

NAIROBI EVANGELICAL GRADUATE  
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

*Effects of Institutional Culture on Leadership Transitions at  
Koru Bible College, 1961-2002 with Implications for  
Effective Introduction of Change in any Academic Environment*

BY  
KITUR JOHN KIPTANUI

*A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate School in Partial  
Fulfillment of the Requirement for the Degree of  
Masters of Divinity in Christian Education*

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ENVIRONMENT

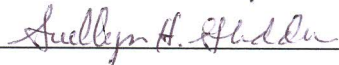
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I declare that this is my original work and has not been submitted to any other College or University for academic credit.

The views presented herein are not necessarily those of Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology or the Examiners

(Signed)



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Kitur John Kiptanui

July, 2007

## ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this study was to reconstruct the founding organizational culture of Koru Bible College and then describe its effects on subsequent leadership transitions. The study also sought to draw general implications on how to introduce change in any academic environment. Two methods employed to collect data were interviews and a study of recorded documents. Emphasis was placed on information gleaned from the interviews because organizational culture is about people's experiences within a historical time frame. A general interview guide approach was used in order to generate information from the respondents. The researcher outlined a set of topics without predetermining the order of the topics and the exact wording of the questions asked. However, the written documents provided tangible and easy to verify sources of data. In order to achieve the research objectives, three questions were posited which gave direction to the research effort:

1. What was the founding organizational culture at Koru Bible College, 1961-1977?
2. How has the founding culture at Koru Bible College influenced or affected subsequent leadership transitions and practice from 1977-1996 and 1996-2002?
3. What factors have enhanced or hindered the process of implementing change at Koru Bible College?

The research findings showed that a founding organizational culture has significant and long-term effects on leadership transitions. The process of change from the founding organizational culture to the desired culture is complex and requires an investment of time. Thus, effective introduction of change in any academic environment calls, primarily, for changing people and understanding the past organizational behavior of the relevant organization.

TO

I dedicate this work to Koru Bible College and Full Gospel Churches of Kenya. My passion is to see FGCK and KBC achieve excellence in all aspects of development.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The African philosophy, *I am because we are*, held true for me while carrying out this research undertaking. Without the painstaking efforts and the presence of others by my side, definitely this research work would not have come to fruition. I am, therefore, indebted to the following for their noble and invaluable roles:

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### Introduction to the Problem

*“The way we do things here”* (emphasis added) sums up the concept of organizational culture in a nutshell (Barkdoll n.d, 1). The concept has gained wide acceptance in recent times as a way of understanding human systems. Studies done show that each aspect of organizational culture is an important environmental condition “affecting the system and its subsystems” (Symphony Orchestra Institute 1997-2005, 1). However, the examination of organizational culture is also a valuable tool in its own right.

An inter-play of relationship exists between organizational culture and organizational leadership. Schein ((n.d, 2) noted that once culture gets established in an organization it determines criteria of leadership. There is need, therefore, for leaders to be conscious of culture, “otherwise it will manage them.” But, leaders should also acknowledge the impact of their behavior on the organization’s culture (Symphony Orchestra Institute 1997-2005, 2). It is possible for leaders to manipulate culture to serve their own personal interests.

Existing knowledge on organizational culture reveals that organizations are unique and distinct from one another (Hofstede 1991, 7-8, Schein n.d, 2, Lunenberg and Ornstein 2004, 81). This revelation provides a watershed in the understanding of organizations and how they relate to each other. Fundamentally, organizational culture has its roots in history and in the collective experience of people in a specific organization. It focuses attention on the human side of organizational life. Thus,

changing an organizational culture is both difficult and requires an investment of time (Symphony Orchestra Institute 1997-2005, 4).

According to Hofstede (1991, 7-8), there are four significant aspects of organizational culture which are crucial to understanding organizational behavior. Each of these aspects has been briefly described below:

1. *Symbols* are words, gestures, pictures or objects that carry a particular meaning which is only recognized by those who share the culture.
2. *Heroes* are persons, alive or dead, real or imaginary, who possess characteristics which are highly prized in a culture.
3. *Rituals* are collective activities, technically superfluous in reaching desired ends, by which, within a culture are considered as socially essential: they are therefore carried out for their own sake.
4. The core of culture is formed by *values*. Values are broad tendencies to prefer certain state of affairs over others.

### The Background of Koru Bible College

Koru Bible College (KBC) is the premier national theological institution of Full Gospel Churches of Kenya (FGCK). It was founded in western Kenya in 1961 by the Finnish Free Foreign Mission (FFFM). During its formative years the college was unilaterally managed by the founding FFFM missionaries from Finland. In 1962, FFFM established FGCK as a denomination and registered it with the Government of Kenya the same year (Kiguru 1997, 9). This led to a leadership change at the denominational level from the FFFM missionaries to the African nationals.

The changes at the denominational level did not immediately affect the leadership of Koru Bible College. The college continued to be directly under the management of Finnish missionaries until 1977 when the first major transition took

place. However, the indigenization process at KBC had begun soon after the registration of FGCK with the Government of Kenya. It culminated in installation of the first African Principal of the college in 1977. By this time the college was known as Koru Bible School. The institution dropped the term ‘school’ in 1996 in favor of ‘college’ to reflect a change of status. At this time the institution was expanding its academic programs to include a diploma in Bible and Theology.

Since 1977, the institution has had several African Principals. The basic program of study since its inception has been a one-year certificate in pastoral ministry (formerly three months). The language of instruction for this program is Kiswahili. The choice of the language was deliberate because the targeted pastors were largely semi-literate rural pastors drawn from Kenya, Tanzania, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. For a long time the institution was managed by on-site resident missionaries, Principals, Deputy Principals and a number of subordinate staff. The Board of Governors and the National Executive Council (NEC) of FGCK supervised the on-site management team on behalf of the National Pastoral Council (NPC) of the denomination. The instructors were basically visiting and included missionaries and African church leaders.

Currently the institution has three basic programmes of study: a Certificate in Pastoral Ministries, a Diploma in Bible and Theology, and a B.A. in Bible and Theology. Launched in September 2004, the B.A. programme is offered in collaboration with Global University, an accredited US-based theological programme that offers internationally recognized long-distance learning. The diploma programme is locally initiated and offers post-secondary theological education in two formats: full-time and part-time. The part-time programme was started in April 2001. And, as alluded to earlier, the certificate programme was initiated by the FFFM missionaries

in 1961. FFFM has since changed its name to *Fida International*. Fida is a Latin word meaning faithful.

### Problem Definition

Koru Bible College (KBC) has gone through various leadership transitions since it was established by Finnish Free Foreign Missions (FFFM). These transitions have been occasioned by, among other factors, the change of ownership from the original founders to the indigenous African nationals, the repercussions resulting from the shift in relationship with the founders, and the expansion of the academic programs. 1996 marks a significant watershed in the history of KBC. It was during this time that the college introduced new academic programs, changed the academic calendar from part-time to full-time, employed staff on the basis of academic merits, and constituted a BOG to run the institution on behalf of the denomination.

The major transitions that have taken place at KBC have focused mainly at the principals, their deputies and BOG. The Finnish missionaries still play a significant role in decision-making regarding administration and finances. Within the cadre of employees are those who have been at the institution for a long time (veterans) and those who joined the institution later (amateurs).

This historical research study sought to establish whether a founding organizational culture affects leadership transitions in a learning institution. The examination focused on Koru Bible College, 1961-2002. Although the institution has existed for over forty years, there has been nothing written about its history and growth.

The study aimed to identify and reconstruct the organizational culture of Koru Bible College from 1961 to 2002. The specific focus of the study was on the effects of the founding organizational culture on subsequent leadership transitions at the

institution. Since organizational culture is about peoples' experiences within a historical time frame, a qualitative approach was adopted. Oral interviews and a study of available documents were undertaken as the primary means of reconstructing the history of the College. Three historical phases of the College were highlighted: 1961-1977, 1977-1996, and 1996-2002.

### Research Purpose

The main purpose of this study was to reconstruct systematically the founding organizational culture (written and unwritten) of Koru Bible College and then describe its effects on the succeeding leadership transitions at the institution. This was achieved through objective collection of data. The data collected was verified and analyzed in the light of available evidence. The overriding aim of the study was to establish the facts relating to the effects of organizational culture on leadership transitions and then relate them to the present and to the future leadership of the institution. The study also aimed to draw general implications for an effective introduction of change in any educational environment.

### Research Questions

The specific questions that this research explored are as follows:

1. What was the founding organizational culture at Koru Bible College, 1961-1977?
2. How has the founding culture at Koru Bible College influenced or affected subsequent leadership transitions and practice from 1977-1996 and 1996-2002?
3. What factors have enhanced or hindered the process of implementing change at Koru Bible College?

### Significance of the Study

The study is significant to KBC as an institution and to its leadership because it will help in the understanding of the present condition of the institution. From this understanding, the institution will be able to chart the way forward from the present to the desired future.

The study may also benefit other educational institutions with a similar heritage. Moreover, the study is important to the academic community because its findings might contribute to the contemporary knowledge on the effects of organizational culture on leadership transitions.

### Limitations and Delimitations

Since the research undertaking was historical in design, the researcher limited the study to the specific historical period and to available information. The sources of information were primarily interviews and a study of written documents. The written documents analyzed included BOG minutes, appointment letters, college policy, and financial records. Interviews were conducted with former principals of the college, some members of the Board of Governors, resident missionaries, employees and some denominational leaders.

The study was confined to the organizational culture of Koru Bible College, 1961-2002, and its effects on leadership transitions and practice only. Factors that have hindered or enhanced the process of implementing change at the institution were likewise identified and highlighted.

### Definition of Terms

*Educational leadership:* This term is used to mean the overall leadership of an academic institution, including management and administration.

*Fida:* It is a Latin word meaning ‘faithful.’ The Finnish Free Foreign Mission (FFFM) adopted the word when they changed their name from FFFM to Fida International in order to symbolize the integrity of their organization.

*Institutional extraversion:* Sanneh and Carpenter (2005, 70) said extraversion occurs “when the economic viability of a project in one country is dependent on funds from a different country.”

*Instructional leadership:* This refers to school Principals who oversee the academic programs and development of their academic institutions.

*Leadership:* It is used here in a general sense to mean guiding, directing, managing, and administering.

*Mental models:* Duffy (2002, 47) said mental models are cognitive representation of what people learn. An organizational mental model is the collective representation of what an organization stands for and how it accomplishes its goals.

*National culture:* Hofstede (1991, 262) defined national culture as the collective programming of the mind acquired by growing up in a particular country.

*Organizational climate:* The relatively enduring quality of the total environment that (a) is experienced by the occupants, (b) influences their behavior, and (c) can be described in terms of the values of a particular set of characteristics (or attributes) of the environment (Tagiuri and Litwin 1968, 18).

*Organizational Culture:* All beliefs, feelings, behaviors, and symbols that are characteristic of an organization. It includes norms, shared values, philosophies, vision, etc (Lunenberg and Ornstein 2004, 81).

*Power distance:* Hofstede (1991, 28) defined power distance as “the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally.”

*Transition:* Refers to the process of implementing change in an organization in terms of organizational behavior and leadership.



## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

This section reviewed and discussed related literature on organizational culture and other related topics. The section covered both the substantive and methodological literature. The researcher conducted a historical study on the effects of organizational culture on leadership transitions at Koru Bible College. The researcher also aimed to draw general implications for managing change in any academic environment.

#### **Substantive Literature**

In this sub-section, the researcher reviewed content-based related literature. The aim was to ground the research pursuit on existing knowledge. The following topics were covered: definition of organizational culture, origin and transmission of organizational culture, relationship between national cultures and organizational culture, changing organizational culture, and mental models. Other topics included leadership definition and the concept of change, leading change in an academic environment, organizations and administration, administrative processes in schools, power and authority, leadership roles of the Board and the Principal, and building teamwork in educational leadership.

#### ***Definition of Organizational Culture***

Schein, who is one of the most prominent theorists of organizational culture, defined organizational culture in a general sense as follows:

A pattern of shared basic assumptions that a group learned as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way you perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems (Schein n.d, 2).

Schein's definition implies that an organizational culture is both shared and learned. His understanding suggests that as groups in an organization evolve, they are faced with two basic challenges: integrating individuals into an effective whole, and adapting effectively to the external environment in order to survive. Schein stated that culture explains the *incomprehensible* and the *irrational* (emphasis added) in an organization. An outsider would basically need an orientation in order to understand what goes on in a new organization.

Hofstede (1991, 179) slightly differed with Schein. He viewed organizational culture as mental programming. He argued that organizational culture is holistic, historically determined, related to the things anthropologists study, socially constructed, soft, and difficult to change. To him, culture in general is the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another. Thus, Hofstede defined organizational culture as "the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes members of one organization from another" (Hofstede 1991, 180). Unlike Schein, Hofstede avoided the term 'shared' and instead laid emphasis on the 'collective programming of the mind'. However, like Schein, he perceived every organization as unique and distinct from one another. He said organizational culture is not about shared values but about common practices because "common practices are capable of solving practical problems in an organization" (Hofstede 1991, xiii).

Since the above definitions are general in perspective, Cornwell's specific focus on organizational culture in schools is quite appropriate. Cornwell defined

organizational culture in schools as the “basic beliefs and assumptions about what the school is all about, how its members should behave, and how it defines its purpose” (2003, 21). According to Cornwell, the critical function of culture in a school setting is to communicate what is considered right and wrong. Thus, some ethical standards are written down in ethical codes, while others are unwritten norms that are learned over time. All the ethical standards, written and unwritten, help define the core values of the institution’s culture.

The above definitions have elicited significant information concerning organizational culture. They affirm the importance of organizational culture in general and why there is need to study a specific organizational culture. Common to all the definitions is the concept of ‘common sharing’ of what is assumed, believed, valued and practiced by members of an organization. The common practices have their roots in the history and growth of the organization. Over the years, the members’ or employees’ minds have been conditioned or programmed to think, act, and feel in a particular way. They, therefore, interpret the behavior and language of others through their own cultural biases. “Each member’s set of beliefs, values, and assumptions become their unquestioned “reality”; they then perceive behavior inconsistent with their own biases as irrational or malevolent” (Symphony Orchestra 1997-2005, 4).

Because the underlying assumptions held by members of an organization are the principle determinants of the existing culture, they should neither be ignored nor taken for granted. As Schein noted, “culture defines us: What we pay attention to, what things mean, react emotionally, and what actions to take when [sic]” (Schein n.d, 3). According to Schein, when people are treated consistently in terms of basic assumptions, they eventually end up behaving according to those assumptions in order to make their world stable and predictable.

### *Origin and Transmission of Organizational Culture*

Schein identified three basic sources of organizational culture: 1. beliefs, values, and the assumptions of founders, 2. the learning experiences of group members, and 3. new beliefs, values, and assumptions introduced by new members (n.d, 9). These sources show that the original organizational culture changes when new members enter and take over its leadership.

Because the influence of organizational founders is immense and may persist for a long time, the impact of new members on an already entrenched organizational culture may not be immediately felt. But, as Blau and Scott observed, a firmly established organization tends to “assume an identity of its own which makes it independent of those who have founded it or of those who constitute its membership” (1962, 1). Thus, according to Blau and Scott, organizations can persist for several generations, not without any change but without losing their fundamental identity as distinct units, even though all members at some time come to differ from the original ones.

Two significant implications can be drawn from the above arguments: 1. that an organization can change over time and assume new identity; and 2. that an organization should not lose its fundamental identity in the process of accommodating change. It is apparent that there are things that are core to an organization and others that are subject to change. A Christian institution like Koru Bible College should not lose its fundamental identity while embracing change. The questions this research asked are, for example, what are the core values and philosophy of Koru Bible College? How have these values and/or philosophy been preserved and transmitted over the years?

The role of the founders in the formation of an organizational culture is crucial and cannot be over emphasized. Schein (n.d, 9) noted that organizations do not emerge spontaneously or accidentally. They are the result of a deliberate effort that begins with a small group under the direction of a founding leader. Schein developed a process of culture formation in an organization as follows;

1. A single person (founder) has an idea.
2. A founder brings in one or more people and creates a core group.  
They share vision and share in the risk.
3. The founding group acts in concert, raises money, work space, etc.
4. Others are brought in and a history is begun (Schein n.d, 9).

Cornwell (2003, 21) agreed with Schein on the role of organizational founders. He emphasized the founder's vision in the establishment of organizational culture. Cornwell said the founder begins to shape the culture from his or her very first actions. The culture therefore begins as a reflection of the values of the founder or founders. Barkdoll (n.d, 1) went further than Schein and Cornwell and argued that some organizational leaders may be motivated by personal interests as they establish an organizational culture. Likewise, organizational leaders can deliberately attempt to change the culture of their organization to suit their own preferences. Barkdoll based his arguments on theoretical and empirical reasons which indicate individuals' attempts to shape the culture of their organization on the basis of personal grounds and preferences. Thus, it can be ignored that personal interests on the part of the leader may have a strong bearing on both the formation and the transformation of organizational culture.

Transmission of organizational culture goes through an elaborate process that involves the inculcation of the founders' assumptions to the group, either through

direct imposition or by a deliberate mechanism of embedding the culture as illustrated below. The leaders ensure their ideas are implemented by “socialization, charisma, acting, doing, and exuding confidence” (Schein n.d, 9-10).

Table 1: Culture-embedding mechanisms

<u>Primary</u> Embedding Mechanisms	<u>Secondary</u> Articulation and Reinforcement Mechanisms
What <u>leaders</u> pay attention to, measure, and control on a regular basis.	<u>Organization</u> design and structure
How <u>leaders</u> react to critical incidents and organizational crises.	<u>Organizational</u> systems and procedures
<u>Observed</u> criteria by which leaders allocate scarce resources.	<u>Organizational</u> rites and rituals
Deliberate <u>role</u> modeling, teaching, and coaching	<u>Design</u> of physical space, facades, and buildings
<u>Observed</u> criteria by which leaders allocate rewards and status.	<u>Stories</u> , legends, and myths about people and events.
<u>Observed</u> criteria by which leaders recruit, select, promote, retire, and excommunicate organizational members.	Formal <u>statements</u> of organizational philosophy, values, and creed.

Adapted from Schein (n.d, 10)

It is apparent from Schein that organizational culture can be transmitted from the founding leader to the founding groups through an elaborate mechanism that involves observation, deliberate coaching, stories, organizational structures, and other means as indicated in table 1. Schein argued that culture does not survive if the main culture carriers depart and a majority of its members leave the organization (n.d, 9).

Questions have been raised on the impact of the founder’s original vision on subsequent leadership transitions in organizations. Two academic institutions that negatively went through the experience of transition illustrate the gravity and enormity of the matter. Jones (1974, 37-53), while giving the story of the *Institute for Advanced Study*, demonstrated that transition from the founder’s vision is not easy. The new Chief Executive (director) of the *Institute for Advanced Study* wanted to introduce structural changes at the Institute but could not effectively do so due to

resistance from the ‘founding’ professors. The dissident professors could not accept any change that was contrary to the original vision of the Institute. Consequently, the Chief Executive and a few of his supporters eventually engaged in a protracted contest with the dissident professors. It ended up in what Jones called the ‘big shoot-out at the *Institute for Advanced Study*.’

Similarly, Sanneh and Carpenter (2005, 70-74) presented a case study on the Baptist Theological Seminary of Zimbabwe (BTSZ) at the time when the baton of leadership at the seminary was changing hands from the Western Baptist missionary leadership to the indigenous African leadership. In their description, they referred to what they termed as “*institutional extraversion*.” Extraversion in this perspective is said to be “what occurs when the economic viability of a project in one country is dependent on funds from a different country” (2005, 70). Sanneh and Carpenter deplored dependency on Western funding and called for mutual interdependence. But, getting rid of financial dependency required deliberate action-steps which would lead to an effective transition. It was, therefore, interesting that, as the first African Principal was taking over the mantle of leadership at BTSZ, the donor support was on the other hand, getting drastically scaled-down. This meant that the African principal was obliged to look for alternative sources of income at BTSZ. Sanneh and Carpenter described the situation as follows: “The scale-down in FMB (Foreign Mission Board) funds in Zimbabwe occurred *simultaneously* (emphasis mine) with the momentous passing of the torch at BTSZ” (Sanneh and Carpenter 2005, 74).

The above illustrations demonstrate the need for organizational founders to envisage the end at the beginning as they establish an organization. This ‘end’ should be incorporated into the founding vision of the organization in order to facilitate and accommodate change when it becomes necessary. Tagiuri and Litwin (1968, 120),

arguing on the perspective of organizational climate, noted that the climate of an “organization tends to be perpetuated from one generation of members to another unless the structure of inputs and outputs and intra-organizational processes are changed along with the feedback efforts” (1968, 120). They suggested that solving an organizational climate problem cannot be obtained by recruiting a new executive but rather by putting in place the necessary structures. But if a new executive is recruited, then, such an executive must be sufficiently knowledgeable, powerful, and charismatic in order to alter the prevailing status-quo.

Duffy (2003, 58) identified important steps necessary for effective transition. Quoting the traditional approach developed by Kurt Lewin, Duffy stated that to change a system, first one needs to envision a desired future. Then, he or she assesses the current situation and compares the present to the future, looking for gaps between “what you have and what you want.” Next, “you develop a transition plan composed of long-range goals and short-term objectives that will move your system straight forward toward its desired future” (Duffy 2003, 58).

### ***Relationship between National Cultures and Organizational Culture***

What happens in an organization where its members come from different nationalities and/or cultural backgrounds? Do their backgrounds affect the organizational culture?

Western missionary-established institutions in Africa are multi-cultural in membership composition. Institutions such as Koru Bible College are made up of African nationals and Western missionaries. This raises the question on the relationship between national cultures and organizational culture.

A distinction between national cultures and organizational culture exists. Hofstede pointed out that “contrary to national cultures, corporate cultures are not a



matter of shared values as some authors want it. They are rooted in the values of the founders and significant leaders, but their values have been converted into the practices, the rules of the game, for all members of the corporation” (1991, xiii). As shall be seen below, this distinction does not rule out any other relationship. This is because organizations are working places where employees or people from diverse cultural backgrounds, and sometimes nationalities, converge and interact.

Using the analogy of computers, Hofstede describes culture as mental programming, meaning patterns of thinking, feeling, and acting (1991, 4). Sources of one’s mental program are found within the social environments where one grew up and collected life experiences. Hofstede argued that the programming starts “within the family; it continues within the neighborhood, at school, in youth groups, at the work place, and in the community” (Ibid, 4).

It is clear from Hofstede’s argument that cultural backgrounds differ at the community level and at the national level. Of particular significance are cultural differences at the national level. Disparities among nations and continents can be explained by historical, geographical, religious and social realities. Some countries, such as those in Africa and Asia, are developing while others, such as those in Europe and North America, are developed. Experiences of people differ depending on which country they grew up in. For this reason, Hofstede defined a national culture as “the collective programming of the mind acquired by growing up in a particular country” (Ibid, 262). He identified four areas of national life that qualify as common basic problems worldwide, with consequences for the functioning of societies, or groups within those societies, and of individuals within those groups:

1. Social inequality, including the relationship with authority;
2. The relationship between the individuals and the group;

3. Concepts of masculinity and femininity: the social implications of having been born a boy or a girl;
4. Ways of dealing with uncertainty, relating to the control of aggression and the expression of emotions (Hofstede 1991, 13-14).

Hofstede took note of disparities that exist among countries on the basis of power distance, relationship between the individuals and the group, gender balance and uncertainty avoidance (Ibid, 23f). These differences are obtained and exhibited at the family, school and the workplace. Hofstede defined power distance, given elaborate treatment in this study, as “the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally” (Ibid, 28). Institutions, according to Hofstede, are elements of society like family, school, and community. Organizations are places where people work. Hofstede argued that in large power distance countries *dependence* (emphasis added) relationships exist, but in small distance countries there is limited dependence of subordinates on bosses. Some developed countries also have small and large power distance. The emotional distance between them is “relatively small: subordinates will quite readily approach and contradict their bosses” (Hofstede 1991, 27). Hofstede noted that in large power distance countries there is considerable dependence of subordinates on their bosses. Subordinates respond by either preferring such dependence, or rejecting it entirely, “which in psychology is known as *counterdependence* [sic]: that is dependence but with a negative sign” (Ibid, 27).

According to Hofstede, African countries have large power distance between the subordinates and the bosses. Western countries are depicted as having small power distance. The implications of Hofstede’s arguments are significant to leadership practice in Africa. First, it means in a place like KBC the Africans are likely to become *dependent* or *counterdependent* (emphasis added) on western

missionaries as the two groups co-exist and work together. Dependency may be the result of a feeling of inferiority rooted in history. Africa in the past has suffered under the yoke of slavery and colonialism. Colonialism was masterminded by Western imperialists. During this time, Africans were treated as second class citizens. Is it likely that this historical reality has been ‘programmed’ into the mind of an African? And is there any likelihood that a Western expatriate may also feel a little bit superior because of the same historical reality? Counterdependence may be the result of rejection or rebellion on the basis of mistrust or perceived domination. Second, Hofstede pointed out that in a multi-cultural situation there is need to understand the background of each group member. This will help in providing effective orientation to the new-comer. Finally, Hofstede emphasized the idea that organizational culture is about values that have been converted into practices in order to solve existing problems.

### ***Changing Organizational Culture***

Changing culture is difficult and time consuming. The process of change involves deliberate, consistent, and patient actions (Cornwell 2003, 152). Thus, culture cannot simply be changed by issuing a new directive or by setting up training sessions. One cannot order employees to change their values and beliefs “through a memo or e-mail” (Cornwell 2003, 152). Effective change requires a clear and honest understanding of where the culture is at the time of initiating transition. This can be achieved by getting to “know the ghosts” of past administrators and informal leaders who helped shaped the culture (Cornwell 2003, 152). There should be a clear vision to guide the change process from the past behavior to the preferred one for the future.

Two key factors make the process of changing organizational culture difficult and time consuming (Symphony Orchestra Institute 1997-2005, 1). First, culture is

rooted in the collective history of an organization, thus changing this historical heritage requires an investment of time and patience. Priority in the search for change should be placed on people and not structures. As Barkdoll noted, “organizations are the people in them...people make the place...we have tried to change organizations by changing structures and processes when it was the people that needed changing” (n.d, 8). People are the ones affected by history. Second, culture is in most cases below the surface of awareness. This means people may not be conscious of what they are doing. The following four steps are considered necessary for an effective process of change;

1. Uncover core values and beliefs. These may include stated values and goals which may be embedded in organizational metaphors, myths, stories, and in the behavior of members.
2. Acknowledge, respect, and discuss differences between core values and beliefs of different subcultures within the organization.
3. Look for incongruencies between conscious and unconscious beliefs and values and resolve them by choosing those to which the organization wishes to commit. Establish new behavioral norms that clearly demonstrate the desired values.
4. Repeat these steps over a long period of time. As new members enter the organization, assure that they are surrounded with clear messages about the culture they are entering. Reinforce desirable behavior (Symphony Orchestra Institute 1997-2005, 1).

### ***Mental Models and Organizational Culture***

Mental models are cognitive representations of what people learn (Duffy 2002, 47). An organizational mental model is a collective representation of what an

organization stands for and how it accomplishes its goals. Duffy stated that this kind of mental model is *embodied in an organization's culture* (emphasis added) and in how it performs in relation to its employees and its customers (2002, 47). Quoting Kegan and Leah, Duffy (2003, 41) argued that people have a built-in, anti-change “immune system” within an organization. For this reason, the immune system is dynamic and provides a person with powerful inclinations not to change. Kegan and Leah stated that if the immune system can be unlocked and modified, people can then release new energy on behalf of new ways of seeing and being. These new ways of seeing and being will serve as the foundation for *unlearning* old models and learning new mental models (Duffy 2003, 41).

Many innovative ideas fail to be translated into meaningful strategic actions because they are often at odd with the mental models prevailing in an organization (Senge 1992, 1). Senge said these mental models hinder the acceptance of new insights because they are deeply ingrained internal images that managers working in a given organization tend to “internalize unconsciously and often fail to adjust even though they are no longer relevant in a rapidly changing ...environment” (1992, 1). He stated that experienced managers are aware that many of the best and brilliant ideas never get put into practice because of existing operational policies. Senge argued that mental models can be simple generalizations, such as ‘*people are untrustworthy*’ (emphasis added) or they can be complex theories. The most important thing, however, is that mental models shape how people act. Senge said “if we believe people are untrustworthy, we act differently from the way we would if we believed they were trustworthy” (1992, 2).

The problem with mental models lies not in whether they are right or wrong. The problem arises “when the models are tacit--when they exist below the levels of

awareness” (Senge 1992, 2). Arguing with relevant illustrations from case studies done in different organizations, Senge demonstrated that failure to appreciate mental models has undermined many efforts to foster systems thinking. Among other suggestions for solving this problem, Senge mentioned the need for openness, and for establishing “internal boards of directors” that bring senior management and local management together regularly to challenge and expand the thinking behind the local decision making (1992, 7).

### ***Leadership Definition and the Concept of Change***

Leadership has been defined as the “ability to establish and manage a creative climate where people are self-motivated toward the achievement of long term goals in an environment of mutual respect, compatible with personal values” (Palestini 1998, 26). The definition is broad in meaning and in scope because it incorporated management to the definition of leadership. To manage in this case is to control ‘a creative climate’ in order to empower people to increase their output. Peterson (1987, 4) viewed management to be related to governance and referred to it as providing the structure and process for implementing or executing organizational decisions. The task of management is to put in place structures and processes for resource allocation, program development and evaluation.

Because leadership is crucial to the life of an organization, there is need for qualified leaders who can exert a positive influence (Palestini 1998, 26). Influence refers to the ability to create a harmonious environment that favors all the people involved in leadership. Such leadership, as Bennis observed, lifts “people out of their petty preoccupations, carries them above the conflicts that tear a society apart, and unite them in pursuit of objectives worthy of their best efforts” (1989, 13). Because good leaders make things to happen, leadership is often offered as a solution for most

of the problems of organizations. Palestini (1998, 25) said the opinion of many within educational circles is that schools will work, if “principals provide strong instructional leadership.” Globally, administrators and managers say that their organizations would thrive if only senior management provided strategy, vision and real leadership.

Palestini said effective leaders have certain qualities that make them influential.

The training of leaders should result in effectiveness. Bennis (1989, 80) saw a problem in modern day university education. He said too many universities are less places of higher learning than they are high-class vocational schools. They are producing “throng[s] of narrow-minded specialists who may be wizards at making money, but who are unfinished as people. These specialists have been taught how to do, but they have not been taught how to be” (Bennis 1989, 81). Bennis’s arguments show that for education to be effective, it should be practical, holistic, and relevant to the leadership situation.

The choice of leadership style is significant to the leadership situation.

Palestini (1998, 25) noted that contemporary thinking points to no single best style. Rather, a cocktail of styles is needed, depending on the leadership situation. Palestini stated in the light of research findings that the effect of any leadership style is altered by such intervening variables as the effort of subordinates, their ability to perform jobs, the clarity of their job responsibilities, the organization of the work, and the cooperation and cohesiveness of the group (Palestini 1998, 26f).

Palestini raised important issues in his description of leadership. First, he suggested the need for leaders to understand their leadership situation. Second, if a leader understands the leadership situation, he or she will have the advantage of initiating change. Thirdly, effective leaders empower people by increasing participation, providing support, sharing information, and moving decision making as

far down the organization as possible. Finally, there should be effective administrative and organizational structures for effective leadership to take place.

### *Leading Change in an Academic Environment*

Change in any organization is usually a result of somebody wanting something to be different from the way it is (Karp 1996, 9). The most important element in initiating any change process is the ability to formulate a clear ‘want.’ Karp noted that the “clearer the change wanted, the more personally determined you are to get it, the higher the probability that you will be effective.”

The biggest challenge to any new executive is on planning to execute change in a leadership situation that calls for change. Bennis presented eleven leadership tips that can help “to avoid major mistakes in taking over a university campus and making great changes” (1972, 112ff). The steps are paraphrased with the key points italicized for the purpose of emphasis.

1. *Recruit with scrupulous honesty.* Bennis compared the act of recruiting to a courtship ritual where the suitor displays his assets; the recruit, flattered by the attention and the promises, does not examine the assets closely. A new administrator needs to survey the landscape, acknowledge resentment, consider the past practice of recruitment, and then recruit with utmost care while involving the existing stakeholders. Bennis said it is easier to break-down barriers than to build bridges.
2. *Guard against the crazies.* Bennis said innovation is seductive. It attracts interesting people. It also attracts people who will take your ideas and distort them into something monstrous. You will then be identified with the monster and will have to devote precious energy to



- combat it. A change-oriented administrator should be sure of the persons he recruits.
3. *Build support among like-minded people, whether or not you recruited them.* Bennis said change-oriented administrators may dangerously assume and act as though the organization came into being the day they arrived. He said there are no clean slates in established organizations. There can be no change without history and without continuity.
  4. *Plan for change from a solid conceptual base.* Have a clear-cut understanding of how to change as well as what to change. If change is to be permanent it must be gradual and participatory. Bennis favored the incremental reform model that depends on a rotating nucleus of persons who continuously read the data provided by the organization and the society around it for clues that it is time to adapt.
  5. *Don't settle for rhetorical change.* Bennis noted that an organization has basically two structures: one on paper and another one that is based on a network of relationships. He says a good administrator creates a good 'fit' between the two.
  6. *Don't allow those who are opposed to change to appropriate such basic issues as academic standards.* Bennis saw opposition to change as inevitable. To counteract such eventualities, the change-oriented administrator must make clear communication to all involved and affected by change. This will offset or minimize fear and thwart any scheme by those would-be opponents.

7. *Know the territory.* An institution needs to develop a relationship with the community surrounding it. Energy should be devoted to public relations in order for the community to have a stake in the institution's present status and future continuity.
8. *Appreciate environmental factors.* Like any other human activity, change proceeds more smoothly in optimal environmental conditions. The need for integrated growth and development is paramount.
9. *Avoid future shock.* Future greatness begins from present practice. Bennis, while referring to Buffalo University, said "The future limited the campus just as the past limits the neurotic." He cautions against putting so much stock in the vision of future greatness at the expense of the present.
10. *Allow time to consolidate gains.* Nothing happens so quickly. For this reason time is critical to success and effective change.
11. *Remember that change is most successful when those who are affected are involved in the planning.* Bennis emphasized the need to avoid causing others to feel that change has been imposed upon them. For this reason, it is necessary to involve all in the planning and implementation stages as much as possible.

### ***The Concept of Organizations and Administration***

An organization is "a group of people bound together in a formal relationship to achieve organizational goals" (Ukeje 1992, 114). Ukeje noted that schools, churches, the army, and social clubs, among others, are organizations. He identified two types of organizations: formal and informal. Formal organizations are "properly defined as consciously constituted and systematically operated groups of people that

bind themselves together for the purpose of achieving a definite objective or definite purposes” (1992, 114). Musaazi viewed organizations as indispensable entities (1982, 1). He held that organizations are needed to provide a structural framework for communication, command and the coordination of activities and people’s efforts. He said no enterprise, large or small, can operate successfully “when duties are so vaguely defined that everybody can meddle in everything and nobody is responsible for anything” (1982, 1).

Tracing the history of organizational behavior and management theory provides a context for understanding its evolution and its current practice. Max Weber, as quoted by Shafritz, et al (2005, 73-78), advocated for a bureaucratic system that is governed by rules. Weber’s five basic tenets are summarized as follows:

1. *Division of labor*. “Divide all tasks into highly specialized jobs. Give each job holder the authority necessary to perform these duties.”
2. *Rules*. “Perform each task according to a consistent system of abstract rules. This practice helps ensure that performance is uniform.”
3. *Hierarchy of authority*. “Arrange all positions according to the principle of hierarchy. Each lower office is under the control of a higher one, and there is a clear chain of command from the top of the organization to the bottom.”
4. *Impersonality* of relationships. “Maintain an impersonal attitude towards a subordinate. This social distance between managers and subordinates helps ensure rational considerations are the basis for decision making, rather than favoritism or prejudices.”
5. *Competence* in employment and administration. “Base employment on qualifications and give promotions on job-related performance. As a corollary, protect employees from arbitrary dismissal, which should result in a high level of loyalty” (2005, 73-78).

Weber’s ideas on organizational behavior are significant. First, he introduced the idea of division of labor. Division of work permits an organization to realize the benefits of specialization and to coordinate the activities of the component parts (Lunenberg and Ornstein 2004, 44). Second, the concept of bureaucracy emphasized

order, system, rationality, uniformity and consistency. But, as Palestini (2003, 4) noted, the term bureaucracy is not attractive to many. He said “bureaucracy conjures up an image of massive red tape and endless unneeded details” (2003, 4). Third, the emphasis on rules meant that relationships at the work place will be more formal and impersonal than face to face. Finally, competence points to the need for employment and promotion to be based on merit.

Administration on the other hand is “the total of the processes through which appropriate human and material resources are made available and effective for accomplishing the purposes of an enterprise” (Olembo, et al 1992, 56) The definition touches on significant issues that hinge on the operational framework of an institution. First, the definition refers to ‘total processes’, meaning the overall systematic order of functioning in an organization in order to avail and direct ‘appropriately human and material resources.’ Secondly, the statement “... *effective for accomplishing the purposes of an enterprise* (emphasis added)” suggests a system of supervision. The basic role of supervision in this context is coordinating, stimulating, directing and guiding.

### ***Administrative Processes in Schools***

According to Olembo et al, the key elements in the administrative processes of schools are as follows: planning, organizing, staffing, directing, coordinating, reporting and budgeting. The acronym POSDCORB has been coined for these processes (1992, 56). Further, administrative processes in schools likewise include the following: communicating, influencing, decision-making, and evaluating. Seven of these processes have been summarized below as presented by Olembo, et al (1992, 56-69). The italics have been added to denote emphasis.

First, *planning* is a process of administration that involves specifications of future events. It is an attempt to forecast the future and prepare for it. The plan should identify the institutional *destination* and then provide a road map for achieving it.

Second, *organizing* involves establishing the formal structure of authority through which work can be divided and arranged for best achievement of objectives. The process involves placing parts of an organization in certain relationship to each other, such that there is order in doing things and in recognizing the authority existing in the organization

Third, *coordinating* flows from organizing. It is a process that requires that the parts so placed be maintained and inter-related for the harmonious operation of the school such that the various parts or departments work as a whole.

Fourth, *communicating* results from the need to create channels of communication and participation among the various stakeholders. This means information and decisions have to be conveyed to appropriate persons in different offices in order for them to know what is happening in other parts of the organization.

Fifth, *influencing* as an administrative concept is used in place of such words as commanding, directing, and controlling. The term denotes an attempt to motivate others to agree with an administrative decision by creating rapport between the management team and the subordinates.

Sixth, *decision-making* involves establishing the conditions for making decisions, controlling the decision-making process in the particular organization, or making sure the decision made at a higher level is implemented at a lower level in the appropriate manner. There is need for adequate supervision at any stage of decision-making to ensure things are done as decided.

Finally, *evaluating* has to do with determining the extent to which a school has achieved its goals. It involves assessing or appraising the effectiveness of both the intended goals and unintended outcomes in a given school (1992, 56-69).

### ***Power and Authority***

Hofstede used the term power distance (as seen earlier) to describe the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally (Hofstede 1991, 28). He said the larger the distance the more dependent the subordinates are on their bosses. He pointed out that most of the countries in the third world, especially Africa and Asia, fall within the category of large distance. Western countries generally have small power distance between the subordinates and the bosses.

Max Weber, referred to by Shapiro (2000, 109), differentiated power and authority. He started with influence over others' behavior, which he perceived as consisting of *involuntary compliance* of others. He saw involuntary compliance as based on power which he viewed as *forced compliance*. Weber saw power as control exercised by threats of physical force or reprisals, the actual use of physical force or reprisal, or manipulation of economic or social conditions. He perceived authority as distinct from power inasmuch as he talked about *voluntary compliance* which he split into two phenomena, authority and persuasion. He said authority is willingly obeyed since people, recognizing authority as legitimate, "suspend their critical and rational judgment to choose other alternative actions" (Shapiro 2000, 109). Persuasion is based on influence through force of personality, cogency of arguments, or prestige of person.

Bierstedt, quoted by Shapiro (2000, 109-110), differed slightly with Weber on power and authority. He viewed power as institutionalized authority, authority as resting on the capacity to apply sanctions, and sanctions as stored force.

Apparently, perceptions of power and authority differ from one organization to the other. It is necessary for every organization to establish clear definitions which should be backed up with clear channels of communication. The inter play between power and authority should be clearly stipulated.

### ***Leadership Roles of the Board and the Principal***

The Board of Governors plays a supervisory role over the on-site management team headed by the Principal. The board members' mandate includes formulating policies, raising funds, making major decisions on matters of development, and providing a link between the educational institution with the owners or proprietors of the institution. Castallo (2001, 5) said most boards of education have been under-utilized because their role is often misunderstood. He noted that a majority of people do not know exactly what they do or how far their responsibility stretches. According to Castallo, what is apparently known is that "board members make policy and administrators implement it" (Castallo (2001, 5). This parochial view shows the necessity for clear job descriptions for the board members.

Principals are instrumental in developing effective leadership in educational institutions. Sharp and Walter (2003, 1) stated that the principal is the single most important person necessary to a school's success. The main roles of the principal include "teachers, students, hierarchical superiors, and sometime other groups" (Lane and Walberg 1987, 14). While the above roles appear multiple, Sharp and Walter (2003, 1) viewed them as basically two-fold: *instructional* leadership and *managerial* work (emphasis added). They cited many research studies which demonstrate that

effective principals established goals for their schools, supported innovation, and exhibited flexibility.

According to Smith and Andrews (1989, 1) school principalship has been a subject of hundreds of studies. In these studies, the principal is depicted as a “building manager, administrator, politician, change agent, boundary spanner, and instructional leader.” Smith and Andrews emphasized the instructional role of the principal as the most fundamental. They said that “effective schools studies reflect the view that the direct responsibility for improving instruction and learning rests in the hands of the school principal” (Ibid., 1).

### ***Building Teamwork in Educational Leadership***

Leadership of institutions of higher learning involves a cross-section of stakeholders. Most missionary established theological institutions in Africa have, among other stakeholders, the Western missionary, the local ownership, the board of governors, and the on-site management team headed by the principal. Often the founding missionary organization is represented on the board of governors and/or in the on-site administrative team. In most cases, the founding missionary organization is the principal donor and hence exerts significant influence when it comes to decision-making (Sanneh & Carpenter 2005, 74).

There is need for teamwork for all those who are involved in leadership. Thompson (2004, 4) defined a work-team as “an interdependence [sic] collection of individuals who share responsibility for specific outcomes for their organizations.” He identified five key defining characteristics of operational teams:

1. Teams exist to achieve a shared goal.
2. Team members are interdependent regarding some common goal.



3. Teams are bounded and remain relatively stable over time. *Bounded* means the team has an identifiable membership; members, as well as non-members, know who is on the team. *Stability* refers to the tenure of membership.
4. Team members have the authority to manage their own work and internal processes.
5. Teams operate in a social context. Teams are not islands unto themselves.

### ***Overview Summary of Substantive Literature Review***

It is apparent that studies on organizational culture have gained wide acceptance in recent times because organizational culture has been found to be effective in understanding human systems. Though opinions differ on the exact meaning of organizational culture, it is clear that knowledge on organizational culture is crucial to the existence and continuity of an organization. As Schein argued, leaders should be conscious of organizational culture. This consciousness will provide a safeguard against being managed by the same culture. The experiences of the Institute for Advanced Study and the Baptist Theological Seminary of Zimbabwe (BTSZ) are clear pointers to the need to understand the founder's vision in organizational leadership.

There are four essential strengths of organizational culture approach as reflected in the literature review. First, it focuses attention on the human side of organizational life, and finds significance and learning in everything that goes on in an organization. Second, it makes clear the importance of creating appropriate systems of shared meaning to help people work together toward desired outcomes. Third, it requires that leaders know the impact of their behavior on the organization's culture. Finally, it encourages the view that the perceived relationship between an

organization and its environment is also affected by the “organization’s basic assumptions” (Symphony Orchestra Institute 1997-2005, 2).

Views on leadership and management are evidently diverse. In Weber’s conception, the real authority is in the rules. The power of the officials is controlled by these rules. He also laid an emphasis on bureaucracy which has become unpopular to-day. Palestini and Bennis on the other hand, placed their emphasis on the role of the individual leader. They argued that individual leaders are capable of bringing change to an organization. Though they did not discount the need for rules, Bennis and Palestini emphasized that organizations cannot succeed without effective and charismatic leadership.

#### Methodological Literature

This section highlighted on the importance of historical research in enhancing knowledge and why it was employed as an appropriate methodology and design for this study.

##### ***Overview of Historical Research***

Historical research is generally based on the premise that everything in the social or natural world is subject to change with the passage of time (McDowell 2002, 3). McDowell called for historical inquiry in order to know the past, understand the present and somehow predict the future. He noted that change occurs on a constant “basic [sic] and we are unable to freeze reality, except perhaps when we look at historical evidence, such as written or photographic material.” Thus, humans instinctively try to locate events in time and often make a contrast between the past and the present, “perhaps hoping that knowledge of the past will help us to make informed judgments about the present” (McDowell 2002, 3).

Ndagi (1984, 86) said historical research is similar to other types of research. He noted that historical research involves critical and objective methods of inquiry with generalizations made from organized knowledge. It could be regarded as scientific, but historical research differs from research into natural sciences because it is not based on experimentation, but on the records of observations which cannot be repeated, although similar events may occur. Ndagi argued that historical research variables cannot be controlled directly like most behavioral sciences such as sociology, social psychology and economics.

The motivation to inquire into the past is as a result of a desire to understand and improve the present and predict the future. McDowell (2002, 29) said historical research does not enable us to discover the past in its entirety. It can only cover those topics which historians have decided to write about, based on evidence to which they have access. He added that no historian is in a position to totally reconstruct the past, but it is possible to offer a penetrating insight into snapshots of past events.

Historical research can be evaluative in nature (Gall, et al 1996, 643). Gall, et al argued that this research method helps educators understand the present condition of education by shedding light on the past. Quoting the British historian E. H. Carr, they depicted history as a continuing process of interactions between the “historian and his facts, an unending dialogue between the present and the past.” Apparently in line with Carr’s view, historical research has come to be defined as a “process of systematically searching for data to answer questions about a past phenomenon for the purpose of gaining a better understanding of present institutions, practices, trends, and issues in education” (Gall, et al, 1996, 644).

### *Sources of Data for Historical Research*

“The quality of your research depends to a significant extent on the availability, careful use, and proper documentation of source material. The sources provide the raw material with which to reconstruct the past events” (McDowell 2002, 3). The statement not only emphasizes the crucial role of sources in carrying out a historical inquiry; it goes further to point out the need for disciplined use of such sources, as well as ensuring authenticity in documentation.

Historical research depends on two kinds of data: *primary sources* where the author was a direct observer of the recorded event, and *secondary sources* where the author is reporting the observations of others (Isaac and Michael 1997, 49). Primary sources are considered more valuable than secondary sources (Ndagi 1984, 88). This is because there is room for distortion in the secondary sources due to two reasons: the author did not do the observations himself and because of the number of people involved in the dissemination of information. McDowell (2002, 55) made a distinction between the two sources. He said that a written record, such as a letter, diary, or report, which was compiled at the time specific events occurred, will be deemed to possess a higher status than an item written at a later date. A written record which has been compiled by an eyewitness does not have to contain original thought or demonstrate literary skill to be classified as a primary source. He adds that secondary sources are mostly written by people who were not present at the events they describe.

Other source materials cited by McDowell (2002, 56-57) include the following: unpublished documents like *minutes* of an organization, letters and diaries. McDowell considered letters as possessing a somewhat higher status than oral testimony. He nevertheless affirmed that not all observations or decisions may be

written. For this reason, some historians contrast this view with the argument that diaries provide a “more complete and truthful account of past events than would be expected in letters” (McDowell 2002, 57).

### ***Oral Evidence***

McDowell said the technique of gathering evidence through interviews has been considerably developed within the social sciences, particularly in the disciplines of sociology and social anthropology (2002, 59). The technique is now being employed in historical research to supplement or enhance the interpretation of written records, as well as assist in the understanding of those events which have not been documented. In particular, oral evidence has been used in social history projects to gain a better insight into the lives of ordinary people whose lives have not been documented. According to McDowell, the benefits of oral history are two-fold: First, oral historians are often able to ask questions of interviewees that may never have been considered in the past, second, they are also able to glean valuable information about how individuals make sense of past events and then place these experiences within a much wider social context. He added that some historians believe that oral history “re-creates the past more accurately than other types of source material” (2002, 61). Oral history, however, may be hampered by memory lapses and biases on the part of the interviewee.

### ***Historical Criticism***

In historical research, the data collected must be subjected to external and internal criticisms (Ndagi 1984, 90). External criticism asks, “*Is the document or relic authentic?*” while internal criticism asks, “*If authentic, are the data accurate and relevant?*” (Isaac and Michael 1997, 49). Internal criticism must examine the motives, biases, and limitations of the author which may cause him/her to exaggerate, distort or

overlook information. Isaac and Michael added that “this critical evaluation of the data is what makes true historical research so rigorous; in many ways, more demanding than experimental methods.”

### ***Design of Historical Research***

Research methodologists are usually divided into quantitative and qualitative specialists (Alford 1998, 12). Quantitative methodologists are further divided into applied and theoretical statisticians. Qualitative methodologists on the other hand are divided into ethnomethodologists, symbolic interactions, grounded theorists, historical methodologists, and ethnographers, each with a specialized vocabulary and a set of techniques. Alford maintained the same understanding as Gall, et al, (1996, 644) who identified historical research as a particular type of qualitative study. Gall, et al, gave four similarities between historical investigations and other qualitative research methodologies. The similarities are as follows:

1. An emphasis on the study of context.
2. The study of behavior in natural rather than contrived or theoretical settings.
3. An appreciation of the wholeness of experience.
4. The centrality of interpretation in the research process.

It is for this reason that historical studies are generally considered a particular type of qualitative research (Gall, et al, 1996, 644).

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH DESIGN AND PROCEDURE**

“In designing a study, a researcher must develop a sound plan for selecting a sample, collecting data, and analyzing the data. If the plan is flawed, the results of the study will be difficult or impossible to interpret” (Gall, et al.1996, 165). In the light of the above statement, this chapter describes the methodology that was employed in this study. The chapter covered the following sub-topics: the entry of the researcher, the population, sampling, design of the study and instrumentation, and data analysis.

The researcher adopted a historical research method because the study itself is historical. According to Best (1981, 148), a historical research is the application of the scientific method to the description and analysis of past events. Historians ordinarily draw their data from the observations and experiences of others. This research study focused on the organizational culture of Koru Bible College (KBC) from 1961-2002 and its effects on subsequent leadership transitions. Data collection was obtained through interviews and a study of recorded documents.

#### **Entry Procedures**

In qualitative research, the researcher is the main instrument of data collection and analysis. In this study, the researcher gained entry into Koru Bible College through a personal application and through a letter from the Academic Dean’s office (Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology). The two letters sought permission to conduct a historical research at the institution on the ‘effects of

organizational culture on leadership transition.’ Individual requests for interview were likewise made with all interviewees.

### Description of the Population

A population is any group of individuals who have common characteristics that are of interest to the researcher. Mugenda and Mugenda (1999, 9) referred to a population as “the aggregate of all that conforms to a given specification.” The specific population for this study was all the people who have worked in Koru Bible College between 1961 and 2002. Employing convenience sampling, the researcher drew a sample from this group on the basis of accessibility and ability to give relevant information. Thus, the sample drawn included five former principals/deputy principals of KBC, six former and continuing employees, two resident *Fida* missionaries, two former BOG members, one current Bishop, and one current deputy Bishop of Full Gospel Churches of Kenya. The researcher also studied the following: BOG minutes, college policy, financial reports, and appointment letters.

### Sample and Sampling

The study employed a qualitative approach, which permits a non-probabilistic sample, focusing on in-depth information and not making inferences or generalizations (Mugenda and Mugenda 1999, 50). The researcher saw this as relevant to the study. Most of the participants were hand picked. Except for former principals/deputy principals and *Fida* International missionaries, the choice of the other participants depended on their informative ability. No specific sampling procedure was adopted for the written sources. The researcher only looked at the available documents which were relevant to the research pursuit.



## The Instrument Design

In qualitative research, most data comes from oral interviews with participants. Face to face interviews were used because of their effectiveness in eliciting information (Weiss 1992, 2). Gall, et al (1996, 309) said the interview format in qualitative research need not be tightly structured because the researcher's goal is to help respondents express their views on a phenomenon in their own terms. Gall, et al identified three basic approaches to collecting qualitative data through open-ended interviews. The approaches are as follows:

1. **The informal conversational interview:** this approach relies entirely on the spontaneous generation of questions in a natural interaction. Because the conversation appears natural, the participants may not even realize they are being interviewed.
2. **The general interview guide approach:** it involves outlining a set of topics to be explored with each respondent. The order in which the topics are explored and the wording of the questions is not predetermined. They can be decided by the interviewer as the situation evolves.
3. **The standardized open-ended interview:** the approach involves a predetermined sequence and wording of the same set of questions to be asked of each respondent in order to minimize the possibility of bias. This approach is particularly appropriate when several interviewers collect data (Gal et al 1996, 309-310).

Considering the diverse backgrounds and orientations of the participants to be interviewed, the *general interview guide approach* (emphasis added) was adopted as the most appropriate in this study.

But regarding the written sources of data, the researcher studied the college policy, the appointment letters, the financial records, and the records of BOG minutes. The criteria for the choice of written documents studied were their availability, authenticity and relevance to the research effort. According to Gillman (2000, 42), documents provide a formal framework to which one may relate the informal reality. They are good sources of data because they can be accessed at any time convenient to the researcher.

### Plan for Data Analysis

In qualitative research, data analysis aims at bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass of information collected. Mugenda and Mugenda (1999, 1) said, in qualitative analysis the “researcher obtains detailed information about a phenomenon being studied and then tries to establish patterns, trends, and relationships from the information gathered.” The collection of data and its analysis can be done at the same time in qualitative research.

In historical research, sources of data are classified as primary and secondary. Collected data from either of the two sources will be subjected to external and internal criticisms (Ndagi 1984, 90). External criticism asks, “*Is the document or relic authentic?*” while internal criticism asks, “*If authentic, are the data accurate and relevant?*” (Isaac and Michael 1997, 49). Accuracy of data in this context is in reference to the historical fact. Relevance on the other hand means the data collected must be consistent with the research problem.

The sources of data in this study were considered primary because of the following reasons:

1. The interviewees were either narrating personal experiences in the organization or were eyewitnesses to what transpired in the organization.

2. The researcher himself conducted the interviews.
3. The documents studied were authentic documents, recently formulated (between 1996-2002), unpublished, verifiable, and accessible to any other inquirer upon permission. The researcher made copies of them in order to make it easy to refer to them.
4. The problem of memory lapse and biases was controlled by the opinion of other interviewees and the written documents where applicable.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **FINDINGS, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

#### Overview of the Research Purpose and Data Collection Process

This chapter describes the results of a historical study that focused on the effects of institutional culture on leadership transitions at Koru Bible College (1961-2002). The main purpose of the study was to reconstruct the founding organizational culture of Koru Bible College and then describe its effects on subsequent leadership transitions. The study also aimed to draw general implications for effective introduction of change in any educational environment.

Two methods were used to collect data: oral interviews and a study of some recorded documents. The wealth of experience the researcher gained while a principal of the institution (2001-2004) enabled him to make independent observations to supplement the information obtained through interviews and written documents. Since organizational culture is about peoples' experience within a historical time frame, emphasis was placed on the information gleaned from the interviewees. Some historians believe that oral history "re-creates the past more accurately than other types of source material" (McDowell 2002, 61). In total, seventeen interviews were conducted involving five former principals/deputy principals, six current and former employees, two western missionaries, two former Board of Governors (BOG) members, and both the current Bishop and deputy Bishop of Full Gospel Churches of Kenya (FGCK). Koru Bible College (KBC) is a training institution of FGCK. Documents studied included BOG minutes, college policy, financial records and appointment letters.

The first section of this chapter gives a straight-forward narrative of the historical developments at KBC, covering the three historical phases under scrutiny (1961-1977, 1977-1996, and 1996-2002). The narrative on the first historical phase answers the first research question while the other two narratives answer the second research question. The second part of the chapter gives an analysis and interpretation of the research findings. The third research question is inferred in all the narratives but brought out more clearly in the second section of the chapter. The narrative style reporting was adopted in order to make the reconstruction of the story-line of the organizational behavior of KBC to flow.

#### Narrative Report of the Research Findings

##### ***1961-1977: The Founding Organizational Culture of Koru Bible College***

Koru Bible College came into existence in 1961 as a fulfillment of a vision that was first espoused by Paavo Kusmin, a Canadian Finnish missionary who was working for Finnish Free Foreign Missions (FFFM). This vision was later approved by the local FFFM leadership and its headquarters in Finland. A parcel of land had already been purchased from a white colonial settler with one storey building in it. The building provided the initial kitchen, classes, dormitory, and practically any other conceivable activity in the school.

According to most participants interviewed, the original vision of Koru Bible College (then Bible School) was not clear except that it was common knowledge that it existed to train African evangelists on the basic doctrines of the Full Gospel Churches of Kenya (FGCK). Kusmin and others are thought to have envisioned a school that could have equipped the evangelists through training in order to speed up the evangelization mandate of Finnish Free Foreign Missions (FFFM) in Kenya. This vision led to the birth of FGCK in 1962.

Being rural-based, the institution targeted illiterate and semi-literate African evangelists who were serving in the rural parts of Kenya. The door was expanded later to include students from the Democratic Republic of Congo and Tanzania. The initial training ran for three months. The first two weeks of the training were devoted to teaching the learners Swahili language. The need for the Swahili language was occasioned by the problem of communication since most of the student evangelists could not read, write, or speak any second language. Most Finnish missionaries were already fluent in Swahili but were not proficient in the English language. Instructors in KBC at this time were purely missionaries. A few Africans were later included in the teaching schedules.

Although Paavo Kusmin is credited with the establishment of KBC, he never became the principal of the school. He kept his focus of proclamation of the gospel and allowed others to run the school. The principalship of the institution (1961-1977), therefore, inter-changed hands between three missionaries: Mauri Vicksten, Matti Villikka, and Arne Kontinen. However, Vicksten served as principal for a longer time than the rest. Participants could not recall exact dates when each of the three was at the helm of leadership. In most cases, the inter-change was occasioned by furlough breaks on the part of the missionaries. The first African deputy principal was Francis Atemo. He was succeeded by another African, Shem Akula. Participants were not certain on the exact date when these African deputy principals served the institution. Shem Akula resigned in 1982 and paved the way for Rev. Joseph Samoei who took over from him in the same year.

Many participants, regardless of the time they worked in the institution, viewed Mauri Vicksten as hero of KBC. Three main reasons were given by the participants, especially those who worked in the first historical phase of the college

(1961-1977): 1. Vicksten loved the Africans and saw the need for nationalization of KBC and the denomination (FGCK), 2. He was impartial and often reprimanded his fellow FFFM missionaries for their arrogance and negative attitude towards the Africans, and 3. Vicksten was instrumental in the development of the basic doctrines of FGCK which formed the core of what was taught at KBC. Vicksten passed away on 4<sup>th</sup> January, 1995.

All the missionary principals who worked during this time operated from their residential houses instead of administrative offices. The habit has continued up to the present. One current missionary (participant) said his predecessors saw no need for administrative offices at the school. Thus, employees, students and any other person frequented the missionary principal's house for as many times as necessity demanded. Often, the principal's wife was the accounts clerk/book keeper of the school. All payments and financial transactions were therefore done at the missionary house as well.

Most of the older participants interviewed joined KBC as employees within the first historical phase (1961-1977). They were neither interviewed before recruitment nor given any employment letters after recruitment. Although these employees did not have any job description, they got accustomed to what they were doing. They knew what was expected of them and they complied with any new assignment whenever required because any refusal could have resulted in arbitrary dismissal. None of them was employed on merit. Either they joined the institution on their own initiative as casuals, or they were brought to the institution by a next of kin, or a church leader. Their employment was not formal because it had no contractual agreement with the employer. All employees were thus obliged to work anywhere and/or do anything in the institution with no regard for specialization. No one was

expected to question the wisdom of the missionary. He had the power to hire and fire anybody. Over the years, the relationship between the unskilled employees and the missionaries became solidified so that the employees began to refer to any missionary couple at the institution as '*baba*' (father) and '*mama*' (mother) as a sign of respect and reverence.

Most of the participants who started working in the institution during the first historical phase (1961-1977) paid glowing tribute to the missionaries for the 'favor' bestowed upon them. But, ironically when asked about their condition of service over the years they began to blame the institution for their financial woes. For most of the pioneering employees, their children have hardly gone beyond primary schooling. Many of these workers appreciate the favorable changes introduced by the African principals since 1996: increased salaries, written job descriptions, appointment letters, National Social Security Fund (NSSF) and National Hospital Insurance Fund (NHIF) membership, among other changes. However, they still believe that KBC cannot continue without the missionaries. Most of these workers, however, do not consider *any* missionary to be good. Only those missionaries who have worked in Kenya and KBC in particular since 1970s are considered good. Some participants cited generous 'loans' from the missionaries, occasional financial rewards, and sumptuous meals at the missionary residence during special occasions as some of the reasons that make them see the *older missionaries* better than the African principals.

One particular unskilled participant who has worked in the institution since 1969 to date narrated his experience and enthusiastically expressed gratitude to the missionaries for granting him the privilege of working in KBC. Since 1969, he has served in several capacities in the school: grounds-man, cleaner, watchman, and cook. By 2002 his salary had risen to Kshs. 2,250 per month. After he attained the



mandatory retirement age of fifty-five years, the leadership of KBC decided to delay his exit from the college because he was 'financially weak', had school-going children at the time, and being part of the institution's history, he deserved a befitting send off. He argued that the institution retained him in order to enable him to exit from the institution with well-deserved financial and material packages. Ten years have elapsed since the promise was made. He felt disillusioned because his expectations were raised and then 'forgotten.' And despite over thirty years of service at KBC, he can neither read nor write.

Regarding finances, most of the participants said the only source of revenue for KBC during the first historical phase (1961-1977) was donor funding from Finland. Local support was not available because the local churches were still weak and struggling financially. Most of the pastors in FGCK obtained their material and financial support from Finland at this time as well. These financial supports were sent to the respective recipients through the resident missionaries. Koru by then was serving as both a training institution as well as the denominational headquarters.

On the issue of decision-making, participants who worked during this time argued that all the major decisions concerning KBC and FGCK were made by the missionaries. However, a few Africans were later incorporated in the leadership board and thereby participated in decision-making process, especially on matters related to the denomination. One of the participants who was among the pioneers to participate in decision-making process said their role as Africans was passive and was related to evangelization. Up to the end of the second historical phase, there was no clear distinction between the denomination and the institution.

The path towards nationalization was not easy. As mentioned earlier, most Finnish missionaries did not trust the Africans and were thus not ready to pass on the

baton of leadership to them. It took the astute intervention of Mauri Vicksten for nationalization to take effect. Vicksten saw the end from the beginning and rallied both the nationals and the missionaries towards that end. Through Vicksten's efforts, the first two African deputy principals of KBC were appointed in succession. In 1977, the first African principal, Rev. Samuel Mureithi, took over the mantle of leadership of KBC. He had not been involved in the leadership of the institution before. All the Participants unanimously affirmed that Vicksten was/is a hero to all: FGCK, KBC and FFFM (now *Fida International*).

### ***1977-1996: The First Major Leadership Transition at KBC***

In 1977, the first African principal was installed to head the institution. The transition was major, not because it ushered in structural changes, but rather because it was a major step in the nationalization process. Participants who witnessed the changes, however, said nothing really changed in the day to day running of the institution. The new principal devoted himself to teaching and left almost all the administrative details in the hands of the resident missionaries. He rarely stayed in the school. He could only be seen when he was teaching and when there were special meetings at the school. According to some participants, missionaries were at peace with Rev. Mureithi because he least interfered with their work. Most of them said this because of the frosty relationships that characterized the relationship between the missionaries and the principals who came after Mureithi. Missionaries continued to hire and fire as well as manage the institution's finances during Mureithi's tenure.

Some participants, mainly former principals, said the academic qualification of any of the resident missionaries was well guarded. Many of them (participants) surmised that missionaries were of humble educational backgrounds. Three factors were alluded to by the participants: 1. missionaries were uncomfortable with anybody

educated, 2. missionaries were openly against any expansion of theological programs in the school. They protested when the diploma program was introduced and vowed not to support it, and 3. Missionaries had warm and cordial relationship with the unskilled employees and church leaders who were either unschooled or were semi literate.

The new principal, Rev. Mureithi, and his deputy, Rev. Samoei, were graduates of KBC. Both had successfully completed the required three months training and had served as senior pastors in FGCK for some time. They were of humble educational background having not gone beyond grade five. They too did not have any formal job descriptions. One participant who was a deputy principal at the time said he did not know exactly what he was expected to do. His appointment was verbally communicated without any elaboration. He said by virtue of his title he knew that he was supposed to assist the principal in matters of administration and general development of the institution. But, with neither training nor prior orientation, he was assigned to be the head of a correspondence course and as a bookkeeper for the school. As the institution's bookkeeper, the deputy principal worked under the direct supervision of the missionary who was in charge of finances.

As mentioned earlier, most of the participants said there were few changes in the operation of the institution after the first major transition. The African principal *replaced* (positionally) the Western missionary without introducing any alternative leadership practice at the institution. Roles remained undefined; there was no clear recruitment plan, employees worked with no specific terms of service, no job description and no program for staff improvement and welfare. Further, power and authority continued to reside in the hands of the missionaries. Participants did not know if the missionaries on their part had any clear job description.

Concerning funding, there were a few changes during this time. Sources of funding increased to include students' fees and support from the national churches in addition to donor funding. In terms of direct monetary support, donor funding was high at 80% and local support was low at 20%. However, some local churches donated foodstuff to the institution at one point. Food donation from local churches significantly increased the local support to almost 50% of the total expenditures. The foodstuff support continued up to 1995 when it suddenly dwindled as the institution was poised to make another major transition. Part of the reason given was that, the then principal, had by this time, 1996, become the national deputy bishop of the denomination (FGCK). He used his position to influence churches to donate food to KBC. By early 1996, the prospect of his exit from KBC made some churches to discontinue their support for the institution. Some participants said the outgoing principal was personally unhappy with the trend of events at KBC. The decision to relieve him of his duties was against his wish. Those who were agitating for change in the institution had claimed that the outgoing principal was not qualified to lead because he was not adequately learned. Even some missionaries had not only joined the bandwagon of change, they had accused him of some impropriety and were demanding for his removal. Left with no option, Mureithi consented to exit from KBC, disappointed and without any farewell. He was, however, promised that he would be the chairman of the Board of Governors (BOG) which was to be constituted shortly thereafter.

### ***1996-2002: The More Radical Transition in KBC***

In 1996, five major events took place in KBC: 1. the school calendar changed from part-time to full time, 2. a diploma program was introduced, 3. a leadership based on academic merit took over the leadership of the institution, 4. the old crop of

African leadership (principal and deputy principal) exited from the school, and 5. a BOG was constituted to manage the affairs of the institution in terms of policy making, funds-raising, and other managerial matters.

Some participants who witnessed the changes thought the role of the missionary had been reduced as scholarship gained recognition. The new principal and his deputy were diploma and Bachelor's degree holders, respectively. The decision to appoint the two was made by the National Executive Council of FGCK and communicated to them verbally. The new principal and his deputy, as participants in this study, said they were not given any job description. The principal received a terse letter after the verbal communication stating, "You have been appointed the principal of the school with immediate effect. Your work will be to prepare the curriculum for the diploma program to be ready by January 1997." The letter mentioned nothing about administrative responsibilities or what he was expected to do after the diploma curriculum was ready. Similarly, the deputy principal received a terse letter which did not indicate his remuneration or specific duties. This was after he had received the verbal communication. He, however, had no immediate concern about his salary. The prospect of serving God in KBC was more exciting to him than any financial incentive. He learned about his salary after he had taken up the assignment. Concerning job descriptions, one former principal said "we discussed about job descriptions slowly as we continued working. In most cases, jobs were describing themselves to us."

Soon after the new principal and his deputy had embarked on their responsibilities, they encountered problems from three fronts: the resident missionaries, the veteran employees, and the BOG. First, missionaries wanted things to remain as they were. They expected '*teachers*' to teach as they (missionaries)

oversaw daily operations of the institution. They also expected all the assets of the institution to be in their hands, including college vehicles. All the moveable assets such as vehicles could not be released without the consent of the missionary. Second, the veteran (unskilled) employees sided with the missionaries and viewed the new leaders as ‘intruders.’ Participants said the veteran employees had coined a popular saying which went thus, “*others come and go, but we are here to stay*” (emphasis added). Finally, the constituted BOG was headed by the immediate former principal of KBC. He had contested to be the bishop of the denomination (FGCK) in October 1996 and had failed to clinch the seat. He regarded his successor at KBC as a friend of his competitor (new Bishop) who had defeated him in the elections. Furthermore, as a former principal he wanted the new leadership to follow his instructions.

Participants said events outside KBC made the missionaries to mend fences with the former principal. Most of the newly elected national leaders of FGCK (1996) were from the ‘elite’ group (fairly educated) in the denomination. They were not happy with some resident missionaries whom they described as illiterate. They wanted them to go back to their home country. Sensing danger, all missionaries rallied behind Mureithi (former principal) who represented the conservative group (old guard). Mureithi had lost in the previous polls. This renewed unity with the missionaries gave Mureithi an opportunity to join forces with them in order to frustrate the work of the new leaders at KBC.

Most participants admitted that conflict was inevitable, and was long and protracted. Two centers of power had emerged in the institution: the principal and the missionary. The focal points were the principal’s office and the missionary’s house. Both centers pulled towards different directions. The new principal wanted to restructure and reorganize the institution by all means. Overtly, everybody appeared

excited about what he was doing. To his astonishment, however, he learned that the majority of people were against him. He managed, though, to convince the BOG to increase salaries for the employees. But with regards to other issues, he found out that the other would-be stakeholders: employees, missionaries, and BOG members were not with him. The BOG was composed of semi-literate church leaders who dared not get into conflict with the missionaries. They viewed the missionaries as ‘parents’ of the church and the institution.

But, participants drawn from the unskilled employees, missionaries, and a former BOG member argued that the embattled principal was ‘big headed’ and wanted to bring change without involving others and without understanding the historical context of the institution. Frustrated by the trend of events, and lacking support from both the BOG and the National Executive Council of FGCK, the new principal tendered his resignation letter to the BOG in 1999. He left the institution disillusioned and dejected. No one gave him any farewell. The then deputy principal took over the leadership of KBC and continued from where his predecessor had left.

According to two participants who had served in the college BOG, a number of BOG members felt incompetent professionally (in mid-1999) to run the affairs of the institution and decided to step down. Their action led to the dissolution of the entire BOG. The dissenting BOG members felt they were unable to translate their decisions into tangible actions. They also felt they were not adequately qualified on matters of education, especially with regards to the diploma program. But their major disappointment came from decision-making process. Informal decisions made outside BOG meetings were treated more ‘important’ than formal decisions made in BOG meetings. Records of minutes studied (1996-2000) clearly affirmed this view. Most decisions recorded in the minutes were never implemented. For example, a farewell

plan for the first African principal and his deputy featured prominently and consecutively in the records of minutes for two years. At the end of the two years no farewell ceremony took place.

With the dissolution of the first BOG, a new board that comprised of trained Christian professionals under the chairmanship of a national pastor who was married to a Finnish national was constituted in 2000. The choice of the chairman was deliberate and meant to please and appease the missionaries who were aggrieved by the new changes. The missionaries had resisted the constitution of the new board because most of its members were not mainstream church leaders. The new board started work by first identifying the past pitfalls in the leadership of the institution. After that, they formed two taskforces from among themselves to formulate a College Policy and Appointment Letters for all employees. Within three months, they had come up with the two documents (samples of the two documents were subject of this study). To update the employees, the new leadership made it mandatory for all the employees to sign a formal contract of employment with the institution starting from January 2000.

With the above changes, the college was once again poised to enter into a new era of transition. The newly formulated College Policy defined the job descriptions of the BOG members, the administrative/management team, and stated the objectives of the institution among other details. The Appointment Letters described the duties of an employee, working hours, salary, probation, and terms of service among other issues. Other changes included appointment of an African to be the college treasurer (to replace the missionaries), recruitment of qualified and trained cooks, and development of a ten-year college plan.



Participants from all categories of stakeholders who were working in the institution by 2000 said all the above changes were only good on paper. They were never practically implemented, either because they were not understood, or because they were not accepted. The new principal who took over the leadership of the school in mid 1999 found difficulty acting out his role in the light of his job description. The veteran employees, the missionaries, and denominational leaders made it difficult for him to work. Frustrated and disappointed, he too resigned towards the end of 2000 with what he called “shattered and unfulfilled dreams”.

Furthermore, the newly constituted BOG (2000) was arbitrarily dissolved in February 2002. There was a change of leadership in the denomination (FGCK), which drastically affected what was going on at the institution. KBC is a training institution of FGCK. The former principal of the college, Rev. Mureithi, and his former deputy, Rev. Joseph Samoei, had respectively been elected Bishop and deputy Bishop of FGCK. The conservative group had turned tables on the ‘elite’ group in the leadership of the denomination. Having developed affinity with the older missionaries, while working in KBC as principal and deputy principal, the new leaders had an interest in what was happening in KBC. They immediately intervened on behalf of the missionaries who were not happy with some leadership changes that had taken place previously. The new Bishop with a few other leaders arbitrarily dissolved the then BOG, ‘reinstated’ the resident missionary as the college treasurer, and constituted a new BOG comprising of mainly semi-literate pastors. The action was a violation of the college policy which had stipulated the procedure for dissolving a BOG. A participant who took part in the changeover said when the bishop was reminded of the college policy he replied, “What is a policy? It is a piece of paper. We can tear it and write a new one.”

Earlier on, a new principal had been appointed in January 2001 to replace the one who had resigned towards the end of 2000. And like his predecessors, he too encountered multiple hurdles and constraints while attempting to discharge his duties on the basis of his job description. He joined the institution in 1999 as a teacher and was a witness to what had transpired before.

Local funding during the third historical phase of the college (1996-2002) was characterized by diminishing local support compared to donor funding from Finland. At the time when the local funding would have increased as a sign of increased local ownership, the opposite was taking place. Some of the factors that accounted for this scenario were leadership wrangles in FGCK and lack of awareness among local churches on their role among other factors. Before FGCK and KBC were separated in 1996, the local support was given through FGCK. KBC as a training institution of FGCK was apportioned 70% of the money received from the local churches. The remaining 30% was shared out among other departments of the church. Thus, many local churches knew they were supporting the denomination and not necessarily KBC. Financial records showed, for example, that in 1995 donor support was Kshs 317,111 while local support was Kshs 246,395, a difference of Kshs 70,716. However, in 1996 donor support was Kshs 371,315 while local support was Kshs 89,959, a difference of Kshs 281,356. The trend of events in the denomination and the college bolstered the position of the missionaries in the college.

A cross section of participants said cultural differences between Africans and missionaries were evident throughout, but became more pronounced during the third phase of the institution. Missionary participants said Africans were not time conscious, did not face issues directly when it comes to planning (go in circles), worked for personal benefit (not the organization), do not see anything wrong until

caught, ask for forgiveness in order to continue with work, defend themselves when they make mistakes instead of owning up to the mistakes, and practice ‘mob justice’ when another fellow worker (African) makes a mistake. They (missionaries) said that these are the reasons that make a Westerner not to readily trust an African. Africans on the other hand accused the missionaries of being ‘colonial’ minded (feel superior), judge a person by face and not character, like jovial/talkative/social people who may be clowns or the wrong representation of the African people, keep records of wrong (they said an African can forgive and forget but never a white man!), likes generalization, are not happy with Africans who are independent minded, manipulate the unlearned for their own advantage, and worship time and rules.

### Analysis and Interpretation of Findings

“Knowledge is historically contingent and shaped by human interests and social values...” (Alford 1998, 3). The history of KBC affirms Alford’s statement and demonstrates how culture evolves in an organization. The first historical phase of KBC (1961-1977) reveals how, as a young institution, KBC developed (consciously or unconsciously) a certain pattern of organizational behavior that became difficult to change later.

The sources of research data for this study were two-fold and were treated as primary sources: interviews and a study of written documents. The oral interviews brought to the fore the vivid experiences of people in an organization. The interviews further revealed how culture evolved in KBC and how it affected the way people made sense of their environment. Some of the information drawn from the interviews were inaccurate (and were rejected) while others displayed both sound historical knowledge and authentic life experiences of the participants. Inaccuracy was noted when the information given disagreed with the majority views, contradicted the

written materials (where applicable), went against common knowledge, appeared speculative (the narrator relying on hearsays), and when a claim was made without convincing corroboration of facts (for example, statements like I think, I believe...). Participants were not given any particular individual labeling for identification. Classification was based on the historical period in which a participant worked in the organization. *Veterans* were those participants who worked in the institution between 1961 and 1996 while *amateurs* were those participants who worked in the institution between 1996 and 2002.

In addition, the written documents studied revealed inconsistency and indecision on one hand, and a disparity between the real and the manifest on the other hand. The BOG minutes (1996-2000) depicted difficulty in decision-making process. Most of the decisions made during this time never got implemented as planned. Some items of deliberations kept appearing in subsequent minutes for as long as three years (1996-1999). The appointment letters and the college policy (developed in 2000) defined and described roles on paper while in practice they were not operational. The financial records (1993-1998) showed the income, expenditure, and sources of income for the institution. The primary sources of income were classified as support from abroad, support from local churches, and fees from students.

An interpretive analysis of the narrative report on the research findings brought to the fore the organizational culture of KBC (1961-2002) and its effects on leadership transitions as evidenced below.

### ***Symbols, Heroes, Rituals and Values***

The above four aspects of organizational behavior were manifested in the history of KBC. First, *symbols* are seen in the way the veteran employees displayed peculiarity from the amateur employees in the use of words. They had coined a

popular saying within their circle which went thus, “*we are here to stay, but others come and go.*” They alone could understand their unique language. In addition, they used the words ‘*mama*’ and ‘*baba*’ to display their emotional attachment to the resident missionaries. They viewed the missionaries as ‘father’ and ‘mother’ figures, not as employers. Second, there was unanimity among all the participants that Mauri Vicksten was a hero in the institution and the denomination alike. However, the values cherished by Vicksten (of empowering the nationals) were elusive at the institution. Third, almost everything done at KBC was informal and spontaneous: employment, dismissals, meetings, and work among other issues. There were no job descriptions. For example, one participant said, “...jobs were describing themselves to us.” Informal meetings were considered more important than formal meetings. To survive, one had to understand the prevailing situation in order to make appropriate adjustment. Finally, it is apparent that obedience was valued and emphasized. Employees were there to be seen performing and not to be heard speaking. Failure to comply resulted in arbitrary dismissal. And to achieve this value, there was need to employ unexposed and unschooled employees who would be malleable and teachable. However, the primary value was evangelism. The institution existed to prepare national evangelists for work of ministry in the rural parts of Kenya and beyond.

### ***Founding Vision***

The founding vision of KBC was not only unclear at the onset; it was also geared towards a short-term objective of evangelization. The parochial nature of the vision stifled institutional growth and development. It also led to unnecessary leadership conflicts. The original vision required redefining and renewal after some time but it was never done. Drucker (1992, 9) said, “The most important task of an organization’s leader is to anticipate crisis. Perhaps not to avert it, but to anticipate it.

To wait until the crisis hits is already abdication.” It took 35 years for the institution to reorganize its academic programs, and 39 years to put in place minimum organizational structures such as college policy, appointment letters, among other issues. It is imperative for an institution to have a clear vision that sees the end from the beginning.

### ***Organizational Structures***

Evidently, KBC did not have both administrative and organizational structures. In other words, KBC was not a formal organization in the understanding of Ukeje (1992, 114). This is because relationships were not formal and there were no clear organizational goals to be achieved at KBC. The absence of structures led to role conflict in the institution. Since there was no mechanism for conflict resolution, problems continued unabated. Organizational and administrative structures would have helped to enhance clarity, accountability, transparency, and efficiency in the organization. In addition, as Lunenberg and Ornstein said, division of work “permits an organization to realize the benefits of specialization and to coordinate the activities of the component parts” (2004, 44).

### ***Cultural Differences and Mistrust***

There were cultural disparities between the Africans and the resident missionaries in KBC. Conflict and mistrust came out openly in the third historical phase of the institution because there was lack of adequate understanding between the schooled nationals and the resident missionaries. The misunderstanding led to mutual suspicion and created a sense of insecurity among the various stakeholders in the institution. As Senge posited, “if we believe people are untrustworthy, we act differently from the way we would if we believed they were trustworthy” (1992, 2).

The cultural differences prevailing at KBC between the Africans and the missionaries could have been the result of different upbringings in different countries.

### ***Dependency***

Dependency at KBC was not only in matters of finances but also in employment, and continuity at work. At the founding stage of the institution, everything came solely from the missionaries. On one hand, the pioneering employees were conditioned to a particular pattern of doing things until it became their way of life. They viewed employment as not earned but as a favor. The favor was conditioned to obedience. Failure to do as expected would have resulted in the withdrawal of the favor. On the hand, the institution and the denomination depended absolutely on financial support from donors at the beginning.

It is clear that financial dependency in KBC was rooted in the history of the organization. Because there was lack of adequate transition plan for local ownership, what began in *good faith* became a snare for the institution. To achieve interdependence between the nationals and the donors called for two things: 1. nationals to change their minds with regard to ownership, and 2. local support to increase significantly.

### ***Culture and Conditioning***

The story of KBC demonstrates that when people are conditioned to think, act and feel in a particular way, they become accustomed to it. Even changing academic programs for the betterment of the institution proved a big issue because some people could not see a better life beyond what was present. And because culture is rooted in history and is both mental programming and shared experiences, the process of change in KBC was both complex and time-consuming. The unskilled employees in

KBC could not be separated from the missionaries after having been with them for a long time. They preferred missionaries who had been with them for a long time.

### ***Staff Development***

Plan for staff development was completely lacking in KBC. For more than thirty years, the majority of staff was unskilled and ‘unexposed’ in terms of general knowledge, updates, and training. The remunerations were also low during this time. The story of one particular participant who had worked in KBC since 1969 demonstrates that the institution did not value education and did not value human resource development, and yet institutions are primarily about people. No organization can progress without effective and motivated human resource.

### ***Denominational Interference***

FGCK’s interference in the affairs of KBC was done with impunity. The problem was historical as well as cultural. At one time the two institutions were intertwined and inseparable. KBC existed to train evangelists and pastors for FGCK. FGCK on the other hand owned KBC. Until 1996, KBC served as the headquarters of the denomination with its deputy bishop serving as the principal of the institution. It is apparent that, even with the separation in 1996, the denomination’s leadership continued to meddle in the affairs of the institution. By appointing the former principal of the institution (who left the institution disgruntled) to be the first chairman of the newly constituted Board of Governors (BOG), the denomination leadership was setting the stage for a contest between the new principal and the former principal. This did not augur well for the college. KBC needed independent and versatile leadership to manage its affairs with little interference. Although the



college policy (formulated in 2000) defined clearly the roles of the management, governors, and owners, it was not adhered to.

### ***Power and Authority***

Power and authority was not formally defined in KBC. When the missionaries were having a sole oversight over the institution (1961-1977) there was no apparent problem. Employees knew where power was concentrated. The missionaries had the power to hire and fire at will, and without any room for redress. The *missionary house*, then, symbolized the central place of power. And as the employees frequented the missionary house for counsel, payment, to borrow loans or for Christmas meal, they knew that the missionaries had the absolute power. This was forced compliance according to Weber (Shapiro 2000, 109). The distance between the employees and the missionaries was wide. The role of the employees was just to function. They were not involved in decision-making and had no say over anything that transpired in the institution.

In the third historical phase when a new principal came with the '*office*' as a central unit of power/authority in the institution, he disturbed the status quo. The conflict that ensued was a contest between those who wanted to preserve the status quo and those who wanted change.

### ***Transition process***

The last historical phase of KBC (1996-2002) shows that, for change to be effective, three factors are very essential: First, it must *begin with people*. The principals and BOG members who attempted to introduce change failed because they did not involve the other stakeholders. People superficially acceded to some changes without any commitment. Second, it should have a clear *understanding of the past*.

Every institution has a history that needs to be understood and appreciated. Finally, it should be based on a clear *transition plan* with clear mission and vision statements. The vision must provide the big picture and must help to see the end from the beginning. All the leadership transitions in KBC were in most cases spontaneous, disorganized, and without any philosophical framework.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, IMPLICATIONS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Overview of the Research Study

The main purpose of this research was to reconstruct historically the organizational culture of Koru Bible College (KBC) and then describe its effects on the succeeding leadership transitions at the institution. The study achieved this purpose through interviewing past principals, some Board of Governors (BOG) members, some denominational leaders of Full Gospel Churches of Kenya (FGCK), some former and current employees, and two resident missionaries from *Fida* International (formerly FFFM). The researcher also studied the following written documents: appointment letters, college policy, financial records, and minutes of BOG meetings.

#### ***Research Problem***

The study sought to establish whether a founding organizational (or institutional) culture affects leadership transitions in a learning institution. The specific context of the study was KBC, 1961-2002. Three historical phases of the college were studied: 1961-1977, 1977-1996, and 1996-2002.

#### ***Research Questions***

In order to give direction to the research pursuit, three research questions were posited as follows:

1. What was the founding organizational culture at Koru Bible College, 1961-1977?

2. How has the founding culture at Koru Bible College influenced or affected subsequent leadership transitions and practice from 1977-1996 and 1996-2002?
3. What factors have enhanced or hindered the process of implementing change at Koru Bible College?

### ***Significance of the Research***

The study is significant to KBC as an institution and to its leadership because it will help in the understanding of the present condition of the institution. From this understanding, the institution will be able to chart the way forward from the present to the desired future.

The study may also benefit other educational institutions with a similar heritage. Moreover, the study is important to the academic community because its findings might contribute to the contemporary knowledge on the effects of organizational culture on leadership transitions.

### Summary of Findings

The findings obtained in this study affirmed the existing literature on organizational culture, leadership and management. In particular, the findings demonstrated that culture is a reflection of the values of the founders, is rooted in history and in the collective experience of people, is shared, and is mental programming (Cornwell 2003, 21; Symphony Orchestra Institute 1997-2005, 4; Schein n.d, 2; Hofstede 1991, 180).

In answer to the first research question which asked about the founding organizational culture of Koru Bible College (1961-1977), findings showed that the founding organizational culture of KBC was characterized by: 1. a narrow and unclear vision, 2. casual and informal employment, 3. lack of organizational and administrative structures, 4. lack of a clear distinction between the college (KBC) and

the denomination (FGCK), 5. dependency on missionaries and external donor funding, 6. mistrust between the Africans and the missionaries, 7. slow nationalization process, and 8. a preference for unskilled labor, among other issues.

In answer to the second question which sought to establish the effects of the founding organizational culture on leadership transitions at KBC (1977-1996 and 1996-2002), findings showed that there were no significant effects on the first transition (1977-1996) because nothing significantly changed on the ground. However, the effects of the founding culture on leadership transitions were immensely felt in the third historical phase (1996-2002) because there was a deliberate attempt to disturb the existing status quo. The conflict that emerged pitted the missionaries and the unskilled workers on one hand, and the new principals and BOG on the other hand. The denomination, FGCK, frequently interfered in the affairs of the institution during this time also.

But, in answer to the third question which inquired into the factors that have either enhanced or hindered the process of implementing change at KBC, the research findings showed that there were few factors that enhanced change. Thus, the factors that have hindered the change process were found to be multiple. The findings linked the hindrances to the founding organizational culture (1961-1977) of the institution. Attempts to change the institution from what it was originally were received with resistance by those who had been part of the founding history. The consequences as highlighted above were enormous. As Tagiuri and Litwin (1968, 120) argued, "An organization tends to be perpetuated from one generation of members to another unless the structure of inputs and outputs and intra-organizational processes are changed along with the feedback efforts." This concept finds support in what Adler (1991, 15) mentioned in his definition of culture. Adler said culture is "...the

interactive aggregate of common characteristics that influences a human group's response to its environment.”

All the above findings confirmed that the founding organizational culture of KBC had significant effects on the subsequent leadership transitions in the institution. It also affirmed that when people are treated consistently in “terms of basic assumptions, they eventually end up behaving according to those assumptions in order to make their world stable and predictable” (Schein n.d, 3). Thus, the process of change is both complex and time-consuming.

### Implications for Introducing Change

Based on the findings of this study, the following implications were drawn for effective introduction of change in any academic environment which is already established.

First, have a clear understanding of the *past organizational behavior*. The aim should be to “uncover core values and beliefs. These may include stated values and goals which may be embedded in organizational metaphors, myths, stories, and in the behavior of members” (Symphony Orchestra Institute 1997-2005, 1).

Second, have a *transition plan*. The plan should embrace the detailed action-steps for the entire transition process. For example, it should explain the new structures to be introduced, objectives, organizational vision and mission, among other relevant issues.

Third, put in place the necessary *structures* as envisioned in the transition plan. In the case of KBC, the structures that were primarily needed were basic organizational and administrative structures. But organizations differ in terms of size, orientation and age. Therefore, structures needed should be relevant to the specific context. Effective transition cannot take place without the necessary structures being

put in place. As Tagiuri and Litwin (1968, 120) noted, change cannot take place “unless the structure of inputs and outputs and intra-organizational processes are changed along with the feedback efforts.”

Fourth, focus on *changing people* through deliberate coaching, teaching and re-orientation. This should include also a continuing program for refresher courses and trainings. People constitute the bottom-line in an organization. Without them, the organization ceases to exist. The process of changing people must be based on the understanding of where people are at the present and where you want to take them. They should be able to have a stake in the change pursuit. While emphasizing the importance of people, Barkdoll noted that “organizations are the people in them...people make the place...we have tried to change organizations by changing structures and processes when it was the people that needed changing” (n.d, 8).

Fifth, involve all the *other stakeholders* in the change process. The leaders of KBC failed primarily because they did not involve other stakeholders in the change process. The other stakeholders must indeed have a stake in the whole process. They should be able to see themselves recognized, appreciated and involved as much as possible. As Bennis (1972, 112ff) observed, change is most successful when those who are affected are involved in the planning.

Sixth, the *vision for change* must see the end from the beginning. The vision for KBC was unclear and short-ranged. When the primary objective of evangelism had been obtained, the vision was ‘realized.’ Being without a futuristic vision, the leadership of KBC reverted to ‘maintenance’ and to safeguarding the past. A good vision will help to anticipate any possible crisis and provide a *fallback* plan should an initial plan fail to work out well.

Seventh, put in place an *orientation plan* for new members. This will help to induct new members joining the organization. This will encourage the new members to develop a desirable behavior. The plan should also take note of cultural differences existing and provide a mechanism for mutual understanding and harmony.

Finally, have in place a mechanism for *constant self-evaluation*. This will help in knowing whether you are still on course as an organization or you have drifted away from your stated objectives and purpose. Evaluation will also encourage openness in the organization by opening communication channels for primary information and for feedback. Finally, evaluation will help an organization to know when to change.

### Conclusion

This study has shown that the founding organizational culture of an organization has great bearing on the future leadership transitions in an organization. The emerging knowledge largely agrees with the theoretical literature reviewed in this study. As Cornwell (2003, 21) noted, the founder of an organization begins to shape the culture of the organization from his or her first actions. In the case of KBC, the mechanism for transmitting and embedding the founders' assumptions, values and beliefs involved a process of interactions, rewards, and direct imposition of desirable behavior to the group (desirable to the founders).

The study has also revealed that the process of changing an entrenched organizational culture is complex and time consuming. When people get accustomed to a particular pattern of behavior it becomes difficult for them to change later. This is what Hofstede (1991, 180) called mental programming. The repercussions of this state of affairs is cultural disorientation because "each member's set of beliefs, values, and assumptions become their unquestioned "reality"; they then perceive behavior



inconsistent with their own biases as irrational or malevolent” (Symphony Orchestra 1997-2005, 4).

Further, the findings of this study have shown that the best strategy for effecting change in an organization must begin with the people and with an adequate knowledge of the organization’s past. People will make sense of structures if they understand what they stand for. Without this vital understanding, it will be difficult for people to accept change.

### Recommendations

In the light of the findings of this research and the above implications for introducing change in an academic environment, the researcher makes the following recommendations for further study:

1. A study to be done in any other missionary-founded theological institution in Africa in order to find out if similar findings can be found.
2. A comparative study on the effects of organizational culture on leadership transitions in non-profit making organizations (like theological colleges) and profit making organizations (for example, Barclays bank and others) in order to appreciate the differences and the similarities
3. A study on why missionary-founded institutions in Africa suffer from dependency on donor funding. Why is local ownership and support not practical? What effective strategies should be put in place in order for ownership to take root locally?

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P.O. Box 24686, NAIROBI

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APPENDIX A

**LETTER OF REQUEST FOR INTERVIEW**

**NEGST  
PO BOX 24686  
KAREN**

28-11-2006

To \_\_\_\_\_  
  
\_\_\_\_\_

Dear sir/madam

**Ref: Request To Be a Research Participant**

I am carrying out a historical research on the ‘effects of institutional culture on leadership transitions at Koru Bible College.’

I have chosen you as one of the people who can provide me with relevant information on my topic of research. To do this, I will arrange for an interview meeting with you at a time that is convenient to you.

Any information you give to me will be treated with confidentiality. I will use the word ‘participant’ in the research report to conceal your name.

I am eager to get your consent as soon as possible. Please sign below if you agree to be interviewed.

God bless you.

Yours truly,

John Kitur  
NEGST

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX B

### GENERAL LIST OF INTERVIEW TOPICS

- Founding vision/mission of KBC
- Leadership credentials, academic levels, etc
- Funding-sources, allocation, management etc
- Criteria for staff recruitment
- Terms/conditions of service
- Job description
- Staff welfare
- Organizational/administrative structures
- Power and authority (power distance)
- Criteria for leadership appointment and practice
- Date and duration of service/leadership
- Challenges of transition/change process
- Hindrances/enhancers of change
- Partnership in development
- College heroes, symbols, and rituals
- Etc

## **VITA**

### **PERSONAL DATA**

Name: John Kiptanui A. Kitur

Birth: 31-12-1964

Nationality: Kenyan

Marital status: married

Number of Children: (3) Ebenezer, Jabez, and Neema

Name of Spouse: Catherine C. Kitur

### **EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND**

Kipteris Primary School: 1975-1981, CPE

Londiani Secondary School: 1982-1986, KCE

Kenya Highlands Bible College: 1993-1997, B.TH

Koru Bible College: 1998, CERTIFICATE

Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology: 2004-2007, M.DIV-CE

### **MINISTRY EXPERIENCE**

Chilchila Secondary School: 1989, TEACHER

Kipteris High School: 1989-1991, HEADMASTER

Chepkechei Secondary School: 1992-1993, TEACHER

Fort-Ternan FGCK: 1998-2001, SENIOR PASTOR (YOUTH)

Koru Bible College: 1999-2004, TEACHER, PRINCIPAL

Kapkoros FGCK: 2003-2004, PASTOR IN-CHARGE