EXPIATION IN THE LIGHT OF *GŨTAHĨKIO*: TOWARDS AN *AGĨKŨYŨ* THEOLOGY OF ATONEMENT

BY

Daniel Kirienye Maina

This dissertation is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of a Master of Theology from St. Paul's University

May 2017

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Supervisors: Dr. John Michael Kiboi

Dr. Sammy Githuku

May 2017

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 college.

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Lead Supervisor: Dr. John Michael Kiboi, Signature _____

DATE: 06.09.2017

Co-Supervisor: Dr. Sammy Githuku, Signature _____

DATE: 06.09.2017

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Abstract

Despite the fact that the Church in Africa has grown both demographically and spiritually, there seems to be a problem somewhat since Africans have still held on to some of their customs that contradict Christianity. This demonstrates that there is something wrong with the way Christianity has been understood, presented and integrated into the African frame of thought. As a result of this, the Church in Africa has fallen into syncretism and Christianity has not become part and parcel of the lives of the Africans. This dissertation aimed at investigating *gũtahĩkio* which is a purification process for those individuals who had contacted *thahu* among the *Agĩkũyũ* community. It also investigated whether there are some authentic aspects of *gũtahĩkio* that can be used to help the *Agĩkũyũ* Christians to better understand, the Christian doctrine of atonement. To achieve this, the study employed *analogia entis* as its methodology which is a theology that considers the day to day living of the people and attempts to lift from their experiences and their struggles means by which they understand their lives and how they understand God. The study established that there is anxiety among the *Agĩkũyũ* Christians since even after absolution and repentance, there is no guaranteeing that their sins have been forgiven. *Gũtahĩkio* was used to purify those people who had contracted *thahu* and as such welcome them back to community life. The study shows that once one went through *gũtahĩkio*, they dealt with the guilt and the worshiper went back home assured that their *thahu* was removed. This process of infusion employed by *analogia entis* helps the *Agĩkũyũ* Christians understand the doctrine of atonement through a frame of mind familiar to them.

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Abbreviations

AD:	*Anno Domini* (Year of our Lord)
Lev:	Leviticus
Nd:	No Date
N.T:	New Testament
NIV:	New International Version
O.T:	Old Testament
P.C.E.A.:	Presbyterian Church of East Africa
Rom:	Romans
Vol:	Volume

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Problem

The introduction of Christianity among Africans brought with it merits and demerits in as far as the way it was received and perceived. Historically, blame has been apportioned to the methods that the missionaries used or did not use while introducing the gospel. As a result of this, Christianity faced lots of challenges among them syncretism. Though Christianity has been widely embraced by Africans, their lives dictated otherwise since they held onto cultural practices that contradict Christianity. This largely was contributed by the fact that in Africa, religion is a way of life and culture plays a huge part in it. Mbiti, (1969) notes that "for the African, and the larger community of which he is part of, to live is to be caught up in a religious drama". This according to Mbiti is "fundamental for it means that man lives in a religious universe" (Mbiti, 1969:15). Blame towards the missionaries in this respect has been that the missionaries refused to take into consideration African cultures and cultural practices which dictated a large part of an African.

The problem of an individual dealing with guilt cannot be wished away. People are haunted by the guilt of sins every day. The lack of internalization that guilt from sins has been lifted off despite absolution lead people to do things that keep driving them further away from faith than closer to God. Christians have shared testimonies of how guilt haunted them even after they had given their lives to God and reconciled with the affected parties. While serving in the A.C.K. Diocese of Mt. Kenya West, the researcher noted that many people struggled with maintaining membership in the Church after offending or

breaking the laws of the Church. Many women for example who got children out of Wedlock were required to take some time off before they could be re-admitted back for Holy Communion. Most of these women ended up leaving certain congregations for others fearing that they would be victimized. While the constitution of the Anglican Church of Kenya Constitution, (2002) states that all one required was repentance after wrong doing, the practice of it seem to bring anxiety in the hearts of many since heavy administrative procedures have to be carried out in order for one to be readmitted back to the Church as well as in Church services(*Anglican Constitution*, 2002:35). Similarly, The Presbyterian Church of East Africa, (1998) Church's *Practice and Procedure Manual*, notes that disciplinary measures for a sinner are counseling, admonition, rebuke, suspension from Church privileges, removal of name from the roll of communicants and excommunication from the Church. Officials may be suspended (*Practice and Procedure Manual*, 1998:122).

This therefore means that despite absolution during a service, one would not take Communion unless other administrative procedures are done.

Bible Verses like Matthew 7: 21-23 makes it difficult for believers since it throws into doubt the confidence of those who claim to accept Christ and profess faith in him. The text makes it clear that those who will share in the kingdom of God are those who will do the will of God, but then the will of God is not physical or tangible hence the difficult in knowing whether it is the will of God we do in our daily lives. Such doubts that come between us and our faith make the burden of our guilt even heavier. Despite the Anglican Church for example laying down clear procedures of how one who has wronged the

congregation should be handled and welcomed back, and despite the fact that there is absolution in every morning worship liturgy, this seems not to convince the Christians that their guilt has been lifted off.

Nwafor, (2016) argues that, before incarnation, all knowledge about God was incomplete and was waiting completion in Jesus Christ. He proposes that just as the Old Testament prepared the Jews for the coming of Christ, the early Greek philosopher prepared Greeks as well. He completes this argument by stating that the African Traditional Religion prepared Africans in the same way (Nwafor, 2016:7). This research proposes that the authentic practices of *gũtahĩkio*[1] can be infused with the Christian doctrine of expiation and as such help the *Agĩkũyũ* Christians in their understanding of expiation.

1.2 Problem statement

The lack of internalization that guilt is dealt with in the declaration of absolution[2] creates stress and anxiety among the *Agĩkũyũ* Christians. Many *Agĩkũyũ* Christians still recourse to cultural practices to alleviate guilt incurred instead of believing that their sins have been forgiven them after confession and the priest's absolution.

1.3 Hypothesis

The research holds that if the *Agĩkũyũ* cultural practice, *gũtahĩkio* is used to explain to the *Agĩkũyũ* Christians the Christian atonement by Christ and the efficacy of the Priests

[1] This was the commonest method the *Agikuyu* used to purify those contaminated with *thahu*. Sammy Githuku, Inculturation Biblical Hermeneutics (2012:69),

[2] This is absolution as used in the Anglican Church in every Morning Prayers in the Common Book of Prayer (1979:42).

absolution, the *Agĩkũyũ* Christians will understand the Christian ritual and hence will not recourse to the traditional options as a solution to remove their guilt.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

I. To examine positive elements of *gũtahĩkio* that can be used to explain the Christian doctrine of atonement and its efficacy.

1.5 Limitations

The study notes that cultures are dynamic and so is the *Agĩkũyũ* culture. The study therefore faced challenges with language barrier. Secondly, the elders rarely documented their customs and practices leaving this role largely to the Westerner's. This means that the information from the Westerners perspective might not be accurate.

1.6 Methodology

This study employs *analogia entis* as its methodology. Nyamiti, (2005) holds that

> …between God and his creation, there is some similarity or correspondence in such a way that one can gain a deeper understanding of the revealed mysteries by examining them in the light of natural knowledge gained from human experience in the world (Nyamiti, 2005: 32).

Thus, *analogia entis* is the use of natural elements analogously to infer or understand divine mysteries. According to Charles Nyamiti one begins by choosing the Christian mystery, the topic or the subject of study, then find out the appropriate African cultural item or theme which can be used for theological elaboration of the Christian mystery. This is followed by theological reflection on the meaning of the Christian mystery beginning

with the meaning in itself followed by its relevance for our spiritual and material benefits in the light of its African counterpart. This is what Nyamiti refers to as "the intrinsic employment of cultural themes in theology (Nyamiti, 2005:22).

The study conducted both library research and a personal interview. The study used non-probability sampling where the researcher deliberately samples items on the basis that the small items selected represents the whole (Kothari and Garg, 2014:97). The library research provided information on the *Agĩkũyũ* people, their social organization, and rites of passage, concept of God and sin, *gũtahĩkio* (Sin Vomi*tting*) and data on the Christian doctrine of atonement. The interview dealt largely with *gũtahĩkio*. Kothari, (2004) writes that this methodology uses structured interviews and uses predetermined questions and are of high standardized techniques of recording (Kothali, 2004:97).

Berg, (2009) notes that this methodology allows the insights obtained from qualitative research to add texture to an analysis and demonstrates meanings and understandings about problems and phenomena that would not have been identified through other methodologies (Berg, 2009:147) Ethical issues were adhered to while conducting the interview.

1.7 Rationale

According to John Waliggo, (1986) the Church in the Northern Africa managed to survive since they had integrated her work with the culture of the people. He notes that part of Coptic speaking Egypt, Ethiopia and the kingdoms of Nubia where it had been translated into local languages, adapted to some local cultures, and propagated by local evangelists survived much longer under the threat of Islam (Waliggo, 1986:12).

The other rationale for Inculturation is that Christianity is a religion so deeply founded in Inculturation through the incarnation of Jesus Christ. God himself is the author of Inculturation so to speak. (Saldanha, 1987) in his book *Inculturation* notes that:-

> …a greater measure of revelation was achieved by way of incarnation, in Jesus of Nazareth. In him we see the fascinating process of critical assimilation reaching a decisive stage. He is God's word and man's response, Word and Event: both deeply embedded in a particular culture and religion. Jesus himself did Inculturation. Jesus himself being a Jew frequented the temple and went there to celebrate the Jewish feasts without condemning the temple and the Sabbath; Jesus relativised them by becoming himself a new temple and the entrance for all people into Gods rest (Saldanha, 1987:21).

The New Testament on the other hand is not short of the analogy of Inculturation. Jesus teaches his disciples to pray and asked them to pray to their Father in heaven, using an image that his disciples were already familiar with that of a father (Matthew 6:6). Equally, Jesus in Matthew 13: 24-53, 22:1-14 uses parables and likens the kingdom of heaven with things earthly and material- images that his disciples and his audience would relate with (NIV Bible).

Majawa, (2005) writes that by God sending his son into the world to save humankind and as such became human means that God from the beginning intended inculturation. He notes that although incarnation of the Word came in a particular time and place, it was meant for all in all places at all times. He argues that God continually reveals Himself in the midst of our lives and that Christ wants to become a part of every culture (Majawa, 2005:63).

1.8 Literature Review

The objective of this section was to show the sources of the materials used in this study and establish the knowledge gaps left by the materials used.

Fr. Cagnolo and Pick, (1933) in the book *The Agĩkũyũ: Their customs, Traditions and Folklore* writes widely on the ethnography of the *Agĩkũyũ* people pointing out their social, economic and political lives. He largely associates these aspects with how they affected the British Colonial Government and how the government affected them. He looks at the rites of passage and the roles they played towards the stability of the society and also discusses the religiosity of the *Agĩkũyũ* people. Cagnolo uses very negative terms in describing the *Agĩkũyũ* people. This gives an opportunity to the study to investigate whether this attitude could have contributed to the negative reception the *Agĩkũyũ* people showed towards Christianity.

L.S.B Leakey (1977) in his series of books *The Southern Kikuyu Before 1903* Vol I, II and III largely writes about the life and the cultural practices of the *Agĩkũyũ* people before 1903. In his series of books, he looks at the origin of the *Agĩkũyũ* people, their social organization, economic activities, their tribal organization and their religiosity. Leakey writes that "the common believe that the so-called 'primitive' tribes lead a 'simple life' but his books offer the opportunity to the leaders to know that the life of the individual Kikuyu before European contact was just as complex as that of any civilized people". He writes that "a Kikuyu individual's life was punctuated by rites of passage, ceremonies which mark the passage of an individual or group of individuals from one stage of life to the next at which time new responsibilities were undertaken towards each other". He notes

that a clear social structure was clearly demarcated on the basis of those stages of life with each individual having well defined responsibilities according to their stage of life, not only to his family but to his village, territorial unit and the whole tribe. He largely in his books provide a straightforward descriptions of customs and practices of the *Agĩkũyũ* people and lacks criticality of what those customs meant in relation to Christianity which was beginning to spread among the *Agĩkũyũ* people.

Jomo Kenyatta, (1978) in his book *Facing Mount Kenya: the Traditional Life of the Gĩkũyũ* writes that "*Gĩkũyũ* tribal organization is based on three important factors which are the family group, the clan and the system of age-grading without which there can be no harmony in the tribal activities". Kenyatta presents an interconnectedness of the *Agĩkũyũ* customs demonstrating how one custom directly or indirectly affected the other. Kenyatta is very critical about the introduction of Christianity and the role it played in oppressing the cultural practices. Kenyatta presents very deep religious aspects of the *Agĩkũyũ* people noting that both individuals and group lives are influenced at all points by beliefs in the supernatural. All the same Kenyatta has done very little attempts to show how both culture and Christianity can illuminate each other.

John Mbiti (1969) in his book *African Religions and Philosophy* argues that Africans are largely influenced by religion and that each people have religious systems with set beliefs and practices. He notes that religion penetrates into all the departments of life so fully that it is not easy to always isolate it. Mbiti is able to beautifully present aspects of the African religions with their Christian counterparts. He critically looks at those two aspects; that of Culture and Christianity (Mbiti, 1969:1).

Sammy Githuku, (2012) in his book *Inculturation Biblical Hermeneutics: A Christian integration of the Old Testament and the Agĩkũyũ concept of Sin* explore the biblical and the *Agĩkũyũ* concept of sin seeking to show how both illuminate each other. He argues that the lack of integration between traditional African concept of sin and the biblical concept of sin is the major cause of increased sinfulness among the African Christians. He proposes the use of Hermeneutics of Inculturation to correct this anomaly by rooting Christianity in African the soul. He in a beautiful way integrates cultural themes with their Christian aspects enhancing an understanding of both elements (Githuku, 2012:7).

St. Athanasius, (1944) in his work *Deincarnatione Verbi Dei* addresses the Christian atonement. He writes on the divine dilemma and its solution in incarnation. He looks at the necessity of the death of Christ and his resurrection and looks at how Christ's death and resurrection achieves salvation for all humanity.

John Goldingay, (1995) in his book *Atonement Today* carries out an examination of the biblical teaching and the Church's doctrinal tradition focusing on a critical debate on the significance of the cross in today's world and its implication on contemporary issues. In his book, he is able to relate the doctrine of atonement to contemporary issues affecting the Church today like feminism, inter-faith dialogue and pastoral theology.

Charles Nyamiti (2005) in his book *Jesus Christ, the Ancestor of Humankind* writes that "African theology is neither a new religious doctrine, nor a sort of syncretism between Christian teaching and Christian religious beliefs, but the very self-same authentic Christian doctrine expressed and presented in accordance with African mentality and needs" (Nyamiti, 2005: 3). He writes that there are two main trends in African theology

today i.e. Inculturation and liberation with his main focus being Inculturation. He discusses the methodology used while conducting theology in Africa. He discusses three aspects in the methodology; these are the use of analogy (*analogia entis*), the principle of interconnectedness of the revealed mysteries (*analogia fidei*) and the explicitation of the practical or pastoral relevance of the Christian mysteries (Nyamiti, 2005:32). Nyamiti demonstrates that it is possible to use African themes to understand Christian mysteries through the process of Inculturation. He is able to critique his methodology, purifies them and uses them to enhance Christian understanding of the revealed mysteries.

John Kiboi, (2017) warns against falling into syncretism while using inculturation to conduct theology. In his article "Theological Inculturation and the Problem of Syncretism: towards a Noetic Approach as Remedy against Syncretism", writes that "there is great danger for syncretism to happen whenever functional approach is employed in contextual theology … the theology from below is majorly employed by liberation theologians" (Kiboi, 2012:30). Kiboi (2017) follows this critique in his book, The *Tripartite Office of Christ in the Light of Worgoondet: towards a Saboat Christology of Inculturation* and argues that the functional approach "is susceptible to possibility of syncretism". This might happen by using human philosophy as an illuminator of divine revelation an approach that is not allowed by the Church (Kiboi, 2017:177).

CHAPTER TWO: THE *AGĨKŨYŨ* CONCEPT OF EXPIATION

Introduction

God in His wisdom wishes that people should know Him and as such, He reveals Himself in different ways to His people. One way through which God reveals Himself is the general revelation which He has given to people through their experiences and the world around them. One of the objectives of this study as earlier stated was to examine whether there are aspects of *gũtahĩkio* (sin vomiting) which is part of the general revelation that can be used to enhance the understanding of the Christian doctrine of atonement.

To achieve this, the study looks at the ethnography of the *Agĩkũyũ* people. Religion was a way of life and was deeply interwoven with culture. This therefore meant that the study had to focus on a large aspect of the *Agĩkũyũ* people including their social organization, their concept of God, Concept of Sin, rites of passage and the idea of *thahu*[3]. All these cultural aspects played a key role in defining an *Agĩkũyũ* person without which we may not understand *gũtahĩkio*.

[3] *Thahu* according to C. W. Hobley is the word used to explain the condition in which one either accidentally or deliberately gets into though coming into contact with circumstances or performs acts that brings with them a curse or ill luck. Hobley notes that a person who has been contaminated or has come into contact with *thahu* becomes emaciated and ill or breaks out into eruptions or boils, and if the *thahu* is not removed will most likely die (Hobley, 1910:428).

2.0 THE ETHNOGRAPHY OF THE *AGĨKŨYŨ* PEOPLE

2.1 The Social Organization Of The *Agĩkũyũ*.

Kenyatta, (1965) writes that the *Agĩkũyũ* ethnic organization is based on three most important factors without which communal activities are difficult to do. These categories are firstly the family group (*Mbarĩ* or *Nyũmba*) which brings together those related by blood. Secondly the clan (*Mũhĩrĩga*) which join in one group several *mbarĩ* units who have the same clan name. The third principle factor is the system of age grading (*Riika*). The *mbarĩ* and the m*ũhĩrĩga* systems help to form several groups of relatives within the community acting independently but the system of age-grading unites and brings together the whole community in all its activities. Those youths who are of the same *riika* meaning they were initiated together remain united (Kenyatta, 1965:4).

Gathigira, (1986) in his book "*Mĩikarĩre ya Agĩkũyũ"* emphasizes on the importance of *nyũmba* and *riika* by quoting a very famous saying among the *Agĩkũyũ* that "*nyũmba na riika itiũmagwo"* meaning that once you belonged to a certain family group and age-group, you would remain a member forever. The age grouping according to Gathigira was an important method or way of people to know their age since it was difficult to keep track of the day or month one was born. One was put into a certain age-group after the rite of passage of circumcision. After circumcision, the group would then be named after a major event or something that had happened in the community at the time like famine, or a disease that killed many people or livestock or some political event (Gathigira, 1986:4-5).

Leakey, (1977) argues that in the normal homestead, there were strong codes of love and unity that brought a man, his wives and their children together. The family was therefore acted as the center of worship making the family worship more important than public worship (Leakey 1977:2). Belief in God and in the ancestral and departed spirit was the fundamental basis of life as an *Agĩkũyũ*. Leakey argues that "any person who lost his faith in the religious beliefs ceased to be a member of the community to all intents and purposes and became an outcast". Leakey further argues that religion held the family together, and united the inhabitants of every village, and bound together the inhabitants of the various villages of a territorial unit and gave them the cohesion that was essential to their mutual security (Leakey, 1977:16-17).

Cagnolo argues that however barbarous and 'savage' a tribe may be, the idea of the family is always implicit. He claims that "when the missionaries first came in touch with these 'savages', they realized that this idea was well founded on traditional principles and safe guarded by rights, laws and sanctions". He claims that civilized peoples are liable to the error of thinking that a tribe which is 'barbarous' and 'savage' is necessarily besotted and cruel (Cagnolo, 1933:50).

2.2 Rites Of Passage

2.2.1 Birth

To understand the context and the seriousness of *gũtahĩkio*, it was paramount to look at the rites of passage. These rites of passage were very important since they were stages that every individual had to go through for them to become elders and eventually celebrated as

ancestors. The rights of passage determined the status of an individual in the society and this determined what ceremonies they can or cannot participate in.

The individual's life as Leakey puts it was punctuated by rites of passage. A complex social structure was clearly demarcated on the basis of the stages of life, with each individual having well defined responsibilities, according to his/her stage of life, not only to his family, but to his village, his territorial unit, the people of the district and the tribe as a whole (Leakey 1977; 1). Emphasizing on the importance of the family unit in the social organization, he notes that the most important religious and social ceremonies were invalid if any member of the family was absent (Leakey 1977: 1).

Among the *Agĩkũyũ*, there were five rites of passage namely birth, second birth, initiation, marriage and death.

Among the *Agĩkũyũ*, children are highly valued, and both male and female children were equally appreciated and "every man in prayer and every woman in desire hoped to be blessed with many children, children were a sign of wealth" (Leakey, 1977:511). All the same, laws and customs did not allow women to give birth to as many children as one would produce naturally since greater importance was attached to having healthy children than to having many children. Babies were spaced out to about one in every third year and no woman would conceive before weaning finished which took about two years. This spacing helped the children to grow healthy and gave a chance to women to do their duties and responsibilities around the home (Leakey, 1077:511).

The naming process after birth involved the father or a male relative who would go into the hut and would ask the question; whom have you seen? (*Mwona ũũ?*). To this question, the women in the hut would respond with the answer depending with the gender of the child that had been born. If it was a first born son, the answer would be *twona arũme na nĩ thongũo*, meaning "we have seen men and it is your father. Leakey writes that "The formulae for describing the new born child as one of its relations was due to the fact that each child always received as its womb name (*rĩtwa rĩa nda*) the name of the particular relative which was fixed by age long custom". After naming and the periods of seclusion were over, the ceremony of purification for the mother, child and the midwife followed (Leakey, 1977: 516-522).

2.2.2 *Gũciarwo Rĩngĩ* (The Second Birth)

Just as the ceremonies accompanying birth marked the transition of the infant from mere fetus into a human being and thus a member of the family, with a family name of its own, the ceremony of the second birth marked the passage of the child from being a member of the family in the physical sense only, to being a full member of the family with a spirit as well as a body. This ceremony was known by many names like *gũciarwo rĩngĩ* (to be born again) *gũciarũo na mbũri* (to be born by means of a goat) and *gũciarwo kerĩ* (to be born a second time). Leakey writes that "until this second birth had taken place the child had no separate identity of its own. It was, as it were, only an extension of his mother. It was compulsory by the traditional customs of the whole tribe that the second birth ceremony had to precede initiation into adult status". The second birth was the most important event of childhood among the *Agĩkũyũ* according to Leakey. Speaking about this custom, it was

often said that the child was put back into its mothers' wombs, (*mwana acokagio ihũ-rĩa nyina*). This was however just a figure of speech and the process was symbolic. The child was once more ceremonially separated from its mother, and the links that united the two as one person were separated forever. In most cases, a child went through the second birth before they were four years old, when it could be said that the child is now beginning to understand things (Leakey, 1977: 550-559).

Hobley, (1910) notes that there is an important point to note that takes place during the second birth. That the child had to go and sleep in their mothers bed alongside of her and cry as if they were a new born baby. He notes that only after this is the child allowed to be circumcised (Hobley, 1910:441).

According to Nyakiunyu Thuita (Interview)[4], there were two types of second births; one was done when a woman got married with children born from another man while the second type was done in a normal child birth born in a home (Nyakiunyu ,Interview: 30.04.2017).

2.2.3 Initiations

Kenyatta writes that the initiation of both sexes is the most important custom among the *Agĩkũyũ*. It is looked upon as a deciding factor in giving a boy or girl the status of manhood or womanhood in the community. This custom of initiation from childhood to adulthood is *irũa* (circumcision). The moral code of the tribe is bound up with this custom and that it symbolizes the union of the whole tribal organization. The *irũa* marks the

[4] Nyakiunyu Thuita was interviewed on 30th April 2017 at her home in Mucharage Village in Othaya Sub-County, Nyeri County. She was 102 years old at the time of the Interview.

commencement of participation in various governing groups in the tribal administration because the real age-group begins from the day of the physical operation. The history and legends of the people are explained and remembered according to the names given to various age-groups at the time of the initiation ceremony. With this custom, a tribe which had no written records would not have been able to keep a record of important events and happenings in the life of the nation (Kenyatta, 1978:133-135).

Leakey emphasizes the importance of initiation and notes that while some of the rites of passage like birth and rebirth affected an individual, initiation though affecting individuals in one sense really affected a whole group of individuals. Initiation acted as a door into becoming a full warrior. All the same, the members of a newly initiated age-group were not entitled to the normal privilege of the warrior class as a whole until they had paid the fee required or set aside (Leakey 1977: 708-712).

2.2.4 Marriage

Kenyatta highlights that the process of marriage was detailed and resulted in the strengthening of the whole community since every member of the tribe had a desire to build up his own family group and by this extend his father's clan (Kenyatta, 1978; 143).

Leakey notes that among the *Agĩkũyũ*, there were many types of legal union between man and woman, but by no means did all of them rank as marriages. He notes that the position and the status of children resulting from such unions were always legalized so there was therefore no such thing as an illegitimate child. Even a child born as a result of an illegal union was accorded a legal status and position which was fixed by long standing customs and depended upon the relevant circumstances. It was from the legal and not the physical

father that all children took their clan names (Leakey 1977:748). Kenyatta notes that there is a fundamental idea among the *Agĩkũyũ* that the larger the family is, the happier it will be. The qualification for a status to hold a high office in the tribal organization is based on family (Kenyatta, 1978:178).

The marriage payment of the *Agĩkũyũ* which was referred to as *rũracio* was an important process and was far from what would be seen as purchasing a wife. Leakey puts across three points why the process was important. Firstly, *rũracio* made the contract legally binding. Secondly, it made the children of those marriages legal members of the family which paid the *rũracio* and thirdly stabilized the marriage. In the event that a girl was married and left her husband without a just cause, her family was liable to repay the *rũracio* with interest. On the other hand, if a man mistreated his wife, he would lose her and all the stock he had given out as *rũracio* (Leakey, 1977:754).

By the laws of the *Agĩkũyũ*, there were only two reasons for divorce recognized once a marriage had been consummated. If a husband mistreated and abused his wife, the wife could make a plea to her father to allow her to be divorced. Likewise, if a woman proved to be such a bad wife in all aspects, he could demand that she be taken back by her family. “If more than one child had been born in the marriage, there could be no divorce. But in the event that divorce was granted, and the divorce proceedings completed, the divorced woman could marry again in accordance with the normal procedure of marriage" (Leakey, 1977:806).

2.2.5 Death

Like in many other communities, death was viewed with a considerable degree of resignation by the *Agĩkũyũ*. "The religious beliefs did not tolerate the idea of a heaven and a hell and when one was about to die, they were not tormented by the fear that after all he might be destined for the wrong place". As a departed spirit, his life would not be unpleasant, for his needs would be fulfilled by members of his family who remained on earth and by his descendants and eventually his spirit would be reincarnated and take its place once more among the living. According to the *Agĩkũyũ*, death took place because *ikũndo rĩa mũndũ ũcio nĩ rĩa thenga* (the knot of that man has been moved). This had reference to the method of keeping appointment. In order to keep an appointment on a particular day, they tied a series of knots on a piece of string to represent the number of days that would pass before the appointment. The conception of death therefore was that the appointed day of any individual were numbered by some unseen super natural power, and when the last knot had been untied the day appointed for death had come. They believed that the day of death was fixed at birth, and when a man's days had run, death had to intervene. The philosophical attitude toward death meant that the relatives and friends of a dead man did not mourn unnecessarily. Despite the fact that they did feel sorrow and great loneliness when a friend died, they were confronted by two beliefs. The first is that "the dead person's spirit would always be near at hand, and the second was that death was inevitable and therefore there need be no regrets that perhaps the life could have been saved if more had been done" (Leakey 1977:938).

The death and the burial of all those who had children even if the children were all dead were treated in a special way which included the performance of full ceremonies and the

sacrifice of a special ram or ewe for the spirit of the deceased. This process shows why every *Gĩkũyũ* was so anxious to have children; it meant among other things that the spirit achieved a status which it would not have had otherwise. For married people who had children or classificatory children, death was marked by ceremonies which appear to be really a form of final rite of passage, making the last and final stage of life of the individual (Leakey, 1977:958-989).

The people "maintain a close and vital relationship with spiritual entities. Their daily lives both as individuals and groups are influenced at all points by belief in the super natural". The system of age-grouping in connection with the living and the dead plays a very important part in the life of the *Agĩkũyũ* community. As a man grows old his prestige increases according to the number of age-grades he has passed. It is this seniority that makes an elder almost indispensable in the general life of the people (Kenyatta, 1978:261-263).

2.3 *AGĨKŨYŨ* RELIGIOSITY

2.3.1 Concept Of God.

God was at the center of religious worship among the *Agĩkũyũ* people. This section demonstrates the relationship between God and the *Agĩkũyũ* people. The study shows how the *Agĩkũyũ* perceived God and how this perception affected or informed their worship and community living.

According to Samuel Kibicho (2006), the Agikuyu people always believed in the one Almighty God, the creator and ruler of all men and women and all things created. He

writes that the question of Atheism was not only unknown, but inconceivable. The religiosity of the *Agikuyu* people according to Kibicho goes back to when god created the *Gikuyu* nation. He, Kibicho notes that according to a *Gikuyu* Legend, after God had created everything, he took *Gikuyu*, the father and the founder of the *Gikuyu* nation and placed him at the top of Mt. Kirinyaga and from the top of his holy mountain showed *Gikuyu* the beauty and the richness of the country that He had given to him and his descendants. From here, it is believed that God showed *Gikuyu* a specific spot filled with fig trees and asked *Gikuyu* to settle there. God further instructed *Gikuyu* to always communicate to him his needs and to constantly call on him through sacrifice and prayer and God promised to hear his prayers every time he raised his hands towards the holy mountain. Kibicho argues that the nucleus of the community of faith of the *Gikuyu* community began when *Gikuyu*, his wife *Mumbi* and the nine daughters whom God had blessed them with joined together to make a sacrifice invoking God to bless the daughters with sons. After the sacrifice and prayers, God indeed gave nine sons to marry the nine daughters (Kibicho, 2006:17-18).

Kibicho further notes that there were designated places, mountains, trees and objects where the sacrifices and prayers were done. He notes that the holy character of these objects and the sacredness of life in general which the *Agikuyu* people emphasized both in creed and practice is seen as deriving from their divine origin. This therefore means that the *Gikuyu* locate the origin of their faith in God Himself, in his own initiative and not merely on human projection or invention. Kibicho also notes that the *Gikuyu* religion was monotheistic from the beginning and does not worship idols or natural phenomena and no evidence has been found of them worshiping idols. According to the *Gikuyu* religion, no emphasis were laid on the fact that God is the living God, since everyone knew this, the

emphasis was rather laid on what God is and what he wills and does. They believed that God lives in heaven and everywhere. Kibicho also adds that *Gikuyu's* monotheism is not exclusive and particularistic but is inclusive in its understanding of God as the God of all men and women and is tolerant of all other peoples' patterns of worship despite the differences (Kibicho, 2006:19).

On the basis for *Gikuyu* belief in the existence and the presence of God, Kibicho writes that the *Gikuyu* believed that God is invisible to the mortal eyes. The *Gikuyu* believed that God made his presence felt so impressively that it was the task of the nonbeliever to give reasons for his or her non-believing. God revealed himself through what the *Gikuyu* referred to as the wonders and mysteries of God through his creation and of these, the mountains held a special place. These were regarded as God's bodes. Kibicho notes that there are four large mountains in the *Gikuyu* country which are *Kiri-nyaga* in the north, *Kia-njahi* in the east, *Kia-mbiruiru* in the south and *Kia-nyandarua* in the south. The officiating elders always faced these holy mountains in turns during sacrifices and prayers (Kibicho, 2006:20).

Sammy Gĩthuku (2012) writes that "the *Agĩkũyũ* believed in one Supreme Being, *Murungu* who is the creator, ruler and governor of the universe and this was a belief that was not questioned or doubted. *Murungu* lives alone in the skies, has no father or mother or companion. He is hidden from the human eye and there is no possibility of beholding Him. He is eternal and judges all according to their behavior" (Gĩthuku, 2012:36). He further writes that *Ngai* is conceptual name for deity and not a personal name. He notes that the *Agĩkũyũ* do not call any person whom they respect by their name but call them by their

epithets. He writes that the existence of *Ngai* is unique and has no associates, suggesting that *Ngai* possesses boundless authority (Gĩthuku, 2012:36).

Quoting Homer and Plutarch respectively, Cagnolo (1933) argues that "there are no people without God" and "without a religion". These statements were true in that since his arrival among the *Agĩkũyũ,* he found that they believed in a Supreme Being, spiritual, ruler and governor of the universe. The *Agĩkũyũ* also believe in the survival of the soul after death. The Supreme Being is believed to be good and generally He is not invoked. Only in cases of public calamities epidemics, droughts, and mortalities is He invoked in public prayers and sacrifices. There were trees in the land which were spared by the axe. These were the "temples" of the *Agĩkũyũ* who offer their sacrifices under the sacred trees. The space around the trees was deemed inviolable and no one would dare to cut wood. Cagnolo gives an account of some Christians who dared to fell such trees by writing that "Unfortunate was the case of some Christians, who having long before rejected the old beliefs, dared to fell some of these trees with the purpose of making firewood. The heathens were struck with horror. The poor fellows did not end the year alive, but paid dearly with death for their boldness" (Cagnolo, 1933:26-28).

Kenyatta contends that the people maintain a close and vital relationship with spiritual entities. Their daily lives are influenced at all points by belief in the supernatural. He notes that the people have a clear idea and understanding of two supernatural elements first, the relationship with the one high God *Ngai,* and secondly the relationship with the ancestors, *Ngoma*. These two relationships or departments function in unison. When a sacrifice is made to the High God on an occasion of national importance, the ancestors must join in

making the sacrifice". He writes that they believe in one God, *Ngai* the creator and giver of all things. He loves or hates people according to their behavior. The creator according to them lives in the sky but has temporary homes on earth, situated on mountain, where he may rest during his visits. In prayers and sacrifices, *Ngai* is addressed by the *Agĩkũyũ* as *Mwene Nyaga* (Possessor of Brightness) associated with *Kirinyaga* (the name for Mount Kenya). *Kirinyaga* is believed by the *Agĩkũyũ* to be *Ngai's* official resting place and in their prayers, they turn and offer sacrifices with their hands raised towards it. Kenyatta writes that *"Ngai* is a distant Being and takes little interest in individuals in their daily takes of life yet at the crisis of their lives he is invariably called upon". At birth, initiation, marriage and death of every *Gĩkũyũ,* communion is established on his behalf with *Ngai*. The ceremonies of these events leave no doubt as to the importance of the spiritual assistance which is essential to them. He notes that this assistance is always obtained by the family group and no individual may directly supplicate the almighty but their whole family group must pledge their interest in the individual's life (Kenyatta, 1978:236).

Kenyatta notes that there are occasions in each man's life, apart from the four main crises, when he requires spiritual assistance like in breaking of a taboo. This is reckoned as an individual matter, and *Ngai* is not approached. This person's purification or absolution is achieved by means of the medicine man, who will work by establishing contact with the ancestral spirits as maybe thought to be involved. It is possible that only one ancestor will need to be propitiated and no need for the whole family group to be brought into action to approach *Ngai* (Kenyatta, 1978:236).

Kenyatta writes that "*Ngai aaikaraga matuinĩ, na nderoranagia na wĩra wa mũndũ ũmwe mwanya, eroranagĩa na mawĩra ma andũ oothe, kana andũ a nyũmba ĩmwe. Ngai ndagiagiagwo"* (God lives in the heavens and he does not bother with the work or affairs of man alone. He looks after the affairs of a whole people or a homestead group. There is no one man's religion or sacrifice) (Kenyatta, 1978:236).

Kenyatta notes that on the worship, "The selected huge trees generally *Mũgumo* or *Mũtamaiyũ* and *Mũkũyũ* symbolized mountains as a 'temple'. Under these trees they worshipped and made sacrifices to *Mwene Nyaga.* These sacred trees are regarded in the same manner as most Christians regard Churches as the house of God. *Ngai* who is not visible to mortal eyes, manifests himself through the sun, moon, the stars, rainbow, lightning and thunder". Through these signs, he can reveal his love or hatred. Kenyatta writes that in the ordinary way of everyday life there were no organized prayers as religious ceremonies. So far as people and things go well and prosper, it is taken for granted that God is pleased with the general behavior of the people. In this happy state, there is no need of prayers. Indeed, prayers are inadvisable, for "*Ngai* must not needlessly be bothered". It is only when humans are in real need that they must approach him without fear of disturbing him and incurring his fury. Kenyatta further writes on the saying "*Ngai ndagiagiagwo"* and note that the saying has wide implications. It implies that even if a terrible calamity, such as death of a child, should befall a man or a woman, their attitude must be one of acceptance for the people know that *Ngai* gives and He has the power to take away. Humans are not left hopeless for *Ngai* may restore his losses by giving another child (Kenyatta, 1978: 238).

If a person falls sick, at first, it is not a matter for supernatural treatment. Ordinary medical knowledge is applied. If this does not succeed, the nature of the case is changed. Then the ancestors are communicated with. With the aid of a diviner, it is found that one of them has been offended. Atonement is made and the affected person recovers. If the illness persists after this, the father of the family must organize the next appeal to *Ngai* himself through a sacrifice. "But the mortals do not do this alone to *Ngai*: The living and the dead now together approach the highest power" (Kenyatta, 1978:240).

2.3.2 *Kugwatwo ni thahu* (Concept Of Sin).

Breaking of laws and taboos in the community was a detestable thing and was sometimes punished by death or excommunication from the community. Doing the right thing attracted blessings and success while breaking of the law was punished. This section demonstrated how breaking of the law and taboos was serious. It also demonstrated how *thahu* was connected with the welfare or the miseries of the community as a whole.

Gĩthuku (2012) writes that "the *Agĩkũyũ* traditional religion did not have in the Christian understanding, beliefs about heaven and hell where sin in an eschatological sense will be rewarded and punished but this did not mean that they did not have a concept of sin"(Gĩthuku, 2012:51). He suggests that examining the traditional beliefs of the people is important as one seek to understand how the Christians interpreted the biblical concept of sin. Those people who transgressed the law and taboos or broke them whether consciously or unconsciously were grasped or trapped by the mysterious supernatural force called *thahũ. Thahu* grasped a person who transgressed a taboo, and consumed such a person to death unless it was vomited out (*gũtahĩkio).* Gĩthuku further infers that "the concept of sin

was more than the prohibited actions; it went beyond mere actions". The individuals actions to begin with was not determined by their moral will, but by the dictation of the community values. Sin according to Gĩthuku was therefore defined by what was allowed or forbidden by the tribal custom. It was also understood as a state that an individual acquired after breaching a taboo. "Sin did not only affect an individual but also the family, the group of association and the community at large". Gĩthuku sees sin as an irregularity or a state that destroyed the harmony of affairs in the universe. It was that action or status that disturbed the *status quo*. Gĩthuku argues that "*Ngai* created the land, rivers, animals, and the environment and instituted the rituals, rites, taboos and community law. When everything remained in its divinely guarded domain there was harmony. It was a sin when a person or an animal disrupted this harmony. Distortion of *Ngai*- given conditions was an attack on a divinely ordered world and this disrupted the society and broke the relationship between the community and the guardian ancestors". There was the believe and the conviction among the *Agĩkũyũ* that *Ngai* had taught the tribal customs to the first ancestors hence unquestioned obedience and since the community was observing it, it was the will of God. This was validated by the saying that "*Mũgambo wa Kĩrĩndĩ no ta wa Ngai"* meaning that what the community has sanctioned is the will of God. This shows that the elders played a big role as the custodians of these values and sin was anything that they disapproved. Threat to this harmony was punished by the ancestors, the living elders and mysterious powers that caused diseases and eventually death if expiation was not carried out (Gĩthuku, 2012:51-54).

2.3.3 *Gũtahĩkio*

The objective of this section is to show how the *Agĩkũyũ* concept of expiation (*gũtahĩkio*) was done and how it affected the community and its members when done or when not done.

Gũtahĩkio was performed in the context of *thahu*. It is therefore important to look at *thahu*, how it was contracted and how it was dealt with. The dissertation also looked at how *thahu* affected individuals as well as the community as a whole.

Gĩthuku (2012) writes that "those people who transgressed the law and taboos or broke them whether consciously or unconsciously were grasped by the mysterious supernatural force called *thahũ. Thahu* grasped a person who transgressed a taboo, and consumed such a person to death unless it was vomited out *(gũtahikia)"* (Gĩthuku, 2012:51-54).

Hobley (1910) writes that *thahu:-*

> …is the word used for a condition into which a person is believed to fall if he or she accidently becomes the victim of certain circumstances or intentionally perform certain acts which carry with them a kind of ill luck or curse. A person who is *thahu* becomes emaciated and ill or breaks out into eruptions of boils, and if the *thahu* is not removed will probably die (Hobley, 1910:428)

Hobley notes that the process of purification of anyone who had become *thahu* or who had been cursed was conducted by a *mũndũ mũgo* or a medicine man and was almost always accompanied by the slaughter of a sheep and anointing with the contents of the stomach

and in some cases the use of “white diatomaceous earth” referred to as *ira*. This process of purification according to Hobley was referred to as *gũtahĩkia* (Hobley, 1910:429).

(L. S. B. Leakey, 1977b) writes that the outward sign of the condition of *thahu* was a wasting away without visible cause and was seen in both human beings and livestock. Any person or live animal that was subjected to conditions which resulted in *thahu* would automatically show some visible signs of the condition unless steps were taken to purify them at the earliest possible opportunity. If this did not happen on time, Leakey notes that the condition would escalate and the end result would be death. He further notes that *thahu* could be contracted either with or without the knowledge of the person contracting it; it would be contracted through the actions of the person himself or through the acts and agency of some other person. Any person might become contaminated by the condition of *thahu* if he or she intentionally or unintentionally broke any of the laws which regulated social life and behavior and the seriousness of the potential *thahu* were dependent on the circumstances at the time. The different types of *thahu* according to Leakey were not all removed by the same form of purification ceremony, nor would a similar *thahu* be removed by an identical purification ceremony on different occasions, for the form of purification was dictated by the circumstances in which the *thahu* had been incurred and sometimes it depended on instructions given by a diviner (Leakey, 1977:1232).

Just as the forms of ceremonial uncleanness that were recognized were numerous, so were the methods of removing uncleanness. Leakey notes that in serious cases of *thahu* , and also in some other forms of ceremonial uncleanness, the process of purification used more than one purification rite. The commonest form of ceremonial purification was by means

of a ceremony known as *gũtahĩkia* which literally translated means to cause to vomit and this ceremony varied considerably according to the nature of the uncleanness which was to be purified and removed. All ceremonies however had one thing in common, that is the symbolic vomiting of the evil and uncleanness by placing some objects and mixture repeatedly to the lips of the patient. In all important ceremonies of purification by means of *ndahĩkio*, a member of this profession officiated by elders of the third and fourth grade were also considered competent to carry out minor ceremonies that did not require the use of magical powders. There were so many ceremonies that were conducted. Some of these were to remove *thahu* caused by death, *thahu* caused by contact with human blood, *thahu* caused by contact with menstrual blood, *thahu* caused by a natural disaster, *thahu* caused by a breach of social law and customs, to remove uncleanness of the *gĩko* (unclean) type, or the *rũruto* (connected with building a new home) type, or the *mũrimũ* (disease) type, and many more (Leakey, 1977:1243).

The study focused on *thahu* contracted at birth or innocently and the ceremony of one where the person(s) being cleansed had broken a taboo and as such breached the social law and customs.

2.3.4 *Thahu* Contracted At Birth or Innocently

The condition of *thahu* went beyond affecting the people who had transgressed the law to people who were totally innocent. Hobley gives several instances where a child or an individual who was the offended contracted *thahu* instead of the offender. He notes that if a woman who had assisted in child birth had sex with a man before the purification process was done, it was the child which became *thahu* and not the woman. To remove the *thahu*

from the child, the woman would be sprinkled with the contents of the stomach of a sheep. He further notes that if a woman was carrying a child with her back and the child slipped and fell, it is the child which became *thahu* and it may not be lifted from the place it fell until a sheep had been slaughtered on that spot. He further notes that if a son slept or had sex with one of his father's wives when the father was away; it is the father who became *thahu*. Hobley notes that the explanation given for the father contacting *thahu* was since he is the one who had begotten the son. In that case, the son may make peace with the father by gifting him a big male goat. This *thahu* was removed by *athuri a kĩama* (council of elders) and if it was not removed, the father would die (Hobley, 1910:433).

2.3.5 *Thahu* Caused By A Breach Of Social Law And Customs

2.3.5.1 The Purification Process

The forms of *thahu* caused by breaches of social law and customs were varied, and although all breaches of social law and custom caused *thahu*, these types of *thahu did* not always require the same form of purification but might instead be removed in other ways. It might be too laborious to look into each of the social laws and customs that existed, therefore for the sake of the study; we will look at the removal of *thahu* due to a deliberate breach of the sex laws on the part of a man and a woman.

If a man and a woman, contrary to law and customs, had sexual contact during the daylight hours, when the family cattle and stock and the children were away from the homestead, a serious form of *thahu* would sooner or later take hold of the children and they would start to grow weak and thin. This prompted the conscious of the man and the woman to have a purification ceremony performed to remove the evil, which they knew was due to their

own fault. The man went to the medicine man and was given instructions on what to prepare for the purification process. The husband had to collect a proportion of the plants that were to be used in the ceremony while the medicine man would bring the rest. The plant used were "*mũrerema, makũri, mũgũmo, mũkũyũ, irigũ rĩa mũtahato, kĩgwa, ndũma, ngwacĩ, ng'ondũ ya kĩondo, ũrũti, rumuri, mucigiri, coco, ng'ondu ya kĩanda, and muhoroha"*. The wife would fetch a large and a small gourd of water, and some large banana leaves (Leakey, 1977:1257-1260)

The medicine man then called for the animal which the husband had selected for slaughter and he anointed its nose and forehead with *ũũmũ* and *ng'ondũ* powder mixed with oil. He then made the man, his wife and his children who normally slept in the woman's hut sit down in front of the hut. He then went ahead and led the animal for slaughter round the group four times, twice clockwise and twice anticlockwise, and as he did this he made the husband and wife to rub their foreheads against the animal's nose to associate the animal that was to be killed with themselves. After this, the animal was taken away to be slaughtered by elders. While this was being done, the medicine man performed a preliminary ceremony of causing the man and the woman to vomit the *thahu* using only a mixture of water and the five magical powders "*ũũmu, mũcanjamũka, rũthuko, kĩnoria*, and *ng'ondũ"*. The water was mixed with all these ingredients in a small hole in the ground lined with a banana leaf, and the medicine man used only bunches of twigs to put to the lips of those he was purifying in this preliminary way and did not use the sheep's foot or the third chamber of the stomach. This having been done, the medicine man prepared himself for the second and the major part of purification (Leakey, 1977:1257-1260).

The medicine man asked for a large cooking pot and instructed the woman to bring out some stones, make a hearth in the courtyard in front of her hut, light a fire and set the pot over it. The medicine man poured a little water into the pot and added the plants collected by the husband earlier, added most of the stomach contents of the animal slaughtered, and some of each of the five magic powders used in the preliminary *ndahĩkio*. The woman and the children were made to sit round the fire and the medicine-man picked the pot from the fire and walked with it round the group once clockwise and once counter-clockwise and put it on the fire saying, "*ndahagĩra thahu ũrĩa ũmũrigicĩte"* (I put the *thahu* that has encircled you in the fire). He then took the pot off the fire again saying, "*ndateng'ũra thahu"* (I take the *thahu* off the fire). The medicine man then repeated the process four times. The meat of the slaughtered animal was set to roast and the rest was taken into the woman's hut and put to boil. While the meat cooked and the contents of the pot with all the plants were boiling, there was a pause to the proceeding. The roasted joints were eaten after which the boiled joints were brought out and the meat and gravy was just tasted and put away. The process of moving and putting back the pot on fire was repeated as before. A large shallow hole was dug near the side of the woman's hut and was lined with banana leaves. The medicine man poured to it the contents of the pot, together with some cold water. The woman and her children young and adults were told to remove all their clothes and wash all over in this bath, using the cooked leaves of the various plants to rub themselves as they did so. While the washing was going on, all the men moved beyond the entrance of the homestead and stood behind them and then proceeded to wipe all of them from head to heel twice and from heel to head twice from the contents in the gourd. He then repeated the process this time from head to toe twice and from toe to head twice. For

this purification, the medicine-man did not use the normal bunch of twigs as used in most of the ceremonies. Instead, he used two bunches, each of which was composed of four leafy twigs, two of *mũgũmo* and two of *mũtei*. After this, the medicine man gave the half-gourd, what was left of the contents and the two bunches of leaves, to the woman and told her to put them in a safe place in her hut until evening. The medicine man then rubbed all of them with *ira* powder and gave them some of the magic powders to swallow and his part of the proceedings was over (Leakey, 1977:1257-1260).

The men's purification was to be done after dark. After the evening meal, the husband was to assemble his wife, all the children that slept in that woman's hut, and the grown up but unmarried daughters and make them stand facing the woman's bed with their backs to the hearth. He then took the half gourd containing the stomach contents, magic powders that were put into the hut earlier and using the two bunches of *mũgũmo* and *mũtei* as earlier, and he wiped his family downwards from head to heel twice and upwards from heel to head twice. He then stood between his family and the entrance of his wife's bed and wiped them from head to toes twice and from toes to head twice. Having done this, the husband untied the two bunches of leaves the twigs of one bunch was placed at the head end of the bed and those of the other at the foot end , so that when the man and the wife next had sexual intercourse, they lay between these two bundles of twigs. The children after that were told to go to their bedroom, and the man and his wife had to have ceremonial sexual intercourse twice as an act of sacrifice to mark the end of the purification (Leakey, 1977:1257-1260).

2.4 Conclusion

The chapter examined the *Agĩkũyũ* community, their tribal organization, their concepts of God and sin, it is clear that they were a well-organized community who loved peace and whose existence was deeply rooted in the principle of love and community living. As Leakey writes "It is commonly believed among those who know nothing of African people, that the so called 'primitive' tribes lead a simple life…the life of the individual before European contact was first as complex as that of any-so-called civilized persons, even if the complexity was of a different type" (Leakey, 1977:1).

The idea of community living and unity in the family was well founded on traditional principles and safe guarded by rights, laws and sanctions. Anyone who went against the community by breaking these laws faced sanctions that were put in place by the community. The process of reconciliation of a person who had gone against the laws of the community was not an individual's affair but a communal affair and rather quite expensive. This was an expensive affair in that the penalties which had been put in place affected not only the offender but his family as well.

Gũtahĩkio and the manner in which it was done and for the purpose which it was done reflect an even deeper philosophy of the *Agĩkũyũ* people. Finding parallels in the Old Testament, sin among the community will be punished if not atoned for. The breaking of social laws and customs resulted into *thahu* which had to be removed else death would take place. The use of an animal or parts of an animal was to cover or wipe away the wrong that the individual or individuals had committed. Symbolically, the animal represented the wrong doing or the breaking of the law and by the medicine man throwing

away parts of the body over his shoulder, and putting parts of the animal on fire then removing them symbolically meant that the *thahu* of the people had been throw away or burnt away making the individual pure again and free from the guilt that had taken them over. Besides the fact that *gũtahĩkia* saved people from death and destruction, it was such an elaborate process that many people would rather avoid breaking the social laws and customs rather than get subjected to the process in the first place.

CHAPTER THREE: THE DOCTRINE OF ATONEMENT

Introduction

Over the years, Christianity has struggled with attempts to make sense out of the death of Christ. These struggles have given birth to theories or attempts to explain the meaning and the purpose of Christ's death and how humanity is to understand it. This chapter looks at these attempts to understand how God reveals himself through Christ's death. The Chapter attempts to demonstrate how the death of Christ is understood as the ultimate sacrifice needed for the salvation of humanity and show how this understanding can be used to explain the efficacy of the death of Christ on the cross to the *Agikuyu* Christians. The chapter will look at the Old Testament view of atonement and the paradigm shift on atonement in the New Testament. It is important to note that there is not one theory that sufficiently accounts for the death of Christ on the cross. Some theories focus on the Objective nature of atonement while others focus on the subjective nature of the atonement. The second part of this chapter therefore will survey a few selected theories of atonement which have been used to explain the death of Christ on the cross both on the objective and subjective natures of atonement.

3.1 The Old Testament Concept of Sin

Leopold Sabourin (1998) writes that sin is an act of humanity by which they disobeys God when they transgress a precept of God Himself. Sabourin further writes that besides this external act of disobedience, explicit mention is made of an internal act, from which the external act proceeds. Looking at the account of the fall in Genesis 3, Sabourin argues that the first sin is considered as a rebellion of humanity against the supreme dominion of God

as a sin of pride (Sabourin, 1998:5). Sabourin notes that there are three principal Hebrew terms that are used to designate sin in the OT. The first is *hata,* which means to miss the target. The term is used either absolutely or in relation to the person against whom one sins. The other one *awon* which signifies sin against Gog and his law as well as the iniquity and guilt which result from it and the last one is *bazah* which designate sin inasmuch as it expresses contempt of God (Sabourin, 1998:13).

Sammy Githuku (2012) writes that in the OT, sin is personal and the result of a conscious decision. He argues that animals do not sin because they are not free to choose good or evil. He notes that sin in the OT is more than just a wrong or a harmful act but rather involves the whole person, their flesh, spirit, heart and soul. It has a physical and mental dimension. He argues that there were no distinctions made between ritual, moral sin and the tribal custom. He notes that at this early stage of the history of the Israelites, sin was a breach of the customary law. He uses the example of (Genesis 20:9) on Abimelech and Abraham where Abimelech is accused of breaking a traditional custom. This is expressed through the phrase, "what have you done to us?" Githuku notes that the customs laid by the Israelites were sometimes expressed in formulas such as "things not to be done" as found in Leviticus 4:2, 13). Githuku further argues that morality was largely a tribal custom and sin was a violation of tribal custom. Morality was enforced by influence exacted by the entire faction on the individual by way of applying prohibitions. This therefore means that sin involved performance or neglecting of certain community described acts (Githuku, 2012:98-99).

3.2 Old Testament View of Atonement

(C. L. Mitton, 1962) writes that the English word "atone" is derived from the phrase "at one". To be "at one" with someone is to be in a harmonious personal relationship with them. Mitton argues that atonement originally meant "at onement" or reconciliation. "To atone for" a wrong is to take some action which cancels out the ill effects it has had. In modern usage atonement "is the process by which obstacles to reconciliation between man and God are removed" (Mitton, 1962:309). Goldingay, (1995) notes that the word atonement suggests reconciliation in general and the New Testament has a variety of images or models for expressing how reconciliation comes about and how atonement works (Goldingay, 1995:3). Likewise, L. L Morris (1996) writes that the word atonement means "a making at one" and points to a process of bringing those who are estranged to a unity. Atonement denotes the work of Christ in dealing with the problem posed by the sin of man, and in bringing sinners into right relations with God (Morris, 1996:102).

The expression 'make atonement' is frequent in Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers but rare in the rest of the Bible. (L.L. Morris, 2001) writes that the need for atonement arrives from the sinfulness of human kind, "a truth made plain throughout scripture but infrequent outside the Bible". In the Old Testament sin is dealt with by the offering of sacrifice thus, the burnt offering will be accepted to make atonement (Lev 1:4) as also the sin offering and guilt offering and especially the sacrifices on the Day of Atonement. Throughout the Old Testament, sin is serious; it will be punished unless atonement is sought out in the way God provided. Likewise, this truth is repeated in the New Testament where it is made clear that "all are sinners" (Rom 3:23) and that "hell awaits them" (Mark 9:43). Morris writes

that, “it is just as clear that God wills to bring salvation and that he has brought it in the life, death, resurrection and ascension of his son; reconciliation brought about by the death of Christ” (Morris, 2001:113-114).

3.3 Origin Of Sacrifices In The Old Testament

The idea of sacrifices cuts across the whole bible. In the Old Testament, it is reflected mainly on the Day of Atonement and in the death of Jesus Christ in the New Testament. Fredric Platt (1918) notes that the sacrificial ideas found in the teachings of the apostolic Church cast their roots so deeply in the soil of Old Testament ideas and practices that careful reference to the sacrificial system inherited by apostolic writers from Jewish sources is essential (Platt, 1918:432).

From the earliest times until the destruction of the second temple in AD 70, a dominant element in Hebrew religion was a series of rites and ceremonies, both public and private, in which beasts were dispatched and foodstuff presented to or consumed in the presence of the deity. (T. H. Gaster 1962) writes that “these are commonly styled sacrifices and offerings, the formal distinction being that a sacrifice does involve the slaughter or burning of an animal while an offering does not” (Gaster, 1962:147).

Sacrifices and offerings were supposed to provide God with his necessary food until they became purely symbolic ceremonies. Miller and Miller, (1954) writes that in its original meaning, sacrifice was a “sacred meal eaten either by the deity alone or by both deity and the worshipers together”. He further points out that “the most common and probably primitive sacrifice was the peace offering (*Shelem*) in which the blood of the animal was poured on the altar or on the ground. The fat and other parts were burned on the altar. In

ancient times, probably until the destruction of Jerusalem and the Exile in 587 BC, the family offered sacrifices and the priest participated only in claiming part of the animal and its hind as their compensation when the sacrifice was offered in the temple (Miller, 1954:86).

It is worth mentioning that the Old Testament has no general word for sacrifice except the rather sparsely used *qorban* which is 'brought near' which is particularly confined to the Levitical literature. According to Morris (1966), sacrifice was not confined to Israel among the nations of ancient times, and many parallels from surrounding nations have been adduced in explanation of Israelite sacrifices. Wood argues that it is significant that the first sacrifices mentioned in Genesis were not "*Zebahim"* meals but the gift offerings of Cain and Abel and the burnt offering of Noah in Genesis 8:20 (Morris, 1996:1036).

3.4 What Sacrifices Endeavored To Achieve.

Sacrifices in the Old Testament endeavored to achieve two things, which are Propitiation and Expiation. This section will deal with both propitiation and expiation and will do so drawing to the fact that scholars have differed on the meaning of these two words some arguing for the use of Propitiation or expiation to understand sacrifices and the death of Christ on the cross[5].

[5] C.H. Dodd (1956) notes that, propitiation means the same as appeasement which is trying to get on the right side of someone whom you have offended by special attentions or courtesies. Dodd suggests that this understanding from this translation is misleading. He argues that it is a strange thing that anyone should have thought that God is to be appeased. Dodd suggests that many people have been put off Christianity because it teaches that God needed to be propitiated and that Jesus died to appease his anger. Dodd argues that the translation of 1John 2:2 that "He is the propitiation for our sins…and the sins of the whole world" is a misleading translation that needs to be relooked at. Dodd appreciates the use of the word expiation instead which is a means of removing some taints or defilement or corruption. He terms expiation as a kind of a moral or a spiritual disinfectant. He therefore writes that the ideas in 1

3.4.1 Propitiation

Gaster, (1962) writes that "from the earliest times, until the destruction of the second temple in AD 70, a dominant element of Hebrew religion was a series of rites and ceremonies, both public and private; these practices were varied in form, in motivation and in significance" (Gaster, 1962:147). He further notes that some were conceived as the presentation of gifts designed to propitiate God on an outright basis. "Some were payments of tribute due to him as Landlord, King and life giver while some were designed to provide the fare for a common meal by which God and the worshipper might re-cement their ties" (Gaster, 1962:147).

Gaster classifies those sacrifices and offerings according to their respective motivations hence coming up with four classes. These classes are: first there were the gifts and tributes, secondly as a media of nourishment, thirdly as a media of communion and finally the media of expiation (Gaster, 1962:147). Fredric Platt emphasizes the significance of the sacrifices by writing that they marked the intimate relationship between God and his worshipper. The prevailing conception of the significance was that it was a present to God in sign of homage, thanksgiving, desire for communion and divine gift. Hastings further

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John 2:2 is that Christ has done that which cleanses us from something foul and corrupt (Dodd, 1956:327-330). On the other hand, Leon Morris (1983) seems to hold a different opinion from Dodd. While Dodd holds that the translation of the word propitiation is misleading, Morris hold that the meaning of the word propitiation is so important that even if the word or the phrase is lost, the meaning must remain. Morris argues that propitiation means the turning away of anger while expiation is rather that making amends from a wrong. According to Morris, propitiation is a personal world while expiation is an impersonal word. In propitiation, one propitiates a person while in expiation; one expiates a sin or a crime. According to Morris, propitiation means that God is angry when people sin and that if they were to be forgiven, something must be done about the anger and the death of Christ is the means of removing the divine wrath from sinners (Morris, 1983:151-153). Other authors who hold the same opinion as C.H.Dodd include John Stott. Stott (1986) writes that it is difficult to believe that God needed some kind of satisfaction before he was prepared to forgive. He refutes the idea that Jesus Christ provided the satisfaction by enduring as our substitute the punishment we deserved claiming that such notions are unworthy of the God of Biblical revelation.

writes that “there is little doubt that Israel in all ages believed in the effectiveness of sacrifice to present or restore the favor of Yahweh” (Platt, 1918:432). The specific object of sacrifice was to make a covenant sure and binding by the interchange of blood between the parties to it; half the animal’s victim’s blood was poured upon the altar for God and half sprinkled upon the people (Platt, 1918:432).

The Day of Atonement according to K.L Mckay (1962) “served as a reminder that the daily, weekly and monthly sacrifices made at the altar of burnt offering were not sufficient to atone for sin. Even at the altar of burnt offering the worshipper stood a far off, unable to approach the holy presence of God who was manifest between the Cherubim and the Holy of Holies”(Mckay, 1962:111). The high priest made atonement for all the iniquities of the children of Israel and all their transgressions in all their sins (Mckay, 1962:110). During this day, the high priest offered a bullock as a sin offering for himself and the priesthood, after the bullock offering, the high priest then sacrificed a he-goat as a sin offering for the people. After purifying the Holy place and the altar of burnt offering with the mingled blood of the bullock and the goat, the high priest took a second goat referred to as the scapegoat, laid his hands upon its head, and confessed over it the sins of Israel. The scapegoat was then driven into the desert, where it symbolically carried away the sins of the people (Mckay, 1962:111).

3.4.2 Expiation

Mckay (1962) writes that the often stated purpose of the sacrifices in Leviticus is to atone, to cover, to wipe away or to ransom by a substitute. The ransom by a substitute seems most in keeping with the theory of sacrifice given in Lev 17:11. The life of the flesh is in the

blood. It is the blood that makes atonement for the soul. Douglas writes that "the sacrifices are to be seen as operating within the sphere of the covenant and covenanting grace. They were not man's expedient for his own redemption but were the fruit of grace; not its roots" (Mckay, 1962:1120-1121).

Gaster argues that if the sacrifices of the bull and the goat effected the removal of Israel's pollution of its cult forms, the rite of the scapegoat serves to remove the guilt resting on the people themselves. The people participated in the scapegoat's departure, pulling out its wool, pricking it, spitting on it and urging it to be gone. Gaster further notes that after performing this rite, the Day of Atonement ended and people went back home dancing and rejoicing. This was the moment when the words of Ps 103:12 "As far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgression from us", were applicable. It is evident that the Day of Atonement was a tremendous moment of renewal that permeated all Israel and unified it in a solemn joy (Gaster, 1962:316).

Freedman, (2000) writes that "after the scapegoat had carried with it the systematic structural and personal sin of the people into the wilderness, the atonement of the people was complete for one year. As a result of this, both communal and personal Shalom was restored". Freedman emphasizes on the importance of the Day of Atonement by writing that it would become the annual high point in early Jewish spiritual renewal and remains so (Freedman, 2000:129).

3.5 New Testament View Of Atonement

Even though the word atonement does not occur in the New Testament, the meaning behind the word is constantly present. Gaster writes that "in the New Testament however, it is no longer associated with the temple sacrifices, still less with payment of money, or incense, or even prayers". He suggests that it is entirely related to Jesus and his coming to earth and especially with his death upon the cross. He goes on to explain that the New Testament declares that in Christ and his death is all that man needs in order to find his sins forgiven and his life reconciled to God. In Him is "what can cancel out the ill effects of sin, release man from the burden of its guilt, and grant him peace with God" (Gaster, 1962:311).

Migliore, (2004) writes that the scriptures unanimously affirm that the death of Jesus was for us, for our sins, for many, and for the world. Christ died for our sins in accordance to the scriptures. In seeking to emphasize the cross Migliore asks, "Is there a way of understanding the confession of Christ crucified for us that speaks with particular directness to our own times?" Migliore suggests that perhaps the primary reason we have such difficulty in making sense of the death of Jesus for us is that it was an event of violence. He argues that "worshippers in many Churches have become accustomed to gilded and bejeweled crosses skillfully disguising the violence that was present in Christ's death for us. In hiding the violence of the event that stands at the center of the gospel drama, we turn the costly message of the love of God into a sentimental fairy tale, or a symbol of domination or some other distortion of its true meaning" (Migliore, 2004:187-188).

Freedman writes that Christ's sacrifice is understood in terms of expiation, the cancelling of guilt and cleansing of sin once and for all. The book of Hebrews highlights Christ's perfect sacrifice for sin and adopts the superiority of his blood over animal blood. He writes that "this was the ideal, complete- all-encompassing sacrifice accomplishing what the Old Testament sacrifices could not; one sacrifice for sins for all times" (Freedman, 2000:128).

Mckay (1962) explains that the epistle to the Hebrews interprets the ritual of the Day of Atonement as a type of the atoning work of Christ, emphasizing the perfection of the latter by contrast with the inadequacy of the former. Jesus himself is termed our great high priest and the bloodshed on Calvary is seen as "typified in the blood of bulls and goats". Mckay (1962) all the same seems to contrast Christ's priesthood and the Old Testament priesthood by writing that "the sinless Christ did not have to make sacrifice for any sin of his own". He further writes that in the Old Testament, "the high priest had to offer sin offering each year for his own sins and the sins of the people. This annual repetition of the sacrifices served as a reminder that perfect atonement had not yet been provided", but according to Mckay, "Jesus through his own blood effected eternal redemption for his people". The prerequisite for fellowship with God according to Mckay is the inward cleansing of a person. He further notes that "the Levitical offering could only ceremonially cleanse the sinner and only affects the purification of the flesh but the better sacrifice of Jesus cleanses the conscience from dead works" (Mckay, 1962:107).

3.6 How Christ's Death Was Interpreted As An Atonement

The New Testament takes the line that the sacrifices of old were not the root cause of the putting away of sins. Mckay (1962) writes that "redemption is to be obtained even of the transgressions that were under the first Testament only by the death of Christ (Heb 9:15)". The cross is absolutely central to the New Testament, and indeed, to the whole Bible. Mckay argues that "All before leads to it and all after look back to it. Atonement proceeds from the love of God". The atonement shows us the love of the Father first as it does the love of the Son. This becomes clear to us when Paul says that God commanded his own love towards us, in that "when we were yet sinners, Christ died for us (Rom 5:8)". Mckay therefore sheds light that "the death of Christ was not an accident but rather was rooted in a compelling divine necessity" for as Paul writes, "it was by the grace of God that Christ tasted of death for us all" (Heb 2:9). Mckay further argues that "the death of Christ is a death of sin. It is not simply that certain wicked men rose up against Him nor is it that His enemies conspired against Him, and that he was not able to resist them. He was delivered for our offences; He came specifically to die for our sins. His blood was shed for many for the remission of sins (Mat 26:28)". Mckay puts it that the cross of Christ will never be understood unless it is seen that thereon the savior was dealing with the sins of all humankind. Mckay explains that Jesus Himself referred to His blood as blood of the covenant which points us to the sacrificial rites for its understanding in Mark 14:24. Paul writes that "Christ has loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God (Eph. 1:2)" and in 1 Cor. 7 refers to Christ's death as a specific sacrifice by writing that "for even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us". Peter likewise speaks of the precious blood of Christ, "as of a lamb without blemish and without spot (1 Pet 1:19)"

which indicates that in all aspect Christ's death was a sacrifice. The death of Christ is viewed as a representative one. It is not that Christ died and somehow the benefits of death became available to men, but it is rather that he died specifically for us. He was our representative as he hung on the cross. He further argues that "the death of the representative counts as the death of those He represents. In His death, He took our place, and His holy soul shrank from his identification with sinners" (Mckay, 1962:108-109).

Young, (1975) discusses that in the Epistle to the Hebrews, we find the idea that the whole Old Testament sacrificial law had been fulfilled and annulled by the sacrifice of Christ. He notes that all interpretations of Christ's death as sacrificial were at first very closely associated with interpretation of the Old Testament, which was seen as prophecy and foreshadowing of Christ. He goes on to say that Christ is understood as "the true High Priest who entered heaven itself, the true Holy of Holies, and sprinkled his own blood there, performing a single effective act of purification hence fulfilling the Old Day of Atonement, and also surpassed and annulled it, being a far more effective means of dealing with sin" (Young, 1975:65-87). Young further writes that the sacrificial blood required no further rationale or justification. God has given them the blood upon the altar to make atonement for their souls. Christians first accepted this from the Old Testament scriptures, and saw the blood of Christ as "the new God-given means of expiation, God's way of dealing with sin" (Young, 1975:65-87). The sacrifice of Christ in Young's view was interpreted as necessarily involving the objective type of atonement; it was understood to imply the offering of suitable compensation to God for the sins of man, as a means of propitiation to the wrath of God (Young, 1975:65-87).

Newbigin, (1956) infers that “at the Last Supper, after Jesus had given bread to His disciples and also gave them the cup, he said, “This is my blood of the covenant which is shed for many” He argues that there is too little doubt that the blood of the covenant refers to the giving of the covenant on Mount Sinai in the time of Moses. The meaning of Jesus' words seems to be that “in the same way by the offering up of His life in sacrifice, a new covenant between God and man was inaugurated. These words of Jesus show that He regarded His death as a sacrifice which like the ancient sacrifices was intended to make atonement between God and man” (Newbegin, 1956: 66-67).

Gaster argues that Atonement is related entirely to Jesus Christ and his coming to earth, and especially with his death upon the cross. The words which were used to describe the death of Jesus were largely drawn from the familiar practice of sacrifice, partly because in this, there was a language that all would understand. The New Testament declares that in Christ’s death is all that man need in order to find his sins forgiven and his life reconciled to God (Gaster, 1962:311). “Old Testament sacrificial language is the origin of speaking of Christ’s blood, which like the Old Testament expiatory rites is poured out for the forgiveness of sins. The interpretation of Jesus’ death as an expiatory death has found here a visible expression which later had a strong influence, especially in the various forms of mystical union with Christ” (Gaster, 1962:807).

Likewise, McClendon and Murphy, (1994) puts his argument across that “the New Testament is so saturated with the Old Testament that it can hardly be read alone and it is much less understood without the Old Testament”. He further writes that “the New Testament understanding of the savior and the cross is truly novel; there is no single Old

Testament motif that fully prepares us for it…there was no expectation of Christ in scripture that could have enabled even the keenest Hebrew reader concretely to foretell Jesus ministry, his suffering, his death and his resurrection." (McClendon, 1994:216)

3.6.1 Theories Of Atonement

In this section, the study will survey a few selected theories of atonement for the purposes of showing how the death of Christ on the cross has been interpreted over the years. These theories will aid the *Agikuyu* Christians in understanding the efficacy of the death of Christ on the cross and how Christ's sacrifice supersedes all other sacrifices given by man to God.

On Atonement, Gustaf Aulen (1931) writes that the Church did not have a developed doctrine of the Atonement as we know it today. The forms of contribution made during the patristic period to theology were different. The concerns according to Aulen at the time were Christology and the doctrine of Trinity. He argues that the beginning of the thought-out doctrine of the atonement is found in Anselm of Canterbury. Anselm developed the theory of satisfaction in the *Cur dues Homo,* and through it taught of a deliverance from the guilt of sin. He taught an objective atonement according to which God is the object of Christ's atoning work and is reconciled through the satisfaction made to His justice. Aulen further notes that Anselm and Peter Abelard are often contrasted as the authors who respectively taught of the objective and subjective doctrines of atonement. The subjective doctrines of the atonement explains the atonement consisting essentially in a change taking place in men rather than a changed attitude on the part of God (Aulen,1931:2-3).

3.6.2.1 The Satisfaction Theory Of Anselm

(St. Anselm, (1962) is engaged in an intellectual argument between Boso and himself. Boso takes the place of the infidels and asks questions on the Christian faith and Anselm defends the Christian faith through his answers. Boso asks him the question of why God who is omnipotent should have assumed the littleness and weakness of human nature in order to save man. Boso starts the argument by raising the ridicule the Christian faith faces since they claim that Christ was born of a virgin, a woman and that he was born, raised and lived a normal human life and that he experienced a lot of things that were incompatible with deity like, hunger, thirst etc. In the defense of this position, Anselm argues that for as death came upon the human race by disobedience of man, it was fitting that by man's obedience life be restored and as sin had its origin from a woman hence the author of our salvation was to be born of a woman (Book One, Chapter II, Paragraph 1) here after quoted as (1:2:1).

Boso makes a follow up and asks what condition or evidence could be used to convince the non-believers that God chose to suffer and go through all that he went through. He brings about the analogy of a painter who paints a picture and selects something substantial to paint upon for the picture to remain. In his response, Anselm argues that it is reason enough to see that God considered that the work he had done to create the human being should not go into ruins and that for the work of salvation to take effect, the human race needed to be delivered by their creator himself. Anselm also responded to Boso's inquiry of why God would not have used another man or angel to save humanity by responding that if that happened, man then would have been a servant of a being who was not God (1:5:1-2).

Boso raises questions around the attributes of God and how the infidels find it contradicting that God, who created by a simple command, would not save man from his own wrath by a simple command. Boso also raises the question of why God would raise a contest between himself and the devil while the devil himself and man all existed because he willed they do. On this, Anselm refers to the will of God by arguing that it ought to be a sufficient reason for us, when he does anything though we cannot see why, for his will is never irrational (1:7:1)

The other question that Boso asks is how the death of the Son can be proved reasonable and necessary. He raises the question of why God could not save man in some other way. He claimed it is a strange thing that God delights in the blood of the innocent that he neither chooses, nor is able to spare the guilty without the sacrifice of the innocent. Anselm explains to Boso the debt which man owes God which is His honor. He claims that to sin is not to render God his due. He follows this by arguing that man owes God a debt of honor and which he requires of us. Anselm holds that "he, who does not render this honor which is due to God, robs God of his own and dishonors him hence this is sin. Everyone who sins ought to pay back the honor of which he has robbed God and this according to Anselm is the satisfaction which every sinner owes God" (1:11:1).

He writes further on the honor of God in chapter XIII and claims that the honor of God taken away must be repaid or punishment must follow. If this does not take place, then either God will not be just to himself or he will be weak in respect to both parties. Boso further asks the question that God ought to sustain his own honor, why then does he allow it to be violated in the first place? Anselm answers him by arguing that no one can honor

or dishonor God as He is Himself, but points to the fact that the creature as far as he is concerned, appears to do this when he submits or opposes his will to the will of God (1:16:1-2).

In chapter XIX, Anselm addresses the question of how man cannot be saved without satisfaction for sin. When man falls into sins, Anselm argues that it is unfit of God to restore man stained with the defilement of sin, unwashed, that is without any satisfaction. Anselm therefore argues that, without satisfaction, that is, without voluntary payment of the debt, God can neither pass by the sin unpunished; neither can the sinner attain that happiness which he had before he sinned (1:19:8).

Anselm argues that man is of himself unable to accomplish satisfaction for his own sin. He argues that, due to the fallen nature of man, he cannot receive from God what God designed to give him unless he returns to God everything which he took from him, so that as from man God suffered loss, by man, also He might recover His loss. Anselm then argues that this can only be effected in the way that, as it is with the fall of man all human nature was corrupted and tainted with sin, so by man's victory, as many men may be justified from sin as are needed to complete the number which man was made to fill. But a sinner cannot justify a sinner (1:24:2).

Anselm holds that no being except God-man, can make the atonement by which man is saved. He claims that this cannot be effected except the price paid to God for the sin of man be something greater than all the universe besides God. He further argues that it is necessary that whoever can give God anything of his own which is more valuable than all things in the possession of God must be greater than all else but God himself, therefore

Anselm from this makes an inference that none but God can make this satisfaction (2:6:4). But he further argues that none but man ought to do this, otherwise man does not make the satisfaction. He therefore concludes that for man to be restored to the heavenly glory, the satisfaction had to be made which none but God can make, and none but man ought to make, it is necessary for the God-man to make it (2:6:4). Anselm proposes that the human and divine nature cannot be produced by a change from one into the other nor by a combination of both to result to a third nature. It is necessary that the same being should be perfect God and perfect man in order to make the atonement (2:7:1).

In this theory therefore, Anselm stressed the absolute necessity of the atonement by grounding it in the very nature of God. He argues that sin consists in the creature's withholding from God the honor which is His due. By the sin of man, God was robbed of his honor, and it was necessarily that this should be vindicated. This could be achieved in either two ways: by punishment or by satisfaction. The mercy of God prompted Him to seek it in the way of satisfaction and more particularly through the gift of his Son which was the only way since an infinite satisfaction was required (Berkhof, 1958:385).

3.6.2.2 Athanasius: The Physical Theory

Athanasius, (1944) in his treatise *De-incarnatione verbi Dei* begins with a question on the atonement; why the Word of the Father, so great and so high has been made manifest in bodily form. He notes that Christ has been manifested in a human body for one reason only which is out of the love and goodness of His Father, for the salvation of us men. He notes that there is no inconsistency between creation and salvation for God has used the same agent for both that is the Word. The author shifts focus on the creation and its nature and

notes that many people have different views of the making of the universe and the creation of all things. For the Epicureans, they held that things were created haphazardly without order. Athanasius critics this view by stating that should this have been the case, all things would be the same in the universe e.g. the whole body would be an eye (Athanasius, 1944:26)

Athanasius notes that the creator made all things out of nothing through his Word, our Lord Jesus Christ and of these entire he reserved especial mercy for the race of men who are the impress of His own image. God secured this grace by making it conditional by making a law and a place. The author connects the story of creation and fall with atonement by stating that it was our sorry case that caused the word to come down, our transgression that called out His love for us. Man having fallen, Athanasius notes that the presence and love of the Word had called them into beings inevitably, when they lost the knowledge of God, they lost existence with it; for it is God alone who exists, evil is non-being, the negation and antithesis of good (Athanasius, 1944:28)

The Divine Dilemma and Its Ssolution In The incarnation

Athanasius argues that due to the state of sinfulness and corruption of humanity, it was unworthy of the goodness of God that creatures made by Him, should be brought to nothing through the deceit brought upon humanity by the devil. It was impossible then that God should leave humanity to be carried off by corruption; because it would be unfitting and unworthy of Himself having created human beings neither could He falsify Himself by taking back His word on death. According to him, suggesting repentance for humanity is not enough since humanity had totally fallen and became corrupt. He therefore notes that it

is only the Word who would provide the needed grace and such recall as we required, who also in the beginning had made all things out of nothing (Athanasius, 1944:32).

Athanasius further argues that it was the part of Christ and Him alone, both to bring again the corruptible to incorruption and to maintain for the Father His consistency of Christians with all. For this purpose therefore, the incorporeal and incorruptible and immaterial Word of God entered our world. Thus taking a body like our own, because all our bodies were liable to the corruption of death, He surrendered His body to death instead of all, and offered it to the Father. He assumed a body capable of death in order that it, through belonging to the Word who is above all, might become in dying a sufficient exchange for all and itself remaining incorruptible through His dwelling and puts an end to corruption for all others as well by the resurrection, the solidarity of mankind is such that, by virtue of the Word indwelling in a single human body, the corruption which goes with death has lost His power over all (Athanasius, 1944:33).

He notes that through the sacrifice of His own body, Christ put an end to the law of death which barred our way and He made a new beginning of life for us, by giving us the hope of resurrection. By man, death has gained its power over humanity; by the Word; death has been destroyed and life raised up a new. Besides the Word, God also provided the works of creation as a means by which the maker might be known, the Law and prophets. The word of God came in his own person because it was He alone, the image of the Father, who could recreate humanity made after the image(Athanasius, 1944:37).

The Death of Christ

Athanasius notes that God the Word revealed Himself to humanity through his works. Only the image of the father could recreate the likeness of the image in human beings, that none other than our Lord Jesus Christ could give to mortals immortality and that only the Word who orders all things and is alone the father's true and sole begotten son could teach humanity about Him and abolish the worship of idols. Through the death of Christ, two opposite marvels took place at once; the death of all was consummated in the Lord's body yet because of the Word was in it, death and corruption were in the same act utterly abolished. The death of human beings under ordinary circumstances is the result of their natural weaknesses. The author notes that the supreme objective of Christ coming was to bring about the resurrection of the body(Athanasius, 1944:49)

The Resurrection

On the resurrection of the Word, Athanasius notes that the resurrection did not happen immediately rest people think that the body of Christ was not totally dead neither did it take too long rest people think it's a difference body or they may forget. A strong proof of the destruction of death and its conquest is shown by the disciples who no longer fear death as before. People are no longer pitiful of those dying since they will not perish. Death has become weak and is now mocked on. It would be absurd to say that the evil spirits whom he drives out are alive but he who drives out and destroys and whom they themselves acknowledge to be son of God, is dead (Athanasius, 1944:56).

3.6.2.3 The Moral Influence Theory

This theory was first advocated by Peter Abelard a French theologian. The moral influence theory of the atonement holds that God did not require the payment of the penalty for sin but that Christ's death was simply a way in which God showed how much he loved human beings by identifying with their suffering even to the point of death. Christ's death therefore becomes a great teaching example that shows God's love to us and draws from us a great response, so that in loving him we are forgiven (Grudem 1954:581). The theory maintains that the love of God displayed on the cross overwhelms the sinner's hostility and persuades them to repent and be reconciled to God. The sufferings of the innocent Christ on the cross stirs sinners to love the one who so manifestly loves them and that people are saved by the compelling power of God's self-giving love (Lewis & Darmarest 1987; 374). Gustaf Aulen (1931) argues that Abelard attacked the imagery of the classic idea of the atonement and its dualistic outlook. The theory also attacked Anselm's satisfaction theory. In this theory, Abelard refused to allow the idea of atonement to be associated with the devil. He attempted to prove the impossibility of the idea of satisfaction. He argued that if Adams lesser faults demanded for such satisfaction, how much more satisfaction would be required for the sins committed against Christ? Abelard's argument therefore was that Christ is the greater teacher and example that arouses responsive love in human beings and this love is the basis on which reconciliation and forgiveness are founded (Aulen, 1931:95-96).

3.6.2.4 The Example Theory

This theory was advocated by the Socianians in the sixteenth century, in opposition to the doctrine of the reformers, that Christ vicariously atoned for the sin of mankind. Its fundamental principles are that there is the retribution justice in God which requires absolutely and inexorably that sin be punished. This theory holds that the death of Christ did not atone for sin; neither did it move God to pardon sin. Rather, Christ saves men by revealing to them the way of faith and obedience as the way of eternal life; by giving them an example of true obedience both in His life and in His death, and by inspiring them to lead a similar life. The view establishes no direct connection between the death of Christ and the salvation of sinners. Yet the theory holds that the death of Christ may be said to expiate the sins of man in view of the fact that Christ, as a reward for His obedience unto death received power to bestow eternal life on believers (Berkhof 1958:387).

3.6.2.5 The Government Theory

Wayne Grudem (1994) writes that this theory of atonement was first taught by a Dutch theologian and jurist, Hugo Grotius (1583-1645). According to Grotius, God did not actually have to require payment of sin, but since he was an omnipotent God, He could have set aside that requirement and simply forgiven sins without the payment of a penalty. The theory therefore holds that the purpose of Christ's death was God's demonstration of the fact that his law had been broken and that some kind of penalty would be required whenever his laws were broken. This therefore means that Christ did not exactly pay the penalty for the actual sins of any people, but simply suffered to show that when God's laws are broken, there must be some penalty paid (Grudem 1994:582). Lewis & Darmarest (1987) argue that the punishment inflicted on Christ is exemplary in that it communicates

God's hatred of sin and strikes fear into the hearts of people so that they will forsake evil and seek personal reformation. The main emphasis of the atonement is subjective; Christ's death motivates sinners to repent of their sins and reform their lives (Lewis & Darmarest 1987:376).

3.7 Conclusion

Having looked at atonement both in the Old Testament and the New Testament, it is clear that the two Testaments interact. The attempt to understand atonement in the New Testament is faced with a number of challenges. Authors such as Mckay and McClendon's argument hold that the New Testament has heavily borrowed from the Old Testament as far as the language used in atonement is concerned. This therefore raises a challenge for the study whether the atonement as has been presented in the New Testament is able to achieve both propitiation and expiation for the people bearing in mind that it deviates from the Old Testament version in which real goats were sacrificed; one providing for expiation and another for propitiation in which people were psychologically convinced that their sins had been taken away from them.

The diverse arguments that have been developed in the theories above and throughout these periods can only mean one thing to us; That there is not one view that can be used to exhaustively account for the purpose of the death of Christ on the cross. Each theory seems to have enough justification to its argument or views. The theories are not without weaknesses. Some have focused on the objective nature of atonement at the expense of the subjective nature of atonement. This therefore makes it very hard for Christians to understand the doctrine of atonement and what Christ's death achieves for them. By some

of these theories denying the death of Christ as expiatory for our sins, and by claiming that Christ did not die for our sins, Christians are left in a state of confusion. Christ's life on earth had more than one dimension. If the role he played in saving humankind from sin is to be understood, then one must look at the life, ministry, passion, death and the resurrection of Christ as sacrificial. All the offices that Christ held have something to offer toward the salvation of all humankind. The death of Christ on the cross is the climax of the sacrifice that He made that offers total assurance of salvation and expiation for our guilt.

CHAPTER FOUR: TOWARDS AN *AGĨKŨYŨ* THEOLOGY OF ATONEMENT

Introduction

In Chapter Two, we demonstrated that the *Agĩkũyũ* people used *gũtahĩkio* to alleviate their anxiety over guilt but since the introduction of Christians' atonement, the *Agĩkũyũ* Christians lack internalization that their of sins are forgiven even after absolution is done. In this Chapter, the study attempts to show how the anxiety that is created among the people for lack of internalization of forgiveness of their sins and removal of their guilt can be eliminated by the use of *analogia entis.* As we have seen in Chapter Two on the ethnography of the *Agĩkũyũ* people, the study has demonstrated that it can borrow from the revelation, the experiences given to humanity to try and understand God or divine mysteries. The study uses the Christian doctrine of atonement to purify *gũtahĩkio* developing a new perspective of understanding for the Christians on the doctrine of Atonement.

4.1 Methodology

The study employs analogia entis as a methodology of likening the *Agĩkũyũ* cultural practice of atonement, *gũtahĩkio* with the Christian doctrine of atonement and especially expiation of the sinner's guilt. The thesis further attempts to infuse the Christian doctrine into the cultural practice- an exercise know as inculturation.

Magesa, (2004) defines Inculturation as

> …The process whereby the faith already embodied in one culture encounters another culture. In this encounter, the faith becomes part and parcel of this new culture. It faces with the new culture and simultaneously transforms it into novel religious-cultural reality. The process involves the interaction of mutual critique and affirmation. It entails acceptance or rejection of thought forms, symbolic and linguistic expression and attitudes between the faith and the cultures in question (Magesa, 2004:17).

Nyamiti (2005) writing on Inculturation and African Christian Theology notes that "African theology is not a new Christian teaching resulting from a sort of combination with incompatible African religious and or cultural elements but it is the very self-same bible and Church teaching presented in accordance with African needs and way of thinking" (Nyamiti, 2005:5).

Waliggo (1986) defines Inculturation as:-

> …The honest and serious attempt to make Christ and his message of salvation evermore understood by peoples of every culture, locality and time. It also means the reformulation of Christian life and doctrine into the very thought patterns of each people; It is the conviction that Christ and his good news are even dynamic and challenging to all times and cultures as they become better understood and lived by each people (Waliggo, 1986:12).

Waliggo further notes that Inculturation "is the continuous effort to make Christianity feel at home in the cultures of each people" (1986:12). He notes that:-

> …the durability of Christian faith in Africa does not depend on networks but the factor which determine whether Christianity stands or falls is whether it has become African; whether Africans have made Christian ideas part of their own way of thinking, whether Africans feel the Christian vision of life fulfills their own needs and desires, and whether

> the Christians worldview and thought system has become part and parcel of African desires (Waliggo, 1986:12).

This definition is also shared by Gĩthuku (2012) who notes that the objective of Inculturation is to transform people. It is the effort to root Christianity in the African soul (Gĩthuku, 2012:16).

4.1.1 *Analogia Entis*

Analogia entis is the principle that through what God has created, we can use it to know who God is and His will. It is also allowed for us to use the created order to speak about divine mysteries by way of analogy such that they human language or the created order can be used to speak of Godly divine mysteries analogously (Nyamiti, 2005:32).

On the *analogia entis* and *analogia fidei*, the Vatican I Council notes that:-

> …there is a twofold order of knowledge, distinct not only as regards its source, but also as regards its object. With regard to the source, we know at the one level by natural reason, at the other level by divine faith. With regard to the object, besides those things to which natural reason can attain, there are proposed for our belief mysteries hidden in God which, unless they are divinely revealed, are incapable of being known … Now reason, does indeed when it seeks persistently, piously and soberly, achieve by God's gift some understanding, and that most profitable, of the mysteries, whether by analogy from what it knows naturally, or from the connexion (sic) of these mysteries with one another and with the final end of humanity ("Decrees of the First Vatican Council," n.d.).

The Vatican I council states clearly that it is possible for us to understand Christian mysteries using what has naturally been revealed to us. It notes that while we can understand and get a glimpse of God ontologically, the Vatican Council lays emphasis on how we can functionally understand God and our faith and the other Christian mysteries.

The emphasis is on how we can use general revelation in our quest to understand religion and faith.

The study aimed at making clear the Christian doctrine of expiation from the perspective of the understanding of *gũtahĩkio,* the research aimed at developing this understanding by using Inculturation. According to Kiboi (2017), for one to achieve the process of Inculturation, *Noetic* or the ontological approach is used. He notes that in this Noetic approach lays two approaches to how God reveals himself to humanity. These are *analogia fidei and analogia entis. Analogia fidei* is God revealing himself to humanity. It can also follow that during creation, God implanted his image in the humanity as a means towards knowing him. Kiboi argues that the *Imago Dei* in which humanity was created was a means by which God revealed himself to humanity. This did not come to fruition due to the fall which made it difficult for humanity to come to a true knowledge of God. Despite God providing prophets, priest and Kings, humanity still fell short since some of the Prophets, Priests and Kings were killed or venerated in the place of God. As a result of this, God incarnated into human and came to reveal Himself to humanity (Kiboi, 2017:187). This is the nature of *analogia fidei* or the ontological approach.

On the *analogia entis* which this study employed, Kiboi notes that God provides humanity with the gift of reason to use to infer from the created order, the existence of God which has always happened through the General revelation. Kiboi uses the example of cultural social anthropological data such as the unity of the African family and argues that this can be used to explain the concept of Church as the family of God. This then would mean that the unity of the African family is a revelation of God's nature of existence in his immanent

trinity. He therefore concludes that African cultural categories can be used to explain and understand Christian mysteries such as trinity. This is indeed *analogia entis* (Kiboi, 2017:187).

The other principle that Nyamiti (2005) proposes that can be used in our effort to understand God and the Christian mysteries is the principle of *nexus mysteriorum*. The principle of *nexus mysteriorum* is explained by Nyamiti. The principle holds that:-

> …each of the Christian mysteries is organically connected with all the others in such a way that it is possible to achieve a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of one particular mystery by examining it from the perspective of any other mystery (Nyamiti, 2005:28).

Nyamiti follows his argument by stating that it is possible to construct an African theology of each of the themes or mysteries of the Christian faith on the basis of one particular African theme (Nyamiti, 2005:28).

4.1.2 Its Justification

God himself is the author of Inculturation so to speak. Saldanha (1987) in his book *Inculturation* notes that a greater measure of revelation was achieved by way of incarnation, in Jesus of Nazareth. He writes that "in him we see the fascinating process of critical absorption reaching an important stage. He is God's word and man's response, Word and Event: both deeply embedded in a particular culture and religion". Jesus himself did inculturation. Being a Jew, He frequented the temple and went there to celebrate the Jewish feasts. Saldanha writes that "without condemning the temple and the Sabbath, Jesus

validated them by becoming himself a new temple and the entrance for all people into Gods rest" (Saldanha, 1987:21).

Kiboi (2017) writes that in the principle of *analogia entis,* the language used is just but analogous and its justification is based on the argument that even in the bible and in the Church, the language of analogy is used (Kiboi, 2017:187). On the use of a*nalogia entis*, the New Testament is not short of the use of analogy. In Matthew 6.6, Jesus teaches his disciples to pray and asked them to pray to their Father in heaven, using an image that his disciples were already familiar with- that of a father. Equally, Jesus in Matthew 13: 24-53, 22:1-14 uses parables and likens the kingdom of heaven with things earthly and material, images that his disciples and his audience would relate with (NIV Bible).

Analogia entis has also been used by other authors like Charles Nyamiti whose model is employed in this study. For example, Nyamiti (2005) in his book *Jesus Christ, the Ancestor of Humankind* analogizes Christ with an Africa ancestor and in another book Nyamiti, (2010), *Christ's Ancestral Mediation Through the Church Understood as God's Family* analogizes the Church with an African family as the family of God.

4.1.4 Critique

Nyamiti criticizes functional approach by writing that "our knowledge of God through nature is much inferior when it is compared to the knowledge of God we acquire through supernatural revelation" (2005:34). He claims that:-

> …revelation of faith holds advantages over reason by stating that faith offers a divine guarantee to our affirmations on God discovered by our natural reason, informs us about divine qualities which can never be discovered through our natural reason, enables us to

> know how God exercises his perfection which we know though natural reason and clarifies lesser by the greater instead of using the lesser to clarify the greater:- from our knowledge of God's Fatherhood in the trinity which is the greater, we gain a more enriched idea of a human fatherhood (Nyamiti. 2005:34).

Before the special revelation which allows us to use the ontological approach to understand God, God, must have revealed himself to the people through their experiences and through the general revelation (Romans 1:20). This therefore means that both approaches; functional and ontological can and should be used in our quest to seeking to understand God.

4.1.5 The Process of Inculturation

While this study employed *analogia entis* as its methodology, it is important to outline the explicitation process which was used as explained by Nyamiti. He advises that "while doing theology in Africa, the process to be successful starts with choosing the Christian mystery, the topic or the subject of study. After choosing, one tries to find the appropriate African cultural item or theme which can be used for theological elaboration of the Christian mystery. The step that follows is theological reflection on the meaning of the Christian mystery beginning with the meaning in itself followed by its relevance for our spiritual and material benefits in the light of its African counterpart". This is followed by what Nyamiti refers to as "the intrinsic employment of cultural themes in theology". This according to Nyamiti is:-

> …the identification of the African categories or themes with the Christian elements in order to allow the African theme to enter internally into the theological elaboration of the revealed truth so as to form an organic part of it and thus influence its constitution, presentation, orientation and progress (Nyamiti,2005:22).

Nyamiti writes that the employment of cultural themes involve two steps; “Identification of such themes with Christian mysteries and explicitation of the implications involved in such identifications” (Nyamiti, 2005:22). Identification therefore means that the African category is made to fuse together with the Christian element so as to form one theological entity with it. Such identification is analogical meaning that “the African category will apply to the Christian mystery and to the African reality it designates only by similitude accompanied with many profound differences” (Nyamiti, 2005:22). On the explicitation, Nyamti writes that there are two steps involved which are the comparative approach and creative interpretation (Nyamiti, 2005:22).

The process of comparative approach according to Nyamiti “Involves a close and a detailed analytical study of both the African theme and the Christian mystery to find out their various components as well as the similarities and differences between them”(Nyamiti, 2005:25-27). The process of creative interpretation involves further two steps which are “theological interpretation of the similarities and the differences between the African theme and its Christian counterpart” (Nyamiti, 2005:25-27) and “theological interpretation of the Christian mystery in terms of its African counterpart” (Nyamiti, 2005:25-27). The former is brought about by “showing the theological implications behind the similarities and the differences” (Nyamiti, 2005:25-27) while the later “implies the analogical formulation of the various items in the Christian mystery in terms of the categories or elements found in the African theme” (Nyamiti, 2005:25-27).

4.2 *Agĩkũyũ* Theology Of Expiation

4.2.1 Similarities Between The Christian Atonement And *Gũtahĩkio*

In both ideas of atonement, there is the involvement of a sacrificial animal. In Chapter Three, the sacrificial lamb provided both propitiation and expiation. As a result, the people were redeemed from their sin and guilt by being purified by the High priest and participating in the process themselves. Similarly in Chapter Two, there was the involvement of a sacrificial lamb. The people who had contacted *thahu* would also participate in the process of their own purification as illustrated above. The lamb would be used to remove the *thahu* which can be seen as the equivalent of sin and guilt in the Old Testament and after the purification in both contexts, the people would be restored into a harmonious existence between themselves and God and the community as well.

In both forms of atonement, the theme of washing or sending away is evident. In the Old Testament during the Day of Atonement, the scapegoat was sent away symbolizing the taking away of the sins of the people and their guilt. In the New Testament, the blood of Jesus washes away or cleanses the sins of all of humanity. During *gũtahĩkio*, the process had to be done away from the home and near a river. In fact, the hole where the contents of the sacrificial animal were to be poured was dug at the river bank. This was symbolic since flowing water was seen as pure and as such would wash away the *thahu* of the people being purified.

The sacrifices in all the three accounts were conducted by a high priest or a medicine man. In the Old Testament, it is the High Priest who offered both the sacrifices of propitiation to God as well as the scapegoat that offered expiation for the sins and the guilt of the people. In the New Testament, Jesus Himself is both the High Priest who offers the sacrifice and the victim himself to the father both to propitiate him for the debt that humanity owed him and at the same time forgive humanity from their guilt and sin. Scriptures refer to Christ as the High Priest; Hebrews 4:14-16 states:-

> ..Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need (NIV).

A medicine man among the *Agĩkũyũ* people was a well-respected individual for through him peace, healing and tranquility were achieved in the community. The Medicine man took the role of the High Priest and hence conducted the sacrifices and more often invoked God's blessings or intervention on behalf of individuals, families and the community at large. He was in charge of offering the sacrifices during the ceremonies. These ceremonies were also focused on propitiating the ancestors and God and also reconciliation among the people hence the removal of guilt or strain among them.

Looking at both the concept of sin in the bible and that of the *Agĩkũyũ* people, it is strikingly similar that in both contexts sin is detestable and punishable with death. In most cases, sin and *thahu* were contacted by people who broke the law or the commandments or the customs. The ideas of original sin seem to also appear in both traditions. In the bible, it

is Adam and Eve who sinned and as a result of their sin, death and punishment occurred. But while they were the offenders and by extension all of humanity, it is God who bore the penalty through his death on the cross. This concept or idea is also among the *Agĩkũyũ* people. As discussed earlier, *thahu* grasped new born children and it was possible that a new born would be born with *thahu*. There were also circumstances in which actions of people who were the offenders did not affect them but affected somebody else.

4.2.2 Divergences Between The Christian Atonement And *Gũtahĩkio*.

4.2.2.1 Jesus The High Priest And Sacrificial Lamb

In the New Testament unlike the Old Testament and the concept of Atonement, Jesus Christ Himself is both the High Priest and the sacrificial lamb. As the High Priest, Jesus stands in the gap for all of humanity similar to the high Priests of the Old Testament and the medicine man among the *Agĩkũyũ*. But Jesus Christ was without any sin and hence he did not require a sacrifice for himself.

Whereas Jesus did not need the atonement, the *Agĩkũyũ* celebrants also offered sacrifices for his own sin Jesus like the Old Testament Priest did. His sacrifice was once and for all time. The sacrifice of Jesus on the cross therefore is way superior to what was achieved in the Day of Atonement which was practiced annually or *gũtahĩkio* which took place often. This does not mean that Christ is aloof in the lives of the people he redeemed but he continues his redemptive work in us every day through Him mediating for us and through the works of the Holy Spirit.

The example given of a son who sleeps with his father's wife yet the father contacts the *thahu* because he bore him could be seen as a way God prepared the *Agĩkũyũ* Christians to understand the idea of original sin and as such understand the necessity for atonement. While the father among the people died if not purified in the case above, God still remains supreme and is not subject to death despite bearing the burden and the penalty for our sins.

The office which Christ holds of the High Priest is not limited to place and time but runs from eternity to eternity. Ortlund writes that "Christ's priestly office is referred to as the source of eternal salvation and belonging to the order of Melchizedek which is a perpetual priesthood. Only an endless, heavenly life, achieved by resurrection and exaltation, can result in perpetual priestly ministry and thus eternal salvation" (Ortuland, 2011:753). The High Priests of the Old Testament and the Medicine man among the *Agĩkũyũ* were limited by time in the sense that they died and someone had to take over from them at some point. This is not the case with Christ; Christ is eternal and his sacrifice everlasting.

To understand this difference between Christ's atoning work and that which was achieved through *gũtahĩkio,* it is important to look at who Christ really is. John 1:1-2 states that "in the beginning was the Word and that the Word was with God and the Word was God". It continues that the "Word became flesh and dwelled among us". It is therefore clear that the Word was Christ, who became human, but the same Word was God, hence Christ's sacrifice on the Cross is God sacrificing Himself to redeem his own people from eternal damnation. All the high Priests in the Old Testament, and all the diviners and Medicine men worked on behalf of the people to point them to God Himself. They were not God; they only represented God to the people and intervened on behalf of the people in times of

trouble. The God to whom the High priests of the Old Testament and other prophets pointed to the people was indeed Jesus Christ, the Greatest High Priest, who was without sin or blemish. This therefore means that all other attempts at atoning for the sins and the weaknesses of humanity is inferior to what Christ achieved on the cross on behalf of all humanity. The *Agĩkũyũ gũtahĩkio* pointed to the atonement of Christ that was to come and was not sufficient in itself. Christ's atonement is a perfect *gũtahĩkio* for the *Agĩkũyũ* people.

One might then ask, what is this debt that humanity owed God that is so serious that Christ has to die? And that other sacrifices cannot propitiate or expiate for? Why is the death of Christ this necessary? In fact, why does God have to die? While this was a 'none issue', or questions that did not bother the *Agĩkũyũ* people, it had become a difficult point of discussion for the Christians since they now were transformed by the renewal of their hearts and minds by Jesus Christ, in fact, they confess the risen Christ. Yet, they remained anxious on whether their sins were completely done away with after a mere confession and a Priest's absolution.

St. Athanasius in his work *Deincarnatione Verbi Dei* and Anselm's *Cur Deus Homo* both state that God's intentions at creation are that humanity should live in a state of eternity and happiness in the Garden of Eden. But by humanity choosing to disobey and dishonor God by eating from the tree of life, humanity destroyed this harmonious relationship between themselves and God. By humanity falling into sin, it would either mean that God punishes them with death, which meant eternal damnation, or he forgives them. But then God was faced by the dilemma of if he destroyed humanity by death then it would

challenge his decisions; why create in the first place if you will leave humanity to destruction? But then He would falsify Himself not to punish since He has stated that the wages of Sin is death. Athanasius therefore argues that only man ought to pay the debt that he owed God, but then since man had drifted back to mortality as a result of his sins, he was unable to make the payment. Athanasius therefore argues that only someone or something bigger than all the created order can satisfy God for the wrongs done. Athanasius concludes that only man is supposed to make the satisfaction but only God can make it hence the God/Man relationship and the necessity for incarnation. It is therefore clear that no other sacrifice given or performed other than that of Christ on the cross can satisfy for our sins. The use of Scapegoats and the blood of sacrificed lambs are not enough to expiate for our guilt and propitiate for the wrongs we have done against God.

The resurrection of Christ brings a major difference in as far as sacrifices were concerned. It is in resurrection that the three offices that Christ held are fulfilled, that of a Priest, a King and a Prophet something that is not achieved in the other sacrifices. On the significance of resurrection, Ortlund, (2011) writes that,

> …resurrection was essential to confirm the efficacy of his death, as incarnation had been to prepare for its possibility…has been called the beginning of the new creation, the emergence within history of the life of the world to come…the beginning and the final world order (Ortlund, 2011:750).

Ortlund argues that the best way Christians can make sense of their hope of life eternal is through reflecting on the resurrection for through it, they will be able to see what God will do to the whole of his creation upon the end of times (Ortlund, 2011:750). The sacrifices among the *Agĩkũyũ* people ended at the ceremony and the sacrifice animals' efficacy died

with it. Christ resurrects after the death and with the resurrection came victory over all sins once and for all making His death the ultimate sacrifice.

As earlier mentioned, Jesus Christ as a High Priest was without sin and hence he did not require a sacrifice for himself contrary to what earthly high priests would do. His saving work as the High Priest goes beyond his earthly life to sustaining our lives through his promise to send the Holy Spirit. Ortlund argues that:-

> …Christ's priestly office, like that of OT priests, consists in two components: oblation (or atonement) and intercession… Christ's Priestly ministry is not completed during Christ's earthly life, but continues in its intercessory and representative functions in heaven after his ascension". He further argues that "…not only is Christ's risen and exalted life in heaven necessary for some of his priestly duties, but that it is portrayed in Heb 5:5-10 and 7:16 as the occasion for his appointment to a specific Priestly office, namely, the everlasting, intercessory priesthood typified by Melchizedek, in which office he continually applies the saving benefits of his atoning sacrifice to his people (Ortlund, 2011:752).

It is clear that what Christ achieves with his priestly office is in a different realm, inaccessible to mere human or earthly high priests. His duties extend to heaven, a state not achievable to the mortals or anyone in the created order. As Ortlund argues, "the particular priestly duties associated with Jesus's Melchizedekian office, such a representation and intercession are duties realized in heaven alone" (Ortlund, 2011:754).

Christ's blood supersedes the blood of animals offered by the *Agĩkũyũ* Priests by the fact that his blood is that of the beloved son of God. His once for all time sacrifice supersedes the repetitive sacrifices because his sacrifice was anticipated in the imminent trinity before actualizing it in his earthly historical event at Calvary.

4.2.3 Christ's Death, The Ideal *Gũtahĩkio*

In this study, we have established that God has provided two ways in which humanity can use to know Him. These are the general revelation and the special revelation. Through the general revelation, we have demonstrated that the *Agĩkũyũ* people were able to understand themselves and God as well. There are beliefs, customs and cultural practices that were done that aided this process of understanding God. We have seen that *gũtahĩkio* was such a deeply valued practice at the center of the *Agĩkũyũ* people that they used to alleviate guilt caused by *thahu* and reconcile people back to God and the community. While general revelation has been used to understand God, this understanding is limited and not fully achieved due to the fallen-ness of humanity. General revelation was not adequate since the prophets and the medicine men and the high priests are all human and have also held back by the fall. Romans 3:23 States that, "For all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God". This therefore means that besides the general revelation, the special revelation was needed to restore man back to God. While *gũtahĩkio* played a significant role in expiating for guilt and restoring people into a harmonious coexistence, it is limited in the sense that the medicine man was mere human and what he did was pointing people to Christ who is the ultimate High Priest and the sacrificial lamb. Douglas (1962) writes that "The cross is absolutely central to the New Testament, and indeed, to the whole Bible: All before leads to it and all after look back to it" (Douglas, 1962:108). In the special revelation, it is God Himself through Christ who is reconciling people to Himself and saving them from eternal destruction. This points the *Agĩkũyũ* Christians to understand Christ's death on the cross as the ultimate *gũtahĩkio* since in Him, there is not only alleviation of guilt for a moment but an eternal relationship is established. That to whom the medicine man prayed is Christ

Himself; God with us and the ultimate sacrifice. Nyakiunyu Thuita (Interview) claims that "*thahu* had grasped her for many years until she was baptized and the *thahu* freed her body and she was well again". This demonstrated that despite how much *gũtahĩkio* helped to reconcile and alleviate guilt, it was not an end by itself but Christ's power was still needed to liberate humanity completely.

By using *analogia entis*, we can liken *gũtahĩkio* to Christ's atonement. This does not mean that *gũtahĩkio* is equivalent but that by analogy, we can liken Christ's death or sacrifice with *Agĩkũyũ's gũtahĩkio* and through this analogy, the *Agĩkũyũ* will come to full knowledge of the work of Christ at the cross and the effects it earns for the believer which is expiation and propitiation.

4.3 Conclusion

The study has been able to establish that by using *analogia entis*, it is possible by analogy to use the *Agĩkũyũ gũtahĩkio* to explain the work of Christ of atonement so that the *Agĩkũyũ* can understand Christian atonement better. By this, the *Agĩkũyũ* will come to knowledge of God through the efficacy of the Christian atonement. The study has established that the *Agĩkũyũ* people were not without a revelation, in fact, most of the revelations they had in a sense prepared them to receive the gospel. Some of these concepts include the idea of original sin, which in one way or the other prepared the Christians to understand atonement and the necessity of the death of Christ on the cross. These mutual points of agreement had greatly aided the *Agĩkũyũ* people in receiving the good news. *Gũtahĩkio* was not without limitations and this has given an opportunity to the Christian doctrine of atonement to purify it on those differences pointing the Christians to Christ's sacrifice on the cross as the

ultimate *gũtahĩkio* for them. This therefore clears the anxiety which has bothered the Christians on the forgiveness of their sins and the removal of their guilt since the sacrifice of Christ on the cross should make sense to them as the ultimate *gũtahĩkio* which is done once and for all.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Inference

If God in his wisdom has willed that people should know Him, then he must reveal himself. As such, God has revealed himself to humanity both ontologically and functionally through special and general revelations respectively. By the fact that God has revealed himself, this can only mean that he has put capacity in the human nature for them to understand him. This follows that the interactions and the experiences of the people and the reason of the human mind helps us in understanding God.

But due to human's fallen nature, this understanding is limited and inadequate hence humanity cannot be able to fully comprehend. It is for this reason that by analogy we can talk of God. This means that *guathikio* has some truth for us in knowing God but it does not carry the whole truth. The inadequacy of *gũtahĩkio* to explicitly reveal God is taken up by the Christian doctrine of Christ's atonement and makes God's will of salvation clear to the *Agĩkũyũ*. Therefore, in using *gũtahĩkio* to appropriate the divine revelation (expiation) is only by analogy and not the equivalent or a suitable replacement of the Christian doctrine of atonement.

5.2 Pastoral Implication

God in his wisdom has not only revealed himself to the *Agĩkũyũ* but to all the people of the world. God has put in every community the capacity of knowing and understanding him. The atoning work of Christ on the cross was meant for all of humanity. All people in all communities in the entire world have had revelations that have prepared them to welcome

the good news of our Lord Jesus Christ. These revelations work as *evangeli preparatio* that allows them to welcome Christ into their lives. *Gũtahĩkio* is a demonstration that God did not stay aloof of his people when he created them and provided means for them to know him. Though limited due to the fall of humanity, Christ brings this knowledge to a completion by revealing himself and dying on the cross.

John 3:16 states that "for God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life". The loving of the whole world means that the atoning work of Christ is for all and it transcend race, gender, time and location. The capacity for all to know Christ and whoever chooses to use it comes into full knowledge of God through Jesus Christ. Christ by his death and resurrection wins over death and continues to keep humanity through the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

5.3 Observation And Recommendation

While this study was very informative and revealed priceless truths on how the *Agĩkũyũ* people get to know themselves and God as well, the study stands the risk of localizing theology. Conducting theology for a particular community or a small group of people may lead to a theology that can only benefit that particular people hence not universal. There is need for further study or exploration of how functional theology can be done without necessarily compromising the universality of the gospel and without dismissing the experiences of the people which are important in understanding God.

The *Agĩkũyũ* concept of expiation is very large and this study has not exhausted all aspects of *gũtahĩkio*. The study recommends that further investigations should be carried out to

identify other aspects of *gũtahĩkio* that can be used to enhance the doctrine of atonement and other Christian mysteries since there is an interconnectedness of the mysteries.

Inculturation is an ongoing process and a popular theme in African theological studies. There is a genuine attempt in Africa today to root the gospel in culture. There is need therefore to continue studies in Inculturation with the honest intentions of bringing the gospel and culture together to establish how they can enhance each other.

5.4 Conclusion

In chapter Two, we established that God has revealed himself to the *Agĩkũyũ* people and demonstrated that through this revelation, they had the practice of *gũtahĩkio* which they used to alleviate their guilt and promote community living. In chapter Three, we looked at the Christian doctrine of atonement and demonstrated how Christ's death is to be interpreted and how Christ's sacrifice through his death is the ultimate sacrifice. In chapter four, we demonstrated that there were weaknesses in the cultural custom of *gũtahĩkio* which needed to be corrected using the Christian doctrine of atonement. The study established that for the gospel to take genuine roots among the Africans (*Agĩkũyũ*), some of the Christian mysteries must be expressed using African expressions. The justification of this is that even before the gospel, God had revealed himself to his people through the general revelation (Romans 1:20). This attempt to use *gũtahĩkio* to elucidate the Christian doctrine of atonement has brought about a new understand in theology. The study in this chapter demonstrates how this new theology can be used universally as an evangelistic tool that can be used to alleviate the burden of guilt among Christians.

The study established that, since God had revealed Himself among the *Agĩkũyũ* people and by extension among the Africans before the gospel was introduced to them, some Cultural customs like the one used in this study of *gũtahĩkio* can be used to help the *Agĩkũyũ* people to understand the revealed Christian mysteries. This was achieved by infusing the authentic aspects of *gũtahĩkio* to enhance the Christian doctrine of atonement by using culture, language, expressions and thought forms of the *Agĩkũyũ* people.

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Interviewees

Nyakiunyu Thuita, *Address, Mucharage Village- Othaya Sub-County, Nyeri County* (No Cell phone Number)

Wairimu Gathenya, *Address, Mucharage Village- Othaya Sub-County, Nyeri County*, Cell phone Number – 0702-066 379

Dr. Sammy Githuku, *Address, St. Paul's University, Private Bag, 00217* (No Cell phone Number) – 0720-895 840

Wangari Marianjugu, *Address, Mucharage Village- Othaya Sub-County, Nyeri County*, Cell Phone Number-0725-423700

Maina Gathenya, *Address, Mucharage Village- Othaya Sub-County, Nyeri County*, Cell Phone Number- 0728-315 982

Wachira Ngumi Francis, *Kariko Village-Othaya Sub County, Nyeri County* (No Cell Phone Number)

Apendix 1: Questionnaire

The following questions were asked during the interviews. They were translated into *Gĩkũyũ* to allow for understanding between the interviewer and the interviewees.

1. What is *gũtahĩkio* and how is it done?

2. What made *gũtahĩkio* necessary or what did one do to deserve the process?

3. What is *thahu* and how is it contracted?

4. Who would Contract *thahu*?

5. What were the signs of one who had contracted *thahu?*

6. What did *thahu* do or how did it affect the individuals who had contracted it?

7. What was the process of *gũtahĩkio?*

8. What were the requirements during *gũtahĩkio*?

9. Where did the ceremonies of *gũtahĩkio* take place?

10. Who qualified to perform the ceremony of *gũtahĩkio?*

11. In your view, do you think that cultural customs affect Christianity or the vice versa

12. In your View, do you think that cultural themes can be used to help the *Agĩkũyũ* Christians to understand the revealed Christian Mysteries?

13. Were the rites of passage important and how?