

AFRICA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

**A PHILOSOPHICAL AND THEOLOGICAL RESPONSE TO THE PROBLEM
OF EVIL: A FOCUS ON THE MENTAL, MORAL, NATURAL
PROBLEM OF EVIL IN THE LUO COSMOLOGY**

By

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requirement for Degree of Master of Theology (MTh)
in World Christianity**

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I declare that is my original research work and has not been submitted to any other
College or University for academic credit.

The views presented herein are not necessarily those of the Africa International
University or the Examiners

Signature _____
George Odera Ouma

ABSTRACT

The problem of evil is the most discussed subject in every culture; for it poses enormous challenges to human existence and belief in the Christian God. Both religious and secular thinkers down through the ages have questioned the trustworthiness of the Christian God in face of evil in the world. Some have argued for the inability of the Christian God to eradicate evil, if indeed he existed, while others have contended that if indeed the Christian God existed, he does not have the intention of erasing evil from this world. These claims render null and void that belief in the Christian God, not only guarantees eternal life, but also exalts humanity above the threats of evil through faith in Jesus Christ; and in the promise that the Christian God shall finally subjugate evil at the end of history.

In this thesis, fundamental questions regarding the problem of evil have been carefully addressed. This undertaking has been in the context of philosophical and theological responses to the problems of moral, mental and natural evil in Luo cosmology. Through this, it is shown that the appalling condition of the Luo community is attributable to Satanic and human free will in committing evil. This reality is exemplified by the presence of the forces of evil which are immanent in the physical creation and in the network of fallen human cultural practices. Exonerating God from evil, this thesis explains that even though it seems that God's eternal decree rendered the entrance of evil into the world, God himself remains absolutely above reproach regarding the origins of evil in the world. God's work remains perfect, for all his ways are just, faithful, righteous and upright despite what evil does among the Luo people.

Whatever the enduring condition of Luo people under the scourges of moral, mental and natural evil, God has revealed his master plan to rescue mankind through the incarnation, crucifixion, death and resurrection, ascension and the second coming of Christ. Faith in Christ elevates humanity above the temptations of evil and empowers humanity to endure the afflictions of Satan to the very end of history. At the end of history evil will be rightly answered by its destruction, and the future hope that God offers will judge, compensate and put into perfect state this present world. Glorious mind and glorious morality shall be restored to man. Man will be a new being enjoying his full life through the perfect rule of Jesus Christ.

This thesis includes strategies for a victorious Christianity among Luo people. These strategies are: studying the metaphysical, epistemological and ethical issues in Luo cosmology, the trainings of Christians on spiritual warfare, initiation interreligious dialogue, evangelism, Christian apologetics, a call for the church to engage in development schemes. The goal of all these is to bring the Luo people to the essentials of the Christian faith toward appreciating the demarcations of the life of the kingdom of Christ and their culture. The study concludes by calling the Luo people to depart from attitudes of mistrust, suspicion, bitterness, rebellion against the claims of the Christian faith; and to abandon their barbarous cultural practices, and promote to excellence their cultural aspects which are in agreement with Christian faith.

TO

My late mother, Mary Briggit Ouma (Nyar Ja-Kom), for raising me up in wisdom and knowledge and understanding, and for her sleepless nights, praying for me for a change of heart to receive Christ and as Lord and saviour.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background, Motivation and Rationale for the Study

The interest and the desire to carry out this research arose from the researcher's personal observations and Christian ministry experience among the Luo people. As much as there were positive experiences which are not the researcher's main concerns here, there were many negative experiences emanating from the religious and cultural practices which continue to hinder the penetration of Christianity into minds and hearts of the Luo people. These experiences are summed up in the statement problem of this thesis in the following section.

Statement of the Problem

Of the many issues that engaged the researcher's mind, the following stand out: First, the persistent cases of mental, moral and natural problems of evil, coupled with practices of sorcery, witchcraft and occult worship have posed threat to Christianity in Luo land. The scope of this threat is that these problems have turned out as the most offensive weapons launched against Christianity by the religious, cultural and the intellectual critics of the Christian teaching among the Lou people.

Second, the church has ignored the situation, even if Christians themselves revert to cultural and traditional religious practices, due to the mysterious afflictions of evil they go through. Research revealed that, from among the Christians there, at least a family would forsake Christian beliefs to join the occult in their teaching and

practices every year. More shocking, is that even theologically trained church leaders and accomplished Christians turn to witchcraft, sorcery and magic, for assistance, during life crises and leadership wrangles.

Third, faced with the deplorable concreteness of a particularly horrifying reality of evil, many Luo people have developed an attitude of mistrust, suspicion, bitterness, and rebellion against the claims of the Christian God. For example, a man and his family had abandoned church and joined a cult of drum dancers after two of his children and a nephew were killed by lightning and thunderstorms.¹ Many elite from the land also claim that secularism provides the freedom of thought and behavior because belief in anything should be an individual's option for this life. For an imposition of a religious praxis on someone else is anathema to an individual's freedom.

The nature of secularism is that there is no fixed moral rule by which a person would be compelled to live by. The problem of moral evil does not have proper definitions to secular minds since, in this worldview, there is no belief in the supernatural, or anything to do with divine transcendence, even in reference to evil or good. Moreover, in the Luo contemporary and ancient religious and cultural pride, without taking any notice of danger, this claim thrives in the context of the claim that Luo traditions and religious practices are morally superior to Christian thought.

A prominent Luo thinker and the founder of the University of Nairobi philosophy department, the late Henry Odera Orika wrote, "I do not believe that the Christian religion is a morally higher or better religion than indigenous African religions, in spite of the fact that Christianity was used to suppress African

¹ This information was passed to the researcher by an African Inland Church (AIC) Pastor in Homa Bay County, where the researcher had conducted a fundraising drive for purchasing iron sheets for roofing. This was on January 5th, 2011, in fact before this research was carried out.

religions.”² It would not be far from truth that a majority of the Luo elite seems to subscribe to the idea that it would be anti-intellectual to admit that Christianity is a reasonable faith which can explain rationally the mystery of the problem of evil for this life. The fourth issue is illustrated by the story of an encounter between a pastor who graduated from Ahero Evangelical School of Theology and some Luo cultural and religious fundamentalists. When the pastor explained to these folks the universality of sin, incarnation, the virgin birth, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ and a future world that is free from evil, these people responded by a *reductio ad absurdum* statement as follows:

Jesus Christ was a white person whose death can only atone for the sins of Israel. Moreover, the Luo people have a superior culture and religion. Our ancestors and the Luo grandfather, Ramogi have mastered our destiny. The Romans crucified Jesus Christ as a revolutionary false prophet and a rebel, and this is very incompatible with the claim that his death is the source of eternal life for all humanity.

Fifth, in the midst of life’s uncertainties emerging in the face of evil, while the worship of ancestors, animism practices, and pseudo Christian movements such as Jehovah’s Witnesses, Mormons, Baha’i and Legio Maria, continue to lead many people away from truth and belief in Christian faith, nominalism is a major challenge facing the church in Luo land.

A discussion held by the researcher with some pastors in his village, and the neighboring clans, revealed that some people who have joined the church either through the excitements of the arrival of new denominations or Christian ministries promising material and financial assistance to the needy and the poor, do not genuinely seek to know Jesus Christ at a personal level; for some of these Christians

² Henry Odera Orika, *Practical Philosophy: In Search of Ethical Minimum* (Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, 1997), 29.

would still consult the “wise” (village traditional divine discerners) for the solution to their religious and cultural problems.

Part of the reason why many Christians there are not so rooted in the Christian faith and the knowledge of the Scriptures, are because there are not many evangelical and mainstream churches in Luo land. An online archive, “His Work”³ Newsletter from 1985 to the present, reveals that there were

38 churches in South Nyanza making a total of 622 Christians overall versus 487 Christians in 1988. This shows the average church size is around 16 Christians. And 99 of these Christians were baptized into the Lord in 1989 and 36 came from other denominations or returned to the church after having fallen away in the past.

Since 1985-1999 the church growth increased rapidly. However, for the last 8 years this statistic has gone down due to poverty, religious and cultural problems. The Roman Catholic Churches, the Seventh Day Adventists, and many splinter Pentecostal independent Churches are the ones dominating today.

Lack of strong faith in the Word of God, and shallow understanding of the doctrine of Jesus Christ result from and contribute to inadequate evangelism, preaching, and teaching and poor gospel contextualization. Thus the superficial response to the gospel message, and the laxity in follow-up of the new converts, make the present reality of the problem of evil among the Luo people may be deeper than one can imagine. However, attempt will be made to explore the problem in its multifaceted dimensions.

Statement of Purpose

The study explores the religious and cultural concepts of evil, the dilemma it poses to the Luo people, and finally provides philosophical and theological responses

³ A complete archive of “His Work” Newsletters from November 1985 to the present. You will find information about the Lord's work both in Kenya and Madagascar in these files. Newsletters from November 1985 through December 1996 to the present

to the problems of evil. This is to give a better interpretation of Christian philosophy and theology in the context of the religious and cultural existential struggles with evil among the Luo people. In other words, the study seeks to show philosophically and theologically that all the religious cultural belief systems that hinder the actualization of the Christian belief in the Luo community, can hardly provide everlasting hope to the community's mental, moral and natural problems of evil.

Some of the important research questions to be addressed in this thesis are delineated below.

Research Questions

Even though there are many questions that may demand answers as per the theme and verdict of this thesis, only the following three questions will be addressed in this study: what are the contemporary Luo/ African/ and Western discussions on the problems of evil and systems of theodicy? What is the nature of the religious and cultural responses to the problems of evil among the Luo people? How would the problems of evil among the Luo people warrant any philosophical and theological responses? It is the philosophical and theological responses to the above questions which will form and sediment the content and the theme of this thesis. Thus the objective of the study will be finally accomplished in due course.

Objectives for the Study

The objectives for this study feature prominently in four ways: First, it is an attempt to investigate and explain the concepts of evil in relations to the Luo cosmology: God, ancestors, evil spirits and human community. Second, the study will investigate the nature of the religious and cultural responses to the problem of evil in

the Luo cosmology. Third, the study is aimed at proposing and integrating philosophy and theology in response to the problem of evil among the Luo people.

Finally this thesis will show that Augustinian theodicy of free will; Alvin Carl Plantinga's Free Will Defense (FWD), Gregory Boyd's Trinitarian theodicy and Isaiah Dau's theology of the Cross absolutely offer an ultimate spiritual and rational solution to the problems of evil among the Luo people. To arrive at all the adequate materials to meet the demands of this objective will depend on the nature of the research methodology.

Research Methodology

The primary information on the mental, moral and natural problems of evil mainly came from the library books and articles, and online resources. Part of the secondary resources, outside the Luo religion and culture were included in the research due to their common affinities with major Luo concepts of evil. There are a few references made to occasions when the researcher interacted with members of the community he comes from, on the subject of the problem of evil in general.

Since the theme of the study is philosophical and theological response to the problem of evil among the Luo people, it is compelling to investigate the philosophical and theological concepts of evil from western perspectives. This is so because the problem of evil is a universal issue for humanity. Additionally, some western concepts of evil have some affinities with the African concepts of evil. Thus the western scholarships will be integrated herein in addressing the questions asked in response to the problems of evil among the Luo people. Despite this brilliant integrations and nature of this methodology, this study is not without limitations.

Limitations of the Study

The problem of evil is the most global religious and cultural challenge to humanity. Despite the many theses and dissertations which have been written on the same, the many debates and talks which are still being held in the academies and public forums, no absolute solutions to the problems of evil seem to have been forthcoming. The researcher, in fact, is not intending to solve all the problems of evil from their global cultural and religious perspectives, but the study is narrowed down to philosophical and theological responses to the mental, moral and natural problems of evil among the Luo people.

Further, the researcher does not promise to solve all the mental, moral and natural problems of evil in the study. Rather, much will be left for further research on the same subject and the works of the critics of this thesis. The challenge to any serious Christian thinkers on this line of thought is to continue with his or her Christian calling to proclaim, preach, teach and defend the mystery of Christianity, as we anticipate a bright future of a world free from hard questions about the problems evil. Moses the lawyer-theologian says, “The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to us and our children forever...” (Deuteronomy 29: 29). However, despite the limitations, this study is based on certain important assumptions.

Research Assumptions

This study proceeds on the following five important assumptions. First, the problem of evil among the Luo people is entirely spiritual problem originating from the fallen destiny of humanity and the entire cosmos. The Luo religious and cultural practices which provide for them the standard by which they

attempt to live in peace with themselves and the whole of nature has failed due to the presence of evil spirits in their religion, culture and the natural world.

Second, the presence of mental, moral and natural problems of evil can therefore be attributed to the fallen condition of the hearts of the Luo people and their pagan practices governed by evil spirits. The chains of evil spirits have bound the Luo people to their pagan religion and culture, and practices of witchcrafts to the extent that they have remained helpless in the state of mental, moral and natural problems of evil from which even the worship of their God through the veneration of ancestor can hardly deliver them.

Third, many believers among the Luo people easily revert to the traditional solution to the problem of evil. This is made possible because the Luo religious and cultural patterns are more familiar to them than the Biblical and theological principles. The Biblical and theological principles seem to be foreign to many souls and minds among the members of the Luo community. The researcher admits that the nature of evil and the problem it poses to the Luo people will remain a mystery until God terminate this desperate history of human suffering and death.

Fourth, the church is less equipped philosophically and theologically to offer adequate explanations for the “why”, “what” and “how” of the nature of the problem of mental, moral and natural evil among the Luo people. Fifth, there is a problem that arises from the Luo religious, cultural and the Christian theological concepts of evil. It is the task of Christian theology to provide solutions to the problem of evil in every human religion and culture.

Sixth, while philosophical and theological explanations are significant to this research, Christianity has the eternal potency to subdue the dominion of evil spirits and solve the problem of evil among the Luo people. It is only the Gospel of Christ

alone that can change the fallen nature of humanity and transform human cultures. Thus, it remains within the scope of this thesis, to discuss and demonstrate philosophical and theological arguments, as the ultimate test for truth in the discussion of the problems of evil and its solutions. This implies that this study has remarkable significance for the church in Luo societies.

Significance of the Research

The significance of this study is shown in three perspectives. First, this study is an additional contribution to the current writings and debates on the problem of evil in African cosmology focusing on the Luo people. The material of this study will be made available to the churches and schools for Christians, teachers of Bible and theology and Christian apologists for the work of the kingdom of God among the Luo people. Further, this thesis will provide the impetus for formulating systems for contextual Christian apologetics. Thus, African Christian philosophy even in the context of other cultures will be made necessary in the Kenyan Christian institutions and beyond.

Second, this study reveals directly the areas in which most mainline and independent church ministers have been weak in the way they approach religious and cultural problems relating to the problem of evil among the Luo people. As far as the current church membership and ministry movements among the Luo people are concerned, the study shows that less knowledge of the Bible, and theological critical thinking and faith in Christ is still a reality. Therefore, deeper analysis of the underlying assumption of the religion and culture of the Luo people will prepare the ground for a critically relevant Gospel message to them, and effectively bring to their (the Luo) context the nature of Christian truth.

Finally, since no writing has been done on free will focusing on the Luo people, except in some written works of some West African writers in their own cultural contexts, this research shows the universal nature of free will both from the African (West Africans), and western philosophical conceptions of the nature of a human being. It shows that God endowed Satan and his angels, and humans with the freedom to choose, but unfortunately these creatures used their freedom to cause evil in the world. Thus, this thesis will show that evil, whether mental, moral or natural, originates from Satanic and human free will.

Overview of the Study

The present study delves into the problem of evil among the Luo people in 5 chapters. The present chapter is the introductory part of the thesis and sheds light on the entire background information on the subject of the research. It further elucidates the direction where this study has taken; a philosophical and theological response to the mental, moral and natural evil.

In chapter 2 the researcher presents historical and contemporary discussions on the problem of evil. First he presents who the Luo people are in light of explaining their identity as an ethnic group. Second, he introduces the problem of evil from selected African and Western perspectives. He explains these focusing on the Luo perspectives of evil, other African or Africanists' views, and expounds on Western theodicies.

In chapter 3 the researcher expounds on the concepts of evil among the Luo people with emphasis on the Luo religious and cultural belief systems, concepts of evil in relation to Luo cosmology. It also captures references to the Luo God, the ancestors, spirits, the human community, and finally makes responses to the problems of evil from the Luo religious and cultural perspectives.

Chapter 4 is where the philosophical and theological response to the problem of evil among the Luo people is instigated. The topics covered in this chapter are the origin of evil, the impact of the fall, Satanic and humanity's free will, theodicy from an African and Christian thought, contemporary views on theodicy, God's omnipotence, the Luo and Christian concepts of God, God's redemptive battle with evil in history, the second coming of Jesus Christ, and the new paradise where the whole creation will be absolutely free from evil.

Chapter 5 draws all the previous chapters together, and concludes by declaring that Jesus Christ is the savior of all humankind, and that God is in no way responsible for the origins of any of the evil discussed here. Instead humanity's misuse of its free will and the operations of Satan as a mighty spirit being are to be blamed for the presence mental, moral and natural evil in the (among the Luo people) world. The second coming of Christ shall bring an end to the rule of Satan and his cohorts. For the new heaven and the new earth completely freed from mental, moral and natural evil will usher in as the final dispensation. Finally this chapter invites the Luo people to turn to Jesus Christ to receive him as their Lord and savior and makes important suggestions for a victorious Christianity over the forces of darkness associated with the problem of evil in the land.

While the discussions on the problems of evil in the Luo religious and cultural cosmology is yet to come in chapter 3, the researcher now turns to discuss the historical and contemporary issues on the problem of evil, and this comes in the next chapter of the study.

CHAPTER TWO

HISTORICAL AND CONTEMPORARY DISCUSSIONS ON THE PROBLEMS OF EVIL

Introduction

In this chapter the researcher presents the contemporary discussions on the problems of evil from the Luo religious and cultural cosmology. Some important African religious and cultural thinkers are considered for this section. This chapter also includes some discussions concerning western conceptions of evil and theodicy. Although it will seem that in some areas of these discussions of the problem of evil a generalized perspective is taken, the focus of the study remains on the mental, moral and natural problem of evil among the Luo people.

Mental evil, as Ihsan Al-Issa and Michael Tousignant put it, is “where one is considered to be possessed by supernatural beings that may control their behaviors, thoughts and desires.”⁴ John S. Mbiti says, “Moral evil pertains to what man does against his fellow man. There are customs, laws, regulations and taboos that govern conduct in society. Any breach of the right conduct amount to a moral evil.”⁵ And natural evil, in Nigel Warburton’s perspective,

Is all evil which is not produced by human beings and which is not allowed by human beings to occur as a result of their negligence. Natural evil include both physical suffering of animals as well as humans; all trails of suffering which

⁴ Ihsan Al-Issa, and Michael Tousignant, *Ethnicity, Immigration and Psychopathology*, (Plenum Publishing Cooperation, New York: 1997), 138.

⁵ John S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 2nd ed, (Oxford: Heinemann Educational Publishers: 1990) 207.

diseases, natural disasters, and accidents unpredictable by humans bring in their train.⁶

Although these evils are defined as meaning and implying different things, they are close in terms of what is inherent in each of their metaphysical proximities. They indirectly explain one another since they are spiritual in their background and in the human and natural contexts in which they are experienced.

As already been stated a few important thinkers on this subject from both Africa and western traditions are selected for their historical and contemporary discussions on the problems of evil. This selection is due to these thinkers' originalities and influence in the philosophy of religion from their own religious and cultural contexts, and the relevance of their thought to this chapter and to the entire theme of the study.

Although some scholars, as noted above, are not from the Luo community by origin and religious and cultural practices, the fact that they are Africans, their concepts of God, ancestors, destiny of humanity, depict those of the Luo religion and culture in many significant ways. Though the discussions on mental, moral and natural problems of evil among the Luo people is at the center of the theme of the study, it is significant for this discussion first to appreciate the Luo as a people proud of their historical and present ethnic identity.

Identity of the Luo People

The Luo people, the descendants of Ramogi, are a Nilotic group. They originated from pastoral nomads who migrated south from Southern Sudan to the land around Lake Victoria near the end of the 15th Century. They migrated in at least five waves starting approximately 1500 AD, and by the 1840's the traditional people had

⁶ Nigel Warburton, *Philosophy: The Basics*, (Routledge, New York: 2004), 70.

formed a tight knit society with *ruodhi* or regional chiefs or kings. Today the areas which the Luo occupy are Migori, Homa Bay, Kisumu, Bondo, Rachuonyo, Nyando and Siaya Districts. The Luo people make up 12% of Kenya's population and are the third largest tribe behind the Kikuyu and Kama peoples of Kenya. The Luo people generally speak three languages: *Dolour* (their mother-tongue or tribal language) Swahili, and English, but well known as the best English speakers in Kenya.

Although many Luo people claim to be Christians, a greater majority of both the Christians and non-Christian still believe in their traditional religion and customary practices. While they extend their traditions and customary practices in the cities, a deeper practice of traditional Luo religion is practiced in their rural parts of the country. There are important features of the Luo religious belief which are worth examining in this review and later in the chapter. Although the researcher has indicated that the review includes some western thinking on the subject, it is important to start this review from the Luo religious and cultural thinking, as we examine the concepts of evil from African and western perspectives.

The Problem of Evil from African and Western Perspectives

The Luo Religious and Cultural Perspectives of Evil

This section begins by examining and summarising the main ideas relevant to the theme of the study. We first begin by examining five Luo thinkers who were selected for this research. These Luo thinkers are: Awuor Ayodo, Andrew B.C. Ocholla-Ayayo, Richard N. K'Okul, Henry O. Oruka and Grace Ogot. After the examinations of these 4 people, the 6 Africans or Africanists that we will examine are: George F. Pickens, Isaiah Majok Dau, John Samuel Mbiti, Kwasi Wiredu,

Kwame Gyekye, and Wilbur O'Donovan. From the Luo community, we begin by examining the concepts of evil from the African-Luo cosmology as viewed by Ayodo.

Awuor Ayodo

In his book, *Luo*, Awuor Ayodo says that the Luo people direct their prayers to the sun and moon, but do not consider them to be gods. The Luo people acknowledge that God, (Nyasaye, Nyakalaga) is the ultimate being above everything else; and that those things which have been created by God are evidence of his presence in the universe and his approximation to all creation.⁷ Thus, the worship of God generally becomes a religious, cultural and social lifestyle among the Luo people.

Ayodo contends that when there is crisis such events or occasions, in which human life is threatened, the worship of God becomes intense and mandatory for everyone in the community. During evil crises, people generally worship God through objects such as the sun, moon, mountains and trees. Thus, the worship of God changes in style during the time when people suffer evil afflictions. Ayodo does not mention evils such as mental, moral, natural evil, but as he explains the nature of the occasions of evil for which the Luo people would call on God urgently, it seems he has in mind the aspects of evil that includes these evils under investigation. The Luo religious belief is that all evil in opposition to God's divine order are counteracted by God through the actions of the ancestors. The places of worship are normally rocky places and hills where the Luo people sacrifice to God.

During funeral ceremonies everyone in the immediate community is expected to attend and pay their respects, as well as those acquainted with the deceased or with the family. Those unable to attend the actual burial can visit the grave whenever they are able to, preferably within a year. Ayodo clarifies, "A person who ignores a death

⁷ Awuor Ayodo, *Luo*, (New York: The Rosen Publishing, 1996), 36.

is thought to harbour ill and evil-feelings toward the family, and the community,”⁸ and might be struck by a serious malady. The spirit of the diseased knows those who attended his or her funeral, and those who did not, and can revenge severely either through mental, moral or natural evil according to the Luo beliefs.

Ayodo explains that since death is considered as evil, if one dies outside the home, the returning corpse enters the compound through a new entrance broken into the fence around the home. This is to avoid the infiltrations of evil spirits into the home which might create more evil problems. The dead bodies would also be beaten to expel evil spirits before they are interred. During the funeral mood the people vent their sorrow by crying, shouting, and wailing.

Men in traditional clothing would cover their bodies with ashes, wear a headdress of feathers, carry spears and shields, and run from one end of the compound to another, expressing their anger and symbolically battling the spirits of death. If all these are not done, then the spirits of death might come back and inflict mental, moral a natural disaster to individuals or the community. This kind of funeral scenario will be well exemplified in the next chapter for further understanding.

The causes of evil are attributed to people who hate others and their achievements. The belief in evil minded people is a reality among the Luo people. As Ayodo puts it, “Such people are believed to be able poison at a glance, kill from a distance, or use various means to cast an evil spell over their adversaries.”⁹ The implication is that experiences of evil manifest in the background of the operations of evil spirits and through interpersonal relationships.

⁸ Ibid. , 36-40.

⁹ Ayodo, “*Luo*,” 32

Ayodo says that evil spirits occupy a realm from which it is possible to help or hinder the living. They are close to God, but removed from the living. If a person passes away under suspicious circumstances, such as abuse or murder, his angered spirit can torment the living.¹⁰ Neglected spirits can create mischief for their surviving acquaintances and family members. When such evil is experienced diviners will be called to look into the situation. Diviners are assisted by ancestral spirits with which they communicate through mediums of various objects. God, at the disposal of his will, and ancestors will heal people and community of maladies such as mental, moral and natural evil whenever they are appeased through sacrifices and rituals.

In conclusion we can affirm that Ayodo's Luo religious and cultural views are governed by the fears of evil spirits, witchcrafts, ancestral angers, and worship of God. Andrew B.C. Ocholla- Ayayo gives us other perspectives on the concepts of evil among the Luo people.

Andrew B.C. Ocholla-Ayayo

As it is important for the study to discuss the fact that human beings are a creation from God endowed with the responsibility to oversee the whole creation, it is imperative to acknowledge how humans stand in relations to God. Andrew B.C. Ocholla-Ayayo believes that humans are the centre of all creation, and all things were given to them by the creator. Although humans are the centre of all creation, they need unconditional communication with the divine since they are surrounded with certain mysterious evil forces against which they need God's protection.¹¹ This means that, in a sense, Ocholla-Ayayo believes that in the Luo cosmology, people live

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Andrew B.C. Ocholla-Ayayo, *Traditional Ideology and Ethics among the Southern Luo*, (Uppsala: Scandinavian Institute of African Studies, 1976), 168.

under the fear of malevolent spirits which directly or indirectly inflict misfortunes to humans and nature in general.

Ocholla-Ayayo agrees with Ayodo's view, that there are evil people among the Luo people who are known for evil behaviours such as causing death and disease through evil spirits. While seeking for remedies for an evil that has been inflicted on humans, the perpetrators are asked to cooperate with the family or the community for the victim to recover. For example, as Ocholla-Ayayo puts it, "if the perpetrator is known and is willing to help, the child's vital function as well as the relations between *Jasihoho* (village healer) and child (and its parents) are unblocked by *hoso* (healing): the evil-eye woman shares a calabash of gruel with the child."¹²

In an incidence of death, for example, as Akong'a puts it, "In case of the death of premarital baby, ritual coitus had to be performed with the child's mother. An outsider of no fixed abode would be therefore appropriate, for he would not lay claim on the girl as his wife."¹³ According to the Luo cosmology, the most important is the performance of ritual coitus despite the degree of death or the one who has died as long as the circumstances of death warrant rituals to push off the evil spirits of the same misfortunes.

Ocholla-Ayayo contends that the Luo people believe that the witches can send a fly directly into a person's mouth. Upon swallowing, the fly settles into the lungs from where it begins to generate infections such as the chest pains and coughing.¹⁴ The evil spirits sent by witches to persons may subject the victim to mental, moral or natural evil. In researcher's point of view, although some victims of evil insinuations

¹² Ibid.

¹³Joshwa Akong'o in *African Families and the Crisis of Social Change*, (Greenwood Publishing Group, Westport: 1997), 13.

¹⁴ Ibid. , 170.

eventually die, the truth here is that as much as there are many evil people among the Luo people, as we will see in the next chapter, there are also many solutions to the problem of evil.

What can be observed here is that Ocholla-Ayayo seems to hold strongly that apart from spiritual agencies, human evil activities is a medium for transmitting evil to others in the community. He also believes that perpetrators of evil can be contacted to participate in the healing process of the victims. Richard N. K'Okul's perspective on the Luo concepts of evil seems rather an extension of Ocholla-Ayayo's thesis.

Richard N. K'Okul

Richard N. K'Okul, in the context of serious operations of evil spirits among the Luo people, contends that there are misfortunes or evil traits that an individual can inherit from a person in one's genealogy. The offspring of a person, who was once a sorcerer (a Luo who uses supernatural powers to discover why certain evils have occurred), or a witch (destructive person), might inherit painful swellings in his or her body as a punishment for the various "misdeeds" within the lineage. Thus, from the researcher's own experience, a child might also inherit the misfortune if a family member once died of the same disease. The inheritance of misfortunes from a family lineage is well explained in the next chapter.

K'Okul argues that the curse of one's misdeed may also manifest itself as a spiritual force, living souls and demons which work with divine powers of ghosts or ancestral spirits, to cause severe mental, moral and natural suffering to the victims. The living souls and demons are believed to inhabit natural surrounding and objects. The phenomenon aspects in which the living souls and demons inhabit the natural surrounding and objects, call for an important cultural explanation for the causes and cures for evil attacks. K'Okul points out, "The belief in and practice of animism or

animatism is, therefore, an important cultural explanations for preventive and curative therapy of *akuodi*,”¹⁵ (painful body swellings). The preventive and curative measures, in broader sense, are also being extended to the healings of evil that may be mental, moral or natural evils among the Luo people.

In K’Okul’s worldview evil spirits may also inhabit both the animate and inanimate worlds, from which they often inflict misfortunes, destruction or death on humans through the works of witches and sorcerers. In an attempt to inflict injuries and misfortunes to an enemy, witch or a sorcerer would put or burry a destructive charm on the foot path of an enemy or a person he wishes to bewitch, kill, harm or bring ill-luck to. According to K’Okul, this is usually a harmful medicine hidden in dead cats, dead black cobras or rotten eggs and used by evil-minded individuals. The reality in K’Okul’s thesis seems to the researcher that should any person gets in contact with these objects, mental, moral or natural evil will immediately strike him or her.

In conclusion, K’Okul takes on the religious and cultural aspects that involves the spirits of the dead coming back to avenge for failures to carry on activities which the deceased used to undertake. To continue with the works which a dead person used to do while the person was still living, is to honour the person on the belief that the person still continues to live. Religiously and culturally if this is not done according to K’Okul, there is grave danger to the relatives of the deceased. For such dangers emanating from the revenges of the spirits of the dead, K’Okul indicates that sorcerers and witches often use objects like animals and reptiles as mediums of evil

¹⁵ Nicholas N. K’OKul, Richard Nelson Ochieng. *Maternal and Child Health in Kenya: A Study of Poverty, Diseases and Malnutrition in Samia*, (Helsinki: Finnish society for development studies, 1991), 126.

spirits to transmit and inflict diseases and cause death to their enemies. But Henry Odera Orika gives yet another perspective in which he treats God, ancestors, evil spirits in relations to the problems of evil.

Henry Odera Orika

Earlier, Ayodo informed us that Luo people unconditionally worship God as their creator, and protector against forces of evil. Henry O. Orika affirms this by saying that to the Luo people, God is one as is evidenced by the way nature remains uniform. This further indicates that there is one divine being ruling nature who resides in this world, as well as in “heaven”, and in the wind which blows.

Orika further describes God as that useful concept from the practical point of view of one overarching reality in the whole universe. He explains that this God, being worshipped even by the majority of witch-doctors (sorcerers who diagnose evils caused by witches in the Luo community) in the community, is known as *Nyasaye Nyakalaga* (the eternal one who is beseeched). He writes,

The Luo name for God is Nyasaye. It is sometimes referred to as Nyasaye Nyakalaga. Most members of the community worship him, including the majority of witch doctors, believe in God...God is superior to man and God represents goodness and holiness. Sprits are mediators between God and man. But there are evil and non-evil spirits.¹⁶

According to Orika, the Luo God has the attributes of goodness and holiness distinguishing him as superior to ancestors and evil spirits. The implications here are that God’s attributes of goodness and holiness are connoted in his divine names; names whose meanings are based on God’s infinite and omnipotent power in the combating of evil and forces of nature.

¹⁶Henry Odera Orika, ed. *Sage Philosophy: Indigenous thinkers and Modern Debate on African Philosophy*, (Nairobi: Masaki Publishers, 1990), 58.

Oruka discusses the reality of death and says that death is perceived as an enemy to all things. There is nobody who likes to die though death is the work of God (though not the cause of evil) by which he punishes the offenders and reminds humans how limited in this life they are. The researcher views this as a form of theodicy presented by Oruka to the Luo people, for it shows that there is another life after death, even as the Luo people see their friends and relatives, dying from mental, moral and natural evil.

In conclusion, Oruka believes that the Luo God is everywhere as a being who defines for humankind the nature of reality. God lives in the heavens and in the wind and is being worshiped even by witchdoctors. The goodness and holiness of this God are connoted in the divine names given to him by the Luo people. In the faces of diseases and death, his faithfulness remains because if one dies or lives, death remains a gateway to the ancestral world. Lastly, Grace Ogot discusses God, ancestors and misfortunes that include the essence of death, and finally discusses what the researcher considers a theodicy.

Grace Ogot

In her thought about the mystery of evil, Grace Ogot demonstrates that all tragedies lead either to human injuries or death. She states that the common feeling and attitude of the Luo people about death, is that it is a guest who invites himself forcefully to human households: “Who will give us medicine for death? Death knocks at your door and before you can tell him to come in, he is in the house with you.”¹⁷ It is for this reason that Ogot argues that due to its inevitability, it is important for every Luo person to build courage against the face of death, because this leads to the

¹⁷ Grace Ogot, (2nd edit.), *Land Without Thunder and Other Stories*, (East African Educational Publishers, Nairobi: 2008), 45

building of courage against all sorts of misfortunes. Thus the essence and the message of death as an old age long belief are received as a sort of transition to the next world. When one is born to the land of the living and whenever time comes, it is death to provide transition to the world of ancestors.

From the days of the ancestors to the present, death has been part of human nature. A child enters this world when its mother gives birth to it, but when it is tired of the world and wants to go and rest with the ancestors; it is death that takes it from the world. Through death generations succeed one another and the nations grow and become larger. The seed that is planted in the soil must first die, and it is by its death that it becomes alive again and produces many seeds.

Death brings relatives and friends together as communal relationships are renewed. At this time one is able to know those who love him and those who do not. Death is a great reminder that a human being is not to live long on this earth. During death experience all the community members are humbled to the same level; for as the researcher observes, everyone is reminded that all humans are equal in the face of death as a community equalizer.

Conclusion, it seems that Ogot presents a theodicy on the face of the inevitability of the evil of death. It seems that there are situations which even traditional doctors, the various ceremonies and rituals undertaken cannot change yet death rates continue to rise. Mental, moral and natural evil are dreaded because ultimately they all lead to death of humans and their environment. However, this does not mean Ogot does not believe in a God.

Like Oruka, Ogot believes that “God is a mysterious being whose essence spread all over the surface of the earth.”¹⁸ But what do other Africans think about the

¹⁸ Grace Ogot, *The strange Bride*, (Nairobi: East Africa Educational Publishers, 1983), 1.

problems of evil? We respond to this question by examining other Africanists' views. The Africanists in this matter include Wilbur O'Donovan and George F. Pickens because, though they are not born and raised in Africa, they have done Christian scholarships in the African context.

Other Africanists on the Concepts of Evil

George F. Pickens

Pickens argues that the Luo people believe that ancestors represent not only the existence of an afterlife, but also the co-existence and interdependence of this life and the next. They believe that the present is as a result of past actions and events and the ancestors are considered the overseers of all of human history.

The Luo primal worldview can be characterized as deliberately conservative. That is, one which prefers and seeks the preservation of the existing order, and one in which change takes place only with the sanction and guidance of the ancestors. Within such traditionalistic religious systems, the present must always be managed and authorized by the past. The ancestors are the vestige of the past, active in the present, so that all individuals and communal actions are to be tested against their precedents and will. The power of life of a Luo person and his kinship is controlled by the spiritual world of ancestors. Pickens asserts:

Man's relationship with God, his kingship with them indeed, is such that he shares their life and power not only in this world but also beyond death, which is not the end. Reflective of this belief is the widespread primal veneration of the ancestors, "the living dead" [who] remain united in affliction and in mutual obligation with the (living).¹⁹

¹⁹ George F. Pickens, *African Christian God-Talk: Matthew Ajuoga's Johera Narrative*, (Maryland: University Press of America, 2004), 122.

For the Luo people, the ancestors are the focus of unity and the source of their existence as a people and as a nation. They have power over the daily lives of the people, and consequently various rituals involving prayers and sacrifices to the ancestors are performed. They show their power through the welfare or misfortunes of their family, in sending children to families and blessing of prosperity to the crops. They are venerated and worshipped because they know all the intimate family concerns.

The Luo people are therefore strongly monotheistic and believe that *Nyasaye* (God) is approachable. He intervenes in human affairs and creates, heals, and provides people with good harvests, cattle and many children. To avoid life crises, which in the researcher's opinion, would be calamities such as mental, moral and natural evil, the Luo regularly offer sacrifices to *Nyasaye*, whose protections and good will are continually sought whenever life and future becomes uncertain.

If the good will of God is not sought through the ancestors in good and convenient time, the result might be a serious drought, over flooding of rivers and streams, thunderstorms, attacks from wild animals, snake bites, mysterious diseases, sudden deaths, adverse moral confusion, conflicts in the families, poor harvests, increasing rates of witchcraft practices, bad dreams and night visits of ghosts of relatives who died long time ago in the clan.

In conclusion, according to Pickens, ancestors control the lives and the destiny of the living. They know everything going on in the world of the living as they mediate the needs of their people to God. But ancestors have to be respected and honoured at all cost and failure to do the necessary will result into disasters. Let us move on to Isaiah Majok Dau and hear what he says on the problem of evil as theologically reflected in the war in Sudan.

Isaiah Majok Dau

Isaiah Majok Dau examines the problem of evil in the context of wars in Sudan. He argues that the design of the African religious thought is that God is the Ultimate Being, and then followed by spirits or divinities, ancestors, living human beings, the unborn, animals and plants. Dau says that in life there can be either misfortune to the benevolence or to the detriment to humanity; so whatever the states of affairs evil must be faced as an inevitable reality.

Dau explains further that, “As morally free agents, we have an inescapable part to play in the problem of evil and suffering. We have an incredible potential to perpetrate evil and influence suffering.”²⁰ A further examination of this statement is that humanity can hardly escape its responsibilities of provoking God to anger for which God has to avenge with serious maladies. To get out of this, Africans seek possible explanations for natural evil through; explanations which include the offering of sacrifices, libations and prayers to God and other divinities. African people try to do everything possible to get rid of suffering and restore health and harmony to the individual and the community.

In the midst of suffering, there is faith in the conviction that God is present even if his presence is not felt. Both the notions of faith and anger, when bad things persists, denote a process of spiritual journey that leads to mature knowledge of God, and the freedom to express deep human feelings. Africans regard death as the climax of evil because it takes away life. They believe that a person goes to another land when dying, though death still frightens many people. Dau believes that African

²⁰ Isaiah Majok Dau, *Following Jesus in a World of Suffering and Violence*, ERT (2007) 31:4, 358-368.

tradition does not acknowledge that suffering and evil are indications of something wrong in human nature as in the Christian thought.

Dau presents the doctrine of the Cross as an ultimate solution to the human problem of sin and suffering. He writes,

At the cross we are granted a glimpse into God's government of the world and into the impenetrable darkness which otherwise lies upon it. Theology of the cross is thus a paradox that the Christian should gladly accept and live with. The cross is both symbol of suffering and deliverance. It reveals both wisdom and foolishness of God.²¹

In qualifying the above statement, quoting Allan Richard, Dau explains, "Redemption through a suffering theophany is the truly Christian response to the problem of evil."²²

Dau argues that the answer to suffering and evil lies in the incarnation and the cross of Christ. He states that the cross of Christ is a distinctive Christian answer to suffering in the sense that God has done something about human suffering. Christ in his death on the cross took our sin, suffering and sickness. It is true that he took our infirmities and weaknesses on the tree and that by his wounds we are healed. The cross is the centre from which God's mercy, righteous omnipotence, omniscience is tapped and upon which the enduring Christian faith rests.

Dau explains the paradox which the cross of Christ demonstrates in stating that "The cross is both a symbol of suffering and deliverance."²³ As symbol of weakness to the strong it is also a symbol of strength to the weak, "it is the power of identification, participation, endurance and transformation. The theology of the cross

²¹ Isaiah Majok Dau, *Suffering and God: A Theological Reflection on the War in Sudan*, (Nairobi: Pauline Publication: 2003), 221.

²²Dau, "Following Jesus," 114.

²³ Dau, "Suffering and God," 221.

is central to the Christian interpretation of and response to suffering. The cross is God's way of overcoming the destructive powers of evil in our world."²⁴ Thus

the cross of Christ always stands as a solemn and powerful reminder that God was prepared to suffer in order to redeem the world and that he expects his people to share the same commitment and pain as they participate in the task of restoring this fallen world to its former glory.²⁵

Apart from showing the great love of God, "the cross brings us face to face with the wonder of God's love and grace, so much that we are strengthened to deal with our suffering with courage and determination."²⁶ The cross speaks to those who are suffering and reminds them of the presence of the omnipotent God taking part in that suffering. That is, "the cross tells them that since God suffers with us and takes part in our suffering, we need to alleviate the suffering of others."²⁷ God who identifies with those who are suffering also knows about suffering, that in following Christ genuinely one must suffer.

Through the cross God has conquered human suffering and defeated forces behind it. Thus, "On the cross Christ won the victory for us over evil and suffering. He conquered the Kingdom of this world and inaugurated the kingdom of the father."²⁸ Dau "sees the cross as the magnificent symbol of love conquering hate and of light overcoming darkness"²⁹ although humanity still suffers "the cross of Christ will always stand as a powerful reminder that although suffering is still here with us,

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid. , 222.

²⁷ Ibid.,

²⁸ Ibid. ,223

²⁹ Ibid.

it is and will be defeated and that our God is present with us in our sordid circumstances.”³⁰

Dau feels strongly that genuine grasp of the presence and the love of God as mediated by the cross have the power to release humanity from its chains and produce healing in suffering. The Scriptures tells us that suffering we now face prepares us for the glory which awaits us when suffering and evil shall ultimately be defeated (2 Cor. 4:16-17). However, we must each share in Calvary and the cross, for only so can we share the glorious victory of the resurrection.

Dau brilliantly and significantly presents the theology of the cross in its solemnity. The researcher has nothing to question and doubt in Dau’s theology of the cross. But the researcher is discouraged by Dau’s over obsession with this theology of the cross to the extent that he evades rational and the logical discussions of the nature of God in the face of evil and free will philosophy. He perceives no place of theodicy in the entire theology of God and suffering in the war of Sudan simply because he is of the view that matters of suffering should not be subjected to debates and rationality.

Space does not allow us to critique Dau’s objections to theodicy as this case warrants. However, for a balanced spiritual and rational defence of the Christian God, one needs to bring in the questions of the heart, faith and rationality together into play. Theoretical and practical reflections of the nature of God in the face of suffering and death that beleaguer human existence and destiny, explain the goodness of God and his unwavering promises, as we inwardly examine ourselves from the perspectives of the falls of Satan and humanity.

³⁰ Ibid.,

John Samuel Mbiti

Every evil that happens is often blamed on the spirits, even if human agents may also be considered responsible. Mbiti says that “Some societies see evil as originating from, or associated with, spiritual beings other than God. Part of this concept is a personification of evil itself.”³¹ It is often believed in the Luo community that evil does not come from God, but from evil spirits or evil persons or from a broken religious and cultural taboo. In the time of uncertainty for the people, the diviners are consulted as they symbolize the hope of society. They are the hope for good health, protection and security from evil forces, prosperity and good fortune, through ritual cleansing when harm or impurities are contracted.

In the settling of disputes during community conflicts, it is generally the elders of the clan who deal with disputes and breaches arising from various types of moral harm. When harm has come to a person, the person believes that someone has used evil powers against him. More often than not it is believed that the culprit would be a family member, a relative or a neighbour. The reason for there being illness and misfortune of some sort is because someone has caused it. If moral problems such as which Mbiti talks about, can be caused by a person through evil spirits, then mental and natural evil are caused in the same way.

Mbiti narrates how the Luo pray to their God³² for mercy and victory when faced with the various experiences of evil. The people pray early in the morning asking God to grant them longer life, and take upon the sun and moon as God’s revelation. It is believed that praying to God every day ensures a young person of

³¹ John S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, (London: Heinemann: 1969), 204

³² John S. Mbiti, *Concepts of God in Africa*, (London: SPCK: 1970), 133.

getting married in early life. In time of the evils of war, the traditional witchdoctors offer sacrifices of sheep or hens, and make long prayers to God through the ancestors.

In conclusion, Mbiti holds it correctly as we saw in others mentioned earlier, that evil can only be attributed to evil spirits, evil persons or the violations of taboos. Two West African religious and cultural philosophers, Kwasi Wiredu and Kwame Gyekye also have important contribution to these discussions on the problems of evil.

Kwasi Wiredu and Kwame Gyekye

Wiredu and Gyekye discuss the concept of theodicy, personhood and free will in relation to the problem of evil. Wiredu states that the term theodicy was coined by Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646-1716) to express the justice or the righteous manner of God's dealings with humankind. Theodicy literally means "God's justice" or "God's righteous way" that includes not only God's providence, but the whole of the philosophy of God. In relation to this, the two thinkers discuss human's status of free will.

Wiredu and Gyekye argue that some people have free will and some do not of which the researcher shall, in chapter 4, verify whether they are right or not. The researcher will explain if it is true that there are degrees of free will in normative as well as descriptive components as they claim. He will consider whether both free will and responsibility refer to the same aspect of human consciousness and conduct.

In lieu of free will, they say, a character can be reformed since a person is responsible for the state of his or her character, because persons are endowed with the capacity to reform and to improve. Human beings are free and must therefore be held morally responsible for their actions and behaviour. So the problem of free will is conceived in terms not only in the attributes of God, but also of those of other deities such as ancestors and evil spirits. Evil proceeds from man's character, conscience,

desires, and thoughts—all of which suggests that evil stems from the exercise by the person of his or her own free will.

The essence of African morality is that it is about morality of ‘conduct’ rather than morality of ‘being a person’ based on what he is because of what he does. Through his free actions he can release forces which shape the world and society. Under the notion that it is in every human’s desire to do only the right thing, it is being stated that “(4) Sometimes, people know what they should do or what they should not do as well as the possible consequences of their acts, but because they lack the will to persevere they take the easier (*sic*) way out and so do not do the right thing.”³³

In conclusion, as stated before, the researcher will interact with Wiredu and Gykye more in chapter 4 on these matters from a Christian perspective of the nature of personhood, free will and evil. Below is Wilbur O’ Donovan’s explanations of evil and its causes from his perspectives.

Wilbur O’Donovan

To a greater degree, for example, mental evil is related to natural evil since human mind is related to the human body. Regarding the causes of this evil, O’Donovan knows this very well that when a person is constantly under intense fear, “and very angry or in other ways mentally disturbed, it can make a person physically sick.”³⁴ Further, in the researcher’s opinion it seems this malady destroys the centre of human knowledge, resulting also in mental imbalances that interfere with human common sense. The loss of common sense probably points to what Kasomo describes

³³ Kwasi Wiredu and Kwame Gyekye, *Person and Community: Ghanaian Philosophical Studies I*, Council for Research and Philosophy, (Washington, DC: Cardinal Station, 1992), 215.

³⁴ Wilbur O’Donovan, *Biblical Christianity in African perspective*, (Carlisle, CA: The Paternoster Press, 2009), 308.

as “insanity, mental retardation and depression.”³⁵ In these state victims of mental sickness from evil are mindless of their mental and their psychological states.

Many victims of mental evil in fact cannot cooperate in a dialogue and reasoning or under normal circumstance share jokes and light moments with other people. For example, as Ozhehome puts it, “when asked a serious question, out of lacking the “know” of his state, and his response is just wild and ungraded laughter.”³⁶ As the causes of mental sickness from evil are not ordinary, O’Donovan further states that they “are connected with evil machinations of hostile cosmic forces and by strains in interpersonal relations.”³⁷ Although O’Donovan speaks from another background of experience, evil machinations of evil forces also exist in the Luo religious and cultural cosmology.

There are dark powers operating in the society in the company of demons inflicting humanity with mental and natural sicknesses. O’Donovan says, “When these demonic powers are projected on to the people through sorcery and witchcraft, the demons can cause physical and mental sickness.”³⁸ To treat people from these sicknesses and deliver them from this malady, O’Donovan says that this will “require elaborate relationships between the living dead. These relationships can include rituals, sacrifices and offerings which must be made to satisfy or to persuade ancestors about certain issues. They also include communication with the dead: directly, or

³⁵ Daniel Kasomo, “An investigation of sin and evil in African cosmology,” in *International Journal of Sociology and Anthropology*, Vol. 1(8), 145-155, December, 2009.

³⁶ F. Ozhehome, *The Theory and Practice of Traditional Medicine in Nigeria*, (Lagos: Okey Okwechime & Co Ltd., 1990), 110.

³⁷ Rais Akhar, *Health and Disease in Tropical Africa: Geographical and Medical Viewpoints*, (Poststrasse: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1987), 252.

³⁸ O’Donovan, “*Biblical Christianity*,” 308.

through divination, or through words.”³⁹ Referring to the presence of evil in the world, O’Donovan states,

People are aware of the real and evil power of witches and sorcerers who bring tragedy and harm to other people. In addition to the work of witches, we are aware of people in secret societies who do terrible things in their meetings. In the day time, these people appear to be respectable businessmen, at night they do terrible things.⁴⁰

It seems that activities of witches are everywhere and there is no community where sorcerers and witches do exist. O’Donovan believes evil spirits and their agents are with us in our communities. Indeed the condition of human mind, morality and nature as a whole suggests that evil is a reality in the world. Describing the scene of the origin of evil, O’Donovan writes,

One of the created angels of God was apparently a palace guard near the throne of God (Ezek.28:14). This angel was very beautiful and very wise at his creation but he became very corrupt as a result of pride (Ezek. 28:17). In the New Testament, the Holy Spirit revealed through the apostle Paul in 1Timothy 3:6 that the fall and condemnation of Satan came about through his conceit (arrogant pride). Putting this evidence together, there is a strong suggestion that the real person being described in Ezekiel 28:11-18 is Satan, although he is not identified by this name in the passage.⁴¹

O’Donovan has explained to us that the origin of evil is Satan due to his arrogant pride for which he was expelled from heaven to earth. It is also this kind of pride that is found among the Luo in which their hearts are hardened against the great things of the Gospel of salvation, despite the fact that many of them are now languishing from the mental, moral and natural evil among them.

This punishment imposed upon Satan and humanity consisted in an enfeebling of nature, in consequence of sin, which disturbed the normal relation between body and soul. Humans have to struggle for their living, and work has become toilsome

³⁹ Ibid. , 222.

⁴⁰ O’ Donovan, “*Biblical Christianity*,” 187.

⁴¹ Ibid. , 188.

and burdensome, thus creating unbalance life of the body and of the soul in life situations. This is the general context in which mental, moral and nature evil threatens human freedom of existence even among the Luo people.

In conclusion, from the researcher's viewpoints of O'Donovan's arguments, it is because of such deadly perils of evil for which the incarnation and resurrection took place. In these, God has made atonement for sin by which the guilt of sin was removed and we, who once were far off, are now brought near by the blood of Christ. That is, Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us' (Gal. 3:10, 13), so that humanity can have victory over the evil forces of mental, moral and natural evils.

Western Conceptions of Evil and Theodicies

We noted earlier about the selected western philosophers and theologians who have discussed and answered the questions about the problems of evil relevant to this study. The following are the selected philosophers and theologians whose works have been influential in the field of philosophy and theology both from with the past decades and millenniums: John Hick, Alvin Plantinga, Gregory A. Boyd, Millard Erickson, Louis Berkhof, Irenaeus of Lyons and Augustine of Hippo.

It is imperative for this section also to state the Western understanding of evil before we engage with the nature of the Western systems of theodicy in this chapter or in chapter 4. Although it would have been significant to suspend the definition of the term "evil" until operational definitions section, due to its complexity in meaning that is toned down in various ways from different thinkers from the medieval times to the present, it is significant for this section to give it a special treatment as early as possible.

Concepts of evil from western perspective

Robert Audi defines evil as “a privation of being, the absence of good in something that it properly ought to have.”⁴² For Plato (428-347 BC), evil is “Injustice, lack of discipline, cowardice, ignorance.”⁴³ And Augustine of Hippo (354-430 AD) says that “evil has no nature of its own; rather it is the absence of good which has received the name “evil,”⁴⁴ since “there is nothing at all which is evil by nature, and “evil” is a name for nothing other than the absence of good.”⁴⁵ Augustine further explains that “Evil things, however, cannot exist without the good; in so far as they are natures.”⁴⁶

In view of the above definitions of evil, the researcher’s understanding of “evil” is that evil is a bad thing that destabilizes, the mental, moral and natural order of the human society. Evil brings fear, hopelessness, and mental insanity, moral and natural disorder in all human communities. The meaning and the nature of evil explains the philosophy behind the western arguments and the construction of their systems of theodicy. In the western systems of theodicy some notably argue for the free will defense and stand for the fact God has a moral reason for allowing evil to occur in the world. Some of these thinkers to be considered first and to be taken seriously are Irenaeus of Lyon and Augustine of Hippo.

⁴² Robert Audi, (Editor) *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy*, 2nd ed., The Cambridge University Press: 1999, 31.

⁴³ Plato, *The Republic*, Cambridge University Press: 2000, 608

⁴⁴ Saint Augustine, *The city of God against the Pagans*, The Cambridge University Press: 1998, 461.

⁴⁵ Ibid. , 477.

⁴⁶ Ibid. , 502.

Irenaeus of Lyons and Augustine of Hippo

From these two philosophers—theologians' stand points, we can explain whether God has moral reasons to allow evil to occur. We will also find out whether God has significant moral reasons to allow evil in their theodicy. The first theodicy was developed by Irenaeus of Lyons and the second one was developed by Augustine of Hippo.

In his "Against Heresies", Irenaeus said that the eternal God is perfect. He contended that humans, after coming into being, must progress into manhood. In this progress, he increases in perseverance, since through persevering he is to be glorified. For it is God's intention that he should be seen since the vision of God is the acquisition of immortality which brings humans to God. Irenaeus regarded the pre-fall Adam as more like a child than mature responsible child. It was for our benefit that the Lord allowed all these sufferings that we may be trained by means of them in stages. Kasomo understands Irenaeus fully well:

Irenaeus (c.130 -202) distinguished two stages of the creation of the human race. In the first stage, human beings were brought into existence as intelligent animals endowed with the capacity for immense moral and spiritual development. In the second stage of the creation, which to him is still taking place, they are gradually being transformed through their own free responses from human animals into "children of God". Thus the human situation is that of tension between the natural selfishness arising from our instinct for survival and the calls of both morality and religion to transcend our self-centeredness. The origin of moral evil to him is that it is a necessary condition in the creation of humanity from an epistemic distance from God.⁴⁷

It seems that, according to Kasomo, Irenaeus sees God as directing all things to achieve the end of humans' perfection and human edification, and to display his own character, so that his righteousness is fulfilled. While God is absolute and eternal in respect of himself, all things are within his power. Contingent things have their

⁴⁷Kasomo, "An investigation of sin," 145-155.

beginning of being in the course of time, and things which have recently come to birth cannot be eternal. On this note it is also important and significant to consider Augustine of Hippo's theodicy for these discussions.

Augustine wondered what is it that we call evil other than what the absence of good was. Augustine argues that in the bodies of animals, disease and wounds mean nothing but the absence of health; for when a curse is affected, that does not mean that the evils which were present, the diseases and wounds, go away from the body and dwell elsewhere: they altogether cease to exist. The wound or disease is not a substance but the flesh itself being a substance, and therefore that is privation of which those evils-something good which we call health but accidents. In the same context, Augustine says, what appears to be evil, when seen in isolation or in a too limited context, is a necessary element in the universe which is wholly good.

As for Augustine, the world was as perfect as created by God. Evil came initially into those areas that involve free will in the internal notions of Satan, angels and human beings. Some of the angels turned from the Supreme God (God) to a lesser god, thereby rebelling against their creator. Later these angels in turn tempted the first human beings to fall, which for Augustine the falls of angelic and human beings are the origin of evil.

Augustine further argues that God permitted evil so that he can bring good out of it, for God judged it better to bring good out of evil, than to permit any evil to exist. God created humanity with free will and placed him among the creation which was "very good" (Gen. 1:31) and "upright" (Eccl. 7:29). We will hear more about Augustine's successful theodicy later in chapter 4. But as for the present, we turn to John Hick's theodicy focussing on the nature of God, creation and evil.

John Hick

John Hick contends that the Augustinian responses to evil hinge upon the concept of the fall of humanity from an original state of righteousness. The Irenaean response hinges upon the idea of the gradual creation of a perfected humanity through life of a highly imperfect world and the response of modern process theology upon the idea of God who is in fact able to prevent the evil arising either in human beings or in the process of nature. Hick says,

Evil refers to physical pain, mental suffering and moral wickedness. The last one is one of the causes of the first two, for an enormous amount of human pain arises from humankind's inhumanity. This pain includes such major scourges as poverty, oppression, persecution, war, all injustice, indignity and inequality that occur in human societies.⁴⁸

It is, however, important to note that although a great deal of pain and suffering are caused by human action, there is much more that arises from such natural causes as bacteria and earthquakes, storm, fire, lightening, flood and drought. Hick wonders why God is perfect yet he created an imperfect world. This means that God cannot be both omnipotent and perfectly loving. Hick asks the same question which Hume had asked hundreds of years ago. That if God's intention is that there be evil in the world then God is not benevolent. If evil in the world is contrary to his intentions, then he is not omnipotent. If evil is either in accordance with his intentions or contrary to it, then God is not benevolent or is not omnipotent.

By all these sentiments Hick undoubtedly poses a great dilemma to evangelicals who are serious with the defence of their omnipotent and *omni-benevolent* Biblical God. Contrary to Hick's arguments against God's omnipotence and *Omni-benevolence*, Plantinga gives us his perspectives on God and evil through his defence of free will.

⁴⁸ Ibid. , 40.

Alvin Plantinga

Plantinga's model of Free Will Theodicy (FWD) is that even though God being omnipotent, he could or could not create a world with free creatures that choose evil. That is, it is possible that being Omni-benevolent, God would desire to create a world which contains evil if moral goodness requires free moral creatures. On this, Plantinga tries to persuade the researcher into seeing the sense of the logical possibility of an Omni-benevolent; omnipotent and omniscient God in creating a world that contains such maladies as mental, moral and natural evil.

Traditionally, Satan is the leading most powerful spirit who led one-third of angels in rebellion against God. Since Satan and his angels were expelled from heaven, they have been wreaking human society and creation. Thus, Plantinga affirms, "But more traditional line of thought is indicated by St. Augustine, who attributes much of the evil we find to *Satan* or to Satan and his cohorts."⁴⁹ As such, this implies that all evil in *Kronos*, space-time existence of the actual world, is broadly moral evil since it was not within the power of God to create a world containing a better balance of broadly moral good and evil.

In conclusion, whether Plantinga's Free Will Defence (FDW) offers the best solution to the mental, moral and natural evil or not, this shall be determined later in chapter in chapter 4 where the researcher shall make a response to the problem of evil among the Luo people. But there is another line of thought, taking after that of Plantinga's free will arguments, presented by Gregory A. Boyed which echoes that of Augustine's.

⁴⁹ Alvin Plantinga, *God, Freedom, and Evil*, (Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1977), 58.

Gregory A. Boyed

Like Augustine and Plantinga, Boyed argues that just as with men, who have freedom of choice as to both virtue and vice, it is among the angels too. Some free agent continued in those things for which God had made and over which he had ordained them. Some outraged both by the constitution of their nature and the government entrusted to them. Because they were free, they rebelled according to the writings of the church fathers. Boyed explains,

We can therefore know that when evil occurs it is not necessary the result of a particular good reason God has for allowing it or ordaining it. All evil proceeds from will other than God, but having said this much, we must also recognise that we can never exhaustively know “givens” of any particular situation and thus cannot fully know why any particular episode unfolds one way while another episode unfolds in a different way.⁵⁰

In the content of the above statement, Boyed seems to admit that there is a mysterious imbalance in the occurrences of evil which is beyond human scope. Thus God’s own sovereign reasons for the existence of evil, and the human appeal to free will theodicy, should be taken as the ultimate explanations for why creation today exists in great turmoil. According Boyed, God’s good will is not being uniformly carried out in history since the earth is afflicted by supernatural forces beyond human control who in their own free volition, incessantly working against the good administration of the Creator.

Matter itself has been polluted with an evil influence, and the whole natural realm suffers accordingly. The tragic nature of this world in its present condition is the result of angels and humans misusing their will. What cannot be attributed to volition of human agents should be attributed to the volition of the fallen angels. The

⁵⁰ Gregory A. Boyed, *Satan and the Problem of Evil: Constructing a Trinitarian Warfare Theodicy*, (Illinois: Downer Grove, 2001), 214.

war that currently ravages the creation involves all angels and humans, but it is first and foremost a struggle between Satan and God.

Another very important person to consider here is a theologian known as Millard Erickson. He explains the fact of Jesus Christ coming into history for the purposes of destroying the works of Satan, and finally the destruction of evil completely in the culmination in judgement of Satan and the wicked humanity in future.

Millard Erickson

Erickson explains the fact of incarnation through the drama in Philippians 2:6-7. He explains that Jesus did not consider equality with God but made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, in the human likeness. “From a position of ‘equality with God,’ which entails the immediate presence of the Father and the Holy Spirit as well as the continuous praise of the angels, he came to earth, where he had none of these.”⁵¹

Christ laid aside his divine majesty, the majesty of the sovereign ruler of the universe, crucified, died, and rose again—defeating evil. The decisive battle in the war between good and evil was fought and won by Christ in his crucifixion and resurrection. Satan and all his evil spirits are now destined to eternal punishment (Matt. 25: 46), torment (Rev.14:10-11), the bottomless pit (Rev. 9:1-2), the wrath of God (Rom. 2:5), the second death (Rev.21:8), eternal destruction and exclusion from the face of the Lord (2Thess. 1:9).

In the researcher’s view, the presence of God and holy angels where Christ came from is absolutely opposite to the mental, moral and natural problems of evil

⁵¹ Millard Erickson, *Christian Theology*, (Michigan: Baker Books: 2003), 696. In chapter 4 the incarnation of Christ is expounded on in relations to the mental, moral and physical problems of evil. Jesus came to destroy the works Satan: mental, moral and physical evil.

among the Luo people. Faith in Christ who has conquered all evil and death is an assurance that the Luo people now await their new and heavenly transitions at the moment of their physical death if they will turn to Christ's saving power. Another prominent theologian of the 20th century is Louis Berkhof who explains the heavenly state of righteousness and the inevitability of hell is the next to examine.

Louis Berkhof

Berkhof seems to give the Luo people a future hope in that despite all the magnitude of the problem of evil in this world, our heavenly Father has a house with many mansions as is stated in John 14:1. In this place, the righteous will not only inherit heaven, but also the entire new creation freed from evil (Matt.5:5; Rev.21:1-3). This experience of the new existence will be free from any of the imperfections and disturbances of the present evil world, Matt.25:46; Rom.2:7. God will bring to an end this evil world. Satan and all forces of evil, and those, whom they will have used to cause chaos in the mind, in human morality and nature, shall perish in the everlasting fire.

Berkhof says "The fire of hell is called "an unquenchable fire," Mark 9: 43; and it is said of the wicked "their worm dieth not," Mark 9:48. Moreover, the gap that will separate saints and sinners in the future is said to be fixed and impassable, Luke 16:26."⁵² The future hope that God offers will judge, compensate and put into perspective this present state of mental, moral and natural evil among the Luo people. As we come to the end of these discussions on the historical and contemporary conceptions of evil, it is imperative to define the most used words in this thesis.

⁵²Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1996), 736.

Operational Definitions

Cosmology

Advice Viriri says that “In its most general and widely used sense the term cosmology refers to a people’s worldview hence one can speak of the Shona cosmology, the Dogon cosmology or as in this case the African cosmology.”⁵³ In this thesis, the term cosmology is used to define the Luo belief in God, ancestors, evil spirits and the human community.

Chira

This is a disease found among the Luo people. It is contracted as a result of breaking certain cultural and religious rules. It is described as an “Extreme thinness... which suggests a dangerous state of pollution; almost all the causes of *Chira* have to do with the principles governing sexuality or seniority. It can come about because of adultery /contact with an un-inherited widow or disregard of seniority rules.”⁵⁴ It is one of the experiences in the entire problem of evil discussed in this study.

Diviner

A diviner, from the researcher’s point of view is a person who discovers issues or provides solutions to human problems through supernatural knowledge. A diviner can use objects or charms to carry out these duties. The term ‘diviner’ means, *Ajuaga*,⁵⁵ in Luo language as one who unveils the mysteries of the problem of evil

⁵³ Advice Viriri, Pascah Munguni, “African Cosmology and the Duality of Western Hegemony: The Search for an African Identity,” in *The Journal of Pan African Studies*, vol.3, no.6, March, 2010.

⁵⁴ Thomas Weisner, S, Candice Bradley, Philip L. Kilbride, eds. *African Families and Crisis of Social Change*, (Westport: Greenwood Publishing Group, 1997), 137.

⁵⁵ Wenzel Paul Geissler, Ruth Jane Prince, *The Land is Dying: Contingency, Conflict in Western Kenya, Epistemologies of Healing*, Vol. 5, (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2010), 207.

through supernatural powers. The implications of this term are further exemplified in chapter 3 of this study.

Free Will Defence (FWD)

Alvin Carl Plantinga is well known for his brilliant application of FWD to explain the presence of evil in the universe. Plantinga says that *FWD* “shows that the existence of God is compatible, both logically and probabilistically, with the existence of evil; thus it solves the main problem of evil.”⁵⁶ The free will defence solution to the problem of evil provides a basis for claiming that creatures, not God, are culpable for the genuine evil that occurs as we will see in chapter 4.

Incarnation

The term incarnation has been defined in many different ways. But for this research, Ewell’s definition corresponds with the theme. He says this of incarnation:

It is the context of Christian theology, the act where by the eternal Son of God, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, without ceasing to be what he is, God the Son, took unto union with himself what he before that act did not possess a human nature, “and so [He] was and continues to be God and in two distinct natures and persons, forever” (Westminster Shorter Catechism, Q.21).⁵⁷

In chapter 4 the term incarnation implies the action Jesus Christ took to identify with humanity even to atone for human sin on the cross for sin and suffering. As far as this thesis is concerned, it is a response God made toward evil and human suffering in the world.

⁵⁶ Plantinga, “*God, Freedom,*” 64.

⁵⁷ Elwell, “*Evangelical Dictionary,*” 555.

Manyasi

This is herb, a substance made from indigenous tree leaves to treat those who have been infected with *chira*. It is called “(medicine for chira and other ancestor-related illnesses only; also called ‘earth medicine’, *yath piny*).”⁵⁸ In chapter 3 *manyasi* is explained as an element involved in how the Luo respond to evil of mental, moral and natural phenomenon.

Omnipotence

Omnipotence is the doctrine of God that explains his being able to accomplish all things, and only the things that do not contradict his changeless purpose and will. Elwell explains omnipotence more. He says, “God is *omnipotent* (Mark 14:36; Luke 1:37) God is able to do whatever he will in the way in which he wills it.”⁵⁹ In relations to the theme of this thesis, it is an attribute of God discussed in chapter 4 that shows God’s consummate ability to prescribe solution to evil or prescribe limits to Satan and evil spirits.

Omni-Benevolence

The term “*omni-benevolence*” means that God is perfect and morally good. Therefore, God in possessing perfect goodness entails the aspect of being good in all ways at all times towards all other beings.⁶⁰ In the entire discussions and responding to the problem of evil among the Luo people the Christian God is portrayed as all good to humanity and to the world.

⁵⁸ Geissler, “*The Land Is Dying*,” 207.

⁵⁹ Elwell, “*Evangelical Dictionary*,” 498

⁶⁰ *Oxford English Dictionary* defines this term as “unlimited or infinite benevolence”. In philosophy of religion in the discussion of the problem of evil, focusing on theodicy, the term refers to perfect goodness and moral perfection of God.

Personhood

From the African concept, personhood is an idea of self-consciousness of a being who is a member of a human community of the same spirits and thought. Personhood constitutes physical appearances, soul and the spirit of that person.⁶¹ In this thesis, the term refers to an individual person who is part of human community, and one against whom none should cherish any evil insinuations, for being against an individual is being against the entire community in light of evil activities.

Rituals and Sacrifices

Africans who adhere to these traditional religious beliefs seek to avoid evil, or when they deal with it to recapture the original state through cleansings. A ritual is ceremonial or symbolic act given importance by repetitions.⁶² Sacrifice is one prominent example of a ritual used to control or cope effectively with evil when it occurs. It involves the shedding of blood of human beings, animals or birds. In this thesis, these two terms apply in the Luo religious and cultural practices of appeasing the dead and evil spirits suspected to have caused evil of some kind to humans.

⁶¹ Kwasi Wiredu, in *Companion to African Philosophy*, (Blackwell Publishing: 2004), 115, explains personhood as the nature of the physical and spiritual components of human being, the powers it has at its disposal, and the forces to which it may be subjected while in the world. As ontological symbols of selfhood, the Luo people deploy the physical human body as a metaphor for modes of thought. There are three significant sets of ontological symbols that, invariably, constitute selfhood heart or liver, head and stomach.

⁶² "Ritual." Microsoft Student 2008 [DVD]. Redmond, WA: Microsoft Corporation, 2007.

Theodicy

The term “theodicy”⁶³ means “God’s justice” or “God’s righteous ways”. The term covers the whole of the philosophy of God: his nature, attributes, and operations. It further explains that God is not responsible for any evil in the universe. The term is very important in this thesis since in chapter 4 it is used to explain that God is always good and right in his plans and purposes even when humans face mental, moral and natural evil. In light of theodicy, God either has good plans for human or intends to bring something good out of evil.

Witchcraft and Sorcery

Mbiti says that witchcraft “is a term used more popularly and broadly to describe all sorts of evil employment of mystical power generally in secret fashion.”⁶⁴ It “is employed to designate the harmful employment of mystical power in all its deferent manifestations.”⁶⁵ In addition, “For African people, sorcery stands for anti-social employment of mystical power, and sorcerers are most feared and hated members of their communities.”⁶⁶

⁶³ Kwasi Wiredu, (editor), *Companion to African Philosophy*, Blackwell Publishing, New York: 2004), 181. The term “theodicy” was coined by the philosopher and mathematician Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646–1716) who used it in his *Essays on Theodicy* to express the justice or the righteous manner of God’s dealings with humankind, which he defended against those who felt that the evils of life are an argument for atheism. The term “theodicy” thus literally means “God’s justice” or “God’s righteous way.” However, this original meaning was quickly expanded to include not only God’s Providence, but also the whole of the philosophy of God: his nature, attributes, and operations. In a word, theodicy became a synonym for natural theology. Theology had long been distinguished as (a) natural theology which is a part of philosophy, and which is the science of God as knowable by human reason without the help of any revelation; and (b) supernatural theology or divine theology which is the science of God as manifested by Divine Revelation term “theodicy” came in handily to replace the more cumbersome “natural theology” and to allow the simple name “theology” to be used for the supernatural science. Convenience and long usage have established the term “theodicy” in its present meaning.

⁶⁴ Mbiti, “*African Religions and Philosophy*,” 197.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

Conclusion

This survey reveals that the problem of evil exists in every culture, under the reality of Satan, demons and human activities. The whole world is in trouble by the appalling human suffering which is very much a reality even among the Luo people in form of mental, moral natural evil. Among the Luo people, there is belief in the supernatural powers. God is worshiped through the ancestors for the wellbeing of human society and the environment.

As we shall focus on the mental, moral and natural evil, we will see in depths the philosophical and theological issues that have featured in this review, even as we shall make Christian response to the problem of mental, moral and natural evil in chapter 4. The most important operational terms have been defined in light of their contributions to the understanding of the key issues in the discussions of the problem of evil. In the next chapter, we move on to examine the concepts of evil in the Luo religious and cultural cosmology.

CHAPTER THREE

THE LUO RELIGIOUS AND CULTURAL CONCEPTS OF EVIL

Introduction

In the previous chapter, we discussed the problem of evil briefly from the Luo, other Africanists and western perspectives. The main thrust of this chapter is to discuss in depth the Luo religious and cultural concepts of evil. It will do this in relations to Luo cosmology that entails a spiritual hierarchy, where God is the ultimate being, followed by the ancestors, evil spirits, the human community, and the natural world. Finally, the chapter discusses the nature of the religious and cultural responses to the problem of evil among the Luo people. But before the foregoing issues are discussed, it is significant for this chapter first to discuss briefly the Luo systems of religious beliefs.

Features of the Luo Religious Beliefs

Among the Luo, there are all sorts of ideas and fears relating to personal spiritual beings and impersonal spiritual forces. These views are based on the fact that “all creation poses *Juok* (spiritual power or reality),”⁶⁷ thus “man is not alone in the universe for there is a spiritual world of power of beings more powerful and ultimate than himself.”⁶⁸ In Luo cosmology, God is experienced through the functions of ancestors, physical creation, persons and community, prayers and worship, rituals and sacrifices. As part of his attributes, God is all that is perceived as good and prosperous

⁶⁷ Ocholla-Ayayo, “*Traditional Ideology*,” 170.

⁶⁸ Harold W. Turner, ‘*The Primal Religions of the World & Their Study*’, in, Victor C. Hayes (Ed), *Australian Essays in World Religions*, (Bedford Park: AASR, 1977), 31.

among the Luo people against all backgrounds of evil. Human discomforts are only attributed to evil spirits whose main activities include inflicting mental, moral and natural evil.

The Luo people believe that their ancestors do not literally die, but rather they take on different forms when they die. It is important for a Luo person to be at peace with his or her God through the veneration of ancestors to avoid evil befalling his or her family or clan. The Luo philosophy of religion centres on questions such as “what will become of man after his death? And what are the causes of man’s suffering and remedies to them?”

It is a common belief among the Luo people that nothing happens without a cause. The Luo people believe that life’s complex questions can only be tackled by humans themselves, since it is only humans among all animals that can imitate the arts of making things and the art of changing nature. They believe that the one who created them so, must be in some way in the form of man himself, though a spiritual transcendent being himself. This assumption includes an attitude from some Luo elite that they can solve their own religious and cultural problems without faith and belief that comes from outside of their culture.

The Luo religious thought holds the following fundamental ideas: first is the idea that the entire universe was created and continues to be sustained by *Nyasaye* who is God. Second is that everything that happens does so, whether good or evil, because it was willed to be so by *Nyasaye* as punishment or for reasons known to him alone. Third, as we learned from Ayodo and Ocholla-Ayayo in the previous chapter, there are evil people who inflict misfortunes and all sorts of human sufferings to others in the community. Finally, the Luo people uphold the fact that the human race

is the centre of all creation, and all things were given to him by the creator,⁶⁹ as “the priest of the universe linking the universe with God its creator.”⁷⁰ What follows is then to understand the nature of the conceptions of evil in the Luo cosmology.

Concepts of Evil in the Luo Cosmology

Luo Concepts of Origin of Evil

First, the origin of evil, according to the Luo folklores and legends came about when humans and chameleon presented a dirty sacrifice to God and God rejected. Angered by this, the Luo people finally cursed the chameleon because he was responsible to God for declaring suffering and death upon humanity. That is why a chameleon walks slowly and each time he sees a human being he must camouflage the surrounding to escape the human notice. This story is being told to young men during story telling moods around evening campfires in the Luo village.

Second, there is another theory regarding the origin of evil which was explained to the researcher by a man known as Okongo Ongere.⁷¹ Okongo is currently engaged in freelance research about the culture and history of the Luo people. This theory states that evil comes from the anger of the living souls whom the creator of the world left un-created in the human body since God ran out of time and materials. So it is these souls which are today inflicting evil of all kinds on humans and nature, resulting into the high magnitude of mental, moral and natural evil. These souls promised that since they were not created in human body and in the image of God, they will always inflict humans and their environment with all kinds of maladies, making sure that humans do not enjoy the privileges of life given them by God.

⁶⁹ Ocholl- Ayayo, “*Traditional Ideology*,” 166.

⁷⁰ John S. Mbiti, *Introduction to African Religion*, (Oxford: Heinemann, 1991), 33.

⁷¹ Okong’o Ongere is based in Rau House Mfang’ano Street, City of Nairobi Kenya.

The significance of discussing the origin of evil attributed to human beings and uncreated spirit in the Luo cosmology, in this context, is to satisfy the belief that all things have their beginnings. In case one may assume that evil originated from God, then it will come out clear that evil originated from other beings apart from God.

However, whether the two theories best explain the origin of evil does not merit our approval now. What matters, in great significance, is to understand the nature of the problem of mental, moral and natural evil and why it warrants responses from within the religious and cultural cosmology of the Luo people.

The Problem of Evil

The religious features of the Luo people, as we have seen above, therefore provide an appropriate context of understanding the nature of evil. In the historical and contemporary discussions of evil in the previous chapter, evil was defined, and through Luo thinkers and some Africanists, we saw pictures of what evil is among the Luo people.

In this section of the present chapter the researcher intends to delve deeper into each case of mental, moral and natural evil. He will explore these concepts of evil in the Luo religious and cultural cosmology in order that appropriate philosophical and theological responses may well be articulated against these three faces of evil in the next chapter. Of the three types of evil, mental evil is said to be the most severe of all evil in the Luo cosmology according to those who have gone through it or witnessed its effects on its victims.

We can recall that at the beginning of the previous chapter mental evil was described as the state where one is considered to be possessed by supernatural beings that may control their behaviours, thoughts and desires. O'Donovan, Kasomo and

Ozhekome also gave us a taste of what mental evil is, yet we still have more from them and others about the mental evil.

Mental Evil

Kasomo has more on this and states, “Mental evil is more serious than the purely physical evil. This applies especially to grave mental disorders such as insanity, mental retardation and depression.”⁷² Mental retardation or mental sickness viewed from philosophical and theological angles is mental evil. Since this research is not about the secular view of evil, it is important to consider mental sickness as mental evil since it is associated with evil spirits. This evil is normally noticed through one behaving unpredictably and contrary to the normal mind-set, moral order and natural stability of the society. Or when a person begins to behave contrary to the common norms of the community’s prescribed pattern of life style. This is because the victim is already in a state where he or she interprets issues haphazardly as registered in his or her tortured mental consciousness.

In the Luo cultural and religious view of human mind, it is believed that the mind can be sick, since anything evil can befall one’s mind no matter what and who a person is. When one’s mind is sick, one is considered as a victim of an attack of some kind, and the victim is viewed as having already acquired mental problems. In the researcher’s experience of such episodes, it will be said that so and so is confused and has been struck by madness, and he or she is suffering from mental sickness. This situation debases human personality as he or she becomes menace of chaos to others in the community. Mental sickness affects one’s health. O’Donovan says, “Mental health can be closely related to physical health. If a person is very discouraged, very fearful, and very angry or in other ways mentally disturbed, it can make a person

⁷² Kasomo, “*An investigation of sin*,” 146.

physically sick”⁷³ even with chronic convulsions and intimidating hysterical cries and shrieking.

A person who suffers from mental evil is associated with many activities due to loss of memory and mental lapse. These include not knowing what is right and what is wrong or what he or she does. Ozekhome comments,

Indeed such a victim does not really care about what he does or says, and at wherever. One may even ask him a serious question, out of lacking the ‘know’ of his state, and his response is just wild and ungraded laughter. Thus, such a person’s senses are obviously not in their proper or appropriate proportions. Therefore, he needs a redirection of his wildly radiating consciousness by the meticulous administration of therapeutic devices on him or her.⁷⁴

Additionally, this person behaves unpredictably in all, or some situations and circumstances. He can cry at any time, can have a loud prolonged laughter, can eat anything including human excrements, can kill fellow human beings at any time or destroy properties, can be excessive in whatever he or she does, can see beings (evil spirits impersonating images of dead relatives of long ago) who are not visible to others, talks to himself, can rape women and rob people of their properties.

Further, a mentally sick person’s behaviors include the possibility of doing such things as standing in the middle of a highway road, or live in isolation of the rest of the community members. He may wonder in the bushes or riverbanks alone, live in one cave after another at the foothills, sit or sleep among the graves in cemeteries. He has the tendency of either talking too much or disrupting meetings with violence, and does not care whether he is naked in public or not. This person has mental sickness—she or he is not well—she or he has the malfunction of the mind—his moral aspects of

⁷³ O’Donovan, “*Biblical Christianity*,” 308.

⁷⁴ Ozekhome, “*The Theory and Practice*,” 110.

personhood are much debased. Mental evil can result in moral and natural evil as part of its extended consequences.

Moral Evil

In the previous chapter, mainly through Mbiti, it was said that moral evil involves one deliberately doing something that one knows will bring harm to another person. Whether the harm is intentional or accidental, to harm someone is still counted as moral evil. Moral evil manifests in different ways among the Luo people. What Mbiti says of moral evil are exactly as it is in the common knowledge and experience the Luo people in their understanding of moral evil.

Mbiti says moral evil can be “robbery, murder, rape, telling lies, stealing, being cruel, saying bad words, showing disrespect, practicing sorcery and witchcraft, interfering with public rights, backbiting, being lazy, or greedy or selfish, breaking promises, and so on.”⁷⁵ In addition, in the Luo cosmology, moral evil includes stealing chicken, goats, sheep or cow, clothes, food, shoes, hoes, spears, shields, a car, bicycles or a motor bikes etc. without someone’s consent. All these are counted as moral evil are rampant among the Luo people.

Cases such as committing acts of sex with someone’s wife, one’s daughter or one’s son, unmarried girl, homosexual are all evil acts condemnable as moral evil. Refusing to marry or refusing to get married is immoral, and not being able to give birth (sometimes attributed to the effects of natural evil) by choice is also considered as moral evil. Hatred, jealousy, fighting with one’s parents, bearing false witness, infringing the rights of children and the poor, obtaining a good or property through false means, tarnishing someone’s name, humiliating an orphan or a widow and selfishness are part of moral evil among the Luo people.

⁷⁵ Mbiti, “*Introduction to African*,” 177.

Among the Luo people, it is an abomination to eat a bird's or certain animal's meat or any types of food prohibited by the Luo customs, since this is classified as an act of moral evil because it is a violation of a traditional taboo. The breaking of taboos, which is the breaking of the fixed rules in the Luo custom, defines a seriousness of moral evil. When a child is born outside his father's compound or homestead, for example, is one serious breaking of a taboo resulting into moral evil.

Stevie M. Nangendo describes one such scenario:

The Luo strongly believe that childbirth blood must be shed in the father's homestead because this is where the original act of creation took place. Also, they believe that all the ancestors must congregate at the father's homestead during birth to shower blessings on the infant, the parents, and the community at large.⁷⁶

This customary rule, giving birth to children in their father's compounds, must be kept and obeyed otherwise it can result into a serious moral, spiritual and societal transgression. Further apprehension of the nature of moral evil is yet to be made clear during the investigation of the root causes of moral evil which are the same cause of natural evil though in different dimensions, that is moral evil sometimes leads to mental and natural evil.

Natural (Physical) Evil

The third type of evil discovered by the observer is called "physical evil" or as it is normally called, "natural evil." This requires further development to the understanding of the various manifestations of natural evil as they exist among Luo people. Under the rubric tragic sense of natural evil in the Luo cosmology, there are

⁷⁶ Stevie M. Nangendo, "Factors Affecting the use of Modern Prenatal and Maternity in Got Agulu Sub-Location" In *African Study Monographs*, 27(4): 145-156, December 2006.

basically four particular types of evils; they are privation, malady, aging, and natural disasters.

First, evil of privation includes such deprivations as natural abnormalities. These include blindness, deafness and natural deformities with the consequent pain and suffering which these privations bring to people. Second, evil of malady involves pain and suffering caused by diseases and is a great and unnecessary evil to both the victims and their loved ones. For example one who suffers from a damaged spinal cord, leprosy, cancer, tuberculosis, elephantiasis, wounds from animal attacks, snake bites and HIV and AIDS would be subjected to an unspeakable pain culminating in death even after much resource have been spent to save the life of the victim. Third, is the evil of aging, whereby human muscles will begin to slow down because of old age, and accompanied with the natural and psychological turmoil with which this is associated in one go. This process is often a sad, lonely, and a wretched one.

Lastly is the type of natural evil that involves natural disaster, which can be attributed to human error or natural causes. Consider the Hell Gate incident that took place in May 21, 1996:

On the Morning of May 21, 1996, as the sunrays started to penetrate the sky, indicating that the new day has begun in Mwanza city, suddenly, a nine hour journey turned into a mass grave when over 800 passengers were killed after their vessel overturned and capsized in the World's second largest fresh water Lake-Lake Victoria.⁷⁷

It was not certain whether this disaster was due to human error or mechanical or storms. What is certain is that the phenomena of earthquakes, hurricanes, tornadoes, floods, famine, droughts, volcanoes, avalanches, lightning, fires,

⁷⁷ IPP Media.com, *Newspaper from Tanzania*. This event took place in 1996—known as MV-Bokoba Tragedy.

landslides, and other similar happenings cause great suffering and pain for those involved.

Recently, at the beginning of this study, in the researcher's village, a certain woman became a victim of a natural disaster. The victim is a woman who was married in a nearby location known as Kamenya. This woman had lost her husband when her husband was swallowed by a python which lives at the banks of a nearby river. This man went to search for some materials for building a family granary. He was attacked by a python that eventually swallowed his body. A few months after she had mourned her husband, her two grandchildren died from having been hit by lightning and thunderstorms that proceeded to kill her two bull cows.

The above notwithstanding, a report from the Kenya National Disaster Profile (KNDP) states that "some parts of the country experience more severe floods than others including most parts of Kano plains (Nyando district) and Nyatike (Migori district) in Nyanza province, Budalangi in Western province resulting from river Nzoia and the lower parts of Tana River."⁷⁸ Rainy seasons normally come with serious devastations to the landscape in Nyanza. Tons of soils from the land are being swept by heavy down pour of rains yearly to the rivers and Lake Victoria. People are left homeless, and many die of malaria and sleeping sickness from mosquito and tsetse fly due to regular overflowing of rivers during rainy seasons.

In the southern region where the researcher comes from, a tragic thunderstorm was witnessed last year when seven school children were hit by the bolts of a heavy thunder and thirteen heads of cows died instantly. The roles of human contribution to these ecological disasters have been through deforestation without adequate

⁷⁸Kenya Natural Disaster Profile United Nations Development Program Enhanced Security Unit, 2004.

reforestation. Burning of charcoals, harvesting of timbers, the selling of firewood in the local town and clearing of bushes for farming for survival have made situation of droughts to worsen. In some locations people have experienced lack of water for humans and pastures for cattle, sheep and goats for almost two or three years.

Some of these disasters like malaria and drought can be prevented by human beings. The problem is that for many years, due to political reasons, the government has neglected the area and side-lined it in term of adequate and equal distribution of natural resources and the training of the local people about forestations. Preventable diseases like malaria and sleeping sickness can be prevented also through the distribution of nets and medicine which the government has not been keen in doing for sometimes now.

Finally the relationship of mental, moral and natural evil is clear. When humanity faces natural disturbances, the moral order is disordered and when moral order is in chaos, the pain and distress that come with it result in mental turmoil. While it is too early to delve into what is to be done to mitigate against such deadly perils, it is important to investigate the root cause of these evils in general and establish why they happen from the perspectives of the Luo religious and cultural beliefs.

Causes of the Three Evils among the Luo People

In the discussions of the causes of the mental, moral and natural evil, it must be noted in mind that there are necessary conditions for evil of any kind to occur. The Luo cosmology is inhabited by the fear of evil spirits, capricious gods, competitive spirits, human anger, jealousies and taboos.

For instance, under the influence of demonic possessions, mental evil will lead to moral evil. This occurs when one makes a wrong choice or bad decision in his

actions leading one to commit moral or natural evil. This interconnectedness is brought by the operations of evil powers among the Luo people in their cultural and religious spheres. In other word when an individual, family or clan suffers from any of the three evils, there are indications that the spiritual and natural universes are not at peace with a societal unitary reality.

In the religious and cultural cosmology of the Luo people God is the giver of all moral order and once any rule is violated, he can as well unleash his anger on individuals, family or the clan. That is, his protective presence will be withdrawn and evil spirits will have their ways and devour the mind, moral and natural outlook of their victims.

Regarding mental illness, for example, there is a belief that it can be inherited from a past relative that forgot or refused to fulfil or meet one of the most important customary requirements. Regarding this experience, Isaac Sindiga and his colleagues have this to say:

If one of the departed family members was a traditional healer (*ajuoga*), his or her spirit may demand a certain surviving member of the lineage takes up his or her vocation. Should this revelation be ignored, then ancestors will send the message forcefully by inducing disease such as mental disturbances (*neko*).⁷⁹

It is morally right to obey the wishes or the will of ancestors. The ancestral wishes and wills among the Luo people are strong and compelling in nature, despite whatever the direction of fate they might take.

In the Luo religious and cultural cosmology the manner in which such phenomenon is handled, by the living, can result into serious mental, moral and natural disasters or an immense blessing to an individual or community. Immoral behaviour or natural deformities can also be inherited from one's lineage through the

⁷⁹ Sindiga, "Traditional Medicine," 67.

presence of ancestral spirit connected to the diseased. If the deceased died from immoral practices or in natural deformity there is likelihood that a child will be born with the same nature or character in a family.

Two weeks before the researcher started writing this thesis, he attended a funeral of a thirty three year old man who had died from falling into a tank of boiling *guru* (boiling liquid gray sugar) in his clan. When the clan elders held a meeting to discuss the cause of this man's death they found out that a witchdoctor from a neighbouring clan was responsible. A relative of the deceased had given three cow bulls to the witchdoctor to inflict a sickness of natural deformity and mental confusion through evil spirits. For three years, this man suffered severe pain and mental retardation.

Under such circumstance, after sometime, the spirit of the diseased might come back to one of the family members to bring the same experience and fate if certain rituals are not carried out immediately. The spirit of the diseased will be a nuisance in that family lineage since one of their own had died in that condition without treatment and healing. More often than not, this is just one of the cases out of the many such acts or incidences that are real among the Luo people.

The moral "misdeed" of a dead person can also result in mental insanity, moral failures, or a terrible natural disaster, like lightning hitting a person or houses in someone's home. So common is the possibility of other extreme malevolent physical experiences which are associated with either acts of witchcrafts or the breaking of a taboo. These experiences would be heavy rain down pours, prolonged droughts, death of livestock from mysterious diseases and fierce wild animal attacks, and sudden death of children or adults. Barrenness and impotency can also occur in the families because of one's moral misdeeds to one's family or community members.

All the foregoing consequences are often, as Mbiti says, “Blamed on the spirits, even if human agents may also be considered responsible.”⁸⁰ Further, as in Rais Akhar’s views, these activities are connected with “evil machinations of hostile cosmic forces and by strains in interpersonal relations”⁸¹ between the living and the dead. Ayodo explains that these evil spirits “occupy a realm from which it is possible to help or hinder the living. They are close to God, but removed from the living. If, for example, a person passes away under suspicious circumstances (such as abuse or murder), his angered spirit can torment the living).”⁸²

Another instance where an angered spirit will revenge is through the infliction of a disease called *Akuodi* (painful swellings on the human body). In this respect, K’Okul says,

The offspring of a person who was once a sorcerer, witch, or a destructive medicine man might inherit *Akuodi* as a punishment for the various “misdeeds”, and superstition within the lineage. A child might also inherit the misfortune if a family member once died of *Akuodi*.⁸³

K’Okul is right on his *Akuodi* view, which would occur as a result of the consequences of “misdeeds” of one of the people in the lineage. But further understanding of such consequence in the traditional Luo beliefs reveals that *Akuodi* is not the only consequence, but one of the known maladies that result from a broken taboo.

The curse of one’s misdeeds, as we have heard already, may also manifest itself, according to K’Okul’s further view, “as a spiritual force, living souls and

⁸⁰ Mbiti, “*African Religions and Philosophy*,” 44.

⁸¹ Rais Akhar, edit. *Mental Health in Nigerian Cities*, (Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1987), 252.

⁸² Ayodo, “*Luo*,” 32.

⁸³ K’Okul, “*Martenal and Child*,” 125.

demons which work with divine powers of ghosts or ancestral spirits (*jochiende*).”⁸⁴ And he adds, “Such spirits may also inhabit both the animate (living) and inanimate (non-living) worlds and are often associated with misfortune, destruction or luck. And they can perform other special tasks as directed”⁸⁵ by the will of the ancestors to carry out punishments. The punishments may be in form of mysterious manifestations. These manifestations may be experiences such as abnormal births of human beings or animals, or animals giving birth to abnormal shapes or in human appearances. One would also be unfortunate enough in being talked to by trees, which by so doing often pose fears to the passers-by. Mysterious creatures such as huge serpents may visit families with evil messages, accompanied by hooting owls. When an owl hoots death or a horrific disaster is believed to be imminent.

Evil spirits often dwell in the rivers, hills and caves and thick bushes, where they are known to be coming from as they visit and roam villages at night as ghosts, wild animals, or a group of people shouting or singing or calling names of either the living or those dead long ago. Sometimes a human voice would be heard among the voices of the howling jackals, hooting owls, mewling of cats and crying hyenas.

In that grisly dark night witches would be riding at the back of hyenas perhaps searching for the recently buried dead bodies for body parts for evil purposes. It is a common knowledge among the Luo people that when such things happen, or in such occasions, the message in this dark night comes as an ultimatum being dispatched from the ancestral world to the living that something is wrong, and that unappeasable danger could be on the horizon.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

When one's parents happened to come across a blind or an insane person, and does not welcome the person or mistreats the person probably through mocking him or her, it is believed that if he or she does not become blind or insane, then it means there is a possibility for them to give birth to a child with mental retardation or a morally depraved child through the influence of the evil spirit as a punishment.

Failure to perform certain family rituals during marriages, the season of planting or harvesting, during the death and burial of a family member, or when a sacred tree is cut down without consulting the elders or ancestors, or when there has been a quarrel with a close family and clan member, will result into a severe natural deformity as a curse to the family involved. Sometimes the curses can be extended to both animate and inanimate creatures if need be in the world of the spirits.

Mental, moral or natural evil to a person, family or community may also be caused by sorcery or witchcraft because of jealousy. For instance this can be when a neighbour or a relative is not happy, say when one is intelligent or rich or excels in education than others, or when a family is blessed with more children than others, or possesses large herds of cattle. In order to deter any achievement of this sort, a sorcerer or witchcraft will be consulted to provide witch charms that would destroy one's possessions or cause particular misfortunes to the individual or the family. This witch charm can be passed through greetings, through meals, drinks, or put on the village pathways where the victim is going to pass through.

An evil person can also cast a spell of misfortunes on children or on someone's prosperity through words of praise. For example, a "form of spell ("bitter mouth", *dhok makech*) affects children (or growing crops and cattle) when someone with an inherent prosperity praises their beauty and growth."⁸⁶ Just a gaze of an evil

⁸⁶ Ibid.

person will “prevent food from being cooked; turn bear sore and cracks put in the kiln.”⁸⁷ Therefore to prevent an evil spells inherent in praises and gazes sorcerer can instruct an individual or family to sacrifice to the ancestors or consult a sorcerer.

In an attempt to inflict injuries and misfortunes to an enemy, Richard N. K’Okul says that “A sorcerer (*Janawi*), witch (*Jandagla*) or a medicine man (*Jabilo*) puts or buries a destructive charm(*nawi, ndagala or bilo*) on the foot path of an enemy or a person he wishes to bewitch, kill, harm or bring ill-luck to.”⁸⁸ In previous chapter, it was Ayodo and Ocholla-Ayayo who told us that the Luo people believe that this is very harmful medicine secreted from dead cats, dead black cobras or rotten eggs and used by evil-minded individuals known as *jandagla* (a witch).

The outcome of the above act might be a deadly road accidents, air crash, ship or boat capsize, thunderstorms, breaking of one’s backbone, arms or legs, attacks by serpents or wild animals, mental or moral confusions. In any case, as a result, the mental, moral and natural pain or trauma in the human community will be of great effect to the extent that any on-going projects will come to a halt indefinitely.

From the discussions the researchers held with one of the sages in his clan concerning broken taboos that may result in mental, moral or natural disorder, even having sex with one’s father’s younger wife would be a broken taboo that will result into serious punishment if not by the clan’s mob justice but by the spirits of ancestors. Even for children to enter into their fathers private rooms is an abomination, because this is prohibited, since they might set their eyes on the parents’ nakedness or their private parts and be cursed.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

More on children's prohibition from entering their parents' room, Paul Wenzel Geissler and Ruth Jane Prince write, "Children should not enter their parents' sleeping area or touch their beds, as this would potentially confuse the growth of approximate generations."⁸⁹ That is, even setting of one's eyes on one's parents' sexual organs, beating or fighting with one's parents, having sex with one's sister or brother or one's daughter, handling a property which is not one's own would also result into mental disorder or the other as a curse. Violations of taboos are aspects of moral evil that would always result into mental and natural evil at the same time unless the underworld spirits are appeased in time.

The researcher knows of a man who committed such an abomination before. The man was driven by the evil spirits into a river and drowned there, and his relatives never found his body because it had already been eaten perhaps by fish, crocodile or a wild animal. Akhar points out "In countries of the developing world, especially in the African cities and villages, mental breakdown in humans has been frequently associated with the enemy of cosmic powers or violation of taboo."⁹⁰ Behind every violation of taboos in any aspects of social, cultural and religious cosmology of the Luo people is the work of evil spirit, and the consequences that result often destroys one's personhood and mars his or her destiny. The destruction of personhood is both moral and natural resulting from mental upsets caused by evil spirits in the victim.

Another distinctive or a remarkable source of mental, moral and natural evil is substance abuse or excessive drinking of alcohol and smoking. The researcher has a brother who has been a victim of alcoholism for many years. Although taking

⁸⁹Geissler, "*The Land is Dying*," 128.

⁹⁰ Akhar, "*Mental Health*," 252.

traditional brews and drugs are accepted from a certain age in the traditional cultural and social standpoint, extreme practice of alcoholism and drug addiction is branded abnormal. In the Luo belief, underneath all human and environmental reasons for alcoholic and drug addictions which destroy the mind, good morals and natural health, there are spiritual powers behind the desires and decisions to drink and smoke.

As is common in the Luo community, whenever there is a quarrel between two parties or a result of land disputes or jealousy on one's achievement and progress, sorcerer and witches or a neighbour or a relative would through sorceries and bewitching activities, create irresistible cravings and thirsts for alcohol or drugs. For a person who is often under alcoholic and drug intoxication will not be morally upright. He will not make good decision and do the right things, but instead create natural chaos to himself, his clan and environment. Prosperous and intelligent persons are normally victims of evil people who hate their success in life, and must make sure they destroy them mentally, morally or naturally, through evil spirits of alcoholism and drug abuse.

Referring to the above story told the researcher by an old man, there are many people among the Luo people who have been bewitched through alcohol and drugs, and who hardly care for their parents, themselves or their families because they spend all their resources in alcohol, drugs and women. While this may be a curse on the parents or the children themselves, the spirit of alcoholism or drug abuse may also be from the ancestors if not directly sent by sorcerers and witchcrafts. Just as we saw in the previous chapter in O'Donovan's views on the operations of Satan and his presence in the world, he continues to say this of sorcerers, witches and demons,

The power of these sorcerers and witches come from the demons who work through them. The demons may carry out the curses and spells of such people.

When this demonic power is projected on to the people through sorcery and witchcraft, the demons can cause physical and mental sickness.⁹¹

The demons can inflict illness or sickness directly or indirectly. The implication here is that demons can bring a person into contact with germs that cause mental illness, thus resulting into moral failures, causing the deterioration of physical health.

In each village among the Luo community, there are at least one or two evil-eye people. That is, a moral evil that causes physical pain may also come from an evil-eye, which is one of the forms of moral evil mostly used by women to inflict stomach and constipation in people while eating something. Ocholla-Ayayo says that

This is what the Luo call *Juok wang* (evil-eye) which by certain individuals who stare at their target individuals especially while eating. The food in the victim's stomach turns poisonous and cause abdominal pain and constipation. *Juok wang* tends to be transmitted by women and may be inherited by daughters through the influence of evil spirits (*juogi*).⁹²

The mental and physical stress and constipation, which accompany this abdominal pain, bring into mind a sudden depression that would lead to mental illness if healing does not take place in time. Fear of death from an extreme agony becomes the source of mental evil that might result into further physical pain when one faints, imagining that he or she is going to die. The victim may also become violent and can cause harm to those nearby because the charm by the evil spirit may have affected the mind, therefore it brings the victim under extraordinary strengths from the demonic powers that are in charge at this time.

Additionally, as we were told by Ocholla-Ayayo in the previous chapter, fly can be sent as a messenger of the spirit by a witch to cause or inflict sickness on someone. Ocholla-Ayayo says,

⁹¹ O'Donovan "*Biblical Christianity*," 308.

⁹² Ocholla-Ayayo, "*Traditional Ideology*," 67.

The Luo believe the witches (*juok*, *sing. jajuok*) can send a fly directly into a person's mouth. Upon swallowing, the fly settles into the lungs from where it begins to generate infections such as the chest pains (*kor maremo*) and coughing (*ahonda*).⁹³

This chest pain and cough may continue for months and years before the person recovers if the right medication is not found. If the man has bad luck it means he will die immediately or after a few hours.

Both the victim of the sickness and the relatives will be highly distressed or demoralized imagining the kind of mental and physical pain this person goes through. All the cattle and the land will have been sold in order to buy or hire a traditional or a modern doctor to rescue his life at the time of his death—leaving his family to suffer without any inheritance to survive on. But the sorcerers and witches will rejoice that their victim is already cut off from the land of the living through death.

Mental, moral and natural evils situations are a complex disastrous phenomenon. These three tragedies are intertwined and interwoven in a manner that makes it hard to understand one phenomenon independent of the other two. Whenever malevolent evil powers have their agents in the land, mental, natural disturbances are inevitable. Sorcerer, witches and violent ancestral spirits pose fear to the entire Luo community as agents of evil powers of the caves and the dark bushes in the wilderness. Some of the political, economic, social, and personal failures among the Luo people are because of the presence of sorcerers and witches alongside pagan cultural practices. The scope of this thesis does not allow for more discussions on these matters. However, as for now it is important to examine the cultural and religious attempts employed by the community in response to the problem of evil.

⁹³ Ibid.

Response to the Problem of Evil among the Luo People

The discussion so far has shown that evil practices are the most threatening phenomenon to human existence, social and economic development among the Luo people. Therefore, for evil influence to be averted, the Luo individual persons, family or clan must seek to establish the cause of evil, or seek to restore a broken relationship with the spirit world of God and ancestors. Just as we saw in the previous chapter, in the features of Luo religious beliefs, that one must seek to be in good terms with God, through sacrifices and rituals. Thus it is mandatory that people provide solutions to the cause of evil situations and circumstances for good life and existence.

Harold W. Turner asserts that it is the nature of humans to seek to “enter into relationship with this benevolent spirit world and so shares in its powers and blessings and receives protection from evil forces by these more-than-human helpers.”⁹⁴ In this process of seeking harmony with the spirit world, as the researcher was once informed by Wera Ocholla,⁹⁵ the following are involved: punishing of evil persons, application of herbs, animal and human sacrifices, divination and rituals, drums, dance and clapping of hands, dialogues and reconciliation and the celebration of personhood and communalism.

We begin by discussing the nature of punishments prescribed to evil persons by the “wise” and the leaders in the Luo community. Whatever or whichever, the forms of punishments prescribed against offenders, all punishments are believed to be from God through the ancestors who influence and superintend the actions of disciplines that are administered against the offenders.

⁹⁴ Turner, “*The Primal Religions*,” 31.

⁹⁵ Wera Ocholla is one of the traditional village acquaintances familiar with rituals and sacrifices. He is also one of the vocal consultants on the religious and cultural matters of the village destiny. Our conversations with him took place on April 14th, 2012.

The Punishing of Evil Persons

Through the punishing of evil persons, the people are warned against actions that would destroy and humiliate humans and frustrate their dignity. To take human life or cause misfortunes such as mental sickness, moral confusion or physical destruction to individuals, family or a clan using supernatural forces of evil is an abomination that merits a severe punishment. Of course the level of punishments depends on the nature of evil committed by the offenders.

In cases where the offenders have hidden their identities, a magician would be invited to navigate through divinations and applications of herbal medicines to discover the culprit. The magicians of course generally know them and could call them by their names, but this is to give them the grace to show their honesty by coming forward, other than being ashamed and humiliated before the villagers when they are pointed out and brought forward by force for public witness.

Sometimes punishing the offender would involve expelling him to distant lands, or be forced to drink human excrements or faeces mixed with human urine. An offender can also be killed by mob, be warned, be whipped or be suspended from the community's festivals and celebrations for seven years. The nature of punishments, therefore are so severe, and no one would dare repeat the crime for which one has been charged and punished.

The researcher personally witnessed a severe punishment of death executed on a sorcerer suspected to have been responsible for the tragic death of a man. The villagers seized him and cut him into pieces and his flesh was put in a sack. His grass thatched houses were burnt, cattle and chickens were also cut into pieces, and his children ran away and disappeared to Mombasa city till today. Of course, there are many events similar to these forms of responses to evil which this thesis will not

cover, but these are indications that even in the Luo religious and cultural cosmology any act of evil or evil itself is not condoned. These punishments serve also as a warning to the present and many generations to come, against some bad practices of the religious and cultural beliefs of the Luo people.

Application of Herbs

For the application of herbs, as Geissler and Prince put it, “A man who has had extramarital intercourse should not enter the house, share food and sleep with his wife or touch his children before he has cleansed himself with *manyasi*, as he may harm them with traces of his disordered bodily relations.”⁹⁶ The *manyasi* is herbal medicine made from some special shrubs or trees believed to possess charms that have the potential to neutralise the spiritual force of curse that may cause *chira*. Extramarital intercourses are moral evil common among the Luo people which in itself is a curse to those who practice it.

At a serious level, as Geissler and Prince further put it, “In order to cleanse the strong “*chira* of the home,” the medicine for *chira*, *manyasi* is often mixed with earth from the home or site where *kwer* was broken (or with the blood of an animal of the home) and ingested by the family members in order of seniority.”⁹⁷ That is, the *manyasi* mixed with the earth and the blood of a chicken, white goat or a black sheep will appease the angry ancestors to avert any mental, moral or natural misfortunes which might be looming upon that person due to the immoral act. In addition, Geissler and Prince explain,

If the *manyasi* (medicine for *chira* and other ancestral-related illness only; also called “earth medicine”; *yath piny*) that family members know of does not work, people suspect that illness is a matter of more than a” small “*chira*”,

⁹⁶ Geissler, “*The Land is Dying*,” 128.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.* , 146.

and the “root of” (*tiend*) *chira* must be investigated through divination, either by a diviner(*ajuoga*) or more commonly by a priest...⁹⁸

In concurrence to the statement, Ayodo says that “diviners are assisted by ancestral spirits with which they communicate through mediums of various objects they carry.”⁹⁹ This is in order that an application of *manyasi* is not done in a vacuum, but in full knowledge of the root cause of whatever the illness is. If the illness is mental, moral or natural, the root cause must be known if the *manyasi* is to yield success in restoring good health to the sick person.

From a dialogue the researcher held with a sorcerer who declined his name from being disclosed, a person suffering from chest pain, coughs, stomach ache, snake or animal bites, malaria, mental disturbances, moral confusion, sexual impotency, barrenness, attacks from evil spirits and others, could get well from drinking herbal medicines. In cases of wounds on the body of a human being or animal, green leaves from particular trees will be squeezed and mixed with a charm and then applied to the wound for healing. The squeezed wet leaves mixed with water are actually the herbal drink that cures human and animal sicknesses; although different herbs might be applied here since human beings are different from animals. There is a vital spiritual force of healing latent in some trees’ leaves in some forests in Luo land.

Divinations and Rituals

As we have seen in the above sections, divination is the practice whereby the diviners attempt to acquire hidden knowledge and insight into events—past, present, and future, through the direct or indirect contact of human intelligence with the supernatural. Among the Luo people, diviners are highly respected people, and Mbiti

⁹⁸ Ibid, 207.

⁹⁹ Ayodo, “*Luo*”, 32.

says that they “symbolize the hope of society: hopes for good health, protection and security from evil forces, prosperity and good fortune, and ritual cleansing when harm or impurities were contracted.”¹⁰⁰

John M. Jenzen says, “The diviner’s specialty is the sorting out of particular details of cases brought to him or her and the offering of an expert diagnosis of the affliction or misfortune’s cause, whether it be of natural or human, or another, spirit-related cause.”¹⁰¹ Thus, a diviner among the Luo people is well known as a provider of good fortune and guidance throughout the various crises and uncertainties an individual, family or clan face.

The practice of divination is closely allied with the practices of rituals and their implications among the Luo people. A ritual is a ceremonial or symbolic act given importance by repetitions, which often accompany rites of passage and religious observances among the Luo people. From the researcher’s knowledge and experience of his own culture, the acts of ritualism are always meant to avert impending disasters, heal sickness, and restore mental sanity, barrenness, droughts, death of human beings and animals, reconciliations in the family or clan. Through rituals, the ancestors are approached via prayers and as the diviner-healers throw bones or white stones in terms of how the bones or the white stones will fall, the ancestors’ advice or instructions are revealed.

Among the Luo people, the ritual preparation to approach the ancestors is required. In a much more intuitive manner, the body of the diviner-healer will “sense” the message of the ancestors. The spirits of ancestors will reveal the causes and the solutions to the problem or may reveal an impending death and sickness of

¹⁰⁰ Mbiti, “*African Religion and Philosophy*,” 171.

¹⁰¹ John M. Jenzen, *Lemba, 1650-1930: A Drum of Affliction in Africa and the New World*, (New York: Garland Publishing, 1982), 14.

any kind. For effectual healing and the averting of an impending disaster, a white hen or a cock, a black goat, sheep, a black bull, or a human being may be required. Big offenses among the Luo require animal or human sacrifices (this is being done secretly¹⁰² these days), and the involvement of herbs like *manyasi* as was stated earlier.

In a case where a family member is dead, the passage to the spiritual world is described as the crossing of a river. The deceased have to pay admission which is provided by the sacrifices of the community. The proper burial rites are necessary so that a person can become an ancestor and live in peace with the survived family members. Wrong burials make the spirit return and haunt the community. The correct ritual prescribed against a certain cause is always effective to cleanse the community. But if the ritual does not work in returning health and fertility, avert disasters, restore mental sanity or relationships, there is a different source of evil, or the ancestors can be blamed for not fulfilling their duty. If this is the case, then God as the highest authority is invoked by regular or permanent offering of food for the disposal of the spirits.

It is always a general knowledge among the Luo community, that evil such as evil-eye or ill motivated public praises are common. For example, children must not be fed in public if their parents do not put amulets of cloths-strings around their waists or around their necks to protect from evil. In particular, “Most children carry amulets against the evil eye and many women have sanctifications on their breasts and to protect them; in situations of risk an ointment of pig’s fat and herbs reflect the evil

¹⁰² Normally witchcrafts are used against a relative, family or clan members. The victim will die from disasters like road accidents, thunderstorms, snake bites or animal attacks. And sometimes quarrel or a fight will erupt so that the other party would hit the other with a weapon and die. The plans to cast the evil spell on a person would be made at night or somewhere in a forest. Nobody will leak the secret of the course of death.

eye back. Women avoid breast feeding in front of strangers and in public places”¹⁰³ where nobody knows who is who in the crowd. Another way of averting evil is through drums, dance and the clapping of hands.

Drums, Dance and Clapping of Hands

The beating of drums made of animal skins is based on the cultural and religious belief that drums are a powerful medium between the traditional healers and the living dead among the Luo people. That is,

The sound of the drum is believed to arouse the ancestral spirits. It is believed that through the sound of the drum together with the accompanying rhythmic dancing and the clapping of hands, the traditional healer can bring about the presence of the ancestral spirits. It is believed that in the context of a healing ritual, dancing soothes the pain. It restores the lost equilibrium. It is therefore seen as a physiological therapy.¹⁰⁴

Some of the pervasive, benevolent, and optimistic aspect of the Luo religion is found in the tutelary spirit cult, and in that of the drum among the Luo people. Drum is a consecrated medicine to those who are afflicted. It is a form of religious immunization such that as the disease and death are conquered, the possessing spirit is placated. The researcher can remember a woman who had a chest problem and cried like a cat at night whenever that pain became severe. She was healed by the sound of the drums which were beaten while the family and sorcerers were dancing and clapping their hands around her.

The drum sound purifies and energizes the sufferer, as the clapping of hands and dancing around the victim, drives away evil spirits to the forests, to the caves and

¹⁰⁴ Buti Tilhagale, Bringing the African Culture into the Church/this is online (internet) resource Points of Contrast between *African* Traditional Religion and Christianity Author: Richard ... Website: religion-online.org (URL). Article Title: *Bringing African Culture into the Church* Author: *Buti Tlhagale* Website: Chidi// *afrikaworld.net/afrel/*

to the hills. Many Luo healers believe that they would often beat the drum before sleeping in order to request the ancestors to communicate with them through dreams.

Dialogue and Reconciliation

Whenever there is a conflict or war, the Luo community will operate on dialogues to establish grounds for reconciliation. Any acts of offence or evil whether in suspicion or in reality must be handled under this process. The aim of this is to attain full reconciliation with each of the conflicting or warring parties and to the ancestral world. Mbiti, speaking from a general view of rather an African consensus and court system, which depicts that of Luo traditional judicial systems, says, “It is generally the elders of the area who deal with disputes and breaches arising from various types of moral harm.”¹⁰⁵ Now, when one is accused of evil of any sort, including that which involves death, sickness or destruction of a property under the influence of evil powers, each party will be made to understand the nature of accusations and the repercussions and the consequences, which that evil might expose the community, the offended and the offenders to.

In other words, the council of the village jury will encourage the two parties in conflict to discuss freely the source of the conflict. This discussion will go to the extent where both the plaintiff and the complainant will understand their positions. The understanding of one’s position will be in relation to truth regarding the matter in question. Once truth is established, one who has lost the case will have his fate decided by the council in light of the nature of the case he or she is accused of. Often in the spirit of dialogue and reconciliation, the one who has lost the case will apologize to the offended, be it an individual, family or the clan. In good will for each other, each of them will be asked to take and drink the herbal medicine called

¹⁰⁵ Mbiti, “*African Religions and Philosophy*,” 206.

manyasi for their psychological and emotional balance toward each other, acknowledging that it is the evil spirits who is the chief accuser here.

When the process of reconciliation extends to the necessity of a ceremony, a ram or a he goat will be slaughtered, and the victims will eat the meals together and drink the soup from one port or a calabash. If porridge or a brew is prepared, the reconciling parties will drink the liquid from the same port or calabash, and this is to demonstrate that there will be no further intimidation or the betraying of each other or another person whatsoever. Hence, the importance attributed to compensation, and even ritual feasting as the outcome of a process of reconciliation. Dialogue and reconciliation is the heart of communalism.

Celebrating Communalism

Communalism is the philosophy of oneness in thought, ideas and activities that enhance the individual consciousness in being part of a shared cultural and religious identity. It is the practice of common living and ownership of the society's values and assets. It is the principles of life and existence that whatever the good or evil that happens to one of the community members affects the entire community. That is, anyone who places himself outside the life and normal workings of critical issues among the Luo family or clan, constitutes a threat to himself and the whole community.

Some Kikuyu cultural philosophies resemble those of the Luo philosophies of communalism. For example, Jomo Kenyatta says, "According to Kikuyu ways of thinking, nobody is an isolated individual. Or rather, his uniqueness is a secondary fact about him; first and foremost he is several people's relative and several people's contemporary."¹⁰⁶ So are the members of the Luo community who celebrate the

¹⁰⁶ Jomo Kenyatta, *Facing Mount Kenya*, (Vintage: Vintage Books, 1962), 297.

shared values to which they are attached culturally, ideologically and emotionally, such as the aspects in which social and economic equilibrium to all is being realized.

In the celebration of communalism among the Luo people, individuals participate in one another's world and appreciate what others do as things that might be done to them. When the community is in harmony with itself, the relationship between the persons and nature is balanced, and the malevolent powers are kept off while the benevolent spirit, *Juok*, provide security for human beings, animals and plants. Peoples' eyes are open on behalf of each other on the observances of taboos and critical custom practices that might bring mental, moral and natural disaster from the anger of the ancestors if neglected.

The resultant force of such spirit of communalism of shared values, interests and aspirations will expel witchdoctors and sorcerers from the community's assemblies of celebrations of each other's success and achievements. When bad people and evil intentioned persons see the characters of the majority conforming to the pattern of the practices designed by the destiny of the community governed by a benevolent and powerful spirit, called *Juok*, they will isolate themselves from the community's activities. Bad omens from the spiritual world will have lost harmony with sorcerer, witchcrafts and with the intentions to provoke the spiritual world. The ghosts of communalism, in whom all community members commune and find their being, render psychological, moral and natural misfortunes powerless.

Conclusion

Among the Luo people fear of the real and the unreal are intertwined and interwoven with their worldview on the idea of the good and evil, and this is embedded in their religious practices and theories of evil. The three outstanding natures of evils are identified and explained as mental, moral and natural evils.

Causes and manifestations and their responses within their cultural and religious cosmology are now clear. The relationship that embodies the three concepts of evil is a complex one. Since an attempt to understand the mystery behind one of them must include the understanding of the context in which the rest of the two exist.

The various responses to the problem of evil include the punishing of evil persons, application of herbs, animal and human sacrifices, divination and rituals, drums, dance and clapping of hands, dialogues and reconciliation and the celebration of communalism. However, no form of the religious and cultural responses to the problems of evil among the Luo people appeared to have a permanent solution. It seems that the problem of evil will ever remain a detriment and an impediment to communalism and economic prosperity among the Luo people forever. However there is hope for the Luo people as is shown in the next chapter, the undertaking to which we now turn.

CHAPTER FOUR

A PHILOSOPHICAL AND THEOLOGICAL RESPONSE TO THE PROBLEM OF EVIL AMONG THE LUO PEOPLE

Introduction

In the previous chapter we discussed the problems of evil in the Luo cosmology in relations to God, ancestors, evil spirits, human community and the natural world. Although throughout these discussions it came out clear that the Luo God is good, eternal, powerful and protective over his people, mental, moral and natural problems of evil are still persistent. We also investigated the origins and causes of mental, moral and natural evil, and the traditional responses to the problem of evil through the punishing of evil persons, the application of herbs, sacrifices and rituals, drums, dance and the clapping of hands and the celebrations of communalism.

Although it was shown in the previous section that some people were healed or reconciled through the indigenous means the researcher described, the outcome was that all these were ineffective against the reality of mental, moral and natural problems of evil. The process proved ineffective because of the absence of divine transformation in the whole of process that will bring salvation and healing that come from Jesus Christ. Thus, there is absolutely nothing in the Luo religious, cultural practices that could offer redemption and permanent solutions to these types of evil.

We indicated earlier in chapter 1 the assumption of this thesis that the problem of evil among the Luo people is entirely a spiritual problem originating from the fallen nature of humans and nature in general. That the cultural and religious practices control the way they view the world and the whole of reality. We also saw

that due to this, the presence of mental, moral and natural problems of evil are attributable to the fallen condition of the hearts of the Luo people.

It is therefore the aim of this chapter to demonstrate philosophically and theologically that the power of the Gospel of Christ can break the religious and cultural bondages initiated by Satan and evil spirits. These forces of evil hold the Luo people captive in the domains of mental, moral and natural problems of evil. It is within the scope and mandate of this chapter also to show that even though the mental, moral and natural problem of evil can be compatible with the existence of the Christian God, Satan and evil spirits cannot go on ravaging human lives, society and natural order forever among the Luo people.

The topics covered in this chapter are as follows: Origin of Evil from Philosophical and Theological perspectives, the Fall of Satan, the Fall of Humanity, General Impact of the Fall of Satan and Humanity, The Nature of Free Will and its Universal Consequences, Theodicy; The Luo and Christian Thought, The Luo and Christian concepts of God, God's Omnipotence, God's Redemptive Battle with Evil in History, The Second Coming of Jesus Christ; The Reality of Hell and The Reality of Heaven.

All the topics above form the content of the philosophical and theological systems aimed at responding to the religious and cultural problem evil among the Luo people. We begin by asking this important question, "What are the philosophical and theological concepts of the origin of evil"?

Origin of Evil

The discussion on the origin of evil in this chapter is captured in two perspectives. That is, the discussion covers philosophical and theological views of the origin evil. From the Luo standpoint, this will be just a brief one since we have

already discussed this in the previous chapter. What follow will be philosophical theories concerning the Biblical views of the origin of evil. Theological views cover the discussions of Satan's and human's fall. These will be considered mainly from a Biblical perspective, but first we start with the philosophical investigation of the origin of evil.

Philosophical Views

We recall that in the previous chapter, the philosophical theories of origins of evil according to the folklores among the Luo people were discussed. First, we learned that humans and chameleon were responsible for the calamity when a chameleon presented a dirty sacrifice to God which God rejected. Second, we saw the theory that evil originated from the anger of the living souls whom the creator of the world left un-created in the human body since he ran out of time and materials.

From a western philosophical standpoint, Berkhof says, "The problem of the origin of evil that is in the world has always been considered as one of the most profound problems of philosophy and theology."¹⁰⁷ It is obvious to any observer that something is either radically wrong or was wrong from the inception of the existence of our space-time three-dimensional universe. In the researcher's view, this seems to have been the case down through the annals of history to the fall of Satan and humanity. Besides other views, there are possibilities that this is true, even in relations to the problem of mental, moral evil among the Luo people.

To ascertain the origin of evil, three possibilities shall be advanced. Each of this possibility will be set forth, delineated and critiqued by the Scriptures. It is significant in this chapter now to discuss and show philosophically and theologically the ultimate test for truth in the entire discussion of the problems of evil and its

¹⁰⁷ Berkhof, "*Systematic*," 219.

solutions. This will be done by utilizing philosophical and theological analysis guided by Scriptures. Thus, Arthur W. Pink begins by expressing his perplexity about the mystery of evil:

But when we come to inquire exactly what is wrong with man, and how he came to be in such condition, unless we turn to God's inspired Word no convincing answers are forthcoming. Apart from that divine revelation, no sure and satisfactory reply can be made to such questions as these: What is the unmistakable imperfection to human nature? What will furnish an adequate explanation of all the evils which infest man's present state? Why is it that none is able to keep God's law perfectly or do anything which is acceptable to Him while in a state of nature?¹⁰⁸

As the problems of evil remains a mystery, the first possible explanation to the origin of evil is that it has been present with the existence of the world. There are several theories of this view. First, there is the view of the sort of cosmic dualism that there are two self-existent and eternal principles or powers governing all cultures in the world: one is "good" and the other is "evil". This theory makes God a finite and independent being. He is neither all-powerful nor all encompassing. Henry Clarence Thiessen makes this justification: "There cannot be two infinite things in the same category, and God cannot be both sovereign and limited by a thing which he neither created nor could prevent."¹⁰⁹ Hence, this theory is untenable.

A second theory regarding this view, emerge from "Gnosticism." Having its roots in the first century and fruition in the second, there are two characteristics that surface from Gnosticism source materials. First, the Gnostics were in no way a uniform group with a single body of doctrine common to them all. Second it is also

¹⁰⁸ Arthur W. Pink, *Our Accountability to God*, (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 1999), 19.

¹⁰⁹ Henry Clarence Thiessen, *Lectures in Systematic Theology*, ed., Vernom Doerksen, (Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Company, 1949), 178.

clear that not all Gnosticism was Christian: it tended to exist independent of the church.¹¹⁰

Concerning the problem at hand, Gnostics espoused a dualism. Unlike the former dualism between good and evil, the powers that be, Gnosticism saw a dualism between two parallel worlds: the spiritual and the natural. The spiritual or immaterial parts consisted of that which is good and the physical or material parts that which is evil. Thus, as Walker says, “there turn out to be two parallel worlds: the original, the divine world of spirit stuff, which is called ‘the Fullness’ (*pleroma*), and the inferior, material world, which is sometimes called ‘the Void’ (*kenoma*).”¹¹¹

From this belief, matter is inherently evil. Hence, as long as matter has existed so has evil. As with the former dualistic concept, this one too falls woefully short of any Biblical basis. Not even the early church embraced it as truth. As Williston Walker observes, “NEITHER GNOSTICISM nor Montanism, persuasive and attractive though they were to the religious mentality of the second century, was embraced by the majority of Christians.”¹¹² The third possible solution to the problem of the origin is that, theologically, evil originated with the fall of Satan.

¹¹⁰ Williston Walker. *A History of the Christian Church*, 4th ed., (New York: Scribner, 1985), 62-63.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 64.

¹¹² Williston Walker. *A History of the Christian Church*, 4th ed., (New York: Scribner, 1985), 59. The author does not indicate to us why he has written “Gnosticism” in capital letter and the rest of the sentence in small letter. Or maybe he wanted to draw our attention to this as esoteric religious movement that flourished during the 2nd and 3rd centuries AD and presented a major challenge to orthodox Christianity. Most Gnostic sects professed Christianity, but their beliefs sharply diverged from those of the majority of Christians in the early church. The term *Gnosticism* is derived from the Greek word *gnosis* (“revealed knowledge”). To its adherents, Gnosticism promised a secret knowledge of the divine realm. Sparks or seeds of the Divine Being fell from this transcendent realm into the material universe, which is wholly evil, and were imprisoned in human bodies. Reawakened by knowledge, the divine element in humanity could return to its proper home in the transcendent spiritual realm.

Theological Views

The fall of Satan

In the history of Christian thought, it has always been conceived that evil has been a possibility with divine creation and the fall of Satan and the angels. But not so much of this is found in Scripture concerning Satan's fall. What is found reveals Satan as created being. His fall resulted from an internal notion as opposed to an outward temptation. His heart was puffed up as he desired to be in a higher position or authority and usurp God's sovereign rulership of heaven and earth (Ezek. 28: 13, 17).¹¹³

The question might be asked, "Why would evil result from Satan's fall?" The answer seems to be in the fact that evil results from sin or self-willed rebellion. Genesis 3 records, in its analysis, the results of Adam and Eve's sin that clearly denotes, though it does not mention this directly, the possibility of the origin of mental, moral and natural evil can be traced to the fall of humanity. Besides mental evil, which is not directly revealed in the fall, Thiessen says, "The first sin had an effect on our first parents' relations to God, on their nature, on their bodies, and on their environment."¹¹⁴ Satan's rebellion is the first transgression, which henceforth became evil, but also resulted in evil activities.

Further, Berkhof says, "The Bible teaches us that in the attempt to trace the origin of sin, we must even go back to the fall of humanity as described in Genesis 3, and not fix the attention on something that happened in the angelic world."¹¹⁵ Though

¹¹³ Charles Lee Feinberg believes that Ezekiel 28:13, 17 is referring to both the king of Tyres and Satan himself. He says Ezekiel saw "the work and activity of Satan, whom the king of Tyre was emulating in so many ways." Feinberg, *The Prophecy of Ezekiel*, Chicago, MI: 1969, 161.

¹¹⁴ Thiessen, "*Lecture in Systematic*," 182.

¹¹⁵ Berkhof, "*Systematic*," 220-221.

Berkhof does not say whether the present evil in the world resulted from this fall or the fall of humanity, he seems to suggest the reconsideration of what happened in Ezekiel 28:13, 17 in connection with the fall of humanity in this dark and evil world.

It is quite possible for the angelic fall to have caused evil in the world, because the original creation was good. Somewhere after the initial *ex nihilo* creation either before Genesis 1:1 or between Genesis 1 and 1:2, the angels fell and caused chaos. This chaos resulted from God's judgement. After the judgement, there was a recreation of the heavens and the earth in their original, perfect state. If this is so, according to the researcher, then in this recreation the evil, which might have been sustained because of the angelic rebellion, could have been rectified.

The proponent of evil resulting from the angelic fall may assert that once sin entered into existence, then its result must be felt. The faulty reasoning here can be seen in Revelation 22, when God again creates the heavens and the earth, yet without sin being a part of it. Thus far, the origin of evil as coming from the fall of the angels is unclear and judgement concerning this theory should be postponed until the theory of the fall of humanity is examined.

The fall of Humanity

This is the most popular theory for which there are several reasons—that the origin of evil is attributed to the fall of humanity. First, prior to the fall, God said, the creation is “very good” (Genesis 1:31). C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch explain:

The creation of man and his installation as ruler on earth brought the creation of all earthly beings to a close (ver.31). God saw His work and (behold it was very good; i.e.) everything perfect in its kind, so that every creature might reach the goal appointed by the Creator, and accomplish the purpose of its existence. By application of the term “good” to everything that God made, and the repetition of the word with the emphasis “very” at the close of the whole creation, the existence of anything evil in the creation of God is absolutely denied, and the hypothesis entirely refuted, that “the six days” work merely subdued and fettered an ungodly, the evil principle, which had already gotten

its way into it. The sixth day, as being the last, is distinguished above all the rest by the article—‘a day, the sixth.’¹¹⁶

Hence, it appears that evil was not present prior to the fall. However, a case can be made from Genesis 1:28, where God told human being to “subdue” the earth, which might show a presence of evil prior to the fall. The Hebrew term “subdue” means to “bring in bondage, keep under, or force.”¹¹⁷ J. N. Oswalt says, “Despite recent interpretations of Genesis 1:28 which have tried to make “subdue” mean a responsibility for building up, it is obvious from an overall study of the word’s usage that this is not so.”¹¹⁸

Further, Oswalt adds, “Therefore ‘subdue’ in Genesis 1:28 implies that creation will not do man’s bidding gladly or easily and that man must now bring creation into submission by man’s strength. It is not to rule man.”¹¹⁹ Oswalt says, “*Kabash* assumes that the party being subdued is hostile to the subduer, necessitating some sort of coercion if the subduing is to take place.”¹²⁰

It is difficult to ascertain from this if evil in the form of human’s present state of pain and suffering manifested through mental, moral and natural evils among the Luo people, was present prior to the fall of humanity. It would be best to say that evil was present in the form of Satan and other evil spirits, but that it did not exist in the same essence of evils as previously described in the last chapter. Thus, if the evidence

¹¹⁶ C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on Old Testament*, 1857; rpt. (Michigan: Wm. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1981), I, 67.

¹¹⁷ J. N. Oswalt, “kabash,” *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, eds., R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer and Bruce Walke, (Michigan: Wm. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1980), I, 430.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*

does not clearly warrant the conclusion that the present pain and suffering prior to human's fall, then it would be wrong to assume it to have existed.

A second line of evidence is the apostle Paul's teaching on the subject. Paul says, "Therefore just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and death spread to all men, because all have sinned"(Rom.5:12). It could be argued, and correctly so, that the apostle is not using the term "sin" as synonymous with evil. Yet, even if this is granted, Paul still indicates whence it began i.e., with the fall of humanity. There is no doubt that some evil entered the world with the fall of humanity. Humanity began to die, denoting the presence of mental, moral and natural decays among the human race in process. The fact that death, through sin, entered through one human being to all humanity in the world, explains the prevailing problem of evil among the Luo people as a consequence of the fall of humanity in general.

A third support that evil originated with the fall of humanity is seen in the curse pronounced upon Adam. It reads, "Cursed is the ground because of you; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you" (Gen. 3:17-18). In Romans 8: 18-22, the apostle Paul clearly delineates that the creation was subjected to these consequences by God himself. The question is whether the sin of Satan or human sin caused chaos. Keil and Delitzsch believe it to be the fall of humanity which is clear by their remarks on Genesis 3:17-24. That,

Everything injurious to man in the organic, vegetable and animal creation, is the effect of the curse pronounced upon the earth for Adam's sin, however little we may be able to explain the manner in which the curse was carried into effect; since our view of the causal connection between sin and evil even in human life is very imperfect, and the connection between spirit and matter in nature generally is altogether unknown. In this causal link between sin and the evils in the world, the wrath of God on account of sin was revealed; since, as soon as the creation (πᾶσα ἡ κτίσις, Romans 8:22) had been wrested through man from its vital connection with its Maker, He gave it up to its own ungodly nature, so that whilst, on the one hand, it has been abused by man for the

gratification of his own sinful lusts and desires, on the other, it has turned against man, and consequently many things in the world and nature, which in themselves and without sin would have been good for him, or at all events harmless, have become poisonous and destructive since his fall.¹²¹

Now, to which cause should the origin of evil be granted? Based upon the Biblical evidence evil was present upon the earth prior to the fall of humanity. It was present both in Satan, fallen angels and the serpent. However, it should be noted that the presence of evil prior to the fall of humanity does not necessitate that it is the cause of pain and suffering the Luo community is presently experiencing. It is clear that this is due to humanity's rebellion in the garden. Thus, when Adam deliberately disobeyed God's command not to eat of the tree in the middle of the garden he set into motion all the evils presently in the world whether mental, moral or natural. However, as we shall see later, another position has been advanced, namely, that the fall of humanity caused moral evil, but the fall of angels caused the problems associated with natural evil among humanity.

In conclusion of the origin of evil, evil has been defined as a state of being which by its nature causes much pain and suffering incurred through the perils of mental, moral and natural evils. The origin of evil has also been suggested. While evil was present prior to the fall of humanity, it was the rebellion of Satan and man's disobedience which had brought about the evil in the world, which is the result of what the Luo people are experiencing today. Hence, the best solution is that evil originated with the fall of humanity. Much about the fall of humanity, as the origin evil, would be discussed later when the Irenaean and Augustinian theodicy shall be analysed. The discussion of the nature of the free will and its consequences will also shed more light on the origin and the nature of evil. Of course, Augustine's and

¹²¹ Keil and Delitzsch, "*Commentary*," 105.

Plantinga's theodicy offer a universal and contextual rational explanation of the reigns of evil in the world. However, it is reasonable first to comprehend the extent and magnitude of the fall of the human race—the children of Adam.

General Impact of the Fall of Satan and Humanity

The fall of humanity from glory brought him face to face with six main consequences, namely; spiritual, physical, personal, social, environmental and vocational consequences. The first to consider are the spiritual consequences.

Spiritual Consequences

Spiritual consequences of the fall denote that humanity died spiritual death. That is, humanity had come to complete separation from God, which was the start of the hostility that today exists between God and man (Gen.2:17). It also brought with it the repercussions of mental, moral and natural evil among humanity. After they fell at the deception of Satan, humanity was driven from the Garden of life and the place of communion with God (Isa. 59:2). Life without God and his laws exposed them to an extreme mental, moral and natural evil.

Physical Consequences

By the fall, humanity, including the Luo people in Adam, was condemned to physical death (Gen.2:17; Rom.5:12-14). In general humanity became victims of the susceptibility to natural evil we discussed in the previous chapter that includes: aging, diseases and suffering embraced in bodily abnormality and disorder in the mind. Thunderstorms and lightning, drought, floods, earth quakes, fire, volcanoes, and hurricanes, waves and surging in lakes, seas and oceans ensued immediately as a result of humanity's fall. Berkhof says humanity changed from "a state of *posse non mori* he descended to a state of *non-posse non mori*. Having sinned, he was doomed

to return to the dust from which he was taken, Gen. 3:19.”¹²² Berkhof possibly implies that humanity fell from the life of God to the life of Satan with the consequences of the physical and eternal death.

It is important to uphold this as true; that until the Luo people are reconciled to God, there will be no stability and harmony in all the backgrounds of their existence (Rom. 8:19-24). This is when Satan and all evil spirits that haunt the Luo people with mental, moral and natural evil, will have been banished from God’s presence and condemned forever in hell.

Personal Consequences

With the entrance of sin through the fall of humanity, sin corrupted the intellects and the inner being of all humanity. The human will was weakened and inclined toward evil, as their reasoning faculty was captured by the rebellious spirits of evil. Their hearts and minds fell under total darkness even to themselves, and his surroundings world of existence. Plantinga says, “Our fall into sin has had cataclysmic consequences, both affective and cognitive. As to affective consequences, our affections are skewed and our hearts now cover deep and radical evil: we love ourselves above all, rather than God.”¹²³

Since then Satan has set up human cultural and religious systems by corrupting the human God given culture with sin, thus most of the Luo people prefer to live without a true saviour and redeemer. It has become utterly impossible for them

¹²² Berkhof, “*Systematic*,” 226—the phenomenon of the divine power that sustained humanity before the fall making them not being able to die as God indicated to them before eating the forbidden fruit in the Biblical Garden of Eden. After sinning humans no longer had the vitality to live but now they had to die since the divine power to sustain them disappeared through his disobedience to the source of life and immortality.

¹²³ Plantinga, “*Warranted Christian*,” 205.

to discern between truth and falsehood without any divine aid. That is, as Plantinga adds,

Our original knowledge of God and his marvellous beauty, glory and loveliness has been severely compromised; in this way the narrow image in us was destroyed and the broad image distorted. In particular, the *sensus divinitatis* has been damaged and deformed; because of the fall, we no longer know God in the same natural and unproblematic way in which we know each other and the world around us.¹²⁴

Thus Paul says, “the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ” (II Cor. 4:4ff; Rom.1:26). The minds of the unbelievers among the Luo people are open only to their religion and culture, the practices of witchcrafts and sorceries. However, there are some Luo people who neither practice witchcrafts nor sorceries, but their belief in other aspects of their culture is a hindrance to the Gospel of Christ.

Social Consequences

At the fall both Adam and Eve tried to shift the blame to each other in the attempt to evade responsibility for plunging human history into chaos (Gen. 3:12-13). This means that among the Luo people there are moral problems of interpersonal nature, misunderstandings, insensitivity, distrust, inhumanity, warfare, and violence, and manipulation of others accompanied by the resistance to salvation. As Plantinga observes, “sin induces in us a *resistance* to the deliverances of the *sensus divinitatis*, muted as they are by the first factor; we do not want to pay attention to its deliverances.”¹²⁵

Despite the grave evidences of the results of the fall of humanity, many Luo people resist the Christian salvation and revert to the practice of sorceries and

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

witchcrafts among them. The fear of the future, selfishness, pride, competition and jealousy, tend to control them against belief in God who calls them to seek him through faith and repentance. Their impatience and arrogance are making them self-willed and autonomous so that the only far they can go is to consult the wisdom of the occult, witchcrafts and sorceries. Apart from these, environmental consequences also merit our attention.

Environmental Consequences

Wilbur O' Donovan states that "Because Adam chose to disobey God (Gen.3:6) and because he refused to repent of his sin when he was given a chance (Gen.3:12), God pronounced a curse on mankind and a curse on the earth itself. He also cursed the serpent who tempted them (Gen. 3:14-19)." ¹²⁶ Adam and Eve's fall from God's glory and his gracious presence affected all creation. O'Donovan further explains,

People often struggle with questions about why there are natural calamities such as earthquakes, hurricanes, tornadoes, floods, droughts, and other disasters which take human lives and cause great suffering. Although the Bible does not explain these things in detail, there is a strong suggestion in Scripture that the whole natural creation has been severely disrupted because of the presence of sin in the world. Immediately after the fall of mankind in Genesis, God announced that they would be changed to produce painful things like thorns and thistles (Gen. 3:18). Surely this must include other painful things as well, such as the sting of scorpions and poisonous snakes, which Jesus identified with Satan's activities (Luke 10:19).¹²⁷

Based on what Jesus says in Luke 10: 19, it is sufficient to take the words "thistles", "scorpions" and "snakes" as imageries for the seemingly enduring afflictions of mental, moral and natural evils by the powerful evil forces from nature and the cultural and religious practices among the Luo people.

¹²⁶ O' Donovan, "*Biblical Christianity*," 92.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.* , 92-93.

Vocational Consequences

Vocational consequences upon mankind include serious physical pain, particularly in pregnancy and childbirth (Gen. 3:16-17). The bearing of children, of course, is a blessing, “but the pain and discomfort result from the fall”¹²⁸ are difficult to contend with. An informant pointed out for the researcher at a local market, a woman whom the pain and anguish of birth had driven into mental disorder. The woman was treated by a local witchdoctor but never recovered fully from the illness. God had intended for the woman to bear children from the beginning, but because of the fall, she bears children with pains so great that her life is threatened.

Many women among the Luo people have died from childbirth complications. Moreover, many children who have been born through birth complications have one deformation or the other in their physical appearances. Keil and Delitzsch write, “The punishment consisted in an enfeebling of nature, in consequence of sin, which disturbed the normal relation between body and soul.”¹²⁹

Because of sin, the ruling of the husband over the wife became tyrannical and domineering. She is now ruled by a fallen and depraved Luo husband. And “instead of the mild and tender love of Eden, the husband would now domineer over his wife.”¹³⁰ Morally, in so many families today among the Luo people, husbands and wives today live in tensions, and wife beating and enslavement is not uncommon. Without salvation and the Biblical model of marriage (Eph. 5:22-33), families will continue to fall apart in the Luo community because of sin (Eph. 5:22-33).

¹²⁸ Hoekema, “*Created in God*,” 135-136.

¹²⁹ Delitzsch, “*Biblical Commentary*,” 103.

¹³⁰ Young, “*Genesis 3*”, 128.

In conclusion, the five consequences: spiritual consequences, physical consequences, social consequences, environmental consequences, and vocational consequences, sum up the very nature of the problem of evil among the Luo people. We can affirm that the state in which the reign of evil spirits exists in the human mind, moral and natural universes among the Luo people is appalling. The more the Luo people attempt to atone for their own way out of the torments of evil spirits through their religious and cultural practices, the more complex the problem of evil becomes. As a result, one may wonder if the Luo people will ever be reconciled to God. Now we turn to the discussion of the roll of the free will at the inceptions of all tragedies in this world.

The Nature of Free Will and its Universal Consequences

In chapter 2 we discussed free will according to Augustine, Plantinga, Boyed, Wiredu and Gyekye, and saw that Satan and man were endowed with free will at creation. In this chapter the discussion of the nature of free will, and its universal influences on the fall of Satan and humanity, will be discussed in detail. This discussion will be in relations to God, Satan and evil spirits, humanity and nature as a whole.

Satan is a rational and powerful, non-*imago dei* spirit being; and human being is a rational physical *imago dei* being. Both Satan and human beings are creatures possessing “free will.” If one might ask, “why did God give Satan and human beings a free will?” Gregory A. Boyed will reply and explain, “The reason God gave them free will was because they, being contingent beings, could not possess “the nature of good” as a matter of necessity. If moral virtue was the goal, freedom had to be the means.”¹³¹

¹³¹ Boyed, “*Satan and the Problem*,” 42.

This discussion is essential for understanding why God is not the cause of evil activities in the world. It is a great absurdity that the Christian God can be rejected and accused of being the cause of evil by some of the Luo people. These Luo people are not aware that their cultural and religious cosmologies are governed by both satanic and human free will as they reject the Christian gospel of salvation preached among them.

Satanic Free Will

The fall of Satan resulted from his internal disposition. His heart was puffed up as he desired to be in a higher position of authority and usurp God's sovereign rulership of heaven and earth (Ezek. 28: 13, 17). Satan freely allowed his heart to freely choose rebellion against God. The angels who followed him freely chose to do so in support of his rebellion against God. Boyed says, "The reason the angels fell and besieged the earth is to be found in their own free decision."¹³² Referring to Irenaeus and Clements, he adds,

On the freedom of Satan, Irenaeus writes that "he apostatised from God of his own freewill" (*Against Heresies* 5.26.2[ANC 1:555], and Clement says, "Now the devil, being possessed of free-will, was able both to repent and to steel." From this he concludes, 'So in no respect is God the author of evil'.¹³³

Boyed seems to indicate that Satan's free will banished him from the presence of God, yet he could freely refrain from that rebellion but he did not. If God freely chose to expel Satan from heaven without the will of Satan first in choosing to rebel against him, then God would have been the cause of evil in the world. Then it means that to act or not act is the decision of individual in the face of two alternatives, right and wrong, and in either way, there is a consequence.

¹³² Ibid. , 45.

¹³³ Ibid. , 41 quote no.21.

Referring to Origen, Boyed states, “Origen, for example, says that it “certainly absurd [to say] that in the cause of their [fallen angels’] wickedness should be removed from their purpose of their own will and ascribed of their necessity to their Creator (*First Principle* 1.5.3 [ANF 4: 258]).”¹³⁴ Origen seems to affirm that evil was not determined by God as a necessity but was because of the fallen angels’ free will. These angelic beings with their freedom of choice as to both the virtue and vice outraged the trust given to them by God’s divine will. In view of this, Athenagoras had also said:

Just as with men, who have freedom of choice as to both virtue and vice, so it is among the angels...some free agent, you will observe, such as they were created by God, continued in those things for which God had made and over which He had ordained them: but some outraged both the constitution of their nature and the government entrusted on them. Because they were free, they could rebel.¹³⁵

Boyed comments that, for Athenagoras and other early church fathers, referring to the content of the above statement, this is the ultimate explanation of evil, and for why creation now exists in a war-torn condition.¹³⁶ Thus Boyed further comments,

As may be seen merely from what transpires—just look around, Athenagoras, is saying—something other than God’s will and design is at work in creation. From mudslides that burry children alive to diseases that kill multitudes of people, it is clear—at least it was clear to Athenagoras and the early church—that God’s good will is not being uniformly carried out in history.¹³⁷

From what the researcher understands from the statement, it has always been held that the fallen angels were imminent in creation. This is the place from where

¹³⁴ Boyed, “*Satan and the Problem*,” 43 in footnote no. 26

¹³⁵ Athenogras, *A Plea for the Christians*, (Kessinger Publishing Company, Montana, 2010), 10.

¹³⁶ Boyed, “*Satan and the Problem*,” 40-41

¹³⁷ *Ibid.* , 48.

they freely create disorder for the Luo people through the afflictions of diseases and natural disasters. Through the afflictions of diseases and the causing of natural disasters there, the demons are working against the good administration of God. Thus, according to Boyed, “The earth is afflicted by “a ruling prince” and “the demons his followers” who are of their own free volition, incessantly working against the good administration of the Creator. The world looks like a war zone because it is a war zone.”¹³⁸ Thus, the Luo community being part of human race in the world is faced with the same problem of this universal unrest.

All matter that forms the physical features in the universe has been polluted by evil influence. Boyed says, “When morally responsible agents choose to oppose God’s will, all that they are responsible for suffers accordingly. In Athenagoras’ view, matter itself has been polluted with an evil influence, and the whole physical realm suffers accordingly.”¹³⁹ That is, “the tragic nature of this world in its present condition is the result of angels and humans misusing their will.”¹⁴⁰ Indeed all the forces behind the moral and natural disorder among the Luo people are under the free choice-actions of the fallen angels and human beings.

The free actions of Satan and that of humanity are at work simultaneously as they ravage the liberty of God’s creation. Boyed makes this distinction: “What cannot be attributed to volition of human agents should be attributed, directly or indirectly to the volition of the fallen angels.”¹⁴¹ Today a vast army of the uncountable number of

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Ibid. , 49

¹⁴⁰ Ibid. , 42.

¹⁴¹ Ibid. , 24.

fallen angels rule this universe in every sphere of human existence and the Luo people are not exempted.

John writes, “The whole world is under the control of the evil one” (1 John 5:19). That is, as Boyed puts it, “the earth is under the power and is populated by multitudes of demons.”¹⁴² Boyed further explains, “Now, in the domain of evil spirits or demons, “Satan is thus called “the ruler of demons” (Mt 9:34), and fallen angels are called his angels (Mt 25:41).”¹⁴³ Through the works of Satan and his angels, we can affirm the causes of various illnesses and diseases, and episodes of mental, moral and natural evil that threaten humanity’s existence. Additionally, Boyed says,

The New Testament identifies illness, diseases, spiritual blindness, and episodes of demonization as part of Satan’s work (Lk 13:10-17; Acts 10: 38; 2 Cor. 4:4; 1John 3:8). The war that currently ravages the creation involves all angels and humans, but it is first and foremost a struggle between Satan and God.”¹⁴⁴

According to Boyed, this cosmic war is found in every culture as the struggle between evil and good continues in human history. Thus the problem of evil among the Luo people is also a struggle between God and Satan—good and evil.

Human Free Will

God creates humans as rational imago dei beings with soul, mind and spirit. The soul is the seat of the will or volition that enables him to make decisions and choices that lead to moral consequences. The soul is humans’ capacity for action, a capacity that allows them to choose this over that and those instead of these.

¹⁴² Ibid. , 42.

¹⁴³ Boyed, “*Is God to Blame?*,”71.

¹⁴⁴ Boyed, “*Satan and the Problem*,”17.

There are myriad of Bible passages that present the reception of God's blessing or cursing as contingent upon human choice. This is epitomized in Deuteronomy,

Behold, I set before you today a blessing and a curse: the blessing, if you obey the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you today; and the curse, if you do not obey the commandments of the Lord your God, but turn aside from the way which I command you today, to go after other gods which you have not known (Deu.11:26-28).

When Joshua challenged the people to “choose you this day whom you will serve,” he was addressing individuals who were free to make moral decisions. There is no place this is made clearer than in the book of Matthew in which the Lord Jesus himself laments, “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, and the city that kills the prophets and stones God's messengers! How often have I wanted to gather your children together as a hen gathers her chicks beneath her wings, but you wouldn't let me”(23:37). The Bible teaches conclusively and emphatically that human beings have free will.

Evil people, as human persons among the Luo people, have free will too. They can choose to kill people or cast spell of death and misfortune on their neighbour or choose not to do so. They can plan, conspire and take such actions willingly without any compulsions from outside of their being. It is the power of free will, which motivates and drives them under the influence of free will of demonic spirits directed by the free will of Satan to cause evil among the Luo people. Evil people among the Luo people and demons freely serve each other either for protection or for afflicting others with death or misfortunes. Satanic free will is often comparably powerful than that of human beings.

The free will of evil people among the Luo people is inclined toward evil propensities, because demonic spirits are in control of their free will. Even though they are capable of making good choice, due to the corruption of sin in their

conscience, humans are incapable of choosing benevolence attitude toward others, and unable to oppose the barbarous customary practices among them. Thomas Aquinas makes these observations, “man’s will adheres to a thing moveably, and with the power of forsaking it and of clinging to the opposite”¹⁴⁵ and he adds, “Man’s free-will is flexible to opposite both before and after choice.”¹⁴⁶ Aquinas implies that even after one realises he has acted wrongly or made a wrong decision, he is still capable by his free will, for example, to repeat the same thing or abandon it for evil or for good purposes.

From an African philosopher, on his view of human’s status of free will, citing an example from his observation of the Akan nature of personhood, Wiredu states:

First, neither free will nor the lack of it is a universal feature of the human condition; some people have free will. Second, one and the same individual may have free will with respect to one sphere of conduct but not some other. Third, since there are degrees of personal and social maladjustment, we speak of degree of free will. Fourth, the concept of free will has normative as well as descriptive components. Fifth, and, perhaps most interestingly, both free will and responsibility refer to the same aspect of human consciousness and conduct, namely, the ability of an individual to retain his human self-identity in conduct.¹⁴⁷

Wiredu thinks that it is possible that free will is only endowed in particular persons, and must not be thought of as an element which can be found in every person on earth. Those who have free will only demonstrate it depending on the circumstances surrounding them. This is so because personal and social adjustments will always determine the degree of free will from one individual to the other.

Further, Wiredu contends that free will and responsibility are compatible in individual’s consciousness and behaviour. The researcher does not think Wiredu is

¹⁴⁵ St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, volume 1 Part 1, Como, NY: 2007, Q.64 art.3 Pt.1, 322.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ Wiredu, “*Cultural Universals*,”130.

right by saying that free will is for only particular individuals since this is contrary to the claim of Christian theology that humans were created with free will. And circumstances do not shape human free will; rather they provide the contexts in which humans are capable of exercising it.

Another argument that Wiredu champions as per the case of free will is that it can be acquired with time through nursing and nurturing by the training of the mind. That is, for one to act in certain ways, it must be determined by a particular worldview governed by a universal law; for Wiredu says, “In my opinion, the validity of this defence of free will within the context of a worldview based on the universal reign of law remains intact even when short of the belief in a supreme being.”¹⁴⁸

Wiredu is not denying the innateness of free will in humans, but he says that, as much it already exists, one can be trained in developing it to another level within a particular context conducive to its development. What Wiredu avoids here is to tell us whether it still requires that one has to exercise his freedom to freely reject or accept that his free will be developed to a degree.

Another African thinker on question of human free will is Kwame Gyekye who, like Wiredu, is an Akan Ghanaian philosopher. He relates a person’s mood, conduct, behaviour and actions to his free will. He makes this dictum: “If a man is unhappy, his conduct is the cause.”¹⁴⁹ This means that the way humans conducts themselves may earn him praise or disgrace. Whether in praises and in happiness or disgrace and disappointment, all depend on one’s free will or choice on how to

¹⁴⁸ Kwasi Wiredu, in *African-American Perspectives and Philosophical Tradition*, ed., John Pittman, (Routledge, New York: Routledge, 1997), 53.

¹⁴⁹ Kwame Gyekye, *An Essay on African Philosophical Thought: The Akan Conceptual Scheme*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1995), 123.

conduct herself or himself. It depends on one's free choice to change behaviour to whatever the direction or whatever purpose he finds this necessary. Gyekye explains,

Because a character can be reformed, such an attribution, it seems to me, is appropriate. A person is responsible for the state of his or her character, for he or she is endowed with the capacity to reform and to improve. In sum, Akan philosophy maintains that human beings are free and must therefore be held morally responsible for their actions and behaviour.¹⁵⁰

Gyekye is right. Freedom is an essential part of human life, and should not be infringed upon since it has a great role it plays in human existence. For things humans do for themselves, and for actions whose results affect others, it is solely upon humans to change or not to change. This is often so, according Gyekye's statement: "Because Akan thinkers hold that moral evil stems from the exercise of man's free will."¹⁵¹

The Luo views of personhood is similar to that of the Akans as expressed by Gyekye: "the problem centres on both the Supreme Being (God: *Onyame*) and the deities (that is lesser spirit)."¹⁵² The exercise of human free will is under the hierarchy of forces where the Supreme Being is the ultimate being, the lesser spirits, may be spirits of ancestors that come second in the command, then humans. In the Luo systems of religious and cultural thought, freedom is God's essence, which he has attributed to human beings, but has to be checked by spirits or the lesser deities. Therefore, any evil that results from human freedom is an act committed not only against God, but also against the lesser deities. This is why the Luo ancestors are angered when something goes wrong in the religion and cultural practices of the people.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² Ibid.

From the Luo systems of thought, God hates evil. Evil only comes from humans' and evil spirits' freedom of choice. In relations to the Luo beliefs systems, from the nature of human will and its outcome, Gyekye points out: "In the Akan thought the problem is conceived in terms of not only the attributes of God but also of those of the deities."¹⁵³ Human moral obligation and conduct thus stem from free will which is original with God and deities mediating between God and humanity. Any set of rules rebuked by human free exercise of the will is against the order of the deities and the rule of God. In addition, Gyekye asserts,

In sum, the basic premise of the arguments of the Akan thinkers on the problem of evil is generally that God does not like evil (*Nyame mpe bone*). Evil, according to most of them, proceeds from man's character, conscience, desires, and thoughts—all of which suggests, within Akan conceptual system, that evil stems from the exercise by the person of his or her own free will (*onipa ne pe*).¹⁵⁴

This means that, based on free will, for example, all decision made, actions taken by individuals must occur within the laws, and norms prescribed within the peripheries of the religious and cultural laws of the Luo people. When free will is misdirected, it creates evil through the decisions made and this angers God.

In the realms of free choice of the will among the Luo people on the judgment of persons and morality, 'conduct' has an upper hand in determining the nature of a person. This bears with it the notion that a person's behaviour is the reflection of that person and community. Individual's personhood is determined by the free actions that individual exemplifies in the context of his community's norms and practices.

Considering free will as humans' basic ideal, and taking humans as moral agents, it is imperative to see human beings as beings that think, and as creatures

¹⁵³Ibid.

¹⁵⁴Ibid. , 127.

determined to change their world, shape their destiny and history. Through their will they can change the society for the better and for the worse. Thus, both Wiredu and Gyekye make this statement:

The conception that creativity is the essence of true human personality implies that man is not just a being who thinks but also a being who acts to change the world. This implies that man is free and self-determining and has a say in shaping his own history and destiny. Through his free actions he releases forces which shape the world and society, and because of his nature he also can release that will destroy the society and the world... Since his capacity for action is essential to being a man it follows that, where freedom to act is denied there is a diminution in the fullest sense of humanity.¹⁵⁵

Wiredu and Gykye's thesis is that human beings as creatures are creative beings, whose activities are based on their free will, which are determined to condition the world and the society. Thus to deny human beings the freedom to exercise their will is to deny him the opportunity to create their own destiny and history. For example, when the Luo's economic, political successes are suppressed they become agitated. It all begins from denying them the freedom to think and reason in the realms of Kenyan politics. This then results in poverty, poor infrastructure and poor performance in national exams.

When the Luo people freely chose to resist these political oppressions, those in authority freely chose to eliminate brilliant members of the community by assassination. For example, the late Tom Mboya was assassinated on 5th July 1969, and the late Dr Robert Ouko was murdered on 14th January 1990. In the presidential election of 2007, the majority of voters freely voted in Raila Odinga for the presidency but the outcome revealed that Mwai Kibaki was the winner against the free will of the majority of Kenya. A protest began against this move and many Luo were either gunned down or slaughtered by swords or displaced as refugees in their

¹⁵⁵ Wiredu & Gyekye, "*Person and Community*," 131.

own country. So to deny a community from practicing its free will is to humiliate that community, and to declare the community impotent of any dignity but only to be eliminated.

In conclusion, Satan freely uses his demonic spirits who freely chose to ravage nature with an intention to create chaos in God's universe. Inclinations in the religious and cultural thoughts about evil among the Luo people must be reversed. The Luo people need to acknowledge freely the presence of Satan and the demonic powers among them. Satan and his angelic colleagues continue to fight divine will for the Luo people by controlling their mind and will. They cause human beings to lose their senses and unknowingly say and do evil things to others. When Satan and his angels capture the mind and the personality of humans, they have as well captured their total will.

Satan and his angelic hosts can, through their free will, cause humans to act freely to inflict death, sickness, poverty, accidents and mental insanity through the practice of sorcery and witchcraft. In the wider schemes of the operations of free will in Satan, evil spirits, and in humanity's free will, no human culture or tradition is free from mental, moral, and natural evil. We still need to go further in our investigation of why the world is in the situation it is, and how it could be possible that the phenomena of evil might remain justifiable. To do that is to examine deeply the concepts of theodicy, mainly from the Luo and the Christian thought.

Theodicy from the Luo and Christian Thought

In the previous chapter, we discussed the concepts of evil in the Luo cosmology in relations to God, ancestors, evil spirits and human community. We examined six means by which the Luo people respond to evil, and found out that these solutions did not succeed to the uttermost. However, God was portrayed as a

powerful divinity concerned with the needs of his people through his goodness and through the veneration of ancestors. And that God hates evil and must be appeased through the ancestors whenever evil manifests itself. What now remains is to explain how it is possible for humans to continue believing in God and persevere in the midst of evil afflictions.

If the only way of dealing with the problem of evil among the Luo people is to avoid this discussion, then this thesis will succumb to that assumption. Or, supposing another way of avoiding dealing with the problem of evil among the Luo people is by concluding that either the Luo God is not sovereign, or the Christian God revealed to us through Jesus Christ is limited and unjust, we therefore can stop here and contend that both the two Beings have arranged the world and its laws for us to discover after death in the ancestral world, or in heaven, whether we have failed or succeeded in our earthly pilgrimage through evil.

Nevertheless, since the reality of the cosmos shows the possibility of one Creator worshipped in every culture, revealed through the person of Jesus Christ, it is prudent to explain whether his power is limited and his being is finite or not in relations to the amount of evil among the Luo people. To do this is to begin to examine the concept of theodicy. What is theodicy? The term “theodicy”, Kwasi Wiredu claims,

Was coined by the philosopher and mathematician Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646-1716), who used it in his *Essays on Theodicy* to express the justice or the righteous manner of God’s dealings with humankind, whom he defended against those who felt that the evils of this life are an argument for theism. The term theodicy literally means “God’s justice” or “God’s righteous way”. But this original meaning was quickly expanded to include not only God’s Providence, but the whole of the philosophy of God: his nature, attributes, and operations.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁶ Kwasi Wiredu, edit., *A Companion to African philosophy*, (New York: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 181.

Theodicy is an attempt simply to explain the coexistence of God and Evil. We shall analyse this concept philosophically from African and in the context of Christian thoughts. Thus, we start with theodicy in the African thought, focusing on its concepts in the Luo cosmology.

The Luo Theodicy

It is important to explain why such a great and loving God would seem to have abandoned his people to suffer the strains of mental, moral and natural evil. The explanation in order to exonerate God from the occurrences of death and diseases, and to explain why and how death and suffering are necessary among the Luo people is what alludes to the nature of theodicy in the Luo thought.

From the discussions of Oruka and Ogot in chapter 2, their theodicies were that death is the most feared experience among the Luo people. However, the Luo people believe that death was determined by God and has positive sides when it occurs. Ogot argued that death reflects *Nyasaye's* wisdom and that in an overall understanding, it would be impossible for life to go on without death. If death were not there, the earth would soon be filled up, and there would not be enough pastures for the cattle, not enough land on which to build houses, not enough fields to cultivate.

Looking at Ogot's theodicy further, it can be illustrated with the story of a child who is being trained or educated or punished. The child may think that he or she is being maltreated by the parents, yet the parents understand the purpose. In the same way, one must see the relationship between *Nyasaye* and his creation, including human beings. If death is the chief of all evil among the Luo people, and the most

horrible of all the worst experiences, it has to be faced with the anticipation for space for those still living and those who will be born later.

Facing death would mean enduring the inevitable afflictions and pains of mental, moral and natural evil whenever treatments are far from success. If mental, moral and natural evil can be averted, fine. But if they overcome the Luo people, then God has greater good beyond the evil of death.

Expanding more on Oruka's theodicy, we saw in chapter 2, in his recorded interviews and discussions with a Luo sage, Oruka writes, "Death is an enemy of all things. All hate it. It is the end of all life. However, because it is the work of God, it is good. God cannot create evil. We must therefore learn to live with death."¹⁵⁷ Furthermore, Oruka states, "When a person dies, we say that he has been called by God. This shows that there is another life after death."¹⁵⁸ This certainly indicates, in such a theodicy, that Oruka contends for the fact that courage against death must emanate from the belief in life after this world, to which people should anticipate joyously to joining, and be with the ancestors.

As an allusion to Oruka's theodicy, an old man had told the researcher, "I am too old, and soon going to the place where your father is." The underlying knowledge here is that death, despite its malevolent implications, is a benevolent experience to all communities even as an individual's old age is advancing, for its eminency in the face of old age, will culminate in the fulfilment of the longing to be in the next world.

The message of death as decreed by God is normally inherent in the drum beats of the traditional drummers during funeral occasions. This is common in most of the African traditional communities during death. Through the drum beats the

¹⁵⁷ Oruka, "*Sage Philosophy*", 87.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

message is passed that human beings must die. For example in Akan community, similar to the Luo drum messages, K. A. Busia, quoted by Wiredu, says,

The drummer is emphasising the inevitability of death. Man must die. The drummer is saying to the ruler: condolences; do not mourn; remember the creator made man to die; and when the destined time comes, it is not only beyond the skills of the physician to save the sick, but also *beyond the creator himself*, to exercise his power to save this man, for the creator has decreed that every man must die, and so he is unable to stop death from exacting the payment due him.¹⁵⁹

Wiredu stands for a decree, that what God has planned to happen to human beings is not a loss to any person whatever the tragedy is. If God is unable to change his decrees, and thought about death, humans must not mourn over the dead or ask why there is death. According to the wisdom in the sound of the drum, death occurs in the context of the very nature of the laws with which God fashioned this universe.

Ogot believes that death is an old age long belief as a transition to another world. When one is born to the land of the living and whenever time comes, it is death to provide transition to the world of ancestors. Ogot writes,

From the days of our ancestors, death has been part of man's nature. A child enters this world when its mother gives birth to it, but when it tired of the world and wants to go and rest with our ancestors; it is death that takes it from here. This is how death connects us to our unborn children who exist as seeds in us. That is how generations succeed one another and the nations grow and become larger. The seed that is planted in the soil must first die, and it is by its death that it becomes alive again and produces many seeds."¹⁶⁰

Ogot's views could imply that under extreme mental, moral and natural afflictions, and where treatment is impossible, death can be allowed. Evil then is considered, in this theodicy, as an agent that leads to death to fulfil God's purpose for the benefit of those who would be left behind, and those to come in future. These sicknesses that proceed to death are reminders of a life after this world as the victim

¹⁵⁹ Kwasi Wiredu, *Cultural Universals and Particulars: An African Perspective*, Indiana University Press: 1996, 119.

¹⁶⁰ Ogot, "*Strange Bride*", 8.

moves closer to God upon whom his survival or destiny depends. The victims of incurable or terminal illness must come to terms with their finitude and mortalities, and face death with courage to leave this world as soon as possible if need be.

In conclusion, through the afflictions of mental, moral and natural evils, God may act indirectly through evil spirits, or directly to impose discipline on humans whereby death will finally occur. For special reasons, under his divine sovereignty, it may be God's holy free will for the evil spirits to inflict freely diseases and misfortunes on their victims. Alternatively, God himself can unleash such terrors as punishment for taboos broken in the community.

Beyond all tragedies no matter what the causes of evil are, there is always the good experience of one transitioning to the ancestral world. The Christian way of thinking is different, though in a special sense, knowledge about the next world, as stated above, is still significant in the Christian theodicy.

The Christian Theodicy

Within the framework of Christian thought on the question of theodicy, we have only two systems of theodicy to consider. These two 'theodicies' explain whether God has moral reasons to allow evil to occur. The fault does not lie in the theory of God having significant moral reason, but in the proposed solutions themselves. As a theologian and a philosopher, it is the contention of this writer that God has a morally sufficient reason for allowing evil, and careful inquiries into these two 'theodicy' will reveal this. Irenaeus of Lyons develop the first theodicy and Augustine of Hippo develops the second one.

Irenaeus of Lyons

Irenaeus of Lyons (120-202) was bishop of Lyons from 177-202. He espoused that human being was created in an unfinished condition. This is clear in the dictum below.

The eternal is perfect; and this is God. Man has first come into being, then to progress, and progressing come to manhood to increase, and thus increasing to persevere, and persevering be glorified, and thus see his Lord. For it is God's intention that He should be seen; and the vision of God is the acquisition of immortality; and immortality bring man near to God.¹⁶¹

John Hick points out, "Irenaeus and others regarded the pre-fall Adam as more like a child than mature responsible child."¹⁶² The fall of humanity and its consequences are not considered disastrously evil, but rather it is a *felix culpa*,¹⁶³ a happy sin, so that humanity may advance in their paths from "image" to the "likeness" of God.¹⁶⁴ Irenaeus himself said,

It was for our benefit that the Lord allowed all these things [sc. evil and opposition to his purposes], that we may trained by means of them...God directs all things to achieve the end of man's perfection and man's edification; and to display his own character, so that his righteousness is fulfilled.¹⁶⁵

Thus, human fall in the early stages of his development only constitutes a greater need of help than he would have otherwise needed. It was God's purpose from

¹⁶¹ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* in Ante-Nicene Fathers, eds. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, (New York: Christian Literature, 1885), 521.

¹⁶² Hick, "*The Problem of Evil*," 138.

¹⁶³ John Hick, *Evil and the God of Love*, (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), 176. According to Walter Elwell, *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, p.425, the term *Felix Culpa* expresses the believer's confidence in God's beneficial control of evil. On the evening before the victorious celebration of Easter churches using the Roman Missal sang these words from the *Exsultet*: *O Felix culpa, quaetalem ac tantum meruit habere remptorem!* ("O happy crime, which merited such and so great a Redeemer!"). *Felix culpa* saw in the fall not just what humanity lost through Adam, but what human might gain in Christ. God alone could see the fall from the perspective of the cross. Thus it was from the cross where salvation culminated in the renovation of the image of God in human kind.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁵ Irenaeus, "*Against Heresies*", 521.

the beginning to create humanity as in need so that he may display his own “goodness” and “righteousness”.

There are at least three characteristics which flow from his theodicy. First, human being is created a child and not an adult. His decision to obey God was a childlike, but necessary decision in order to bring about the necessity of growth. Evil is the catalyst of this growth. Hick has correctly surmised that this type of theodicy ultimately makes God responsible: “the Irenaean type of theodicy in its developed form, as we find it in Schleiermacher and later thinkers, accepts God’s ultimate omniresponsibility and seeks to show for what good and justifying reason He has created a universe in which evil was inevitable.”¹⁶⁶ Another characteristic is that God is limited. Hick comments,

If anyone asks this, he must be told that God is absolute and eternal and in respect of himself all things are within his power. But contingent things have their beginning of being in the course of time, and for this reason they must need fall short of their maker’s perfection; for things which have recently come to birth cannot be eternal; and not being eternal, they fall short of perfection for that very reason (sic).¹⁶⁷

It is obvious that His limitation is about His power. Irenaeus did not believe that God could have created a perfect mature human being.

A final feature of the Irenaeus theodicy is eschatological in nature. Hick calls it, the “vail of soul-making.”¹⁶⁸ It seeks God’s vindication on the basis of bringing about an infinite good.¹⁶⁹ One way this is accomplished is through the none-existence of hell. As Hick notes, the “Irenaean thinkers (at any rate since Schleiermacher) have been inclined to see the doctrine of eternal hell, with its implication of permanently

¹⁶⁶ Hick, “*Evil and the God*,” 262.

¹⁶⁷ Irenaeus, “*Against Heresies*”, 521.

¹⁶⁸ Hick, “*Philosophy of Religion*,” 515.

¹⁶⁹ Hick, *Evil and God of Love*”, 26.

unexplained sin and unending suffering, as rendering a Christian theodicy impossible.”¹⁷⁰

Even though this theodicy began in the second century, today it has many proponents. Though, it should be noted, it has gone through several metamorphoses in Schleiermacher and other later thinkers. However, there were some who disregarded Irenaeus theodicy and chose to reformulate a different theodicy consistent with their findings in Scripture. Two centuries later one such theologian and a philosopher was Augustine of Hippo.

Augustine of Hippo

Augustine of Hippo born on November 1, 354, in Tagaste, a small agricultural community in North Africa. As his love for truth grew he became ever so gripped with the problem of evil, which a group called the “Epicureans” regarded as an irrefutable arguments against religion.

So the young Augustine took up Manichaeism in hope that seemed to be admirably plausible solution for the co-existence of God and Evil. The “Manichee adopts a metaphysical dualism which he believes to be in accord with the empirical facts.”¹⁷¹

Though his doubt grew, Augustine accepted this dualistic concept of a good kingdom and evil kingdom for nine years. Not being able to find any true gnosis or knowledge, he abandoned truth and rationality for a blank denial. This scepticism left him in a few years as he met the Bishop of Millan, Ambrose. A few years later after much dialogue with Ambrose, he became convinced of the reasonableness of

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁷¹ Augustine, *On Free Choice of the Will*, trans. Anna S. Benjamin and L. H. Hackstaff, (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1964), xx.

Christianity and was baptised. It was from that point that he began to develop his theodicy.

Augustine begins his work, *On Free Choice of the Will*, by asking the question, “Is God the cause of evil?” He answers it quickly by stating that God is not the cause but each evil man is the cause of his own evil doing.¹⁷² In Book Two, he ponders the question of why God gave human beings freedom of will that is, why did He give human beings the power to sin. In Book Three, he questions whether God is responsible for the sin due to free will if he foreknew and ordained that it would happen. His response is negative and he concludes that human beings are responsible for their own action.

Augustine countered evil in two ways. First, he saw evil as a privation; a corruption or pervasion of something good. Hence, it has no existence in itself, but it is pharisaic of some good. In *Enchiridion* he wrote,

For what is that which we call evil but the absence of good? In the bodies of animals, disease and wounds mean nothing but the absence of health; for when a curse is affected, that does not mean that the evils which were present—namely, the diseases and wounds—go away from the body and dwell elsewhere: they altogether cease to exist; for the wound or disease is not a substance—the flesh itself being a substance, and therefore that is privation of which those evils—something good which we call health—are accidents.¹⁷³

A second manner in which Augustine countered evil was through his “aesthetic conceptions of evil.”¹⁷⁴ And “According to this view, what appears to be evil, when seen in isolation or in a too limited context, is a necessary element in the universe which, viewed as a totality, is wholly good.”¹⁷⁵ Augustine was looking from

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, 3.

¹⁷³ Augustine, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, ed., Philip Schaff, (New York: Christian Literature, 1887), III, 240.

¹⁷⁴ Hick, “*The Problem of Evil*”, 137.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

“the viewpoint of God, who sees timelessly and a whole entire moving panorama of created history, the universe as good.”¹⁷⁶

Basically, in the Augustinian theodicy, God created man and woman sinless and placed them in the Garden of Eden. Through the temptation of the serpent, humans fell into sin through the misuse of their own free will. Thus, the Creator is liberated from the responsibility of evil in the world and it is placed upon humanity. Hence, it looks back to the past for its explanation and roots of evil. Further, it points to a final recompense for evil through the judgement and everlasting death of those who reject Christ and the liberation of those who receive Him as Saviour and Lord.

In conclusion, Augustinian theodicy stands out as the best for the defence of God against evil. This is clear in Augustine’s writings, “For He judged it better to bring good out of evil, than to permit any evil to exist.”¹⁷⁷ For Augustine human beings are morally responsible for misuse of their own will. It was not God’s desired result of human free will to be used with such devastating results, with evil entering into the cosmos.

God created human being with a free will to choose right from wrong. He was a sinless being embodied in the phrase “it was very good” (Gen. 1:31) and “upright” (Eccl. 7:29). Concerning humanity’s creation Berkhof says, “The idea is that by creation that which was archetypal in God became ectypal in man. God was the original of which man was made a copy.”¹⁷⁸ Scripture teaches that evil, pain and suffering are due to humanity’s rebellion against God. After the fall, both Adam and Eve hid themselves because of their wickedness and shame.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷⁷ Augustine, “*Nicene and Post-Nicene*,” 246.

¹⁷⁸ Berkhof, “*Systematic*,” 203.

Berkhof says in God's vindication, "God cannot be regarded as its author. God's eternal decree certainly rendered the entrance of sin into the world certain, but this may not be interpreted so as to make God the cause of sin in the sense of being its responsible author."¹⁷⁹ By God's very nature, he cannot sin or be tempted by sin (cf. Job 34:10; Ps. 92:15; Is. 6:3, I John. 1:5 and Jas. 1:13). "His work is perfect, for all His ways are just; a God of faithfulness and without injustice, righteousness, and upright is He" (Deut.32:4).

This Christian theodicy is highly complex, yet it contains the basic concept that the Christian traditional concept of God exists along with the evil in the world. This is deemed possible by stating that God is not responsible for the free choice of human beings. The "free will" is responsible for the reigns of evil in the world including the Luo community. It is this that will be our next level of discussion, focusing on the works of Alvin Plantinga. His theodicy is more of Free Will Defence than a theodicy.

Plantinga's Theodicy

Plantinga is perhaps the foremost Christian philosopher in the 21st century Western Hemispheres. His fame is due primarily to two things: (1) his development of Reformed Epistemology, the idea that the belief in God is properly basic and is warranted without any external evidence, (2) his Free Will Defence (FWD) which is an attempt to refute the logical problem of evil, that posit the existence of an omnipotent, omniscient, wholly good God in an evil world.¹⁸⁰ Plantinga's thesis is that "It is possible that God, even being omnipotent, could not create a world with

¹⁷⁹ Ibid. , 220.

¹⁸⁰ James Beebe, R. (July 12, 2005) "Logical Problem of Evil," in *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Retrieved September 21, 2009.

free creatures that never choose evil. Furthermore, it is possible that God, even being Omni-benevolent, would desire to create a world which contains evil if moral goodness requires free moral creatures.”¹⁸¹

The logical problem of evil is that God who has omnipotence, omniscient and Omni-benevolent properties exist alongside the situations of evil; evil includes, according to the researcher, mental, moral and natural evil. Trying to bring Plantinga’s free will defence and epistemology down to the Luo contexts, this scenario would seem to be untenable to many Luo thinkers who consider it as illogical, if indeed it is true, that the Christian God has those properties mentioned.

A brilliant English literature teacher¹⁸² at Ototo High School in the researcher’s county did mention to the researcher that the problem of evil, and the various solutions to it, had been debated by many Luo sages centuries ago. One side of the argument was that evil comes from the anger of the living souls whom the creator of the world left un-created in the human body since he ran out of time and materials.

Flashing back in chapter 2 and briefly at the beginning of this chapter, the researcher presented two theories of the Luo origins of evil. The second of these two theories is the one that follows, and taken directly from the previous chapter. It is about the angry Souls revenging against God for not creating them in his image and in human bodies. These souls promised that since they were not created in human body and in the image of God, they will always inflict humans and their environment with all kinds of maladies and making sure that humans do not enjoy the privileges of life

¹⁸¹ Chad Meister, *Introducing Philosophy of Religion*, (Routledge: Cornell University, 2009), 133.

¹⁸² This was on April 4th, 2012, when researcher has this conversation with the teacher whose name is William Oyugi.

given them by God. Gor Mahia, Lwanda Magere, Obondo Mumbo the legendary wise magicians in the history of the Luo people, tried to appease the souls many times but lost the battle and died.

This period is remembered as the age of *dede* (locusts), which ravaged the vegetations and crops for decades. There is no period in the history of the Luo community in which hundreds of thousands of human beings and livestock perished like in this period. Then *tuo mar nindo came* (sleeping sickness), years later, since the time of Otieno Onyango and Migoya, the two great ancestors of the researcher's clan.

In the period of seven years, hundreds of families migrated to either northward or southward running away from tsetse flies, those who remained around Lake Victoria and beyond, lost three or two families almost every month. There were many other disasters, but these ones are still remembered with nostalgic refrain of other such experiences.

Opposed to the Luo theodicy, even among Luo people, Plantinga would put forth a defence, offering a new proposition that is intended to demonstrate that it is logically possible for an Omni-benevolent; omnipotent and omniscient God to create a world that contains such disasters as natural evil. The two disasters, sleeping sickness and the outbreak of locusts, according to the Luo people were brought about by the angry God, through the ancestors who, in their free will, showed up in the form of evil perils, or allowed evil spirit to do such visitations.

In Plantinga's views, a world—the Luo religious and cultural world containing creatures that are significantly free is more valuable, all else being equal, than a world containing no free creatures at all. For this Plantinga argues that God can create free creatures, due to their free will, but he cannot cause or determine them to do only

what is right. For if he does so, then they are not significantly free after all; they do not do what is right freely.

For God to create creatures capable of moral good, therefore, Plantinga argues, he must create creatures capable of moral evil; and he cannot give these creatures the freedom to perform evil and at the same time prevent them from doing so. As it turned out, some of the free creatures God created went wrong in the exercise of their freedom, making this the source of moral evil. Thus, any logical thinker will agree with the researcher that the fact that free creatures sometimes go wrong, counts neither against God's omnipotence nor against his goodness. For God could have forestalled the occurrence of moral evil only by removing the possibility of moral good.

Plantinga's argument would be that even though the Christian God is omnipotent, it is possible that it was not in his power to create a world—Luo religious and cultural world—free from mental, moral and natural evil. Therefore, there is no logical inconsistency involved when God, although wholly good, creates a world of free creatures that inflict mental, moral and natural evil among the Luo people. By these arguments, Plantinga has established the possibility that God could not actualize a world—Luo religious and cultural world—containing free creatures that always do the right thing.

It sounds compelling that there is a fair argument for the view that the existence of mental, moral and natural evil is logically consistent with the existence of the Christian God, whose gospel is being preached and rejected by many Luo people. It is the dictum of the researcher that Augustine's free will and Plantinga's FWD destroy the arguments of evil developed by none-Christian Luo people against the Christian salvation.

Plantinga extends his FWD to natural evil by holding that it is possible that all natural evil is moral evil, because it is possible that it is evil resulting from the free actions of non-human agents, namely, Satan and his minions. Plantinga says,

Satan, so the traditional doctrine goes, is mighty none human spirit who, along with many other angels, was created before God created man, unlike most of his colleagues Satan rebelled against God and has since been wreaking whatever havoc he can. The result is natural evil. The natural evil we find is due to free actions of nonhuman spirits.¹⁸³

How would natural evil resemble moral evil as Plantinga argues? How is this possible? Plantinga writes,

Natural evil significantly resembles *moral* evil in that, like the latter, it is the result of the activity of significantly free persons. In fact both moral and natural evil would be special cases of what might be called *broadly moral evil*—evil resulting from the free actions of personal beings, whether human or not.¹⁸⁴

It is thus plausible to take this as true in relations to mental evil. It was argued in the previous chapter for that matter, that mental, moral evil and natural evil are related. What the researcher had in mind is that their relationship is confined in the evil, resulting from free actions of personal beings. Thus, the researcher agrees with Plantinga on his exemplification of this compendious statement:

(41) All evil in *Kronos* is broadly moral evil, and it was not within the power of God to create a world containing a better balance of broadly moral good and evil...(42) God creates a world containing as much broadly moral good as *Kronos* contains.¹⁸⁵

This applies to the case of evil among the Luo people. There is no cultural and religious world of a people on this planet, where a better balance of broadly moral good and evil is actualized. Plantinga's use of the word *kronos* (a biblical Greek term meaning "time") seems to the researcher as a term Plantinga uses to predicate "worlds

¹⁸³ Plantinga, "God, Freedom," 58.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid. , 58-59.

¹⁸⁵Ibid. , 59

and ages” in which both good and evil exist. So whatever evil is realized in *kronos* is moral evil by origin and design of free will given to human beings and Satan and his angels on the day of creation. It is this free will which these spirit beings misuse in wreaking the mental, moral and natural universes of the Luo people.

An Overview of the Luo and the Christian Concept of God

An important similarity between the Luo and the Christian conception of God is basic belief in God. It is also important to note that in most cases the discussion of the African concept of God examines clearly the nature of the Luo concept of God. O’Donovan says, “There is probably no native-born African who is not aware of the existence of God.”¹⁸⁶ The God of the Luo conceptually overlaps in many ways with the identity and the revelation of the Biblical God. The Luo God is personal in the sense of possessing personhood. O’Donovan adds that “he has no body and he is invisible.”¹⁸⁷ Of course, all Africans believe that God is a Spirit being.

Byang Kato believes that everything in the spiritual and the physical world is the way it is today as a direct result of his action.¹⁸⁸ Mbiti also holds the same belief that the African God sustains this world in the sense that he keeps everything which he made in existence at every given moment, and in the sense that he is seen to be the one who provides and protects this world.¹⁸⁹ The claim that Mbiti makes represents also the case of the Luo God. From these two beliefs, as O’Donovan explains that it naturally follows that the Supreme Being is seen as almighty; for he has the power to

¹⁸⁶ O’Donovan, “*Biblical Christianity*,” 41.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 316.

¹⁸⁸ Byang Kato, *Theological Pitfalls in Africa*, (Kisumu: Evangel Publishing House, 1975), 31.

¹⁸⁹ Mbiti, “*Introduction to African*,” 49-52.

do anything he desires,¹⁹⁰ and according to Mbiti, the Supreme Being also has complete knowledge.¹⁹¹ O'Donovan believes God is present everywhere¹⁹² as he is also eternal.¹⁹³

Mbiti says that the Supreme Being is likewise good.¹⁹⁴ So by this even the Luo people understand that God is not only good, but also not an evil being. Thus Gehman says, "Whatever tragedy is experienced is blamed on witchcraft or the living-dead. God is seldom charged with wrong doing."¹⁹⁵ Although the Luo God shares the same transcendence with the Christian God, P. Bower says that this is not to "project a traditional religion that is compatible with Christianity."¹⁹⁶ Turaki says that it seems that there is less of a chasm between God and the other spirit beings, and that the category used to understand the remoteness of the Supreme Being is not transcendence *per se* but differing communal responsibilities.¹⁹⁷ Turaki has in mind the general concept of God that includes the supreme deity in the Luo cosmology.

It is clear that there is much in common between the biblical view of God and the Luo concept of God. These similarities extend over both the character and the work of each deity. There are two major differences between the God of the Bible and

¹⁹⁰ O'Donovan, "*Biblical Christianity*", 41.

¹⁹¹ Mbiti, "*Introduction to African*," 56.

¹⁹² O'Donovan, "*Biblical Christianity*," 41.

¹⁹³ L. Nyirongo, *The gods of Africa or the God of the Bible? The snares of African Traditional Religion in Perspective*, (Potchefstroom: IRS Potchefstroom University, 1997), 11.

¹⁹⁴ Mbiti, "*Introduction to African*," 55.

¹⁹⁵ Gehman, "*African Traditional*," 320.

¹⁹⁶ P. Bower, "*African theology: its History, Dynamics, Scope and Future*," in *African Journal of Evangelical Theology*: 2002, 21(2): 109-126.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.* , 156.

the Luo concepts of God. I will mention few differences not because there are not many, but because more explanation is required, yet we are limited in space.

Firstly, the God of the Bible is different from the Luo God in that he is knowable and relational, and conquered evil through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The problem with the Luo concept of God is that he goes no further than revealing himself relationally to the Luo people. Although humans can pray to the Supreme Being in certain situations ¹⁹⁸ as O'Donovan puts it through the language of Turaki, this Supreme Being never interacts with, or personally reveals himself to humans in the redemptive manner ¹⁹⁹ as does the God of the Bible. However it is notable, despite some aspects of the culture and religion of the Luo being evil, God has revealed himself through what is commonly referred to as 'general revelation' which the Luo people perceive very well.

It is possible, as it would be Biblically; that verbal communication with God begins from personal relationship with him is not a reality for the Luo community. Thus, there is a stark contrast between the biblical view of God and the God of the Luo people. Since the beginning of time the biblical God has revealed himself through communicating verbally with human beings, and finally through Jesus Christ (Heb. 1:1-4) for the salvation from the powers of evil. In this communication, he has told humanity that he hates evil and has offered them the possibility of a relationship. Thus, the God of the Bible is different from the Supreme Being of the Luo people in that he is knowable and relational.

Secondly, the Luo God, like the God of the Bible, is holy and just. Kato explains that the problem of evil in the African worldview is against the community

¹⁹⁸ O'Donovan, "*Biblical Christianity*," 42.

¹⁹⁹ Turaki, "*Christianity and African*," 160.

and not against God.²⁰⁰ It is the community who is most offended, by these social ills, and it is they who take the responsibility to discipline the offender²⁰¹ as we saw in the last chapter. Nyirongo adds, “The responsibility belongs to those who are physically alive, but more especially to the ancestral spirits who are the custodians of the community.”²⁰² The biblical God says that sin is against him personally (Psa. 51:4), and causes him great offence (Hos. 9:15). Indeed, the biblical God promises that he is judging sin now (Rom. 1:24) and will do so in a more comprehensive way in the future (2 Peter 3:7). Thus, in contrast to the humanistic view of the magnitude of evil in the Luo tradition, the God of the Bible is seen to be holy and just.

In light of the above, there do seem to be major differences and similarities between the Luo conception of God and the Christian conception of God. In reflecting on the world without God’s word, Paul says, “although [people] knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened” (Rom.1:21). From this verse two things are evident. Firstly, the Luo people do know something about the true God.

It must be affirmed that the Bible is correct when it asserts that God’s divinity and power have been plain to humanity since the creation of the world (Rom. 1:19-20). Furthermore, due to the nature of the evidence, its scope must be universal; and so we cannot exclude Luo people from this knowledge. God has not left himself without a witness in the Luo community; he has clearly spoken through what has been made.

²⁰⁰ Kato, “*Theological Pitfall*,” 42.

²⁰¹ Nyirongo, “*The gods of Africa*”, 63.

²⁰² *Ibid.*

Secondly, the Luo people have distorted their knowledge of God. Although there is much in the Luo concept of God which corresponds with the biblical conception of deity, this knowledge has been illegitimately expanded and perverted (Rom. 1:21). Therefore, the Luo people have effectively made their own God. Whatever rationalization one may try to make, the worship of Luo God is idolatry, and is the point of the increase of evil in the Luo culture. Thus at the point where revelation from the deity becomes re-creation into a new deity, it becomes impossible to see much of the biblical God in the continuity of the Luo God for that matter.

In light of the above it seems that the similarities between the biblical God and the Luo God should be affirmed to an extent. These similarities are seen in the belief in the existence of a personal and spiritual deity who is the almighty creator, and the all-knowing, protector and provider. Moreover, he is good, eternal and omnipresent. At the same time it must always be maintained that this is fundamentally a different God due to the Luo's distortion of general revelation.

Examples of where this difference is manifested are, amongst others, holiness, justice, knowledge and relationship. But these are surface cracks which reveal to us the much greater underlying problem of idolatry. As Christians we must believe that if the Luo community is to have any hope in God, their God must be the God of the Bible. Therefore, we need to be aware of this idolatry and proclaim with great boldness the God of the Bible among the Luo people. In regards to the problem of evil and life adversities, God of the Bible remains omnipotent as explained below.

God's Omnipotence

There is no better way to explain the term "Omnipotence" apart from its theological and Biblical definitions. Millard J. Erickson says that the term expresses

“God’s transcendence character.”²⁰³ Being transcendent includes the property of being able to accomplish only those which God wishes. The exercise of God’s omnipotence is limited by His will. Humanity, Satan and the fallen angels are absolutely subject to God’s will and word. The Hebrew name for God “is more than the distinguishing title of God or man. The people of Israel were aware that could be attached to a name therefore their usage of the concept demonstrates this broad range of meaning.”²⁰⁴

There are three names for God given in the Old Testament. The most general term for deity in the Old Testament is “*El*,” “*Elah*,” or “*Elohim*.” Its meaning is “strong one.”²⁰⁵ It has four compound forms:(1) *El Shadai* found in Genesis 17:1, meaning “Almighty God;”²⁰⁶ (2) *El Elyon* (Gen.14), meaning “Most High God;”²⁰⁷ (3) *El Olam* (Gen. 1:33), meaning “Everlasting God;”²⁰⁸ and (4) *El Gibbor* (Is.9:6), meaning “Mighty God.”²⁰⁹

The second name that God calls himself is “Yahweh.” A passage where this name is found is Exodus 3:14. It carries the idea of “self existent one.”²¹⁰ It has three compound forms; (1) Yahweh Elohim (Gen. 2:4) meaning “LORD God,” (2) Adonai Yahweh (Gen.15:1) meaning “Lord GOD,” (3) Yahweh Saboath (I Sam. 1:3) meaning

²⁰³ Erickson, “*Christian*,” 245.

²⁰⁴ Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., “Name,” *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopaedia of the Bible*, ed., Merrill C. Tenney, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1977), IV, 363.

²⁰⁵ Jack B. Scott, “Ih,” *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, eds. R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer Jr. And Bruce K. Waltke, (Chicago: Moody), 1980/1989, I, 41.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.* , I, 42.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

²¹⁰ Victor P. Hamilton, “haya,” *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, eds. R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer Jr. and Bruce K. Walke, (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), I, 213.

“LORD of Armies or Host.” The final name for God found in the Old Testament is “Adon” or “Adonai.” It is a term used both for God and men carrying the basic meaning of “Lord” or “Master.”²¹¹ In Psalm 110:1 Adonai signifies the Son, and in Genesis 24:9 it is used to describe Abraham who is a human being.

From these names and their compound forms it is quite apparent that God is maximally a powerful being. As a non-contingent being his existence is independent of any other sources. Though ascribing mighty power to God, His names do not in themselves define what is meant by “omnipotent.” In Job 42:2 it is said of God that He can do anything which He purposes. “I know that you can do all things; no plan of yours can be thwarted.” Also prophet Jeremiah proclaims, “Ah, Sovereign Lord, you have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and outstretched arm. Nothing is too hard for you” (Jer.32:17).

Not only in the Old Testament is God said to be able to do all things, but also, the New Testament expresses the same idea. In Matthew, Jesus said, “with God all things are possible” (Matt. 19:26). The apostle Paul echoes the same note, “I can do all things through Him who strengthens me” (Phil.4:13), and in Ephesians he speaks of “the surpassing greatness of His power” (Eph. 1:29). There is little question that the Bible teaches that God is omnipotent, but does it in any way qualify this term?

There have been proponents of the limitation of God’s power on the other side of scholarships. On the one side are those who espouse that God’s omnipotence would allow him to perform any actions or states of affairs. This is the most demanding definition of the term. Barhop says of the Scholastics that they “claimed that God by virtue of His absolute power could affect contradictions, and could even sin and

²¹¹ Robert L. Alden, “dn,” *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, eds., R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer Jr. and Bruce K. Walke, (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), I, 12.

annihilate Himself.”²¹² Descartes held to a similar view: “Descartes had contended, in one of his discussions, that God could alter mathematical truths if He so willed, and hence it is possible that 2+3 will equal 6 tomorrow.”²¹³

On the other side of the coin is a less demanding definition which seems to be much more accurate. Scripture seems to support a concept of God’s omnipotence that is limited in nature. The Bible says that there are things which God cannot do: (1) He cannot lie (Num.23:19), (2) He cannot repent (Num.23:19), (3) He cannot look on evil with pleasure (Hab.1:13), (4) He cannot be tempted by evil (Jam.1:13), (5) He cannot deny himself (2Tim.2:13), and (6) He cannot change (Mal.3:6). Even though there are some passages which may seem to deny the last one concerning His immutability, for example Genesis 6:6, Exodus 32: 14 and Jonah 3:10, these passages do not say that God’s nature is actually changing. Rather they should be understood as men experiencing the different attributes of God in accord with their response or change of heart. Thiessen says,

Immutability is not to be confused with immobility. God is active and enters into relationship with the changing man. In these relationships it is necessary for an unchangeable God to change in his dealings with changing man in order to remain unchangeable in His character and purposes...the God who cannot repent (Num.23:19), repents (i.e., his dealings with man change) when man changes from evil to good, or good to evil (Gen.6:6; Exod. 32:14; Jer. 18:7-11; Joel 2:13; Jonah 3:10).²¹⁴

It is important to understand that these limitations in no way subtract from God’s omnipotence. The words of St. Augustine are reassuring,

We do not put the life of God and the foreknowledge of God under any necessity when we say that God must live an eternal life and must know all things. Neither do we lessen his power when we say He cannot die or be

²¹² Berkhof, “*Systematic*,” 80.

²¹³ Avrum Stroll, *Introduction to Philosophy*, 3rd ed., (New York: Holt, Reinhart and Winston, 1979), 242.

²¹⁴ Thiessen, “*Lectures*,” 83.

deceived. This is the kind of inability which, if removed, would make God less powerful than He is. God is rightly called omnipotent, even though He is unable to die and be deceived. We call Him omnipotent because He does whatever He wills to do and suffers nothing that He does not will to suffer. He would not, of course be omnipotent, if He had to suffer anything against His will. It is precisely because He is omnipotent that for Him some things are impossible.²¹⁵

Two further refinements need to take place in order to have the best and most accurate definitions of omnipotence. Up to this point, omnipotence could be defined as the power to instantiate any logically possible states of affairs. Some like Plantinga have argued that this definition is not adequate. Their reasoning is similar to the following, take for example, in order to explain this; Professor J. Nkansah will launch his *African Christian Thought* book in the year 2013. This is a logically possible state of affairs that an omnipotent being could conceivably bring about, but there is just one problem.

Again to explain a state of logical impossibility in relation to God's omnipotence, take for example, Professor J. Nkansah launched his *African Christian Thought* book in 2010. Hence, this state of affairs is impossible for even an omnipotent being to bring about, since the past is unchangeable. Henceforth a new definition is necessary. It might be stated as, the power to instantiate any logically possible state of affairs in which the realities of the world coincide with history. In other words, God's omnipotence would be such that not even He would be able to reverse time and change history. Stephen T. Davis supports this view:

No definition of 'omnipotent' will be acceptable, then, if it entails that an omnipotent being must be able to change the past-either directly, e.g. by bringing it about today that Hitler was assassinated in 1938, or indirectly e.g. by bringing it about that next week. I will shake hands with the person who assisted Hitler in 1938. A necessary condition for a state of affairs being 'bringing about' at a certain time, then, is that it be logically compatible with everything that occurred prior to that time.²¹⁶

²¹⁵ Norman Geisler, *What Augustine's Says*, (Michigan: Baker Book House), 1982, 56.

²¹⁶ Stephen T. Davis, *Logic and the Nature of God*, (Michigan: Baker Book House, 1983), 80.

The refinement centres on the will of God. It is not contrary to God's omnipotence, for Him to limit himself; in fact this may be even a greater display of his *potentia absoluta*. Quoting Charnock, Berkhof says,

Absolute, is that power whereby God is able to do that which He will not do, but is possible to be done; ordinate is that power whereby God doth that which He hath ordained or appointed to be exercised; which are not distinct powers, but one and the same power. His ordinate power is part of His absolute for he had not power to do every-thing that He could will; He might not have power to do everything that He doth will.²¹⁷

Further Berkhof adds, "But the actual exercise of God's power does not represent its limits. God could do more than that, if he were so minded."²¹⁸

Omnipotence power is therefore the power to instantiate any logically possible state of affairs in which the realities of the world coincide with history as long as it is consistent with that which he has appointed.

Having arrived at a satisfactory definition of God's omnipotence which is consistent with the study of the Scriptures and logic, it is now time to make a most worthy consideration in the context of the study. This is an obligation to examine the historical facts that explain God's redemptive battle with evil and its forces in human history. God conquered Satan through his coming into time through Jesus Christ's death on a cross and his resurrection in this historical battle.

God's Redemptive Battle with Evil in History

A great battle has been around since the beginning of time, between God and Satan, over who is the supreme king over human history and destiny. This war is likened to the conflict between light and darkness, and good and evil. The researcher also indicated earlier that the problem of evil in the world is indeed the conflict

²¹⁷ Berkhof, "Systematic," 80.

²¹⁸ Ibid.

between God and Satan. But God had a plan to save mankind from evil and deliver history from the rule of Satan and his fallen angels to himself. God's plan for redemption was exemplified through the incarnation of Jesus Christ, his crucifixion, resurrection and his ascension to heaven. Through all these stages, the battle between God and Satan was extended to the earth through Incarnation as the first step in the extension of the battle to the world.

Incarnation

When Jesus Christ became man through incarnation, when a full and undiminished divine nature as well as a full and perfect human nature was united in the historical person of Jesus of Nazareth, the plan was to destroy the yoke of Satan and all his evil insinuations. Paul writes, "But when the fullness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons" (Gal.4:4-5, KJV).

Jesus had also proclaimed this of himself, "For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45, KJV). Christ further proclaimed, "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10, KJV). Christ came to give his life as a ransom so that humanity can be delivered from mental, moral and natural evil through his atoning death on the cross. And to be like human beings who suffer problems of mental, moral and natural evil so that he can save and heal them in identifying with them. Berkhof says "He laid aside the divine majesty, the majesty of the sovereign Ruler of the universe."²¹⁹ Erickson succinctly explains this more:

What Jesus gave up in coming to earth was immense. From a position of "equality with God," which entails the immediate presence of the Father and

²¹⁹ Berkhof, "*Systematic*," 332.

the Holy Spirit as well as the continuous praise of the angels, he came to earth, where he had none of these. The magnitude of what he gave up is beyond our power even to imagine, for we have never seen what heaven is like. When we arrive there, we will probably be overwhelmed by the splendour of what he left. He who became a pauper was the highest prince.²²⁰

In his coming to destroy the works of Satan and his cohorts, Christ reversed the course on which Adam by his sin started humanity and thus becomes a new leaven in the life of mankind. The pagan and the evil systems in the world were shaken. God's presence on earth in the person of Jesus Christ indicated that mental, moral and natural evil was to receive its final response. Wayne Grudem writes,

Just as God had promised that the "seed" of the woman (Gen. 3:15) will ultimately destroy the serpent, so God brought about it by his own power, not through mere human effort. The virgin birth is an unmistakable reminder that salvation can never come through human efforts, but must be the work of God himself.²²¹

That is, when human cultures and religious efforts and practices failed in providing the solutions to the problem of evil, Christ came in the likeness of man to atone for sin and all evil in the world. In his sinless and perfection, Christ assumed a fallen human nature, and purified sinful humanity from evil and presented it before the Father as the first fruits of a saved humanity. As humans are saved from sin, whose result is the problem of evil, they behold the nature of Christ and celebrate a life free from all evil intimidations.

In his incarnate life Jesus encountered temptation, the dead, the demon possessed, the blind, the cripple, and the lepers, and the bleeding women, and baggers, teachers of the law and forces of nature. All these encounters are indicators that Christ came into the domain of mental, moral and natural evil. It brings us to the flashpoint of Jesus' conflict with Satan and the fallen angels whom he expelled from

²²⁰ Erickson, "*Christian*," 696.

²²¹ Grudem, "*Systematic*," 530.

heaven. He came to their domain of evil rule, the world, and had to face them both in his humanity and divinity. Time came when Jesus prayed for forty days, after which he was tempted to turn stones into bread to prove that he was the Son of God, and bow down to worship Satan so that Satan would give him part of his kingdom (Matt. 4: 1-11; Lk. 4:1-13).

Could Jesus submit to Satan's proposals? Could he commit evil he came to destroy? Could he not deliver humanity from evil such as mental, moral and natural evil? Since Christ came to take the power and authority which God gave Satan over humankind (Luke 4:6), it would be beyond all imagination if Jesus could submit to Satan and forfeit the purpose of his mission to the world. He came to destroy the works of Satan, bring humanity back to God, and finally establish the kingdom of God absolutely free from the problems of evil.

When Christ first appeared in the temple and a scroll was handed to him, he read that the Spirit of the Lord was upon him and has anointed him to preach the good news to the poor. Moreover, he came to proclaim freedom for the prisoners, and to heal the blind and set the captives free (Luke 4:18-19). Whether Christ came to save from spiritual blindness or set the captives free, through his death and resurrection, he came to set human beings free from the chains of evil forces of this world through his salvation.

As one who has power over mental, moral and natural evil, Jesus spoke by his authority and command, and his words came out with truth and certainty, and he never doubted his assertions and statements. For instance, he asserted that "heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away" (Mk 13:31). The words of Jesus are eternal and powerful, and it is only by his words that the problem of evil can be solved. No ordinary human being could make claims such as "the Kingdom of

God is within you” (Luke 17:21). He often called nations to “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near” (Matt 4:17). With the proclamation of the nearness of the kingdom of God, time had come for the termination of the rule of Satan and evil forces of this evil world.

Whenever he spoke, people “were amazed at His teaching” (Matt. 7:28, 29; Luke 4:32), and “No one ever spoke the way this man does” (John 7:46). The sense of finality that was in his proclamations, and assertions indicated that his words were the very words of God—the healer of all evil afflictions. Jesus asked his audience “Can any of you prove me guilty of sin? If I am telling the truth, why don’t you believe me” (Jn. 8:48). In one occasion the teachers of the law opposed Jesus and accused him of being an illegitimate child. Jesus said, “You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father’s desires” (Jn. 8:32-33, 37, 39, 42-44). The teachers of the law did not know that Christ had come to deliver humanity and the world from the severest aspects of the problem of evil; mental, moral and natural evil.

Apart from his verbal proclamations, Jesus did things which made further proofs of the agency of his mission on earth. These were mainly his miraculous works against human sufferings and the presence of Satan and his demons; for he did come to destroy the works of the devil (1Jn 3:1-3). At Gadarenes he healed a demon possessed person (Mk 5:1-9); at Bethany he raised Lazarus back to life (Jn. 11:23-27); at Bethsaida he gave sight back to the blind (Mk 8:22-26); at sea of Galilee he calmed the storm(Lk 8:22-25); he made the lame and cripple walk (Matt. 15:29-31); and he also fed five thousand with five loaves and two small fish (Jn. 6:1-14). If Jesus healed the demon possessed human being and raised Lazarus from the dead, what is mental, moral and natural evil before Christ?

Not even the greatest ancestors like, Gor Mahia, Lwanda Magere, Obondo Mumbo, to mention but a few, could redeem the Luo from the mystery of evil. Who among these Luo heroes ever did things even in Lake Victoria such as calming the raging storm of the Sea of Galilee as Jesus Christ did? (Mk. 4:35-40). Not even the great Luo legends, Gor Mahia and Lwanda Magere could calm any storms of Lake Victoria. Occults, sorceries and witchcrafts practices, and unspeakable rites and sacrifice to the dead among the Luo people are rendered powerless before whom mental, moral and natural evils fall.

God the creator had a plan which also brought about the crucifixion of Jesus Christ during his incarnate period. In being the ultimate sacrifices, above the sacrifices of mere human beings, animals and birds, Jesus “himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness” (1 Peter 2:24) that comes from God who can only be satisfied with the death of his own Son on a cross of crucifixion as the perfect sacrifice.

Crucifixion

This is the second stage of the battle of God and Satan toward conquering evil powers. Crucifixion demonstrates the full conquest of all demonic spirits of mental, moral and natural evil. At the climax of the battle between God and Satan, occasions often arose which demanded that Jesus must die. Christ’s death was in the plan of God all along from the beginning so that through Christ’s death all operations of evil are conquered.

The most serious accusations levelled against Jesus were that he claimed equality with God. In John 10: 31-39, Jesus had rebuked the Jews for how they do not understand Scripture. Jesus then says in verse 37 that if he does the works of the Father then they should believe that he is God’s Son and that they will know that the

Father is in him and that he is in the Father (John 10:31-39). That Jesus Christ and the heavenly Father were one in the fight against Satan and all his afflictions in the message of the cross. When Christ was crucified on a cross at Calvary, it was because of humanity's sin and against Satan and his evil actions in the world.

James Montgomery Boice says this of crucifixion: "It is that for which the incarnation took place, and to which the resurrection took place."²²² Boice adds, "crucifixion is a theme of the Old Testament: the Old Testament sacrifices, given to Israel by God for pedagogical purposes prefigured Christ suffering."²²³

The suffering of Christ and his sacrificial death on a cross became the fulfilment of every form of worship and sacrificial systems in all human cultures. No amount of sacrificial atonement would be able to appease the fears demons inflicting mental, moral and natural evils on humans and the world. Aspects of religious and cultural practices that depict the worship of ancestors and fears of evil spirits can now be consummated to their end, with Christ being accepted by faith to reign supreme over every mental, moral and natural evils among the Luo people.

Erickson asserts, "The decisive battle in the war between good and evil was fought and won by Christ in the crucifixion and resurrection. Satan has been defeated... although he continues to fight on."²²⁴ By the defeat of Satan on a cross, the Luo people can by faith and salvation through Christ, celebrate their victory over the forces of darkness which operate within their cultural and religious practices. Other cultural and religious aspects that are attached to the world of ancestors and evil spirits will also be transformed by the teaching of the Scriptures.

²²² Boice, "*Foundations*," 558.

²²³ *Ibid.* , 559.

²²⁴ Erickson, "*Christian*," 495.

In that fateful night at the Garden of Gethsemane Jesus felt sorrow even to death because of humanity's sinful condition and man's desperate need for salvation.

Grudem explains,

The suffering of Jesus intensified as he drew near to the cross. He told his disciples of something of the agony he was going through when he said "My soul is very sorrowful even to death" (Matt 26:38). It was especially on the cross that Jesus' sufferings for us reached their climax; for it was there that he bore the penalty for sin and died in our place.²²⁵

Boice echoes Grudem's thought: "In it God has made an atonement for sin by which the guilt of sin was removed and we, who once were far off, are now brought near by the blood of Christ (Eph 2:13)."²²⁶ The blood that now brings us to God is the perfect blood that can appease forces of darkness. The Luo religious systems of atonement through sacrifices and rituals undertakings are not only, adequate but leads to destruction and enslavement to Satan.

On March 7th, 2012, Rev. Wilson Odede, informed the researcher that pleasing the ancestors, for any identified evil, such as murder, defilement, adultery, evil spirits afflictions, death, betrayal, quarrels, fights, natural disasters, sicknesses, breakings of taboos etc., was to transfer a particular misfortune to a human being, animal, hens, dogs, cats, snakes or cover it. There is no permanent solution to such problems of evil, among the Luo people, since the process often required continuous sacrifices when misfortunes persisted as evil spirits continued to torment families.

Crucifixion of Jesus Christ on the cross of redemption is the truth that transcends absolutely all the religious and cultural experiences. The act of crucifixion of Jesus indicates that all elements of the problems of evil in every culture can be destroyed. John Stott explains this truth: "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the

²²⁵ Grudem, "*Systematic*," 572.

²²⁶ Boice, "*Foundations*," 559.

law by becoming a curse for us' (Gal. 3:10, 13)."²²⁷ All the cultural and religious laws are laws which are burdensome, and they promote practices that favour the operations of demonic spirits.

When Jesus redeemed us from 'the curse of law', by dying for us on the cross, God has declared that it is only the powers of the blood of Christ that can demolish all of human cultural and religious strongholds. When nonbelievers among the Luo people, knowing that the crucifixion of Christ was also for them, will turn to Christ in repentance and faith in God, the light of the gospel will shine in their hearts as they are set free from sorceries, witchcrafts and pagan religious and cultural practices to experience full deliverance from mental, moral and natural evil.

Sinless and perfect in every sphere of his being and character Jesus is the saviour of the world God approved. In this approval Jesus bears the eternal mandate to deal with the problem of evil in all spheres of human existence. Although the researcher did not mention "scapegoat" either in chapters 4 or 5, in the Luo religious and cultural traditions, scapegoat is usually a white goat, black sheep, or black bull, white cock or chicken, a boy child, a relative. Jesus, as the scapegoat, came not only to atone for our sins, but to deliver humanity from mental, moral and natural evil bondages.

Animals and birds would be used as scapegoats to avert a disease, an imminent disaster, drought, poor harvests, barrenness, poverty, wealth acquisition or wealth protection etc. Animals and chickens would be slaughtered at convenience sights, and human being die through accidents, sudden death, short illness, be swallowed by a python or a crocodile, killed by leopards or a lion or buffalos, thunderstorm and lightening, small fight in the village, snake bites or insects bites.

²²⁷Stott, *"The Cross,"* 137.

After the death of the victims, the family or the clan will be certain of being out of mental, moral and natural disasters.

Among the Luo people, no matter how successful all the above sacrificial systems may seem, the results are temporary with multiple direct cultural, social and spiritual problems to individuals, family or the clan, and the fears of evil will persist with dangers anticipated. It is only by the blood of Christ that the Luo people will be saved from their sin and demonic controls. Paul says, Jesus “is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him” (Col 1:15-16).

At his death Jesus Christ cried, a cry of dereliction (Isa 53:7; Ps. 22.1). Mental, moral and natural evil of all ages heaped on him as their victim. He was in the state of having been abandoned and became dilapidated because of mental, moral and natural evil. Stott says, “He could not save himself and others simultaneously. He chose to sacrifice himself in order to save the world.”²²⁸ With whole mankind in mind, the death of Christ involved the full council of heaven. Stott illustrates this: “If the Father ‘gave the Son’, the Son ‘gave himself’”.

If the Gethsemane ‘cup’ symbolized the wrath of God, it was nevertheless ‘given’ by the Father (John 18:11) and voluntarily ‘taken’ by the Son.”²²⁹ Berkhof says “At the same time He died a cursed death, and thus gave evidence of the fact that He became a curse for us, Deut.21:23; Gal.3:13.”²³⁰ The content of curse that Christ

²²⁸ Stott, “*The Cross*,” 92.

²²⁹ *Ibid.*, 178

²³⁰ Berkhof, “*Systematic*,” 340.

took upon himself on the cross, were mental, moral and natural evil which were crucified with him, yet he rose again on the third day.

Resurrection

Christianity stands or falls before evil forces by the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ. This is the foundation of Christian faith and confession against all forces of darkness, and the satanic forces associated with mental, moral and natural evil. In 1 Corinthians 15, Paul says, “if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is without foundation, and so is your faith. In addition, we are found to be false witnesses about God, because we have testified about God that He raised up Christ – whom He did not raise up... And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins” (vs. 14-15, 17). In a more detailed model, Erickson explains:

Paul’s theme is that physical death has been defeated through Christ’s resurrection. Humans still die, but death’s finality has been removed. But Paul attributes to sin the power that physical death possesses in the absence of resurrection. But with Christ’s overcoming of physical death, sin itself (and thus spiritual death) is defeated (vv.55-58). Apart from Christ’s resurrection from physical death, we would remain in our sins, that is, we would remain spiritually dead (v.17).²³¹

Thiessen adds,

Many admit the necessity of the death of Christ who denies the importance of the bodily resurrection of Christ. But that Christ’s physical resurrection is vitally important is evident from the fundamental connection of this doctrine with Christianity. In 1 Cor. 15:12-19 Paul shows that everything stands or falls with Christ’s bodily resurrection: apostolic preaching is vain (v. 14), the apostles are false witnesses (v. 15), the Corinthians are yet in their sins (v.17), those fallen asleep in Christ have perished (v. 18), and Christians are of all men most miserable (v. 19), if Christ has not risen.²³²

²³¹ Erickson, “*Systematic*,”

²³² Thiessen, “*Lectures in Systematic*,”243

The whole of New Testament faith and teaching centres on the confession and conviction that the crucified Jesus is the Son of God established and vindicated as such “by the resurrection from the dead according to the Spirit of holiness” (Rom. 1:4). Resurrection of Christ not only assures us that Jesus is God, but also that death has been conquered, and all sicknesses and evil forces of nature have been healed and pacified.

William Lane Craig is correct when he notes the relevance of the resurrection now and for the future:

Against the dark background of modern man’s despair, the Christian proclamation of the resurrection is a bright light of hope. The earliest Christians saw Jesus’ resurrection as both the vindication of His personal claims and as a harbinger of our own resurrection to eternal life. If Jesus rose from the dead, then His claims are vindicated and our Christian hope is sure; if Jesus did not rise, our faith is futile and we fall back into despair.²³³

Boice says,

But if Jesus is living, then his life can be lived out in us and genuine holiness is possible. This happens by “the immeasurable greatness of his power in us who believe, according to the working of his great might which he accomplished in Christ when he raised him from the dead” (Eph. 1:19-20).²³⁴

Boice has this detailed explanation to make on the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

On Mars Hill Paul proclaimed that God “has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness, by a man whom he has appointed, and of this he has given assurance to all men by raising him from the dead”(Acts 17:31). Christ spoke on final judgment when he was on earth, claiming that he would be the judge. The fact that God raised him from the dead is proof of his claims. It is a pledge that the judgment day is coming.²³⁵

²³³ William Lane Craig, *Reasonable Faith: Christian Truth And Apologetics*, (Wheaton: Crossway, 1994), 255.

²³⁴ Boice, “*Foundations*,” 345.

²³⁵ *Ibid.* , 347.

Erickson sums up this resurrection story: “The initial stage of the age to come had already appeared in the resurrection of Jesus. Paul realized that, having died and risen with Christ, he is already being transformed and will receive in his new and heavenly body at the moment of physical death.”²³⁶ After this victorious resurrection and defeat of Satan and his forces of evil by Jesus, God approved all these by exalting him through his ascension. Resurrection proves that all rebellious angels responsible for chaos in the world have their place reserved in hell.

Ascension and Exaltation of Christ

Christ’s ascension was triumphant over Satan and his forces of evil and all that attacks and undermines creaturely existence. Ascension and exaltation of Christ is a declaration that human mind can be set free from evil torments, morals can be transformed and nature can be harmonised. Although direct confrontation of sin and forces of evil were and are no longer over, but in his exaltation, Satan and the fallen angels had been sentenced to everlasting damnation, and all evil actions to be vanquished finally in future. Torrance explains,

the exaltation of human nature into the life of God does not mean the disappearance of man or the swallowing up of human and creaturely being in the infinite ocean of the divine Being, but rather that human nature, remaining creaturely and human, is yet exalted in Christ to share in God’s life and glory.²³⁷

Even before his ascension Christ was exalted. In John 20: 17 Jesus appears to Mary Magdalene and forbade her to hold him. He was about to ascend to His Father, and the nature of the disciples’ fellowship with Him were of a different sort. The disciples were no longer going to have His physical presence; they were not to relate

²³⁶ Erickson, “*Christian*,” 1187.

²³⁷ Thomas F. Torrance, trans. & ed., *The School of Faith: The Catechisms of the Reformed Church*, (London: James Clarke & Co: 1959), 135.

to him by physical sight, hearing, and touch. The ascension was a bodily departure from this present world. That is,

Physically, the Ascension meant a complete change of conditions, the passing into a mode of existence having no longer direct physical relations with our ordinary experience; whither we cannot follow by the exercise of our sensitive intelligence, and which in our lack of material for comparison we cannot even imaginatively picture.²³⁸

When the ascension of Christ indicates a changed condition for himself, it means that the Luo people do not need to be where they are spiritually forever. As much as it is true that all mental, moral and natural healings are now possible, Christ went to prepare a place for his own, John 14:23; Ephesians 2:6, and as guarantee of our entrance into Heaven where he intercedes for us. Guthrie asserts, “The work of mediation between God and man depended on the entrance into heaven of the mediator, as the intercessory nature of the Jewish high priest depended on his gaining access to the holy of holies.”²³⁹

The gaining of access to the holy of holies is one of our guarantees that mental, moral and natural evils have met their response. He sent the Holy Spirit, the third Person of the trinity as a gift to the church (Eph.4:7-13). It is through the actions of the Holy Spirit that Christ now heals all human sicknesses, and delivers humans from demonic possession.

From this evil world he had redeemed, Christ entered into his place at the right hand of God as his coronation, and sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high (Matt. 26: 64; Hebrews 1:3). Jesus was given glory and dominion, as the place of distinction as the Psalmist had said: The Lord says to my Lord: Sit at My right hand,

²³⁸ James Hastings, et al., ed., *A Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels*. 2vols. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark), 1906-1908. 1:125.

²³⁹ Donald Guthrie, *The Pastoral Epistles: An Introduction and Commentary*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, (London: Tyndale Press, 1957), 399.

until I make Thine enemies a footstool for thy feet” (Psa. 110:1). The enemies that Jesus had put down at his feet were the malevolent powers of mental, moral and natural evil.

And “It is therefore, at the feet of a man in whom all things dwells the fullness of God-head, that all principalities and powers bow themselves in willing subjection and adoring love.”²⁴⁰ Principalities and powers also included all the hosts of spirits that cause mental, moral and natural evils to humanity.

Guthrie explains, “The enthronement idea is intended as a public demonstration of sovereignty, as a result of which universal homage is finally secured.”²⁴¹ This is “an intercessory presence. Satan accuses us, but our Priest makes intercession for us. He sanctifies our worship.”²⁴² It is the Holy Spirit who reveals to us about the exalted Christ, and carries the work of salvation in humanity. Through his salvation Christ, delivers human race from the harsh rule of human religion and culture, where humans are accused by Satan through mental, moral and natural evil.

Actions of the Holy Spirit

The age of the fulfilment, the deliverance from all mental, moral and natural depravities which came, had come through Jesus, and the Holy Spirit was and is still the true sign of this realisation (Acts 2:33, Joel 2:28-32). This realisation includes the knowledge that humans should no longer fear evil spirits for God had come in his Spirit to subdue all the evil causing the problem of evil. The sign of this has been

²⁴⁰ Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, 3 vols. (Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1968), 2:637.

²⁴¹ Guthrie, “*The Pastoral*,” 399.

²⁴² Berkhof, “*Systematic*,” 403.

revealed to humanity, not by traditional ancestral spirits, but by the Holy Spirit of God (1Peter 1: 10-12).

Francis Kimani Githieya says that “the Holy Spirit is part of the Godhead and not the spirit of Saints or an ancestor.”²⁴³ He explains further, “when we attempt to compare God’s Spirit with that of the ancestors, we end up with a faulty concept of Trinity.”²⁴⁴ As a redeemer and a member of the Godhead, the Holy Spirit determines the limits and operations of evil spirits in their ministries of mental, moral and natural evils. He is the agent of healing and stabilisation of the mental, moral and natural torments in the world. By his infinite power, he combats Satan and all cultural forces of evil that inflict humanity with all manners of evil.

The Holy Spirit is the power that gives visions of the past, present and future, and reveals even the secret things of God in his eternity. All those who accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and having renounced all the evil deeds in their hearts and minds, invited God the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit in their hearts. When salvation comes to humans, the Holy Spirit heals the mind, transforms moral characters and restores harmony to the natural world.

Satanic forces will have no power to inflict mental, moral and natural injuries to the one who has come into union with God through Christ in his covenant of salvation affected by the Holy Spirit. Berkhof says,

As the covenant in which God made provisions for the salvation of sinners is called the covenant of grace, as the mediator of the covenant is said to have appeared “full of grace,” so that we can receive out of this fullness “grace for grace,” John 1:16, 17, so the Holy Spirit is called “the Spirit of grace,” since He takes the “grace of Christ” and confers it on us.²⁴⁵

²⁴³ Francis K. Githieya, *The Freedom of the Spirits: African Indigenous Churches in Kenya*, (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1997), 194.

²⁴⁴ Ibid.

²⁴⁵ Berkhof, “*Systematic*,” 426.

O' Donavan says, "The Holy Spirit has the power to change people's characters and behaviours, and to help them become more and more like Christ (2 Cor. 3:18; Eph 3:20)."²⁴⁶ He adds, "By reading the book of Acts, we discover that it is the Holy Spirit who is most active in the world today, although the world is almost totally unaware of His presence and activity (John 14:17)."²⁴⁷

The book of Acts of course records many instances in which the Holy Spirit acts miraculously in an unusual situation of evil on behalf of the apostles. John says, "When He (Holy Spirit) comes, He will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgement" (Jn. 16:8).

The Holy Spirit is the secret inner life present in the life of a Christian which enables the believer to shine as moral and spiritual light to the world darkened by sin (Matt.5:14-6). Through the Spirit's presence, Jesus was and is the light of the world (John 8:12). The Holy Spirit restrains evil in the world, including forces of evil that tend to control human mind, morals and nature as a whole. O'Donovan says,

The Holy Spirit restrains much of the evil that people would like to do. He is probably the One referred to in 2 Thess. 2:7 (NASB), who restrains lawlessness. In Genesis, God told Abimelech, the king of Gerar, that He had restrained Abimelech from committing adultery with Abraham's wife Sarah when Abimelech had taken Sarah as wife (Gen. 20:6).²⁴⁸

The presence of the Holy Spirit restrains much evil in that without him the world would be an abyss of evil. Without him every human would suffer from mental, moral and natural evil. The Holy Spirit also convicts people with the sense of guilt concerning their sin, and warns them that there will be a judgement and reckoning for

²⁴⁶ O' Donavan, "*Biblical Christianity*," 128.

²⁴⁷ Ibid.

²⁴⁸ Ibid. , 134.

their sin. Because of this, he pleads with people to repent and turn to Christ and change their lives (John 16:8-13). O'Donovan says,

Millions of Africans can testify to the same life changing power of the Holy Spirit. He has rescued them from witchcraft, demon possessions, criminal violence, sexual sin, drugs addictions, and from a thousand of other sins. He has given them a whole new life in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17). Every true Christian is an example of the life changing power of the Holy Spirit. It is God's purpose to change the wretched sinful men into the character of Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit."²⁴⁹

It is the Holy Spirit dwelling in us who gives us the desire, as well as the strength to change and to believe in Christ (Phil. 2:13), even though our sinful minds, morals and nature strongly resists those changes (Gal. 5:17). It is only when we ourselves choose to obey the urgings of the Holy Spirit that God gives us the strength to change and overcome the forces of human religions and culture.

The Holy Spirit, regenerates (Titus 3:5), seals ((Rom 8:23, Philippians 3:20-21), strengthens and encourages (Col.1:29, 1Cor 15:10; Judges 14: 5-6), empowers prayers (Rom. 8:26; Rom.8:27; 1 Cor.14:14-15), illuminates (John 14:26; John 16:13, 1 Cor. 2:10-12), Guides (Rom. 8:14, Acts 16: 6-7), overcomes temptation (Matt. 26:40-46; 1 John 4:4), interprets the love of God (Rom. 5:5), fosters unity (Eph. 4:3-4) Rom. 8:5-6; Gal. 5:6; Col. 3:12-14).

All the above ministries of the Holy Spirit bring an end to all problems of evil in human culture. Mental, moral and natural evil are here eradicated through complete work of the Holy Spirit in humans and the society. The future world is experienced and celebrated in the Spirit, and the glimpse of the future rule free from evil is shown in the daily lives of the people.

Referring to the Galatians 5:25, F. F. Bruce says, "If the Spirit is the source of our life, let the Spirit also direct our course. That their new life in Christ was lived by

²⁴⁹ O' Donavan, "*Biblical Christianity*," 137.

the spirit they knew; the moral corollary of this, Paul reminds them, is that conduct should be governed by the Spirit.”²⁵⁰ The Holy Spirit opens blind eyes so that the unregenerate may see the truth by un-fogging their minds of the clouds of evil.

Human morals will be transformed, nature harmonised when humans understand what they see, and gently woos their wills until they come to place their faith in Christ our Lord and saviour.

The Second Coming of Christ

In the book of the Acts of the apostles, after conquering all forces of evil in the world, Luke records, “This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven”(1:11). It was important for the disciples to see Jesus taken up into heaven, since they knew without doubt that he was God, and that his home was in heaven.

The two white-robed men mentioned here were angels who proclaimed to the disciples that one day Jesus will return in the same way he had gone. This event shows that human history is moving toward a specific point, to the glorious return of Jesus to judge and rule the world (II Thess. 2:18; I Tim. 6:14; II Tim. 4:1-8; Titus 2:13). Christ in his holiness and divine splendour will hit all evil empires and mental, moral and natural problems of evil will be no more.

The vision of the rider on the white horse, in the book of Revelation, is a vision which sets forth symbolically the age-long struggle between the forces of evil and good with the promise of victory for the good (Rev. 19:11-21). The binding of Satan had already been announced by Christ (Matt.12:28-29; Jn. 16:8, 11; 12:31).The Gospel whose powers still penetrate human religions and cultures will culminate in

²⁵⁰ F.F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians: a commentary on the Greek text* (Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co: 1982), 157.

the millennium (Rev. 20:2-3). In this period the nations will live in peace because Satan's rebellion (through mental, moral and natural evil) will be ended by the triumphant return of Jesus Christ, followed by the general resurrection, the final judgment, and the eternal state ("Heaven" and "Hell").²⁵¹

The reality of Hell

Apostle Peter says that the angels which sinned (evil spirits that inflict mental, moral and natural evil in the world) were cast into hell and committed to pits of darkness (2 Peter 2:4). In parallel to this it is said "And angels who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode, He has kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day" (Jude 6). Those who worship the beast (Satan) will be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb (Rev.14:10-11). Erickson explains that "this is eternal punishment (Matt. 25: 46), torment (Rev.14:10-11), the bottomless pit (Rev. 9:1-2), the wrath of God (Rom. 2:5), the second death (Rev.21:8), eternal destruction and exclusion from the face of the Lord (2 Thess. 1:9)."²⁵²

John the apostle writes, "The cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake of fires and sulphur, which is the second death" (Rev. 21:8). In a sense, this is the destiny of all the mental, moral and natural evil forces except for the holy angels and saints.

²⁵¹ Stanley J. Grenz, *The Millennial Maze: Sorting out Evangelical Options*, (Illinois: Downers Grove 1992), 72.

²⁵² Erickson, "Christian," 1242.

Reality of Heaven

The idea of heaven in Christian theology is because heaven exists in reality. Heaven is a real place completely and absolutely free from mental, moral and natural evil. Berkhof describes it “as the house of our Father with many mansions, John 14:1, and this description would hardly fit a condition”²⁵³ since “Scripture gives reasons to believe that the righteous will not only inherit heaven, but also the entire new creation, Matt. 5:5; Rev. 21:1-3.”²⁵⁴ The ‘new creation’ implies that the righteous will be in a state of perfection without any presence of mental, moral and natural evil.

Berkhof explains that this experience will be free from “any of the imperfections and disturbances of the present, Matt. 25:46; Rom. 2:7.”²⁵⁵ The enjoyment of the full communion with God as the essence of eternal life will be the climax of the celebration of this life (Rev. 21:3). That is, as Berkhof asserts, the righteous “will see God in Jesus Christ face to face, will find full satisfaction in Him, will rejoice in Him, and will glorify Him.”²⁵⁶ He adds, “Our good works will be the measure of our gracious reward, though they do not merit it. Notwithstanding this, however, the joy with each individual will be perfect and full.”²⁵⁷

²⁵³ Berkhof “*Systematic*,” 737.

²⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

God will bring an end to it all, since mental, moral and natural evil will be rightly answered by its destruction. The future hope that God offers will judge, compensate and put into perspective this present world of evil. Isaiah the prophet and John of the Revelation have the following to say:

The Wolf and the Lamb will feed together. The Lion will eat hay like a cow. But the snakes will eat dust. In those days no one will be hurt or destroyed on my holy mountain, I, the LORD, have spoken” (Isaiah 65:25). And the “Lord will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there will be no more death or sorrow or crying or pain. All these things are gone forever” (Rev. 21:4).

The new spirit, the new heart and the new mind will be restored to human beings in the new paradise where human beings will become new beings. Human beings will live his full life in the life of peace with God, himself and nature above all powers of mental, moral and natural evil dominions.

Conclusion

Sin affected our first parents Adam and Eve as Satan’s rebellion in heaven as the first transgression, and finally evil came to the whole world. The general impact of evil was manifested through six different aspects. At the creation, God gave Satan and humans free will. Thus, it is out of free will that Satan and his loyal angels attempted to overthrow God and take charge of the rulership of the universe. Satan and his fellow angel followers were expelled from heaven. Satan captured, after his arrival on earth, the human free will by deceiving him into disobeying God’s commands. Humans freely chose to disobey God and freely accepted Satan’s proposal. Satan and demons have always fought God’s will on earth since they were expelled from heaven.

Even though the Christian God is omnipotent, it is *possible* that it was not in his (self-controlled power) power to create a world—Luo cultural and religious world—free from mental, moral and natural evil. Thus, there is no logical

inconsistency involved when God, although wholly good, creates a world of free creatures that inflict mental, moral and natural evil among the Luo people. Moreover, there is the possibility that God could not actualize a world—Luo cultural and religious world—containing free creatures that always do the right thing.

That God's omnipotence refers to his transcendence in being able to surpass all realities that oppose his changeless purpose for humanity. In the names ascribed to God are the nature of his character and actions of being able to do all things that please him. His comparison with the Luo concept of God revealed that he is alive and has revealed himself through Jesus Christ because of his intention to relate with humans at a personal level.

God had a plan exemplified through the incarnation, crucifixion, death and resurrection, ascension and the second coming of Christ. We saw the fulfilment of the ages, an end to all evil torments, through the coming of the Holy Spirit who was sent by Christ as he promised. That the purpose for the coming of the Holy Spirit was to empower believer against evil forces and promote God's righteousness. We saw that the second coming of Christ would be for judging Satan and his fallen angels. In future Christ will bring all creation under his authority and condemn Satan and his wicked followers to hell.

All things will be brought to an end, and mental, moral and natural evil will be rightly dealt with and destroyed at the coming of Christ. The future hope that God offers will be realized. He would judge this present world of evil. Glorious minds and glorious morality shall be restored to humans. In their new paradise, humanity will be new beings, enjoying their full life and a life of peace with God and the Lord Jesus Christ—a state and life with absolute freedom from mental, moral and natural evil.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Introduction

This chapter offers the significance and implications of all that has been discussed in the last 4 chapters. It presents a summary, conclusion of the entire research and present recommendations at the end.

Summary

This thesis has dealt with the toughest and most perplexing problems in the study of philosophy of religion since and after the commencement of the Christian thought down through the ages. It is for this reason that this philosophical and theological response to the problem of evil among the Luo people has been an exigent undertaking this far.

Any concerned theologian who wishes to provide an answer to his fellow humans must prepare to think and reason logically. Pastors, evangelists and serious Christians must be able to explain how Christian belief can be compatible with the hurt and suffering from mental, moral and natural evil among humanity. It is a compelling task and duty to account for the existence of evil among the Luo people with the existence of the traditional evangelical concepts of theism.

With human nature being corrupt from the beginning, responding to evils emanating from complex strands of religious and cultural practices, within a particular religious and cultural setting, calls for commitment to holiness, prayers, cultural exegesis, sound biblical hermeneutics, sound theology, and critical thinking. The task

requires humility and simplicity of the mind for the Holy Spirit to use one's intellect in the process of reasoning and discernment of issues.

Significantly there are several aspects of implications of this study which have been exemplified. It has contributed critically to the current investigation and debate on the nature of the mystery of evil in the African cosmology focusing on the Luo people. To those doing theology and religion focusing on the subject of evil, the omnipotence of God, and salvation of Jesus Christ, the theology of the cross and contextual apologetics in view, this study will be helpful.

This study is important for the teachers, pastors and evangelist to re-examine their theology and apologetic approaches to the critical questions emanating from the problems of evil in any religious and cultural contexts. Deeper analysis of the underlying assumptions of the religion and culture of the Luo people has prepared the ground for a critically relevant Gospel message to them, and to effectively bring into their (the Luo) context the nature of Christian truth.

Although this study focuses on the Luo community, the philosophical and theological arguments herein are still applicable to any undertaking in cross cultural dimensions. The impetus for formulating systems for contextual Christian apologetics has been provided and the possibility for this endeavor has been outlaid.

It is an underestimation not to take their belief in God, ancestors, evil spirits, communalism and the natural world into account, when investigating the problem of evil among the Luo people. For the problems of evil in any human community must be discussed in light of their causes and remedies within the context of the various cultural stratum rooted in the community's belief systems. Evil, no matter which way any culture can view it, the phenomenon of its tragedies are a practical reality in the entire human society.

From the religious and cultural stand points, the various responses to these three types of evil were explained as including the punishing of evil persons, application of herbs, animal and human sacrifices, divination and rituals, drums, dance and clapping of hands, dialogues and reconciliation and the celebration of communalism. Unfortunately none of these responses showed the eastern rays of a rising sun of brighter future for the Luo people.

All the cultural and religious remedies prescribed to the problems of evil revolved around humans, ancestors, and evil spirits, yet all these entities remained as problems to each of the mentioned entities and to themselves. No truth tested and justified in its own conceptual religious and cultural contexts will ever yield an eternally redeeming outcome for a people whose belief systems are steeped in their own worldviews.

Unique in itself, this research has shown that free will is a universal notion in human nature. It has been examined both from the African and western philosophical conceptions of the nature of personhood. At creation God endowed Satan and his angels, and humans with the freedom to choose, but unfortunately these creatures used their freedom to cause evil in the world. Although God gave Satan and his minion free will like he did to all humans, he did not create them in his image and likeness, as he did to human beings. Thus, this thesis has shown that evil, whether mental, moral or natural, originates from Satanic and human free will. This thinking and analysis are rare among the evangelical circles in Africa concerned with Christian apologetic on the face of evil that exists in the world.

Wiredu, Gyekye, Augustine, Plantinga and Boyed told us in chapter 2, and much more in the previous chapter, how humanity came into this trouble. Augustine, Plantinga and Boyed have concurred in saying that Satan and his loyal angels

attempted to overthrow God and take charge of the universe. After they were expelled from heaven, they came down to the earth and captured human will and deceived Adam and Eve into disobeying God's commands. All human beings in every culture throughout the ages have faced the misfortunes of all kinds because of these creatures' misuse of their freedom of the will. There are uncountable number of demonic spirits controlling humanity in every way, for they have become immanent in the physical creation and in the network, culture and religion of the Luo people.

Satan's rebellion and the fall of humanity impacted the world in six different ways. That is, the impact of evil was manifested through spiritual, natural, vocational, environmental, social and personal consequences which were analysed. The magnitude of the rule of evil in the world has captured humans in every spheres of their existence, thus creating an impetus for such a complex nature of the problems of evil among the Luo people.

While it is maximally true that though God's eternal decree seems to have rendered the entrance of evil in the world, this is not to make God the cause of evil. It is logically possible for an omnipotent and omniscient God to create a world that contains evil. A world containing creatures that are significantly free is more valuable than a world containing no free creatures at all. No logical inconsistency is involved when God creates a world of free creatures that inflict evil. The implication is that there is the possibility that God could not actualize a world containing free creatures that always do the right things.

Since all evil in the world is broadly moral evil, it was not within the power of God to create a world containing a better a balance of broadly moral good and evil. Since this is the case, as the observer sees it, then no cultural and religious world of a people on this planet, contains a better balance of broadly moral good and evil.

The Christian God in his omnipotence has the ability to accomplish things he wishes to accomplish at any time and at any place in the universe. His names depict his nature and actions of being able to do all things that please him. The true God would be the one who has revealed himself through Jesus Christ to all cultures with an intention to relate with humans at a personal level for salvation. In other words, if the Luo people have to have a hope in a God, their God must be the God of the Bible, not their religious and cultural God of ancestors they elaborately venerate.

The Christian God had a plan of salvation which he accomplished and exemplified through the incarnation, crucifixion, death and resurrection, ascension and through the promise of the second coming of Christ in future. After Christ's ascension the Holy Spirit came with the fulfilment of the ages. The Holy Spirit came to empower believers against sin and evil and to promote God's righteousness in the world through the existence of the Church and its missions.

The second coming of Christ will be for the purpose of judging Satan and his fallen angels, and all the wicked humans and condemn them to eternal damnation. Evil will be rightly answered by its destruction, and the future hope that God offers will judge and compensate, and put into perspectives this present world of evil. In the new paradise humans will be new beings enjoying their full lives in the life of peace with God forever in eternity.

Conclusion

Philosophically it has been proven that God is not the author of evil in whatever the circumstances of his being and actions in this four dimensional universe he created. Although instances of evil teach and remind humans to rely on God and reveal God's love to them, the origin of all evil begins from the misuse of free will which God gave to Satan and humans. All kinds of evil found in any human society

must be attributed to the free will of Satan and his fallen angelic beings, and that of the humans.

The Luo people therefore, since they have free will too, are free to freely choose to abandon evil aspects of their religion and culture, and freely choose Jesus Christ. God freely chose to come down in the person of Jesus Christ who willingly died on cross for human sin. God is freely willing not only to deliver the Luo people from evil, but also is freely willing to come to their hearts and give them eternal life freely. Satan and his angels can choose to do good too, but because of their unredeemable corrupt nature, their decisions to do good will never materialize (since eternity cannot be reversed) in a redemptive sense.

Theologically the problem of mental, moral and natural evil among the Luo people has explanations. Humans who were created by God in his image sinned in the Garden of Eden by disobeying God when they ate the forbidden fruit. The penalty of death was placed on them accompanied with earthly suffering that has come upon all human beings. But through the incarnation, death and resurrection, ascension, and the second coming of Christ, mental, moral and natural problem of evil, though still exist among the Luo, can and will be vanquished forever.

However, this thesis has not tried to answer all the mysterious questions of why mental, moral and natural evil exist in the Luo community. The remaining questions are best left to God, for His ways are infinitely beyond our ways and his will is sometimes beyond our understanding (Prov. 3:5, 6). Christians must note that there are for sure things the Christian (or even the non-Christians) will not be able to understand.

Things which are beyond human comprehensions have to be left up to the God of the Bible who will render hidden things open in the end. Until then, the Luo people

should think of the Christian God as one who loves each of them so much that he became human being, lived a sinless life, and sacrificed himself by stretching out his arms on the cross to pay the their penalty of sin.

However, Christians can now rejoice in the confidence that he or she is able to satisfactorily provide an answer to the problem of evil among the Luo people. No longer does any pastor, evangelist or a theology teacher need to shrug his or her shoulders in indifference, doubt or disdain; rather he or she can appeal to the mind and heart of a Luo questioner, and speak boldly concerning God's attributes of power and goodness. One can now be esteemed with great confidence that the problem of mental, moral and natural evil among the Luo people has been addressed. The researcher has presented the philosophical and theological reasons why such problems of evil exist and how they can be overcome in Luo land.

To the Luo people who will believe in Jesus Christ, he would give life and they shall be saved. Truly, a God who loves like this, is One in which the Luo people can confidently trust with those things they cannot understand in relations to mental, moral and natural evil. The healing of the three problems of evil can come through faith in the saving power of Christ affected by the Holy Spirit, the study of the word of God, holy living and constant prayers. Victory over evil was demonstrated on the cross of Calvary where Christ died for the sin of all humanity.

In the cross, it becomes evident that evil is that which God does not will, and yet at the same time that which he has the power to turn over into an instrument of his saving work. In the cross, the mercy of God and his righteousness unite with his omnipotence and omniscience. The theology of the cross is central to Christian interpretation of and response to suffering. The cross is God's way of overcoming the destructive power in our world. The cross of Christ always stands as solemn and

powerful reminder that God was prepared to suffer in order to redeem the world and that he expects his people to share the same commitment and pain, as they participate in the task of restoring this fallen world to its former glory.

The eternal superiority of Biblical revelation, the work of Jesus Christ on the cross of Calvary, absolutely determines whether all human cultures will fall or stand. It is time for the Luo people to receive the salvation of Jesus Christ, turn God in his love and encounter the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. There is no alternative, yet if this does not happen, the problem of evil among the Luo people will remain a perplexing religious and cultural impediment to their social and economic progress for centuries to come.

Recommendations

For the success of Christian ministries among the Luo people against the problem of evil, the following must be put into consideration: First, church ministers and leaders need to fully understand the Luo religious and cultural philosophy, for a better interpretation and contextualization of the Gospel of Christ among them. Second, for intense witnessing for Christ, Christians there need to learn the art of dialogue, evangelism and Christian apologetics so they can defend God, Scriptures and Christianity against the critics.

Third, there is need to establish theological colleges for theological education among the Luo people for the quick and effective spread of Christianity in the land. Fourthly, Christians in the land need to be encouraged to study the Scriptures and pray always in the name of Jesus Christ, for the displacement of the Luo religion and culture with Christianity and ethics of the kingdom of God, and for the transformation of the Luo culture. This is when the sovereignty of the Holy Spirit will rule supremely over evil spirits and the spirits of ancestors. Then none of the Luo people will again

be intimidated with witchcrafts, sorceries, occultism and the anger of the ancestors; no longer will they fear the torments of mental, moral and natural evil.

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APPENDIX I

Guiding Questions for the Villagers and Their Leaders

1. Who are the Luo People?
2. Is there possibility that there are morally upright people?
3. What are some of the reasons why some people are called bad people?
4. What is your definition of evil?
5. How great is the Luo God?
6. What are the main causes of death?
7. What do witchcraft and sorcerers do?
8. Is Christianity a foreign religion to you?
9. Do you believe in life after death?
10. What happens when some rituals are not observed?
11. What is the root cause of alcoholic and drug addiction in this land?
12. Who are the most evil people in your community?
13. Why would someone die suddenly
14. Who are the ancestors?
15. Why are some people demons possessed?
16. Why some people more successful and others are are not?
17. Do people offer sacrifices to the ancestors?
18. What is the cause of mental sickness? Physical deformation? Moral confusion?
19. Do ancestors have connection with land of the living?

20. What are some of the important taboos that need to be observed?
21. What are main causes of mental insanity, social disorder and disasters?
22. What are the major causes of death?
23. What do you do when someone is dead?
24. How did this universe come into existence?
25. Why do people destroy the lives of each other?
26. How do you respond to evil situations?
27. What is the role of divination and rituals?
28. What are the causes of jealousy?
29. What causes, earthquakes, thunderstorm or droughts?

GUIDING INTERVIEW QUESTIONS CHRISTIANS AND CHURCH

LEADERS

1. Does sorcery and witchcraft exist among Christians?
2. Are there church leaders involved in this practice?
3. Do you know someone who has died from witchcraft?
4. Can witchcraft or sorcery destroy families?
5. Are there people in the community who do not believe in the Bible?
6. What do some Christians do when they are sick or faced with any life problem?
7. What happened to mankind after the fall of Adam
8. How do you define evil?
9. Do you believe in Satan and evil spirits?
10. Is there a hope for resurrection of the dead?
11. Why do you think there is so much evil in the world?
12. Is God the source of evil?

13. Is moral evil a free choice?
14. What is your view about the destiny of the wicked?
 - 11) What are the factors that hinder the growth of Christianity in your area?
15. Who is Jesus Christ to you?
16. Is the idea of heaven and a reality?
17. Is there need for Bible Schools and research institutions in the land? Why?
18. Will this world one day be freed from powers of evil?
19. What hinders the progress of the community?
20. Are there witchdoctors attending your church?
21. Do know of any sorcerer or a witchdoctor?
22. Do you fear an evil person?
23. Why are there some people who physically and mentally sick?
24. What is the root course of evil
25. What are some of the reasons why people become sick?
26. Do you dream of your ancestors?
27. What do you think about the death of Jesus Christ?
28. Define the Holy Spirit in relations to ancestral spirits
29. Why do some people hate those who are successful?
30. How many Christian schools exist in your area?
31. In what ways would the church engage in human development in the area?
32. What sort of infrastructure would the like to be engaged in?
33. Are there needs for more churches and Christian schools in the land?
34. Will this world come to an end?
35. Can God use evil to accomplish his will?

GUIDING INTERVIEW QUESTIONS WITH THE SOCERER'S AND WITCH DOCTOR

1. When were you born?
2. What was the career of your parents?
3. What are your siblings doing?
4. What do you do to earn your living?
5. Do you remember your ancestors by name and characters?
6. Do they appear to you in dreams?
7. Do you become sick?
8. Do you fear death?
9. What do you do to stop death when it is coming?
10. Do people like you?
11. Are human body parts useful for you?
12. Are there some people who talk ill of you?
13. Why do people talk ill of anyone?
14. Do you have a god?
15. What do sacrifices and rituals mean to you?
16. Have you made someone sick or dead?
17. Are there creatures which drink human blood?
18. Do you treat people who are sick?
19. Why are there some trees, rocks or hills which are important to you?
20. Can you speak to a dog or a cat?
21. What do you think when someone is dead?
22. What are the causes physical deformation, mental retardation and moral confusion?
23. How are cats and dogs useful for you?

24. Do you like doing things at night?
25. Are snakes edible? Are there people who eat snake in this community?
26. What do you think about snakes?
27. Why do people consult you about their problems?
28. Do Christians come and consult you on matters of life?
29. Do you speak to the dead?
30. Where is the source of your power?
31. Do you like what you are doing?
32. Why do you think there is so much evil in the world?

GUIDING INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THE LUO ELITE

1. Do you believe in the traditional Luo cultural practices?
2. What is the definition of religion?
3. What do you understand by the term “evil”?
4. Is God the source or cause of evil?
5. Do you believe in the ancestors?
6. Why do people fight?
7. What the Bible to you?
8. Will human history come to an end?
9. What is implication of being cursed?
10. How was Africa before modernity?
11. What is animism?
12. Do you attend church?
13. Do you believe in Satan and evil spirits?
14. Where will you go when you die?
15. Are mentally sick people real human being?

16. Can demons possess people?
17. Why some people are cripples?
18. Do you believe in the ancestral spirits?
19. Do know Jesus Christ?
20. Does God exist?
21. Do witchdoctors and sorcerers love successful people?
22. Why is there so much evil in the world?
23. Where did the universe come from?
24. What are the spiritual powers behind life tragedies?
25. What sort infrastructures are needed in Luo Land?

APPENDIX II

Summary of the Interviews

Apunda Odhuno: interviewed by Pastor James Ochieng on Dec., 13th, 2011 at Pala Market.

- On the role of witchdoctors and sorcerer in the cause of mental confusion, bad luck, diseases and death.
- On evil spirit, marriage, faithfulness, honesty

Dula Bondo: interviewed by Pastor James Ochieng on Dec., 13th, 2011 at Pala Market.

- On the nature of God and his abode according to the Luo worldview.
- On God's relationship with ancestors

Omolo Mumbo: interviewed by Mr. Joseph Otieno on Dec., 14th, 2011 at his home

- On the associations of animals with evil when their meat is eaten and when these animals roam the village at night

Ogada Okoth: interviewed by Pastor James Ochieng on Jan., 5th, 2012 at his home

- On the omnipresence, omniscience and rule of the Luo God and his on evil activities
- On God unleashing in the form of evil

Okumu Raongo: interviewed by Mr. Joseph Otieno on Jan., 5th, 2012 at his home

- On the creation of humans and the universe according to the Luo worldview.
- On what constitutes the nature of man

Oginga Ouma: interviewed Pastor James Ochieng on Jan., 6th, 2012 at his home

- On evil-eye and how it causes sicknesses and death in the community
- On the relations between humans and ancestors in relations to evil manifestations
- On the origins and the various form of moral evil in the community
- On the names of God and how they are related to his nature
- On his relationship with evil among the Luo

Group Interviews by the researcher himself on Jan. 8th, 2012 at a village funeral

- On the cause of death of young people
- On the practices of funeral rituals and ceremonies

Group Interviews by the researcher on Feb., 9th, 2012 at a Church

- On Christians practicing witchcrafts
- On the numbers Christians joining false denominations and cults
- On Christianity, mental and moral evil
- On the source of evil on in the breaking of marriages

Omolo Nyawara: interviewed by Pastor James Ochieng on Feb., 2nd, 2012 at his home

- On the question of the eternity of the ancestors, whether their existence cease with time
- On ancestors and ethics

- On the role of ancestors in the history of the Luo people
- What happens when they are not worshiped

Wera Ochola: interviewed by Pastor James Ochieng on Feb., 2nd, 2012 at his home
The origin of mental evil in relations to customs, witchdoctors and evil spirits.

- On the physical evil such as abnormal birth, physical disasters and when trees talk to human beings
- Evil and its associations with the past
- On the cultural and religious response to the problem of evil.

Witchdoctor: interviewed by the researcher on Feb. 20th, 2012 at Pala Market

- On the thunderstorms and human deaths in the rivers and lakes
- On the operations of ancestors and evil spirits
- On collapse of families, barrenness and bachelorhood
- On alcoholism and drugs additions

Oloo Anyango: interviewed by researcher himself between March 7th and March 9th, 2012 at his home

- On the existence of evil spirits and where they live or inhabit
- On why evil spirits, wizards and animals roam villages at night
- On the impact of cutting down a tree without the consent of the elders and ancestors
- On why people hate and bewitch each other using charms

Oloo Owino: interviewed by Mr Joseph Otieno on March 17th, 2010 at his home

- God and human suffering

Nyokere Odima: interviewed by the researcher himself on April 3rd, 2012 at his home

- On the indication of the sense of mental confusion
- On possession of evil spirit and mental sickness

Orwa Pedha: interviewed by Mr Joseph Otieno on April 7th, 2012 in his garden

- On the source of death
- On death and God's wisdom

Chief Oburu Owaga: interviewed by Pastor James Ochieng on April 11th, 2012 at his home

- On the root causes of conflict in the among the Luo people
- On the nature of reconciliation between disagreeing people or families
- On the role of herbs and creation

Rev. Wilson Okode: Interviewed by the researcher himself on April 15th, 2011.

- On whether witchdoctors treat mental sicknesses completely
- On transferring evil to another human being or an animal or an object.
- On Christianity and evil spirit

PERSONAL DATA/PROFILE

- Name: George Odera Ouma
- Born: 1966
- Sex: Male
- Marital Status: Married
- Nationality: Kenyan
- Languages: Luo, English and Kiswahili
- Children: Three: 1 daughter and 2 sons

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

- 1973-1982: Agudo Primary School (Ndhiwa Constituency, Kenya)
- 1983-1987: Obera High School
- 1988-1990: Diploma, Motor Vehicle Mechanic, Lutheran Youth Centre & Training School, Oyugis, Kenya.
- 1991-1992: Certificate, Lamp and Light Bible Correspondence Association
- 1994-1998: Diploma-Bible and Theology, Ukamba Bible College
- 2000-2002: Bachelor of Arts (BA)-Christian Education, Caribbean College of Bible International
- 2002-2005: Master of Divinity (M.Div.)-Bible and Theology, Columbia International University, USA
- 2006-2008: Master of Arts (MA)-Philosophy of Religion and Ethics, Biola University, USA
- 2010-2013: Master of Theology (MTh)-World Christianity, Africa International University

WORK EXPERIENCE

- 1987-1988: Sagmo Construction Company, Nairobi, Kenya.
- 1989-1990: Lutheran Youth Center and Training School Christian Union Director
- 1992-1994: Lamp & Light Bible Correspondence Association Chairman
- 1996-1997: Christian Apologetics Ministries, Nairobi, Research Assistant-Word of Truth
- 1998-1999: Pastor, Africa Inland Church Kayole West, Nairobi
- 1999- : Associate Editor, Christian Update Magazine.
- 2000- : Associate Pastor, Africa Inland Church Umoja
- 2001-2002: Founder, Africa Inland Church Donholm-Nairobi-Kenya
- 2004- : Adjunct Lecturer, Ukamba Bible College
- 2004-2005: Participated in the Intersivity Forums for Religion and Psychology (South Carolina), Student Ministry Instructor: Columbia International University
- 2006-2009: Adjunct Lecturers: Scott Christian University
- 2010-2012: Senior Pastor, Africa Inland Church, Ngong' Road, Nairobi, Kenya