



Full Length Research Paper

Intervention of beliefs and practices in Ugo (divination) in African context: Case studying the GĩKũYũ Presbyterian Christians of Nyeri Presbytery, Kenya (1908 – 2008)

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Abstract

African world-view is controlled by some forces, which are believed to intervene in circumstances beyond human capability. Cultures, communities and religious institution in many occasions come into agreement of the existence of these supernatural powers. They however, differ greatly on their nature, concept and the manner in which they are consulted and incorporated in human affairs bringing about inconsistency in conviction and concerns of reliability. Thus, this study investigates beliefs and practices in *ũgo* (healing divinity) among the Presbyterian Christians in Nyeri presbytery. The result of this study is expected to resolve subject of dualism among the African Christians and bring about wholistic living in the Christian community. Guided by Horton's theory of African religion as one of manipulation, and Niebuhr's missiological model, the study adopted a descriptive survey to collect data from 382 respondents (364 church members, 6 pastors, 6 elders, 6 *ago*). The study employed systematic and multiple sampling techniques (purposive, stratified random, simple random and snowball) to determine and select the sample. The data were collected through observation, interview schedules and administering questionnaires to the respondents. Data was prepared for statistical analysis using Statistical Package for Social Sciences, means and percentages formed part of the descriptive statistics. The findings reveal that, the *Gĩkũyũ* believed in *ũgo* as key instrument through which God heals them. The Church of Scotland Mission on its onset among the *Gĩkũyũ* community denounced these practices terming them as devilish without logically evaluating the value they held in *Gĩkũyũ* aspects of life. The imposed beliefs and practices as revealed in the study failed in offering complete physical and spiritual elements in solving problems hindering the wellbeing of the community. This resulted to *Gĩkũyũ* PCEA Christians revert to *ũgo* in search of this spiritual elements a trend that continues to the present day. This scenario is spurred by the *Gĩkũyũ* PCEA Christians understanding of health, illness and healing from African perspective that takes into account both physical and spiritual aspects. This brings about the evidence of religious dualism among *Gĩkũyũ* PCEA Christians. The study recommends inculturation procedure whereby *Gĩkũyũ*'s culture elements in tandem with biblical teaching are incorporated into Christianity and those incompatible are replaced. The integration and the replacement help in enriching the mission Christianity, therefore as a result, overcoming dualism.

Keywords: *Gĩkũyũ*, beliefs and practices in *ũgo*, Presbyterian Church of East Africa, inculturation. Dualism, Indigenous healing, Ritual purification.

INTRODUCTION

The introduction of Christian teachings in African culture, in the 19th and 20th century CE, was paradoxically accompanied by denouncements of African beliefs and

practices where such practices were immediately seen as primitive and devilish. This was however done without logically evaluating the said beliefs and practices and

their importance in African ways of life (Hiuhu, 1938; Irvine, 1938). The success of missionaries in converting African to Christianity and their determination in conformation the African Christians to the Western Christian culture overlooked the value attached to these beliefs and practices by the Africans (Karanja, 1999; Githieya, 1995; Kibicho, 2006). These resulted to partial backsliding of the African Christians to some of the practices with which their perceived benefits could not be drawn from the missionaries' teachings and culture. The Christian missionary presumed that the Africans had no religion of their own and were uncivilized, these to them was a perfect barren ground to plant their religion giving no room for any other belief and practice (Hinga, 2001: 187). This was however not true for, in particular the *Gĩkũyũ* The word "Gĩkũyũ" in this study refers to the people whom ethnologists group is Bantu. The name is used interchangeably to people and their language: "Mũgĩkũyũ" is a member of this ethnic group.

community had a religious world view which existed in two planes, that of human world and spiritual world. They believed in life after death, where when people died they transformed into spirits (ancestors) who still held connection with the living. The ancestors were believed to possess mystical powers that pervade the universe. Sorcerers and witches utilize the same powers to harm the people while *Ago* (sing. *Mũndũ Mũgo*) use it to diagnose diseases and misfortunes, and witchcraft detection and eradication, thereby helping people and fostering life (Kĩrika, 1988).

The Christian missionaries condemned all activities related to the *Gĩkũyũ* religion. Among the religious and cultural practices that were condemned were indigenous healing practices, magic, sorcery, witchcraft, curses, marriage institution (polygamy, sorarate and levirate marriages), the ancestral veneration, traditional festivals, initiation rites, and traditional sacrificial rituals. As a substitute, missionaries replaced such practices with Western culture, which they assumed would provide a base in which the gospel would flourish. However, there are those resilient cultural elements such as beliefs and practices in divination, which have continued to be practised secretly by converts where Christian influence has been very strong (Mbiti 1969, Mugabe, 1994, Kibicho, 2006).

Unfortunately, when these Christians are found out by the Church leadership, they are subjected to disciplinary action, sometimes leading to excommunication (PCEA, 1999, Gatu, 2006). This being the case, the PCEA Church has had to bear with the secret duality of some of its members, a practice that has continued to pose a challenge to evangelism. This paper sought to investigate beliefs and practices in *ũgo* with a view to inculturating the same in order to meet *Gĩkũyũ* PCEA Christian spiritual needs lacking in Mission Christianity, and consequently overcome dualism.

Objective of the Study

Following this background, the study endeavored to:

1. Examine the extent of adherence to *ũgo* in *Gĩkũyũ* indigenous beliefs and practices.
2. Investigate the determinants of vulnerability of *Gĩkũyũ* PCEA Christians to the beliefs and practices in *ũgo* despite Christian evangelization.
3. Identify strategies the PCEA Church can put in place of inculturating Christianity into beliefs and practices in *ũgo*.

Gĩkũyũ Christians, like many others in Africa, continue living a double life, on one side, under sanctions by the Church and on the other, in secretive cultural practices ultimately prohibited by the Church. This has a negative impact not only on the spiritual growth of the individual, but also of the Church. No wonder, Christianity remains superficial among *Gĩkũyũ* Christians. It is in this regard, this study set out to investigate what satisfactory interventions services the Church can put in place to replace the roles played by *ũgo*. The study endeavored to examine the adherence to *ũgo* in *Gĩkũyũ* indigenous beliefs and practices.

Literature Review

Some scholars have concentrated on the study of beliefs and practices in divination among Africa indigenous communities. This includes the work of Parrinder (1962), Mbiti (1969), Idowu (1971), Mitchell (1977) and Schoffeleers (1989). These scholars observed that African indigenous communities sought the presence of God through specialists who acted as custodians of the religious heritage and knowledge for their community. According to Mbiti, diviner-doctors typify what is best in a given community. In the analysis of divination, these authors seem to agree that diviner-doctors rescue individuals or the community in matters of health and general welfare. A careful examination of these writers' work underscores the fact that in some cases, a person may inherit the profession of divination from the parents. In other cases, a person may be called through a dream while another may obtain it from an experienced diviner-doctor. Nevertheless, all diviner- doctors achieve their status through their outstanding abilities and intelligence. After being commissioned to the profession, a person associates himself or herself with a skilled diviner to learn the science of the medicine. However, these writers fail to account for the strong African affiliation to beliefs and practices in divination even after conversion to Christianity. Their work would be helpful to explain why *Gĩkũyũ* Christians revert to indigenous practices, which is normally related to mystical powers through belief and adherence to *ũgo*. The study further reviewed literature concerning inculturation of beliefs and practices in

divination for wholistic living among African Christians. The proponents of inculturation include Kraft (1979), Idowu (1973), Bediako (1995), Pobee (1979) and Oduyoye (1989). In their view, Christianity should be related to the local culture to remove the foreignness associated with it. It should also be freely grow within the African cultural heritage so as to have an African imprint. Their work is extremely useful in inculturation beliefs and practices in *ũgo*. The term inculturation was favored among many other terminologies as it describes the type of Christianity in which the Gospel is inserted into the local culture, thereby facilitating simultaneously the transformation of culture and the transmission of the Gospel (Nasimiyu, 1986; Waliggo, 1986 and Kiaziku, 2009). The work of these scholars is useful in suggesting that the term inculturation provides the best procedure of giving *Gĩkũyũ* Presbyterian Christians a wholistic living.

To this end, it can be argued that many African Christians experience a religious vacuum. To them, Christ is either absent, indifferent or insufficient to deal with their problems. The religious vacuum is reflected in the African Christians' persistence in indigenous religious practices among them beliefs in curses, oathings and traditional healing (Kahindi 1988, Wamue, 1988 and Mwaura, 2001). In this connection, this study agrees with these scholars that African Christians have suffered from a form of religious schizophrenia emanating from the way Christ was packaged to them. This study addresses the issue of religious dualism in connection to evangelization of the *Gĩkũyũ* by CSM missionaries. It has explored some of the beliefs and practices in *ũgo* that should be inculturated to give *Gĩkũyũ* Christians a wholistic life.

In conclusion, two observations have emerged from the reviewed literature. First, the content of the African religion provides a fertile ground for inculturation. However, Christian missionaries ignored such a rich heritage and opted to cast their Westernized Christianity to the African mindset. This negatively impacted on Africans, as it developed religious vacuum. Finally, it must be noted that many Christological scholars have constructed their theological concepts within the context of the ambivalent interaction between African and Western missionaries of the 19th and early part of 20th centuries. By so doing, they have ignored the contemporary issues that many African Christians wrestle with in their day-to-day lives, and how such inform or shape their worldview. Their work fails to show that African Christians face the challenge posed by pragmatism. In this connection, Africans tend to explain Christianity only in terms of what it can do for them, which is, provide solutions to their cultural, political, economic, social, and religious problems. This explains why many of them resort to *ũgo* when Christianity fails to address such problems. As such, any inculturation study that hopes to be relevant in the 21st century needs to be relevant to its immediate context and address Africans' existential needs. This study addresses this challenge.

Theoretical Framework

The study adopts the theories of Horton's African religion as one of prediction, control and manipulation (Horton, 1995) and Niebuhr's (1951) Evangelistic model. According to Horton (1995), African religion defined by Taylor (1871), as the belief in spirits was found to be inadequate. Horton states that African religion is essentially a faith of predication, control and manipulation among other goals. That is, a religion in which rituals are engaged as means to an end in themselves. This elaboration shows that Horton's theory sees African religion as pragmatic; a faith made by humans to serve their interests and needs.

The second model for this study is Niebuhr's (1951) missiological motifs. Niebuhr (1951) conceptualizes five theological paradigms showing relationships of Christ to culture since the beginning of Christianity. These motifs are Christ against culture, Christ of culture, Christ above culture, Christ and culture in paradox and Christ the transformer of culture. The study utilizes Niebuhr's paradigms as follows: Christ against culture stresses the opposition between Christ and culture. The Christ against culture paradigm was used in this study to eliminate without purification elements in the beliefs and practices in *ũgo*, which are incompatible with the word of God, among them; witch-hunting and charm making.

The second typology is that of Christ and culture. Jesus in this approach is not at variant with cultures but a purifier, the fulfiller of hopes and aspirations. Christ of Culture was used to select those themes in the beliefs and practices in *ũgo* which have total support of the whole biblical witness. In this study, we introduce Jesus as the only one who can bring a total fulfillment of religious aspirations of *Gĩkũyũ* which they struggle to satisfy through beliefs and practices in *ũgo*. Niebuhr's last typology is that of Christ the transformer of culture. This is a more hopeful and positive attitude towards culture, which implies that there is a need for conversion or transformation. It takes cognizance of the impact of sin on culture. Transformation in this study takes into consideration the inadequacies and weaknesses of fallen human nature. Applied to this study, the motif shows that beliefs and practices in *ũgo* can enrich and transform *Gĩkũyũ* Christianity in alignment with Jesus' redemptive revelation thereby creating a *Gĩkũyũ* Christian community that is truly Christian and fully rooted within *Gĩkũyũ* religio-cultural heritage.

Two important revelations emerge from these theories. First, Horton's African religion as one of manipulations addresses the worldview of *Gĩkũyũ* Christians that connote the idea of religion as pragmatic. Horton's theory, in this study is used to show that the aim of the beliefs and practices in *ũgo* among *Gĩkũyũ* Christians is to manipulate the spiritual beings and supernatural powers in order to secure their goodwill and protection. This framework precipitates religious dualism

among *Gikūyū* Christians. Second, in utilizing two of Niebuhr's missiological models, namely; Christ of Culture and Christ the transformer of cultures to illustrate the inculturation paradigm, the study posits that Jesus reconstructs beliefs and practices in *ūgo* by challenging, sifting, transforming, and rebuilding them.

Inculturation Procedure and Its Application

The process of inculturation adopted in this work is based on Niebuhr's conceptual framework explained above. It acts as a filter to distinguish those beliefs and practices in *ūgo* which are in tandem with biblical witness are incorporated into Christianity and those incompatible with the Gospel are replaced with Christian rituals. The process of inculturation follows three stages. Stage one is a critical evaluation of the cultural element of beliefs and practices in *ūgo* to be inculturated on the basis of biblical teachings. The second, is a descriptive analysis of the core ingredients of the cultural theme of the beliefs and practices in *ūgo* as is understood in the *Gikūyū* culture. The third deals with the actual method of integrating and replacing or rejecting any *ūgo* theme. We submit to call this process, "inculturational theoretical procedure" and it consists of three phases as follow:

The integration process helps to recognize the missionary's culture and supra-cultural components of the Gospel acknowledged in OT and NT universal truths. The supra-cultural components without being distorted are extracted from the missionary's culture and integrated with indigenous culture. The replacing process involves substituting the indigenous element with Christian rituals while integrating supra-cultural elements they both share, expressed in cultural images, concepts and figures of speech. The rejection indicates that the cultural element is not compatible with the Gospel and thus it is eliminated without purification. In the three approaches, there is transformation and enrichment of both Gospel and culture. Similarly, when a culture receives supra-cultural components, it provides the Gospel with a local base since Christianity, as Shorter (1974) indicates, cannot remain without a cultural dress.

The Meaning and Purpose of Inculturation in Cross-Cultural Evangelism

Dialogue between African Religion and Christianity is essential the ongoing process of inculturation. Until recently, such dialogue transpired within an environment of inequality whereby African cultures were regarded by mission Christianity as primitive and devilish, and unfit to receive and transmit the Gospel. For such dialogue to succeed, it would require an environment of mutual respect with a common goal of enabling the gospel message to be understood, accepted and lived in the

thought-forms of the culture as expressed in its vocabularies, art-forms and imageries. This does not mean that culture becomes superior to Christianity, but through dialogue with local culture the foreignness associated to Gospel is eliminated so that Christianity acquires cultural imprint. In this venture, Kurgat (2009) notes that as long as Church continues to be re-born in a new culture, thus, inculturation dialogue becomes an on-going process.

The term "inculturation" means the process which the Gospel is presented to a given culture in a manner through which a mutual interaction between Christianity and people's traditions are enriched through sharing of the evangelizer and recipient's culture. The recipient group feels incorporated and accepted in their cultural images, language and concepts (Nasimiyu, 1985:97). It is a term properly understood in the context of transmitting the Gospel in a cross-cultural setting (Shorter, 1974: 87). On the process of inculturation, Shorter (1974: 69) argues that Christianity a non-Christian culture, it embodies itself in a new culture. In so doing, Christianity challenges, refines and reforms that culture. Shorter (ibid) adds that two processes are involved; the removal of foreign elements from Christianity and dressing Christianity with the cultural garb for the Gospel cannot exist in a vacuum but in a culture.

The encounter of the Gospel and culture in the process of inculturation is also both incarnational and confrontational. Magesa (1975; 87) observes that the incarnation of Jesus Christ is synonymous to inculturation. His idea is based on John 1:14 that propagation of the Gospel can be exemplified in the incarnation of Jesus Christ in Jewish cultural situation. Just as Jesus "found a home" in Jewish traditions where He grow up and practised His ministry in cultural clothing, the Gospel must be reincarnated in every cultural context to an internalized religion. Thus, incarnation forms the basis for some of beliefs and practices in *ūgo* in tandem with the Gospel to be incorporated into Christianity. This process is in agreement with Niebuhr's second paradigm of Christ of culture. Inculturation also confronts some of beliefs and practices in *ūgo* not compatible with Gospel and are replaced with others from bible. This process is in line with Niebuhr's fifth motif of God the reformer of culture.

METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

The paper is based on a study that was carried out in Nyeri Presbytery, Nyeri County, Kenya. This study used a descriptive survey research design that included all PCEA *Gikūyū* Christians. Nyeri Presbytery has ten parishes with 1,246 Christians. The following sampling techniques were used: Simple random, stratified random, snow ball and purposive sampling techniques. Using stratified random sampling techniques, the researcher

selected three parishes, one from each stratum (rural, semi-urban and urban). Purposive sampling technique was used to sample 12 church leaders (5 pastors, 1 lady evangelist and 6 elders) ensuring equal distribution in the 3 selected parishes. Simple random sampling also used to select 213 women and 151 men from all the 3 selected parishes. Using snow ball method, the researcher sampled 6 *ago*. The total sample comprised 382 respondents. Out of these, 376 represented the Christian fraternity. This was 30% of the total population for research to be objective (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003) notes that representative sample should be at least 30% of the total population for research to be objective.

To complement questionnaire data, interview and observation schedules were used. Data were analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), while the former utilized “conversion analysis” and “meaning interpretation” (Kvales, 2007). All data were coded thematically in relation to the study objectives.

RESULTS

Reportage of this study is thematic according to research objective. The findings indicate that *ūgo* is grounded in the *Gīkūyū* worldview, a mindset that gives credence to the interrelatedness between the material world and the spiritual universe. In addition, the study noted that *Gīkūyū* has religious specialists referred to as *ago* and who are perceived as men of God with immense wisdom. Their office originates from God and *ago* are taken as God's agents especially in addressing diseases and misfortunes. Qualifications to the *ūgo*'s office demand that one goes through the rites of passage among them; second birth, circumcision and marriage. This condition is based on the *Gīkūyū*'s belief that, for one to be a *Mūndū Mūgo*, he/she has to have undergone all transition rituals. *Ago* were expected to be sober and kind to all people.

This study also found that *ago* controlled indigenous healing. Consequently, they are considered divine agents in charge of the entire discipline of the community's medical care. Further, the study observed, *Gīkūyū* has a “disease – theory system” which identify, classify and explains diseases and misfortunes. According to this theory, the study noted, diseases and misfortunes are caused by curses, broken taboos, oaths, witchcraft, and *mīhūmū* (breath). The theory places the problem on a wider causal context of social, physical, psychological, spiritual and environmental aspects of *Gīkūyū* culture.

The study underscored the fact that the disease theory system is pivotal to *ago*'s healing process. Unlike in contemporary medical practices, it goes beyond mere diagnostic enquiries and employs both physical and spiritual methods in treatment. On the physical dimension, *Ago* apply medicine mainly derived from natural ingredients, while on the spiritual aspect, they ask

patients to perform various ritualistic actions either to neutralize or avert any personalized agents that may have caused the diseases or misfortunes. Further, *ago* have to advise clients on counter-measures in the form of charms or ritualistic acts familiar to the patient. In their treatment procedure, *ago* not only refer to spiritual agencies but also link diseases and misfortunes to invisible and tangible events.

Respondents Familiarity with *Gīkūyū* PCEA Christian's Involvement in *Ūgo*

Next, the analysis focused on whether respondents were familiar with Christians who consulted *ago*. Their responses are presented in figure 1.

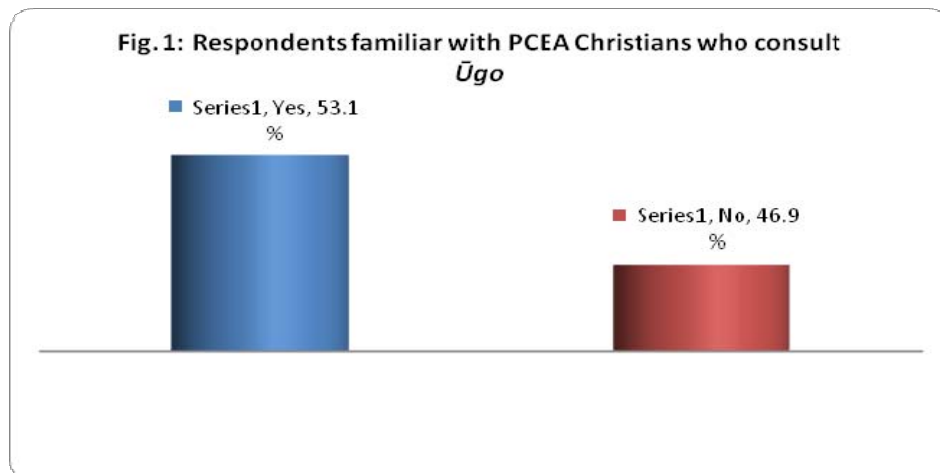
Figure 1 shows that at least 53.1% of the respondents know PCEA Christians who consult *ūgo* while 46.9% did not know of any. It appears that *ūgo* is a philosophy used by *Gīkūyū* PCEA Christians to explain events and circumstances that lack scientific explanations. This phenomenon according to Banda (2005), eventuates in syncretizing Christianity and African religion. It is this seeming insufficiency of Christianity to grant *Gīkūyū* PCEA Christian true salvation, mostly of their existential needs, that forces them into religious syncretism. Instead of rejecting Christianity altogether, they opt to remain in both Christianity and also follow the beliefs and practices in *ūgo*. As such, they live in duality hoping to gain “double insurance” from both religions.

Existential Needs That Make *Gīkūyū* PCEA Christians Persistence in Beliefs and Practices in *Ūgo*

The study sought to document the existential needs that make *Gīkūyū* Christians consult *ūgo*. The data analyzed were from elders, pastors and Church members (N=326). The results are shown in table 1:

From a sample of 326 respondents, a total of 2,608 existential needs were given. The findings of this survey indicate seven key reasons. Top in the list were diseases (56.4%), followed by family conflicts (54.9%), love potions (51.1%), marital conflicts (47.3%), childlessness and impotence (44%), power and prosperity (24.8%), to get protective charms (21.8%). Others include: suspicion of having been bewitched (19.8%), being under a curse (19.2), lack of enough faith in Jesus (19.2), power to recover lost property (18.8%), insanity (16.9%), to ensure opponents/enemies are destroyed (11.3%), mysterious deaths in the family (11.3%), to appease ancestral spirits (7.5%) and others (6.9%).

These findings imply that *ago*'s scope of operation is broad and covers every aspect of human life. The list above indicates that among *Gīkūyū* Christians, suffering and misfortunes apparently go deeper than they may appear. This understanding stems from indigenous

Graphical Representation of Respondents familiar with PCEA Christians who consult *Ūgo***Table 1:** Frequency distribution of reasons for consulting *Ūgo*

Responses	Frequency	Percent **
Diseases	183	56.4
Family conflicts	179	54.9
Land disputes among neighbors	167	51.1
Love potions	154	47.3
Marital conflicts	147	45.2
Childlessness and impotence	143	44
Power and prosperity	80	24.8
To acquire protective charms	69	21.8
Suspicion of having been bewitched	64	19.8
curses	63	19.2
Lack of enough faith in Jesus' power	63	19.2
To recover lost property	61	18.8
Insanity	58	16.9
To ensure opponent/enemies are destroyed	36	11.3
Mysterious death in the family	36	11.3
To appease ancestral spirits	24	7.5
Others	22	6.9
Total	2,608	

** Multiple responses were allowed

worldview of *ūgo* beliefs and practices. This is essential adaption of traditional beliefs for contemporary milieu. It suggests that *Gĩkũyũ* PCEA Christians, both literate and illiterate, still see the world with the lenses of their forbearers, and seek solutions for their problems and uncertainty of a changing world from the same source that is *ago*. These results are consistent with Muchiri's (2000) and Mbondo's (2006) studies on life situations where Christians among *Gĩkũyũ* and Kamba seek the services of diviner-doctors. These findings concur with

Mwaura (2001) and Domingues (2000) who observe that there is an overriding belief in Africa that throughout one's day-to-day activities, one is confronted by various evil forces that militate against life's endeavors, causing diseases and misfortunes. Such forces, in African indigenous context, were connected to beliefs in witchcraft, sorcery, curses, spirits of ancestors and taboos and had to be counteracted through diviner-doctors (Magesa, 1998).

Since these forces permeate beyond Christian

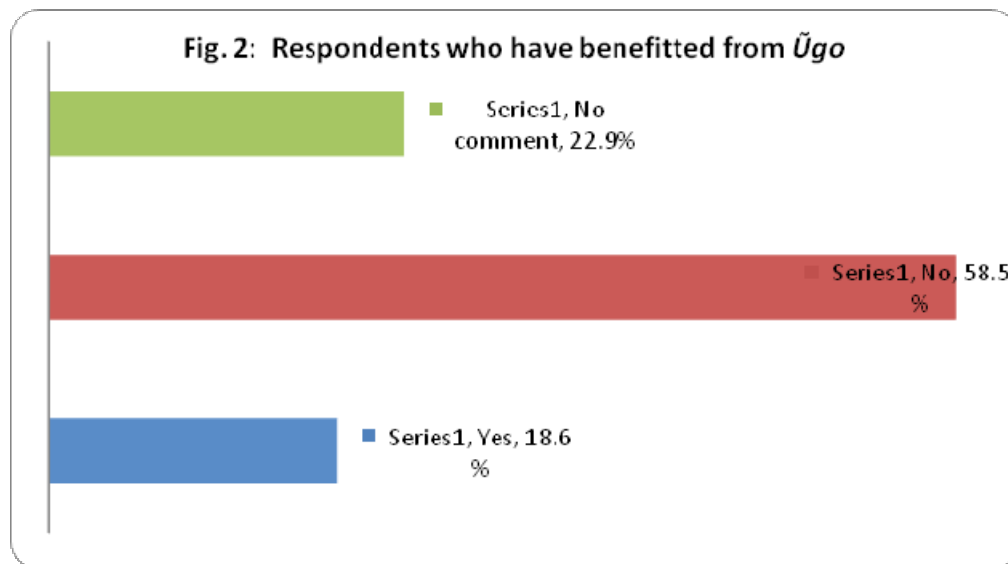


Figure 2: Respondents who have benefitted from ūgo

conversion, the PCEA Church has not realized fully the hold these beliefs have over Christians in Nyeri. This has resulted in feeble efforts by Church leaders through pulpit ministry warning Christians not to be involved. By so doing, they fail to offer concrete solutions to PCEA Christians' existential needs. Because of the failure of the Church to offer alternative practices to counteract these forces, Christian's rituals and Western medicine are inadequate replacement of beliefs and practices in ūgo. This means that *Gĩkũyũ* Christians are driven to ūgo because Christianity does not offer an equivalent replacement to their spirituality.

Respondents who have benefitted from Ūgo

The respondents were then asked how they benefitted from the services offered by Ago. The results are presented in Figure 2:

Figure 2 indicates that one hundred and eighty four (58.5%) had not benefitted from the services offered by Ago. Only fifty eight (18.6%) of the respondents had, while seventy two (22.9) muzzled their comments. Very few respondents familiar with *Gĩkũyũ* PCEA Christians involvement with ūgo in figure 1 are willing to admit that they consult ūgo in time of crisis. The underlying reason for this secrecy is that the Church condemns ūgo beliefs and practices and encourages her members to believe in the power of prayer whenever misfortunes and illnesses strike. Consequently, those involved in ūgo are excommunicated or barred from participating in Church activities in particular Holy Communion. Such Christians conceal their lifestyles in a way that no one could suspect them to avoid Church discipline. These findings are consistent with the Theron's (1996) and Magesa's (1998)

observation that diviner- healers' consultation enjoins secrecy since those who are found out by the Church are subjected to Church discipline. This indicates that "mission Christianity" has not penetrated deeply into the consciousness of a number of African Christians for it to become an integral part of their religiosity.

Beliefs and Practices in ūgo Themes that can be Inculturated into Christianity

The study further sought to investigate themes of beliefs and practices in ūgo which can be inculturated. This is in line with Burke's (2001:193) recommendation that inculturation starts from the bottom- up, whereby people produce cultural raw material, while the theologians produce doctrinal material. Views were sought from pastors, elders and ordinary Church members. The results are presented in Table 2 below:

The respondents among them pastors, elders and laity were of the view that beliefs and practices in ūgo embody the ministry of Christ. Majority saw them as legitimate preparation for the Gospel of Christ and would make an important contribution to African Theology. The findings in Table 2 reveal that 65.1% of respondents isolated healing as the most desired theme for inculturation. Other themes include purification (54.4), exorcism (46.1%) and others (13.4%) respectively. The study sought to understand the rationale behind such views. The results are given below.

Table 3 shows that 72.8% respondents favour healing practices in ūgo as a possible inculturation strategy since indigenous healing involves physical and spiritual aspects while 53.1% cited protective medicine, 33.2% said that it provides medicine to enhance productivity to people, land

Table 2: Frequency distribution of themes in beliefs and practices in *ūgo* that can be inculturated into Christianity

Themes	Frequency N=326	%**
Indigenous Healing	212	65.1
Purification	177	54.4
Exorcism	151	46.1
Others	43	13.4

**Multiple respondents were allowed

Table 3: Frequency distribution of factor influencing indigenous healing practices be inculturated into contemporary healing methods.

Nature of influence	Frequency (N=212)	%**
Physical and spiritual healing service	154	72.8
Provision of protective medicine	112	53.1
Medicines to enhance fertility to land, livestock and people	70	33.1
Others	39	18.2

**Multiple respondents allowed

Table 4: Frequency distribution of factor influencing ritual cleansing to be inculturated into Christianity

Nature of influence	Frequency (N=177)	%**
Purification of an individual when harm or impurities have been contracted	150	84.9
Ritual purification protects a person or family from ritual impurities	91	51.5
Ritual purification used to readmit into regular society the cleansed person or persons	25	14.4
Others	19	10.6

** Multiple responses allowed

and livestock, while 18.2% cited other reasons. These findings support Kolie's observation (1991) that diseases and healing are the first concern to African peoples. These views stem from the traditional *Gĩkũyũ* worldview, which see diseases and misfortunes as having a physical and mystical dimension. Healing is also mediated in a holistic manner that addresses these two aspects and *Ago*, according to this approach, may be a good source of cure. Consequently, the study concludes that *Gĩkũyũ* traditional worldview on diseases and illness has lingered among *Gĩkũyũ* PCEA Christians despite Christian evangelization and consequent conversion. This mind frame has created religious dualism as Christians attempt to adhere to the faith and at the same time to *ūgo*'s worldview in dealing with illnesses and healing.

These findings show that (84.9%) of respondents consider ritual cleansing once contaminated with harm or

impurities (*thahu*) as 51.5% of the respondents said they favor it as it protects them from *thahu* (ritual impurities); 14.4% of respondents favored ritual cleansing as it reinstated the affected back to the community while 10.6% gave other reasons.

The study observes that understanding ritual purification is influenced by both *Gĩkũyũ* religio-cultural worldview and Judeo Christianity. From the *Gĩkũyũ* indigenous worldview, ritual purification was aimed at rectifying various illnesses and misfortunes thereby bringing to resolution and reconciliation either to an individual or family in response to instructions given by *ago*. As such, ritual purification has permeated beyond Christian conversion. This state of affairs has resulted in less commitment of *Gĩkũyũ* Christians to their Churches and at times back to ritual cleansing to seek religious satisfaction that lacks in mission Christianity.

Table 5: Frequency distribution of factors influencing the exorcism to be inculturated into Christianity

Nature of influence	Frequency N=43	%**
Protection against evil spirits	28	65.1
Invoking spiritual world's favor	23	54.6
Vanquishing deadly regions of spiritual forces	20	46.4
Others	11	26.3

**Multiple responses were allowed

The findings in Table 5 show that majority of those who favored exorcism to be inculturated into Christianity (65.1%) considered *ūgo* practices of protecting people against gratuitous and maverick evil spirit as a core reason; 54.6% preferred it in order to invoke the spiritual world to act in their favor while 46.4% considered the practice of vanquishing deadly regions of spiritual forces that constantly harass Christians and entangle them in great pain. These understandings are derived from the *Gĩkũyũ* traditional as well as the Judeo-Christianity worldviews. To the *Gĩkũyũ*, every phenomenon in the human world was as a result of an action or decision made by some spiritual beings. *Gĩkũyũ* Christians have also been influenced by the New Testament religiosity in which, belief in demons and unseen supernatural powers is inherent. Jesus after all, exorcised many and literally gave powers to His disciples to do the same.

This state of affairs is underpinned in two beliefs; first, by using the right technique, appropriate power and approach, human beings can transform or confuse evil spirits, to make them favourable, or at least stop them from causing illness and misfortunes (Kenyatta, 1938). Second is the belief that, most effective and safe way to deal with evil spirits is to confront them by rebuking, binding and exorcising. The study observed that both beliefs have informed *Gĩkũyũ* PCEA Christians' attitudes toward evil spirits. These findings correspond with Abogunrin's (1991) assertion that the African worldview is similar to biblical one, in particular the first-century Palestine in which Jesus lived and ministered. These findings corroborate Okorocho's (1992) who observes that Africans see life as a recurring battlefield between evil and good forces, a view that compares with Domingues (1999) who notes that Africans believe their cosmos to be populated by malevolent spirits locked in a cosmic battle at the centre of which is humankind. These forces inflict sickness, death and all kinds of misfortunes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the study findings and inculturation procedure suggested in this work, the following recommendations are made:

i. The PCEA Church should develop policy guidelines through the Theological Panel on doctrines that would

provide central principles on inculturating beliefs and practices in *ūgo*. Such a blueprint should not only expound the intent of inculturation, but also to strategize implementation.

ii. The PCEA should identify and appreciate the inculturation of beliefs and practices in *ūgo* and other indigenous cultural practices that do not contravene biblical teaching. This would ensure that the Christian faith becomes internalized and able to answer the existential needs of *Gĩkũyũ* PCEA Christians.

iii. The PCEA should be organise seminars, retreats and workshops for pastors, elders and group leaders to inculcate in them the importance of inculturation. Experts on inculturation should be engaged to facilitate such fora in order to guide leaders in promoting inculturation in their churches.

iv. The theological panel of the PCEA on doctrine should revise catechumen materials on baptism with a view to inculturating elements of ritual purification that are missing in missionary Christianity.

iii. The study also recommends that the PCEA Health Board should recruit Christian chaplains with spiritual capability to play the role of *ago* as divine healing agents

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