PAEDO BAPTISM AND THEOLOGICAL CONTESTATIONS:

AN AFRICAN THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

BY

ESTON KINYUA NJERU

This Dissertation is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of a Master of Theology (MTH) from St. Paul's University

August2016

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DECLARATION

This dissertation is a product of my own work and is not the result of anything done in collaboration. It has not been previously presented to any other institution. I agree that this dissertation may be available for reference and photocopying, at the discretion of the University.

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I confirm that the work reported in this dissertation was carried out by the student under my supervision.

SUPERVISOR:

DR. DICKSON K. NKONGE

:……..DATE……

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Abstract

The study sets out to unveil the contestations revolving around the theology of paedobaptism, from an African theological perspective. The contestations are manifested in the fact that infants or children from single-parent families, non-communicants and those from the families whose parents have never conducted their holy matrimonies in the church are normally denied the coveted rite owing to 'theological justifications' thereof. Hence, the study sought to review and reconstruct the manner, the meaning and the efficacy of the sacrament of baptism. It has established that only by appealing to some African cultural elements such as care for children, hospitality, and ancestrologyamong others can we adequately unveil the problem statement. Methodologically, the researcher specifically theologized by citing some cases from the African theological scenes, and is greatly indebted to the Kenyan Anglican See of Embu for the rich encounters. In particular, the researcher addressed the theology of paedo (infant) baptism in his bid to unveil the controversy surrounding the rite of baptism, which is seen as comparable to the African ritual of circumcision. The instructions in the ritual of circumcision are also seen as comparable to the catechism classes before baptism takes place. Paedobaptism is seen to be in tandem with the ritual of circumcising young infants in some African communities. Further, the Old and New Testament times, the early church, the reformation times, and even the post reformation times had the practice of paedobaptism taking the central stage; hence the findings of the research have it that the contestations regarding paedobaptism are theo-historically unnecessary. And in view of this, churches that practice a theology of exclusion with regard to paedobaptismhave to review their theological trajectories. The study is theoretically informed by inculturationtheory that is well propounded by John Mbiti and Kwame Bediako.In the case of inculturation, the gospel is in dialogue with various cultures of the world. In particular, the case of attempting to make Christianity authentically African follows within the realm of inculturation and generally contextualization. While contextualization does not necessarily have to address the cultures of the world, inculturation has to specifically focus on culture and its contacts with the theology of the Christian faith. As implied above, the strength of inculturation as a working theoryis seen in the fact that it compares wellwithother African theological motifs such as reconstructive, anthropological, liberation and translatability among others.Overall, the study was guided by the following objectives: To investigate the nature of contestations regarding paedo baptism and eventually seek to understand it in African context. In turn, it also aimed at seeking to understand Baptism in African theological context, the effects of not baptizing the children of growing number of single-parents and those not officially married in the church; and to show how and why baptism can be used to incorporate children of single-parents, non-communicants and those whose holy matrimonies are not conducted in the church. The research was guided by the following research questions: how can we understand and actualizepaedobaptism in African theological context without losing our respective gospel constituencies? What are the effects of not baptizing children of single-parents in our African context? And how can it be made relevant to incorporate children of non-communicants in Anglican-African context today? In his design, the researcher used descriptive and analytical method of data presentation. The primary data was collected by extensive reading of theological literature regarding baptism, and some limited interviews from people who are connected to the underlying topic.Therefore,the study has established that only by appealing to some African cultural elements such as care for children,the concept of African hospitality and ancestrology among others can we adequately unveil the contestation regarding paedo baptism

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

A.C.K…….Anglican Church of Kenya

A.I.C…….African Independent Instituted/Indigenous Churches

C.M.S …… ……..church missionary society

Et al …….. ……..and others

N.R.M……New Religions Movement

T.E.E……...Theological Education by Extension

P.C.E.A……..Presbyterian Church of East Africa.

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Definition of Key Terms

a). **Paedo Baptism** or pedobaptism refers to infant baptism

b). **Credo Baptism**refers to the religious practice of baptizing only individuals who personally confess faith in Jesus, therefore excluding underage children.

c). Baptism- The meaning of baptism in this study is that, it is an outward sign of entrance into the covenant community of God's people that is the church. The recipient also puts on Christ since he/she has been baptized into Christ. This means that, the baptized has died buried and resurrected with Christ. Baptism also means the incorporation in the body of Christ.

d). Protestant. -A member of any Christian church that is not Roman Catholic. It could also mean any Christian church that is not Roman Catholic.

e). Archdeaconry- An ecclesiastical jurisdiction ruled by an archdeacon and is made of two or more deaneries which have several parishes.

f). Diocese- an ecclesiastical area headed by a bishop and made up of several Archdeaconries.

g). Reconstruction- an engineering term used in construction to denote a new construction after the old has been destroyed or has become irrelevant.

h). Liberation- This refers to the aspect of being set free from every form of captivity including poverty, oppression, exploitation and political injustices.

i). Ex- opera-opera to- sacrament has automatic effect to remove sin.

j). Efficacy- capability or effectiveness in producing the result that is intended.

k). African theology – Christian theology done in Africa by African theologians or theologized African contextual realities by any theologian(s).

NOTE: that ACK-Embu Diocese and the Anglican See of Embu are used interchangeably and carry the same meaning.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

In considering paedo (infant) baptism in African theological perspective, the study acknowledges the contextual nature of Christian theology. Considering that African theology is kerygmatically universal but theologically provincial (Gathogo, 2015), it is significant that we assess paedo baptism from our respective situations and contexts. Further, Jesse Mugambi offers a classic definition of theology as the "systematic articulation of human response to revelation within a particular situation and context" (1995: 19). In light of this, Kurewa (1975:36) defines African theology as "the study that seeks to reflect upon and express the Christian faith in African thought forms and idioms as it is experienced in African Christian communities and always in dialogue with the rest of the Christendom." In this study, the researcher builds his theological argument by theologizing some observable practice in his context of the See of Embu, which indeed enriches the study as a contemporary theological works.

In this study, the phrase "African theology" will be used to refer to that theological reflection and expression by African Christians that arises out of the philosophy of the African people and speaks to their relevant needs. The study considers the meanings of "African theology" and "African Christian theology" as congruent. As Samson Gitau describes:

> African Christian theology [read African theology] should therefore be considered as a theology of selfhood. This position is grounded on two grounds. Firstly, it is in the recognition of the changed status of much of Africa, from colonial to the post-colonial era, and secondly, as a symbol of the desire of the church, in Africa to be in a position to present Christ as one who knows and understands the hopes, fears and aspirations of Africans (2000:142).

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Certainly, there is a need to review the policy of baptism in the Anglican church of Kenya ACK-Embu Diocese. This is because the Diocese of Embu has been denying baptism to the infants and children of single-parents, non-communicants and for families whose holy matrimonies were not initially conducted in the Anglican Church. In particular, the study sought to unveil the doctrinal inculturation of baptismal sacrament, which has been controversial in the ACK-Diocese of Embu for a long time. In this study, the ACK-Embu Diocese and the Anglican See of Embu are used interchangeably and carry the same meaning.

In view of this, the task of this chapter is to introduce the entire contents of the study through bringing out the research problem, the background to and motivation of the research. It also gives us the research design and methodology, the theoretical framework, the conceptual clarifications, the research hypothesis, the preliminary literature review, the scope of the study, the research findings, justification for the research, and the resolutions of the study.

1. 2 Background to and motivation of the study

The background and motivation of the study on paedobaptisms stems from theresearcher's ministerial encounters, as a long serving clergy in the Anglican church of Kenya, Embu Diocese. In my encounters, I noted that the contestations regarding the efficacy of either paedo or credo baptism continues to date. Considering that the two theo-doctrinal viewpoints have the potential to tear down the church right in the middle, I realized that it is incumbent upon me to navigate this troubled waters purposely to bridge in the gap therein. In particular, I encountered the following questions: is paedobaptism superior to credo baptism or vice versa? Does Christ's prayer that "all of them may be one" (John 17:21) have any theo-doctrinal relevance to this

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treatise? Should children be welcomed to the rite of baptism? Which is Jesus' baptism: credo or paedobaptism? Such questions have dominated baptismal discourses for a long time, particularly in the Anglican See of Embu, and beyond the ecclesiastical boundaries.

Certainly, baptism is an initiation rite which predates Christianity and has been practiced by Christians throughout the centuries, particularly after the 16thCentury reformation. Dodged by controversies particularly with regard to paedo and credo baptisms, the need to focus on it has become critically significant. Indeed, the post-colonial era of reconstruction, a phenomenon where we rewrite our histories, theologies and revise all forms of our survival in order to genuinely move forward, drives the motive of this research. Indeed, the need to seek to reconstruct our Biblical hermeneutics, theology and historiography is necessary for a society that is in dire need of theo-doctrinal direction and cannot be gainsaid. Certainly, there is need to revise the traditional understanding of credo or paedobaptisms in order to make it at par or in tandem with the vision and mission of the modern church, namely, to serve Christ with all faithfulness possible.

As things stand, the contestations regardingpaedo and or credo baptism obtains even in the 21st century Africa. In essence, adherents in my specific See of Embu have been served with all manners of teachings, doctrines and diverse traditions regarding baptismal theologies. Nonetheless, the study has endeavoured to show that the sacrament of baptism has its efficacy from Jesus who instituted it and therefore we cannot omit anything that the Lord Jesus has prescribed either in words or deeds. Hence, the study showed that the children of single parents, non-communicants and those not married in the church should be baptized without any condition

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being placed on either of them, their parents or guardians. Further, this study sought to make the single parents, non-communicants and those not married in the church and their children feel accepted and liberated from the church's policies and ecclesiastical rules. The study also showed that the affected group of people could have found identity and felt being counted as part of the body of Christ. The study also showed that those who seek baptism do it as way of acknowledging that human existence is not in order so it needs to be reoriented and reconstructed. Therefore, denying the same implies that human beings have no sins. This has called for reviewing of the policies, regulations and ecclesiastical laws of the modern church.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

In Embu Diocese the children of single parents, non-communicants and of parents whose holy matrimonies were not conducted in the church are not baptised. However, parents and guardians who accept to undergo the prescribed church rules and regulations normally have their children permitted for baptism. In spite of this, not many parents and guardians are ready to go for the catechism classes.This prompts one to pose the same question that Jesus' Disciples asked in the Gospel of Saint Mark chapter nine: “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents that he was born blind?” In other words, the same question applies in the case of the single parents, non-communicants and those whose holy matrimonies were not conducted in the church. Similarly, guardians to the orphans have found themselves sailing in the same boat.

In view of this contestation, the study has endeavoured to show that the cry of the affected children sounds the loudest. It is like the children are deprived off their rights in the church where they are expected to have solace. This eludes a scenario similar to when the parents

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brought little children to Jesus in their bid to have him touch them, but the disciples rebuked those who were bringing them. But when Jesus saw it, he was moved with indignation, and said to them: "Allow the little children to come to me! Don't forbid them, for the Kingdom of God belongs to such as these." (Mark 10:14). As a result, the study shows that there is need to review and incultulate the manner, the meaning and the efficacy of the sacrament of baptism in the ACK-Embu Diocese, in order to sort out the confusion regarding the sacrament of baptism, so that it may rhyme with the cultural naming of Aembu community where children were all accepted as "full" members of the community. This in turn agrees with John Mbiti's aphorism, that: 'I am because we are and since we are therefore I am' (Mbiti 1969:108). This communalistic approach builds the case for reassessing the nature of contestation regarding the sacrament of baptism for children in general. In a nutshell, how can the children of single parents, non-communicants and those whose holy matrimonies have not been solemnized in the church be incorporated in the rite of baptism in the church of the 21st century Africa?

1.4 Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study is to investigate the real understanding of paedo-baptism otherwise called infant baptism and its effects to the modern church. This is possible through first incorporating both the Old and the New Testament meaning of baptism. Further, there is a dire need to explore the African's Christian understanding of the meaning of baptism. Moreover, like in the African rite of passage of initiation where the initiates were taught their community ethos, secrets and their responsibilities, in the same way catechism could be stressed for teaching the initiates in faith, the expected behaviour from them and the consequences if they happen to break those outlined codes of ethics. Consequently, it should be noted that; without the word of God,

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that water is nothing but water, and there is no baptism. But when it is linked with the word of God, it is baptism.

1.5 Research objectives

From the outset, the objectives of this research were to:

- To understandpaedobaptism in light of African theological context.
- Find out the effects of not baptizing Infants/Children of non-communicants.
- To attempt a theological justification for including children in the schema of baptism; and how children of single parents, non-communicants, and those whose holy matrimonies are not done in church can be incorporated.
- To do inculturation of Baptism in African Perspective.

1.6 Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study:-

- What is the understanding of paedobaptism in light ofAfricantheological context?
- What are the effects of not baptizing Infants/Children of non-communicants, single parents and those not married in church?
- How can we make baptism theologically relevant in African theological context?
- How can inculturation of baptism be achieved in the African perspective?

1.7 Research hypothesis

This study is premised on the contention that while Baptism is ritually a means of entry into the membership of the body of Christ, it can be best understood in African context by appreciating the communal nature of the African peoples. That is, where does the communalistic African

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society place children in its religio-social discourses? And where does the African-Christian now view paedo baptism. In other words, paedo baptism is easily understood by appealing to some African cultural elements that defines the African person; hence, inculturation as a theological paradigm is critical in unveiling paedo baptism in African Christianity. In other words, the whole meaning of paedo baptism cannot be understood in African theological context outside the African cultural concepts of communality; otherwise, it would remain a stranger from within (Galgalo, 2012).

1.8 Justification of the study

This study set out to investigate the, understanding and efficacy of the sacrament of baptism for the Christians. The study sought to reveal a sound and profound theological position that can best address the contestations regarding the sacrament of baptism. It will go a long way in benefiting the practicing Christians, the students in colleges and universities. The study is important because the church leadership and other Christians have a manual for the unveiling the contestations thereof that obtains in our African context and the larger Christian society.

1.9 Scope of study

As a systematic theological project, the study was carried within the framework of the contestations revolving around paedobaptism. As noted, the study was carried out with intent to unveil the contestations that render baptism a remote ritual to the members of the general society. From a participant observation in the local Embu Anglican Diocese, It was realized that if there are challenges regarding this sacrament, it follows logically that other African contexts face the same contestation. In view of this, the concern, the scope, and the parameters of research

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isclearly defined. Considering that we are theologically provincial but kerygmaticallyprovincial,the motivation and background of the research had a contextual starting point; that is, the researchers own experiences as a participant observer. Nevertheless, the context helps to understand the wider Christian constituency that indeed wrestles with these contestations without a clear theological engagement.

1.10 Limitations of the study

In the study, the researcher was confronted with the shortage of the baptism literature for research. To counter such research challenges, the researcher had to request a particular Anglican Diocese for the access of its library and archive in order to get some materials. In other words, even though the study was not primarily a field work research, it was driven, by some demands, in some cases to gather more data from the field. This came out clearly when the researcher sought some clarifications on issues that were connected to this research. In particular, when comparing the Christian rite of baptism to the African religious rite of circumcision, the researcher was, at times, led to wonder whether his own research had shifted from the contestations regarding paedobaptism or whether to change direction and pursue the case of continuity between African religious rituals in African Christianity, a view which is strongly advocated by Samuel Kibicho in his book, *God and Revelation* (2006). Nevertheless, the parameters of the research were well defined right from the hypothesis that the researcher set to test, and in the problem therein.In other words, despite the danger of digressing from contestations in paedo baptism to continuity of African religious rituals in African Christianity, the study has strived to unveil the problem statement within the set framework. In attempting to remain within the confines of the research, and in sticking to inculturation as the theoretical

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framework, the researcher further took cue from the fact Christology urges inclusivity of Jews and Gentiles, men and women, slaves and not slaves (Galatians 3:28). Such Christological positions resonate well with African theologies of inculturation. Again, the fact that the new covenant in Jeremiah 31:31 goes beyond one side of the social divide shows that the contestations behind paedobaptism can be addressed within the set framework in this study.

In a nutshell, the study was structured within the noted parameters. As a systematic theological treatise, it has strived to stand beyond the temptation of becoming a historical treatise, a mere cultural research, and/or a mere duplication of materials regarding baptism. Despite its limitation, in terms of resources, scope, and other delimitations, it has however attempted to shed more light on the way forward, particularly with regard to addressing the contestations revolving aroundpaedobaptism from an African theological perspective.

1.11. Conclusion

The chapter has endeavoured to introduce the entire study that focuses on the efficacy of baptism – be it credo or paedo. It has sought to bring out the problem statement, that is, how the church can live out to its true creed: to welcome both Jews and Gentiles, adults and children, particularly with regard to the all-important rite of baptism. By bringing out the justification of the study, hypothesis and the objectives, it has introduced the study. This now prepares us to look at the preceding chapter on literature review, to which we now turn.

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CHAPTER TWO

MEANING AND SIGNIFICANCE OF BAPTISM

2.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the literature review, theoretical framework upon which the study is anchored. Whether a research is purely library based or includes field research, it will have to critically review the available literature in the area of interest Komidar (1993:103 cited Peter 1994:29). Therefore, in this research, the researcher highlights some issues other scholars have written on Baptism that is infant baptism in particular. Since many scholars do not write on infant baptism directly but have provided relevant information, others have given suggestions on how the contemporary church could incorporate children (infants) in the body of Christ which is the kingdom of God. Therefore, this literature review will provide the necessary background information that determines what has already been looked at, that related to this study. Since literature review deals with secondary data, thus this chapter will review literature by addressing the following subheadings:

2.2 The meaning of Baptism: Credo versus Paedo

In the words of Matt Slick, the President and Founder of the Christian Apologetics and Research Ministry, credobaptism is the practice of baptizing only those who are able to make a profession of faith (see https://carm.org/matt-slick, accessed 24th February 2015). The word *credo* comes from the Latin for "creed." Credobaptism is also called Believer's Baptism. CredoBaptists maintain that it is improper to baptize infants (PaedoBaptism) since there is, in their view, no account in Scripture where infants are baptized. Certainly, a thorough biblical exegesis is needed

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to counter such extremist positions. Again, from a casual look in the Kenyan context and beyond, credobaptists also tend to practice baptism by immersion.

> Conversely, Paedobaptism (pedobaptism) is the practice of baptizing infants. The Greek word *pais*means "child"Thereare differences of beliefs among churches that practice paedobaptism on what happens to the child when it is baptized. The Roman Catholic Church teaches that baptism removes original sin and strongly urges parents to baptize infants. It also teaches that such baptism saves the child (Grenz 2000: 528).

There are reformed groups such as the Presbyterian Church in America which practice infant baptism but unlike the Roman Catholic Church do not teach that such baptism saves the child. Instead, it teaches that infant baptism is a covenant sign and does not save - just the same as Old Testament circumcision was a covenantal sign that did not save (for details see Jurgens 1970: 209). The Lutheran Churches, like the Roman Catholic Church, practice infant baptism and maintain that such baptism saves the child.

Without a critical or exegetical study of both the Old and the New Testament, one can easily argue that there is no explicit command in the Bible to baptize infants. Nevertheless, some hold that it is prefigured in the Old Testament circumcision of infants by which God commanded them to be entered into the Abrahamic covenant. This Abrahamic covenant spoken of in Genesis 12:3 was quoted by Paul in Galatians 4:8 as being the gospel. Therefore, some hold that the Abrahamic Covenant which included infants is still in effect (see Grenz 2000: 528). Therefore, infants are said to be worthy of such covenantal participation in the present-day (Col. 2:11-12 relates circumcision and baptism which now includes both males and females). Also, as the Old

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Testament taught that entire households were circumcised (females obviously excluded) as were entire households baptized in the New Testament. For instance, this can be seen from New Testament verses such as:

- Acts 16:15 “And when she and her household had been baptized, she urged us, saying, 'If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house and stay.' And she prevailed upon us.”
- Acts 18:8, “And Crispus, the leader of the synagogue, believed in the Lord with his entire household and many of the Corinthians who heard Paul believed and were baptized.”
- 1 Cor. 1:16, “Now I did baptize also the household of Stephanas; beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized any other” (for details see Jurgens 1970).

Based on their understanding of New Testament passages such as Colossians 2:11–12, paedobaptists believe that infant baptism is the New Testament equivalent of circumcision. In the Old Testament, all male converts to Judaism, male infants born to Jewish parents, and male servants were circumcised as ceremony of initiation into the Jewish community. Paedobaptists believe that baptism has replaced Old Testament circumcision and is the religious ceremony of initiation into the Christian community. During the medieval and Reformation eras, infant baptism was seen as a way to incorporate newborn babies into the secular community as well as inducting them into the Christian faith (Jurgens 1970).

Christian denominations that oppose infant baptism would include the Baptists, Churches of Christ, and Pentecostal groups. They would deny infant baptism by saying that belief must

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precede baptism and that infants cannot believe. Curiously, cultic and sectarian "Christian groups" such as the Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons, and the Christadelphians, are a non-Trinitarian, millennial Christian group whose aim is to get as close as possible to the faith and practice of the early Christian church, also deny infant baptism. Clearly, those who are against paedobaptism go against the early church fathers, in church history, who taught that infant baptism is proper. In particular, Origen states that the practice of baptising infants is of apostolic origin (for details see Jurgens 1970: 209).

Having defined paedo baptism, it is imperative to define baptism in general, to which we now turn. According to the Catholic Encyclopedia Baptism-Etymology and definition; the Greek word *baptizo* Means "to plunge, dip, immerse" something in water. This is the commonly recognized and standard meaning of the term in ancient Greek literature both inside and outside of the Bible (Grudem 1994: 967). Further, there are passages that speak of "bathing" or washing (in the Septuagint, Judith 12:7 for example, and in the New Testament, mark 7:4) would most likely involve covering one's body (or hands, in Mark 7:4) completely with water. Consequently, if any New Testament author had wanted to indicate that people were sprinkled with water a perfectly good Greek word meaning "to sprinkle" was available: *rhantizo* is used in this sense in Heb. 9:13, 19, 21, 10:22. Secondly, the sense "Immerse" is appropriate and probably required for the word in several New Testament passages. In Mk. 1:5, people were baptized by John in the river Jordan "(the Greek text has an," in and not "beside" or "by" or near the river. Mark also tells us that when Jesus had been baptized "he came up out of the water" (Mk. 1:10). The Greek text specifies that he came "out of" (ek) the water, not that he came away from it (this would be expressed by Greek. apo).

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Thirdly, the symbolism of union with Christ in his death, burial and resurrection seems to require baptism by immersion, as Paul says in (Rom. 6:3-4; (Col 2:12). Baptism thus very clearly pictures death to one's old way of life and rising to a new kind of life in Christ. But baptism by sprinkling or pouring simply misses this symbolism (Grudem 1994:968). This shows the confusion and misunderstanding of the real meaning of baptism.Further washing, death and resurrection with Christ are symbolized in baptism, but Romans 6:1-11 and Colossians 2:11-12 places a clear emphasis on dying and rising with Christ. If death and resurrection with Christ are symbolized only by immersion, not at all by sprinkling or pouring, what then is the positive meaning of baptism?

The amazing truths of passing through the waters of Judgment safely, of dying and rising with Christ, and having our sins washed away, are truths of momentous and eternal proportion and ought to be an occasion for giving great glory and praise to God. If churches would teach these truths more clearly, baptisms would be the occasion of much more blessing in the church. Baptism is one of the two ceremonials that Jesus commanded his church to perform. However, there is disagreement among Protestants even over the general term that should be applied to them. Because the Roman Catholic Church calls these two ceremonies "sacraments", and because the Catholic church teaches that these sacraments in themselves actually conveys grace to people without requiring faith from the persons participating in them. On the other hand, some Protestants (especially Baptists) have refused to refer to baptism and the Lord supper as "sacraments". They have preferred the word ordinances instead, because baptism and the Lord's Supper were "ordained" by Christ (Grudem 1994:966). Other protestants such as those in the

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Anglican, Lutheran and reformed traditions, have been willing to use the word "sacrament" to refer to baptism and the Lord's supper, without thereby endorsing the Roman Catholic position."Sacraments" could be used interchangeably since they are synonymous in meaning. This indicates that sacraments have been a bone of contention from long time ago to date and especially the meaning of baptism in the ACK-EmbuDiocese.Hence,people like

Susan Wood compares and contrasts Lutheran and reformed understanding of baptism with Tridentine theology and Vatican ii approaches (Wood 2009:218). Wood makes her pivotal point that a full theology of baptism can only be constructed from an eschatological horizon. She further asserts that difficulties in our ecumenical dialogues arise from divergent meaning of sacrament of baptism. A handy start outlines several official Roman Catholic and Protestant definitions of sacrament. She shows ways in which catechumenal process support seeing baptism as a transformative process rather than single event. She described Lutheran and reformed patterns of initiation consistently giving greater attention to Calvinist based reform and almost none to Anglican patterns (Wood 2009:218).In line with Wood's observations above, one can easily notice that such contentions weaken our ecumenical appeal particularly when we consider the contestations that have played out with regard to paedo baptism. Indeed, the ACK-Embu Diocese takes the sacrament of baptism as an ecclesiastical rule without necessarily moving the theology of paedo versus credo baptism to catechumenical levels. Clearly, exhaustive and in-depth theology of baptism (both credo and paedo baptisms) is a necessity and can indeed be reconstructed from an eschatological horizon (see Wood 2009:218). In deconstructing the current theo-doctrinal trajectories, a reconstructed way of viewing paedo baptism will most likely

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emerge thereby giving hope to children of the single parents, non-communicants and even to those who may not have solemnized their holy matrimonies from an ecclesiastical stand point.

Undoubtedly, the needs of children cannot be fully provided for without a reorientation of national development policies. In order to do this, African government must be ready to adopt culture-relevant approaches and be more willing to listen to their population (Nsamenang 1992; 164). On the same, the internet encyclopedia of philosophy states that the doctrine of sacrament follows Christology, "for the sacraments has efficacy from the incarnate word Himself" (Bradley 2009), however, Thomas Aquinas contradicts the Franciscans view that the sacraments are mere symbols whose efficacy God accomplished with a directly creative act in the soul. This means that "To deny infant, baptism is to deprive them of a privilege and benefit that is rightfully theirs the sign of belonging to the community of God's people, "covenant community" (Grudem 1994:985). This has helped us in attempting to understand the need for affirming paedo baptism, hence baptism should not be denied to infants since it originated from above backgrounds that form part of the rich history of Christianity.

In studyingpaedo baptism, it is critical to appreciate that African Instituted churches (formerly called African Independent Churches) have unique ways of baptizing people. Some combine credo and paedo baptism, others baptize by immersion and is restricted for adults only, others baptize by blessing with oil (for details, see Gathogo 2014). All these diversities are geared towards enriching the body of Christ hence Embu Anglican Diocese can borrow a leaf from creative works of AICs particularly if their modes of baptisms are compatible with the God of Christendom. In turn, an African initiated church is a Christian church independently started in

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Africa by Africans and not by missionaries from other continents for that matter. The oldest of these is the Tewahedo (Ethiopian Orthodox Church) which dates from the 4th century, and was one of the first Christian churches in the world (Marcus 1994). AICs are classed as follows: Ethiopian churches, Zionist churches, Messianic churches, Apostolic churches and AladuraPentecostal churches. For instance, Aladura churches which originated in Nigeria and include Christ Apostolic Church, Cherubim and Seraphim, Celestial Church of Christ and Church of the Lord (Aladura) rely on the power of prayer and in all effects of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. While their baptismal methodologies differ from one AIC to another, they too have lessons that can inform this study on the real meaning of baptism and the contestations regarding this all important Christian sacrament.

2.2.1 Old Testament Concept of Baptism/Water Rituals

Certainly, the Church is beholden or indebted to Judaism for its main structures such as Messiah, Scripture, Canon, Liturgy, Altar, Pulpit, Church Offices, Songs, Offerings, the Lord's Supper, as well as the baptism itself. As Dr. Merrill Tenney, the editor of the Zondervan Encyclopedia of the Bible says, "Baptism as a rite of immersion was not begun by Christians but was taken by them from Jewish and pagan forms …" (Brownson, 2007: 10). From the Old Testament background baptism is derived from the Jewish *Mikveh*. In turn, the term *mikveh* in Hebrew literally means, any gathering of waters. It is specifically used in Jewish law for the waters or bath for the ritual immersion. To this end, the building of the mikveh was so important in ancient times; for it was said to take precedence over the construction of a synagogue (Allen, 2010). Further, immersion was so important that it took place before the High Priest conducted the service on the Day of Atonement (Brownson, 2007). This was done before the regular Priests

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participated in the Temple service; and before each person entered the Temple complex; and even a scribe wrote the name of God. It was also done in several other occasions. Interestingly, the Mishnah (the first major written redaction of the Jewish oral traditions also known as Oral Torah) attributes to Ezra a decree that each male should immerse himself before praying or studying. On the whole, there are several Jewish groups and sects that observed ritual immersion on dailybasis as a measure of reassuring their readiness for the coming of the Messiah. One of these Jewish groups is *Hemerobaptists*, which means "daily bathers" in Greek language (Brownson, 2007). Additionally, the Essenes and others called *toveleishaharit*, meaning "dawn bathers" were regular in these baptism rituals. Further, Genesis 1 verse 10 brings out the third day of creation where the source of the word mikveh appears for the first time in Old Testament theology. It says, "… to the gathering (mikveh) of waters, He called seas …" From this, it is clear that the ocean is still a legitimate *mikveh*(Allen, 2010).

2.2.2 Baptism during the Inter-testmental Period

On the other hand, it can be noted that the baptism of the converts to the biblical faith is not found in the Old Testament; rather, it was a practice that developed in the inter-testamentalperiod(Brownson, 2007). Some scholars call it Jewish proselyte baptism. In this case, Gentiles who wished to convert to the biblical faith were required by Jews to be ritually baptized. It is during this period (inter-testamental) that the proliferation of mitzvahs (Jewish baptisteries) in Judea. In view of this, Gentiles were seen to be very dirty in their sins hence they had to be cleansed before they could join God's covenant community. And in turn, this idea of "covenant community" compares well with African cultural practice of circumcision where a non-

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circumcised person was seen as ritually unclean, non-partaker of communal life, and indeed, as a person who was not a full member of the community (Kenyatta, 1938).

In turn, this form of baptism is the background of John's baptism (Allen, 2010). The difference is, John was calling the Jews themselves to be baptized or be cleansed. Or was it a call for a theological revival? In the synoptic, John is seen as downplaying the pride of Jews, pointing to the fact that they were no better than the Gentiles. They were equally sinful and both in need of true faith and repentance in equal measure.The implication of John's view of inclusive baptism is that God's wrath (and/or blessings and curses) falls on both Jews and Gentiles. The same argument, on inclusivity, can be extended further into the 21st century Africa as we consider the contestations regarding paedobaptism.

There is strong evidence that during the inter-testamental period and into the first century, at least part of the Jews thought that circumcision was required for the convert to Judaism (See, for example, Schiffman in *Jewish and Christian Self-Definition Volume 2* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981), 115-156, especially 125-127. For the Jew, circumcision was one of a handful of important boundary markers which set them apart from the rest of the world. For the Gentile, circumcision was a strange mutilation of the flesh. Greco-Roman writers who comment on Judaism usually ridicule the practice. Marital, for example, seems to find a great deal of (naughty) humour in the Jewish practice (*Epigrams* 7.35.3-4; 7, 82, 11.94).

On the whole, circumcision was a major factor in Jewish identity. While the practice of circumcision itself is not unique to the Jews in the Ancient world, although some of the traditions

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based on the Hebrew Bible are specifically Jewish. Circumcision is given as a sign of the Covenant of Abraham in Genesis 17, yet the ritual itself did not confer "spiritual blessing" as a sign of the covenant. For this reason the prophets told the people that they needed a "circumcised heart – clearly a metaphorical use of the idea of circumcision (Deut. 10:16, 30:6; Jer 4:4; Ezek 44:7, 9).

2.2.3New Testament Concept of Baptism

In the New Testament, there were many ritual immersion baths (*mikyaot*) on the Temple Mount. Josephus tells us that even during the years of war (CE 66-73), the laws of ritual immersion were strictly adhered to (Brownson, 2007). Clearly, many of the early Church's daily activities were centred on the Temple, as the New Testament shows (Allen, 2010). In turn, the Temple itself contained immersion baths in various places for the priest to use. In particular, the High Priest had special immersion pools in the Temple, two of which are mentioned in the Mishnah(Oral Torah). One of them was in the Water Gate in the south of the court; and another was on the roof of the Parva Chamber (Brownson, 2007). An additional place for immersion was on the Mount Olives. It was connected with the burning of the red heifer. There was a special ramp that led to the *mikveh* on the Mount of Olives from the Temple Mount, which was built as an arched way over another arched way so as to avoid uncleanness from the graves in certain valleys. Of interest to note is that recent archaeological excavations have found 48 different *mikyaot* near the Monumental Staircase leading into the Temple Complex (Allen, 2010).

In a nutshell, immersion rituals were common even in the early New Testament times as a measure of cleansing and as continuity from other Jewish heritage that were prevalent. This

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again drives us to the question, why then are there theological contestations regarding paedo baptism even in the 21st century? Can a retrieval of such Old and early New Testament backgrounds that were rooted in Jewish heritage help us in retracing where the rain began to beat us theologically? Is not the fact that the theology of baptism rooted in Jewish history not helpful in unveiling our present concerns?

Critically important is the fact that there are six descending orders of ritual baths in the Mishnah (Oral Laws of how to accomplish the written Law). The highest order is that of a spring or flowing river. In particular, we see Jesus understanding and fulfilling this order in Matthew 3:16 as he comes to be baptized in the Jordan River. In other words, he fulfilled all righteousness, which is the highest order (Brownson, 2007). This Living Water Order is illustrated in the forgiving of sins (John 4:10-11). Equally, there are also six basic restrictions on the water used in the *mikveh*. This included rules such as: a). the *mikveh* cannot contain any other liquid apart from water; b). the water has to be either built into the ground or be an integral part of a building attached to the ground; c). the *mikveh* cannot be flowing except for a natural spring, river, and/or ocean; d). the water cannot be manually drawn; e). the water cannot be channelled to the *mikveh* by anything unclean; f). the *mikveh* must contain at least 40 sa'ah or approximately 200 gallons of water. Clearly, if there were such prescriptions then, how does not it follow automatically that to our modern versions of baptism, and especially paedo baptism which is the main concern for this study? Have we ignored the clearly cut out ritual prescriptions regarding paedo baptism hence theological contestations on the same? Such concerns inform this study (Allen, 2010).

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In a nutshell, the Jewish background of Christian baptism shows that it is critically significant for comparative reasons; and indeed in addressing the rituals surrounding baptism. Characteristically, the convert could repent and have a part in the life to come without it. Obviously, the convert could repent and have a part in the life to come without it, but the emphasis seems to be pointing to the taking on of a new "believer" status illustrated as a "new birth" by immersion. In any covenant with the Lord the three items of God's Word, the blood, and a token are always present (Genesis 17:11). Jesus was always cautious to have three witnesses in everything He did (I John 5:7-8). In the Old Testament circumcision was considered the token of God's covenant, and in the New Testament we see the same wording concerning baptism as it is referred to as "circumcision made without hands" (Colossians 2:11-12). Whatever religious denomination, all believers should agree that immersion has its roots in the Jewish mikveh of Jesus' day, and it is of utmost importance for each of us to fulfil this righteous deed.

2.2.4 Early Church Practice of PaedoBaptism

The issue of baptism is one that has troubled Protestants for centuries. As we look into the history of the church the issue of infant baptism has not been the problem as it has been in recent centuries. As the church was in an evangelistic mode in the first three centuries we find clear statements of the fact of adult baptism upon conversion (Brownson, 2007). There was also the concept that baptism washed away all pre-baptismal sins. Hence there arose the practice of postponing baptism until one's deathbed in order not to commit post-baptismal sins which would have to be dealt with through penance (Allen, 2010).

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As the church conquered the pagan world we see infant baptism as arising as a universal practice. In part this appears to be based upon the fact that even in the ancient church there was the concept that baptism was the initiation rite into the community of faith, and infants born into that community so are baptized (Brownson, 2007). A second factor appears to have been the rise of the understanding of original sin and the belief that baptism washed away the stain of original sin. Third, the ordinances very early were understood as actually conveying grace and accomplishing something spiritually. As early as CE 400, St. Augustine appeals to the universal practice of infant baptism as proof that the church saw infants born with the stain of original sin (Allen, 2010). We find explicit mention of infant baptism as early as Tertullian around CE 220 (Allen, 2010). Tertullian mentions the practice in conjunction with sponsors who would aid in the child's spiritual training. It would be assumed that this is the origin of the practice of godparents.

In a nutshell, Paedobaptism, also called covenant baptism, and/or household baptism is the most common form of baptism practiced in Christianity throughout its history, right from the early church (Brownson, 2007). As the name indicates, it is baptism for a person while an infant or child, commonly performed within the first two years of life. In Protestant traditions of paedobaptism, since such a baptism does not require the active participation of the baptized (as with a 'believer's baptism'), the intent of the act and the liturgies of the worship services surrounding it are quite different from adult or believer's baptism. Whereas a believer's baptism is a wilful act of the baptized, infant baptism is considered to be a symbolic as well as mysterious act of God by which a claim is placed upon the child's life by God and the Church.

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Such a claim does not ensure the salvation of the baptized, as believed within the Roman Catholic Church, but rather follows the Biblical tradition of God calling people to himself and that the hope of what is to come is not found within the abilities or effectiveness of the baptized but within God himself (Brownson, 2007). Thus the freedom that the Church has to baptize children relies on the basis that God's purposes will be accomplished despite the frailty of the baptized Church. This freedom is confirmed within Reformed theology as a continuance of the sacrament of circumcision under the Abrahamic covenant.

In many Protestant traditions which practice paedobaptism, particularly Reformed, a young adult will re-iterate the commitment of baptism through what is commonly called "confirmation"(Brownson, 2007). As a culmination of church classes, and perhaps a more personal mentoring as well, the young adult who has learned the rudiments of discipleship and his or her relationship to God and his people will confirm this understanding and commitment to it as a basis of his or her life.

2.2.5 Infant baptism in the Church of Reformation

The church of the reformation appreciated paedobaptism, especially those who were born to believing parents. Reformed Christians do so this on the basis of the continuity from the old covenant between God and Israel and the new covenant with the church (Brownson, 2007). They also see God's saving purpose in the new covenant as having to do with families as well as individuals. Because Reformed Christians believe baptism must be embraced by faith to have any benefit, they recognize that faith may come later in life rather than proceeding baptism (Allen, 2010). Infants may also be said to possess a seed of faith which will come to fruition

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later, or baptism may be administered based on a promise of faith offered by their sponsors, which will be kept at a later age.

Reformers held that the ritual of baptism via immersion is not necessary for baptism to be properly performed, but that pouring or sprinkling is acceptable (Brownson, 2007). Sprinkling is said to symbolize the sprinkling of the blood of Christ for the removal of the guilt of sin. Only ordained ministers are permitted to administer baptism in Reformed churches, contrary to the allowance for emergency baptism by midwives in Roman Catholic churches, though baptisms performed by non-ministers are generally considered valid. Reformed churches, while rejecting the baptismal ceremonies of the Roman Catholic Church (such as the use of chrism, salt, and insufflations), accept the validity of baptisms performed with them on the basis that the substance of baptism remains (Allen, 2010). They do not rebaptize someone who has been baptized using these ceremonies because baptism is never to be repeated.

2.2.6 Baptism as the Fulfilment of Circumcision

Critically important is that baptism can also be seen as the fulfilment of circumcision. This drives us to consider the Old Testament background to baptism. What ceremony foreshadows the practice of baptism? The natural answer to that question is circumcision. The two ceremonies are parallel in their theological meaning. That is:

1. *Entry Rites:* As was noted above, both were required of new converts to the faith. They are both entry rites into the faith signifying the person had been accepted into their new faith.

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2. *Social Identity Markers:* They both were marks of belonging to the covenant people of God, separating the believer from the world, marking them out as members of the church.

3. *Being Made Clean:* They both represented making the new convert clean, their old life of moral filth having been washed away.

4. *Symbols of Justification by Faith:* They both were outward signs of inward faith, of being justified by faith.

5. *Renunciation of the Old Life:* Both represented the believer putting away the old sinful nature in order to live in new obedience to God (Brownson, 2007, Allen, 2010).

In addition to the above parallels, St Paul directly links the two ceremonies in meaning in Colossians 2:11-13. He says, "In him you were also circumcised with a circumcision not performed by human hands. Your whole self ruled by the flesh was put off when you were circumcised by Christ, having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through your faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead. When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins." In view of the ongoing, it is easy to deduce that the early church meditated on how the two practices were alike and/or different; and indeed how they shed interpretive light on each other. This now helps us to understand the early church practice of baptism.

The Anglican See of Embu does not offer specific solutions to stop the alarming and increasing number of unbaptized infants (children) who are a burden not only to their parents but also to the

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whole Community. For example the Apostle Paul had taken risk of giving guidance on matters of faith, Marriage, Baptism and even Circumcision. In Galatians 3:27 Paul says, "As many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ". According to Wayne Grudem, Paul here assumes that baptism is the outward sign of inward regeneration, further; Grudem argues that the New Testament authors wrote as though they clearly assumed that everyone who was baptized had also personally trusted in Christ and experienced salvation (Grudem 1994:971). Here the New Testament says that all of those who have been baptized have been baptized with him, and have put on Christ. On the same Jomo Kenyatta says that, the initiates promise by the oath that from this day onwards they will in every aspect deport themselves like adults and take responsibilities in the welfare of the Community, and that they will not lag behind whenever called upon to perform any service or duty in the protection and advancement of the tribe as a whole. They are made to promise never to reveal the tribal secrets, even to a member of the tribe who has not yet been initiated. When the bathing is completed, all the initiates are lined up following their order of adoption (Kenyatta 2004:141-144).

This rhymes with the Churches' view that the baptized person is incorporated, by the baptismal character into the mystical body of Christ, however, every validly baptized person, even one baptized outside the church becomes a member of the one holy catholic and apostolic church. This could mean that all baptism done by every generation including the ACK-Embu Diocese is valid, provided it is carried out in the right way that is by use of water and the pronouncing of the names of the trinity. On the same, Grudem (1986:30) observes that Baptism is understood in three ways, that is: as the outward sacrament, where in the washing with water, represents the cleansing of the souls (Luke 7:29; Acts 18:25; 1Peter 3.21). This means that baptism is very

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significant for having a ritual washing like initiation in the Old Testament. Secondly, Grudem interprets baptism as an inward spiritual washing signified by the outward sign (Mathew 3:11).Thirdly, he interprets it as the suffering of Christ (Mathew20:22; Luke 20:50). This indicates death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This is the base of Christianity and should be taken as the core meaning of baptism.

2.3.1 The Necessity of Baptizing Infants

The Anglican Church teaches that baptism should be administered to infants. This is because the act of baptizing an infant includes giving a name to the infant at that time (Grudem 1994:971), since christening or giving a name is part of baptism in our churches. Secondly, some churches believe that baptism is necessary for salvation and the act of baptism itself causes regeneration. In this view, baptism is a means whereby the church restores the saving grace on the people including their Children, if this is a kind of a channel of saving grace, then it should be given to all people including the infants despite their parents' status.

2.3.2 Baptism verses Circumcision in the African Context

According to Richard Burridge baptism is a rite of initiation, the process by which converts to Christianity acknowledge their faith in Jesus and come to be accepted into full member ship- the Christian community (Burridge 2004: 139). This was the case with adult baptism, which was the usual form in the early church and to which most of the surviving evident refers. To complement that, Howard Marshal relates how Jesus was circumcised and named, the stress falling on the significant name which he was given before his conception (Marshal 1978:114).This is why the scripture attests to Jesus' son-ship and his call to begin his earthly ministry.

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This is an indication that whenever there was a ritual, something new was expected from an individual and the above narratives are intended to record an adoption of Jesus as the son of God (Marshal 1978: 151).This is a hypothesis that the early church made the baptism into an act of adoption. Therefore, without either the initiation or the naming, an individual is not adopted into the society, and that person cannot feel obligated to fulfil his/her duties in the community or in the church, for example if Jesus was not prepared to start his earthly ministry, he would have been weak willed and incompetent to do what he did in the ministry of healing, teaching and preaching. For instance in the society, at Cana of Galilee he told his mother that his time had not yet come. The same will happen, if the children of single parents, non-communicants and those not married in church are not allowed to be baptized.

In the African context, names constitute persons; therefore naming ceremonies are accompanied by dramatic performances (dance) and appropriate symbol-bearing media to celebrate the new life that arises from the grip of death (Christensen 1990:75). On the same, Iain Murray observes that the purpose of circumcision corresponds with the necessity of baptism which is used as a seal, even to infants; the seal is to confirm the covenant. The covenant is that God owns them, and records them among his people, and children within his visible church and kingdom (Murray 1987:387). This means that if the children are not baptized or given names they would be nameless, without any identity or value in the community of the ACK-Diocese ofEmbu. Furthermore, it was held that in baptism the gift of the spirit was conferred, as it had been with Jesus' baptism (Mk 1:10). Whether the requirement of faith excludes infants from the Christian sacrament is much debated since there is no explicit evidence either way in the New Testament.

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However, those who are against children baptism base their argument on the strong ground on the New Testament that seems to sanction Baptism of only those who are converted and capable of making conscious declaration of faith. However, it is argued that households who were baptized would have included infants (Acts 16:15-33). Baptism which is parallel with circumcision as a rite of infant initiation, points in the same direction (Browning 2009:30). Furthermore, pointing out the distinction between the names bestowed in baptism, it never occurred to the missionaries that they could give to their African converts, names taken from their own traditional. African names were unworthy of Christian faith. In the long run, African Christians themselves came to adopt the same mentality and rejected their traditional names. This makes Lawino Complain in OkotP'bitek's song of Lawino: Pagan names he says…

> Belong to sinners
> Who will burn
> In everlasting fires
> Ocol insists
> He must be called
> In his Christian name (p'bitek, 1969:127).

This shows that the ACK-Embu Diocese is following the teaching of the missionaries which does not co-relate with the real meaning and efficacy of baptism.Since the unbaptized children are depicted as pagans or sinners who will go to hell and burn on everlasting fires.

2.4 The Protestant PaedoBaptist View (Covenant PaedoBaptist Position)

This view is sometimes known as the covenant argument for Paedobaptism. It is called a "covenant" argument because it depends on seeing infants born to believers as part of the "covenant community" of God's people(Grudem 1994:975). The argument that infants of believers should be baptized whatsoever depends primarily on the following three points:

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(a). Infants were circumcised in the Old Covenant: In the Old Testament, circumcision was the outward sign of entrance into the covenant Community or the community of God's people. Circumcision was administered to all Israelite children (male children) when they were eight days old (Grudem 1994:975).

(b) Baptism is parallel to circumcision: In the New Testament, the outward sign of entrance into the "covenant community" is baptism. Therefore baptism is the New Testament counterpart to circumcision. It follows that baptism should be administered to all infant children of believing parents. To deny them this benefit is to deprive them of a privilege and benefit that is rightfully theirs – the sign of belonging to the community of God's people. The "covenant community" the parallel between circumcision and baptism is seen quite clearly in (Colossians 2:11-12) in him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of flesh in the circumcision of Christ; and you were buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead (Col 2:11-12).

(c) Baptism in the Reformation: Wayne Grudem further observes that everyone must be circumcised, everyone must be baptized. Even among the adult males, circumcision was applied to everyone, not just those who gave evidence of inward faith. It is certainly true that baptism is the sign of entrance into the church; it symbolizes new birth and entrance into the church (Grudem 1994: 977). Therefore, according to Grudem the New (Testament) covenant is the continuation of the Old (Testament) covenant. "What does baptism do? In other words, we might ask, "what does it actually accomplish? What benefit does it bring?" baptism has a clear answer to this question. Baptism causes regeneration. Also Baptists have a clear answer: Baptism symbolizes the fact that inward regeneration has occurred. But PaedoBaptists cannot adopt either

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of these answers. They do not want to say that baptism causes regeneration, nor are they able to say (with respect to infants) that it symbolizes a regeneration that has already occurred (Grudem 1994: 978).Therefore, the most accurate paedoBaptist explanation of what baptism symbolizes is that it symbolizes probable future regeneration. This may be a probable hypothetical guise because the tree is usually known by its fruits. It must be understood as symbolizing probable regeneration at some time in the future. It seems fitting to reserve this sign for those who give evidence that there is actually truth in their lives.

One other perspective on the symbolism of baptism is given by Michael Green. He says: "infant baptism stresses the objectivity of the gospel. It points to the solid achievement of Christ crucified and risen, whether or not we respond to it. Not that we gain anything from it unless we repent and believe. But it is the standing demonstration that our salvation does not depend on our own very fallible faith; it depends on what God has done for us" (Green 1987:76). This is a worthwhile course for supporting paedo baptism; hence children should not be denied baptism in the Anglican See of Embu or any Anglican church for that matter.

2.4.1 The Effects of Baptism

When baptism is properly carried out then of course it brings some spiritual benefits to believers as well. There is the blessing of God's favour that comes with all obedience, as well as the Joy that comes through public profession of one's faith, and the reassurance of having a clear physical picture of dying and rising with Christ and washing away sins (Grudem 1994: 981). The Lord gave us baptism to strengthen and encourage our faith. It should do so for everyone who is baptized and for every believer who witnesses a baptism. According to Sinclair Ferguson,

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baptism affected the rebirth of the baptized, clothed him in a new garment of immortality and bestowed an indissoluble seal upon him (Ferguson 1988:72). This is why post–baptismal sin was taken seriously, hence it caused many people to follow the example of Constantine and postpone their baptism to their death beds. This was not right because baptism is a process not a destination. Further, Thomas Aquinas taught that, although baptism removed the guilt of original sin, at any moment sin might be rekindled into flame (Ferguson 1988:72). This statement could be true because not once saved always saved. On the same Peter Lombard, however, taught that baptism weakened the desire to sin.Consequently,the council of Trent reaffirmed that baptismal grace could be lost through serious sin. While adopting much of the Roman Catholic baptismal theology, Luther pointed out that the water of baptism was made a gracious water of life and a washing of regeneration by the intrinsic divine power of the word of God (Ferguson 1988:72).

Initially, Luther made the effect of baptism dependent upon faith, but finally modified this position to emphasize the command of God as the satisfaction for baptism. The reformed tradition emphasized the view that baptism was the sign of the new covenant and as such infants should be admitted to the new covenant as young as the Jewish child was admitted to the old covenant by circumcision (Ferguson 1988:72). This means that baptism strengthened faith, gave parents the assurance that their child was incorporated into the covenant and gave the child title to the covenant, even in an unconscious state, being a rich source of consolation as the child grew up. According to Karl Barth, the nature, power, and meaning of baptism are dependent on Christ, it cannot be made void by human inadequacy (Ferguson 1988:72). This means that the sacrament of baptism as a covenanthas its power from Jesus Christ.

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The world council of churches Lima document (Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry, Geneva 1982) stated that baptism "is a participation in the death and resurrection of Christ, a washing away of sin, a new birth, an enlightenment by Christ, a re-clothing in Christ, a renewal by the spirit, the experience of salvation from the flood, an exodus from bondage and a liberation into a new humanity in which barriers of division are transcended" (Ferguson 1988:72). This means that when the children of the single parents, non-communicants and those not married in church are going to be baptized it would be like an exodus from bondage and a liberation in which barriers of division are transcended. Much recent thinking about baptism has seen it as the ordination of the whole people of God. Therefore the whole people of God may mean that all generations, all tribes, all races; all ages are included in the covenant of God. Therefore, the children of single parents, non-communicants and those not married in the church should be considered for baptism.

2.5 The Roman Catholic Teaching on Infant Baptism

The reformation centred upon this issue for example, Martin Luther's great concern was to teach that salvation depends on faith alone, not on faith plus works. Even, The New Testament message is that Justification is by faith alone. "By grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God – not because of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2:8-9). Moreover, the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord (Rom. 6:23). Actually, the Roman Catholic argument that baptism is necessary for salvation is very similar to the argument of Paul's opponents in Galatia who said that circumcision was necessary for salvation. Paul's response is that those who require circumcision are preaching "a different gospel"(Gal. 1:6). Therefore, the Diocese of Embu failure to baptize the children of single parents non-communicants and those not married in the church is like pegging baptism to the

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ecclesiastical functions of the church for example marriage which is not a necessity for salvation. It must be stated that no work is necessary for salvation.

Therefore, baptism is not necessary for salvation. Even 1st Peter 3:21 certainly does not teach that baptism saves people automatically or confers grace, *ex opera operato*. It does not even teach that the act of baptism itself has saving power, but rather that salvation comes about through the inward exercise of faith that is represented by baptism (Col 2:12) (Grudem 1994:974). In fact, Protestants who advocate believer's baptism might well see in 1 Peter 3:21 some support for their position. Thus, it might be argued that baptism is appropriately administered to anyone who is old enough personally to make "an appeal to God for a clear conscience" 2 Col. 2:12 can be used in the same manner. Paul says that in baptism Christians were "raised with (Christ) through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead". This presupposes that those who were baptized were exercising faith when they were baptized – that is, they were old enough to believe. Nevertheless since the ACK church believes in infant baptism, and not believers' baptism, the issue of denying the infants/children of single-parents, non-communicants and those not married in the church should not be there.

2.6 TheNew Testament Argument on Baptism

There is a lot of misunderstanding on who should be baptized. For instance after Peter's sermon at Pentecost we read "those who received his word were baptized" (Acts 2:42). The text specifies that baptism was administered to those who received his word "and therefore trusted in Christ for salvation". Similarly, when Philip preached the gospel in Samaria, we read " when they believed Philip as he preached good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they

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were baptized, both men and women" (Acts 8:12). Likewise, when Peter preaches to the Gentiles in Cornelius, household, he allowed baptism for those who had heard the word and received the Holy Spirit. While Peter was preaching "the Holy spirit fell on all who heard the word" Peter and his companions "heard them speaking in tongues and extolling God" (Acts 10:44-46). Peter's response was that baptism is appropriate for those who have received the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit: "can anyone forbid water for baptizing these people who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?" Then Peter "commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ" (Acts 10:47 – 48). The point of these three passages is that baptism is appropriately given to those who have received the gospel and trusted in Christ for salvation. This means that baptism is not just water on its own, but it is water used according to God's command and linked with God's words (McGrath 1999:240).

2.7 Infant Baptism and the Reformers

All the protestant reformers of the 16th century Europe, from where we in Africa have taken from, including Martin Luther (1483-1546), HulddrychZavingu (also called HuldrychorUlrich/UlrichtZwingli and (1484–1531) and John Calvin (1509-1564), were in agreement with paedobaptism. Since baptism strengthens faith as the instrument of justification. The Protestants belief that baptism is so closely related to the gospel, and that through it, Christians receive eternal life and without baptism there can be no assurance of salvation (article 9 of the Augsburg confession, 1530). Therefore, both the children of believers and unbaptized adult or non-communicants parents should be baptized. Since through baptism, the children are received into God's grace. In Corinthians 7:14, Paul said that children of believers are "holy" Paul used old covenant ceremonial language to teach the Corinthians that the children should not

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be considered outside of the visible people of God ,including baptism. Jesus made the same argument in Mark 10:14. He says that the kingdom of God ‘’belongs’ to children of believers in Acts 2:39. Peter specifically includes children in the fulfilment of the promise.

In Ephesians 6:1 Paul addresses children as if they were in the covenant people of God (Ephesians 6:1;colosians 3:20-21)From this perspective, Matt 28:19 and 2:38-39 are direct commands to baptize an infant. It is considered true that there is no explicit command to baptize infants. Neither is there an explicit verse which states God is one in three persons, but God’s word teaches the existence of the trinity throughout the bible from Geneses to Revelation.

2.7.1 Does the New Testament Teach Infant Baptism?

Since there is no explicit command to baptize children then we should stop admitting women to the Lord’s Table since there is no direct command to allow women to come to the table. Every faithful Jew understood circumcision to be a visible reminder that he was a part of the people of God. To fail to circumcise one’s sons would be to declare them to be cut off from God’s people, grace and promises, the same way the children of the single parents, non-communicants and those not married in church are cut off from the church.

2.7.2 The perception of Baptism in the church today

In the A.C.K Diocese of Embu, baptism curriculum of those seeking baptism of children, who normally would not have been admitted for baptism (2013:1), states that the provincial constitution leaves each bishop to determine the circumstances under which such children can be baptized. It goes further to say that, the parish council is to assess the spirituality and capability

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of the parent in determining whether a child would be baptized or not. They would then make a recommendation to the bishop (2013:1). This indicates that if the head of the church (for example, bishop) gives authority to the infants/children of single parents, non-communicants and those not married in the church could be baptized.Furthermore,each Christian received the baptism of the Holy spirit at Pentecost, and the term is now more commonly used to refer to that event recorded in (Acts 2:1-13). Pentecost is the Greek name for the Jewish feast of weeks, derived from its occurrence fifty days after Passover. This means that there is a connection between baptism and the Holy Spirit; so, when the child is not baptized it is assumed that, the child does not have the Holy Spirit.

2.7.3 Validity of Infant Baptism

In the Aembu tradition, an individual child was part of the community. His/her achievement or even failure was seen as the achievement or the failure of the community, thus John Mbiti says, "I am because we are and since we are therefore I am" (Mbiti 1969:109). This is a cardinal point in understanding the African view of an individual in a community. Furthermore, a child was held to be the property of the community and it was the community who were going to see to it that the individual child became a significant and productive member of the community, an asset to all. Today, things have changed and it is an everyman for him/herself and "God for us all" attitude. Hence, nobody seems to bother whether the children of single-parents, non-communicants and those not married in church are baptized or not. This individualistic kind of life in the community has further spread into the A.C.K-Diocese of Embu. And indeed, it is nothing but westernization of sorts; or is it globalization gone awry? Certainly, the era of globalization does not mean we demonize all African cultures; rather, we respect them and

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instead employ cultural relativism as opposed to ethnocentrism. Seen in this way globalization in the afro-Anglican context does not mean that we gun down our children spiritually or/and their guardian parents. It means, respecting and adapting rich cultural elements of all peoples in the world, particularly those that enrich the global society, such as respect and care for the vulnerable in society. Such should instead be bequeathed to the global village for mutual sharing. According to Henry Okullu;

> The problem with missionaries is rejection of every indigenous religious concept thinking that the whole African religious background is one with a lot of superstitious, taboo and magic (Okullu 1974:55).

Actually, missionaries should not be blamed wholesomely for the indifferences noted in the See of Embu and the Anglican Communion as a whole, but the great problem is with the African church leaders who thought that they were taught too well by the missionaries and as such are determined to keep the Christian faith "pure". Certainly, a god who does not change or allow room for reconstruction of society from time to time is an idol and is not the biblical God. Historically, the Church Missionary Society (CMS) came to Embu in the ACK-Embu Diocese around 1910 and established a mission centre at Kigari. Can we logically say that history of the Kigari Anglican church remains intact or ought to remain so? Has the techno-computer age affected it in any way hundred years down the line? Has the western education that is constantly in dialogue with the African form of education affected the locality? Certainly, yes – and God oversees this positive change. In the early part of the 21st century, the Anglican See of Embu has started the new practice of initiation rites called "clean jando" or circumcision by words to girls and boys. In this new mode of circumcision, they are both taught in a classroom during the five days of seclusion. They are taught how to be responsible in the society after which boys are circumcised in such "circumcision colleges" of sorts. Indeed, this is a positive approach to the psychological growth of our children. Since baptism is parallel to circumcision, in the New

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Testament then, the outward sign of entrance into the "covenant community" is baptism. It follows that baptism should be administered to all infant children of believing parents (Gruden 1994:975).

As much as the church would like to keep discipline, order and tradition, if the children of the single parents, non-communicants and those not married in Church are not baptized, the church will continue to have "nominal Christian" who do not participate in the church activities and since their children are not recognized for baptism. The church will lose both the children and their parents. Tradition regarding who should receive full membership status has been a bone of contention in the ACK-Embu Diocese for a long time. This scenario has created a conflict within and outside the church because of their inconsistencies. Similarly, parishes differ with one another in matters related to baptism. In the recent past a lot of cultural transformation has taken place in the ACK-Embu Diocese while very little has changed in matters related to religious rules and regulations. For example, the local church constitution draft revised in 1996 defines the church committee members as regular communicant members who are over the age of eighteen (Embu Diocese synod book 1990). Further the Mothers union constitution of the Anglican Church of Kenya plainly says that it is concerned with women who have met the church requirements as far as marriage is concerned. This shows that the un-married parents had no proper place in the church. This is a phenomenon witnessed in the ACK-Embu Diocese to date.

2.7.4. Socio-economic and Cultural Factors Leading to Single-parenthood

Money economy came with the West almost the same time with Christianity and has done great harm not only to the community but to the See of Embu as well. Although it cannot be

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condemned wholesomely, it has changed and deteriorated the moral values both in the Aembu community and in the ACK-Embu Diocese. As a result, many men and women are leaving their matrimonial homes to go out in search of money. In the final analysis, separations are noted in many homes. These single parents are not allowed to participate in the church activities neither are they elected as committee members. Moreover, their children are not baptized in church. The second type of single parents are the women who are not married and they raise their children alone without the husband and the father figure is absent and plays no role in the household economy. These types of single parenthood also bear the responsibility of the family on their own and also their children are not allowed to be baptized in the ACK-Embu Diocese.

The third category are the widows or widowers who are in the church before the death of the husband or wife , even these ones, their children are not accepted in the ACK-Embu Diocese for baptism. Consequently, bad behaviour of the children is often associated with bad conduct of the mother. This leads some of them to live a secluded lonely life which results to low self-esteem and rejection since the society as well as the church has no proper place for children born outside marriage. Further, in the light of cultural social and religious background of the Aembu community, a family without a father is considered incomplete. Therefore, children born in these households are considered illegitimate and more often are subjected to ridicule and rejection both in the community and in the ACK-Embu Diocese. Mostly, the genesis of the problems in the church is brought by men who chase away their wives or divorce them. Women become the victims of the circumstances with their children, for instance in the researcher's church, in which the diocese is under this review, quite a number of young married men are chasing away their un-schooled wives, just to marry old rich women. In such cases, these marriages are also short

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lived due to age-gap between the spouses and also the influence of middle life crisis, on young men and women. Moreover, commercial sex workers are on the increase, which is causing men to leave their non-performing wives in search of "greener pastures", for example, about a quarter of the men who work in town and their wives are in the rural areas have separated due to the unbecoming behaviour of their husbands. Many of these couples have not solemnized their marriages in the Church; hence their children are not baptized. Finally, nowadays, the marriage dowry is paid in form of money unlike before the coming of the missionaries when the blood of a goat or sheep had to be shed and sprinkled as a symbol of uniting the two families and as a seal and a sign of becoming one as Christian is baptized to become one in Christ. The problem is that no matter how much one pays, the spouses do not have respect for each other since the seal of the covenant is not there. Hence, Michael Howard says in Ndeti (1972:80) that;

> In many parts of Africa, cattle are used as money in the payment of bride price, money economy may have very beneficial effects by expanding individual freedom, but it can also disrupt existing social relationships, increase peoples dependency and lead to their impoverishment.

On the same LaurentiMagesa observed that;

> Marriage solemnized with bride wealth becomes a profoundly sacred reality. Solemn prayers, sacrifices and blessings are always offered over the marriage by the clan. However physical separation may occur in certain situations, such as cruelty, lack of care for the wife or evidence of witchcraft in either spouse, but this separation does not necessarily imply that the marriage bond is broken (Magesa 1998:127).

It may be observed that Christianity is not a problem if it was acculturated to the African way of doing things like incorporating infants and children in the community of ACK-Diocese Embu. This would rhyme with the cultural components which had diverse values, rites, symbols and patterns of incorporating infants and children into the traditional community oftheAembu.These groups of people are already socially excluded from day to day activities.

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2.7.5 Pre-circumcision Training Equated to Catechism Classes

Aembu community boys and girls were given thorough counselling on adulthood and especially home management. They were taught how to solve family conflicts, without necessarily involving other people. The boys and girls learnt at this stage that listening to one another and giving fair comments and understanding someone's mind could solve a lot of problems. This teaching took place in the evenings, mornings, during herding and during communal work. At times, boys and girls were taught separately especially in the evenings by fathers and mothers respectively. There was no set time for educating the youth. Boys and girls were reminded that there would be a great day of circumcision and they would cross the bridge of childhood to adulthood where they would become full members of the community, so they grew up expecting to face the day of circumcision. At this time they would become adults and eventually face life as men and women. They were allowed to marry after circumcision, could do counselling, look after cattle, women would take care of children and cook but both men and women tilled the land. On the hand, in the ACK-Embu diocese, those not married in church, non-communicants are not allowed to participate in some activities like church elections, Holy Communion or be best couplr to couples intending marriage therefore there is a contrast between the traditional initiation and the church.

2.7.6 The interaction Between the Missionaries and the African Culture

When the Christian missionaries came to Embu at the beginning of the 20thcentury, they met an organized community that carried on their activities in an orderly manner and in fear of the living God. The missionaries did not take into account that religion surrounds everything a Muembu does. Since they had missed the point there was a crash between them and the Aembu. This is

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the crash realized in the ACK-Embu diocese where children of single parent, non-communicants and parents not married in church are not baptized. Similarly these children are considered as unfortunate and are seen as sinners not worthy before God. They are held in contempt, are rejected in the church and discriminated. The missionaries had concluded that the traditions of the Embu people were heathenry and satanic and that they contradicted Christian principles. Moreover, the missionaries termed female circumcision as sin and vowed to fight the custom and wipe it out completely. Due to their negative attitude on female circumcision they did not take time to study its value. The same way the ACK-Embu diocese has not recognized the value of single parents, non-communicants and parents not married in church as they are created in the image of God. Mwaniki (1995:10) observes, "The early missionaries mixed Christianity with Western traditions so much that it was too difficult to separate the two. Therefore, as they planted Christianity they were at the same time westernizing people, so they could not understand the values of traditions and customs of the Aembu."

The Embu Christians were confused and continued with both Christianity and female circumcision. Further Mwaniki notes that between 1930 and 1933, the missionaries took a measure of persuading people who were to be baptized to first of all sign that they would never circumcise their daughters. Several people refused to sign and as a result they were refused the sacrament of baptism (1995:11). The church was so young to start taking such stern steps of ex-communicating circumcised girls together with their parents or guardians. On the same Henry Ayot says that, the Church of Scotland believed that the African must receive Christianity coupled with Western culture to the exclusion of traditional custom. Ignorance of the importance of the African traditional values and adherence to a rigid code of morality brought a major

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conflict concerning female circumcision between kikuyu and the missionary in 1929 and 1930 (Ayot 1979:203). This meant that the Church of Scotland known as the Presbyterian Church followed the same trend as the Anglican Church in condemning the practice and not teaching or educating people effectively. As such, female circumcision controversy caused widespread recession from Anglican and protestant missionaries in Kikuyu, Embu and Meru. This resulted with 'muthirigu' a dance-song mocking missionaries and Christians opposing female circumcision which was banned by the government in 1930 (1979:203).

At the same time a pastorate council met at Kigari and resolved that Christians will not circumcise girls. Similar meetings were held at C.S.M. Kahuhia in Murang'a District in 1922 (Mwaniki 1995:12). Some African preachers who were on the missionary's side made people run away from the church because every time they went to the pulpit they told the people that, "whoever will circumcise does not belong to Jesus". This is the similar position found in the ACK-Embu diocese where single parents, those not married in church and non-communicants are considered not of Jesus and their children are not baptized. However, the Christians who favoured the practice vowed to continue with it. This was because instead of teaching the disadvantages of the practice the Presbyterian and Anglican churches continued blowing the horn louder, saying that the practice was a sin. The Roman Catholic did not condemn the practice wholesomely. They were more tolerant with the African customs. They did not forbid their converts to take alcohol, smoke or participate in tribal ceremonies (Mwaniki 1995:14).

The Catholic Church does not mind whether girls are circumcised or not even to date. However, they are strict on the ecclesiastical discipline like marrying in the church and being a committed

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member of the church. This are the issues adopted from the Catholic Church to the Anglican Church and are already outdated because instead of teaching the importance of baptism, that is, baptism strengthens faith after knowing that an outward regeneration has occurred and that sins have been forgiven, this would become a source of reconciliation that a person and a title to the covenant of God and that one had become a full member of the visible church and the kingdom of God. Further, it makes one be born again which depicts death, burial and resurrection with Christ. This is a cardinal meaning of the sacrament of baptism. When those who favoured female circumcision heard that the council in collaboration with the church had passed a law forbidding the practice, they circumcised more girls than ever before. The same case with the single parents, non-communicants and those married in church as long as their children are not being baptized and they themselves are not accepted as full members of the church the number of the children not baptized is superseding the number of the baptized which is the alarming and contentious issue in the See of Embu. However, when the council found out that the law was not effective, they changed it and resolved to educate female circumcisers on how to do the procedure less severely.

Responsible church elders were given the task of supervising the procedure. Demonstration lessons were given, for instance, two girls were circumcised in broad daylight at Runyenjes(Mwaniki 1995:15). This gesture encouraged the community to acquire a permit from the county council and medical officers of health. The need to revive the issuing of permits to circumcisers reveals that African Christians were unable to draw a line between Christian's beliefs and the Aembu traditions. According to Henry Agot, some Africans recanted the creeds they represented, some readily accepted them and some mixed their new faith with traditional

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beliefs (Ayot 1979: 204). Cultures and customs change with time but this deep rooted custom will take some time to be eradicated or abandoned because people have continued to hold fast the tradition and have left the commandment of God, contradicting what Jesus taught people to be selective among cultures (Mark 7:8).

2.7.7 Circumcision inthe Bible

The meaning and objectives of male circumcision in the bible were very different from the meaning and objectives of African circumcision even though the physical procedure was similar. In the Israelite culture, boys were circumcised as infants eight days old. It was a sign of the covenant which God had made with the Israelites. It symbolized God's grace and call into a covenant relationship. It did not symbolize the acquiring of particular rights, duties or status in the society in the way that African circumcision does. Therefore, the Israelite male circumcision cannot help us to understand circumcision in African cultures such as the Aembu custom, but when we read that, "any uncircumcised male… shall be cut off from his people" (Gen 17:14), we may think that this looks similar to the African circumcision. Moreover, the bible does not have a direct reference to the circumcision of girls, neither in the Old Testament nor in the New Testament. Inference could be draw with what Jesus said in Mark 9:43-48, but we have never heard of anyone trying to conquer envy by removing someone's eye, to conquer theft by chopping somebody's hand or conquering slander by cutting off the tongue. Consequently, when Jesus met a woman who had been caught committing adultery, he said to her, "Go and do not sin again" (John 8:11). Similarly, being single or not marring in church is not an individual's choice but it is caused by unavoidable circumstances which could be tackled through teaching, pastoral care and counselling in the church.

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CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The study employed a theoretical framework based on inculturation theory. Basically, it refers to the interaction between gospel and culture in order to provide contextual theology that fits a particular community of faith. In the African context, some of its chief proponents are John Mbiti and Kwame Bediako. In particular, Bediako (1992, 1995) uses the models of Justin Martyr and Clement of Alexandria to argue that just as they used the Greco-Roman cultural categories of their time to contextualize the Gospel and create a Christian identity, so should African Christians use their own cultural heritage in forming their Christian identity. Hence, in comparing baptism and African rituals of circumcision, the study utilizes inculturation as its theoretical framework.

Inculturation as a theoretical model compares with LaminSanneh's theological theory of translatability. Sanneh converted to Christianity from Islam and is now a practicing Roman Catholic, has written many books and articles on the relationship between Islam and Christianity. Another major area of Sanneh's academic work is in the study of World Christianity. He writes extensively about the translation of the Christian message, challenging a good deal of the accepted history of mission in the modern academy. In his 1989 *Translating the Message*, he writes: "In time, Christianity expanded from Europe into Asia and Africa, among other places, and was able to break out of its Western cultural confinement by repeating the process by which the church's missionary centre shifted from Jerusalem to Antioch and beyond. In some important

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respects, however, the modern shift was unprecedented, for it was the extraordinary multiplicity of mother-tongue idioms that became the subject of Christian mission rather than the cosmopolitan values of an ascendant West. Nonetheless, mission maintained continuity with its apostolic past. In examining the modern missionary phase, however, we should highlight important signposts in the indigenous culture, especially in the local encounter with the modern West. The translation role of missionaries cast them as unwitting allies of mother-tongue speakers and as reluctant opponents of colonial domination" (LaminSanneh, *Translating the Message, 2nd ed.* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis, 2009), 94-5). In theology, he developed a framework called, translatability – a phenomenon where the gospel becomes relevant when it is translated into the respective people being evangelized. Sanneh's argument is that from the earliest days of mission to the technologically sophisticated projects of the 20th Century, Christianity has attempted to spread its message through many other languages and, ultimately, many cultures. In his book, *Translating the Message*, Sanneh explores the history and contemporary developments of mission. He argues that because language and culture are closely intertwined in traditional societies, missionary pioneers often acted (many times against their own intentions) as vernacular agents. They laid the groundwork—for example, by establishing alphabets and developing literacy—for nationalist sentiment and the growth of indigenous Christianity.

This concern for inculturation has become the defining characteristic of doing theology in the second half of the 20th century and the 21st century for that matter; and is being addressed by Christians throughout the world. Consequently, in the enterprise of inculturating Christianity in Africa, theology must not ignore pertinent insights from other parts of the world church as in the

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case of addressing the contestations in paedobaptism and where circumcision as an African rite of passage is compared with the Christian rite of baptism. Certainly, orthodox theology in the 21st Century will always demand that culture and the gospel be in constant dialogue as a measure of authenticating the mission of Christ among the various people of the world. Critically important, both inculturation theory and translatability theory are in working agreement Pope John Paul II; who, in 2007, exhorted the church in Africa by urging it to consider inculturation as "one of the greatest challenges for the church on the Continent on the eve of the Third Millennium" (see Pope John Paul II, 2007).

In dealing with ritual of paedobaptism and engaging it with rite of circumcision as two rites that are in tandem with ritual theories, we also appreciate Catherine Bell's view on rituals where human actions are re-interpreted to give meaning to the particular society of faith. In her book, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice* (1992), she argues thatrituals, characteristically, tend to call attention to behaviours rather than beliefs, and especially repeated practices shaped by social custom and theo-religious mandate. In a nutshell, ritual theory raises questions about how theo-religious practices should be interpreted. In view of this, the study of paedobaptism is seen as a contested ritual from an African theological perspective; and indeed this follows from the strategy of this study noted in the first chapter where the problem statement, hypothesis, justification, and the background and motivation of the research is stated concretely.

On another note, inculturation, a theoretical framework, compares with contextualisation. In turn, contextualization refers to the process of relating the "message" to the "context." With regard to international politics and economics, Mugambi (1995:64) says that the word means "the transfer

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of concepts invented in one culture to another." StephenBevans (1992:4) insists that doing theology contextually is not an option but really a theological imperative. In his book *Models of Contextual Theology: Faith and Cultures,*Bevans gives detailed information about contextual theology and provides five models of contextual theology. These models are: the translation model; the anthropological model; the praxis model; the synthetic model and the transcendent model (1992:37-117). Similarly, doing theology in African context is indeed a theological imperative especially when addressing the contestations in addressing paedobaptism, its comparison with circumcision in Jewish culture, and in comparing it with circumcision in African religious heritage.

3.2 Oral Interview

To get information from Embu Diocese, the researcher carried out oral interviews with various people within the scope of the research. The information gathered supplemented greatly the information from other data collection methods. The interview included some prominent Church leaders and theologians. According to Wangusa this is a conversation, an interaction process with a specific purpose (Wangusa 2007:6).

3.3 library Materials

The researcher also used various library materials from St. Paul's University and other literature from the Internet to review the current meaning and effects of infant Baptism. The following questions were addressed; is it okay to baptize infants? Is infant baptism biblical? (www.gotquestions.org / infant baptism).

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3.4 Conclusion

Inculturation theory as its theoretical framework, the chapter has demonstrated how the ritual of paedobaptism has been a significant ritual in the Old and New Testament times, in the early church, the reformation, and even in the present times. It has also demonstrated how inculturation, as theological model, compares well with other theoretical frameworks such as translatability by LaminSanneh, ritual theory by Catherine Bell, and contextualization by Stephen Bevans. The chapter has unveiled our problem statement by its demonstration of the efficacy of paedobaptism despite the ecclesiastical contestations regarding this rite and/or ritual. It has also demonstrated efficacy of this rite even when compared with African rituals of adulthood such as circumcision. In considering the pre-circumcision instructions in the African context, the two rituals compared well as catechism classes are characteristically instructional also. By drawing from the various sources, the chapter has climaxed the study in demonstrating that the contestations regarding paedobaptism is indeed a theological digression that need not be there in the first place, as it is perfectly in order. In African theological context, both credo and paedobaptism are acceptable just as some Africans (Kamba of Kenya for instance) circumcise their boys during the infancy stages; while others circumcise boys when they were old enough and able to explain the purpose of the ritual being administered on them. Seen from the findings of the research, the efficacy of paedobaptism thus needs no further contestations in the African context, as Church history and the African theological scene is in continuum with it.

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CHAPTER FOUR

A THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

4.1. Introduction

Having seen the historical background of paedobaptism and the contestations thereof, this chapter moves on to clarify the objectives of the study by reflecting on the following key areas: one, the meaning of paedobaptism in light of African theological context; two, the effects of denying baptism to infants/children; and three, offer a theological justification for including children in the schema of baptism. In view of this, it is hoped that the statement of the problem will have been unveiled.

4.2. Understanding Baptism in African Theological Context

As noted in our hypothesis, paedobaptism can best be understood by first addressing the place and importance of children in African context. In some African communities, a boy child is circumcised while still young, even after birth, just as the Jewish children were circumcised during their eighth day (Luke 1). Indeed, some African communities circumcise the boy child at around ten years while the Kikuyu, Meru, Mbeere and Embu communities circumcise their boy-children at around 14 years (Kenyatta 1938, Mbiti 1969). This is meant to bring in meaning, membership and indeed a sense of entitlement to the well-being of the community. In other words, a circumcised person partakes the rituals, aspirations, and indeed builds on the heritage of the community thereby gaining full identity hence his communal role is clearly stamped.

Male circumcision amongst Bantu speakers defined a change in status before, during, and after the coming of the European civilization in the 19th Century. This involves a clear break between

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a childlike status, elevation to warrior status and generally toughening or hardening of boys to men (Kenyatta 1938, Mbiti 1969). In turn, the model of viewing baptism from the perspective of African forms of circumcision implies that the tendency through Bantu-speaking areas in prehistory was for more and more groups to view it as a climactic moment that cannot be abandoned easily irrespective of any cultural encounter thereof. Presumably this is accelerating, especially amongst the fringes of the non-circumcising areas, as male circumcision is now sometimes simply emblematic or traditional, although still signifying adult status and commonly lacks the wider social significance it once had.

In the previous centuries prior to the 21st Century, the circumcision of the girl child was also practiced. It has since then been abandoned as the African society adopts alternative rituals. Putting it differently, baptismal rites in the communal African society cannot be seen as complete until it incorporates children who are seen as not just the future but also the cementers of our socio-marital relationships. As will be demonstrated in the next sub-section, children are the reason for not only our present joys but also of our future hopes. If the Christian ritual of baptism excludes them from the schema of baptism, then the significance and meaning of baptism is lost. Certainly, an African society is composed of the living, the dead, the children, and the yet to be born (Kenyatta 1938, Mbiti 1969). It is for that reason that exclusion of children from baptismal rituals lacks meaning as it brings out the connotation that the society of God is getting theologically fragmented and divided.

In attempting to understandpaedobaptism in light of the African context, it is critically important to recall that the Protestant reformers of the 16th Century CE stressed the positive benefits of

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baptism for the infant. In the words of the Puritans' 1647 *Westminster Confession of Faith*, the rite solemnly admits the recipient into the visible church both signifies and seals to him or her participation in the covenant of grace, in-grafting into Christ, regeneration, remission of sins, and his giving up unto God to newness of life. This grace of baptism is not merely symbolic, being "not only offered, but really exhibited and conferred by the Holy Ghost to such, whether of age or infants, as that grace belongeth unto, according to the counsel of God's own will, in his appointed time" (Westminster Confession of Faith XXX.5, 6). This Westminster confession also resonates well with African phenomenon of inclusivity, especially with regard to children.

4.3. Effects of Denying Baptism to Infants/Children

Considering that an African family is seen to be complete only when it has children, denial of baptism to infants/children is indeed against the norms of an African society. To some, it can be seen as rebuking the ancestors to whom the children are named after. This can be well explained by taking the case of a childless marriage, to which we now turn.

4.3.1 Childless Marriages

One way of understanding the effects of denying baptism to infants/children is to consider the case of childless marriages in the African context. If divorces can take place among childless couples, then the denial of baptism to children of single mothers, and other none communicants contradicts the importance of children in the African context. Certainly, childless marriages are seen as a disgrace. Further, in traditional African society, children belong to the society and none was or is ideally discriminated against or denied rituals on account of his or her parental error, behaviour or perception of whatever nature. Seen from the perspective of paedobaptism, a child

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cannot be denied Christian ritual of baptism just because his or her mother is a single parent or other prejudicial considerations. To punish a child out of parental misdemeanour is an affront on the ancestors who are the unseen members of the larger society. Hence, there are ancestral consequences of denying baptism to children. For indeed, how can an African parent deny a child that which is noble, praiseworthy, lovely, right, pure, trustworthy, good, and desirable? (Philippians 4:8). If anything, such should be included in the schema of ecclesiology.

In his article, "Extremist or an inculturationist? Retrieving MilkahMuthoni's (1948-2009) afro-Pentecostalism" in the Journal, *StudiaHistoriaeEcclesiasticae*, May 2014, 40(1), 191-214, the writer cites the case of pioneer of Gospel Music Industry in East and Central Kenya, MilkahMuthoni who was barren. Upon realizing that she could not bear children, she led her husband, Bishop John WambuWaweru in shopping for a co-wife? In other words, despite her strong evangelical stand, she could only understand the Gospel from the inculturation motif. That is, she found it necessary to invoke the element of culture that allowed a childless woman to allow her husband to get a co-wife who would possibly bear children for all of them. In such religio-cultural scenarios, the entire family, plus the extended family, brought up the children together. No one would discriminate such children.

Gathogo (2014) cites her 4th song, volume 5, entitled '*Amombiremarier*i' meaning 'God created man and woman to fit into one another', where Milkah strongly denounces divorce. Irrespective of marital challenges thereof, divorce cannot be justified in anyway. Gathogo (2014) further cautions that Milkah, in this case, does not give an ethical guidance regarding some abused spouses, for example - battered partners – a phenomenon where even men are also getting

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ambushed and hence getting beaten by some wayward wives. Whatever the argument, Milkahcontended that issues such as childlessness should not be used to justify divorce especially for African Christians. As noted above, after discovering that she was barren, like her elder sister Zipporah, as both of whom were allegedly cursed by an elderly neighbour following some family disagreements among their parents, she went on to advice her husband to marry "a second wife particularly one whose womb has never hosted a child. Marry her so that we can bring up the children together" (Gathogo 2014: 193). She reportedly told her husband. This ultimately happened. True to her words, she literally brought up her co-wives' children as if they were hers. In a family photo, Milkah could be seen smiling broadly with her co-wife, husband, and children whom she saw through adulthood. Considering that she had accumulated a lot of savings through the sale of volumes of her composed music cassettes, and other family businesses, she used these earnings to promote their quests for education among other forms of support that she offered.

By advising Waweru to marry a second wife, following her realization that she was barren, Milkah was simply attempting to demonstrate that divorce is totally unacceptable in both the African heritage and in African Christianity. Jesse Mugambi appears to echo her view point when he explains the practice in African religious heritage by arguing that it is obligatory for a normal adult to marry. But it is not obligatory for anyone to contract a polygamous marriage. The circumstances which necessitate the contracting of polygamous marriage "are openly discussed by the parties concerned, including the family of the man, of the additional bride, and of the first wife, these circumstances range from childlessness to the need for additional labour in the family" (Mugambi 1989: 162). In Milkah's case, the reason for a co-wife was purely meant

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to fill in the children gap – a phenomenon which was easily justified by appealing to African culture and the Old Testament where Abraham sought to have a child through Hagar after Sarah failed to have one. In a nutshell, as we consider the theological contestations regarding paedobaptism in the African context, it is critical to recall the great value of children in matters of faith, theology, culture, and economy. Theologically, God's love for the world as seen in John 3:16 drives us to appreciate that we are God's children chosen before we chose the saviour (John 15:16). Christians are therefore called upon to bear fruits by loving the cosmos – the children, strangers, men, women, ecology and so forth. It cannot be satisfying till we address the plight of children from a theological perspective.

4.3.2 The Case of Street Children

Children who are abandoned, denied parental care, social care, ecclesial care and other socio-spiritual needs may feel unwanted, and sometimes revert to streets. In turn, it is critical to address the case of street children in our endeavour to understand the importance of children in both the church and the larger society. In addressing the plight of the street children, Gathogo (2001:3) cites the Kenya Government Ministry of Home Affairs and National Heritage as one whose children's department was assigned the role of coordinating all matters relating to children in the streets. For example, they process and approve the application, registration of, and monitor all bodies that are involved in street urchins' programmes. They ensure that the requirements are met or else the affected organization is deregistered. In turn, various individuals and organizations have also shown interest and are involved in assisting the street children. Some of those mentioned are: Undugu Society of Kenya, Tunza Dada Society, St. Nicholus children, Isiolo Good News Centre, Jehovah Jireh children's home, Kianyaga Children's home, and

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Utugichildren's home among others (:3).

Further, churches that are involved in the ministry of street children are noted as follows: Pentecostal Assembly of God, Seventh Day Adventist, Anglican Church of Kenya, Roman Catholics, and Salvation Army (Gathogo, 2011: 03). Gathogo (2001:3) goes on to say,

> Like other displaced people such as refugees (especially in Africa), the widows, the aged, the disabled, the orphaned, and the hungry, street children need to be rehabilitated because they are the most valuable resource and they are also our future. A child who is neglected or abused is a future that is lost. Thus, they need help because they are African children born in a continent whose traditions have placed a high value on the well-being of children. In any case, all human beings are made in God's image (Imago Dei) hence the need to care.

Clearly, the effects of denying baptism to children can be understood by addressing the above two cited cases, among others. Indeed, it may amount to abdicating our theo-social roles and eventually failing the community of God who so much loved children. While the christocentricGod loves children, the theocentric God, as seen in the African religious heritage, equally loves children; hence an African church has no excuse in regard to paedobaptism.

4.3.3 A Theological Justification for Including Children in the Schema of Baptism

In view of the foregoing, there is a very strong justification for including children/infants in the schema of the Christian rite of baptism. As implied, African society is structured largely around the lives of its children. In other words, Africans attach great value on children. Across the continent, children represent continuity with rituals and contemporary institutions designed to ensure children's survival and prosperity. At the same time, children are viewed in many African cultures as crucial to family survival itself, in that they help maintain household economies through their cheap labour in the home, in family agricultural or food-processing activities, or in trade or artisanship. In this sense, the strongest data that we can easily describe these circumstances are in anthropological and related studies. Certainly, many of these studies have

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provided us with the knowledge we have of life in rural African society by theologizing the ministry of children or the case of paedobaptism and the contestations thereof, our quest for Christian instruction to maturity becomes real (Ephesians 4:13-18). Clearly, the maturity of Christian theology in Africa can best be experienced in the way the contestations regarding paedobaptisms are resolved.

Further, few of these non-theological studies are focused specifically on children, but instead these studies place children in the context of African families, communities, and the wider society. Anthropological research in Africa has given us a sense of the process that takes children into adulthood and the institutions that have been developed for that process; language acquisition is a related field of study (see Kenyatta, 1938). The historical study of Africa has not provided extensive detail of the lives of children because political history and economic history have been the major strains of that literature, sectors in which children have not necessarily been highly visible. There are a few theologians, however, who have made historical study of children and slavery a significant field (Mugambi, 1995). Contemporary scholarship has focused on children primarily through the extension of institutions, such as health and education, to children. There are also many studies on the issue of War and Child Soldiers in Africa, despite the fact that the numbers of children engaged in such violence are relatively small. A particularly strong area of the literature, albeit an area difficult to catalogue or collect due to its limited circulation or "in-house" nature, is in socioeconomic development, as administered by governmental, non-governmental, and private-voluntary organizations. Jesse Mugambi (1995) in particular argues for the rehabilitation of the marginalized: the disabled, women, refugees, youth and students.

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Nevertheless, he too fails to bring in children, and mention them, as in need of rehabilitation within his framework of pastoral care for all in need.

In some ways the literature on African children is an extension of growing interest in women in Africa, and in the differential impact of socioeconomic change and development on women and children. In that way we see great strides made in the area of maternal and child health, for example, linking the health of children at its earliest stages to the processes of fertility, pregnancy, and prenatal issues. From this point, there are concerns for the Health of African children through the most vulnerable years up to age five (Mugambi, 1995). Education or schooling becomes the dominant field of African child study from that age onward, with new concerns growing about the plight of the African girl child, the most marginalized of global social groups. The issues surrounding the African girl child include relative deprivation in terms of school access; special health concerns such as in the area known as "harmful traditional practices," such as female circumcision and early marriage; and the related issue of obstetric fistula. New areas of research include African children in sports and in the arts, and children's relationships with media, and indeed the theological community. Children have been important characters in African Literature and Theatre (Gathogo, 2001). In view of this, a theological reflection on some case studies such as childless marriages, circumcision, and the street children has helped us to see the strong justification for including children in the schema of baptism. Certainly, theology is necessarily contextual; as failure to ignore the particular situation and contents renders the said theology irrelevant (Mugambi, 1995). Seen in this way, a theology of baptism which will ignore the place of children in the Christian ritual of baptism becomes necessarily irrelevant. In turn, this has helped us to effectively confront the contestations

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regarding paedobaptisms by exploring other ways of understanding children and the myriad problems facing the African context.

4.4. The Inculturation of Baptism in the African Perspective

In order to have a baptism that is participatory, there is a need for inculturation,as a theological theory that informs this study,to be taken into account.Considering that inculturation in its simplest definition is appreciating the importance of dialogue between gospel, culture and the context in general in order to make Christian theology authentic to the various groups of people to whom it is propagated, the study has therefore cited, above, the case of childlessness and the importance of children, the Christian ethical dilemma facing African theological context, the street children plight, the ritual of circumcision, and indeed, theAfrican cultures of inclusivity in our endeavours to usher in the inculturated theology of paedo baptism that is context-sensitive, hence relevant. Put it differently, the study has endeavoured to demonstrate that the exclusivity that is demonstrated by some practitioners of African Christian theology contradicts the African concepts of inclusivity, careful considerations, theo-ethical considerations,hospitality and care for children ,who are indeed the futureof any nations under the sun. In a nutshell, the study has established that it is improper to deny the rite of baptism to the children of single parents, non-communicants and for those whose parents have not solemnized their holy matrimonies in the church because it contradicts theo-cultural context, hence the meaning is lost.

In view of the foregoing, the study has strived to demonstrate that gone are the days when the unbaptized and infants were seen as destined to hell even when Christ promises more rooms (John 14)to both young and old.Ifbaptism is said to be universal dynamic which embraces the

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whole of life, extends to all nations and anticipates the day when every tongue will confess that Christ is lord to the glory of God the Father, therefore, it should be an inclusive sacrament. As Paul said "for many of you were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. This is a community forming dynamic. There is neither a slave nor free, there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus (Gal 3: 27). Further, the gospel message clearly calls for an option in favour of the poor, single parent, not married in church and the oppressed. Baptism like the good news is a word of promise and hope. Christians cannot, without betraying their baptism, accept passively the fact of racism, sexism, oppression and other social injustices therefore, baptism can only be important from a world view of cultural perspective. For this to use Professor Galgalo's words, Christianity as well asbaptismremain a stranger of sort because Africans have neither fully owned nor appropriately appropriated it as their spiritual home (Galgalo 2012:35). This is where we have people having Christian names such as James, John and Mary among others filling prisons today. This being the case therefore, we propose that the inculturation of baptism will strengthen the foundation of African Christianity and if it is not administered to an individual, he\she cannot inherit the kingdom of God (Jn 3:1-10), it has to be fully rooted and understood in the African perspective. As ZablonNthamburi argues in the book *Anatomy of Inculturation*edited by Laurent Magesa, faith mission in the African context like Baptism must bring hope, freedom and reconciliation where apathy , frustrations, repression and oppression dominate (Magesa 2004:190). Therefore, there is dire need to inculturate baptism by re-expressing, re-interpreting and reapplying the baptismal truths using the right cultural codes, meaning, thoughts, forms and relevant images. The inculturational model of baptism inspires inculturationand following the example of Jesus Christ, makes the cultural rebirth of baptism and gospel message imperative for African churches.

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Since theologies' task is to provide the answers of human existence, a theology of infant baptism will emphasize the initiatory function of the rite within the community whatever the age of the baptized; baptism signifies grace and the call for lifelong growth in Christ with a view to the resurrection at the last day (Ferguson 1978, 70-71)

4.5Conclusion

Addressing the contestations revolving around paedobaptism cannot be an isolated case, as the study has demonstrated. It has to be addressed within the broader picture of marginalization seen with the Jew versus Gentile divides. It must be seen from the perspectives of the gender divides. It must also be addressed by factoring on the cultural environment that informs African theology, a phenomenon that is seen in MilkahMuthoni's appreciation of culture despite being an evangelical Christian. Paedobaptism cannot also be seen outside the cultural practices of circumcision among the Jews and among the circumcising communities of Africa. Certainly, theoretical framework of inculturation extends its networks wide enough to help us understand authentic theology in Africa by addressing the holistic concerns that make Africa. Indeed, if the churches and governments have to focus on the street children without blaming the irresponsible parentages, then paedobaptism should be seen as another hot matter that cannot be left to "whom-it-concern" rather the African church has to recall some ancient traditions as panacea to these contestations. From the on-going thus, inculturation is not a return to 'paganism' or to become unchristian. Rather, it is to appreciate that the gospel is at home in every village and city of the world when it is able to dialogue with the underlying issues. Indeed, the gospel becomes relevant when it focuses both the realised and the unrealized eschatology. That is, when it

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appreciates the current concerns (realized) and what is primarily heavenly (unrealized). Christ appreciated this fact by his two natures, human and divine without losing his mission on earth. Unveiling the contestations revolving around paedobaptism Africa thus leads us to appreciate cultural realities regarding children. Being seen as beings of high value, the future and the present, means no serious theologian will exclude them from any ecclesiastical rite. If anything, the kingdom of God belongs to people who are like children (Luke 18:16).

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CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents summary of the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the study. The chapter further presents suggestions for further reading. Indeed, this is a very important chapter in this study that responds more clearly to the statement of the problem.

5.2. Summary of the findings

The purpose of the study is to investigate if the church understands the real meaning of baptism and its effects and the contestations therein, particularly with regard to paedobaptism. The researcher further aimed to critically investigating why the children of single-parents and non-communicant and parents not married are left out. Is it theologically justifiable? The study explored all the challenges these children and their parents go through and highlighted the gaps between the children and the ministry of the church.

Indeed, the study has established that it is not possible to unveil the contestations revolving around paedobaptism without addressing the African cultural reverence for children, the import, their place in the family and the place of childless marriages. The study has also addressed other cultural elements, such as circumcision that is particularly administered to the boy-child and which resonates well with the ritual of baptism. In both the Jewish and the African society, circumcision is seen as rite with a divine stamp which must necessarily be administered to children who in turn grow to adulthood. Similarly, paedobaptism is further justified by not only appealing to biblical texts but also by African cultural elements. In view of this, the study has

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noted the societal role of even taking care of the street children rather than blaming their reckless families. And in that spirit, an expression of agape, the love of children in need of baptism can also be seen from the same lens. In citing the case of an evangelical oral theologian and the de-facto founder of the Gospel music industry in Central and Eastern Kenya, MilkahMuthoni, who was barren or childless, the study has demonstrated how she advised her husband to marry a second wife in order for the family to have children.This further demonstrated the importance of children in African context. All in all, the study has demonstrated the strong justification for including children in the schema of baptism in a society that attaches strong value on children. Hence, the contestations regarding paedobaptism have no place in African theological perspective.

5.2.1 Does the Church Understand the Meaning of Infant Baptism?

All the clergy understood the real meaning of baptism as an act of strengthening faith, giving assurance and giving a title. A big percentage of the laity did not understand the meaning of baptism and referred it as a means of attaining full membership into the church and just acquiring a name. The study findings also showed that both the clergy and the laity preferred infant baptism to adult baptism.

5.2.2. Effects of Not Baptizing Children of Single Parents, Non-communicants and Those Not Married in the Church

The researcher sought to find how the children of the single parents, non-communicants and those not married in church are affected. The findings of the study show that 70% of the clergy were of the opinion that the children become frustrated, have low self-esteem and even become

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traumatized. They lack faith that all human being are equal before God. 30% of the clergy felt that these children feel unloved. Out of the 116 respondents in the focus groups, 100 respondents were of the opinion that the children become frustrated, have low self-esteem, stigmatized and are traumatized. Thus they lack faith in the equality of all human beings before God. 16 respondents were not sure of the effects.

5.2.3. How Can Baptism of Children of the Single-parents, Non-communicants and Parents Not Married in the Church be incorporated in the Church?

According to Richard Burridge baptism is a rite of initiation, the process by which converts to Christianity acknowledge their faith in Jesus and come to be accepted into full membership of the Christian community (Burridge 2004:, 139). From the study findings, it is clear that baptism can be used to include all the children regardless of them having been born by single-parents, non-communicants and parents not married in the church. Additionally, it has come out clearly that the contestations regarding paedobaptism are largely fuelled by ignorance. Clearly, a critical study of baptism from the early church, Old Testament Times through the Reformation times to the present will show that contestations regarding paedobaptism are indeed unnecessary. The church has to learn to end these contestations, partly through theological education that is credible.

5.3 Conclusions

The study set out to unveil the theological contestations regarding paedobaptism. Are they justified? This led it to retrace the study of paedobaptism from ancient times, Old Testament Times, New Testament Times, the inter-testmental period, the reformation times, and in the

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modern times. What makes these contestations regarding paedobaptism remains, even in the 21stCentury? How dangerous are these contestations to the welfare of the African ecclesiology? How can these contestations be addressed from an African perspective? Through exploring various theological trajectories such as baptism and circumcision, African heritage versus Jewish heritage, Biblical theology versus African religious heritage and so on, the study was able to establish that the contestations regarding paedobaptism will remain until they are addressed from an African theological perspective, and in particular, through the motif of inculturation. In turn, inculturation assumes that the Gospel of Christ can be best understood as it relates with other cultures to which it encounters. In this dialogue of culture and the gospel, it takes St. Paul's model as a proto-type of inculturation and contextualization when he says in 1st Corinthians 9:21-24 when he says thus,

> To those without the Law I became like one without the Law (though I am not outside the law of God but am under the law of Christ), to win those without the Law. To the weak i becameweak, towintheweak. I have becomeallthingsto all menso that by all possible meansI might savesome of them. I do all this for the sake of the gospel, so that I may share in its blessings.…

This means that the contestations of paedo baptism can only be understood in the light of inculturation as my theoretical framework.

5.4 Recommendations

The researcher suggests that the church leadership needs to reconstruct the meaning, and efficacy of the ritual of baptism in our churches, to rhyme with the African (Aembu) naming and incorporating of children in their community. Further, the church needs to educate her members on the meaning of baptism which is not only having a name and being a member of the church but for a holistic growth of the body of Christ. It is worthwhile also to note that the theory of inculturation, a phenomenon where Gospel and culture are in dialogue of purpose, cannot be

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ignored in our theological discourses in Africa. Indeed, addressing paedobaptism from the framework of inculturation will unveil the contestations thereof. To this end, the study recommends that more research be done on areas under contestations such as polygamy, same-sex marriages, corruption, permissiveness, gender relations among others and address it from an African theological perspective in order to get the way forward. It is also suggested that African theologians need to study more on inculturation to assess its suitability in addressing cutting edge issues facing our contemporary African society. Last, for a society that is facing theo-ethical challenges, a study of inculturation from a theo-social dimension is critical for any aspiring church minister; hence it should be made a mandatory unit in all seminaries for clergy. This will help the upcoming pastors to theologize from a contextual perspective.

5.5. Suggestions for Further Reading

Further reading can be carried out in finding out how the sacrament of baptism can be used for holistic growth in the church.

Further, study could be carried out on empowering the single-mothers and non-communicants and those whose holy matrimonies were not solemnized in the church, to find their place in the church. It will also be important to further read on formulation of policies which can be used to guide baptism of children of the single-parents, non-communicants and those not married in the church.

There is need to further study baptism in the context of the African indigenous or Independent Churches (A.I.C.) in order to make a broader comparison. Again this will help us in assessing the

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form of baptism in the See of Embu and the models of baptisms done in Africa without theological over-reliance on the western theo-doctrinal discourses. Such a study will eventually lead to an authentic form of baptism in the See of Embu in particular and the 21st century African context in general.

It is also recommended that materials on post-colonial African reconstruction and renaissance be read with vigour in order to bring more sensitization regarding the general need for renewal of our society holistically. This will indeed go a long way in strengthening the need to address cutting edge issues facing our contemporary society. Indeed, the debate about credo and paedobaptism is one such issue in need of review for the betterment of the See of Embu and beyond. Seen in this way, the clergy and the lay ecclesial leadership can be encouraged to use the available resources such as pulpit, the human resources such as choirs, mother's activities and the youth activities among others, to emphasize the socio-spiritual reconstruction and renewal of our society.

As a study that was theoretically guided by inculturation model, the study has been able to underscore the value of children by revisiting the case of the value of children in African religious heritage. By citing the case of childless marriage where a co-wife was sought, the African heritage has aided our suggestions for further researches. That is, can not the contestations revolving around paedobaptism be addressed by critically looking at such rich elements of our African heritage? Cannot theologizing the plight and care of street children by both the government and the church also inform us in attempting to unveil the contestations revolving paedobaptism? The study thus recommends that rather than just compare baptism and

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circumcision which are rooted in both Jewish and African societies, the concern for baptismal rituals in Africa should also be studied from the perspectives of other cultural values such as the concepts of hospitality, ancestrology, and the care for children and the aged among others. Only then shall African Christianity be able to unveil the various contestations thereof.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: QUESTIONAIRES

ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY, LIMURU

P.O PRIVATE BAG

LIMURU - KENYA

TEL: 0202020505 / 020202510

CELL: 0728669000 / 0736424440

Dear Sir / Madam,

I am carrying out a research study, on Paedo Baptism And Theological Contestations An African Theological Perspective an "Investigation on the meaning and Efficacy of infant Baptism in A.C.K Embu Diocese" and would like to request you to kindly assist me to obtain the relevant information by duly filling this Questionnaires, as this study will be beneficial in assisting children of single- parents non-communicants and unlawfully wedded parents to be accepted fully in the church through baptism.

Please note that your opinions and views will be treated confidentially and your name will not be included in the final publication.

Thank you for your assistance.

Yours sincerely,

ESTON K. NJERU

ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

APPENDIX 2: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY, LIMURU

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