet which is regarded as a special diet for a recent mother. The area midwife, `kamatarach' is alerted to remain readily available, and even the husband lingers nearby.

A Pokot Mother and Her Children With
Ritual Paintings on the Face and Arms
(Copied from Consolata Fathers, *Pokot*, p. 32)

Birth

At the onset of labour pains, the traditional midwife is immediately called in and other women also come to assist. Delivery usually takes place in the main house, but it can also take place elsewhere, even outside. During labour she rests on especially broad and soft leaves of a tree called `tepengwo'. In advanced labour, when the baby is in the birth canal, the mother has to sit on a stone because incisions have to be made to widen the opening which as a result of clitoridectomy cannot stretch widely enough for the baby to deliver. The instrument used to make the incisions is the `terema', whose special use is piercing a bull to get blood from the jugular vein. Its significance is borne by the fact that it is one of the few things that cannot be given away even when the head of the family dies. To the Pokot sitting on a stone has ritual significance bearing in mind that at circumcision initiates sit on stones.

From the reports gathered, delivery was and is difficult for most Pokot women. Even some eating taboos are meant to limit the size of the foetus.

Men are prohibited from being in the homestead when the delivery is taking place. In case of a difficult prolonged labour, many more women join the group to assist and to empathize.

After delivery, the baby is closely observed for any deformities. In case of any abnormality being detected, the mother and child are not allowed to take milk from the healthy cows, for it is believed to hurt the cows; they take milk only from the old toothless cow. This prohibition is observed until the mother has her first menstrual flow following delivery, then it is lifted. The period between is considered enough observation period for the baby to determine its health.

All the eating taboos enforced during pregnancy are lifted after delivery, except that of eating fat meat. But then the taboos related to

menstrual uncleanness are applied to the new mother. She has to be fed by someone else, continues to use separate utensils, and does not do any household chores until a ritual called `lopou a kama moning' is officiated by the midwife or any other elderly woman. The old woman chews aromatic `moigut' herbs and spits on the mother and child and authorises her for the first time since delivery to handle food and dishes. The baby is shaven, and both mother and baby are bathed in warm water treated with aromatic leaves. Van Gennep's interpretation of the significance of such shaving fits here: ". . . a child's head is shaven to indicate that he is entering into another stage, that of life . . ." (Van Gennep 1960, 167).

The washing gives both cleanliness and purity while the sweet smell indicates pleasantness, health, and blessing. After this ritual all taboos are lifted, the woman can interact with other people and perform her household chores.

The Pokot experience fits into Van Gennep's understanding here, he explains:

> Among people who consider the pregnant woman impure, that impurity is ordinarily transmitted to the child who is consequently subject to certain taboos and whose first transitional period coincides with the mother's last transition preceding her social return from childbirth (Van Gennep 1960, 50).

The Pokot of a former generation had few coverings. They covered themselves with animal skins which for women were in two pieces, a skirt and a sheet tied at the shoulders. A mother uses the sheet to cover the baby.

Immediately after delivery a special belt called `leghetio' is tied around the mother's stomach to put it back to normal shape. This belt can never be cut from the hide of a cow that had died of itself. It had to be ceremonially clean, and it is decorated with cowrie shells and beads. A young mother is not permitted to make it before delivery, for it would be

presumptuous. As they prepare a special one for her she can borrow one from a friend.

After that, special baby coverings are made from the skins of young goats or sheep. A covering called `anopet' for strapping the baby on the mother's back or even on the chest is made of ceremonially clean goat skin.

Ceremonially unclean people are not allowed to enter the house where the young mother and baby are confined. Even at this stage there is a certain sacredness attached to the child. Those barred are those who have had sexual relations of late, especially illicit relations. A landmark in the form of a goalpost is put at the entrance to the homestead as the boundary between the sacred area and the profane. Such an unclean person does not dare to go beyond it. It is believed that the shadow of such a person falling on the child can make it sick or even result in death. Even the child's father is not exempt from this regulation.

Naming

The Pokot do not name a child immediately after birth. They seem to fall into the category of groups who consider a child as sacred. Therefore, they take a defensive attitude toward the child similar to the attitude the group assumes toward a stranger. Whereas the naming of a child both individualizes and incorporates him into society (Van Gennep 1960, 62) the Pokot give the child a certain period before becoming an individual (Van Gennep 1960, 53). During this duration a general name, `chemyarkil' is used for newborn babies.

When the midwife and other women return after about a month to perform the purification `lopou a kama moning' for the mother and child, then the child is given a name, thus getting incorporated into the society.

Names are determined by several factors like the time of day when the

birth takes place, the place or the occasion. A child born in the morning is named Chepkiech/Pkiach; in midmorning, Chelimo/Plimo; at mid-day, Chebet/Kibet; at evening, Cherotich/Rotich; at night, Chenangat/Mnangat. Names related to occasions are like Chetum/Tum, during dance; Cherop/Krop, during rain; Chepkemei/Pkamai, during famine. A child born at the door entrance is called Chepkukat/Pkukat; on the way, Chepor/Por; in the garden, Chepar/Kipar; and in the grazing pastures, Chesang/Kisang. In all the above sets the first name is for a girl and second one for a boy. In some cases they share the same name like Lorot when born on the way; Relun when born at the appearance of the moon; and Yego for children born at dawn.

The giving of names after the duration of day and seasons indicates that the Pokot believe that people's lives are inter-related to cosmic rhythms. Twin children are not given these names and their case will be discussed separately.

Twins (`Salaa')

To the traditional Pokot the birth of twins by humans and cows is considered abnormal and a bad omen, therefore they are not well received. It is reported that in the past some parents would even eliminate one child, or give it away far off where it would never be identified with that family. Others would allow them to live, but their lives were closely watched. Their incorporation into the community does not follow the pattern of `normal' children. Instead it was delayed and their separation prolonged. Twin children are not allowed to play freely like other children. They are considered to be accident-prone and their activities are limited. They are also considered as a risk to other children.

Twins are not given the names of ordinary children and vice versa.

They are given names like Cheporit/Porit, Chesinon/Sinon, Chemakal/Makal and Cheriwoi. In each set, the first name is a girl's while the second is a boy's, and the last single name is unisex.

After undergoing purification rites like all other children, the twins and their parents have two more ceremonies to undergo. The first is called `yatat' (to open) and is performed when the children are the age of about five years. In this ceremony an uncastrated ram is used and a specialist `yotin ndo tum' officiates. The twins, their parents, and all the people attending gather inside the cattle `boma'. There they dance around the ram. One informant explained that in the dance the children are put on the ram in turns and carried round. Thereafter, the ram is strangled to death and people feast on it together with beer. The ram is considered a propitiation for the twins.

The second ceremony special for twins is called `riwoi gitunga' (to finish). In this ceremony the victim is a black bull and the officiant is the same as for `yatat', who should be a man. The bull is intoxicated with beer as the ceremony progresses in the cattle `boma'. People sing and dance around the bull, occasionally passing over and under it, and beating it with their fists simultaneously until it dies. The carcase is slaughtered and the meat cooked in the calves' compartment of the main house. In all phases of this ceremony, people who had undergone such a ceremony before, `Cheriwoi', have a privileged position. They are the ones who prepare the meat and dish it out to the rest. We can say that the twins are first incorporated into the `Cheriwoi' and then successively into the whole society. People sleep at the venue singing and taking beer.

In the morning of the second day all the people gather into the cattle `boma' before the cattle are let out. The crowd surrounds the cattle and walk in a procession around them. `Yotin ndo tum' leads, followed by the father

of the twins, then by the first wife, the twins, their mother, other siblings, `Cheriwoi', relatives, and then all others, in that order. The procession goes around the cattle four times after which the cattle are let out of the `boma'. At that juncture a ritual is carried out on the twins. Their ear lobes are pierced: a boy on the right ear and a girl on the left ear. The blood that drips from the laceration is believed to atone for them and to pave the way for a good life. Simultaneously with these acts, a diviner predicts their future by watching bubbles in a small water pond made in the middle of the `boma'. With that the ceremony ends.

Unless these two ceremonies are carried out, twins cannot be circumcised and neither can they marry, for it is these rites which incorporate them into the community of normal people.

INITIATION RITES FOR BOYS & GIRLS

Of the four categories of rites under investigation the initiation rites are most elaborate and interesting. This popularity is because of the large numbers of initiates involved so that most members of the community, both young and old, are mobilized to participate in one way or the other. Regarding the classification of rites that Van Gennep has proposed (1960, 11) on the stages of separation, transition and incorporation, these rites of initiation divide themselves conveniently into those categories. As we go on to discuss the various rites, this will become evident.

The Lelan Pokot have initiation ceremonies for both boys and girls to mark the transition from childhood to adulthood. Initiation also has an aspect of purification of the uncleanness associated with being uncircumcised. For boys the main rite is circumcision while for girls it is clitoridectomy. There are major similarities and differences in the way the initiations are carried out on each group. This practice of initiation is one of

the major differences between the Lelan Pokot and their fellow tribesmen who live in the drier northern area of the district in Alale Division who do not circumcise men, most probably due to their state of insecurity.

Qualification For Initiation

Girls are initiated at a much younger age than boys. Girls qualify for initiation at puberty, but boys are kept until they attain the age of about thirty years. Before the circumcision they are termed as boys regardless of age. Girls can be initiated every year, someone suggested even twice a year, but boys are initiated by a process which involves the consultation of the elders and the `koroyakyon' (diviner). The elders have to give their consent while the `koroyakyon' has to determine whether the year is propitious for the occasion or not. Usually male initiation comes around after every six years. The female initiation is carried out almost on an individual basis, but male initiation is a communal affair. For both, the dry season is preferred and the time when food is readily available. A girl needs the consent of her father alone and after that she can start making the arrangements. Other girls then fit into the plan depending on its convenience for them.

The Operation

On the set day the candidates for initiation go to the river early in the morning and bathe. They leave their clothes there, never to wear them again and return to the venue naked. The disposal of the clothes indicates the break being made with their childhood by the performance of the rite. The washing has implications of hygiene, ritual purity, anesthesis, and haemostasis.

Boys are escorted from the river by initiated men and girls by initiated women. These are the new groups into which on successful

initiation they will be incorporated, and therefore they are being groomed to it. In each case they are ushered into the operation venue where a mixed crowd of men, women and children is waiting together with the operation specialists; a man, `mutin' for the boys, and a woman `koko melkong' for the girls. For both sexes, a stone is provided for each novice to sit on arranged in a row. After the ceremony those stones are considered sacred, never to be removed nor to be used again for such a ceremony.

There is a preliminary operation which is performed publicly and witnessed by all, followed by a more thorough one executed elsewhere in the absence of the opposite sex. After a successful operation each novice is clothed with a skin covering called `Sir'. The act of cutting body parts in the operation symbolises social separation and incorporation into the group of the initiated. Van Gennep has expounded the philosophy thus:

> These are rites of separation from the asexual world, and they are followed by rites of incorporation into the world of sexuality, and in all societies and all social groups, into a group confined to persons of one sex or the other (1960, 67)

> The mutilated individual is removed from the common mass of humanity by a rite of separation (this is the idea behind cutting, piercing, etc.) which automatically incorporates him into a defined group; since the operation leaves ineradicable traces, the incorporation is permanent (1960, 72).

John Mbiti has a different interpretation of the rite of cutting:

> When circumcision and clitoridectomy are practiced they symbolically represent the flow of life through the shedding of blood from the organs of reproduction . . . (1975, 104).

The Confinement

Uncircumcised boys are called `Karachuna' but after the operation become `tiyos', while prior to operation girls are called `tipin' and after the operation become `chemeri.' `Chemeri' are confined in the homestead and they can separate or team up as it may be convenient for them. But the `tiyos', who are usually in large numbers, about fifty or more, are led to a

forest dwelling shelter called `menjo.'

In their first days of confinement novices are not allowed to feed themselves, instead they are fed by assistants. Those assisting boys are called `mokoghony.' The act of undressing and going naked, and being fed emphasize the novices' new beginning as small children. It also implies ritual uncleanness as in the case of new mothers. Long sticks called `sindit' are kept at the entrance to their houses. These sticks serve as a territorial boundary to warn strangers who might stray into their house.

In the `menjo' the `tiyos' stay in the same order in which they were circumcised, beginning with the son of the oldest father to the one of the youngest. Brothers are never allowed to follow one another, but are separated for they consider it a bad omen. Novices eat from the same hand and drink from the same container. They also pass urine on the same spot. These acts together show their oneness. Co-initiates transcend the confines of age and biological kinship to form a social kinship, an age set, or what Mohammed Amin (1987, 83) has called "brothers in circumcision."

The `tiyos' receive their cooked food from homes, but women and girls as well as uninitiated boys are barred from the `Menjo'. They deliver the food about two hundred meters away, to the elders or to the `mokoghony', and go away. Whenever they approach the `menjo,' women wear rattles on their feet as a warning of their presence.

Both sexes are fed with `ugali' and milk as meat is not allowed in their diet before they heal. This could be related to their social status of childhood. Nor are they allowed to bathe. They should speak in suppressed voices only and to whistle as a signal to someone who is far, a further indication of their assuming childhood status.

Rites Performed in Confinement

During the confinement of novices, rites are performed which gradually take them through the transition period up to incorporation back into the society. They will be discussed successively.

'Ngembasany'

This ceremony releases the novices from the prohibition against feeding and warming themselves. After it is performed they can feed themselves and warm themselves before the fire and also outside in the sun. One informant said that it is performed on the girls three days after the rite of clitoridectomy and that women use `moigut' herbs to cleanse them. The duration of stay for the boys to the time when `ngembasany' is performed is not clear, neither is there any indication that `moigut' is ever used on males.

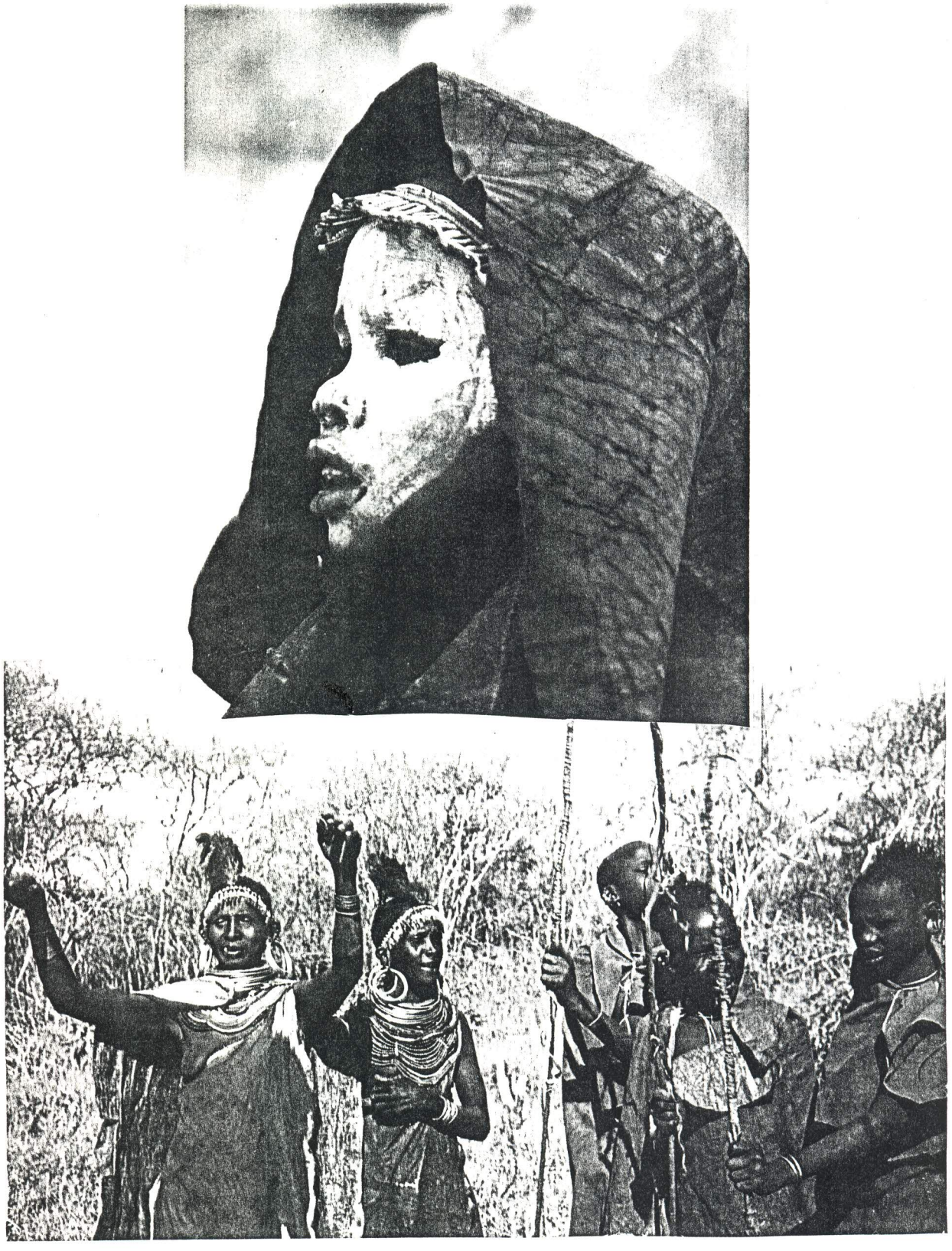
This rite marks the end of the childhood stage for the novices.

'Lapan'

When the `Chemeri' are fully healed this rite is performed on them. Women chew `moigut' herbs and spit saliva on them thereby pronouncing them free to move out of their hut and free to do household chores. The `chemeri' paint their faces with white chalk and continue avoiding their fathers and all men in general. The boys have no rite parallel to `lapan'.

'Kisironmpoartin'

This ceremony is performed for both the `tiyos' and the `Chemeri'. It releases them from their confinement and gives them freedom to walk about in the village, but it does not allow them to reveal themselves to the opposite sex. It is the first rite of reincorporating them back into the society, but partially since they are still restricted to members of their gender.



Top: Pokot Initiated Girl 'Chemeri' Covered with 'Sir'and Face Painted White to Indicate That She Is Healed

Bottom: Mothers Celebrating with Their Initiated Daughters Who Have Been Granted Freedom of Movement After 'Lapan' Ritual Is Performed (Both Picutres Copied from Consolata Fathers, *Pokot*, pp. 16,17)

In regard to the `Chemeri' women take them to a stream for a bath. They wash off the white chalk from their bodies and replace it with red ochre as well as the `sir'. The `Chemeri' are led across the stream back and forth and after that their freedom is complete. The bottom hem of the `sir' is decorated with a collection of bottle-tops and cattle-hooves - `karakaren', whose rattling noise when a `chemeri' is walking serves to warn men about her presence.

Back at the residence women slaughter a goat and hold a big celebration which includes the taking of beer and thus welcome the initiated into their fellowship. She can walk about in the village to visit fellow `chemeri', friends and relatives. They walk about with a stick called `sitet.' The `Chemeri' remove the grass on which previously they had been sleeping and revert to regular bedding. They cannot use their pre-initiation bedding.

The `tiyos' are similarly taken to a stream where they do more than bathing. Their caretakers go before them and make intricate structures in a pool using tree branches. They make hidden shades where the trainers can hide and scare the novices, and submerged branches which they can use to harass them. The `tiyos' are required to go underneath a canopy almost submerged in water as they cross the stream. Their legs are trapped while a wild noise is made by the people hidden in the shades. This is frightening and it is meant to measure the courage of the young men. It is also disciplinary because those who are known to be rude or who have misbehaved have their legs trapped and pressed until they confess their wrong doing. A special friend among the `mokoghony' is needed because he is the one who stands on the bank of the stream to pull the `tiyos' out.

This ceremony which includes crossing a stream symbolises the novices' break with the transitional period and their gradual reincorporation

into society as evidenced by the freedom of movement which they receive. `Tiyos' are given freedom to walk about in the villages, led by their `mokoghony.' They do not reveal themselves to women; they wear a facial screen called `soghogh' and hide themselves in the bush whenever they meet married women. They, however, leave their sticks across the way. The women are not supposed to walk over them without depositing a gift in the form of coin money or a metallic ornament. The 'tiyos' harass unmarried women and girls, demanding gifts from them with the threat of shooting their feet with blunt arrows if they do not comply.

This antisocial behaviour to women shows that novices are not bound by the rules governing society. Van Gennep has elaborated this aspect succinctly in the following paragraph:

> During the entire novitiate, the usual economic and legal ties are modified, sometimes broken altogether. The novices are outside society, and society has no power over them, especially since they are sacred and holy, and therefore untouchable and dangerous, just as the gods would be. During the novitiate the young people can steal and pillage at will or feed and adorn themselves at the expense of the community (Van Gennep 1960, 114). The nature of the transitional period may also be at least a partial explanation for the sexual licence permitted among a certain number of peoples (Van Gennep 1960, 115).

This latter eventuality is said to be true of Maasai male initiates when they are in the transition period (Amin 1987, 86).

Each novice can also go home during the day and eat food, nevertheless, always avoiding meeting the mother. They always return to the `menjo' for the night. All along, the `tiyos' and even the `chemeri' are not allowed to speak.

Instruction Given During the Seclusion

During the period of seclusion the Pokot teach the novices the virtues which they consider important for each sex. Women visit the `Chemeri' at

night and instruct them on cleanliness, honesty, hard work, contentment and keeping honourable social relationships. Any girl who is known to be a thief or rude is particularly dealt with.

The `tiyos' are instructed on how to lead an independent domestic life, providing for their families and keeping their future wives in submission. They are advised against revealing secrets to wives and to children, secrets like where they have invested their wealth and about any bad relationships with fellow men. The reason given for the latter is that the wife will overreact to the situation and worsen it. Novices are taught that a grown man should not handle children; he should remain rough and tough without softening. They are taught public speaking and argumentation and a form of diplomacy and protocol, in preparation for addressing the council of elders - `kokwo'.

Pokot social relations, especially regarding marriage are taught. Those who are initiated together should live like brothers, honouring one another and respecting his fellow's wife, never to desire her. They cannot marry one another's daughters, for being an age set such daughters are like their own. Other skills taught are the successful naming of wild animals whose images are displayed in the `menjo'. The novices practice sharp shooting with arrows on small animals like rats and birds. Courage is instilled into the novices by various means.

In the Pokot traditional society the novices could stay in the transitional state for three to five months before they returned to normal life.

Initiated Pokot Boys, 'Tiyos', Covered With 'Sir' and Their Care-Takers Perform a Ritual Before Leaving the Forest Grass Hut, 'Manjo', for the Graduation Ceremony, 'Kipuno'
(Picture Copied from Consolata Fathers, *Pokot*, p. 17)

The Graduation Ceremony

The graduation ceremony for both boys and girls is called `kipuno.' On the appointed day, the initiates leave their habitation and reveal themselves to the public at a dance in an open space. The initiates and their mothers are well dressed up with decorations. In the dance, mothers form the core, with the initiates surrounding them and the rest making the periphery. The initiates dance around their mothers four times, and the mothers have to make sure that each has anointed her son/daughter with ghee at least four times. The ghee is contained in rams' horns which are ceremonial containers. After the dance the people feast and disperse to their homes. This marks the end of the seclusion and only a step short of full incorporation.

Before parting the `tiyos' perform one final ritual of disposing their weapons. They form a single file and run to a designated tree where they deposit their sticks, bows and arrows around the trunk and run back to the field. Such paraphernalia is sacred and should never be removed from there. The tree chosen is usually one with aerial roots so that eventually it will swallow up the paraphernalia. After the ceremony the initiates are taken home by brothers and sisters, but continue to hide from their mothers.

The next day the initiates reveal themselves to both parents at their homes in a ritual carried out in the cattle `boma'. Parents and relatives attend and beginning with the parent of the opposite sex uncover and anoint the head of the initiate with milk, giving or promising gifts. This ritual fully incorporates the initiate back home and into society. The men become `Muren' and the ladies become `mror', no longer regarded as children despite age.

About three days after `kipuno' the `mror' individually performs a small ceremony called `ketpowos' in which she puts away all articles used in

`chemeri'-hood. She takes her walking stick and the ones which had been displayed at her doorway, together with all other articles she had been using, and deposits them at the trunk of a `ketpowos' tree. After the disposal she is free to marry.

While in seclusion as `chemeri', the `mror' had made new and different ornaments which she starts wearing after the `kipuno' ceremony. Even in appearance she is different from a `tipin'.

In former times the `muren' were required to perform a further ceremony called `sapana' before getting married. In this ceremony the candidate speared a bull to death outside the homestead. People feasted on it and the elders blessed him anointing him with chyme and washing him with milk. After this ceremony he could marry at will.

MARRIAGE AMONG THE LELAN POKOT

John Mbiti has underlined the importance of marriage in African traditional societies:

> Once [boys and girls] have gone through initiation ceremonies, not only is there nothing to stop them from getting married and bearing children, but they are under a solemn obligation to do so . . . marriage is looked upon as a sacred duty which every normal person must perform. Failure to do so means in effect stopping the flow of life through the individual, and hence the diminishing of mankind upon the earth (Mbiti 1975, 104).

Pokot practice is quite true to this view. They value married status so highly that an unmarried person (gone past age) is despised. Anybody who dies unmarried and without leaving descendants is not even accorded a proper burial. In fact in former times they were just dragged to the forest with a rope tied to the legs and left there for predators to devour. But a married person who had attained the honour of a homemaker has the honour of ascending to elderhood, and at death is given an honourable

burial in the homestead. Everybody is expected to marry and failure to do so is considered a curse.

Preparations for Marriage

In the old days, men married at a mature age. They first had to undergo the rites of circumcision and `sapana'. They proved their industry by making beehives and proved their courage and responsibility by herding and protecting cattle from raiders. That could take them up to the age of thirty years or more. It was required for the man to be mature enough so that he could successfully head his home and keep his wife/wives under submission.

Women usually get married at a much younger age. Anywhere after the age of fourteen girls are initiated into womanhood by clitoridectomy and after that are considered mature enough for marriage. This results in their becoming mothers when they are under age and physiologically immature, leading to critical complications at childbirth, such as fistula.

Matching and Betrothal

A young man chooses the girl he likes, but occasionally the parents also make a recommendation to their son. The Pokot discourage the choice of a wife on the basis of beauty. They insist that all women are the same. Character is the major consideration. They look for a bride from a family with good reputation, which is known to be peaceful, not quarrelsome; hard working, and not lazy; contented, and not covetous; generous, and not mean.

Pokot are strictly exogamous and therefore before any advance is taken the clan relationships are closely reviewed. A man is not allowed to

marry from his father's or mother's clan. Several other relationships are also considered. If the young man's parents are satisfied that such a pre-meditated marriage is feasible, they prepare for the betrothal - `aloto.'

The father prepares honey beer and goes to visit the lady's father accompanied by the son and friends. Any misfortune on this party is considered a bad omen. Breakage of the beer pot, the sound of a certain ceremonially unclean bird or animal can lead to postponement of the betrothal.

If none of these interrupts, the party visits the lady's home and they declare their desire. If the lady's father is agreeable, he will invite them into the house and join them in taking beer. In case he is not in favour, he will direct them to a spot outside the house or even outside the homestead where they will take the beer. He may even refuse to take it.

The father behaves in this manner because in marital affairs "the acceptance of a gift places a constraint not only upon the individual who accepts it but also upon the group to which he belongs" (Van Gennep 1960, 133).

The girl's parents will take their chance to examine the young man and his family to make sure that they are not related unfavourably for marriage. The girl's parents tend to be more lenient because they are anxious to get their daughter married so that they can receive the bride price. More negotiations will go on privately between the two fathers and if all indications are good the engagement ceremony, `koyogh', is planned.

The 'Koyogh' (Engagement)

On the day set for the `koyogh' the two families gather at the lady's home with many relatives in attendance. On this coming together of the

extended families, John Mbiti has this to say:

> This is an important African view of marriage, namely that it is not an affair between two people only but between those two people together with their families and relatives. This has grown out of the African view that a person does not exist all by himself: he exists because of the existence of other people. The philosophical formula about this says, 'I am because we are, and since we are therefore I am' (Mbiti 1975, 108).

This gathering, which adequately represents the extended family, reviews the relationships between the two families once again. If they are satisfied that the two can marry they discuss the bride price and agree. The bride price ranges from five to ten cows and six to twelve goats. In case of competition for the lady, the bride price would increase. After a successful negotiation, they all feast together as a seal to the agreements made and as a sign of the union initiated.

There is no indication that the Pokot ever contract a marriage with no bride price paid. They seem to hold strongly to a view like that expressed by John Taylor:

> The transfer of a girl and all her unborn children from one kinship group to become a wife in another represents a very serious loss of the life-force of her family which must be compensated by some exchange (Taylor 1963, 102).

The payment of bride price legitimizes sex in marriage.

The Wedding

After a successful `koyogh' the groom's family arranges the day they will take the bride in a ceremony called `kiyil tagh' or `kiyil ta moning'. The dowry agreed upon is taken and a large party of relatives and friends goes to the bride's home. Elders sit privately to make the negotiations, usually at night and the bride price is presented. This consists of livestock which by now are in the `boma' together with those of this home. This herding together of the animals of the two different families is an indication of the

union that is going to be instituted through marriage.

The elders seal the agreement by eating and celebrating together with beer. Consent is given for the lady to be married. The bride and groom are called to the elders' meeting and given advice on married life.

Someone in the groom's party offers the bride a walking stick on promise of a gift. She accepts the stick and the party starts out, making melody as they head for the groom's home. The bride goes reluctantly and she has to be manipulated with promises of gifts in the form of cows and goats, but such promises are not necessarily kept. This procession, usually at night, marks the bride's separation from her family and clan. Her reluctance indicates the pain of the separation.

At the groom's home there is more feasting and merrymaking deep into the night. Throughout the ceremony the bride makes herself difficult even refusing food, and inducements have to be applied to make her comply.

At the new home, the bride does not immediately cohabit with her husband. Due to the visitors plus her shyness, she sleeps with other women in the mother-in-law's house for several days, even a week or two. Eventually she will settle in her husband's house and they will make their home there.

The 'Noghshio' (Marriage Pledge)

This is the rite that incorporates the bride into the new family and at which she receives a visible symbol of her being a married woman. This ceremony can be performed on the third day after marriage, or on any other convenient day. For a `cheriwoi', however, it has to be performed on the next day after marriage. The officiant in the `noghshio' is called `chipo koyogh' and has to be someone who is related by marriage to the groom's family and whose family can intermarry with it.

The father-in-law officially invites the bride to the ceremony with the gift of a cow. The `chipo koyogh' makes the form of a cattle `boma' using cow dung and seats the couple on a ceremonially clean cow hide adjacent to the formation. The husband sits on the right with the wife on his left and their maid at the extreme left. The `chipo koyogh' is given a thong cut from a ceremonially clean hide which he ties around the wrist of the bride's right arm and starts to twist it into a bracelet called `tirim'. At the fifth knot he stops, and the husband promises the wife a cow, three more and a sister-in-law promises a goat, four more and another sister-in-law promises a sheep, five more and a brother-in-law promises the bride a cow. These are serious promises to be kept.

The `chipo koyogh' anoints the `tirim' with milk, honey and soft cow dung. The husband's parents tie the final knot and promise a further gift. The maid, who is usually the groom's sister eats the remaining honey. By the tying of the `tirim' the bride is incorporated into the family and clan of her husband, while the couple and their maid are instituted as a nuclear family.

After the `tirim' is tied, the husband and wife are anointed with milk, honey and cow dung, the husband on the right side of his face and the right leg, but the wife anointed on the whole face, chest (breasts), belly and legs, As the officiant does the anointing he blesses the couple saying, `anyien, anyien', which means `sweet, sweet', thus wishing the couple a joyous and prosperous life. They do not wash that day.

The tying of the `tirim' can also be accompanied by the pronouncement of curses on the bride if she engages in adultery. The `tirim' shows the indissolubility of the marriage because even at the death of the husband or on separation and divorce the woman continues to wear it. It is believed that removal can cause a catastrophe in the family, death of the

husband or livestock.

This ceremony completes the marriage process for the couple. There is, however, no pledge for the husband to marital faithfulness, and he could take other wives or keep girlfriends.

DEATH AND BURIAL CEREMONIES

The Pokot consider death as the worst evil or misfortune that can befall someone and a family as a whole. It causes profound grief and terror. They have such a repugnance for corpses that they avoid them, even to the point of deserting bodies of their relatives in hospitals, leaving them to hospital staff to bury.

Since it is believed that a corpse defiles whatever it comes into contact with, be they people, houses or even a motor car, a sick person in critical condition is taken outside, put under a tree and nursed there. If death occurs inside a house, all foodstuffs therein are considered unclean and a pregnant woman is not allowed to eat them. The body is removed as soon as possible and the burial is also hastened.

The Burial Place

A man who is the head of the family is buried in the middle of the cattle `boma' at the youngest wife's home, as a show of respect and goodwill. The choice of the cattle `boma' may partly be due to its being soft and easy to dig for them who did not have strong tools for digging elsewhere. It may also be due to the association of cattle with ceremonies and as a show of welfare - the "cattle complex."

Married women are also buried in the `boma' but at the periphery. As aforesaid, unmarried people are not given a decent burial. They are taken

out of the homestead and buried or just dumped there. This is punishment for "stopping the flow of life through the individual." (Mbiti 1975, 104).

The Burial Procedure

The Pokot never bury bodies with any clothes or ornaments still on. It has to be stark naked. This removal of all articles pertaining to the living is a strong indicator to the separation of the corpse from the living. For a respected elder, the last-born son has the privilege of removing them, and he is also the one who lowers his father's body into the grave and is given a cow as reward. The reason for this arrangement is because the last-born son inherits his parents' homestead whereas the older sons move out to establish their own. In case the last-born son is too young to bury his father, others bury him in his name.

Burial should be performed only in the morning and mid-afternoon, never at mid-day or at evening. The Pokot associate blessings with the morning but curses with the sunset. Therefore, an evening burial would be interpreted as a wish for the deceased to perish with or like the setting sun.

The grave is dug along a north-south length and the corpse is laid on the side facing the sunrise, the source of blessings. Men are laid on the right side and women on the left. Those buried in the cattle `boma' are covered with a little soil and then with much cow dung. Even people who committed suicide are, nevertheless, given such a burial, but the spot where the suicide was committed is considered unclean. If it was inside a house it had to be cleansed, and if on a tree that tree was destroyed.

At the burial, a black he-goat `tisa' is ceremonially slaughtered for the cleansing of the family and of all who dug the grave and handled the body. Each takes chyme from the intestines and smears himself/herself. The burial

is usually brief and then people eat the goat meat and disperse. The eating of this goat is not considered as a feast because its function is to cleanse and to expiate for those contaminated by the death.

Rituals Following the Burial

Following the burial a period of mourning continues. The widow(s) and other family members remove all ornaments including the `tirim'. Even cattle bells are removed and for three days no work is done, all social life is suspended. On the fourth day after burial a ceremony called `kiyam kindo' - "eating the ox" - is held at the first wife's home. In the morning, all the family members are shaven clean. The cattle are led out of the `boma' and the chosen ox is pelted with stones by the crowd while the first born son is ready with a spear. When the cattle are well outside the homestead, he spears the ox to death. It is slaughtered and eaten out in the forest. At this feast, the deceased's age-mates and friends have an honoured place.

Van Gennep's interpretation of such a meal is that "the deceased is thought to partake of a farewell meal eaten on the spot by mourners, who then all leave" (Van Gennep 1960, 150). It serves as a final rite of separation from the living and incorporation into the spirit world. Paul Hiebert further interprets it as a meal "given out of fear, to placate [the spirits] and assure their quick departure" (Hiebert 1976, 169).

All the meat has to be eaten at this venue, nothing should be taken home and people do not linger long there. When all is over, all the people disperse simultaneously in haste and without looking back. This latter behaviour is due to belief that ancestral spirits, in fellowship with the one newly incorporated to their company, immediately descend upon the venue to get their share from the left-overs.

The widows have new `tirim' made from the skin of this ceremonial ox and they put their ornaments back on. In case of a widow who is childless, she does not get a new `tirim', instead she is left free to re-marry if she so chooses.

Immediately on someone's death, his property is frozen. No claims can be made on his estate and no disposal is permitted. Even his tools are banned and cannot be used, until a purification ceremony is performed after one lunar month. On a set date after the new moon, all relatives gather at the deceased's home in the evening. The advent of the new moon is considered propitious for the renewal of things. They feast and take beer together. Ina C. Brown's interpretation of such feasting is acceptable here:

> When mourning is ended, a reintegration of the mourners into the group takes place. Death is disruptive, and for those whose lives are most affected the mourning period constitutes an important *rite de passage* by which the individuals concerned change their status and at the end of the period reorient themselves to the community (Brown 1963, 61).

The elders review all the assets and liabilities which the deceased left behind. This is important because the Pokot traditionally distribute their livestock among friends as a form of insurance against loss by disease or raids. Such transaction is done in great confidence. Wives are not told about these investments, only a very close friend. Whoever has a claim lodges it at this meeting and those who have the deceased's property reveal it. Pokot are usually quite honest and truthful when dealing with one another out of fear of curses. Liabilities are settled and the remaining wealth distributed to the family members: the widows and their sons. Daughters do not inherit from their fathers.

The elders also appoint a new head of the family who could be, but does not necessarily have to be, the first-born son. The choice is for the son

who is reasonable enough to unite and care for the family and to foster his late father's high social status.

In the morning following the overnight business session, a ceremony called `kilokunoto karin', meaning "to remove articles outside" is performed. All the clothes, tools and weapons of the deceased are put outside in an open space. One of the respected elders chews `moigut' herbs and walks around the articles spitting on them to purify and renew them for use by other people. This rite is required because of the ritual contamination that the Pokot associate with death. On purification they are given out to relatives and friends. The new head of the family takes the spear and shield and the `terema'. These are the symbols of authority and responsibility.

This is the last ceremony performed by the Lelan Pokot in relation to a deceased person. It is, however, less elaborate for junior members of a family.

CHAPTER FIVE

BIBLE TEACHINGS

Following a thorough description of the four Pokot rites given in the previous chapter, the hermeneutical community needs a good working knowledge of Bible teachings on the four rites. In this chapter therefore, an analysis of Bible teachings on the rites of birth, circumcision, marriage and burial will follow.

BIBLE TEACHING ON PREGNANCY AND BIRTH

Almost all biblical stipulations on pregnancy and birth are concentrated in the Pentateuch, with mere inferences in the rest of the Bible. This is expected since the Pentateuch gives the foundational guidelines for Israelite community and religious life.

Among the regulations which touch on pregnancy and birth, it should first be noted that since extramarital sexual affairs were outlawed, there is no provision for birth out of wedlock. A woman in menstruation remained unclean for seven days and in segregation, and if her husband cohabited with her within that period, he also became unclean for seven days (Leviticus 15:19-30). After coitus husband and wife remained unclean for a day (Leviticus 15:18). Consequently when God was meeting the Israelites on Mount Sinai, they were directed to abstain from sexual relations for three days (Exodus 19:5).

God commanded the first humans to procreate (Genesis 1:28) and therefore giving birth was considered a primary role of Israelite women (Genesis 24:60).

On giving birth a woman remained cultically unclean depending on the gender of the baby. If she gave birth to a boy the period was seven plus thirty-three days and if to a baby girl fourteen plus sixty-six days. The first division indicated intense uncleanness, while ritual cleansing by the priest could be performed only at the expiry of the entire period. (Leviticus 12:1-8). For her purification a woman presented to the priest a one year old lamb offered as a burnt offering and a young pigeon or dove for a sin offering. After that rite she returned to normal life. Even our Lord Jesus Christ and his mother went through this purification process. This had to be so because he was born under the law so that he can redeem those under the law (Luke 2:22-24, Galatians 4:4).

By New Testament times, boy children were named on the eighth day, simultaneous with circumcision. There is the possibility that female children who had no initiation rite were named immediately after birth, or if we go by the division of the period of uncleanness, on the fifteenth day.

There are inferences that there was a special stool on which women sat to deliver (Exodus 1:16) and that after delivery babies were washed, rubbed with salt, and then clothed (Ezekiel 16:4).

In the New Testament records about the early church, we are not told of any practices related to pregnancy and birth. The most probable reason for this omission is that such practices are cultural and vary from place to place. Christians are not bound by the Old Testament ceremonial law.

BIBLE TEACHING ON CIRCUMCISION

A. Institution in Genesis 17.

Circumcision as it is known in the Bible was instituted by God to Abraham and his descendants as a covenant (Genesis 17:1-14). God's part in

the covenant was to make Abraham the father of a multitude of nations, to be his/their God, and to give them the land of Canaan (vv. 4-8). Abraham's part in the covenant was to be circumcised, he and his descendants, as a sign of that covenant (vv. 9-14). Though God did not expressly explain the meaning of circumcision to Abraham, He in no uncertain terms made it mandatory. "But an uncircumcised male . . . shall be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant" (v. 14).

Consequently any uncircumcised person should not partake of the Passover (Exodus 12:43-45, 48-49), for it was the mark of membership in the covenant community. This seems to have been the basis for circumcising proselytes into Judaism.

B. As Practiced in New Testament Times

By New Testament times, circumcision was still highly regarded by Jewish leaders, not only as a sign of membership to the covenant community, but also as a sign of submission to and willingness to obey, the law of God. Therefore the Judaistic clique in the Church believed that unless Gentile Christians were circumcised they could not be saved (Acts 15:1). To them uncircumcision itself was an uncleanness. Peter had to be taught that God had cleansed the Gentiles and therefore he should not call them unclean (Acts 10:15, 16). The Church Council of Jerusalem (Acts 15) decided against the Judaizers, so after all, the Gentiles could be saved without being circumcised.

In several of his epistles, Paul takes up this issue against the Judaizers. The whole of Galatians is written for this purpose and so are Philippians chapter three and Colossians chapter two. To Paul, circumcision is an implication of self confidence, of one's ability to earn salvation by good

works. Therefore, he comes out strongly against it:

> Behold I, Paul, say to you that if you receive circumcision, Christ will be of no benefit to you . . . every man who receives circumcision is under obligation to keep the whole law. You have been severed from Christ, you who seek to be justified by the law, you have fallen from grace (Galatians 5:2-4).

Paul convincingly argues that circumcision has been superseded by grace, faith and regeneration, and made irrelevant. He says plainly:

> For in Christ, neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything, but a new creation (Galatians 6:15).
>
> Therefore, be sure that it is those who are of faith that are sons of Abraham (Galatians 3:7) . . . heirs according to promise (3:29).
>
> . . . beware of the false circumcision; for we are the true circumcision, who worship in the spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh (Philippians 3:2,3).
>
> And in Him you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in the removal of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ (Colossians 2:11).
>
> (Quotations from New American Standard Bible)

In other words Paul is saying that the uncircumcised Christian is lacking nothing and neither does the circumcised Jew have anything to boast about. The ground shifted from under the feet of the Judaizers, making circumcision irrelevant. On the basis of grace, faith and the new birth, the believer is baptized into and clothed with Christ. As it is said:

> There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus (Galatians 3:28).

BIBLE TEACHING ON MARRIAGE

Marriage is one of the social institutions which bears the most profound marks of the culture in which it is practiced. Yet the Bible tells us that marriage originally was of God's making, who said "it is not good for the man (Adam) to be alone, I will make him a helper suitable for him."

(Genesis 2:18). Because of the divine involvement marriage should be honoured (Hebrews 13:4). The depth of intimacy in marriage is indicated by the explanation that husband and wife become one flesh (Genesis 2:24). The primary purpose of marriage is procreation (Genesis 1:28).

The Bible tells us quite a bit about how the Jewish community in the Old Testament times up to the time of Christ practiced marriage.

Jewish society is built on the family in which patriarchal supremacy is the unquestioned pattern, and the family is built on the institution of marriage. To assure continuation of the Hebrews as a nation and to minimize religious syncretism, intermarriage with other tribes was prohibited (Deuteronomy 7:3), while to protect psychological and social stability intramarriage with close relatives was prohibited, too. (Leviticus 18:6-18, 20:10-21). Jews can be said to be endogamous.

The marriage ceremony was preceded by a betrothal at which dowry was paid by the groom as a seal of the marriage covenant between the two families. Betrothal was almost as binding as the marriage itself such that it could not be dissolved without a formal divorce (Matthew 1:19).

Highlights of the marriage ceremony were the transfer of the bride to the bridegroom's home, hosting of the marriage feast, then the consummation of the marriage in the bridegroom's chamber from which the bride's proof of virginity had to be obtained, failure for which the bride would be stoned to death (Deuteronomy 22:13-21).

Male children were crucial to a marriage. Bromiley has thus underscored the importance:

> Because property and inheritance were primarily concerned with the males in the family, it was almost imperative that a man have a son who could continue the family line and to whom he could leave his estate. This need for a male successor is critical to the understanding of Hebrew marriage practice in the Old Testament (Bromiley 1986, 262).

Consequently, in pursuit of male heirs, Hebrew men engaged in polygyny, the levirate marriage and even concubinage. God allowed these practices among His chosen people.

In the early church marriage continued to be regarded as a family and community affair, and therefore, it was not until the tenth century after Christ that marriage ceremonies were held in churches (Bromiley 1986, 262). In the Bible the marriage relationship is used to symbolise God's relationship with His people.

We can draw the following biblical principles on marriage: (1) since God gave Adam only one woman as helper, monogamy is God's ideal; (2) since the marriage union makes the husband and wife one flesh, this union should remain indissoluble; (3) the honourable preparation for this union is chastity for both boy and girl (Hebrews 13:4); (4) it is an institution for this life only (Matthew 19:11).

BIBLE TEACHING ON DEATH

The subject of death, both physical and spiritual, is widely covered in the Bible. We can in fact say that death is one of the major spiritual enigmas that the Bible sets out to resolve, and it is for sure accomplished.

The Bible explicitly teaches that death is caused by sin (Genesis 2:17, Romans 6:23), because a holy God must punish all transgression of His laws, and He has chosen to punish sin by death.

Jewish society believed that dead bodies, be they of humans, animals and even insects were unclean and that any contact with them caused defilement. For this reason burial was hastened and priests were restricted in their participation in mourning with high priests and Nazirites prohibited altogether (Numbers 19:11-16; Leviticus 21:2ff). Anyone defiled by coming

into contact with a corpse, a human bone or a grave had to remain unclean for seven days to undergo a purification rite. In this rite ashes from the sacrificial altar were mixed with water and a clean person sprinkled the unclean person or things using hyssop. On the seventh day the unclean person washed in flowing water and was purified. By New Testament times tombs and burial areas had to be whitewashed to obviate uncleanness by accidental contact.

The normal period of mourning was seven days (Genesis 50:10, 1Samuel 31:13), but it could be longer for a prominent leader. Mourning was characterized by crying, rending of garments, donning of sackcloth, dishevelling or tearing of ones hair and beard, holding hands over or scattering dust and ashes on one's head or wallowing in it and fasting. By New Testament times professional mourners were being employed. But God proscribed to the Israelites the heathen practices of shaving, body mutilation by incisions and tattooing and offering food to the dead (Leviticus 19:28, Deuteronomy 26:14).

Whereas Romans and Greeks practiced cremation and Egyptians mummification, the Jews buried corpses in graves. The Jewish practice may be built on the hope of resurrection of the body and the immortality of the soul (Bromiley 1979, 556). For a corpse to remain unburied or to be exhumed subsequent to burial was the climax of indignity or judgement (1 Kings 14:11, 16:14). Jewish practice was to wash the body, anoint it with aromatic ointments for purification and to clothe it as in life for burial.

Man has always struggled with the reality of death and found consolation in various beliefs. In the patriarchal age of the Old Testament, life after death was envisioned as establishing one's name in posterity through heirs who would maintain his inheritance in the land (Genesis 30:1,

Leviticus 20:20). But the ultimate victory over death was won through Christ's death and resurrection, who by so doing deprived it of its sting (1 Corinthians 15:26, 36, 54, Philippians 1:21, John 12:24).

The Bible teaches that the eternal destiny of the soul is fixed by the individual's response to Christ in this life (Hebrews 9:27, Revelation 14:13). Therefore Christians should assist the sinner's repentance and thus save his soul from death (James 5:20).

CHAPTER SIX

CONTEXTUALIZATION

Now following the description of Pokot rites given in chapter five, we want to contextualize them and come to a decision as to what the Lelan Pokot Christians can continue to practice and what they must avoid. As we enter this new area of our study, what has been pointed out about the practice of the rites nowadays needs to be repeated. It has been stated that the descriptions given were the ideal Lelan Pokot practice before changes overtook them. They are, however, described in present tense because it would have made the descriptions clumsy if it were attempted to differentiate between what is still practiced and what has ceased.

Therefore as we go on into contextualizing, it will become evident that some aspects of the rites are not issues today. Nevertheless, none of them has disappeared in its entirety such that there are no issues to address. It is here that the distinction between the ideal and today's practice will be spelt out.

On the set day for the contextualization seminar (27th Dec. 1994) the researcher came with set questions written out for discussion touching on each of the four rites. The topic of contextualization was introduced in a brief worship session that preceded the discussion. Acts 15:1-11 was read and the researcher pointed out that in Christian practice, some things will be cultural, just as circumcision was cultural to the Jews. Being a cultural practice it was not enforced on the Gentile Christians, while at the same time there was nothing wrong with it if Jews chose to continue circumcising. The researcher further pointed out that becoming Christians does not

require people to reject their culture in its entirety and adapt another culture. Rather there are some aspects of their culture which they can retain, but of course there are aspects that they cannot continue to practice as Christians.

The study questions were written in English but the discussion was in Kiswahili. The topics were treated successively following the same order in chapters four and five and the same order will be followed here.

CONTEXTUALIZING BIRTH

These are the questions that guided the discussion:

1. Does a Lelan Pokot woman feel impure during menstruation and after childbirth?
2. Does a Christian woman need cleansing (parpara) before delivering her first born child? Why?
3. Does a Pokot Christian woman need to observe dietary taboos during pregnancy? Why?
4. Should a Pokot Christian woman have 'lopou a kama moning' purification performed on her? Why?
5. Is today's thanksgiving ceremony the same as `lopou'?
6. How should a Christian Pokot couple regard the birth of twins? Do they need `riwoi' purification?
7. Why do Pokot Christians give their children Christian and English names?

In response to these questions the participants answered that the general change in their society has obviated beliefs in uncleanness which were applied to a woman during menses, pregnancy and after delivery. Therefore there was no need for purification rites like `parpara', `lopou a kama moning', and dietary taboos. They testified that even non-believers have lost faith in those rites. But it was noted that when faced with a difficult pregnancy and delivery, Christians who are weak in faith might

think that the observance of those rites can help them. Participants pointed out that dedication to prayer for the sick will help to counter such lapse in faith.

It was pointed out that some of the dietary taboos were enforced because milk never used to be boiled and therefore there was a real risk to a pregnant woman. But since most families boil milk that risk does not arise and she can take all milk.

It was noted that a Christian thanksgiving ceremony had been substituted for the `lopou' purification. A month after delivery Christian women invite fellow Christians and relatives to a feast. All who attend give the mother and child gifts and the women give a Bible name to the child. The researcher followed up the matter of giving children English and Bible names and the response was that such names served a good purpose in the Pokot context.

It was explained that the Pokot are used to changing their names after initiation. Men drop childhood names and take the name of a favourite bull. The participants felt that choosing Bible characters' names is a fitting substitute and that it is a way of widening their knowledge of the Bible and a source of strength to their faith by emulating the Bible character.

CONTEXTUALIZING INITIATION

These discussion questions were used in this section.

1. Do Pokot still have `koroyakyon' nowadays? Can Christians listen to his prophecies?
2. Can a Christian engage in a traditional initiation ceremony? Why?
3. How can Christian Pokot youth show their passage from childhood to adulthood?
4. How can Christians show a broader social unit?

5. How and when can Pokot Christian youth be instructed in matters of social life?

Participants answered that `koroyakyon' are no longer there in their society, but even if they were, Christians would not listen to his prophecies. That Christians should not engage in the traditional initiation ceremony because of the things required of parents and the things taught to the youth during the confinement. They however admitted that some of the things taught were beneficial in social life. In answer to question five regarding loss of social education, it was answered that the church and homes should teach matters of social life. There is an aura of secrecy around the specific things taught during initiation and therefore no specifics were given.

It was felt that male circumcision should continue to be secularised by being done in homes or hospitals by medical practitioners, but with no rites accompanying. But female initiation should be totally rejected.

In answer to question four which is based on the fact of the impressive age set that was formed by co-initiates which transcends kinship ties, it was answered that the Christian community was a better union. Both men and women, young and old, as well as people of other tribes, found a better union in Christ which had no barriers.

Female initiation (clitoridectomy) was totally rejected because by implication from the Bible it is improper, for God did not order Israelite women to be circumcised. The other reason is that the government's Ministry of Health in conjunction with the Ministry of Culture and Social Services has of late carried out an educative campaign to enlighten people on the harm caused by clitoridectomy and to discourage them from performing it.

Participants expressed the view that the new birth fits as the Christian rite of passage from childhood to adulthood. That in Christian life

knowledge of the word of God makes the believer like an elder, though he be young.

CONTEXTUALIZING MARRIAGE

On the topic of marriage, discussion was guided by these questions:

1. Can a Pokot Christian youth approach a lady's father and ask for her hand in marriage?
2. Are Pokot Christians bound by the controls in marriage social relations?
3. Can Pokot Christian fathers give their daughters without asking for the bride price?
4. Can a Pokot Christian woman wear the `tirim'? Why?

The participants' responses to these questions indicate that Lelan Pokot Christians have retained much of their cultural way of contracting a marriage. A young man cannot go to negotiate with a father-in-law to be, neither can social relations be overlooked. Christian parents still ask for bride price, but it was pointed out that they can give their daughters without demanding deposit of the bride price before the wedding. The only major difference is that Christians do not take beer in their betrothal meetings.

Discussion on the `tirim' was interesting. We could not point out anything wrong with it and yet Lelan Christian women have long removed them. The only apparent reason was that a blanket condemnation was made on cultural practices and the `tirim' was not spared. It was felt that the Christian marriage ceremony has fully substituted the `noghshio' traditional ceremony at which the new nuclear family was set up and the marriage pledge put on the bride. Participants felt that Christian marriage has the added advantage of providing rings as pledges for both husband and wife.

CONTEXTUALIZING DEATH AND BURIAL

The following questions led us in the discussion on death and burial.

1. Is it acceptable for Christians to be buried facing east? Why? Can't they face elsewhere and lie on any other side?
2. Can a Christian man be buried elsewhere except in the cow `boma'?
3. When a Christian is buried should the `tisa' goat be slaughtered at his burial? Will participants in the burial smear themselves with chyme?
4. Should Christian women remove ornaments and shave at the death of husbands?
5. Should a Christian family invite people for `kiyam kindo' feast?
6. What can we do to foster unity among brothers?
7. Do Christians need to cleanse the articles of a deceased person? How should they do it?

In the discussion that followed, it was found out that question number six was based on a misunderstanding. The researcher confused the ceremony at which brothers hold a skin, receive tokens of meat from elders and eat together, thinking that it was done at the `kiyam kindo'. At the seminar, it was pointed out that the act of unifying is performed at the family business meeting a month after burial. The correction was well taken and alterations made in the relevant sections of the description.

It was agreed that Christians be laid in the grave following customary practice, but it was felt that the burial could take place elsewhere other than in the cattle `boma'. It was decided that it is not fitting for a Christian family to host `kiyam kindo'.

On questions three, four and seven the participants felt that Christians should not hold the view of defilement by death. The `tisa' goat may be slaughtered, but for feasting purposes rather than ceremonial. Prayer cleanses everything and therefore no more ritual cleansings are necessary. It was pointed out that even unbelievers prefer to invite Christians to pray

rather than perform the cultural rituals. Thus, Christian prayers have fully substituted ritual purifications performed at burial. Jesus' teaching on defilement in which He ruled out external defilement is applicable in such situations. Defilement occurs by what comes out of the heart rather than what someone eats or comes into contact with (Matthew 15:10-20).

CONCLUSION AND PROPOSALS

At the end of the seminar one of the elders gave an admonition unexpectedly. He read Ephesians 4:17-24 and emphasized that Christians should not walk as unbelievers, but instead should put away cultural practices. This last episode indicates the tide we were against all along in the contextualization practice. Our orientation, the researcher included, is in rejecting traditional customs in totality. All along the researcher was actively fighting against it because he knew that was an extreme response to cultural ways. Unfortunately the seminar participants did not know better and it could not be expected of them to make a sudden change of attitude.

It was encouraging to discover that even in the prevailing attitude of rejection of cultural practices, relevant substitutions, as pointed out above took place unconsciously and have minimized the social dislocation that could come due to total rejection. Culture is endowed with a great tenacity for survival.

Comparisons between Pokot beliefs about uncleanness and purification are surprisingly close to the stipulations in the Pentateuch. If it were not for Jesus' explicit ruling on what can cause defilement (Matthew 15:10-20) this could easily be a difficult topic to handle.

Several areas need to be strengthened so that Christian practice can display more relevance to the Pokot way of life and meet needs fully. Prayer is a prime area because it substitutes most purification rituals which the Pokot practiced. Prayers should be arranged for all major occasions and for crises times in people's lives. For example an expectant woman should be able to call a prayer fellowship in her home to beseech God for safe delivery

of her baby. The laying on of hands should also convey the impact of the prayers on the person in need. Owing to the cultural background it seems that Churches which practice the sprinkling of holy water will have a special appeal to the Pokot.

In the area of teachings, the progressive study of Bible characters is recommended in preference to other patterns of preaching and teaching. As pointed out during the seminar, Pokot believers are enthusiastic about likening themselves to heroes, and whereas in the past they took pride in hero bulls, Christians will benefit from taking pride in and emulating Bible characters.

If Christians do not let their young people go for initiation ceremonies, they will miss a forum for some social education. It is therefore proposed that Christian parents and the church should actively plan social education forums where such social education as may be necessary will be taught. Besides doing it in homes, the church should encourage youth rallies and camps and include topics of social education which need to be studied. Such meetings are taking place in Lelan, but they need to be intensified and well utilized.

Generally it should be concluded that Christians should not shy off from being ritualistic in a Christian ceremony, because such ritual will have a special appeal to the Pokot who are accustomed to a ritualistic life. Weddings, baptisms and celebration of the Lord's Table should be carried out elaborately to give the full thrust of their significance.

This study has been limited to the four rites. The researcher believes that if all aspects of Pokot cultural life were investigated and contextualized consciously, their lives would be enriched and the church made more relevant and appealing to those who have not yet believed.

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APPENDIX

QUESTIONNAIRES

QUESTIONNAIRE # 1 - BIRTH

Date:.....

Name of Respondent: ..... Sex .....

Age: a) Under 30 Yrs. .....b) 30 - 35 Yrs .....

c) 35 - 40 Yrs. .....d) Above 40 Yrs .....

1. What precautions did a pregnant mother take?
   a) Conjugal?
   b) Dietary?
   c) Any other?
2. What special things were observed at birth?
   a) Who had to be present?
   b) Where did the delivery take place?
   c) What particular articles had to be there?
3. How were the mother and child cared for after the delivery?
   a) Diet?
   b) Medical treatment?
      (i) For after birth pains?
      (ii) For baby stomach grip?
   c) Clothing?
   d) Which other taboos had to be observed?
   e) How long was the period of seclusion?
4. Naming of the child:
   a) How long was it after delivery?
   b) What determined the name chosen?
   c) What kind of ceremony was performed at the naming?

(i) Who had to be present?

(ii) What kind of food was eaten?

(iii) What else transpired?

(iv) Who announced the name?

5. Can you remember any other important ceremony that was performed for a young child?

QUESTIONNAIRE # 2 - INITIATION (BOYS & GIRLS)

Date:.....

Name of Respondent:..... Sex.....

Age: a) Under 30 yrs.....b) 30 - 35 yrs .....

c) 35 - 40 yrs. .....d) Over 40 yrs .....

1. How did a youth qualify for initiation?
2. What preparations were made for initiation?
3. How was the operation done?
   a) At what location?
   b) In what position?
   c) How did they dress up?
   d) What articles were used?
   e) Who performed it?
4. In what kind of place were initiates detained?
5. Who was in charge over them?
6. How were their lives regulated during the seclusion?
7. What are the most important things that were done?
8. What ceremony was performed at their graduation?
9. What was expected of their life on graduation?

QUESTIONNAIRE # 3 - MARRIAGE

Date:.....

Name of Respondent:..... Sex.....

Age: a) Under 30 yrs. .....b) 30 - 35 yrs .....

c) 35 - 40 yrs. .....d) Above 40 yrs .....

1. At what age can someone marry?

   a) For Men?

   b) For Ladies?

2. How was the matching done?

3. What ceremonies were carried out before the wedding day?

4. What ceremony was performed on the wedding day?. What special things were done by:

   a) Father?

   b) Mother?

   c) Brothers?

   d) Sisters?

   e) Any other relative? or friend?

5. How was the new home set up?

QUESTIONNAIRE # 4 - DEATH & BURIAL

Date:.....

Name of Respondent:..... Sex.....

Age: a) Under 30 yrs.....b) 30 - 35 yrs .....

c) 35 - 40 yrs.....d) Over 40 yrs .....

1. What is the attitude of the Pokot towards death?
2. Where was a corpse kept?
3. Who was allowed to handle a corpse? i.e. to see, to touch, to carry?
4. Was the corpse clothed?
5. Where was the grave made (dug)?
6. In what position was the body laid in relation to the homestead?
7. What rites were performed on the burial day?. Was it a must that an animal be slaughtered?
8. What kind of ceremony was performed a month after burial?
9. Do the above practices apply to all ages and sexes?

CURRICULUM VITAE

Charles Muthangya Kimwele is a Pastor Missionary of the Africa Inland Church Kenya. He was born in 1956 the seventh child of Benjamin and Laeli K. Ngusa, peasant farmers in Mutonguni location, Kitui District, Kenya, and elders in the local congregation of the Africa Inland Church.

He had his primary education at Tulia Primary School (1964-1970), Secondary education at Mutonguni Secondary School (1971-1974), and his foundational theological training at Scott Theological College, Machakos (1976-1980, Diploma). Further theological studies were pursued at Scott Theological College (1988-89, B.Th degree) and now in N.E.G.S.T. (1993-1995, Master of Arts in Missions).

Charles has been in active pastoral service since May 1980, in various capacities and places. As tutor at Mulango Bible Institute, Kitui, and assistant pastor in A.I.C. Kitui Township (1980-1985). As missionary to Western Province, Kenya, while stationed at Webuye (1986-1988). Then as missionary to West Pokot: Kiwawa Mission (1989-1990) and Lelan (1991-1993).

Charles married Zipporah Mwethya Nguli of Kalama, Machakos, in April 1983 and they have four children, Mwendwa, Muuo, Jehoshua and Kenneth, all boys.