

**AUTHENTICITY OF CHRISTIAN  
CONVERSION IN THE AFRICAN CONTEXT:**

*An investigation on the Rationale for the Hehe to Convert  
to Christianity with Special Reference to the Iringa Diocese  
Of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (1899-1999)*

By

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis contends that Christian conversion in the African context has been authentic because of the translatability of the event of Christ. The event of Christ is defined as the incarnation, the suffering and death on the cross and the sending of the Holy Spirit. Through these events God made the calling of all humanity including Africans, for transformation unto salvation. God is perceived as the originator and the initiator of Christian conversion while human beings and their culture are perceived as the recipients and channels of God's mission.

The combination of the concepts of *preparatio evangelica*, the translatability of the event of Christ and the theology of the cross are the basis of the theological deliberations of this thesis. The thesis contends further that the proclamation of the gospel hence, Christianisation moved together with the wave of modernization.

Due to the continuity of translation, Christianity strengthened its influence and became the Word of God in the Hehe vernacular. In that way Christianity was naturally indigenised and continually contextualised in the Hehe culture and belief thus being deeply entrenched in their daily life and could be rightly described as renewed Hehe (African) Religion. Therefore, the Hehe accepted Christianity because God appeared in the human (Hehe) nature through Jesus Christ and dwelt in the Hehe community and shared everything with them. God through Jesus Christ participated in the daily suffering. He was humiliated and became vulnerable and weak. Through the translation of the Word God was no longer the ineffable beyond. Through the manifestations of the spiritual gifts God remained among the Hehe; instructing, comforting and reminding them of the benevolent love and the call of God for the universal salvation through which the Church builds its response to God's mission.


## DECLARATION

I, Owdenberg Mdegella, hereby declare that this thesis, unless specified in the text, is my original work. I also declare that I have not submitted this research project for any other purpose in any other institution or university.

  
O. Mdegella

27/05/2005

As supervisor, I agree to the submission of this thesis.

  
Prof. A.O. Balcomb

27/05/05

## DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my beloved wife Sarah Godfrey Lyamuya and our six children Madethe Kisumbo Mdegella, Faraja Haika Mdegella, Hosea Moses Mdegella, Makarios Godfrey Mdegella, Gregoreite Tumwiukage Mdegella and Peace Eunie Mdegella for bearing with me during the whole period of my studies. I also dedicated this thesis to my parents Moses Mwalikatage Mdegella and Elizabeth Mayuta Mkemwa for taking me to the Church for baptism and using their most meagre resources to take me to school, an endeavour that opened the door of seeking knowledge.



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**(Brose, W. 1988:73).**

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RELIGIOUS AUTHORITY**

## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

AIDS	-	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ANE	-	Ancient Near East
AR	-	African Religion
ATR	-	African Tradition Religion
AU	-	African Unity
BMG	-	Berliner Missionsgesellschaft
BMS	-	Berlin Mission Society
CCT	-	Christian Council of Tanzania
CE	-	Christ Event
CMS	-	Church Missionary Society
CSSC	-	Christian Social Services Commission
CWME	-	Conference of World Missions and Evangelism
DC	-	District Commissioner
DOA	-	Deutsch Ostarfrika
DOAG	-	Deutsch Ostafrikanische Gesellschaft.
ELCT	-	Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania
FELM	-	Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission
Fr.	-	Father
HIV	-	Human Immunal Virus
IRD	-	Iringa Diocese
LMC	-	Lutheran Mission Co-operation
LWF	-	Lutheran World Federation
NIV	-	New International Version
NT	-	New Testament
OT	-	Old Testament
PHD	-	Doctor of Philosophy
PMB	-	Pietermaritzburg
RC	-	Roman Catholic

SEM	-	Swedish Evangelical Mission
Sr.	-	Sister
SS&S	-	Sacred Songs and Solos
TAG	-	Tanzania Assemblies of God
TEC	-	Tanzania Episcopal Conference
TZS	-	Tanzanian Shillings
UMCA	-	Universities' Mission to Central Africa
USA	-	United States of America
WCC	-	World Council of Churches
WWI	-	First World War
WWII	-	Second World War

## CHAPTER 1

### 1. INTRODUCTION

#### *1.1 Opening Remarks*

This chapter, even though an introductory one, consists of discussions around questions that were raised as criticisms against Christianity in Africa. It is for that reason that it requires both the opening and the concluding remarks of the main concern of this thesis. The main concern of this thesis is the conversion of Africans from African Religion (AR) to Christianity. Thus, the term "conversion" will appear constantly.

While conversion, is common in Christian theology, the term appears only once in the Bible as a noun, where Paul admonishes Titus that a recent convert should not be appointed to leadership (ITit 3.6). The term "conversion" does not appear directly as a verb that connotes the act of turning or transforming although the Old Testament and the New Testament have terms that signify a change from one religious affiliation to another, or from disbelief, lack of faith and apostasy to belief, renewal of faith and new obedience. (Cf. Isa 45:22; Dt. 30:10; Lk 1:17 and Ac. 3:19).

The conversion of Africans from AR to Christianity, which is the main concern of this thesis, has been challenged for several decades. Various academic disciplines, political and social settings have questioned, criticised and sometimes disapproved of conversion in four lines of thought. The first line of thought contends that God chose a specific religion for every ethnic or people group. This postulates that AR is for Africans and Christianity for Europeans. The second line of thought contends that the Christianisation of Africa was an extension of Western imperialism and the project of colonisation was at the heart of Christian mission. The third line of thought argues that Africans accepted Christianity because of poverty, hunger and other material and temporal benefits. The fourth line of thought argues that the presence of missionaries in Africa was, and still is, detrimental to the Church in African hence to culture,

community life, religion and identity. In addition, they argue that missionary initiated churches lack indigenous identity and are replicas of the Western church and civilisation.

The claims and censures that have been expressed against the conversion of Africans to Christianity allege that such conversion was inauthentic because it arose from wrong motivations on the part of missionaries, supporters of mission and the African converts. Those who argue along the first line believe that Africans lived an authentic religious life within the AR community setting. In arguing further that Christianity is for Whites<sup>1</sup>, they argue in the same way that Islam is for Arabs and their close associates in Asia, North Africa and South Eastern Europe. Furthermore, Hinduism is assumed to be for Indians, Buddhism for North-Eastern Indians and other Asians and Confucianism for Orientals. Wakamata (1976:9) associated these kinds of arguments with the anthropologists who met in Barbados in 1971 under the support of the World Council of Churches (WCC), where the same claims were made in connection with indigenous cultures in Latin America.

The first line of thought is partly expressed by Collins. The researcher had a coincidental discussion at Pommern in Iringa concerning the conversion of Africans from AR to Christianity with an American student of Xavier University who had come to Tanzania in the Iringa Diocese in 1998 as a volunteer. The discussions developed into correspondences between the researcher and the student named Collins. Collins wrote to the researcher saying,

I believe some of the missionaries' goals for bringing light to the "Darkest Africa" were quite *misconstrued* [sic] and extinguished some of the most innate traditions that made up Tanzanian society. The outlawing of dancing on most occasions, initiation procedures, defining acceptable clothing and changing marital laws are some examples. These all show that the missionaries did not want to simply introduce Western Christianity to Africa,

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<sup>1</sup> The term "Whites" represents the Caucasians who have their original ancestry in Europe. These Whites are presumably all over the world. The use in this thesis refers to missionaries and colonizers who came from Europe and North America.

but rather change African Traditional Religion into Western Christianity (Collins 10-01-1999: Letter, referred in appendix I).<sup>2</sup>

With the second line of thought, the evaluators of the mission work argue that Africans had, and still have, the right to accept Christianity or convert to any other religion as they wish, but the way in which Christianity was introduced in Africa deprived them from establishing an authentic Christian Church. They argue further that only missionaries and their colonial allies had the power and the right for decision-making. They ask, "How could an authentic African Christian church be established under the circumstances of imperialism and colonisation"? (Collins 04-01-1999: Pommern).

A summarised version a question from a German Volunteer who was also in Iringa says, "How could authentic Christianity be established in Africa when missionaries were collaborators of colonisers of Africa and when Christianity was full of imperialism, economic exploitation, discrimination, oppression and paternalism?" (Zimmermann 11-09-1998: Iringa. Personal notes referred in appendix II A).

Rodney, the author of the book "How Europe Underdeveloped Africa," did not make any differences between missionaries and the other Whites. He supports the assertions of Zimmermann. He accused all Whites of underdeveloping Africa. For him missionaries were part of the colonizing force as were their explorers, traders and soldiers (Omari 1976:13). For Rodney, the information from David Livingstone through exploration brought forth Christian mission, colonisation, economic exploitation and loss of cultural identity on the pretext of civilising Africans. To prove his arguments, Rodney quoted Livingstone from his farewell speech at Cambridge as he said, "I go back to Africa to try to make an open path for commerce and Christianity" (Coupland 1967:103).

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<sup>2</sup> The researcher thinks that Collins wanted to say misconstrued.



The third line of thought blames Africans that their motivation to convert to Christianity was not based on what the gospel required of them. Those who argue along this line claim that poverty, hunger, insecurity, cravings of social and economic or political control as well as the need for social status and privileges and other temporal or material gains prompted Africans to convert to Christianity. The following quotation from Collins substantiates the above assertions as she says,

Beginning with Germans and followed by British, Western Christianity was the religion of those in power. Africans were coerced to convert in order to gain certain favours and items such as cloth [sic], seeds, and farming machinery. Possession of these material goods increased one's social standing in the community. Anyone trying to raise a family and have income would opt to adopt such a religion because of the monumental material and social benefits (Collins 10- 01- 1999: Letter, referred in appendix I).

The fourth line of thought is taken by foreign and local theologians, politicians and contemporary missionaries who want to see an African Christian church that is free from any form of Western domination. They could be designated as sympathetic towards African identity. They have argued that Africans should have a stronger sense of owning the church instead of allowing missionaries to dominate them and diminish African identity, leaving African Christians to be mere imitators of the Whites.

The researcher summarised another question from a German volunteer in this way: "How can we claim authentic Christianity in Africa when all what we see in the churches is a replication of Western Christianity? With the exception of some African Independent Churches, why has African Christianity embraced so many forms and structures of Western Christianity such as liturgy, hymnody, psalmody, dress, speech, expressions and symbols? Aren't those clear signs of a colonised and manipulated church?" (Zigelkow 11-09-1998: Iringa. Personal notes referred in appendix II B). The sentiments that have been summarised from

Zigelkow indicate that African Christianity that was established through Western missionaries lost a lot as far as African identity is concerned. Thus, for some observers that kind of Christianity lacks authenticity.

Therefore, the researcher establishes that all four lines of thought seem to convey the perception that Christianity was imposed on Africans which in turn has led the conversion of Africans to Christianity to become deficient in authenticity. An ardent concern was raised whether the same arguments as those raised against Christianity could also be raised in other spheres of influence such as politics, government, economics, security and defence. Is it not true that Western materialism, technology, educational systems and legal systems have influenced Africa? Concerns could be raised against the villages and cities of Africa that have become dumping grounds for Western industrial products. A scholar in Religious Studies answers these concerns with the argument that strong criticisms against Christianity in Africa arise from the fact that religion, and in this context AR and Christianity touch the soul, which according to him is the principal centre of human function.

When it comes to religion, on the other hand, the need to preserve indigenous character may be strongly defended. Can a distinction be made between technical and spiritual culture? But again, the universities have adopted western educational systems with amazing faithfulness. What is the particular element, which is felt to conflict and jar with the local culture? This greater resistance in the area of religious beliefs and experiences is undoubtedly due to deeper roots of these things in the human soul because of their intimate relationship with primal human functions (Yannoulatos 1981:253).

### ***1.2 Background and motivation***

In an article in the African Theological Journal of 1984 written by the late Bishop Kibira entitled; "Has Luther Reached Africa? The testimony of a confused Lutheran" (Kibira 1984:6). Kibira describes an occasion when a European journalist confronted him.

During the celebrations of commemorating the Augsburg Confession a reporter at Augsburg confronted me with the following question: "You are an African, a Tanzanian, I mean you are not a German". Anyhow, he meant, "What have you to do with the celebrations of Luther and his fellow Reformers? Would it not have been better to stay at home and develop your own African religions, which in my opinion would make your countrymen more stable in life as they used to live before colonialism took over Africa?" (Kibira 1984:6-7)

The sentiments expressed in the quotation above can lead us to think that the reporter lacked the basic knowledge of AR and its encounter with Christianity in relation to mission. We could also suppose that the reporter was not aware of the concept of *Missio Dei* (God's Mission) as related to the work that was done by Western and African missionaries in Africa. Nevertheless, the reporter was questioning the authenticity of Christian conversion in the African worldview. According to the reporter, the interest was in knowing the motivations of Africans to accept Christianity and repudiate AR.

Criticisms and accusations against missionaries aroused more interest to make a deeper study of the relationship between missionaries, colonisers, Western culture and imperialism. The core question remained unanswered, namely what was the motivation of Africans to accept Christianity, if Christian missionaries are portrayed in such a negative way?

The researcher's interest was triggered further in 1989 when he was asked to attend an "Africa group" at the *Kirchentag* (a one-week "Church Day" Rally) in Berlin. This Africa group had very few Africans who had been asked to attend. The rest of the people were young theologians together with their lecturers and professors. Some former and contemporary missionaries from Germany working in Africa were also present. One of the professors for African Studies, who had spent just nine months in Africa during his doctoral research, was mercilessly attacking missionaries as allies of colonialism and destroyers of African culture and religion. He asked two questions. The first question was whether the

researcher was able to tell the difference between a colonialist and a missionary. The second question was whether it was still necessary for Germans to send missionaries to the rest of the world and especially Africa where, according to him, "they have a bad reputation" (Helmut 17-06-1989: Berlin. Personal notes referred in appendix IIC). A young female theologian added to those two questions by asking whether it was prudent for the researcher and other African pastors to preach the gospel that, according to her, has destroyed AR and African culture? She asked when the researcher when thought he would start preaching AR. She said, "Why did you Africans accept Christianity? Don't you like your own religion? Why do you still allow missionaries to destroy your religion and culture?" (Schmidt 17-06-1989: Berlin. Personal notes referred in appendix IID).

Adding to the questions asked above, the same concerns were raised in North America (USA) that led the researcher to come to the decision of writing this thesis. The researcher was simply asked, "Why did Africans accept Christianity after all evils that were committed against them by Europeans, such as enslavement, colonisation, discrimination and many others?" (Herbert 20-06-1993:Chicago. Personal notes referred in appendix IIE). This question and those asked at the *Kirchentag* in Berlin prompted this research.

Herbert's question led to a chain of questions concerning African Christianity. For many years, the researcher had understood that Christian conversion in Africa was having the same reasons as it has always be in other parts of the world. The researcher had always believed that Jesus came to save the sinners of the entire world and not only the so-called heathens of Africa but also sinners of Jerusalem and Rome as well as sinners of Berlin and all over the Western world. It was part of the researcher's conviction that Christianity has always been channelled through culture and challenged all cultures, just as it had been channelled through the Hebrew culture and challenged it, even thought it could be rightly described as the mother culture of Christianity. The researcher lived with the conviction that Christianity; with the exception of the Hebrew

culture, has always been propagated by people of a foreign culture in its early stages and later on it has always been taken by people of the host culture. In the same way, the researcher thought the notion that “every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord”, as it is expressed in Romans 14:11 meant that all people with their cultural behaviours and power shall acknowledge Jesus as Lord in their mother tongues. It is fair to question why some people thought Christianity was “white” in colour and culture? The researcher thought he had understood rightly that Christianity had antagonisms and confrontations with Jewish culture and religion that culminated in the crucifixion of Jesus Christ but also gained followers through the same culture. He thought he had rightly understood that Christianity was in North Africa and Southern Europe almost in the same century. He also thought that he had understood rightly that Christianity was introduced in Europe with many Christians being persecuted and accused of destroying the culture and religion of the respective European nations of that time. Therefore, every people in the world could be asked the same questions that are asked to, and about Africans. The accusations that Africans accepted Christianity amidst adverse conditions and at the cost of betraying their culture, religion, identity and human dignity are somehow undeserved.

Kiwovele thinks that even those arguments that seem to be sympathetic and pro-African are in a deeper sense deriding the integrity and credibility of Africans. He says, “For example, it is not only unfair but also erroneous to think that Africans would trade their ancestors and repudiate AR in exchange for material goods” (Kiwovele 30-10-1997: Njombe).

Other scholars emphasise that the issue of conversion of Africans should be looked at from an African perspective and not otherwise. Mugambi suggests that looking at Africans, their background and how they made their own way of interpreting what the gospel required from them is fairer than looking at missionaries. By so doing, he does not rule out the errors of missionaries.

In spite of the failure of early missionaries to relate the gospel positively to the African background, Christianity was accepted by some African converts who made their own interpretation of what they saw, read and heard in the process of missionary activity (Mugambi 1989:33)

The third group of scholars argue that African Christians explored Christianity in all its complexity and made their own interpretation within their own context. These emphasise the conversion of Africans to Christianity as specifically dependent on the translation of the message of salvation into the African culture and their worldview.

It has become commonplace to think of Christian churches in Africa as alien institutions, the cultural agents of colonial and capitalistic powers who helped to subdue Africans to European domination. Christian missionaries brought, and enforced, specifically European cultural norms and religious, social, moral and economic behaviour and sought to mould African individuals and societies to them. Similarly, African conversion to Christianity has been seen largely in materialistic and instrumental terms as individuals sought to gain political allies, land, education, medicine, and jobs in the new colonial order through the missions. Such views neglect the manifold ways Africans interpreted and appropriated Christian scriptures, practices and institutions for their own purposes within the contexts of their own values and needs. Confronted with new epidemic diseases, disaster and wide spread political and economic destruction in the wake of colonial conquest. Africans sought new religious concepts to regain moral control over their lives. ... It is thus critical that we probe deeply into experiences of African Christians themselves as they explored the new faith in all its complexity, interpreted it in their own cultural and historical contexts, and appropriated it as their own (Spear 1999:3-4).

These quotations justify the need for a rational investigation into AR from Africans and the context in which Christian mission was done. They emphasize the genuineness that Africans saw and perceived what was fit and what was not fit for their spiritual and intellectual consumption. It is thus apposite to demonstrate the main considerations of this thesis. This, in spite of the fact that

it is fairly clear that those that have offered the criticisms, all of whom are from the original "sending" countries, are themselves suffering from the angst of former colonisers who now see their forefathers (and implicitly their own) complicity with colonialism.

Firstly, the response to the first line of thought requires a thorough knowledge of AR beliefs and practices in the African context that is being studied. Secondly, it is important to determine the criteria of authenticity for Africans to accept Christianity. Thirdly, an investigation has to be done to show whether there are any indications of such authenticity or otherwise. Fourthly, some historical and missiological accounts have to be given regarding the missionary motives and approaches that influenced the motivations of Africans to convert to Christianity as a project of modernity and a search for new alternatives of life. Fifthly, analytical responses to the censures concerning colonialism, imperialism, conversion for temporal gains and life achievements have to be given. Out of these five considerations, I have formulated four theses and hypotheses. The first, and second considerations are put together in the first sub-problem and its hypothesis.

### *1.3 Problem statement and hypotheses*

The main problem and hypothesis for this study are as stated hereafter.

Main problem: Apart from all kinds of censures against the missionary motives and approaches as well as the motivations for Africans to accept Christianity, is there enough evidence that many have opted for this faith because of the translatability of the message of salvation based on the event of Christ?

Hypothesis: Together with the appropriate motives and in spite of all ulterior motives of the missionaries and the motivations of Africans to convert to Christianity, it was the message of salvation that Christianity offered based on the translatability of the event of Christ that constituted the prime motivation for Africans to convert to Christianity.

The main problem and the hypothesis are deliberated upon in four main areas. The four main areas determine the formulations of the main questions that need to be asked. These questions will be followed by possible answers in the form of hypotheses. The Questions that are to be answered are:

1. What are the basic beliefs and practices of African Religion (AR) amongst the Hehe that have had an effect on the process of Christianisation?

Hypothesis: The pre-Christian experience consisting of the belief in God, the centrality of the ancestors, the relevance of the spiritual realm and the significance of diviners against malevolent and supernatural forces characterized AR amongst the Hehe.

2. What are the criteria of authentic Christian conversion that are consistent with the Christianisation amongst the Hehe?

Hypothesis: The translatability of the message of salvation that stems from the initiative that God took in the event of Jesus Christ to bring forth the calling of all humanity for transformation, forgiveness of sins, and fellowship with God within their faith and cultural contexts are the criteria of authentic Christian conversion.

3. What are the indications of authentic Christian conversion amongst the Hehe?

Hypothesis: The presence and the continuous translation of the Bible in the mother tongue, the continuity of God's Mission and the continuity of contextual theologisation, and indigenisation are the indications of authentic Christian conversion amongst the Hehe.

4. What were the motivations of Africans to convert to Christianity?

Hypothesis: The compliance with God's calling for mission and the project of modernity were the motivations for missionaries' endeavours and of Africans to convert to Christianity.

5. What were the problems that accompanied the Christianisation of the Hehe?

Hypothesis: The close collaboration between missionaries and colonialists, political subjugation of the local people, the imprecise notion of conversion for



temporal gains, cultural intolerance and repression of African identity were the problems that accompanied the Christianisation of the Hehe.

#### *1.4 Objective and Significance of the Study*

The objective of this thesis is to illustrate that the message of salvation comes to people within the divine time frame where God becomes a missionary to a people group before, during, and after human agents (missionaries). Christian theology calls such a time frame the *kairos* (fulfilled time). The concept of *Missio Dei* (God's Mission) is thus elucidated in God becoming the missionary through self-translation in the event of Jesus Christ hence cutting across all cultural, religious, political, social and economic circumstances to bring forth authentic Christian conversion.

The significance of this study is multifaceted. Firstly, the study will give the essential information concerning AR amongst the Hehe and Bena who have much to share in language and culture. Secondly, it will be one of the initial missiological literatures that have dealt with the conversion of Africans in the Lutheran context of Southern Tanzania. The information will facilitate an in-depth study in inter-cultural and contextual communication of the message of salvation as the researcher tries to establish the presupposition that Jesus Christ speaks in, and through the receiving culture. In such a proposition, the researcher underscores the fact that missionaries have to take the receptors' culture and the translation of the Bible in the vernacular of the receptor's culture seriously with the explanation that it is the central aspect of authentic conversion, as one anthropologist stated,

Although in intercultural communication it may happen that at times the receiving society will try to interpret the message in terms of the sending society's way of life, such is generally not the case in regard to the missionary's message, which is interpreted (and misinterpreted) almost exclusively in terms of the receiving society's cultural experience. The communication that takes the receptor's cultural background into account has the best chance of

remaining substantially unaltered and being properly understood (Luzbetak 1970:17).

Thirdly, the study is expected to establish a theological basis that will attempt to answer the question of how Africans related Christianity with the issues of mission and the project of colonisation, mission and the project of modernity, mission and social service and the issues of mission, and culture and identity. It is through such a theological base that contextualisation will be dealt with.

### *1.5 The scope of the study and its Delimitations*

Lutherans in Tanzania are united under the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT). ELCT has twenty dioceses and Iringa Diocese (ELCT-IRD) is one of them. This study is done in the Iringa Diocese. The geographical location of Iringa Diocese and other necessary descriptions are given in the section of selected congregations. The study deals with Bantu people of East Africa, in the Southern Highlands of Tanzania. A specific focus is given to the dominant tribe in the area, namely the Hehe. There are other Hehe in the neighbouring Southern Diocese, in Mufindi District. Since the research is bound to Iringa Diocese, these Hehe are referred to from time to time when particular information requires it. The Bena tribe is referred to frequently because it shares in the mission history, ethnology and culture of the Hehe. Ethnological accounts pertaining to the Hehe and Bena in Iringa in the Southern Diocese are given in the section that explains the selected congregations. Academically, the study is bound to systematic theology or doctrinal theology. However, since it combines other disciplines such as anthropology, sociology, history and African mission studies it has been termed as essentially missiological. Concisely, the study is limited to African mission theology or contextual African theology.

### *1.5.1 Period Under Discussion*

Concerning the delimitations, the research is time bound. It commences with the coming of missionaries amongst the Hehe and the Bena. One hundred years have been considered as sufficient time for substantive observations of how Christianity has evolved over the years and be accredited as having authenticity in the local context. The limit has been chosen to be 1899-1999.

Several reasons have been taken into consideration in the choice of time limit. First, Lutheran missionaries arrived in Iringa amongst the Hehe in October 1898. They started to establish the mission work in 1899. The second reason of choosing this range arises from the historical records of the various phases in which German missionaries and missionaries from other European nations established their work in Iringa. Third, Christianisation in Iringa among the Lutherans can be classified into six phases. The first phase was between the arrivals of first missionaries to the beginning of the First World War (WW I), which was between 1899-1914. This was the time in which mission and colonialism could be seriously considered. The second phase was the time of war and recession of mission work (1914-1925) due to the first internment of missionaries. This was the time when Africans were not given the responsibility to lead the Church but the church grew out of, and away from the mission centres, whilst mission centres drew back. The third phase was the time when German missionaries returned and resumed their work (1925-1939). The fourth phase was during the Second World War (WW II), which was between 1939-1945. During this time two important things happened. First, the first African pastors were ordained to the ministry. Second, missionaries from Sweden came to Southern Tanzania, an experience that assured the stability of mission stations that were left by German missionaries who were interned for the second time. The fifth phase is between 1945-1964. This phase also had two important events. First, it was the last period for missionaries to lead the church. Second, it was the time when national freedom and the urge for indigenisation with the spirit of

nationalism were voiced openly thus being the official beginning for Africans to take over the leadership of the church from missionaries. The sixth phase is between 1965-1999. This covers the time when the church has been in the hands of African leaders. It is envisaged that contextual theologisation and indigenisation have been taking place faster than when the church was led by missionaries.

### *1.5.2 Ethnographic Account and AR Research Limitations*

There is enough archaeological evidence that Iringa district was already occupied during the Old Stone Age. This can be traced at Isimila, a Stone Age site that is twenty-one kilometres away from Iringa municipality, to the south, along the highway to Zambia. There is also evidence of the middle Stone Age people whose stone carvings are at Ikombagulu Mountains that are one hundred and thirty kilometres away from Iringa to the North East, along the highway to Dar-Es- Salaam. Archaeologists have identified these carvings with the movement of the Bushmen who moved from Northern Africa to Southern Africa (Madumula 1995:1).

The Hehe can be fully traced as a tribe from the years 1840-1850 (Malangalila G. 15-9-1999 and Redmayne 1968:37-38). The last two paramount chiefs Muniyumba and Mkwawa unified the Hehe from small chiefdoms to a paramount chiefdom before German colonisation (Roberts 1968:ix). The Hehe tribe is a conglomeration of several immigrant tribes from all directions of the earth. The immigrant tribes were united under small chiefdoms and identified themselves either by their dialects or their geographical locations. There are several names given to these sub-tribes but the most common ones are *Vadongwe*, *Vasagala*, *Vasavila*, *Vadzungwa* and *Vakilwa* (Musso 1968:8-9, Malangalila, G. 15-09-1999: Mlolo, Gaifalo and Chusi, H. 11-07-1998: Ilula). These sub-tribes occupy Iringa and Mufindi Districts. They are very closely related to the Bena and Benamanga who occupy Njombe and Ulanga districts respectively. There is a

distant relationship with the Sangu in Mbeya district and Kimbu in Chunya district.

Like many other people in East Africa, some Hehe tell stories about their ancestors coming from other places. Linguistically and culturally the Bena, both those in the Ulanga valley and those in the Njombe highlands, are more closely related to the Hehe than any other group, but there are only few a few people whose ancestors have been in Uhehe for four generations or more who claim that their ancestors came from Ubena. It is clear that the large number of people on the central plateau and dispersed elsewhere outside Uhehe are as many themselves claim, descended from people who lived in Usungwa [sic] (Udzungwa). .....There must be also some truth in the stories of ancestors of some other Hehe coming from Ukimbu (Redmayne 1968: 39).

While the Hehe tribe in Iringa District is the cultural and religious focus of this thesis, most of the information from the archives, as it will be seen later, puts the Hehe of Mufindi District and the Bena of Njombe together with the Hehe of Iringa District in describing the work of early missionaries. Moreover, many tribes have migrated to Iringa in the past one hundred years from other parts of Tanzania. This has brought about a significant presence of people from the Bena, Wanji and Kinga tribes amongst the Hehe. The Nyakyusa, Ndali and Sangu are also in considerable numbers. These migrated to Iringa amongst the Hehe as farmers, labourers and employees in various government offices and institutions. There are Lutherans from other parts of Tanzania who live in Iringa. These have not been excluded from the research, but when it came to AR the other tribes were not deeply considered because of the inevitable variations that might be encountered concerning ancestors and worldviews regarding spiritual realms as well as protective and destructive forces. If each tribe were to be attended the research would become too stretched out without much in-depth study.

### *1.6 Research Methodology and Literary Resources*

This research is essentially missiological. It is thus investigated from three academic perspectives namely social anthropology, systematic theology and church history. This approach has been used by most of the people whose researches are missiological. Sundberg (200:27) being one of them affirms this approach. The social anthropological aspect in this thesis arises from studies in descriptive linguistics where cross-cultural communication is involved and where an investigation into people's social, religious and cultural contexts are also taken into consideration (Sundberg: 29). Furthermore, the research seeks to know the kind of missionaries, the time frame of their work and the church historical factors in which they were engaged.

Since this research has been conducted primarily as a fieldwork, most of the information has been oral, thus requiring some knowledge of the local cultural context. Library material and archival information have been used as secondary sources and for literature review. It was thus observed during fieldwork that oral information had its own strengths and weaknesses. Its strengths were found through those people who conveyed their true knowledge of AR and/or their conversion experiences. The strength was also found from those informants who had been either eyewitnesses or those who had close interaction with the people who experienced or witnessed historical occasions or conversions.

Nonetheless, there were two major weaknesses that the researcher experienced. Some of the informants wanted to impress the researcher because he is their leader. Others were inconsistent because they changed some of the information even on the same day if the researcher asked the same question a little bit differently. These seemed to convey the information, which they might have not been sure about it. It was thus necessary to counter check some of the information from other people or to use the library and archival resources.

### 1.6.1 Interviews

Fieldwork was conducted through interviews and questionnaires. Interviews were preferred because they are effective in the African circumstances. Pons says,

Firstly, it allows us to ask people direct questions about themselves and their own behaviour and activities. Secondly, it allows us to ask people not only what they do and are but also what they *think* and *feel*; in other words interviewing allows us to gather subjective opinions as well s factual information. Thirdly, it allows us to ask people how they *perceive* and *interpret* their personal circumstances and histories and the actions of others. Finally, it allows us to ask people to *explain* the motives and reasons for their behaviour; thus an interviewer may at times in effect be asking people to join him or her in the process of analysis and interpretation (Pons 1992: 98).

Two approaches were used in conducting the interviews. The first approach was participatory observation. In this approach, the researcher asked questions that initiated conversations and discussions between the researcher and the interviewees or among the interviewees themselves. The second was the semi-structured approach. In this approach, the researcher to introduce questions which he had prepared. Some questions were fixed and others were flexible. This allowed the informants either to tell stories of their conversion or to convey some information of their experiences concerning the conversion of other people. Such stories and information are the ones that have been used for case studies.

Some interviews were recorded and others were not. The researcher had to refrain from recording everything that proved to be out of the research framework. In most cases, the researcher and his assistants opted to listen to everything that the interviewees' said and took notes of issues that were relevant to the researcher's basic questions. The researcher opted to record a few conversion stories, case studies and narratives from Christians, members of AR and some diviners. The people to record were chosen after the responses to the interview questions or questionnaires. With this, the interviews were finished

first and then another time was set for recording. Special attention was also given to proverbs, legends and poetic similes.

Fieldwork required extensive writing. Owing to the demands of that task one or two always asked to assist in interviewing and compiling the responses. For the interviews of 1997-1999, Msigomba Phoebe, and Somela Alfred, assisted in conducting the research. Msigomba is a teacher and administrator by profession. She has assisted three other PhD students in research in 1995 and 1996. Somela is a communications specialist and he took notes of everything including laughter. Such interjections have not been cited. Chavala Aikam, came in to assist in 2000-2004 and replaced Somela.

Pastors Mkemwa Samson, Madembo Benitho and Mdegela Hammerton (an elderly local leader and a teacher by profession) helped to meet with diviners and members of AR. Pastor Mutasingwa, Robert helped in interviewing two out of four diviners and two people who had made self-confessions that they had been practising sorcery or witchcraft.

The interviews were analysed weekly. We endeavoured together to answer the following questions: What did people say? How did the responses answer the questions that were asked? A summary was then made and necessary details were noted as the responses prompted.

Citations for interviews and questionnaires will be done in the text with the surname, date, the month, the year, and the place as Turabian (1996:150, 206-207) recommends. Turabian (1996:150) requires that the one who presided over the interview be seen in citations. It should thus be understood that all interviews and questionnaires were presided over by the researcher. The necessary information was transcribed and has been used in the text. In addition, the researcher has included a special identification numbers of the cassette in which the information was recorded.



### *1.6.2 Questionnaires*

Questionnaires were given to pastors, evangelists and some academicians in the diocese. These questions are shown in appendix VI. Their textual citations will follow the same pattern as those of the interviews and as suggested by Turabian (pp. 150, 206-207). It is worth noting that most people in Iringa were not fond of questionnaires. Some of the questionnaires had to be administered shown henceforth.

The first set of questionnaires was given to five pastors, three teachers and two evangelists. In a period of one year, only one pastor and one evangelist responded. Since most of the people in the research area seemed to take little interest in responding to questionnaires, yet another group of ten people in five categories namely, two pastors, two business people, two teachers, two lawyers and two politicians were chosen. This time the questionnaires had to be administered. Questions were asked questions and the responses were written accordingly with the assistance of Msigomba and Somela. Basic questions for interviews and questionnaires are in appendix VI.

### *1.6.3 Selection of Informants*

The geographical location of the Iringa Diocese is in the Southern highlands of Tanzania. It is situated between 11 and 13 degrees East (longitude) and 7.5 to 9 degrees South of the Equator (latitude). It covers an area of more than forty thousand square kilometres (40,000 sq.km) that form three local government- administration districts, namely Iringa Rural, Kilolo and Iringa Urban.

According to the ELCT Calendar (2004:46), ELCT Iringa Diocese has a membership of seventy-seven thousand (77,000), in sixty congregations. It is estimated that forty-five thousand members (45,000) are adults. It was not possible to interview all members or all adults. The sampling plan was done in the following manner. Firstly, fifteen congregations, which constitute 25% of all

congregations were chosen, where in-depth interviews were made. Five more congregations were included later because they had members who had first hand information concerning their conversion after being healed through prayer, the confession of sorcerers and the debate concerning a polygamist who wanted to be baptised without divorcing his wives. With the five congregations being added the number came to twenty (20), thus making thirty three percent (33%) of the selected congregations.

Secondly, it was the intention of the researcher to interview not less than ten people in each. This was supposed to be 0.3% of the adults. Nevertheless, it happened that in most of the congregations more than ten people came for interview. In Pommern, Idete, Isimani, Mbuyuni and Masisiwe more than thirty people were interviewed. In the end 315 people have been interviewed. The number includes some members of the Roman Catholic Church and members of AR and diviners.<sup>3</sup> Lutherans alone amount to 275 and forty- (40) of the informants are non-Lutherans. The names of informants are in appendix IV.

These informants were divided into six categories. The first category consisted of members of the Lutheran Church in the Iringa Diocese. The second category was composed of some Lutheran missionaries who worked amongst the Hehe or the neighbouring tribes as well as members of the Lutheran Church in Southern Tanzania, especially the from amongst the Bena who had vital information, which the researcher needed.

The third category was composed of Roman Catholic Christians, of whom two were priests and two were nuns. Bishop Ngalalekumtwa of the Roman Catholic Church in Iringa gave the researcher a one hundred years jubilee book and commented that most of the information, which the researcher wanted was

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<sup>3</sup> The issue of designating the religious affiliation to diviners is very controversial. Out of six who were interviewed, two were former members of the Lutheran Church and one of them retains his membership until now; two were members of the Roman Catholic Church and one of them is an active participant of the Church, even though he does not partake the Holy Communion. Two of them claimed to be members of AR, one being a woman, she participated in the baptism class until its end but in the end she refused to be baptised. With that, the researcher decided to designate them with their own category.

found there. He also directed the researcher to meet Fr. Wisa, Sr. Mpwepwa and Fr. Battifalo.

The fourth category was composed of members of the AR. Most of AR members in Ifuwa, Wotalisoli and Isagwa were confident with their religious beliefs; hence they did not shy away. Some members of AR in most of the congregations seemed to be defensive. The reasons might be that either members of AR were the minority in most congregations or some members of AR have been faithful attendants of the church but they have been denied baptism because they are practising polygamists. Such was the case in Idete, Pommern and Masisiwe.

The fifth category consisted of diviners, some of whom had left the church and some of whom were practising members of AR as cited in the third footnote. An exceptional case was with Lwanzali. He left the church, became a diviner and got married to two more wives. He participates in and even sometimes supervises communal AR rituals but he uses Christian prayers before divination and before eating.

#### *1.6.4 Selected Congregations and their Geographical Spread*

The research was conducted in twenty congregations as cited in the previous subsection. The twenty congregations were put in six clusters. The first cluster consisted of those congregations that had the earliest converts among the Hehe. These were Muhanga, Idete, Kimala and Ipalamwa. They are located in the Eastern part of Iringa Diocese. The second cluster consisted of Ihemi and Pommern congregations. These are located in the Southern part of Iringa Diocese. From these congregations came the second group of Hehe converts, with a reasonable number of converts from other tribes such as the Bena, Wanji and Kinga.

The third cluster consisted of Ilula, Muhiliwa, Mlafu and Ifuwa in Udekwa area. These are located in the North-eastern part of Iringa Diocese. The

first converts from these congregations were Hehe who were evangelised by Swedish missionaries and early African converts. The fourth cluster was composed of the urban congregations that have a mixture of tribes, Christian traditions and missionary backgrounds. The selected congregations in this cluster are Iringa central, Kihesa, Mkwawa and Mlandege. These are located at the central part of the diocese. The fifth cluster was composed of congregations that were born out of Idete and Pommern congregations. Most of these congregations resulted from the evangelisation done by African preachers during the two World Wars (WW I and WW II) and thereafter. The selected congregations are Masisiwe and Kidabaga. These are located in the south-eastern part of the diocese. The sixth cluster was composed of Isimani, Mtera, Mbuyuni and Kidamali. These are in the northern, north-eastern and Western part of Iringa Diocese that came into being through most converts who had been Moslems or migrant farmers and nomadic tribal groups. In these congregations, there were still a relatively high percentage of Moslems and members from AR.

#### ***1.6.5 Library Resources and Literature Review***

This thesis would be incomplete and almost incapacitated if it did not have the input of many people who have written about Christianity in Africa and specifically about mission and conversion. Theologians who have influenced this thesis could also be divided into primary, secondary and tertiary groups.

Even though many authors will be used to substantiate the arguments in this thesis, there are some who will form the primary theoretical bases of the arguments. The arguments, according to the formulation of the main hypothesis and the hypotheses that guide the chapters, are designed to follow this pattern. First, the pre-Christian experience through African Religion is to be validated as *preparatio evangelica*. Other than the findings from fieldwork, the basic literature for that validation will be from several publications of Mbiti and Bediako. Second, the translatability of the event of Jesus Christ as seen in the second

hypothesis will draw the primary literature from books and publications of Bediako, Fashiolo-Luke, Sanneh and Walls concerning Christianity in Africa and the primacy of translation through incarnation, suffering and the Pentecost. Literature from Martin Luther and Paul Tillich will focus on the theology of the cross in the perspectives of African contextual theology and the universal calling for salvation. Third, Balcomb and the Comaroffs will create a theological base concerning the motivations of conversion and the project of modernity. Fourth, the remaining two hypotheses will draw literary sources from archival records and from historical sources. These include authors such as Nurnberger, Mwakabana, Parslaw, Rambo, Kimambo and Spear, Mugambi, Omari and Stott and many more others such as Kraft, Penoukou, Okorocho, Okoye, Omari, Wakamata, Nyagava, Ayandele, Mugambi, Wright, Richardson and Green as it will be indicated in the relevant citations and bibliographical data.

#### ***1.6.6 Archival Resources***

Archival records were collected from Berlin at *Georgenkirchstrasse* in the old mission office of the then *Berliner Missionsgesellschaft* (Berlin Mission Society). The archives are currently under *Berliner Missionswerk* (Berlin Mission Work) in the same location. The materials were collected in two phases. The first phase was done by a group of historians and theologians from the Southern dioceses of the ELCT in 1991. These materials came in the hands of the researcher when he participated in writing a book for one hundred years' celebration of the mission work by Berlin Mission Society in Southern Tanzania. The materials were written in Gothic German but some old German missionaries in Berlin translated them. Translators included Herms, Sehemsdorf and Schimanowski. The researcher visited the archive in 1996 and collected more materials that were relevant to the thesis with the help of Schimanowski.

In 1998, Koebler translated most of the information that was collected in 1991 from German to Swahili and presided over the compiling of the information

for the one hundred years celebration for the Southern Diocese. The researcher got much relief from the information that was compiled by Koebler. That information has been used as the basic archival reference as it will be seen in citations. Pastors Georg Scriba of South Africa and Pastor Dr Fares Ilomo of South Central Diocese helped in translating some of the materials that were collected later from German to English. These were both published and unpublished materials.

There was no information from Swedish or Finnish missionaries that was sought from the archive because the researcher does not know any Swedish or Finnish languages and he did not have translators for Swedish and Finnish. However, the researcher found what he thought was necessary from pioneer and contemporary missionaries. Abrahamson, Uhlin, Holmstroem, Helstroem and Person provided information concerning Swedish missionaries. Peltola, Smedjebacka and Notko provided information concerning Finnish missionaries. Other than archival materials, there were old records and literature that were used in finding information concerning early missionaries and colonialists. Prof. Nyagava, Bishop Mgeyekwa and Pastor Mgovano provided the required information.

#### *1.6.7 The Researcher and the Context*

The researcher was born and grew up in the same area of research in a Christian home. Most of the people who were born in Christian homes amongst the Hehe Lutherans were taught to repudiate AR from childhood. The researcher had the first exposure to AR during his theological training. He has never had direct participation in any AR rituals or sacrifices. The information given in this research concerning AR has been obtained from AR members, Christians and pastors who have participated in AR and library material.

The researcher knows the environment in which the research is done. He oversees the Lutheran diocese in which the research is done. His grand parents,

except one, died as members of AR. The researcher is a Hehe of the Dzungwa sub-tribe. He knows the Hehe, Bena and Swahili languages that are used in the church in Iringa.

The main interviews were done between 1997 and 1999. Even so, the researcher continued collecting some information whenever it deemed necessary until this year of 2004. There are some research excerpts, which date back to 1985. These were taken from personal notes of the researcher. Any of such excerpts that will be cited, will also be shown in appendix II.

### *1.7 Outline of chapters*

The first chapter makes the general introduction of the thesis. The second chapter illustrates the pre-Christian experience of the Hehe within the context of African Religion (AR). The third chapter portrays the criteria of authentic conversion in relation to the notion of the translatability of the event of Jesus Christ.

The fourth chapter concerns itself with the indications of authentic conversion. The chapter builds on the observations of the third chapter and spells out that the indications of authentic conversion through the continuity of translatability. It also shows that indigenisation and the cultural identity in the church are viable through continuous contextual theologisation.

The fifth chapter analyses the missionary motives and the motivations of the Hehe to convert to Christianity. The main concerns of this chapter are directed at finding out the factors, the approach and the search for alternatives of life in relation to Christian conversion and the project of modernity.

The sixth chapter spells out and analyses the problems that accompanied the Christianisation of the Hehe in Iringa. Deliberations are earmarked at investigating the validity or invalidity of the three censures namely, mission and colonialism, conversion based on material and temporal benefits, and the detrimental effects on African culture, religion and identity.

The seventh chapter concludes the thesis. The conclusion takes the normal trend of bringing all ideas and arguments from all chapters to affirm the main problem and the main hypothesis as being genuinely argued and reached to the desired goal.

### *1.8 Concluding Remarks*

The common opinion of scholars in mission theology, African Christianity and anthropology emphasise that the conversion of Africans should be studied from an African perspectives and not otherwise. The argument goes further and suggests that when Africans sought new religious concepts to regain moral control over their lives they found answers in what Christianity offered through the translatability of the message of salvation based on the event of Christ. The investigations in this thesis are based on the understanding that it is critical to probe deeply into experiences of African Christians themselves as they explored the new faith in all its complexity, interpreted it in their own cultural and historical experiences, and appropriated it as their own.

Thus, the research determines the rationale and the criteria of authenticity for Africans to accept Christianity by making a study of what happened amongst the Hehe of Iringa in Tanzania. The assumption is that God has always been a missionary amongst the Hehe through pre-Christian experience and through the self-translation in Jesus Christ.

Consequently, the next chapter will concern itself with African Religion (AR) as the pre-Christian experience that signifies that God's Mission (*Missio Dei*) even before missionaries came to Africa. This chapter will investigate what Africans believed, practised and how they related to God. The main discussions are expected to set arguments that will respond to the first line of thought that Africans should have remained with African Religion. The main focus will be about God, ancestors, spirits and diviners.



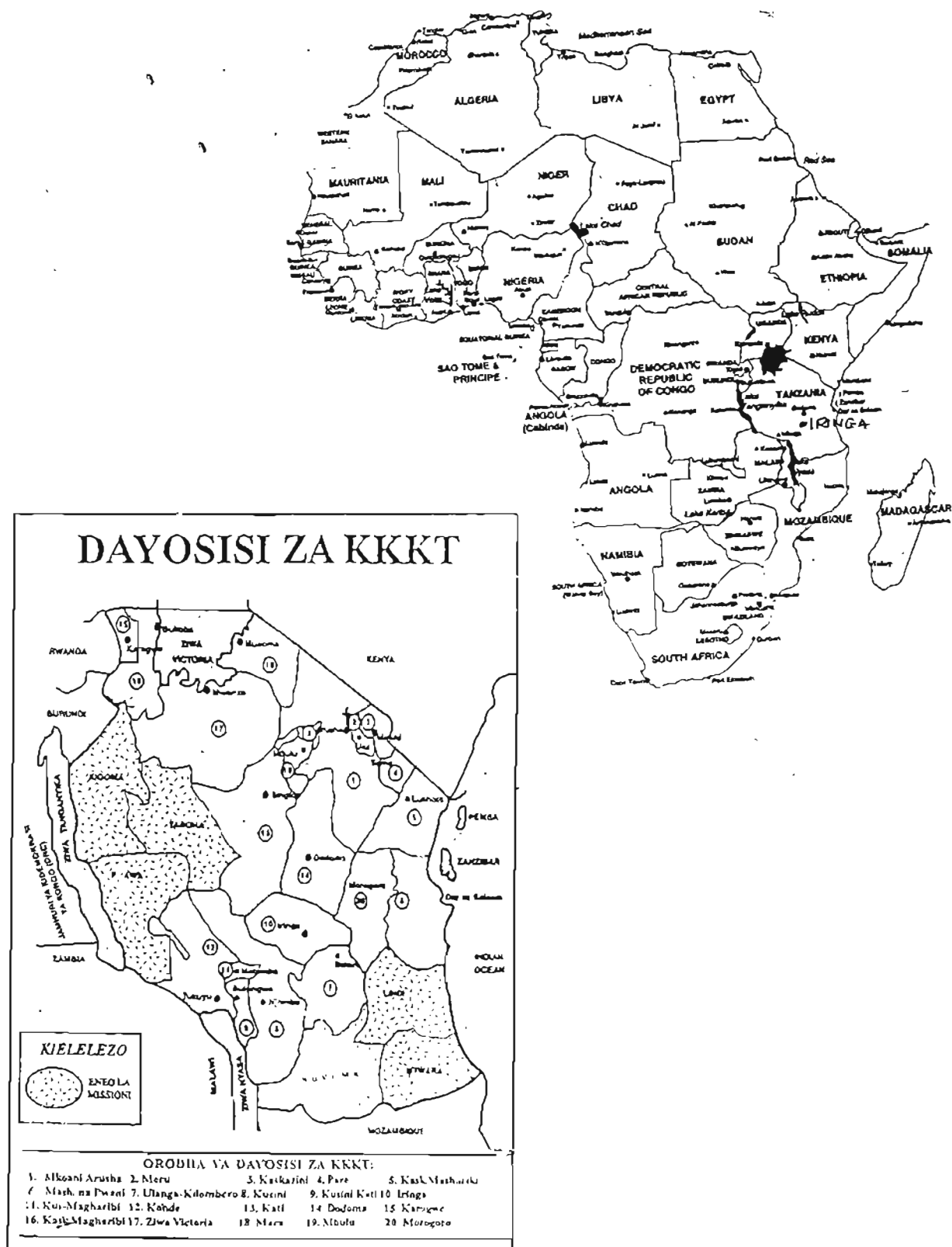


FIGURE 1: IRINGA AS SEEN IN THE MAP OF AFRICA AND TANZANIA (Sources: The Ministry of Education and Tanzania, 2004 Atlas and the ELCT Calendar, 2005)



FIGURE 2: THE MAP OF IRINGA: SELECTED CONGREGATIONS

## CHAPTER 2

### 2. PRE-CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE: AFRICAN RELIGION AS *PREPARATIO EVANGELICA*

#### *2.1 Introduction*

The first chapter has shown that the authenticity of conversion of Africans from AR to Christianity is under question. Such criticisms and accusations have been expressed in the four lines of thought as summarised below. First, Africans should have remained with AR instead of converting to Christianity because in AR they lived a more authentic life than in Christianity. Second, the conversion of Africans from AR to Christianity cannot be authentic because Christianity was established under imperialism and colonialism. Third, most Africans converted to Christianity because they were seeking alleviation from poverty, some were seeking for food aid against hunger and others sought for various temporal gains such as status and whatever else the Western missionaries could offer. Under such circumstances conversion could be considered as authentic. Fourth, Christianisation of Africa through Western missionaries was detrimental to culture, religion and African identity thus establishing the kind of Christianity that is a mere replica of European Christianity and civilisation. Such Christianity must also lack authenticity.

The backgrounds and arguments pertaining to those four lines of thought have been clarified in the first chapter. The task of this chapter is to address the first line of thought by showing what the Hehe believed prior to Christianisation and how the encounter of that kind of belief with Christian faith brought fourth an effect of cross-fertilisation that became instrumental in opening the door for Christianisation. The aspect of cross-fertilisation is considered as the way in which adherents of AR interpreted the proclaimed gospel in relation to their pre-Christian or pre-missionary experience. It is also considered that missionaries

used the name and attributes of God, the concepts and expression of AR to convey the Christian message. In that way AR is seen as *preparatio evangelica*.

The sub-problem or research question that has to be addressed in this chapter is as stated in the introduction and it reads as follows: What are the basic beliefs and practices of African Religion amongst the Hehe that have had effect on the process of Christianisation? Hypothesis: The pre-Christian experience consisting of the belief in God, the centrality of the ancestors, the belief in the reality of the spiritual realm and the significance of diviners against malevolent and supernatural forces that characterized AR amongst the Hehe prepared the Hehe for Christianisation.

This chapter concerns itself with four basic investigations. The first investigation is about the name and the understanding of God in AR amongst the Hehe. The second investigation is about the centrality of ancestors in the AR especially in the community and religious life that embedded the rituals and sacrifices of the Hehe religion. The third investigation is about the way adherents of AR understand the spiritual realm and how they consider it as a reality. The fourth investigation is about the significance of diviners who were understood as possessors of supernatural benevolent spirits that helped the Hehe community to overcome malevolent supernatural forces.

Thus the first purpose is to demonstrate that *Nguluvi*, the Hehe name of God, has been adopted as the Christian name of God. It is also intended to show that *Nguluvi* is an innate concept in the Hehe culture. The attestation of the name is discussed together with the attributes of God as understood in Hehe and in Christian theology. The relevance of the Lutheran concept of the hidden God in relation to the Hehe notion of God will also be investigated from the attributes of God. One of the major concerns is to explore whether in converting to Christianity the Hehe turned to a new God or turned to Jesus Christ and just altered their approach to the same God.

The second purpose is to show that the ancestors were the centre of religious life and guardians of the norms and values in the Hehe community. Discussions are meant to show the roles of ancestors prior to christianisation and how those roles have been in most part redefined, distinguished and reclassified as to what should be done by Jesus Christ and which remain under the ancestors.

The third purpose is to show that the Hehe believe that there are spiritual or supernatural powers, which have a strong influence in people's lives. It is the researcher's intention to investigate those beliefs and reflect on how they have affected the conversion of the Hehe to Christianity. The researcher also wants to enquire whether the Hehe have completely repudiated those beliefs or whether they have embraced some and repudiated others. The assumption is that the understanding of spiritual realms in AR has helped Africans understand a Christo-centric *pneumatology*.

The fourth purpose is to show that the belief in God, the centrality of ancestors and the belief in spiritual and supernatural powers had an impact on missionaries and influenced the problem of Christianisation. The impact and influence have been termed as cross-fertilization because they are believed to have changed the worldview of both Christian missionaries and the Hehe concerning God, the way to relate to God and they way to understand Christianity and AR.

The fifth purpose is to show the significance of diviners in the AR community and how their presence and functions have had an effect in understanding the ministry and the redemptive acts of Jesus Christ. The functions of diviners are compared to what Jesus Christ did in the healing ministry, the exorcism of demons and the manifold miraculous signs as well as the prophetic utterances.

It is hoped that with these five purposes will address the concerns of the first line of thought that Africans should have remained with AR instead of converting to Christianity with the claim that within AR Africans lived a more

authentic life than in Christianity. The five purposes are also expected to show the fact of cross-fertilization between AR and Christianity towards the validation of the concept of *prepatio evangelica*. Implicitly, the discussions require some knowledge of AR amongst the Hehe. It is also hoped that the authenticity of Christian conversion in the African context is not wholly based on what missionaries proclaimed but also in what AR offered in terms of what was believed and practiced before Christianisation.

It should also be implicit that there isn't any written information concerning African Religions (AR) amongst the Hehe. In order to get insightful knowledge, the researcher used the information that was obtained from fieldwork and compared it with information from the writings of various scholars concerning AR amongst the Bantu. There are cases where the current wisdom was not in agreement with what was found amongst the Hehe. In such cases, the researcher adhered to the information that was gathered during fieldwork. This was taken on the assumption that AR and the practices thereto can be known better from their tribal setting.

## *2.2 Theological Orientation of AR*

This thesis uses African Religion (AR) instead of African Traditional Religion (ATR). The use of the term "traditional" has been discouraged, especially among Lutherans. The department for Theology and Studies under the Desk for Church and People of Other Faiths of The Lutheran World Federation made a thorough study and came up with an affirmative conviction that the use of the term "traditional" was either derogatory or time bound. Scholars involved in those studies include the renowned specialists of AR and other fields of theology such as, Prof. Mbiti, Prof. Phiri, Prof. Malewo, Prof. Moila and Dr. Mwakabana and many more others (Mwakabana 2002:9).

The researcher interviewed Mwakabana (02-10-2003:Moshi) concerning this claim. Mwakabana asserts that every religion is traditional. He emphasizes

that Judaism, Islam, some Christian denominations, and Christianity itself especially in the Western world and all other “World Religions” are more traditional than AR. Moreover, “traditional” has many connotations that are both negative and positive. Negative sentiments include the state of being outdated, rigidity, and non-dynamic, fixed and conservative. Positive connotations include the state of being established, accepted, present and historic. Both negative and positive connotations do not describe AR appropriately. To avoid these sentiments the thesis will use African Religion in its abbreviated form as AR.

One of the important concerns about AR is its anthropocentricity in origin and praxis. The authors of the Bible have indicated that Judaism has its source from God. Islam claims the same. According to the New Testament authors, Christianity is the continuation and confirmation of the Jewish faith, thus having its origin from God. The New Testament teaching concerning Christianity demonstrates that people in all other religions including Judaism strive to seek and please God; in Christianity God seeks people and has already paid an everlasting price and sacrifice for human failure and sin. African Religion is slightly different. Africans do not strive to seek God. They do not either strive to please or sacrifice to God. They fear God and they understand that any sin committed against God will automatically lead to death. Thus for Africans, especially the Hehe, the best way to relate to God is to sincerely acknowledge God’s being, presence, force, power, knowledge and the work of creation, transcendence and immanence, then avoid God, lest you provoke God and die (Siyovelwa 04-03-1999: Iringa). To explain the notion of this relation Mgeyekwa uses the Bena concept of *Kiluvi*, which in Hehe is Kimenya. Following is the précis of his assertions,

The Bena believed in God who was the Supreme Being. They used the expression “*Kiluvi*” to indicate that God was always there, a self-existent and an incomprehensible being. When Africans saw the creation they conceded that there must be being who must be in control of the whole universe. Thus *Kiluvi*

symbolised the nature of power and incomprehensibility while *Nguluvi* symbolised the mystic being of creation, providence and concealment (Mgeyekwa 1990:28).

The assertion by Siyovelwa and Mgeyekwa bring forth the question: who is the author of African Religion? One probable answer could be found in the concept of the *logos spermatikos* from Clement of Alexandria, "by which he meant that the seeds of the Word or the rays of the Light are present in all religions and philosophies" (Mwakabana 1997:186). The other probable answer would be to uphold ancestorology, where ancestors, being in the "supra-natural" status uncover the secrets of the world beyond and tell the living about God. One diviner affirmed that it is possible for ancestors to communicate through spiritual possession of family members or diviners (Lwanzali 29-10-2003: Ilula).

Thus, by theological orientation we relate our viewpoint to the summary below.

African Religion (AR) is an indigenous system of beliefs and practices that are integrated into the culture and worldviews of African peoples. Although diverse in its local manifestations, it has common basic elements which testify to its unity regionally and at continental level. Among the main beliefs of AR is the acknowledgement and affirmation of God who is the Creator and sustainer of life and all things. AR recognises the reality of the invisible world in which human life continues after death. The basis of AR lies in the strong belief in the unity of the cosmos, where religion embraces the natural and the supernatural, the sacred and the secular. Religion permeates all aspects of life making the whole person a religious being in a religious world (Mwakabana 2002:11).

### *2.3 African Religions (AR) amongst the Hehe*

"But missionaries told us that Africans worshipped spirits and are very frightened of them! ... We have sent missionaries to bring God to the Dark Continent where people had no religion" (Mwakabana 1997:23). Such sentiments have been expressed for more than one hundred years but there have never been



a point in time where they could hold true. In the course of doing mission, it became apparent that Africans knew and believed in God.

AR amongst the Hehe provides a pattern of human behaviour that explained how people had to respond to their daily life experiences and expectations in terms of success and failures as well as human relationships. For the Hehe a person becomes a member of AR on the day of birth. This does not exclude pregnancy but rather includes the unborn child in the religious life of the parents. As soon as the child is born, all necessary religious rites are performed. The performances of those rites remain in a continuum that starts from childhood to the time of death. These include presenting the child to the ancestors and giving to the child one of the ancestral names. Initiating teenagers during puberty and guiding them towards marriage and adulthood are intermediary rites. Sustaining relationships in the community and being a responsible person in the life of adulthood and parenthood are advanced customs. Being a wise responsible elder and a family religious leader are not only advanced rites but they include renaming. Finally, dying and becoming an ancestor requires a ritual of graduation.

For example, a person without children shall be called by the first name. A person who has children shall be called by the clan name with a prefix of *mwa* (son of) for men and *se* (daughter of) for women. The change signifies a contribution has been accepted by the ancestral lineage. A person with grandchildren shall have the prefix removed and women will be given an adverbial name indicating that the person has achieved what was expected of that person and has the right to join ancestors whenever they might call.

Besides family matters, a person is part and parcel of the totality of creation and the community in which a person belongs. AR does not involve only human life but all that surrounds the person. There is something religious in drought, floods, typhoons, normal rains, hail and all normal or catastrophic features. Cultivating, fishing, hunting, planting a fruit tree or a tree at the

graveyard, and all other good deeds are religious. They are meant to please the ancestors and the community. Prayer and community are expressed as relating to the centrality of ancestors.

The community is the core in which religion is expressed. The integrity of the community is sustained by the common understanding of moral and ethical values. Among others, these include the understanding of life as a gift to the community, which means each member of the community, is responsible for every other and obligated to provide for the welfare of the other (Mwakabana, 2002:11).

### *2.3.1 Understanding God in African Religion Amongst the Hehe*

Much has been written about AR in many tribes. Some inconsistencies or disparities have been observed among the scholars of AR. There are also some disparities in the understanding of God. The approach that is taken in this subsection is to express what the Hehe have said about God. For any doubtful information the researcher will counter-check the information from the Bena tribe or with some scholars of AR among the Bantu of Southern Tanzania.

The Hehe like many African people are monotheistic and believe that there is one God called *Nguluvi* who is the Supreme Being. This same God, with the same name is shared with the Bena people. For the Bena and Hehe *Nguluvi* is both Supreme Being and a living Force. Even though Stark did not speak on behalf of Bena and Hehe people, we agree with the following assertion:

As the Bible speaks of the living God (Matt 16:16), the African speaks of God as a living Force, the ultimate Power in a universal hierarchy of power. These two concepts of God, Being and Force, do not contradict but rather supplement each other, as do the world-views from which they arose (Stark, in McVeigh 1974: xiii).

For the Hehe and Bena God cannot be defined beyond the Supreme Being and the ultimate living Force. The most common way of explaining God is through conceptual attributes. For example, the name *Nguluvi* signifies the supremacy of God while the attribute of *Kimenya* describes the living Force. In

responding to the question, "How would you as a Hehe define God?" An elderly Hehe said, "*Nguluvi ye Kimenya* (God is the ultimate living Force) (Siyovelwa 03-04-1999: Iringa). In this assertion, Siyovelwa was not giving the definition of God but rather explaining God through God's attributes. Another Hehe responded to the same question that God is understood and believed as *Magava* (the creator). When he was asked to explain that the relationship between God and creation he said, "All creation, including human beings could not be what it is without the creator and the creator is God" (Kalenga 08-10-2002: Ilogombe). Once again, Kalengela defines God from conceptual attributes that describe God from what is seen and experienced. Siyovelwa and Kalenga explain God in a way that is very similar to the assertion below.

The phenomenon of the Supreme Being in the traditional African worldview follows a consistent pattern; he is always the head of the spiritual hierarchy. He is the powerful God of nature, or man's creator (sometimes confused with man's first ancestor) or even the Creator of the universe, and Lord over it (Nurnberger 1973:21).

It should be noted that Nurnberger uses the male gender classification of God although AR does not classify God in any gender. The gender classification arises from English language. Conversely, Hehe and Swahili languages do not have gender differences for males, females and neuters. During this study it was found that the Hehe refused completely to classify the gender of God. In fact, some of the questions from the researcher about God scared the Hehe especially when they were asked about God's gender. Kiwola, a female AR member refused to continue answering questions because she felt offended when the researcher asked whether God was male or female.

It is thus indicative that Hehe people fear and revere God, but do not sacrifice or perform rituals to God. Not because they do not want to sacrifice or perform rituals but because they think people cannot communicate directly with God. They have the highest regard for God and in relation to created things, such as mountains, rivers, the sun, the moon, stars, and forests. They speak about

God with exceeding care and they never allocate God to a place (Kalenga 08-10-2002: Ilogombe). There is no information about a specific place that would be identified as God's sanctuary where the Hehe people sacrificed or performed rituals to God. Even during the community rituals such as rain making the place that was used in certain year would not be necessarily used the subsequent year. If the ritual were to be repeated the following year the sanctuary would be decided in the same year by the responsible diviner. In addition, there is no graven images, or any creature that can represent God. There is also no means through which the Hehe claim to communicate with God. However, Ngandango (12-11-1998: Mhiliwa), Siyovelwa (04-03-1999: Iringa), Msigomba, J. (22-10-1997) and Mgeyekwa (1990:28-29) maintain that the ancestors had the ability to communicate with God but that ability is unknown to the living people. Siyovelwa and Ngandango add that a black male sheep was sacrificed on the occasions when the living wanted the ancestors to communicate with God. The black sheep symbolised the mystic and concealed communication between the ancestors and God. The sheep was, and still is a sign of humbleness and compromising behaviour.

Ngalembula (25-8-1999:Isagwa) claimed that ancestors were afraid of God. He added that the notion of ancestors' communication with God was influenced by Christian thought and practice. Several other informants refuted the notion of communicating with God directly or indirectly through ancestors. Moto (02-09-1998 Kidabaga) said, "*Hwehwe i Nguluvi iyetu yilipalaveti, ngaya tembeli au mupadili*" (Our God is private, There is no temple or priest). Moto, like many of the Hehe, did not want to explain how the Hehe communicated with God.

In a continued discussion with the researcher Moto did not even want to define God but described God just as others did with the attributes of *Magava* (creator) and *Kimenya* (the ultimate force). He emphasized the fact of privacy in which God cannot be directly consulted. In support of that, Kalenga strongly denied the notion that ancestors communicate with God. He spoke with

assurance that ancestors were afraid of God (08-10-2002: Ilogombe). With these contentions the researcher adopted the arguments given by Ngangango, Siyovelwa, Msigomba and Mgeyekwa that ancestors were requested to communicate with God but the living Hehe and Bena (from Mgeyekwa) did not know how that communication was done. Mgeyekwa asserted "*Das Gebet lautet: 'Ihr Goetter (Ahnem), bittet Gott fur uns!' - Na Nyenye Minguluvi mutunyilikilage hwa Nguluvi*". (The prayer: "Esteemed gods beseech God on our behalf").<sup>4</sup>

### 2.3.2 Fundamental Attributes of God

The deliberations in the previous pages of this chapter indicate that there is only one name of God, which is *Nguluvi*. All that is spoken about God amongst the Hehe, other than the direct use of the name refer to the fundamental attributes of God. By the phrase "fundamental attributes" the researcher refers to those attributes that are common amongst the Hehe, and presumably widely used amongst Africans. In his writings, Mbiti (1980:30-33) has maintained that God in AR is omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent, transcends and immanent. Many scholars have argued that Mbiti used Greek religious philosophy and pasted those concepts to AR. Gehman has defended the arguments of Mbiti concerning the attribute of an omniscient God in AR by saying,

Various authors object to any suggestion that the God of AR was omniscient. They claim that it is a Greek thought, not a traditional African thought. To them this is reading into AR what is not there. Perhaps! But I have found no evidence that traditional Africans believe that God is unlimited in his knowledge. Perhaps they have not speculated abstractly to think that God has full knowledge of everything, everywhere, always and from eternity past and is therefore omniscient. But we do find universal confidence in the Supreme Being who knows everything about people and their activities and from whom we can hide nothing. We may deceive

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<sup>4</sup> Mgeyekwa wrote in German and translated into Bena. The researcher has made the translation of both German and Bena in English. Mgeyekwa uses the term *minguluvi* for ancestors to show that there were times when ancestors were considered as having a supra-natural and mystic ability that was beyond human comprehension.

the ancestors but we cannot deceive God (Mbiti, in Gehman 1989:189).

The contentions lead to the need of investigating and making thorough critiques the ideas of Gehman in relation to what the Hehe say about God. What the Hehe say might or might not be what Mbiti or Gehman is saying. Our interpretation might also be incorrect but by bringing all arguments together, we might come up with a better understanding.

We assert that the concept of an omnipresent God amongst the Hehe might be partly correct but not fully correct. The Hehe say *Nguluvi kwali mbepali* (God is always there) (Siyovelwa 04-03-1999:Iringa). *Nguluvi kwali mbepali* can also mean that only God has eternal presence and the rest of creation receive its presence through God's presence. It can also mean that only in the presence of God does being and presence become a reality. According to the Hehe, people live in God's presence when they are alive and when they are dead, but God cannot live in peoples' being or presence. People cannot run away from God but God who is present has concealed that presence to the point where nobody can see God. Nobody can hide or deceive God but God is extremely hidden. God can be present in a place where and when nobody else is present. To this the Hehe say *Nguluvi pwali pe wipwali na pesi wi pwali* (God is present where you are present and where you are not present (Mwendikibalula 25-08-1999:Ifuwa). In this way, Hehe fear God every day and everywhere. They cannot stand, sit down or kneel anywhere and speak to God without acknowledging God's presence. They cannot withstand God's rage when God appears in thunder, flood or typhoon (Kalenga 08-10-2002: Ilogombe). It is therefore enough to say, "let God be God who is ever present and hidden in God's own right". Hence, for the Hehe God's presence, concealment and being belong together. We consider that the Hehe do not want to place the presence of God to a macro or micro, single or plural, locality but to an anonymous locality. They simply want to acknowledge the being, the force, concealment and the presence of God but they

acknowledge the fact that all these are in the judgment of *Nguluvi*. The being of God is completely independent and hidden from people; it cannot be discerned or described. God is thus present in a hidden manner and the best way to relate to this present God is to stay away or avoid that God. If it is permissible to use foreign terminology to describe the attributes of God then it is right at this juncture and on the basis of the argument brought forth, to say God for the Hehe is both omnipresent and *Deus absconditus* (hidden God).

The way that is preferred by the Hehe to describe and relate to God has been observed among the Kikuyu of Kenya. They do not speculate, and do not define God or relate God to any ancestral lineage. The assertion below affirms the argument.

(3) No one has ever seen God (invisible, spiritual {and} hidden) (4) God is the greatest or the ultimate mystery. (5) God is the most unique: he is in a class all by himself: he has no father, no mother; no wife, nor family nor relatives (Kibicho 1978:372).

The concept of an omniscient God can be partially defined in the etymological study of the name *Nguluvi*. The use of the term "omniscient" arises from the notion that God knows everything. We can discern the concept of an omniscient God if we study other conceptual attributes of God such as *Nguluvi munyidzela* (God who knows all). To the Hehe that means God's knowledge is unlimited. God has full knowledge of everything, everywhere, always and in all creation (Makilika 25-08-1999:Isagwa). The term *munyidzela* can be equalled to the Christian notion as found in Luke 12:7, where the author says that God knows even the number of hair on our heads. *Nguluvi Munyidzela* also means, "God who knows each behaviour and movement of every creature, one who is in full control of all human thought and one who governs all things that were known in the past, those that are known now and those that will be known in the future". Concerning the future, one scholar of AR said,

Because God knows the future, nothing can take him by surprise. He cannot be deceived, or frightened, or defeated. Nothing can be

done by anyone, anywhere, that he does not already know about before hand. He knows the result of every action that will take place (O'Donovan, 1996:58)

The claim that the term "omniscient" is borrowed from Greek thought is obvious and fair. Nonetheless, an etymological study of *Nguluvi* as the name of God shows that the name arises from the word *kiluvi* (Mgeyekwa 1990:28). *Kiluvi* is an active verb in an indefinite form. It simply means that no one can reduce or add to what God is. *Kiluvi* is cognate with the passive verb of *anguluvike* in the first person singular. *Atuguluvike* is in the third person plural. *Ngulwime* is in the first person, active and singular. *Ngulwime* means, "I do not ask questions and question and I do not go out looking for answers. What I see is what it is and that is the end of everything".

For example, when an unexpected death occurs and when the problem cannot be solved by the knowledge of the diviners and through sacrifices to ancestors, the Hehe say that the dead person has made us dumbfounded. The Hehe speak of the dead person by expressions such as *gito*. They say, "*gito atuguluvike!*" ("*gito* has made us speechless, without action and with no direction to turn to") (Kalenga 08-10-2002: Ilogombe). *Atuguluvike* brings the term *ngulwime*, which means, "I surrender". The deep philosophy behind it means, "the only way to stand on the safe ground is to accept what I see and hear". When the Hehe and Bena people come to a point where no answers are found they say "*tugulwime*". This has the implication that any thing beyond that human experience is none but God. No more search or speculations should be entertained. Thus beyond speculation and search there is God (*Nguluvi*). This view is also found among the *Badimo*. Nurnberger (1973:21) describes the situation as having reached a point where it is no longer searchable and reasoning on the situation has to come an end. At this point, the Hehe say, "*Nda nyela kwekwivala, Manyi yimwene Nguluvi*" (Let everybody know that this is the end, beyond this there is God) (Kalenga 08-10-2002: Ilogombe).



This etymological study illustrates that *Nguluvi*, who is the Supreme Being is the God who knows all and rules all knowledge. In other words, explaining God in any way that pretends to know God is blasphemous and unwarranted. There is no Hehe person who can stand among people and claim to have the knowledge of God. No Hehe in AR can make a verbal, straightforward pronouncement that God is omniscient, but the way they describe God's knowledge indicates that God is omniscient.

The researcher was first annoyed with some of the interviewees who responded with "*manyi*" or "*manyi yimwene*". These were most of the responses to the questions "How much does God know?" And "With what or how can we compare the knowledge of God?" "*Manyi*" (I do not know) or "*manyi yimwene*" (No one knows except God) were the common answers. In the course of research the researcher conceded to the notion that the responses of *manyi* or *manyi yimwene* were the most profound terms or phrases that described the knowledge of God. We will use the response from the first person that responded with *Manyi yimwene Nguluvi*. This person was Mdunange (25-8-1999: Isagwa).

*Manyi* or *manyi yimwene* are intricate phrases. Firstly, they imply that no person can speak with assurance about the welfare of God. God is *Manyi*. When *Manyi* stands alone it means, "I do not know and I do not intend to know because I cannot know". The researcher thinks that Mdunange was saying, "It is only God (*yimwene*) who knows about all realities and no one can know about God". When *Yimwene* stands alone, it is interpreted as self-knowing. *Mwene* means "alone in himself or herself". We could even interpret *mwene* as "the owner of selfhood".

Secondly, if we allow ourselves to think in the Hehe perspective, then we should once again acknowledge the similarity between the Greek concept of an omniscient God who in Hehe would include the notion of the only all-knowing and self-knowing God. No Hehe described God directly as omniscient but the indirect explanations indicate that the Hehe concur with that definition of God's

omniscience as argued by Mbiti when he says, "On the other hand, God's omniscience is absolute, unlimited and intrinsically part of his eternal nature and being" (Mbiti 1980:31).

The other concept that is important for our knowledge in AR amongst the Hehe is the Omnipotent God. The concept of an omnipotent God is close to that of a living force, which is *Kimanya* (the unconquerable power). The concept can be elaborated further in Hehe. In some instances, *Kimanya* means "the ability to crush anything and everything from what exists to non-existence". Hence, the term indicates that *Kimanya* is the force and power over and above everything. The Hehe say, "*Kangi yi mwene ye Kimanya munya ludali*" (Mungai 02-02-1999: Iringa). A transliteration of this sentence reads; "For God only has the utmost power." Such a statement is uttered when the Hehe want to express the fact that nothing is too hard for God because God is *Kimanya*. *Kimanya* is also described as an overall mystic power. No mystic power, supernatural or ancestral, can reach God. *Kimanya* is God who is divine in power and in selfhood (Siyovelwa 04-03-1999: Iringa). *Kimanya* is also related to sustenance. In this, the Hehe believe that the power of God sustains people and creation and to that they say, "*i Nguluvi yi mavika*" (God who sustains). On the contrary, when God shows power in the death of a person the Hehe say "*i Nguluvi yi malekasa*" (God who separates) (Kiponda 10-01-1997: Iringa).

*Malekasa* is the common term for someone who separates people but in AR amongst the Hehe "*malekasa*" means a peaceful "life allotment" between the "living dead and the living- living (Balcomb 2004:3).<sup>5</sup> It is believed amongst the Hehe that even if people die they do not perish. They just change from the living-living to the living-dead. The living-living and the living-dead are never separated. They communicate and commune through rituals and sacrifices. Death, whether inflicted by evil people or a common calling by ancestors is a

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<sup>5</sup> The expression "the living-living" is borrowed from Balcomb in an article entitled "*Aspects of Christian Mission in South Africa-Case studies analysis approach*".

home return. God as *malekasa* can use the ultimate power of *Kimenya* and separate people. That means God allows people to live in natural and supernatural homes. A diviner can be consulted about the cause of death and in most cases the diviner has to provide the answer to the question, "who is the cause" and not "how" or even "why", did the death occur. Those questions of "how, why" and "what" concerning death of a person are in God's hands. Some people have claimed that Africans do not ask why because they are not interested in logic. That assertion is not true. For the Hehe, to seek the answer to the question "why" is unnecessary because it is only meant to intimidate God.

These descriptions seem to fit with Mbiti's definition of the omnipotence of God as he says, "Among many peoples, God's omnipotence is seen in his exercise of power over nature" (Mbiti 1980:32). The definitions fit because they portray that all power rests in God's hands as asserted hereafter,

Just about everyone realizes that God is all-powerful (omnipotent). People in Africa have understood this truth for countless centuries as they observe the natural creation of God around them (O'Donovan 1996:53).

*Kimenya*, the omnipotent God, is therefore linked to the attribute of a practical Force of *Nguluvi* the Supreme Being who in this line of thinking resembles the Hebrew *Yahweh* who is the source of experienced reality, and where experienced reality includes good and bad experiences. (Nurnberger 1973:25-26). This then leads us to conclude that the Hehe speak about God's power as an experienced incomprehensible reality.

The other concepts that demand our attention are transcendence and immanence. Mbiti and other scholars in AR have used these concepts. We are led to study these concepts because they are commonly expressed amongst the Hehe. The use by Hehe is in agreement with the perceptions amongst the Kikuyu as quoted hereafter. "God is both removed, hidden, far from men, and at the same time close to them (i.e. transcendent and immanent)" (Kibicho 1978: 372).

The transcendent God is closely related to the eternal God. The Hehe expression for this notion is *Nguluvi ng'ana mvango n'uwuduga* (God who denies the beginning and the end) (Mdunange 25-08-1999: Isagwa). The expression *Nguluvi ng'ana muvango* is also interpreted as God who has no forerunner or predecessor and one who shall never have a successor. Sometimes the Hehe say *Nguluvi ngaya muvambo* (God has no beginning or prologue) *kangi ngaya lwapu* (and has no end or conclusion) (Mdunange 25-08-1999: Isagwa). This is the same as saying,

He is made by no other; no one beyond Him is. There cannot be, and there is no 'beyond' God: He is the most abundant reality of being, lacking no completeness. He transcends all boundaries. ...He even defies human conception and description (Mbiti 1980:33).

These two Hehe expressions for transcendence and immanence as confirmed by Kibicho and Mbiti affirm Luther's theology of the hidden God. As we quoted above from Kibicho God is removed and hidden, far and close to people. The author of this thesis has an opinion that another perspective from other tribes in Africa may bring forth a deeper understanding of this dualistic formulation. We will use the observations from other Bantu tribes from literary sources to elaborate the point further. The Sotho according to Nurnberger, relate to *Modimo*, who is God amongst the Sotho in the same way *Nguluvi* is among the Hehe. The first observation is that "*Modimo* does not speak". The second observation is "a complete absence of any positive reaction of man to the existential experience of *Modimo*" (Nurnberger 1973:180). The second observation is thus elaborated,

Our second observation is a complete absence of any positive reaction of man to the existential experience of *Modimo*. There is no prayer and no sacrifice directed towards *Modimo*. There is no shrine and no priesthood. There is no attempt of mediation on the side of the diviner. There is no ritual of any sort, whether in terms of religion or magic. There are no taboos, which are unambiguously connected with *Modimo* himself (Nurnberger: 180-181).

These observations fulfil one primary concept of God that was stated in defining the omnipresence of God, which is the notion of the hidden God. It is important to take note that the present God is unseen; the nearest divine (supernatural) is the farthest in terms of human nature. The totality of all these is Luther's concept of the hidden God. Hence, God in AR is (*Deus absconditus*) hidden.

It might help us to summarize our findings for the concept of the hidden God with the formulations from Nurnberger who uses Luther's views and compares with the understanding of God among the Tswana. The relationship between the hidden God and people is put as follows:

God is then very close to us, around us and through the entire world. But on such an overwhelming scale, he cannot be grasped or perceived by us. We fail to understand his purposes and do not even realise he is present. A fish knows nothing of the ocean in which it swims, in which it begins and ends its life, although its very skin is in contact with it all the time. Luther calls this experience of the *Deus nudus* (naked God), the God with whom one cannot communicate and who one cannot understand, who is therefore, the *Deus absconditus* (hidden God) (Nurnberger 1985:46).

The researcher concurs with the assertions above because the name and attributes of God as portrayed by the Hehe are ways of proving that God who is around us, in us and in whom all our being and all creation depend, as Nurnberger claims, God is always experienced but hidden. For the Hehe all reality-animate, or inanimate, and post-animate represents God who is present, most powerful, most knowledgeable, and most distant. Therefore, God is beyond reach but God's force is always felt at the closest range because God is the living force. Although God is the concealed reality, God is at the same time the reality that cannot be avoided.

With all that has been said so far, one could say that Christianity did not bring, introduce or reveal God in Africa and especially amongst the Hehe (See also arguments by Setiloane, 1978:402), rather Christianity confirmed, added, and

to a certain extent, deepened, and perfected the understanding of God amongst the Hehe. In view of these arguments Okorochoa says,

A new scheme of faith can find a hearing only by appealing to religious instincts and susceptibilities that already exist. And it cannot reach those [instincts] without taking into account the traditional form in which all religious feeling is embodied, and without speaking the language which men accustomed to these old forms understand (Okorochoa 1987:5).

For the sake of demonstrating the authenticity of Christian conversion amongst the Hehe one could say Christianity was not a negative or destructive religion over and against AR, instead Christianity concurred and confirmed that God is *Nguluvi*. This means, Christianity proclaimed the same God as in AR and that is why God retained the same name. The name *Nguluvi* is God's identity. Therefore, God's identity and character remained unchanged.

In all interviews that the researcher conducted with the Hehe, Africans from other tribes and the missionaries, he asked this question: What is the difference between the Christian God and God in the AR amongst the Hehe? Most of the respondents had one answer. - "It is the same God". One of them remarked, "How can God be different and still retain the same name?" (Msume 20-07-2003: Luganga). If indeed God remains the same God, with the same name and the same attributes, or even if some attributes are added or refined, we ask ourselves, which God is the Christian God amongst the Hehe? Isn't God the same one who has been long known through AR? This leads us to the opinion that the Hehe converted to the new faith but not a new God. The conversion of the Hehe from AR to Christianity was a continuity of faith to an in-depth understanding of the same God who was believed in AR with new approaches to the same God of AR.

Mbiti argues in the same way as asserted in herein and he says,

The process of continuity means that the Christian Faith establishes links with areas of African Religion, which largely resemble Christian teaching. At these points the same or similar ideas meet

and merge into each other without conflict and people feel "at home."

For example, the concept of God is common in both Christianity and African Religion. The Biblical God is not unknown to African peoples. For thousands of years they have known him as creator and sustainer of all things. For this reason the preaching of the Gospel and the translation of the scriptures use African names for God in each area of the continent. The concept of God is a point of continuity (Mbiti 1978: 309).

A theologian might ask, was there any conversion to that effect? Yes, there was a turning through incarnation and the suffering of Jesus Christ that made God deeply and fully known and confirmed the AR faith through the event of Christ. Bediako helps us to understand the encounter between AR and Christianity when he says,

Accordingly, African Christian experience emerged as not much more than a refinement of the experience of the "old" religion, and the vindication and the affirmation of African selfhood, which, at the start, had been conceived as the task of the Church, later came to be entrusted to the revitalisation of the "old" religions, with their "God given heritage of indigenous spiritual and cultural treasures" (1996:5)

He argues further saying,

In other words, as well as a wide spread consensus that there does exist an African pre-Christian religious heritage to be taken seriously, there has been also the realisation that it is important to recognise the integrity of African *Christian* experience as a religious reality in its own right. The view here is that Christianity, as a religious faith is not intrinsically foreign to Africa. On the contrary, it has deep roots in the histories of the peoples of the continent, whilst it has proved to be capable of apprehension by Africans in *African* terms, as demonstrated by the vast, massive and diverse presence of the faith in the African life. In other words, the eternal Gospel has already found a local home within the African response to it, demonstrating that Christ had effectively become the integrating reality and power linking the "old" and the "new" in the African experience (Bediako 1996:6)

Therefore, the attributes of God in AR are not in contradiction with what Christianity teaches about God. Moreover, for Lutherans among whom this research is done, Luther's doctrine of the hidden God is vivid in AR amongst the Hehe. It is also vivid amongst those tribes from whom we have quoted. Those are Kamba as elucidated by Mbiti, amongst the Kikuyu as elucidated by Kibicho, amongst the Sotho as elucidated by Nurnberger and among many tribes of Africa as elucidated by McVeigh and other scholars of AR. It is appropriate to affirm Bediako's assertion that, "The God of Africans has turned out, after all, to be the God of Israel whom the Christians worship" (1995:213).

The terms "deepening", "confirming" and "perfecting" of the understanding of God need to be clarified. These three aspects will be discussed further in the last subsection of this chapter concerning the notion of cross-fertilization. Nevertheless, three aspects seem to have deepened, confirmed and perfected the understanding of God amongst the Hehe. These are the Word, the Word becoming flesh and dwelling among us, and the notion of God with us as Immanuel. A brief consideration is made hereafter in connection with the three aspects.

The first consideration will be about the impact of the Word of God. John 1: 1 in Hehe language reads, *Pamuvango kwali kwina Liswi, kangi i Liswi ili lyali kwa Nguluvi, kangi i Liswi lyali Nguluvi* (In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God). Any Hehe person would accept that one of the attributes of God is the Word because the Word has authority. When the Hehe report that an announcement from a leader or chief they say, *Nyela! mupulikise iliswi* (Please listen to the word). Word means, "declaration", "ultimate command", "pronouncement" and "a statement". Yes, indeed for the Hehe God who is the Supreme Being and a Living Force can be manifested in power and authority through the Word. In this perspective, Christian faith teaches that the Word is none other than God. This was new. It meant this; over and above



everything, beyond all human limits and all natural and supernatural powers, there is God's speech.

The second consideration is the notion of God becoming flesh and dwelling among us (Jn 1:14). The notion was a new scheme of faith as Okorocho stated hitherto. It needed enough interaction and exchange of ideas between AR and Christianity. However, the event of Christ through the concept of incarnation explains the fundamental AR principle. AR is relational. One could say the concept of God becoming flesh could be summarised as God's initiative of forming a new relationship with human beings. Penoukou (1991:25) brings the idea of incarnation together with creation. God who created without the help of human beings brings salvation and wants solidarity with human beings.

An adoption of ideas from Penoukou could be interpreted that the event of Jesus Christ through incarnation can have "the christological treatment" that is from God but as "proposed here [it] will take its point of departure in a basic anthropological datum" (1991:27). It is clarified further that God initiated the process of salvation in a manner that human beings would perceive. Hence, even though incarnation is divine, the Word became flesh so that the divine could take the anthropological expression and be understood from human cultural elaboration and still achieve the divine will.

Our proposition to begin from the anthropological phenomenon, with a view to an original encounter with the Jesus Christ event, in no way implies that the latter is to be determined by the former. In other words, we know full well that the object to be believed is not to be gauged by the yardstick of anthropological data, or of any cultural elaboration. Our proposition is to attempt to discover and articulate the interrogations and aspirations imbedded in a precise anthropological datum with a view to investigate them in the salvation project of the Crucified Risen One. The goal of the like undertaking is not, then, to reduce the content of faith in Christ to human questions, but rather to begin with the latter in a concrete enterprise of conversion, of actual questioning, of these human questions. Our intent is an undertaking ultimately opening out upon the infinite Hope of the Risen One. That is to

say, here as elsewhere, the decisive criterion of judgement is not our cultural legacy but the Word made flesh (Penoukou 1991:28).

These assertions by Penoukou underline the assumption that the concept of incarnation, "God becoming flesh and dwelling among us" as one that turns the mind of Africans from their pre-Christian experience that God moved from the state of being hidden and invisible to a relational God who did not only come to people but became human so that people could "see, hear and touch him as he dwelt not above or apart from us but truly among us" (Kraft 1981: 173). By anthropological datum the researcher makes a simpler interpretation that God did not want us to know about him but to experience him and to interpret our human experience with him. Moreover, anthropological datum could also be interpreted as "God in Jesus became so much part of a specific human context that many never even recognised that he had come from somewhere else" Kraft: 175). For our thesis, God broke through the Hehe notion of isolating the Supreme Being and became specific in their pre-Christian experience and formed a new experience of solidarity with them.

The notion of God with us as Immanuel (Mtt 1:23) could only be explained in the attributes of God's omnipresence and immanence. That means the Hehe notion of *Nguluvi pwali* became true through incarnation. God with us portrayed a deeper meaning of God's direct involvement in human life. This was also portrayed in the event of Christ as explained in the third chapter. Thus, Christianity unknowingly built its salvation story on the AR foundation and possibly on part of the AR foundation. That is where our argument of authenticity arises.

### ***2.3.3 Contextual Reflections Concerning Authenticity***

This subsection makes reflections on what has been said so far. The reflections start by the reminder that the first German missionaries who came to Iringa amongst the Hehe had been in Africa before. Some had worked among

Africans for a lengthy period, some for a short period and others had just been exposed briefly. History shows that they had worked among the Zulu, Pedi, Sotho, Venda and Tswana in South Africa (Sehmsdorf 1991:9-10). The same German missionaries had worked in the Southern part of Tanzania amongst the Nyakyusa since 1891 and Kinga since 1893 (Koebler 1998:1). It is thus expected that such missionaries would have understood that God was not a new concept in Africa. The historical information will be elaborated further in the next chapter.

In the third chapter of the book of Exodus (3:14), God makes a self-introduction that underlines the basic fact that God exists in selfhood but requires a relationship of trust and obedience. That is one of the facts that had to be comprehended in AR because the name *Nguluvi* does not correspond exactly with the name *Yhwh* (Yahweh), but in Ex. 33:20, as supported by Gen. 16:13; Jn 1:18; 6:46; 1Ti 1:17; 1Jn 4:12 the definition of God as *Nguluvi* fits well. God is understood as an ineffable beyond, one who is beyond speculation and one who cannot be seen by human eyes. The African understanding of God is compatible with Luther's *Deus nudus* (the naked God) hence in agreement with *Deus absconditus* (the hidden God), which, hopefully, German Lutheran missionaries knew and would be expected to apply in the context.

However, the principal argument is that whatever missionaries proclaimed, the Hehe perception of God as *Nguluvi* remained to signify the God they believed in and the God who was preached by missionaries. In African culture, the name has an identity. It is impossible in African culture to retain the name and attributes as well as the basic identity and claim to bring a change. Moreover, any additional information about God that Christianity has offered does not change the fundamental attributes of God. We therefore underline that the Hehe recognized that Christianity proclaimed the Supreme Being and the Living Force.

In the course of proclaiming the Word of God in the vernacular, it could be construed that God spoke to the Hehe deep down in their hearts through their mother tongue. The point about authentic conversion and the notion of the mother tongue could be stated that God supplied the information, which was understood by people of all ages and all levels of knowledge. Seen from perspective of AR we could as well say the knowledge that was availed by God could not be availed by mere human beings. However, God availed that knowledge through human beings. In that way we could as well say it is not in what missionaries conveyed but what God who communicated with the Hehe through missionaries that brought forth the transformation of the Hehe. Therefore, it appears that the knowledge of God in AR came from God and was revealed by God. It could also be construed that the same God who availed the information about himself also willed to perfect the knowledge of who that God is. Seen from the AR perspective it could be said that God made a self-revelation in AR. It could also be said that the same God who made a self-revelation in AR made a self-revelation through Jesus Christ. Therefore, the translated Word of God as the revealed information of God deepened and perfected the knowledge about God for those who heard and converted to Christianity.

#### ***2.4 The Centrality of Ancestors in the African Religion***

Ancestors are at the centre of African community life and belief. The fourth commandment of the Lutheran catechism reads, "Honour your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you" (Ex. 20:12). As far as AR is concerned, honouring your father and mother includes the honour of ancestors. "To take the ancestors away from an African is robbing him of his personality" (Setiloane 1978:406).

The centrality of ancestors is expressed through rituals and sacrifices. Four main types of rituals were identified during fieldwork. The first type is family worship that involves only family members and is associated with common

family matters such as the duty to make libation to ancestors on a regular basis, to make an updated report to ancestors about the family situation, and to make regular propitiations to appease the ancestors. Sometimes, family rituals included requests to ancestors for healing or protection of a family or clan (John Msigomba 22-10-1997: Iringa and Makilika 25-08-999: Isagwa). There is another family worship that is associated with special medical dispensation or a nullification of deadly revenge (*litego*). *Litego* which transliteration is a "trap" can befall a family or clan as a result of an evil that has not been confessed. (Mdunange 25-08-1999: Isagwa).

The second type of worship is associated with rites of passage such as the birth of a new member in the family, puberty, marriage and death of a person in a family or clan. Ancestors have to be informed of what is transpiring among the living members of a family or clan. In that logic, religion is not an option but the primary factor of life from the day of birth to the day of death. Ancestors are always at the centre of every family activity, worship and sacrifice.

The third type of worship is associated with calamities such as floods, storms, typhoons, droughts, hunger, earthquakes and attacks by pests. Sacrifices in this worship are also given to clan ancestors, but in a conglomerate manner. A chief or sub-chief would have been advised or consulted diviners on an imminent disaster or a disaster that might have happened already. The respective leader summoned clan leaders to perform a ritual for their respective ancestors.

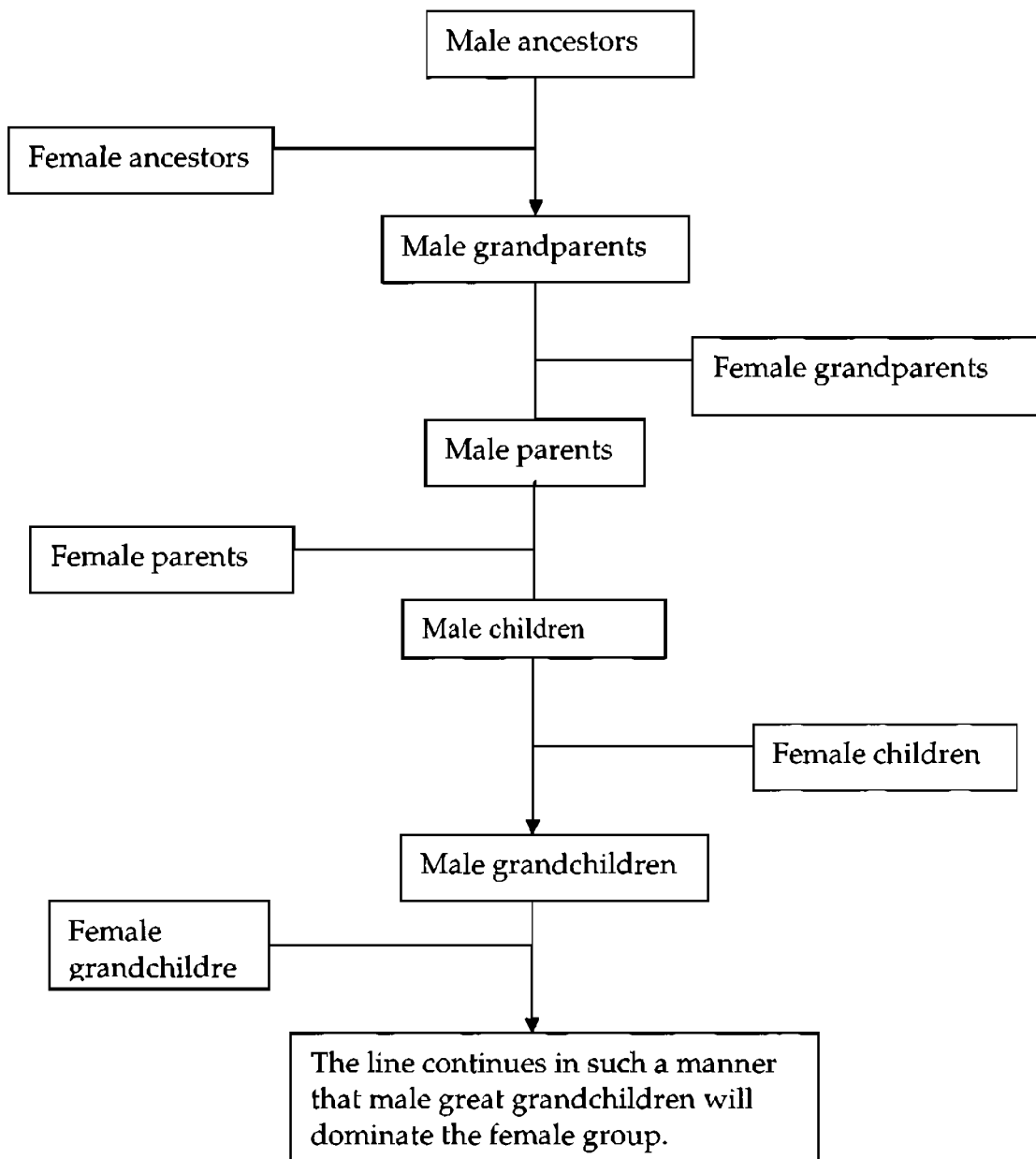
The fourth type of ritual is indirectly related to ancestors but in most cases to specific functional spirits. By functional spirits, we mean spirits such as those of war, power and divination. Spirits of power involved performances such as those of burying a dead chief or a dead chief's wife while being seated on a living person. The sacrificial rituals were done in the time of war named *mahomelo*, which were performed to induce courage and concealment to Hehe warriors against their enemies. These two types of rituals involved human sacrifice. The

information in these four paragraphs was given by Makilika (25-08-1999: Isagwa), Lwanzali (22-08-1999: Ilula) and Fulgence Malangalila (15-09-1997: Iringa).

Leaders of rituals were mainly first-born males. Leadership amongst the Hehe is patrilineal. However, the first-born male or female is always the leader of the family or clan. If the family or clan leader is a female, the first male in the line would be the one to perform the rituals under the dictation or in consultation with the female leader. The family lineage consisted of ancestors, great grand parents, parents, children and grandchildren (Ngalembula 25-08-1999:Isagwa).

#### **2.4.1 Family Rituals**

The first type of ritual is propitious. In this type of ritual, each family has an obligation to visit the ancestor, summon them by greetings and state the purpose of the visit. After stating the purpose, the family offers the required libations to ancestors at the sanctuary known as *fyanga* (graveyard) (Makongwa 27-09-1997: Ipalamwa). Families have an obligation to maintain a continuous communion and communication with ancestors. This is signified by a *nambika* (propitiation ritual) where libations through *munyeke* (some kind of uncooked maize flour porridge) and *finyunya* (lungs of an animal such as a cow, goat or sheep) were given to the ancestors as a way of summoning them to communion and communication with the family. The rest of the family normally communed by eating *wugali* (stiff porridge of maize or finger millet flour) with *nyama* (normally beef or mutton) and drinking together the local beer known as *wugimbi* (made of finger millet and maize flour). In the times of good harvest, the family communes by using *wugimbi wa nzuki* (local beer mixed with honey) (Malangalila 15-07-1997: Iringa)



**Figure 3: Hehe line of command and exercise of social and religious authority**

After eating and drinking together, the whole family goes into joyous celebrations that involved intensive singing and dancing. Everybody is expected to sing and dance. There were times in the past that such celebrations took three full days. While drinking in such occasions is permitted, getting drunk is an act of disgrace. Acts of immorality are also strictly forbidden. It is due to such restrictions that people drink slowly and steadily. When they sense that they are getting drunk, they stand up and dance. This practice has led the Hehe and most Africans to become good dancers and composers of songs (Ngandango 11-12-1998:Mhiliwa).

#### ***2.4.2 Rites of Passage***

The second type of ritual involves information sharing. Ancestors are to be informed of every rite of passage that comprised the whole life cycle from the birth of a new member in the family to the time of death. The name of the new member in the family is one of the most important pieces of information to the ancestors. The naming ceremony is done at the graveyard where the baby receives the name of one of the ancestors at the place where that particular ancestor was buried. Each newborn baby got the first name from one of the ancestors. The second name was the child's characteristic name such as *Ngavakavili* (God who recreates). The second name depends on various aspects such as the season in which it was born, the socio-political situation, the day of birth, the child's colour or complexion, the mood of parents and the geographical weather and any other situation, which the parents want to remember. For example, a person who was born during the rainy season would be given a name that relates to rain such as *Mtungulindonya* (the rain shaker). Likewise, would be the names concerning war, peace and any other significant occasion (Chavala 25-08-1999: Isagwa).



### 2.4.3 Corporate Rituals

This subsection is written in the past tense because the researcher was informed that the last time when such performance was done, that most of the interviewees could remember was 1998 during the torrential rains of El Nino. In the third type of rituals, the whole community was asked to participate. This was associated with calamities such as floods, storms, typhoons, droughts, hunger, earthquakes and attacks by pests. In the time of the catastrophe, each clan was required to contribute a sheep or goat for special worship, prayers or libations. The libations were called *nambika ya malugu* (corporate rituals for appeasement). Leaders in such ritual needed the support of clan elders (See also McVeigh 1974:11-12). Families or clans that hailed from rainmakers and those religious leaders who served in the house of the chief were required to bring cows. To do so they exacted a certain amount of cereal, honey or any other foodstuff from their subjects and with it they exchanged a cow from their herd or from one of their subjects.

This practice brought about a suppressive behaviour where any produce that looked better was confiscated on the pretext that it would be used during the corporate ritual. In that way, a big cow, regardless of who owned it, belonged to the chief. This applied also to a big goat, sheep and later on came the best harvest. The practice came to a point where the most beautiful women had to get married to chiefs or their assistants. It was permissible to kill a poor husband who was married to a beautiful girl and take the girl to the chief or his assistants. This caused many of those who felt that their wives were beautiful to stay away from the chief as much as they could.

During corporate rituals, clan representatives gathered at a neutral place, such as a thick forest, a big river, at the peak of a mountain or around a big stone. These spectacular sites were thought to host the spiritual powers of ancestors from different clans. The sanctuaries for floods, storms, typhoons or hunger were either on a high mountain or around a big tree. The sanctuary for drought

was either on the banks of a big river that was drying or in a thick forest that was also in danger of drying. The sanctuary for pests was on a big stone or high mountain from which the ritual performers could see as many farms as possible (Lwanzali 22-08-1999:Ilula).

It has been mentioned that in such a disaster the ritual performers invoke *Nguluvi* the Supreme Being through singing while seeking for God's mercy (McVeigh 1874:12). The common opinion is that such claims do not hold true amongst the Hehe. All adherents of AR support the researcher's opinion that there was no special ritual or sacrifice that invoke *Nguluvi*.

During corporate rituals elders made offerings in turns and repeated the same words such as the one written hereafter: *Va kuku ye mugonile mutudegepele mudaulile umudawo ugu* (Dear sleeping ancestors wake up, be merciful to us and sort out this problem) (Ngandango 12-11-1998: Muhiliwa and Lwazali 22-08-1999: Ilula). After these words the leader of the day, who was either a diviner or one of from the rain makers clan as appointed by the chief or sub-chief stood up and made a short farewell speech. The offerings consisted of the common *munyeki* (uncooked maize flour porridge) and *finyunya* (lungs of cows, goats and sheep) as narrated previously. If it was a time of drought, the rainmakers and diviners were consulted before the worship was conducted. If it was a pest attack, the diviners were also consulted before the worship was conducted. Some animal blood was sprinkled around the appointed sanctuary whenever any such worship was performed (Ngandango 12-11-1998: Muhiliwa and Lwazali 22-08-1999: Ilula).

#### ***2.4.4 Sacrifice and the Quest for Power***

The fourth type of ritual involved special sacrifice and sometimes it went as far as involving human sacrifice. There were two forms of this kind of practice. One was strictly private and the other was performed in public. The private one was a sacrifice for warriors, secretly known as *mahomelo* (for war).

All leading warriors needed some kind of magic for confronting their enemies. The magic was therefore named *migoda ja mahomelo* (special medicine for warriors) (Malangalila, F. 15-09-1999: Iringa and Lwazali 22-08-1999: Ilula).

This religious practice was especially strong among the Hehe because of their frequent heavy fighting with the Ngoni and other tribes. Every time the Hehe prepared for a battle, diviners were consulted. It is said that there were times when the diviners demanded blood from a *musutu* (slave) or *munyifuge* (domestic slave) who seemed strong and healthy. Once the demand was accepted the *musutu* or *munyifuge* died a mysterious death. All interviewees at Isagwa (25-08-1999) confirmed this information. In this way, warriors got extra courage. It was therefore believed that through this sacrifice the warriors were sometimes sheltered with some kind of invisibility from their enemies and spies (Malangalila 15-09-1997: Iringa).

The other human sacrifice involved the burial of a chief, sub-chief, or one of the chief's wives. This was described as *kutaga umutwa* (the chief on the lap) or *kupagata ilifimba* (lapping the corpse). Almost all interviewees aged above 65 confirmed this information. The chief, sub-chief or one of his wives who died was counted as one who was simply being sent away from the living community to join the ancestors or the living dead. In the case of burying the chief, sub-chief, or one of his wives, a strong male for a chief, or a strong female for a chief's wife was appointed for the burial as "sitting stools". It was believed that those who were appointed as sitting stools were to be servants of their masters and mistresses when they were upgraded to the position of ancestors.

It is narrated that certain clans were vulnerable to such sacrifices. The Tagamutwa and Mwamufimba clans confirmed that they were susceptible to the practice of the sitting stool. Tagamutwa means, "abandon the chief" and "Mwamufimba" means, "a person who is bound to the cadaver". In later developments, those clans were relieved from the practice and in their place war captives or obedient slaves were appointed to the task of being sitting stools.

Leaders of the chief's family or clans consulted with ancestors not only to receive the new comer but also to accept the one who escorted the aspiring ancestor (Tagamutwa and Mwamuwumbe 27-08-1999: Pommern). One historian confirms part of this information as asserted below.

These ruling families were often set apart from their subjects because, instead of throwing away the corpses of their dead into the bush to be destroyed by hyenas and vultures, they buried them together with a living person. In Kihehe this custom is described as *kupagata lifimba*. Members of particular families associated with chiefly dynasties were chosen for this task, which involved sitting in the grave and supporting the upper part of the chief's corpse in one's lap. Some of the chiefs' graves were marked by elephant tusks (Redmayne 1968: 40)

Such kinds of sacrifice seem strange and horrific. A one sided reading would look at such human sacrifices as belonging to AR hence consider AR with a negative view. It is indeed true that the information is horrific but the sacrifices have nothing to do with AR. They are issues of power and authority. Blood shedding and taking a person's life or putting another person's life into risk in order to guard power and authority are common in the Old Testament history and in the history of Christianity. Craving for power and authority are vivid in all nations and cultures are marked by deaths of millions of people. Church leaders and politicians have done that. Church history is filled with records of people who died because they were against the Pope, the confession of a particular church or the decisions church councils. History can prove that leaders of AR have caused death to fewer people than Judaism, Christianity, Islam and other religions that are called world religions. The Church of Christ has grown by stepping on the graves of its martyrs who were persecuted by people who wanted to protect their religious beliefs and power or those who felt that their authority was threatened by the presence of Christianity. Within this decade Jews, Muslims Christians and people of other faiths and social or political settings have died in the world because of religious fundamentalism and power

struggle. Therefore, human sacrifice, personal or impersonal and shedding another persons blood or taking away the life of a person for any religious reasons or political reasons is always unjustifiable.

Consequently, the author of this thesis argues that the realities and effects of sin are universal. The need for salvation is also universal. The author argues further that unless Jesus Christ is incarnate, and unless the suffering, humiliation and the shame of the cross turn to be part and parcel of an individual's life, even those nations that claim to be Christian nations would not qualify for authentic Christian conversion.

#### ***2.4.5 Social control, Purification and Security***

A person might commit an offence or transgress against another person and escape the necessary punishment. The offender might be know or unknown. The offended person will either send a word (*liswi or lidzwi*) around the village asking the transgressor to show up. If the transgressor does not show up, the offended person goes to a diviner (*umulagusi*) who would put a trap (*litego*) to make the transgressor confess. In practice, the trap causes harm, disease and death. Sometimes the offended consult diviners without sending the word to the community. For example, if death occurs in a family the bereaved do not announce in public that they will consult diviners. It is known by everybody that the bereaved will consult diviners. If there might be anybody who might have been the cause of that death or who might have participated in one way or another in causing such death, then that person is required to seek reconciliation and repentance. Such repentance and reconciliation is presided by elders of the families involved in the problem. A diviner gets involved when the offender does not show up for repentance and reconciliation. Depending on the kind of offence, the offended would require a payment of one of these, a sheep, a goat or a cow to make sacrifice of appeasement to the ancestors who would confirm the reconciliation between the offender and the offended. The offender's ancestors

will also need a sacrifice to cancel the probable revenge (Lwanzanli 29-10-2003: Ilula).

Other than social control and security, there are rites of purification. Some of these rites are restrictive and performed secretly. These included control measures and removal of curses, calamities, bad omen and malevolent forces in the community. These also were preceded by divination. Some of these practices had both positive and negative impacts on the Hehe society. Nevertheless, some of those practices became reasons for the Hehe to leave AR and convert to Christianity, as we will see in the sixth chapter. Respondents to the interviews and questionnaires referred to these rituals and practices as outdated and unbearable. These included the assassination of twins, assassination of albinos, killing men who impregnated women out of wedlock, and excessive charges in consulting diviners (Kikoti 27-08-1997: Pommern). These issues will also be dealt with in the sixth chapter concerning the motivations of converting to Christianity.

A special purification rite had to be conducted in a family where an albino was born. An albino was understood as a child whose conception was influenced by an angry ancestral spirits. The presence of the albino would cause disaster in the family. With that understanding, the child had to die. The same was done with a child who was born with a disability. A disability was a sign of non-acceptance by the ancestors (Kikoti 27-08-1997: Pommern).

A man who impregnated a woman or a girl outside of wedlock was to be beaten to death. The procedure for betrothing a girl or a divorced woman was to be followed strictly. Widows are not mentioned here because either a brother or a cousin inherited a widow on the 40<sup>th</sup> day after the burial of a husband. Widows or those who inherited them were sometimes appointed with or without their consent.

Any sexual intercourse before marriage was a cause of death. The easiest way of unveiling the secret of sexual intercourse was pregnancy. Most of the

men who committed that offence ran away from the village or respective community (Makongwa 27-09-1997: Ipalamwa). These practices should be termed cruelties. Such cruelties are very partial solutions. They are comparable to the practices of the Old Testament and the Islamic law that sanction death by stoning. The intention has always been, to bring discipline and order and with AR, to please the ancestors. Human right activists are totally against the practices and they have gained support worldwide.

#### *2.4.6 Case Study 1: Western Missionary's Visit to AR Sanctuary*

Pastor Dr Henrick Smedjebacka narrated this information to the researcher on the 12<sup>th</sup> July 1997 in Helsinki. The contact information of Smedjebacka is [Smedjebacka@felm.org](mailto:Smedjebacka@felm.org) or [www.mission.fi](http://www.mission.fi). Present at the interview were the former Finnish missionaries in Tanzania and Namibia as well as some officers of Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission (FELM). Among them was Pastor Erik Helminen who was by that time the Africa Secretary of FELM. His contact by e mail address is [erikk.heminnen@evL.fi](mailto:erikk.heminnen@evL.fi). More information concerning Smedjebacka is in appendix IV. Smedjebacka is a former Lutheran Finnish missionary to the Southern Highlands and a former mission director of Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission.

The validity of this information was confirmed by four Wanji people namely, Pastor Japhet Mbwani (30-07-1997: Kihesa), Lameck Sanga, (30-07-1997: Kihesa), Rachel Konga (29-08-1999: Ihemi) and Pastor Ludaliko Nselu, (02-08-1997: Ilambilole). The grandparents of the three interviewees came from the Wanji tribe and are members of the Iringa Diocese but Ludaliko Nselu was an eyewitness of the occasion.

The narrative is about a visit to the area of ancestor veneration. The researcher felt the need to include this story because there is a close resemblance of the ancestor veneration of the Wanji with that of the Hehe. Ngajilo was not

found to prove this information because he died in 1993 when the researcher was not aware of the story.

As an ongoing methodological reflection one could say Smedjebacka initiated a long-term interaction between Christianity and AR. There are still some contradictions and paradoxical discussions within the Hehe, Bena, Kinga and Wanji communities in the Iringa Diocese on how people should relate to the ancestors. Some Christians, including pastors, still owe strong allegiance to the departed community. It is worthwhile to learn from what happened in the past and see how some of the first generation Christians looked and related to ancestors and how they turned to Christianity. In part, this narrative set a ground for the consideration of the first line of thought that challenges the conversion of Africans from AR to Christianity and argues that Africans should have remained with their AR.

The interview was done with the intention of investigating what pioneer missionaries knew about ancestors and the related rituals and how they interpreted such rituals. The interview was also earmarked at making a comparison and a contrast on the understanding of AR between missionaries and the local people then investigate the reasons for the local people to turn from AR to Christianity. It will be discussed at a later stage on how African Christians have considered the relationship between them and ancestors.

The researcher was not aware of the story but Smedjebacka came up with the story when he was answering this question: According to what you know, how would you describe the African Religion? This question is in Appendix VIID, 2.

One day Smedjebacka asked his host, Ngajilo, to take him to an AR practising community where he could visit the place of ancestral worship. Ngajilo refused for some time but finally agreed. However, he requested Smedjebacka to respect the taboos and limitations of the visit. Smedjebacka was not supposed to enter the worship huts because he was not a religious leader.



He was warned that he should not take photographs, because if he looked straight at the graves, whether through a camera or the naked eye, he would become blind. However, this belief is slightly different amongst the Hehe and Bena. Hehe and Bena allow relatives to touch and stretch themselves on the graves of their ancestors when they talk or offer prayers of petition. They also allow some solemn dances around the graves if dances are intended to please the ancestors. Kinga and Wanji do not allow this except for religious leaders. Hehe and Bena cannot allow a person who does not belong to the clan even to visit the graveyards of their ancestors. (Makongwa 27-09-1997: Ipalamwa and Gaudenzio Malangalila 15-09-1999:Mlolo). A practising member of AR among the Hehe or Bena would not allow Smedjebacka to go to the graveyard.

As the two left for the village Smedjebacka took a camera in his bag without Ngajilo's knowledge. As they approached the area, they met people who were about 200 metres away from the worship huts, which housed the graves of ancestors. Ngajilo spoke to them in the Wanji language asking them whether it would be acceptable to proceed up to the huts. The villagers refused and Ngajilo told Smedjebacka that the nearest they could go would be 100 metres from the huts. Smedjebacka agreed to go that far. When they reached about 100 metres Ngajilo would not proceed. He turned his back to the huts because he was not a religious leader of that clan and according to the Wanji AR belief, he would immediately turn blind if he continued gazing at the huts. Ngajilo was a pastor, baptised for more than fifteen years before that date, but he still believed in some fundamentals of AR.

Smedjebacka went ahead to the huts, looking straight at them. The villagers who were 200 metres away yelled at Ngajilo asking him to stop the missionary from provoking the ancestors, because they would make him blind or even kill him. They believed that he would definitely turn blind or die. They yelled louder and louder appealing to him to stop what he was doing. Ngajilo was perplexed. Smedjebacka pursued his course, went straight into one hut after

the other, and took photographs. The villagers were dumbfounded. Ngajilo could not look at the huts or at Smedjebacka.

Smedjebacka completed his curiosity mission and returned to Ngajilo who had his back to the graves and huts. Smedjebacka returned to Ngajilo and took his hand, but Ngajilo hesitated for some time to look at Smedjebacka. He thought something bad must have happened to Smedjebacka. They walked together for about 20 metres, and then Ngajilo asked whether Smedjebacka had not become blind. Smedjebacka stood in front of Ngajilo, looked straight in his eyes and said, "I am not blind. I went into every hut and took photographs". Ngajilo said nothing. They came to the villagers who all looked at Smedjebacka; he had not turned blind.

Ngajilo burst into tears and told his people that the God of Christ was indeed God (*Nguluvi*). He told them that he believed in Him, but sometimes he feared to provoke his ancestors with his new faith. He pleaded to them all to come to the God of Christ. (Smedjebacka 12-07-1997: Helsinki).

As a result of this visit, many Africans in that village registered for baptismal lessons including the grandparents and parents of the three interviewees and Pastor Nselu. During baptismal classes, they told Smedjebacka and Ngajilo that they would still respect their ancestors but not participate in libations and sacrifices as they had before. They knew that God whom they had been hearing about through AR could not prevent them from believing in the God of Christ. They wanted to become Christians and learn more about God. Their worldview about God changed.

#### *2.4.7 A Critique to the Narrative*

In the time of this occasion Ngajilo had stopped to venerate the ancestors but his worldview about them had not changed to the extent that was expected by Smedjebacka. It is assumed that Ngajilo's understanding of Christianity and AR was radically altered after this occasion. Smedjebacka confirmed that Ngajilo

started to visit the religious leaders of AR and preached to them. He held discussions with them about the ancestors and participated in their funerals freely because he was now sure that those religious leaders were not as dreadful as he thought and as they claimed to be and would not harm him in any way (Smedjebacka 12-07-1997: Helsinki).

This case study is an example of the disparity in the perception of AR and ancestors between a missionary and an African Christian convert. Ngajilo had been baptised as an adult who had participated in ancestor worship many times. He had been a member of the church for some reasonable time, according to Mbwani, for not less than five years before he went for pastoral training. The minimum time for pastoral training would be three years. He had served several years before he met Smedjebacka. This implies that he had been a member of the church for more than ten years before this experience took place.

Why was Ngajilo afraid and how was he liberated from fear? We suppose that Ngajilo was afraid because he knew that ancestors needed their appropriate respect because they were the benchmarks of faith, norms, values and other community codes of conduct. He wanted to maintain a trustworthy relationship with his community. He was not ready to repudiate ancestors through technology and control. He had believed in God and had learnt more about God than what he knew in AR. He took ancestors as real and that have a set of truths. He knew there was another set of truths in Jesus Christ but he was still defining, comparing and contrasting the roles of ancestors and those of Jesus Christ. For him these sets of truths had not yet intersected. Therefore, he was afraid because while he believed in Jesus Christ he also still believed in the power of the ancestors. He preferred a peaceful separation between Jesus Christ and the ancestors. He did not want to provoke ancestors and he did not want them to provoke him (Konga 29-08-1999: Ithemi).

What were the impact and the result of that visit to the graves of the ancestors? Smedjebacka's visit to the sanctuary made the Wanji understand that

ancestors were not against Christian faith. Most of us converts would misinterpret Ngajilo when he said God of Christ is the real God. The author of this thesis interprets that Ngajilo was saying, "O.K. now I confirm *Nguluvi* is God in Christ. Ancestors have played their good role prior to Jesus Christ. Now they can be relieved most of their roles because the responsible person Jesus Christ has come". According to some adherents of AR one could also say the Wanji understood that Smedjebacka with his Christ had developed a friendly relationship with ancestors or ancestors had accepted Jesus Christ as being on their side and one who would protect and lead their families. Lwanzali (29-10-2003: Ilula) was of the opinion that many Hehe people think the presence of Jesus Christ does not annoy the ancestors. They also think that ancestors are not against Jesus Christ and the other way round. However, they know that Jesus Christ being the Son of God is more powerful than ancestors.

The researcher visited Lwanzali again to countercheck with him on various issues concerning ancestors, divination, and protection. Moreover, the researcher briefly narrated this story to Lwanzali. Lwanzali affirmed what Kalenga in Ilogombe had said (10-08-2002) that ancestors were afraid of God. They do not forbid people from going to Church. For example, Lwanzali is polygamous, he does not take Holy Communion but he is a regular churchgoer. He has an annual pledge and gives his harvest offering annually. His wives and children are baptised. It should also be noted that Christians in Tanzania have a very negative or reserved view concerning diviners. Most Churches in Tanzania have a bad impression of AR and ancestors although all African Christians do relate to ancestors in the same way. The LWF has addressed this issue and one of the statements reads,

(c) This early phase put an unfortunate and false stigma on AR in the minds of Christians in Africa itself and abroad. Many Christians especially older converts and those brought up in "extreme" evangelical circles, still react negatively with regard to AR. Even today some missionaries and African Christians do their utmost to

condemn it and demonstrate how according to them AR is of the devil and has to be wiped out. Consequently, they created and patronaged enmity among people through dividing them according to their religion into "good" (if they are Christians) and "evil" or "bad" if they followed AR, something which is extremely unethical and unbiblical. Unfortunately many individuals, families and communities have been driven to that state of mental attitudes and social behaviour.

(d) It suppressed and even silenced open discussion and objective evaluation of AR, especially among Christians. For that reason many of them are forced to behave hypocritically while practising some aspects of AR in secret or during major crises in life. This is not healthy and leads to serious pastoral problems, especially in connection with sorcery, spirits, health, sickness, healing, marriage, death and social relationships. (Mwakabana 1996:23-24).

Mwakabana gives us the summary concerning the situation in which Ngajilo found himself. He belonged to that early phase when, according to Mwakabana AR was associated with a negative stigma. Fortunately Ngajilo did not share this negative feeling against AR but he was in a situation where he was forced to have a negative attitude. Before the visit to the sanctuary, Ngajilo avoided communication and dialogue with adherents of AR. This author experienced such negative attitude. Many Christians were puzzled when the researcher interviewed diviners and adherents of AR, taking into account that the researcher is one of the top leaders of the Church.

The Isagwa interview proved that there was what has been described as "hypocritical behaviour" among Christians because there were times of crisis that "they hung their Christianity" and consulted ancestors or diviners (Ndolela 25-08-1999: Isagwa). A member of AR confirmed this. The summary of the confirmation had two points. First, Christians are more inclined to AR than the other way round because AR adherents do not go to Christians to seek help in matters concerning the church or AR but Christians do "come to us to seek help in times of crisis". Second, when death occurs in a family or clan Christians allow

those who are not church members to consult diviners and they participate in the discussion concerning the results of divination (Makilika 25-08-1999: Isasgwa).

There are two more issues to be addressed. The first issue is the behaviour of Smedjebacka towards AR and the second one is the fact that he did not turn blind. Almost all sociologists, missiologists and systematic theologians who have read this story think that Smedjebacka's behaviour lacked respect for AR. Mengele (28-09-2004: Iringa) commented that Smedjebacka's behaviour would be compared with a member of AR going to Church with a black sheep to be slaughtered for *finyunya* (lungs and liver), a twenty-litre pot full of *munyeke* (half cooked porridge) as well as cereals, meat and *wugimbi* for AR celebrations at the church altar. Even though his action made many people to come to Church his disrespect towards AR ritual sanctuaries reduced the credibility of ancestors. Missiologists describe such behaviour as naïve (Kraft 1991: Class notes, Fuller Theological Seminary). Parslaw (12-05-2004: Makumira) described such behaviour as one that was practised by many missionaries who wanted to show that AR was an unfounded belief. People seemed to accept the missionaries' point of view but in reality people continued to relate with ancestors. Retired bishop Swallo (10-05-2004:Iringa) commented that such an approach caused more problems to the Church in Africa because it brought forth church members who could be described with a Swahili saying, "*Funika kombe mwnaharamu apite*" (Cover the cup and let the bastard pass) or "*Mwarabu mbaya kiatu chake dawa*" (Even though an Arab is bad his shoes bring healing). The literal meaning of the first saying is that "do not allow a bastard (foreigner) to know the secrets of your family". Accept the bad foreigner's view so long as that view brings peace and prosperity to the community but do not allow the foreigner to exercise free movements lest the foreigner induces an unbecoming behaviour to the community. In other words, one could say the Wanji came to Smedjebacka's church because Ngajilo, who respected AR sanctuaries, was with him and Smedjebacka's movements were under control. It could also be added that

Smedjebacka's presence was beneficial to the community. Hence, one could also accept what Mbwilo, the current bishop of the Lutheran Church in the Wanji area said; "The Wanji might have thought that Smedjebacka had some divine power through which ancestors did not harm him even in his mischievous behaviour. The Wanji might have joined the Church to learn about that special power" (Mbwilo: 22-08-2004: Iringa).

What do we say about the fact that Smedjebacka did not turn blind? We have to ask ourselves whether ancestors had ever said that people who did not belong to the clan would turn blind if they visited them. We think the taboo was put to avoid disrespect and mishandling of the sanctuaries and the taboo became institutionalised and extended to include the myth of blindness.

Thus, the registration of many of the Wanji for baptismal classes was not motivated by Smedjebacka but one could say the calm behaviour of ancestors and the need to know more about the power that Smedjebacka possessed caused curiosity among the Wanji. The behaviour of Smedjebacka resembled that of diviners. It could be construed that the Wanji were interested in the diviner-like missionary. Moreover, Ngajilo and many more fellow Wanji people had accepted the Christian faith but also had a community to which they belonged and which they respected that is why Ngajilo did not join Smedjebacka to the sanctuary. It could therefore be interpreted that the registration for baptism showed the need to know about Jesus Christ within the cultural framework of the community.

Nonetheless, it could be assumed that Ngajilo and those who joined the Church in the early stage of mission work needed time to put the demarcating lines between that, which belonged to the church and that, which belonged to the community. Ngajilo did not allow the missionary to influence him in situations where he would offend his own community but allowed new experiences of reality to change him. It is presumed that the truth that could lead him to a paradigm shift about the role of Jesus Christ and ancestors had not taken place. When he was asked why he was afraid he simply answered, " I just tried not to

fear but I could not stop fearing" (Smedjebacka 12-07-1997: Helsinki). Dononda, a Bena from Pommern, said Ngajilo might have been a family leader and by virtue of his position as a pastor, he had special respect and integrity in the community that he did not want to lose (Dononda 28-08-1999:Pommern).

### ***2.5 Spiritual Realm: Benevolent and Malevolent Forces***

Fieldwork and literary resources indicate that the spiritual realm is a reality among Africans. All studies concerning AR have illustrated this fact. Understanding the African worldview has been one of the main concerns towards the investigation of authentic Christian conversion. An understanding of spirituality and the spiritual realm in the African community is one way of getting to know how AR had created situations that provided a ground for the propagation of the gospel either in a competitive way or in a supportive way.

According to AR and the Hehe cosmology spirits are around us on earth. An equivalent explanation by Mbiti reads,

These are the forces and things closest to human life. Therefore according to the belief of African peoples there are many such spirits. They are connected with: the earth, hills, mountains, rocks, boulders, trees and forests, metals, water in various forms (such as lakes, ponds, rivers, waterfalls and rapids, lagoons and river banks), different animals, insects, certain diseases and so on (Mbiti 1975:67-69).

One could add to this list with seas, oceans, some birds, reptiles (such as snakes) and strong wind because some spirits have been commonly associated with these, especially among the Hehe (Lwanzali 1999-08-22: Ilula).

The Hehe have classified all spirits to three types. All tree types are supernatural. The first type comprises of ancestral spirits that are called *masoka*. These are benevolent. The second type comprises of many sorts of malevolent spirits that are categorised in many ways according to their behaviour. These are normally related to sorcery and witchcraft. The generic terms for them all are



*mibepo* (spirits) or *mbepo* (air-like, unseen and dangerous creatures). These can cause diseases, disabilities, pain, stress, anxiety and death to individuals or groups of people. The third type is called *ng'ala* (cold wind or windy state). The *ng'ala* spirit refers to a disease, which makes a person temporarily crippled or mentally unstable.

The disease is called *Ng'ala* because it makes a person feel cold and temporarily paralysed. This can occur due to sexual intercourse between a biological parent and a child (a mother and a son or a daughter and a father). Due to the seriousness of the problem the Hehe have nicknamed the disease *ng'ala ya nguluvi* (cold from God) indicating that it is a disease that has arisen from disrespect to God and ancestors or in other words a disease that has arisen from immorality of the highest order. *Ng'ala* can also befall a person who might have abused or insulted ancestors.

One person named Beatus Mbeyunge, made a self-confession to the researcher (17-08-2002:Iringa) that he suffered from *Ng'ala* because he had insulted the ancestors when he sold the family sanctuary as part of the normal farm. He was thoroughly checked at the hospital, including having an HIV/AIDS test but no disease was found. When he went to diviners, they told him his problem. He confessed and made the necessary rituals and sacrificial demands. Mbeyunge lives until this day and is a member of the Roman Catholic Church.

### ***2.5.1 Ancestral Spirits, Divination and Protection***

Ancestral spirits are part of the family (Gaudenzio Malangalila 15-09-1999: Mlolo). They are the ones that possess a person and imbue the power of divination (Lwanzali 11-08-1999: Ilula and Kilovele 28-08-1999: Itimbo). Ancestral spirits can possess a person and speak to the family or clan through the possessed person. Family members can go into dialogue with these spirits and even reach a compromise on a controversial issue. It is even possible to argue

with them and correct them or rebuke them if they behave in an excessively unbecoming manner (Makilika 25-08-1999: Isagwa).

Ancestral spirits have five main functions. First, they guard their respective families. Under normal circumstances, faithful Hehe people would never go away from their homes without asking permission from their ancestors. They are expected to go to the sanctuary and seek permission. Seeking permission would entail proper explanation of the next abode. Ancestral spirits were expected to give escort and protection. If the sanctuary could not be reached because being far away or because of limited time, the applicant would report to the parents. This practice is called *kwilaga kumasoka* (reporting to ancestors) (Mdunange 25-08-1999: Isagwa). In this case, ancestors operated like immigration officers.

A person who joined the family had to be reported even before arrival. Ancestors could refuse a person's entry in the family who joined through marriage or servant-hood. You could hear people saying, *amasoka gakamubihye* (ancestors have refused the individual). This could happen even at point of death. A person could be in a coma for many hours or even days. If such a person did not succumb to death, the Hehe took the assumption that the person had been refused entry to the ancestral abode and rituals had to be done to appease the ancestors (Mdunange 25-08-1999: Isagwa).

Adherents of AR have expressed that *masoka* (spirits) do encourage and some times demand from family members to perform rituals and offer sacrifices. Adherents of AR added that sometimes spirits motivate the family members to form a united community. It is under this role that such spirits can influence new born babies to cry with much irritation in demand of a name from one of the ancestors (Kidanganyike 28-10-2003: Wotalisoli).

Furthermore, ancestral spirit could possess a person one or more people in the family. It is common to hear the Hehe say, *limwibete ilisoka* or *gavibete amasoka* meaning ancestral spirits have (caught) inspired an individual or certain people.

Such situations are understandable because people under such situations speak things that are not normal but relevant to the community (Kidwangidze 27-08-1999: Wotalisoli). The situation resembles prophesying as found in the Old Testament (1Sam 10:6, 19:23-24) and speaking in tongues as found in the New Testament (Acts 2:3-4; 1Cor 12:1-14:27).

Observations from the fieldwork came across the notion of "long term ancestors", implying those people who died a long while ago. It is believed among diviners that many of these do inspire people in the family or clan with the spirit of divination (*wulagusi*). In most cases, such spirits are benevolent. It happens very rarely that such spirits could be violent to some people for special disagreements (Lwanzali 22-08-1999:Ilula).

Under normal circumstances, a diviner is respected and the services offered thereby are also seen as valuable. There is an equivalent experience among the Zulu and one of them says, "The benevolent spirit is the spirit of ancestors which makes one a diviner or *isangoma*. ....The diviner is a link between the dead and the living" (Biyela 1996:61).

The main functions of a diviner (*mulagusi*) are to reveal the truth, act like police and detect malevolent forces in order that they can be exposed and destroyed. The diviner is normally given directions by the spirits that possess the individual on what to do whenever requested to do so. It will be false to underestimate the functions of diviners prior to Christianisation. Currently, among Lutherans in Iringa, the functions of diviners and even more of what diviners have been doing have been associated with the gifting of the Holy Spirit (*Charismata*). Victims of malevolent spirits are restored through normal prayer, healing prayer, consultation and counselling.

The information as given above needs to be complemented by the fact that the Hehe used herbal medicine, which was free from divination and witchcraft. Common herbal medicine was normally given without special taboos. All

medicines that were associated with divination, epidemics and protection from sorcery were prescribed with special taboos.

There were medical dispensations that were associated with healing and protection. Families or clans needed special medical support for nullification of malevolent spirits and forces or vengeance. This was done either at one of the homes or at the sanctuary of the ancestors of those affected. Some medical dispensation was done at the sanctuary of the diviner if the problem was complicated. The diviner's sanctuary is called *kitala*. *Kitala* has two meanings. First, it means the place of oath. Secondly, it means a place that is never tried for fun (Lwanzali 29-10-2003: Ilula). If any issue was taken to the *kitala* it meant that all efforts had been tried and proved futile. If answers are not found at the *kitala* then the whole issue must be left to *Nguluwi*.

Medical dispensation for nullifying a deadly revenge, known as *litego* (trap) arose from the need to stop deaths, diseases and deformities. Families or clans to which a culprit belonged suffered from diseases or deformities and even deaths that were inflicted on them as revenge. The concept of *litego* operated in the following way. If a person committed a crime or offence against another person from another family, and the criminal or culprit escaped uncaught, the claimant sought help from the diviner. The diviner made a magical trap that caught the criminal or perpetrator. *Litego* (trap) was believed to have the ability to attack the family of the culprit. In the course of searching for the criminal or perpetrator, the magic trap caused deaths, deformities, diseases and unrest in the offender's family or clan. The criminal or offender was in most cases the last to suffer (Lwanzali 29-10-2003: Ilula).

The family that suffered went to a diviner and sought help (*kulagula*). Diviners were able to diagnose the problem. The criminal or offender was summoned to confess and repent. The confession was verbal, but the culprit was sometimes heavily penalised. The cost of the penalty was meant to recover the damage caused by the offence, for reconciliation and for covering the costs of

medical dispensation. The fines ranged from several cows, sheep, goats, chicken, crops, clothes and money. There were other strange articles that were used for penalization these included items such as the head of a monkey, the skin of a snake and as much as the diviner required. The problem was settled with special taboos that were given by the diviner to both parties (Lwanzali 29-10-2003:Ilula).

This practice served to police the community. It did not end until both parties, namely the offender and the offended, had taken meals together. Meals included the act of pouring some blood into the soil as a sign of telling the ancestors that the enmity had ended. Normally a black chicken, goat, sheep, or cow was slaughtered for the meal, depending on the seriousness of the case and the fine that was paid. The negative side of this practice allowed the diviner to control the situation and dictate terms that caused deaths or deformities to innocent people. In the end, the diviner took the lion's share of everything that was paid by the offender as well as the bequest that was paid by the offended (Ngandango 12-11-1998: Muhiliwa).

Divination is, common amongst the Hehe because it is the way of seeking advice when deaths, diseases, ill omen and all kinds of misfortunes occur in a family. The prescriptions of the diviner include wearing charms; known as *fumbala*, tattooing several parts of the body known as *kutema inyagi* (incision), and infusing medicines that were known by the diviner. If the prescription included protective medicine for the family or household, the practice was known as *kwidinda* (protection). Some charms and other items were buried around the homestead of victimised such as the house, the farms, and the cow barns and culminated with a dispensation of special medicines (Fulgence Malangalila 15-09-1997: Iringa and Mkini 27-08-1999: Pommern).

### **2.5.2 Case study II: Power Encounter and Disproportionate Divination**

The information in this case study is a transcription of a tape-recorded interview. For Swahili speakers the audiotape of this narrative can be found from

[saraowden@hotmail.com](mailto:saraowden@hotmail.com). The tape is identifiable with the label II-IPA/ACCAC 97/8/14. The interview was done on 14<sup>th</sup> August 1997 at Ipalamwa with Hammerton Mdegela, a former primary school teacher. Present during the interview were the researcher's assistants, Phoebe Msigomba and Alfred Somela. Pastor Samson Mkemwas, and several other informants of Ipalamwa were present. The information was first narrated half way then we requested him to start afresh so that we could record it.

The narrative came as a response to the question: What would you describe as the problems that were experienced during the Christianisation of the Hehe? This question is in appendix VIIA, 14. More information concerning Hammerton Mdegela is in appendix IVA, pp. 10-11. The Validity of this information was checked with Pastor Lwidiko Kimbavala (05-03-1999:Pommern) and Paul Kalenga (08-10-2003: Ilogombe). This information was seen valuable because it gave the first hand information of personal experience on the first power encounter between Christians and adherents of AR. It shows how and why Africans came across Christianity and modernisation, the way they reacted and the results of the encounter that made the breakthrough for the conversion amongst some of the Hehe. More importantly, the encounter is between an African Christian and adherents of AR. It has no Western influence. This narrative helps us to see Christianisation from a different perspective than that, which is thought to arise from Western missionaries accompanied by depletion of AR beliefs, attraction of material effects, colonial subjugation and cultural destruction, as it has been claimed in the four lines of thought in the introduction of this thesis in 1.1 (pp.1-5).

Mdegela, who is referred to as the teacher in this story, was posted to teach in a new church primary school at Uhafiwa in 1968. Uhafiwa is a remote village in Heheland. Around Uhafiwa, were several other villages that sent their children to Uhafiwa for primary school because they did not have schools of their own. Uhafiwa and the rest of the villages around had only a handful of

Christian converts who were outnumbered by adherents of AR. The local authorities of Uhafiwa wanted every person, including Christians, to succumb to their authorities of diviners. They also wanted to show to every person who joined their community including the Christian teacher that they had the final authority in the area and that the teacher should acquiesce to their AR authority. Unfortunately, the village had many sorcerers who overpowered AR family leaders and who in turn found that the only way that would assure their security and protection were diviners. These made the diviners over extend their power.

The story shows that the people who held authority in the area were called *Vavina* (the superior), which included *vahavi* (sorcerers) and *valagudzi* (diviners). Sorcerers disturbed the society. All people had to consult diviners to get protection. The more sorcerers disturbed the families, the more diviners were needed to counteract the sorcerers. In such situations, a person feared a sorcerer and the only possible safe way was to yield to diviners. In that way, diviners had the final say in everything. All people made commitments with *vavina* and gave presents to the leaders of the clique or their representatives. Charges and sometimes presents were given to diviners in appreciation or in fear. These were given in terms of foodstuffs, honey, meat, livestock, poultry, and sometimes in terms of money or property such as land.

Commitments to diviners would always involve rituals, which would be accompanied by vows, taboos, and sacrifices. Diviners gave conditions to their clients and one of the conditions was to refuse baptism. Children went to school because they were forced by the civil law but their parents reminded them not to accept baptism. The sign of their binding commitment to *vavina* was to keep the hair at the midpoint of the head uncut as long as the commitment remained unchanged. That kind of hair was commonly known as *kiduli* in singular and *fiduli* in plural. *Fiduli* were signs that were given by diviners to those who had undergone the rituals of protection. It was believed that whoever touched the hair with an evil aim could be harmed and whoever dared to cut that hair, other

than, the diviner, would die. Accompanied by those commitments was faithful participation in AR worship services, rites and sacrifices. Some of those practices were done on weekdays and would take pupils out of school on any one of the days. There were cases where pupils were absent from school even for week. The teacher had to be silent lest he might provoke the so-called *vavina* and who would cause suffering or death. In a way, the *vavina* dictated the terms of community life and schooling. Due to the *vavina* protection, pupils felt that they were untouchable by their teachers even when they misbehaved.

The teacher and a handful of pupils who did not believe in the *vavina* philosophy remained in school even when the rest were absent. However, it was known to them that they were to refrain from provoking the *vavina* as much as possible. Conversely, the *vavina* expected to be honoured and be given presents regularly even by those few Christians. Christians were threatened that if they refused to do that they would die. Former teachers of the school when it was still a bush school, prior to being a primary school had succumbed to *vavina*.

Mdegela was expected to do the same. However, it was difficult for him because he grew up in a Christian home where diviners no longer had any influence or power. He had to decide whether to submit to AR patterns or to remain a Christian. He had to decide between fearing the so-called *vavina* in the community and succumbing to them or remaining with faith in Jesus Christ and worshiping God through Christ alone. He knew that he was sent to the village to start a dependable Christian school, which meant being a missionary in that area. He decided to remain a Christian and to run a Christian school.

There came a point in time where he had to confront those practices with a firm stand to bring order and discipline in the school. One day he ordered all pupils with *fiduli* to have them cut by the next day. This was intended to bring the school to discipline. Pupils went home and told their parents about the order from the teacher. Some parents took heed to the order but some did not, especially those who belong to the *vavina* clique. Those parents who took heed



consulted the *vavina*. The *vavina* were not ready to surrender to the order as they complained with ridicule, "*Icho Kikilisti kikwamidzi hela kifwa hela*" (That young Christian boy will die soon).

The *vavina* felt that their authority would easily be nullified if they simply obeyed the order. The *vavina* countered the order and sent a message to the whole village and the neighbouring ones on the same night that no one was to accept the order. The next day all pupils came with their *fiduli* just as they had on previous days. Mdegela, consulted some elders in the village and suggested to them that if the *fiduli* belief continued to rule the community, the school would be closed forever, or if it were to exist, it would be one of the poorest schools in the region and the whole country. He suggested that there be no compromise to the *fiduli* philosophy and that AR worship services, rites and sacrifices be done on Saturdays or Sunday. If that would not suffice, they could be done during some of the public holidays. Poor teacher! He did not know that for them all days were the same.

One elder suggested to the teacher that he could do what he thought but he must be strong enough to bear the consequences. The warning was thus spoken in Hehe:

*Be mulugu pige che ukuwenda, ukwene uvelage wiladzile kudado ipa pana vanu vavina! Manyi yono apo na yiveve uvelage ulimuvina".*  
(Honourable man does what you wish, but you must have been well wished and blessed by your father {ancestors or parents} at home before you left, otherwise do not dare to do what you plan. There are extremely big people here. Unless you want to prove to us that you are also superior {you have greater authority}. What you are about to do is extremely dangerous and it might cost your life) (Mheni, 1968: Uhafiwa as narrated by Mdegela 14-08-1997: Ipalamwa).

The teacher was confronted with a crucial decision. He postponed the exercise that day and when he dismissed the pupils, they murmured these words "*yee lilemitwe, (you see, he has failed!)*". The next day all pupils with *fiduli* were absent. They had gone for special rainmaking worship and a new power

induction to confront the teacher. According to them they did not need to inform the teacher that they were going to be absent because it was taken for granted that he had feared the *vavina*.

That was enough provocation. When all the pupils were back, the teacher acted firmly and sternly. He spent some hours praying to God after which he ordered all pupils to go in one of the two classes. He asked those few Christians to stand by the windows while he locked the door. He read the Word of God from Mark 16: 15-18 and preached about God's power and authority in opposition to human and superstitious power and authority. After the proclamation, he made a public prayer. He then ordered all pupils with *fiduli* to go to him one after the other. He cut each *kiduli* and ordered pupils to go back to their seats. The teacher placed the hair in one big basket and when all the hair was cut, he ordered them to go out and stand around the school dumping area. He burnt the hair and the basket. He then conducted another prayer and dismissed them, warning them that if they did not return to school the next day he would give them a more severe punishment. They all went home and knew that the end of the teacher had come.

Pupils were home before sunset. The message spread in the village like wild fire. There was yelling heard from one hill to another. It is said that, after the yelling, the sky was full of fast moving sounds of rocket-like objects then there was a very heavy but brief thunderstorm. The teacher and two of the Christian pupils who stayed with him locked themselves in one of the school offices that were used as the teacher's house because the community had not yet constructed the teacher's house.

As soon as the strange thunderstorm was over and since it was already dark, the three remained in the room, knowing that there would be a reaction from the *vavina*. After to the thunderstorm there was a very close range lion's roar. The teacher and the two pupils checked the doors to make sure that they were firmly locked. They knelt down and prayed. While they were praying the

lion came and banged on the door, urinated at the door, tore the school drums that lay around the veranda with its claws, roared several times in the corridor, and went to the place where the cut hair was burnt. It dug out the ashes with its claws while roaring and discharged its dung at that spot. Somehow, there was a sound of struggle between the roaring lion and something else. It seemed as if someone had chased the lion away. It ran away while still roaring until its voice faded away in the neighbouring dark villages. It should be noted that there were no records of lions being in Uhafiwa or the villages around in the past several decades.

The whole village knew the teacher and his two boys had died. Nobody showed up during that night to check what had happened. The teacher opened the door at around 6 am; he took courage and walked out to see what had happened. He went around the school and found all that has been narrated hitherto. He called the two boys to come and witness the events. It is said that they saw all that had happened and thanked God for a well-recorded victory.

A short while later, the school was thronged with men and women from almost all the villages around the school. It is also said that they came not to see people who were still alive but to witness the remains or the corpses of the three, for they were certain that they must have died from the thunderstorm or eaten by the lion. All pupils and diviners turned up that day. To everybody's amazement, the teacher and the two boys were alive, washing and getting ready for the day's schedule. People could not believe their eyes. They were certainly astonished. They just witnessed the torn drum, the wet floor at the door and the lion's dung at the place where the hair was burnt.

That was the day of real change and the beginning of transformation in the whole village and the society around. The teacher changed the schedule for the day. He took the Bible and asked all people to sit. It was as if a deity gave a command. They all sat and paid full attention on him, wondering at how powerful he was and where he acquired that authority. The elderly man, who

had told the teacher to refrain from his intentions and who was known by the name of Mkolomoto Mheni exclaimed, "*Nyela avagosi kovali, e ule! Mone we Nguluvi apo I Nguluvi yaumuyetu uyu ngomi*" (It is unbelievable! Yes indeed, there are truly powerful people in the world. If it is because of God, then that God must be incredibly great). God being incredibly great is akin to *Kimenya*. The use of the term *ngomi* signified the mighty power of God.

That was the golden chance for the people of Uhafiwa to hear the Word of God. The teacher preached from Acts 19:13-20. He could remember what he emphasised in sermon. The researcher did not quote what Mdegela, H. recollected from his sermon for fear that it might be exaggerated or lack the authenticity because it was preached thirty years ago. Nevertheless, Mdegela remembered very well that he emphasised the presence of the power of God in Jesus Christ who is the Son of God. God is understood by the Hehe as the creator of everything and the one who has authority over all people and creation. He warned the crowd that no one should ever try to compete with God. He confessed before them that he believed in that God and worked through and for him. He invited pupils and adults to come and learn about that powerful God who had authority even over the *vavina*. It was a golden chance to tell them how to overcome the fear of sorcerers and avoid dependence upon diviners who were the so-called *vavina*.

People registered for baptism in multitudes. The school was used for catechetical classes as well as a church on Sundays. It was encouraging for those few Christians but extremely painful to the diviners. Seventy years prior to that a German missionary Wilhelm Neuberg had started a mission station in the villages in 1898 but he did not register anyone for baptism. The same village had turned to Christ in a few months after that power encounter.

### 2.5.3 A Critique to the Narrative

The narrative brings forth several concepts of AR that have been portrayed in the previous sections of this chapter concerning the relationship between God and people; ancestors and the community and the role of diviners. We will do this by looking at the Hehe in their Bantu perspective. Nurnberger says,

The foundation of AR among the Bantu is dynamism. This means that reality is perceived as consisting of uncanny powers which can flow in any direction – detrimental or beneficial – like waves of the ocean. Rituals are attempts to channel these powers in beneficial directions; sorcery tries to channel them into detrimental directions. Ritual is public, communal and legitimate; sorcery is private, selfish and illegitimate. People, animals, homestead (and all that belongs to the family) must be strengthened and protected against the detrimental flow of dynamistic power by means of rituals and empowered by enhancing the beneficial flow. (Rituals are the first source of power of the diviners) Diviners are supposed to “smell out” the source of calamity and know which rituals will have the desired effect (Nurnberger 1973:24-25; 1975:175-176 and comments from supervisory consultation 2002.11.30).

Let us interpret in terms of that AR philosophy. The power that was experienced through the teacher was from God in whom the Hehe believed. They knew that God had that power but it was not directly experienced because God was an invisible reality. There was a borderline between the dynamistic power of ancestors and that of God. The power of God as the Supreme Being was so far beyond human speculation and consultation. God was indeed *Deus absconditus*. What could the Hehe do when sorcerers were obliterating them? A balanced statement from the Sotho context describes the state of affairs. We put ourselves in the situation of the Hehe and Sotho and seek aid in a desperate situation and what we see around us are diviners. What we know of dynamistic power are ancestors who act directly or through diviners. Then we understand the Uhafiwa situation in this way,

Dynamistic power can, however, also be actively employed. This is done by "magic" rites, which are either repetitive or conventional to secure the ongoing processes of life, or extra-ordinary as prescribed by the diviner for special cases. With these rites persons, processes or things are strengthened, which means that they are charged with dynamistic power. This can happen with various aims in view- confirmatory, productive, protective or therapeutic. ... Malevolent use of dynamistic power is *boloi* (sorcery). Its secrecy and unpredictability makes it the most dreaded negative factor in the life of the Sotho community. All adverse irregularities of life, which cannot be dealt with by a restoration of troubled relationship within the kin group, are ascribed to sorcery. The diviner has to discover the source of the evil and prescribe the relevant rites, which employ dynamistic power to counter-act the malevolent influence and, if possible, destroy the sorcerer himself (1975:175-176).

An assessment of the above story impels us to see that the *vavina* philosophy worked well when people were not sure of any other alternative and when sorcery abounded. When the new alternative came, they opted for it. What did they opt for?

They opted for salvation, deliverance and affirm their faith in Nguluvi who seemed to have drawn closer. Like the Wanji in the first case study, Jesus was seen as the one who relieved ancestors from the tedious roles of overpowering sorcery. We will use citations from African scholars to ascertain our assertion. Okoye citing Mbiti writes about the African view of salvation and says,

Salvation is thus deliverance from the power of evil forces, from the enclaves of human enemies, from ill health, misfortune and poverty. It is wholeness and peace, the complete human being saved in unity with God (Mbiti 1986: 152). The African concept of salvation explains some of their expectations of the church. It looks to the figure of Jesus in the gospels, particularly his miracles and preaching of the reign of God (Okoye 1997:71).

We are mindful of the fact that the AR philosophy regarding ancestors and diviners was necessary and useful so long as there was no other

alternative. We should also be mindful that ancestor veneration and rituals as well as divination were not “from the devil” as some Christians think. It was God’s way of managing situations amongst Africans. The conversion of Africans to Christianity, such as the one expressed in this case study and the previous one were results of God’s personal and contextual translation in the African community. God made a self-translation in the form of an encounter. An explanation of the translation in an encounter could be stated as the one below.

If a religious form does not produce enough power to assure the people of its effectiveness and viability in the face of any contingency, it is soon given up and a more effective one is sought. ... Christianity arrived at the time when people’s circumstances had compelled them to have serious doubts about the viability and effectiveness of their Primal religious forms. They were therefore compelled to opt for the more effective alternative religion in the face of the situation. This alternative religion happened to be Christianity (Okorochoa 1987: 206).

We should add that not all the people in Uhafiwa decided to join baptismal classes. There are people who belong to AR and *Vavina* philosophy until today. We have the assumption that the encounter approach was a one-time event but several other approaches continued even after that encounter. However, both Christians and non-Christians in Uhafiwa do believe in one single God. They are both monotheistic and without idols. However, they differ in approach. One major difference between AR and Christianity is the approach to faith and to God. AR sees God as one beyond approach. That is why God is given a black sacrifice and the black colour symbolises holiness (Siyovelwa 04-03-1999:Iriringa). Saying the same thing in the words of Luther and the author of Exodus, we could put it this way, “Leave the naked God (*Deus nudus*) alone otherwise you will die”. Christianity says, “Come to God for God is translated in human covering. The hidden God (*Deus absconditus*) is now the same revealed God (*Deus revelatus*) in the mask of Jesus Christ”. The mask should imply translation through incarnation, suffering and death on the cross and the total

event of Christ. "Hence, there is no more harm." This notion will be elaborated further in the third chapter.

#### 2.5.4 Malevolent Forces: Spirits and Sorcerers

The malevolent forces or spirits in Hehe have been identified by the term *mubepo* in singular and *mibepo* in plural. These terms are common amongst the Hehe but there is some discrepancy between them and the New Testament in the Bena language. Bena and Hehe especially among the Dzungwa use the same New Testament. The Holy Spirit in Bena was translated as *uMubepo Umwimike* or *Umubepo Umwelu*, which means the anointed spirit or the White Spirit respectively. *Umwelu* can also mean clean. Seemingly, that translation is faced with two inaccuracies. First, it is possible that the German missionaries who did the translation avoided the term *lisoka* because for them *lisoka* was equivalent to ancestor centred worship, which they called paganism and devilish religion. Second, they might have not got the proper term for "holy", which both in Bena and Hehe would not be *mwimike* because *mwimike* means the anointed. The closest term would be *mugolofu*, which would mean the honest. For the German translators the term "holy" was translated as anointed, clean or white. Hopefully, the translation would be reworked to *iLisoka Iligolofu*, which would literally mean "the benevolent and honest spirit". Otherwise, *Mubepo* has a negative connotation. For example, the same Bena people use the term *mubepo mulamafu* for "demon". The author of this thesis is of the view that the translation is theologically faulty because the Holy Spirit is not simply the anointed white or clean demon. After all, the author finds no Biblical or cultural reference to any colour of any spirit.

*Mibepo*, which have been defined as malevolent spirits do attack and kill. These are normally the *ndiyakiki* (what shall I eat) type, which arose from Arabic culture and have been commonly known as *jins* (killer spirits). They cause diseases, deliria and hysteria. The New Testament calls them demons or evil



spirits. Demons derange a person. A demon-possessed person will do things, which a normal human being would not do (Biyela 1996:59). Characteristics of mental disturbance, aimless actions, utterance of insults and much other abnormal behaviour are common to a demon-possessed person. Diviners have accused sorcerers that they are the one who attract or domesticate such evil spirits. Sorcerers use malevolent spirits in many ways including forced love, torture, transfigured guile, depredation, translocation and many more other evils.

The malevolent spirits are therefore directly associated with sorcery or witchcraft. *Vahavi* is the common Hehe term for sorcerers, witches and witchdoctors. *Wuhavi* is the common term for witchcraft and sorcery. Sorcery and sorcerer are the two terms that are will be used in this thesis to signify the agents of the malevolent spirits and the behaviour of those agents. These terms are common in academics and in both the Old and New Testaments.

It is not possible to delude normal Hehe that there is no sorcery. Malevolent forces and spirits are real in their lives. They create fear and discomfort. They are basically the oppositions force against the ancestral spirits. Sorcerers, according to the Hehe, are enemies of people and ancestors. The main task of diviners and the sacrifices that diviners prescribe to be offered to ancestors are in most cases intended to nullify sorcerers and their malevolent spirits. The Old Testament states candidly that sins of sorcery are punishable by death (Dt 18:10-12): IIChr. 33:1-6). The New Testament considers sorcery and magic as works of the devil (Acts 8:9, 13:8 Gal 5:20). In Revelation, sorcery will be judged by fire. In Lev. 19:20 divination and sorcery are forbidden.

### ***2.5.5 Case Study III: Discerning the weakness of sorcery***

The information that follows was recorded and what is written hereafter is the summarised version of the story. Swahili speakers can obtain the cassette from the author with the e-mail address: [saraowden@hotmail.com](mailto:saraowden@hotmail.com). The Cassette

that contains the information is labelled with this identification: I-IPA/ACCAC/97/8/14. The interview took place on 14<sup>th</sup> August 1997 at Ipalamwa. The narrator was Pastor Samson Mkemwa. More information concerning Pastor Mkemwa is in appendix IVA, pp. 13-14. The narrative came as a result of responding two questions that are found in appendix VIIA and D. The questions were given to the interviewees several hours before the interaction. Pastor Mkemwa decided to respond to the two questions with a practical experience that will be narrated in the subsequent paragraphs. In appendix VIIA, question 14 says: What would you describe as the problems that were experienced during the Christianisation of the Hehe? In appendix VIID, question 1 says: What is your opinion concerning the conversion of Africans from African Religion to Christianity?

Present during the interview were several informants of Ipalamwa, the research assistants namely Msigomba and Somela. The narrative was found important because it had two functions. First, the occasion helped many Hehe to perceive the encounter between sorcery and Christianity. Secondly, it showed that Jesus Christ was truly playing the most important roles of giving true security to the Christian believers against sorcery and malevolent forces. The Hehe believed that God and ancestors offered security to people. The diviners were seen as the ones who would smell out the presence of malevolent forces and sorcery and destroy them. The occasion brought forth the understanding that Jesus Christ also took the role of diviners and conquered sorcery and malevolent forces. The occasion took place in 1947 and many people were able to affirm the information.

Pastor Mkemwa narrated a story concerning Kunzugale who was the ward secretary of Ukwega. A ward secretary was a government leader who was responsible for about ten villages or more. The narrative was about the act of rage and vengeance in which Kunzugale buried some deadly charms of sorcery with the intention of killing all Christian preachers who he thought had entered

his special area of influence. He buried the charms at the pulpit with the vow that any one who stood at the pulpit to preach would run mad.

Kunzugale had forbidden Christian preachers, namely Lupituko Mkemwa, Yotam Mkemwa, Samwel Makongwa and Aaron Kikoti as well as other Christians, to start churches in certain areas of his ward. He believed that those areas were for AR practitioners. He hated Christians because he believed that they were rude and proud of themselves. Pastor Samson Mkemwa claimed that they were understood that way because they knew how to read, write, argue with government officials and make good speeches when they preached. The researcher thinks that Christians despised Kunzugale and they were disloyal to him because he was not able to read and write.

Adding to that, Kunzugale thought Christians pretended to be superior to the ancestors and whom he thought they had repudiated. Mkemwa admitted that Christians were also argumentative. Due to their argumentative behaviour, Kunzugale thought that they despised him and pretended to be superior to African government leaders who did not know how to read and write. He also thought Christians dressed well on Sundays and felt proud of themselves thus looking down on or discrediting the rest of the community. Those allegations were partly true because Christians partly despised and disregarded some of the directives from the government representative. Sometimes they did most of the things without consulting the local leadership.

The story started this way: Makongwa and some of his family members were baptized but lived in one of the restricted areas. They had to walk for one hour every day for morning prayers and Sunday services. Subsequently they asked Yotham Mkemwa to consult the ward secretary to allow them to put up a small chapel for morning prayers. Mkemwa told Makongwa to go ahead and build the chapel close to his house because Makongwa and other Christians who lived in the restricted area were separated from the rest of the Christian community. Mkemwa gave that permission without consulting the ward

secretary. Makongwa and the Christian community in that area built a chapel and worshipped there.

Kunzugale heard about that and visited the area, accompanied by some of his assistants. He went to the village on the pretext of tax collection, but his main aim was to check how much Christianity had influenced the area. He found a chapel. He was enraged. He went into the chapel and told one of his assistants named Kidava (Dzilikwileme) to dig a hole at the place where the preacher stood. The hole was dug and Kunzugale took from his bag a kind of charm wrapped in red cloth and buried it in the hole. He poured some liquid in the hole and told Kidava and his other assistants that whoever would stand on that spot would run mad.

In the evening Kunzugale told one of his uncles what he had done in the chapel. His uncle, though a member of AR, feared God in the way in which Christians related to God. He told him to go and remove the charms and warned him that he should not fiddle with Christians. He also stressed that the way Christians relate with God makes them exceptionally powerful. Kunzugale did not take heed to the advice. He believed that the power of sorcery would triumph over Christians.

Makongwa arrived the next morning, not knowing what had happened. Some people in the village who were afraid of sorcery knew that Kunzugale had buried the charms and they were waiting for Makongwa to go mad. Makongwa stood at the pulpit; he opened the Bible and preached. Nothing happened. Kunzugale was in the village waiting to see the mad preacher. The morning devotions went well and ended at about eight. All the people left the church in good health.

Two hours later, four young men came running to Kibomo village where Kunzugale had buried the charms under the pulpit. They were Kunzugale's assistants from his home in Ipalamwa village. They told him that his two wives had gone mad. Kunzugale was terrified and enquired when this had happened.

The assistants reported that it was around seven o'clock in the morning. That was the time when Makongwa stood at the pulpit.

He arrived home just to find his two wives in a state of madness. He called a diviner to treat them but their condition went from bad to worse. A partial recovery took place after Kunzugale went back to Kibomo some days later and removed the charms from where he had buried them. The situation was such that the wives recovered at certain seasons of the year but went mad again during the month in which Kunzugale had buried the charms.

This defeat of sorcery resulted in an enormous number of people from those villages turning to Christ. Christianity triumphed while sorcery receded. Makongwa, his friends and other Christians went on using the pulpit, and the youths sang "*Jumbe alitega mtego akaingia mwenyewe*" (The ward secretary made a trap that caught none but him). Kidava, the one who had dug the hole, had a vision the next night that required him to repent and be baptised. In this vision he heard the words from Acts 2:38: "Repent and be baptised, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Kidava 14-08-1997: Ipalamwa).

#### *2.5.6 A Critique to the Narrative*

Sorcery, as it appears in the preceding paragraphs has been a controversial subject in the church in Africa but not in the society. There are church people who have wanted to silence the issue but those efforts have proved futile. This case study is going to illustrate one way among many, which made the Hehe discredit the power of witchcraft and sorcery and partly prove that God was among them and protecting them.

Missionary reports and several Tanzanian scholars have expressed their opinions regarding the subject. Koebler wrote about some of the complaints from missionaries that one of the three main obstacles to Christianise Southern Tanzania was sorcery. The extract reads,

The main adversaries of mission are sorcerers. Sorcery has increased immensely as compared to the past experience when chiefs gave medicine for farming and protection of diseases. The temptations that befall on Christians and catechumens are that they fear sorcery and poisons (Koebler 1998:17).

A paraphrased and summarised version from Lema writing from a Northern Tanzanian perspective portrays that Africans do not believe in anything happening by chance. Most of the time, they believed that every event or phenomenon, bad or good, had a personal cause. Sorcery, curse or God's wrath were the causes for every evil or calamity (Lema 1999:48-49). A Catholic priest in South-western Tanzania complains that in spite of missionaries insisting that sorcery does not exist and in spite of destroying shrines among the Fipa tribe, the belief that there is sorcery has not wavered (Smythe 1999: 139-140).

We interpret the story in three ways. First, as it was the case with Uhafiwa story in the second case study, the Hehe perceived promptly that Christian faith was against sorcery and relieved people from the struggle against sorcery. God, the one named and understood as *Nguluvi* stood with people to overcome the atrocities of sorcery. For those who converted to Christianity divination was no longer a necessity. It is possible to interpret that the Hehe came to the perception that in Jesus Christ *Nguluvi* had really come near. The Christian teaching that is portrayed in Matthew 1:23, was translated that *Nguluvi* was among us.

These are the fundamental arguments of the author who agrees with Bediako, Sanneh, and Walls and several other African theologians as cited in the bibliography that the criteria of authentic conversion to Christ, hence to Christianity, have their basis in the Word being translated in the religious and linguistics of the receptor culture. The Comaroffs, as we shall see in the next subsection on cross-fertilization and in the next chapter on mission and colonialism, emphasize the fact that a missionary preaches the way the preacher feels but recipients translate in the context of their faith (religious) and livelihood.

Secondly, Christianity has to accept both credit and criticism that in its way of implementation the Great commission it empowered people, consciously or unconsciously to demand for their rights. There were times when such demands were overdone. Such might have arisen from either a misinterpretation of what their rights are or merely human pride and arrogance against what they perceived as ignorant leaders. The author is of the opinion that Mkemwa J. should have consulted the ward secretary. Most non-Christian African leaders have had the feeling of being disrespected by Christians and that has delayed the conversion of such leaders.

Thirdly, it should illustrate that sorcery is very closely related to power and revenge and sometimes as compensation for an inferiority complex. Kunzugale could have simply summoned Mkemwa, J. and Makongwa as his subjects and ask them why they did what they did. In its place, he used excessive force that turned out to do permanent harm to his own innocent wives. The researcher wanted to know whether Kunzugale was indeed a sorcerer. Mkemwa, S. proved that Kunzugale ended up being sent to diviners who destroyed his witchcraft. In reference to what diviners had done, someone named Kivumbi then composed a song. The chorus was saying, "*Mulavage jumbe wakave kumiho* (Look what has happened to the face of the ward secretary)". Diviners had cut all Kunzugales hair, tattooed him with incisions of oath on his face and other parts of the body to stop him from practising sorcery again. These acts are called *kumoga uwuhavi* (eradicating or destroying sorcery).

*Kumwoga uwuhavi* is preceded by *kutovela uwuhavi* (naming or pin pointing the sorcerer). From a practical point of view, the Church cannot directly do the pinpointing and the destruction sorcery unless the sorcerer makes a self-surrender. There are two ways that have been reported to the researcher. One way is for Christians to devote time and pray against sorcery in the area, asking God to destroy it. Such an approach is difficult and requires strong faith.

Apparently, there are stories from Ihemi (Mhenga 28-10-1997: Iringa) that some witchcraft was destroyed in Lyasa, Tanangozi and Kiponzelo villages through this kind of prayer. Sorcerers reported that their articles of sorcery were found burnt without knowing how it happened. The other way has been what Makilika and Ndolela (25-08-1999: Isagwa) described as “temporarily hanging Christianity” to consult diviners or cooperating with adherents of AR in the family to catch the sorcerer and destroy the articles of sorcery. According to Mwakabana, this “temporary hanging of Christianity” is what he describes as hypocrisy in the first case study.

Over and above all these discussions, the author of this thesis finds that Christianity has found an authentic home in Africa. It could not be a church in Africa without encountering those issues. All these issues concerning ancestors, spirits, divination, sorcery, agreements and disagreements on how to deal them among converts and in propagating the gospel are common to the church and are part of contextual theologisation in mission. Christianity in Africa is authentic because Christ lives the real life of Africans. God is making direct confrontations with the Hehe together with their ancestors and diviners. God meets the Hehe as they grapple against sorcerers and uncanny forces. God confronts the *vavina* and pupils in Uhafiwa. Consequently, God and calls all of them for true transformation that leads to repentance and faith in Jesus Christ.

### *2.6 Cross-Fertilisation as an Interpretation of Preparatio Evangelica*

The basic hypothesis of this thesis is that most Africans (Hehe) opted for Christian faith because of the message of salvation based on the event of Christ. The hypothesis goes with the awareness, which has been discussed in this chapter that God has always communicated with all people in their cultural context, prior to and after Christianisation. In spite of the fact that we cannot discover the secrets of God by our curiosity, logic and technology, even so, awareness has been created from the understanding of AR and the Christian



perspectives about God, ancestors, the spiritual realm and the significance of diviners. It would be difficult to understand why God would have created Africans non-Christian ethnic groups and just abandoned them. The author of the book to the Hebrews says,

In the past God spoke to our fore fathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, who he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe (Heb. 1:1-2).

The author in the quotation above speaks in the Hebrew context but an African is expected to understand this in the African context. Accordingly, the Hehe would also be mistaken and faulty if they thought that the knowledge they had in AR about God was from their own initiative. Thus the statement that follows is intended to substantiate these assertions in the context of this research. "Apart from God's initiative, God's act, God's revelation, no confident basis exists for God-talk" (Kraft 1981:181).

Therefore, the message of salvation as proclaimed by Western and local missionaries confirmed about God and the fundamental concepts about God. It redefined the essence of rituals, sacrifices and celebrations. It deepened the knowledge of supernatural realities and the African cosmological unity and continuity. Furthermore, the point of departure for the Hehe and all Africans to understand Christianity was AR. One could say, the Hehe turned to Jesus Christ just to find out that their faith in AR was still relevant but with different dimensions and approaches. The newest of all concepts was Jesus Christ but as Penoukou has indicated, it was possible to identify Jesus Christ within the AR setting and the local situation. God was not new but Jesus Christ revealed God with a perfected worldview. Spirits were not new but Christianity came with the knowledge of the Spirit of God and differentiated it from other spirits that are known in AR and Christianity. One could say that initially the Hehe did go for a new religion but they went to listen to the proclamation of the Word of God and

in search of new truths. It so happened that the new truths had a bearing in the “old” truths. It is from this understanding that the concept of *preparatio evangelica* is reflected, as the following assertion connotes. “African theology argues that there is much continuity in the relationship between Africa’s pre-Christian traditional religious heritage and its present Christian identity. It lets the gospel encounter and be shaped by African experience” (Bediako 1996:1).

This process is what we call redefinition. By redefinition, we denote that when Christology was added to what was known in AR the Hehe found the doorway to the possibility of communicating with, and worshipping the Supreme Being who was understood as the Living God. This indicates that conversion from AR to Jesus Christ was not intended to chase away the ancestors. To be more precise, it signifies that Christ started from where the Hehe were, and took them many stride higher. Christ did not eradicate the ancestors but brought them face to face with God, with Christology and with *pneumatology*. By so doing the Hehe had a change in the worldview of relating with God.

We have observed in this chapter that many aspects of AR repeat themselves in Christianity. For example, every AR ritual ended up with some kind of “communion and fellowship” between ancestors and the living. Such a “fellowship” has much resemblance with the Holy Communion. AR worship intended to create unity, harmony, perpetual solidarity and love within the community of the departed and the living as well as among living people themselves. The AR “communion and fellowship” were meant to be events of family reunion not only of the living but with ancestors as well.

It is thus postulated that the event of Christ has redefined the communion and fellowship and have taken them beyond the fellowship among ancestors and the living to be the communion and fellowship with God. The event of Christ underlines the fact of reunion, family-hood and the fulfilment of the *parousia*.

The event of Christ is symbolised by the sacramental elements of bread and wine. Bread and wine signify the basic food and drink of the background in which Jesus Christ instituted them from Judaism to Christianity. Equally important is the understanding that Jesus Christ redefined the Jewish Passover to a universal Christian event. In the same way, Jesus Christ officiated Christianity in and within Judaism. It is thus appropriate to argue that the elements of AR worship symbolised by *munyeke* and *finyunya* as defined in 2.3 have been redefined to bread and wine.

While Christianity uses bread and wine for communion, the Hehe use stiff maize porridge (*wugali*), local beer (*wugimbi*) and meat. The elements of bread and wine for communion among the Jews include mutton. Christians have reduced mutton with the claim that bread represents the flesh as well, where Jesus Christ becomes the *Agus Dei* (the Lamb of God). With this understanding, Nyagawa, one of the first African pastors among the Hehe wrote “*Ye nene ye ndiwugali wa wumi*” (I am the stiff maize porridge of life) instead of I am the bread of life. Indeed, this is where authentic conversion is bound to translatability. It is quite obvious that Nyagawa understood communion from an African Religious background.

### 2.7 Conclusion

The three major concerns of this chapter are the name and the understanding of God, the centrality of ancestors in AR community life, worship and sacrifice and the reality of the spiritual realm. Among the main beliefs of AR is the acknowledgement and affirmation of God who is the Creator and sustainer of life and all things. AR recognises the reality of the invisible world in which human life continues after death. The impact and influence of AR in the process of Christianisation has been termed cross-fertilization because it is believed that in the process of evangelisation there was a change of worldviews of both

Christian missionaries and the Hehe concerning God, the ancestors and the spiritual realm.

Out of these concerns it has been indicated that the Hehe in AR do not strive to seek God. They do not either strive to please God or sacrifice to God. They fear God and they understand that any sin committed against God will automatically lead to death. Thus for Africans, especially the Hehe the best way to relate with God is to acknowledge God's being, presence, force, power, knowledge and the work of creation, transcendence and immanence then avoid God, and stay away to avoid provoking God that might lead to a great harm or death.

The Hehe, like many African people, are monotheistic and believe that there is one God called *Nguluvi* who is the Supreme Being. The Bible speaks of the living but the Hehe speak of God as a living Force, the ultimate reality and Power. There is no information about a special place where the Hehe people worshiped God. There is no graven image, or any creature that can represent God. There is also no means through which the Hehe claim to communicate with God.

According to the Hehe, people live in God's presence when they are alive and when they are dead but God cannot live in people's being or presence. People cannot run away from God but God who is present has concealed that presence to the point where nobody can see God. Nobody can hide or deceive God but God is extremely hidden. God can be present in a place where and when nobody else is present. In this way, Hehe fear God everyday and everywhere. They cannot even withstand God's rage when God appears in rage like thunder, flood or typhoon. It is therefore enough to say, let God be God who is ever present and hidden in God's own right. Hence, for the Hehe God's presence, concealment and being belong together. The use of the Lutheran concept of *Deus absconditus* (hidden God) is therefore appropriate in the Hehe AR context.

It has been evident that within AR amongst the Hehe, the realm of ancestral spirits is real. Death for the Hehe, whether inflicted by evil people or a common calling by ancestors is a home return. God as *malekasa* can use the ultimate power of *Kimenya* and separate people. That means God allows people to live in natural and supernatural homes. Ancestors have to be considered as family members. Worship and sacrifice involves only family members and is associated with common family matters such as the duty to make libation to ancestors on a regular basis, to make an updated report to ancestors about the family situation, and to make regular propitiations to appease the ancestors. Sometimes, family worship included requests to ancestors for healing or protection of a family or clan.

Ancestors have played their role as guarantors of good life and continuation of life prior to Jesus Christ. We could also say the propagation of the gospel amongst the Hehe developed a friendly relationship with ancestors or ancestors accepted Jesus Christ as being on their side and one who would protect and lead their families. Missionaries promoted the disparity and enmity between ancestors and Jesus Christ but the Hehe perceived in their own way as illustrated herein.

The spiritual realm is another reality amongst the Hehe. There are benevolent and malevolent spirits. Ancestral spirits are benevolent. Ancestors can become angry and cause a cold disease to a person who insults them. Diviners do receive the power from long-term ancestors. The main task of diviners, and the sacrifices that diviners prescribe to be offered to ancestors are in most cases intended to nullify sorcerers and their malevolent spirits.

Sorcerers, according to the Hehe are enemies of people and ancestors. Hehe discredited the power of witchcraft and sorcery and partly when they perceived that God was among them and was protecting them. The perception confirmed that Christian faith was against sorcery and relieved people from the struggle against sorcery. God was understood as *Nguluwi* who stood with people

and ancestors to overcome the atrocities of sorcery. For those who converted to Christianity, divination was no longer a necessity. Christianity among the Hehe is authentic because Christ lives the real life of Africans. In addition, there are many AR aspects of faith that repeat themselves in Christianity.

Having shown the fundamentals of AR thus partly responding to the first line of thought that questions the authenticity of Christian conversion in the African context, the next chapter will determine the criteria of authentic conversion. If according to this chapter God is known in AR and if the argument that the God of AR happens to be the same as the Christian God, then the notion of AR being *preparatio evangelica* is fair. If *preparatio evangelica* is understood as a synthesis and a factor of cross-fertilisation then the notion that God was a missionary in Africa before the missionaries came is also viable. The viability of those two notions requires an understanding of the criteria of authentic conversion. Therefore, the next chapter will investigate the criteria of authentic conversion. The main focus will be on the concept of translatability of the event of Christ in the Hehe context.

## CHAPTER 3

### 3.THE CRITERIA OF AUTHENTIC CHRISTIAN CONVERSION

#### *3.1 Introduction*

The previous chapter described the pre-Christian experience and argued that the AR experience was vital in setting the ground for evangelisation. It has shown that Christianity found beliefs, practices and philosophies that agreed or disagreed with the propagated Word of God. For both positive and negative aspects of the encounter between Christianity and AR, Christianity found a ripe host culture and religious beliefs that caused a cross-fertilisation effect with the Christian faith. The second chapter has shown that Christianity found a religious Africa and not a religious void, as it was misconceived prior to the coming of missionaries.

However, Christianity came with Western culture, economy, politics and civilisation as Balcomb asserts,

The missionaries did not only bring the gospel. They also brought their culture. The recipients of the message did not only hear what the missionaries said, they interpreted and filtered that message through their own culture and perceptions of the missionaries themselves (Balcomb 2004:1).

With these assertions that are viewed from various academic, political and social settings, the authenticity of Christian conversion in Africa is questioned. In order to investigate the authenticity of conversion it becomes imperative to determine the criteria of authentic conversion.

This chapter concerns itself with the criteria of authentic conversion and investigates the second basic question that has been thus formulated: What are the criteria of authentic Christian conversion that are consistent with the Christianisation amongst the Hehe?

Hypothesis: The translatability of the message of salvation that stems from the initiative that God took in the event of Jesus Christ to bring forth the calling of all humanity for transformation, forgiveness of sins, and fellowship with God within their faith and cultural contexts are the criteria of authentic Christian conversion.

The "event of Jesus Christ" is an expression that is used to refer to the four occasions in the life of Jesus Christ. There are designated as the incarnation, the suffering and death, the resurrection and the sending of the Holy Spirit. The four occasions are then associated with the universal calling of all humanity for salvation.

The first section introduces the chapter. The second section will define conversion together with the expression "authentic conversion". It will also interpret the phrase "message of salvation". The third section will investigate the concept of translatability of the event of Jesus Christ through the incarnation. The fourth section will concern itself with the translatability of the suffering and death of Jesus Christ in relation to the Hehe experience and in connection with Luther's theology of the cross. The fifth section will concern itself with the Pentecost experience and how it fits the Hehe context in view of the present and continuous translatability of Christianity. The sixth section will investigate the universal calling that is seen as part and parcel of the translatability of the event of Jesus Christ. The concept of universal calling arises from the conviction that sin is a universal problem, hence conceding the Biblical conception that all human beings are sinners and all are in need of God's grace, therefore in need of forgiveness of sin and reconciliation. Forgiveness of sin is understood as arising from the transformation that leads sinners to faith, obedience and repentance unto salvation. Looking from an AR perspective we consider that sin brings injustice, corruption, hatred, fear and enmity among people. The seventh section will conclude the chapter and introduce the fourth chapter.



### *3.2 Definitions and Interpretation of the Key Terms and Concepts*

This section has been included to clarify what the researcher means by the expressions, "authentic conversion" and "the message of salvation". These two expressions are the major concerns of this chapter. Therefore it is necessary to define and interpret those terms before analysing the discussions that pertain to the criteria of authentic conversion. The definitions and interpretations are done from both the fieldwork and the literary resources.

The preceding considerations are based on the understanding that a person becomes a member of the Church *after* being converted. "Conversion" is thus expected to be directly or indirectly, a common term in Christian teachings. In spite of that expectation, the term is complex and can sometimes cause confusion if its use is not specified. The difficulty is asserted below.

Conversion is a concept whose biblical meaning is especially difficult to understand because of the many connotations associated with the term as a rallying point of various contemporary religious groups. The difficulty is compounded by the fact that the realities associated with the concept in biblical writings cannot be subsumed adequately under a single lexicographical entry (Achte-meier 1971:197).

The definitions that are given in this section are intended to create a specific path to which this thesis is inclined. The term "conversion" is thus defined together with the expression of authentic conversion so that the criteria of authentic conversion can be established. The message of salvation is defined in this section because it is part of the hypothesis of this chapter and it will keep appearing in almost every chapter.

#### *3.2.1 Perceptions of Authentic Conversion*

The phrase "authentic conversion" is used in this thesis in relation to the Hehe peoples' religious shift from AR to Christianity. The thesis has no intention to examine inauthentic conversion because it is not possible to show it through

the data. It is presupposed, in any case, that only God can determine inauthentic conversion.

Peace (2003:2) asserts, "once the word 'conversion' is uttered confusion begins". The researcher observed such confusion when he approached one of his renowned lecturers of systematic theology during his undergraduate studies. The researcher asked Dr Naman Laiser, a Tanzanian Lutheran, a PhD holder since the early 1980s from Germany and a long-term senior lecturer of Systematic Theology in Makumira, what he understood concerning authentic conversion. Laiser told the researcher, "Bishop, there is nothing like conversion in the Lutheran Church" (11-02-2004). The researcher was astounded; he asked himself whether such assertions were theologically justifiable? Other than that the researcher questioned further, "Is it possible to have a Christian Church that has come into being without conversion?" How could that be? How will the church get members without conversion to Jesus Christ? With Laiser's assertion the researcher came to the point of accepting Achtemeier's assertion that the Biblical meaning of conversion is difficult. The researcher came to the conviction that the term conversion brings confusion if it is not defined.

In a brief word study the researcher came across three Hehe terms that are relevant to the considerations of this thesis. The terms are *kupiluka* (return), *kupituka* (turn or be transformed) and *kupela* (repent). The two Hehe terms "*kupiluka*" and "*kupituka*" seem to agree with the most common verbs that have been used to describe Christian conversion. These are turning, and being transformed. Turn and return appear many times in the Old and New Testaments to express the same thing, as it will be shown in the following discussions.

The Old Testament uses two basic Hebrew verbs namely, *pana* for transformation (Isa 45:22) and *shub* for turning (Dt.30: 10). The New Testament uses two basic Greek verbs namely, *epistrepho* for turning (Lk1: 17) and *metanoia* for transformation (Ac 3:19). The other Hehe term "*kupela*" will be used at a later

stage. The subsequent discussion will focus on the two terms *kupiluka* for turning and *kupituka* for transformation. Greek and Hebrew will be used briefly to set the foundation that describes what has happened amongst the Hehe.

As a theological term, conversion means, “to turn, to turn around, to turn back, to change, or to turn away from” (Brown 1986:354). The Greek words that are used to describe those verbs are *epistrepho* (ἐπιστρέφω) for turn, turn around, turn back and be converted. *Strepho* (στρέφω) is used to describe a turn and a change. *Apostrepho* (ἀποστρέφω) describes the act of turning away from, and *epistrophe* (ἐπιστροφή) describes the act of turning to, which signifies conversion.

*Strepho*, *apostrepho* and *epistrepho* share the meaning of turn, turn to, turn to oneself, and turn round. According to Peace (1990:5), all three verbs describe mainly the intentional turning of the attitude and mind set. Therefore, they signify a change in viewpoint, approach and a depiction of an idea (Brown 1986: 354). The Hebrew word that resembles *epistrepho*, which is also found in the Septuagint, is *shubh*. *Shubh* also means turn around, return (qal), bring back, and restore (hiph.)” (Peace 1990:5).

The relevance of the definitions of conversion in the Hehe context start with what the Hehe believe. The Hehe believe in the Supreme Being whose name is *Nguluvi*. The researcher has argued in the second chapter that *Nguluvi* is the same God who is called the Living God in Christianity. It is important at this juncture to note that “conversion” for the Hehe in the AR context does not necessarily entail the act of turning or returning to God because in AR no one has the permission to turn away from God. Turning away from God would also mean turning away from the ancestors and the family. This has been elucidated in the second chapter. Instead, “conversion” in the Hehe perception has been interpreted as the act of coming closer to God, having a new perception and a new worldview about God, thus presumably perfecting the perception of the relationship with God. It has also been elucidated that AR in the Hehe were not allowed to practice idolatry.

The Hehe would therefore be more in agreement with the way in which the New Dictionary of Theology interprets *epistrepho* and *shubh*. In this dictionary, conversion is described as a change of direction (cf. Jo. 21:20, 1Th. 1:9)) that denotes a decisive God-ward reorientation (Ferguson and Wright 1989:167). A God-ward reorientation makes more sense in the Hehe context. Conversion in the context of AR among the Hehe would also agree with Baker's Dictionary of Christian Ethics that defines conversion by using the words *shubh* and *anastrepho* as the initial change of attitude. A change in attitude is seen as a new approach that creates new relations between people and God (Henry 1971:139). The researcher has used those two dictionaries to emphasize the notion of creating new relations because the Hehe religion is bound on relationship. If there was a turning from AR to Christianity then that turning ought to be seen from the relational perspective. The terms "*kupiluka*" and "*kupituka*" are essentially relational. The emphasis in these two Hehe terms is the change in worldview and relationship.

Peace takes a traditional stand of Christian teaching when he says,

Though the word conversion can be defined in various ways the domain of definition is itself fairly contained. Conversion is all about change; change from one worldview or lifestyle to quite a different worldview of lifestyle (Peace 2003:2-3).

The use of the expression "quite a different world view" by Peace might not be the most appropriate expression for *kupituka* in Hehe. Albeit, *kupituka* is akin to the Greek *metanoia*, which means transformation, but it also means the change of mind that accompanies repentance, faith and commitment. In this case *kupituka* could mean the transformation of religious perception. The AR perception understood God from the creation, sustenance, protection, generosity and punishment. The Christian perception that is depicted in *kupituka*, which is akin to *metanoia* perceives God in faith and from a family relationship. God becomes the father, the medium of relationship is called the Son and the presence

of God is felt in the Holy Spirit, which is the Spirit of God. The notion of the Spirit has a direct link to the ancestral spirits. It could therefore be asserted that the Hehe turned from the perception of God who was an ineffable beyond to God who comes in the perception of the family.

Christian translators have used the term *kupiluka* to signify the act of turning from sin while the term *kupituka* has been translated to signify the transformation that comes as a result of faith and repentance. Peace (1990:11) uses both *metanoia* and *metamelomai* to signify repentance. The researcher does not find the equivalent of that use in the Hehe perception. Instead, *kupela* could be akin to *metamelomai*. The Hehe use the term *kupela* for repentance.

Since the research is done amongst the Hehe people their language will be used to discuss the Hehe terms. *Kupela* in Hehe starts with the acts of leaving, regretting and denouncing the previous practices and abiding to the new practices. What might have been the use of the term *kupela* before Christianisation? According to Mnyawami (06-07-2003: Iringa) *kupela* was the most common practice in the family and in the community.

*Kupesa* meant the practice of the parent to stop the child from sucking. Thus *kupela* signified the act of the child to stop sucking from the mother. In daily living, *kupela* signified regret and the confession of past misconduct with the promise of not repeating the misconduct. If *kupela* were to seek for the Biblical equivalent expressions then both *metamelomai* and *exomologesis* would be the closest expressions (Cf. Josh. 7:19; Ps 51:5; 1Tim 3:16). *Exomologesis* refers to the confession of sins, the need for forgiveness, a vow and a recitation of a creed in secret or in public (Tappert 1959:133,166,374).

The conversion of the Hehe could be linked to all three expressions namely *kupituka*, *kupiluka* and *kupela* without setting an order as to which one came before the other. The assumption is that all three deeds took place consciously or unconsciously amongst the Hehe at one time or at different times without a specific order. Most importantly is the fact that Christianisation found

expressions that were common in the Hehe society and they were useful in bringing the necessary translation that brought forth what Christianity concedes to be the expected change or transformation that can be described as conversion. The logic of authentic conversion in those three terms is that Christianity found local situations and expressions in the Hehe vernacular and through their translation Christianity was able to propagate the message of salvation and call upon the Hehe people to turn from AR belief to Christian faith.

Turning from one faith to another was not common amongst the Hehe but turning from an unacceptable pattern of life to an acceptable one was common hence the use of the terms *kupela* and *kupiluka*. In addition, the local situations provided not only the vocabulary for transformation such as *kupituka* but there were demands in the society that required a transformation. A person who had caused serious problems or curse in the family or clan could face death as a penalty to the misdemeanour. One most common way to escape the death penalty was for the person to pay compensation for the offence that had caused problems or the curse and promise not to repeat the offence but be transformed. The expressions that would be used in the Hehe language for such occasions would be *kwidikila makosa* (confess the misdemeanour), *kupela* and *kupituka*. It is not easy to find the right English expressions for the three terms. Swahili would use *kukubali kosa*, *kutubu na kugeuka* (to confess, to regret and to transform). Greek would use *exomologew*, *epistrepheo* or *metamelw* and *metanoew*.

This leads us to another way of understanding conversion in the Hehe context. The expressions "*kwidikila makosa* and *kupela*" give the impression that they provide pre-requisites for faith and repentance and *kupituka* gives the impression of conversion. Authentic Christian conversion amongst the Hehe would involve the confession of human sinfulness, the readiness to believe in the payment of sin, which are faith and repentance and the readiness to transform. One could say the simplest form of defining authentic conversion would be to acknowledge the open commitment and confession of Hehe Christians that is

viable in the daily life of the Christian Church in Iringa. Their active participation in the total life of the Church signifies authentic conversion.

One could say the presence and praxis of *kupela*, *kupiluka* and *kupituka* in the Hehe vernacular shows that God had turned towards the Hehe even when the Hehe thought that God was an ineffable beyond. According to Luther in Plass (1959:1265-1266), God had turned to the Hehe before the Hehe turned to God. Hence, the total change of mind, allegiance and attitude that are found in *kupiluka*, *kupituka* and *kupela* in the Christian perspective of conversion were guided by the grace of God. It is through the grace of God that Christianity teaches about turning from sin and evil, which means that it is the God-given ability that is endowed to people. Through the translatability of the event of Jesus Christ in their lives of the Hehe, the grace of God guided them to recognize the reality and the effect of sin. The recognition helped them *kwidikila makosa* (to accept that they are sinners or confess the sins) *kupiluka* (to turn and look to Jesus for the recompense of their sins) and *kupituka* (be transformed).

Arguing along the line of these three terms, authentic conversion from AR to Christianity in the Hehe context could be defined as a transformation of worldview, an enhancement of confession faith and commitment. The local situation, which means the AR experiences and innate linguistic expressions, provided the background that was needed by the Hehe to come to the genuine understanding of the centrality of Jesus Christ as an alternative of religious life in the place of ancestors. In this aspect, turning or *kupiluka* should be considered as turning from the centrality of ancestors to the centrality of Jesus Christ. Furthermore, "authentic conversion" of the Hehe as observed from the term *kupituka* should be understood as the radical change of mindset, firstly about God who was thought to be an ineffable beyond to become the God of grace who can be approached. It should also be understood that God who was far beyond communication had allowed communication and communion with the Hehe. Another Africa theologian asserts,

That is to say, the fulfilment of human being is not, when all is said and done, a question of human (ideology, political, economic, or the like) means. First and last, the fulfilment of the human being is a question of faith, of conversion and of communion of being with the source of all being

Christ has shown that this communion of to-be-there with the Supreme Being is not only a spiritual attitude, or a post-mortem objective reserved for the eschatological consummation (Penoukou 1991: 49).

According to Siyovelwa (06-10-2003:Iringa), ancestors were invariably the agents of communication between people and God.

How and when ancestors communicated with God is not known, but the living asked them to communicate with God. It is not known whether the ancestors communicated what the living people were able to tell them or they did less or beyond that. What we know is that they communicated with God. Christianity brought forth Jesus Christ who can communicate with us and communicate with God as well. By so doing Christianity has made our work less demanding (Siyovelwa 06-10-2003:Iringa).

Siyovelwa was expressing the view that the Christian proclamation and the teaching about Jesus Christ have brought forth a new perception of God. The perception is that God who had always been perceived as unreachable (hidden) and one who would be consulted by ancestors without the knowledge or directives of the living, was now perceived as one who accepted to be seen in the person of His son Jesus Christ and was available for communication even to the extent of allowing us to know what is communicated.

Such an understanding is a genuine spiritual transformation and it expresses the authentic meaning of *kupituka* of the Hehe mindset and attitude towards the spiritual relationship with God.

Ideas borrowed from Rambo (1993:2-3) depict religious conversion as a method of looking for solutions that make sense and reach the real value and meaning in present life and a complete sense of existence. He says, "Religious conversion is one of humanity's ways of approaching its self-conscious



predicament, of solving or resolving the mystery of human origins, meaning, and destiny" (Rambo :2). If the assertions by Rambo are reflected in the Hehe context, they could be interpreted that even though God initiates Christian conversion in the human presence Jesus Christ its authenticity is achieved in the cultural and religious expression of the people. According to Siyovelwa, the Hehe searched for ways to communicate with God. It was possible to communicate with ancestors because they knew them and some of the living had once lived with them. One could say it is overt that the kind transformation that took place amongst the Hehe was the revelation and acknowledgement that God could draw near to people, call them to fellowship, communicate with them, call for reconciliation and communion. For the Hehe Christianity was complementing, confirming and bringing the answer to the longing souls, which wanted to communicate with God. The researcher interprets ancestors as agents who were asked by their living family members to carry the burden of sin, pain, humiliation, failure, disease and all worldly ills that they encountered daily on their behalf and present them to God. According to the information that was collected during fieldwork the Hehe believed that ancestors could take that burden to a certain point. The living family members could not explain how far the ancestors took their burden because that was beyond what the living family members could recognize. When Siyovelwa says, "Christianity made our work less demanding", the researcher interprets that the pre-Christian experience was part of the journey towards authentic Christian conversion where the rituals, sacrifices and libations were made in an effort to seek communication and communion with God through ancestors have been fulfilled through the event of Jesus Christ whose life, ministry and the relation with God are understandable in the human terms and daily living. It is thus stated further that,

This ontological solidarity extends to all human problems, inasmuch as, in becoming a human being, Christ has lived in every way as a human being of his time. By his life, his teaching, his miracles, by his death and his resurrection, he reaches human

beings at the crossroads of their anguish, their suffering, and their aspirations. But the attitude of Christ toward human problems is fundamentally determined by God the Father's will to love (Penoukou 1991:49).

It is from the background stated in the preceding paragraphs that the assumption can be made that the Hehe came to the realisation that human efforts to remove and win against sin, curses, agony and calamities in the society were not fully achievable except through Jesus Christ, hence converting to the faith in God through the truly translated Jesus Christ. This idea of Conn may be drawn upon here.

Many contemporary theologians, however, realizing the full religious depth of conversion beyond the moral, recognize in Jesus response to crises in his life and ministry, the transformation of faith, a rethinking of his relationship to the Father that defines the very essence of religious conversion (Conn 1983:96).

The discussions above should answer Rambo's question, "What is authentic conversion?" After defining Christian conversion with the Hehe expressions as *kupela*, *kulipuka* and *kupituka*, the task that follows is to give an interpretation of what the researcher means by the concept of Christian authentic conversion. Rambo says,

But I see "genuine" conversion as a total transformation of a person by the power of God. While transformation occurs through the mediation of social, personal, cultural and religious forces, ... I believe that conversion has to be radical, striking to the root of human predicament. For me, the root is a vortex of vulnerability (Rambo 2003:22).

Rambo uses another term that relates to conversion: That is "the power of God". Three terms are therefore used namely "the grace of God", "an encounter with God" and "the love of God". Thus four aspects of conversion emerge.

The first consideration concerning authentic Christian conversion will start with personal encounter with God. An encounter with God refers to the situation where God speaks to a person either through an audible voice, a

situation that is rare both in the old and New Testaments as well as in the African context. The encounter with God is also experienced through the act of hearing the preacher of the Word of God or by reading some Biblical literature.

It is presumed that hearing and/or reading the Word of God exposes a person to an awareness of what Rambo describes as God's power. The Christian teaching according to the Lutheran faith describes the power of God as perceivable through the love, the will and the grace of God (Jn 3:16-17). In that exposure, human worthlessness and sin are awakened (Lk 5:8). Hearing and reading the Word of God are notions that take for granted that the Word of God is in the vernacular or mother tongue.

The second consideration arises from the ideas of Rambo as already quoted. According to Rambo, authentic conversion involves the mediation of social, personal, cultural and religious forces. This is directly applicable in the conversion of the Hehe from AR to Christianity. When missionaries came, they found the Hehe with a religious faith, where people believed in God, centred their rituals through ancestors, and believed in the existence and the reality of stronger powers of the spiritual realm. Diviners were the means of controlling malevolent or so to say "evil powers and powers of darkness".

The means that brought forth the breakthrough for missionaries to come into contact with the Hehe were to learn the Hehe, Bena and later Swahili languages. Learning the languages included learning the culture, the religion and the general social setting that included the necessity of consultation with the local leaders. Therefore, the researcher concurs with Rambo that authentic conversion occurs through and in a given cultural context where culture and the religious background of the given community play roles of preparing the ground and making the possibility of a break through for the new faith. This is what has been described in the second chapter as *prepatio evangelica*.

Kraft (1981: 169- 172; 1984:486-484), has advocated the primacy of understanding Christian conversion from the host cultural concepts and context.

In his advocacy he defines authentic Christian conversion in the African context as the event of Christ that is seen through the African lens. Kraft's arguments are also emphasised by Walls (1996:26-29) where they could be precisely put in this way, "there is authentic Christian conversion when Christ is incarnate in the heart of the African culture, belief, norms and values".

With Rambo's assertion, we define the expression "the power of God" as God's initiative of self-translation to a person in the event of Christ. Such an encounter is seen in the dramatic conversion of Paul (Ac 9:1-19).

Paul was an ardent Jew of the Pharisaic order (Phl. 3:5-9). Albeit, he was a faithful Jew, he discovered how sinful he was when he encountered Jesus Christ through a bright light and the audible voice of Jesus Christ that spoke in his mother tongue. In his personal, religious and cultural setting, Paul heard Jesus Christ and he was transformed. The assumption is that even if a similar event has not occurred to any Hehe person, yet God's grace has come to the Hehe and transformed them. The editor of the *International Review of Mission* said, "In the actual encounter with God's grace, the awareness of sin is awakened. It is also the Holy Spirit who produces repentance" (Castro 1983:310).

Authentic conversion is therefore that personal encounter with either the power or the grace of God or both. The encounter between God and the potential convert through the power and the grace means hearing the Word, the will, the call and the love of God in the vernacular and in the daily human struggles of life (Lk. 15:1 ff). The encounter that has been described herein intends to affirm the notion that authentic conversion is an awareness of God's love that involves hearing, experiencing and responding in faith and repentance to the gracious initiative of God that has been translated in the event of Jesus Christ because the encounter with God in the event of Christ uncovers the "sad reality and effect of sin" (Castro 1983:309).

Thirdly, arguing again from Rambo's view, authentic conversion has to be viewed from "striking the root of human predicament". One example of "the

root of human predicament" is in the discourse of the encounter between a Samaritan woman and Jesus Christ at the well in Sychar (John 4:1-42). According to the authors of the "Life application Bible of the New International Version" (1998:1871- 1872), the discourse shows that Jesus met the woman in her daily struggle. In the course of conversation, which this thesis describes as "hearing of the Word of God" the woman encountered and discover the uniqueness of the person and the power of Jesus Christ. The woman at Sychar exclaimed, " Come see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be Christ?" (Jn. 4: 29). Later on the people of Sychar responded that they believed in Jesus Christ not because of the encounter between the woman and Jesus Christ but because they had seen and heard Jesus Christ himself. They told the woman, " We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves, and we now that this man really is the Saviour of the world" (Jn. 4: 42). One can assume that the Hehe would say, "We believe not because missionaries have come from Germany and Sweden but because we have heard with our own ears about God, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit in our own language and within our daily predicaments and what we have heard brings salvation".

Fourthly, using the same example of the woman of Sychar and making the interpretation of Rambo's "vortex of vulnerability", it is postulated that authentic conversion to Jesus Christ took place when Jesus Christ met the woman in her vulnerability. According to the authors of the Leadership Bible NIV (1998:12.43), the woman was vulnerable to discrimination, isolation and sexual exploitation. They say,

This account portrays Jesus meeting a woman who was isolated from him by racial, gender, lifestyle and positional barriers and reached out to the woman, treating her as an equal. In that moment, she discovered that God actually cared for her. Jesus used his power to lift up a woman who was down cast, and she became his greatest spokesperson to the people in her town (Buzzel, Boa and Perkins 1998:1243).

Several theological aspects that support the notion of authentic conversion are presupposed. These include the new projections of righteousness, the awareness of justice, reconciliation and internal peace of mind as well as the encouragement for hope and victory. The Samaritan woman, as described by the authors of the leadership Bible, represents many African women and men. She fits in the context of Africa women and men who were discriminated even by their own missionaries, the women around Africa whose human rights were and are still abused and those who are still isolated or mistreated because of the gender imbalance. The arguments of authentic conversion envisage that when Jesus Christ reaches such people with the Word of God through any messenger and when the Word is preached in their cultural context in the vernacular, such people will discover the liberation and peace that is found in Jesus Christ. It is also envisaged that the liberation and peace that is found in Jesus Christ will penetrate through the varied uneven relations and cultural elements and bring forth not only authentic Christian conversion but also authentic living in those cultures. Many ecumenical consultations have emphasised the fact of peace and liberation as primary components of salvation and motivation of authentic conversion. Potter for example says, "Christ came to initiate in us this process of liberation from enslaving elements of our culture, a liberation which can make that culture something living and authentic" (Potter 1983:319).

While Christian theology according to the Lutheran teaching emphasizes authentic conversion as dependent on Christ's merit (Rom 8:1-4), it also emphasizes that authentic conversion ought to be perceived as the acceptance of a set of new truths with the need of assimilating them and making the proclaimed gospel and the mission of God amongst the Hehe theologically relevant.

To summarise, ideas from Bediako (2000:57), Hastings (1976:49) and Mbiti (1986:229) can be drawn upon. All three emphasize that authentic conversion is viable when Christian faith is genuinely lived, experienced, and theologised in

the community. Put in a precise form, authentic conversion involves a paradigm shift that is meaningful in the local community and where local converts become aware of God's Mission and transformation.

### 3.2.2 *The message of salvation*

The intention of this subsection is to clarify the use of the phrase "the message of salvation". The phrase arises from the hypothesis of this chapter, which says, "The message of salvation that stems from the initiative that God took the event of Jesus Christ..."

There are two main concerns that have to be clarified. The first one is to define the meaning of the phrase "the message of salvation" that led the Hehe who had been adherents of AR to turn to Christianity. The second one is to investigate the relevance of that expression amongst the Hehe. These concerns call for some reflections to the second chapter.

It has been indicated in the second chapter (2.3), especially the whole third subsection that the Hehe performed family, clan and communal rituals with sacrifices and libations. It has also been indicated in the fourth section (2.4) that the Hehe consulted diviners and performed rituals and offered sacrifices with specific purposes. The first purpose was to have continued communion and communication with the ancestors. The second purpose was to seek for mercy from God and appease the ancestors. The third purpose was to remove from people the idea that God's anger was manifested in dreadful events such as storms, floods, typhoon, excessive draught, plagues, and attacks from hostile clans and tribes as well as attacks by pests and wild animals (Kikoti 08-07-2003: Pomerin, and Lwanzali 28-10-2003: Ilula).

Lwanzali, a diviner, narrated to the researcher how he was forced by the divination spirit to call for a communal rain making rite in 1999, against the then impending drought. He said,

*Kile kitu kilikuja kikisema "msipotambika mwaka huu, mvua haitanyesha" na mwenzangu se Kulanga wa Idunda alikuja akasema amepata miujuza [sic- mauzauza] kwamba lazima tutambike... Mimea ilianza kukauka... tulipotambika mvua ilianguka nyingi (Lwanzal 29.10 2003). (That thing [the spirit] came and said, "If you do not perform the rain making communal rite, there will be no rain" and my colleague se-Kulanga was also possessed by a spirit and had visions that directed to us to perform the rain making rite... Crops started to wither, when we performed the rain making rite, rain fell in abundance) Translated by the researcher.*

Rituals, rites, libations and sacrifices show that the Hehe were in need of God's help for their survival. Furthermore, the Hehe sought for deliverance, rescue and safety against the harmful and destructive natural and supernatural forces in the society. Those needs could be classified as physical needs and would be adjoined to the wide-ranging definition of salvation as thus stated.

*"Shalom" in Hebrew and "soteria" in Greek are secular concepts. They imply the transformation of a situation of danger and need into a situation of safety and well-being. We must regain the profanity of these concepts if we do not want to be led astray into pseudo-spiritual irrelevancies. I say pseudo-spiritual because what is not existentially relevant is also not authentically spiritual. Thus the aim of all redemptive action is the restoration of human beings to safety and well being. ... If well-being is comprehensive, any specific need is a specific deficiency in overall well-being. ...The specific thrust of any redemptive action is a response to a specific, experienced need. ... Redemption, salvation and deliverance are concepts, which only make sense if they are defined as responses to real needs (Nurnberger 1990: 206-207).*

The Hehe would identify with the kind of salvation that is described by Nurnberger as *"wima kunoga"* (well-being), which is akin to *"shalom"*. When the Hehe people say *"uyo mwina kunoga"* they literally mean a wholesome person. Wholesome could mean, healthy, wealthy and peaceful, or having an abundance. The opposite is *"wimafibi"* (unwholesome, unhealthy, disordered, lacking and poor). Thus salvation for the Hehe could be established as having both the secular and the spiritual connotations.



Other than the search for physical well-being, the second chapter has indicated that the Hehe sought for ways to please God. In every ritual people who had committed offences sought for reconciliation and forgiveness. It is thus perceptible that the Hehe sought for spiritual salvation, which is the salvation against sinfulness. Henceforth the research will investigate on the concept of salvation and sin in the Hehe context.

The informants in fieldwork had several expressions for salvation. The researcher compared those expressions with the Hehe Bible translation. The Bible translation committee used the term "*wupoki*" for salvation. (Mbeho 10-08-2003: Iringa). The researcher discussed with Canon Mbeho concerning the term "*salvation*" and the two agreed that "*wupoki*" was the term that represented the diverse expression of salvation in Hehe. Mathew 1:21 says, "*Umwene alavapoka avanu mu nzanangifu dzawo*" (He will save his people from their sins) Translation from NIV. In Luke 19:9 the verse says "*Neng'ino uwupoki wufikite mukaye iyi*" (Today salvation has come to this house). Translation from NIV.

"*Uwapoki*" is an inflection of the verbs "*kupoka*" (take away from, snatch from) and "*kwipoka*" (wrestling) signify that salvation is attained through struggle. Therefore the literal sense of "*uwupoki*", in Hehe is the process of using either power or force and when necessary a recompense to take away "A" from proprietor "B" who is apparently the illegal proprietor to "C" who is apparently the legal proprietor. The act of taking away is intended to bring deliverance and to rescue, but that kind of deliverance or rescue cannot take place until the legal proprietor "C" has wrestled, recompensed or fought against and defeated the illegal proprietor. The illegal proprietor "B" in the Hehe context was believed to be the malevolent forces and people who wanted to cause pain or death to other people. Sorcery, the use of malevolent forces and misconduct were counted as behavioural patterns and practices that enraged God and were against the will of ancestors and the society at large. The sinful behaviour will be dealt with in the subsequent subsections.

However, the need for salvation has been there amongst the Hehe. The Hehe sought for ways to attain salvation through rituals and sacrifices. It is therefore assumed that the proclaimed Word of God became the message of salvation to the Hehe because the preachers used the terminology that promised security and continuity of daily life. It is also assumed that it became the message of salvation because it proclaimed peace and life in fullness (Jn 10:10b), freedom, deliverance, relief and well-being.

Since salvation is a Biblical term it would not be enough to dwell with the Hehe vocabulary to come up with the proper interpretation of the message of salvation. References are made from several scholars to compare with what was found in the fieldwork. For example Guthrie defines salvation as God's answer to the needs of people as he says. "The Biblical doctrine of salvation may be briefly summed up as God's answer to man's need" (1973:598). Garret Jr. defines salvation as "deliverance, redemption or purchase, and liberation or setting free" (Garret 1995:308). The argument is carried further that salvation or deliverance is deeply imbedded in the Old and New Testaments. Its usage is found even in the past biblical documents (Garret: 308). In the words of Jesus Christ the message of salvation was defined as "bringing good news to the poor, freedom for prisoners, recovery of sight for blind people, release of the oppressed and the year of the Lord's favour" (Lk 4: 18-19).

New Testament references make an enlightening comparison with the Hehe situation. For Matthew and Mark "the message of salvation" is the proclamation of the "Good News of being ransomed" (Mt 20:28, Mk 10: 45). For the author of Ephesians and Paul in Colossians, it is the message of being redeemed (Eph 1: 7, 14; Col 1: 14). For Matthew, Paul and the author of Hebrews the message of salvation is being saved (Mt 1:21; 1Tim 1: 15; Heb 5: 5) and the message of a sacrifice being paid on behalf of the sinner (Heb 5-10). For Paul in Romans and Corinthians it is the message of expiation (Rom 2; 25; 1Jn 2; 2, 4: 10), atonement (Rom 5:11) and of reconciliation 2Cor 5:20; Rom 5:8). Paul's version is

akin to that of Aulen (1979:4) in *Christus Victor* (Christ the Victor, Col. 2: 14ff). The Hehe did not have *wupoki* as the message of salvation from punishment and penalty as seen (2Cor 5:21, Rom 6:23). It could therefore be summed up that the message of salvation for both Hehe and the Biblical references that have been cited that it brings relief and satisfaction to a person who is in anguish and anxiety. The assertion by Paul and Mark could be summed up as defining the message of salvation as an example of obedience to God Phil 2: 8, Mk 10: 39 and a message that confirms total liberation (Wilson 2002:109).<sup>6</sup>

The assumption is put forth that Christian teaching proclaimed the liberating and redeeming activities of the message of salvation. However, the researcher looks for Paul's arguments so that he can make deeper interpretation of salvation from the Lutheran Church perspective. The Pauline perspective in his epistles is that there is no salvation by the means of law. The Hehe AR perspective could be described as one that is more inclined to the law. The impression of law can be depicted from the terminologies that define sin.

The first word that describes sin in Hehe is "*nzanangifu*". *Nzanangifu* means lawlessness, without totem, without taboo or rule, uncouth fond of dirty tricks, destructive and disastrous (Ngalembula 27-10-2003: Isagwa). "*Wuhosi*" is another term that describes sinfulness. *Wuhosi* means being erroneous or fond of wrong-doing (N. Kaywanga 14-8-1997: Ipalamwa).

There are two other terms whose meanings are close to sinfulness. These are "*wafu*" (misconduct, infuriation) and *wangula nongwa* (offender, corrupt, fond of blunder, without control, senseless and unintelligible), (Kidanganyike 28-10-2003:Wotalisoli). According to Kaywanga and Ngalembula, the expression "*wangula nongwa*" is more inclined to both criminal and civil offences. For them "*wangula nongwa*" was not even dealt with in religious functions. A "*mwangula nongwa*" (culprit, one who commits an offence) was judged and punished by the

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<sup>6</sup> The list of the views and ideas about the message of salvation in this paragraph are taken from Wilson, but the originator is McIntyre (1995:26-52). I have used the summary from Wilson.

leader of the clan or the ruler of a given area. If the offence happened to be serious, such as rape, murder, theft and those of that kind, the offenders were murdered or chased away for the village.

Upon these observations, it seems that sin was not a concept that was introduced by Christianity. Purportedly, sin existed amongst the Hehe and AR required confession, ritualistic expiation and compensation through sacrifice. The Christian concept of salvation from sin was non-existent. Practices that were used to remove sin and evil have been expressed in the second chapter (2.3.2-2.3.4). It has also been indicated in the second chapter that the Bena and Hehe have much in common. The New Testament and the hymnal books that were used by both Bena and Hehe until the 1980s used the expression of "*nongwa*", "*mbifu*" and "*nzanangifu*" for sin. Both Bena and Hehe use the expression "*mbifu*" in the place of "*wafu*" because *wafu* is in most cases used as an insult.

One verse of a Bena song says "*Anyombye inongwa dzangu*" (Southern Diocese 1979:112 hymn number 190) (He has paid for my offences). It is very likely that the message, which shows that Jesus takes away the sins of the world, was indeed the new message of salvation based on the event of Jesus Christ. It could be inferred that the concept of translatability of the event of Christ helped the Hehe and Bena to perceive the message of salvation as one that comes and declares salvation to sinners without their merit. The expression "The Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world" is translated thus in Bena "*Akakolo Ka Nguluwi kitegule imbifu dza kwenenyi*" (Southern Diocese 1997:51, hymn number 86)<sup>6</sup>. The literal translation says, "The Lamb of God takes away the evils of the world". Sin in Bena and Hehe has been equated to an evil attitude. The expression "*mbifu*" from "*wuwifu*" shows that sin is evil and depressing. One could say the message that Jesus Christ saves has very deep roots of healing, encouraging and liberating connotation in the Hehe and Bena vernacular than

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<sup>7</sup> The expression "*dza kwenenyi*" has been taken from the publication of 1935 instead "*dza twevanu*" from the publication of 1997 because the one of 1935 is more authentic. The expression "*dza twevanu*" does not agree with the New Testament translation.

what translators could imagine. The meaning is built upon the pre-Christian experience where each sin had to be paid for through rituals and sacrifices.

Another Bena hymn says, "*Ve Nguluvi, e nzolofu Inzanangifu dzangu: E sipwali umupoki vakwenivala kuno*" (Southern Diocese 1997: 91 hymn number 155) (O God, innumerable are my sins: There is no one on earth who can save me). One could argue that after all the song was translated from a German hymn. The argument would be fair but the researcher tries to understand the perception of the Hehe and Bena. Taking the perception from the pre-Christian experience the researcher thinks of a Hehe or Bena who has performed all rituals and sacrifices; one who has consulted many diviners and his or her problems remain unresolved then one hears the message that Jesus takes away all the sins without any other condition besides faith. The message of salvation by grace becomes meaningful because it comes when everything from an AR experiential perception has failed.

Having thus argued, it shows that sin amongst the Hehe and Bena was problematic, and it needed solutions. The Hehe and Bena who had tried hard to defeat sin all their life long without total redemption understood the argument by Paul that salvation is not by law. Paul shows how law cannot save when he says, "Since it could only indicate the presence and excite the reactionary activity of sin and stop men's mouths in their guilt before God (Rom 3:19; Gal 2:16)" (Marshall 1997:1048). Paul then shows the solution when he argues that salvation is provided as a free gift without human merit. The following summary from Marshall is appropriate.

Salvation is provided as the free gift of the righteous God acting in grace towards the undeserving sinner who, by the gift of faith, trusts in the righteousness of Christ who has redeemed him by his death and justified him by his resurrection. God, for Christ's sake, justifies the unmeriting sinner (i.e. reckons to him the perfect righteousness of Christ and regards him as if he had not sinned), forgives his sin, reconciles him to himself in and through Christ 'making peace by the blood of his cross' (2 Cor. 5: 18; Rom. 5: 11;

Col. 1: 20), adopts him his family (Gal. 4:5f; Eph. 1:13; 2Cor. 1:22), giving him the seal, earnest, and first fruits of his Spirit in his heart, and so making him a new creation. By the same Spirit the subsequent resources of salvation enables him to walk in newness of life, mortifying the deeds of the body increasingly (Rom. 8:13) until ultimately he is conformed to Christ (Rom. 8: 29) and his salvation is consummated in glory" (Phil. 3: 21) (Marshall:1048).<sup>8</sup>

The Christian message of salvation to the Hehe and Bena was received as the solution to what was look for through AR. What was sought through AR has been defined as pre- Christian experience. This point could be explained by a metaphor of climbing a hill. Climbing a hill starts at its foot. The climber goes higher and higher because one has started from a lower level. The lower level is not considered inferior but foundational for the climber to reach higher. The importance of AR in creating the foundation for Christian message is that through AR the Hehe showed the need for salvation. The message of salvation based on the event of Jesus Christ availed itself and proclaimed that Jesus Christ was ready to take away the sin of the world.

The message of salvation became more meaningful in the Hehe context because of availing the speech of God in the vernacular expression. The researcher supposes that the vernacular expression, which took the terminology from the mother tongue, had more in-depth perception because it carried more weight to the Hehe than what the translators had envisioned. It is assumed that the translators took the terminology but the Hehe took the same terminology and made reflections from their life experiences prior to and in the process of Christianisation. This brings us back to the concept of translatability. "Translatability ensures that the challenge at the heart of the Christian enterprise is, even in setback, kept alive in all cultural contexts" (Sanneh 1991:48).

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<sup>8</sup> Marshall refers to Ephesians as one of the Pauline epistles but modern scholars have shown that it does not belong to Pauline epistles.

### 3.3 *Translatability through the Incarnation*

The term "translatability" purports the idea that in the incarnation God made a self-translation into humanity thus being one among all people of all races and cultures in the whole world. The self-translation of God into humanity is seen as the incarnation where God is transformed from being invincibly divine to a vulnerable human being. This forms the first criterion. The basis of this criterion is that Jesus became a Hehe in Iringa as soon as the Hehe heard the Word that was proclaimed to them in the vernacular and believed in the Word, as stated hereafter,

Incarnation is translation. When God in Christ became man, Divinity was translated into humanity, as though humanity were a receptor language. ...

But language is specific to people or an area. No one speaks generalized "language"; it is necessary to speak a particular language. Similarly, when Divinity was translated into humanity he did not become generalised humanity. He became *a person in a particular locality and in a particular ethnic group and a particular place and time* (Walls 1996: 27).

The second criterion continues with the claim that God made a self-translation in the suffering and death of Jesus Christ on the cross, and followed by the victorious resurrection. According to Luther's theology of the cross, suffering and death are understood that God experienced human humiliation, suffering and the shame of the cross through Jesus Christ. By so doing God made a self-translation that was practical and possible to be interpreted in the daily experiences of all human beings. Sufferings and tragedies are common to all human beings and the whole creation and prove the reality and the effect of sin and the need for salvation. Furthermore, through the resurrection God made a self-translation that brought forth the core of Christian faith and hope. It is in that hope that God is understood as the centre of both Christian and African religious affinity and worship. The African understanding of ancestors' supernatural ascendancy after death creates hope that the dead people are not

lost. Resurrection in Christianity brings forth a deeper hope that the dead are not lost and they will rise again, which is Good News not only in Christianity but also in the AR perspective.

In view of the above, the sending of the Holy Spirit becomes the third criterion. This purports the idea that when Jesus Christ sent the Holy Spirit, God officiated the unending translation of the Bible into every mother tongue where the gospel would be preached. In so doing, the study underlines the claim that the calling of all humanity for salvation is thus made possible in Christianity through the translation of the Bible into the vernacular of all ethnic groups, tribes and nations. With this fourth occasion of the event of Jesus Christ, the sending of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost served as God's hallmark upon the angelic claim that "Immanuel is God with us" (Mtt.2: 23). The claim meant that from the day of Pentecost God should be heard in the proclaimed Word, by every person, in every nation hence in every person's mother tongue, and under all and every circumstance all who would believe in the Word would be saved and be called to fellowship with God. This happened to the Hehe amidst colonisation, commercial exploitation, political subjugation, lack of material wealth and rampant poverty, ignorance and diseases. Accordingly, the argument that authentic Christian conversion does not depend on changing from one religion to another, one kind of civilisation to another or from the so called uncivilised to civilised. It does not depend on political subjugation by those who have power over and against those who do not have power. Furthermore, it does not depend on being colonised or having nationalistic freedom, abundance or lack of material wealth and cultural vitality or dejection. The basic argument is that authentic Christian conversion takes place when the translated message of salvation reaches people and speaks to them in who and what they are.

The fourth criterion is the calling of all humanity for transformation, forgiveness of sins, and the fellowship with God. The claim is that, through Jesus Christ God initiated the universal calling that would always confront the



universal sinfulness of all people in their specific cultural contexts requiring them to believe, repent and accept forgiveness of sin and come to reconcile and have fellowship and communion with one another and with God.

Translatability is the term that has been borrowed from Bediako, Sanneh and Walls to signify how God made a self-translation from the divine nature to human nature. Subsequent deliberations will show how each author has argued. The three authors have used the concept of translatability to demonstrate that it is the innate demeanour of Christianity. The researcher is in agreement with the three authors that contrary to all other religious faiths, it is characteristic of Christianity to translate itself.

Translatability has been interpreted into four themes. We will use ideas from Bediako to define the themes. The first theme is the divine translation where through incarnation God transforms from invincible to a vulnerable human. He says;

But behind the Christian doctrine of substantial equality of the Scriptures in all languages, there lies the even profounder doctrine of the Incarnation, by which the fullest divine communication has reached beyond the forms of human words into the human form itself. The Word [of God] became flesh and dwelt among us. Translatability, therefore, may be said to be in-built in the nature of Christian religion and capable of subverting any cultural possessiveness of the faith in the process of transmission (Bediako 1995:110).

The second theme defines translatability as the starting point of universality of Christianity as it demonstrates its characteristics of being accommodative and adaptive in every environment.

Translatability is also another way of saying universality. Hence, the translatability of the Christian religion signifies its fundamental relevance and accessibility to the person in any culture within which the Christian faith is transmitted and assimilated (Bediako:109).

The third theme is based on the language or the vernacular in which the gospel is preached, which in this thesis will be frequently referred to as the mother tongue. It is under this theme that the three authors point out that indigenisation of Christianity is inevitable because once the Word of God is translated in the mother tongue and adapted in the culture of a people group then Jesus Christ, and therefore God and Christianity are inevitably expressed in the language, symbols and life of the indigenous people. "Christian doctrine rejects the notion of a special, sacred language for its scriptures and makes God speak in the vernacular so that 'all of us hear... in our own languages ... the wonders of God' (Ac 2:11)" (Bediako:109).

The fourth theme is continuity. "Thus universality, translatability, incarnation and indigeneity belong in a continuum and are integral to the warp and woof of the Christian religion"(Bediako 1995:123). From Bediako's assertion, the concepts and praxis of translatability, universality, indigenisation and incarnation are interwoven and inseparable in a manner that is inevitable and fundamental to Christianity. The researcher understands that the propagation and the translation of the message of salvation move from one culture to another. The former and the later cultures enrich each other. The former culture sows the seed and the later culture grows the seed. In that way, the recipient culture practices indigenisation (Mtt 13:23). It could be argued therefore that one criterion of authentic conversion in the African context is the conviction that the Word of God is the seed that falls on the good soil of Africa, which accounts for the fast growth of the church. It could also be argued that the good soil of Africa cannot be separated from the pre-Christian experience where AR had always been interwoven with its African culture.

The preceding arguments are very akin to the accentuation of the Reformers and Luther's theology of *Sola Scripture* (the Word alone) and *Sola Christo* (Christ alone). In that accentuation, Luther was underlining that the foundations of salvation and Church authority are Jesus Christ, the Word, the

faith and the grace of God. The other two expressions namely, *Sola fide* (faith alone) and *sola gratia* (grace alone) will come in the discussions at a later stage but our emphasis here is the requirement of the Reformers that the Bible must be in the language of the receptor culture, which, according to the above argument, is the good soil for translatability, universality, and indigenisation hence incarnation.

In the first theme, translatability portrays God in Jesus Christ being transformed not only in the linguistic Word but also in the human nature of Christ. With such an assertion, we refer to our main argument that authentic conversion is thus the faith in the human God in Jesus Christ (Rom 10:9). We argue in the same line that Jesus Christ is the Word of God in human language. The basis of this argument is thus expressed, "Christ is the Word of God translated. His divinity is translated into humanity, humanity being the receptor language" (Visser and Bediako 2000:xi).

Questioning or determining the authenticity of Christian conversion or its criteria amongst the Hehe ought to start with questioning whether there is a Bible in the vernacular that can be described as the mother tongue of the Hehe. This can be answered in the affirmative, as there is a Bible in Bena, Swahili and Hehe. Consequently, we have heard God speak in Bena, Swahili and Hehe. By so doing the conversion of the Hehe to Christianity has arisen from what God has been saying and doing in the perceptions of the Hehe in their mother tongue.

Sanneh (1991:9-47) and Walls (1997:3-7) argue that once Christianity is introduced in a place, it will translate itself into the context of that place, regardless of whether the propagators want it to happen that way or not. As a consequence, wherever Jesus Christ is introduced in the translated Word, God will make a self-translation into the culture, religious faith and in the totality of their life. It is thus asserted, "God chose translation as his mode of action for the salvation of humanity. Christian faith rests on a divine act of translation: the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us (John 1:14)" (Walls 1996:26).

We carry further this argument and ask ourselves: According to the paintings that have been traditionally handed over for many decades, Jesus Christ has been painted as a Jew of the Western culture or a Westerner with a Jewish culture. Nevertheless, how do people in Iringa understand Jesus Christ in their day to day living? Do they understand Jesus Christ as a Jew, a white man or a Hehe? How is Jesus Christ incarnate in the Hehe culture and faith? We will answer these questions by going deep in the concept of incarnation.

Incarnation is born from the Latin word *incarnare* (to make flesh). The prefix *in* has a causative sense "to cause something to be something" and the stem *caro* or *carnis*, means "flesh" (Wayne 1994:543). The modern Swahili Bible, second edition (2001) puts the heading for the first part of the first chapter of John (1:1-18) *Neno akawa mwanadamu*, whose transliteration means "Word became human". "Word" is treated as a third person pronoun. We can as well say, "He who is the Word or that which is the Word became human". In John 1:14a, the translation reads, *Naye Neno akawa mwanadamu akakaa kwetu* whose transliteration means, "He who is the Word became human and dwelt in our midst." The Bena version of 1958 says, "*Neke Ulidzwi adzukage nyama ja muvili neke adzage adzovelage apesu*" ("The Word was transformed and became human flesh and he came and spent his life with us"). The Hehe translation of 1999 says, "*Nave Liswi ave munu swe akwikala kwa hwehwe*" ("And the Word became human and lived with us"). In spite of the minor variations, both Bena and Hehe indicate that there was a transformation. There was an act of the verb "to be". The notion of living with us goes beyond just being "among us" to "becoming part of our families hence joining the ancestral lineage".<sup>9</sup>

This phrase can be very well understood if it is studied from an AR and Hehe or Bena leadership philosophy in relation to *Liswi* (*Lidzwi*). *Liswi* can be sent out to people by only four authorities, namely the father, the ancestors and

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<sup>9</sup>*Liswi* is for the common Hehe. The Bena of Njombe and the Dzungwa (a sub-tribe of the Hehe) use *Lidzwi* and this has been the case since 1908. Hehe has been translated since 1990 from the initiatives of this researcher.

the chief or the chief's representative (Kiwovele 30-10-1997: Njombe and Kidanganyike 25-8-1999: Wotalisoli). The rest of all people, even the highly respected diviners do not have the *Liswi*. In spite of their great importance in the Hehe society, diviners cannot have *Liswi*. They can have a *lukani* or *lulongwa* (a concern or an issue). *Liswi* is the ultimate authority of the speaker. Diviners do not have ultimate authority because in seeking for answers to a problem a person can consult more than one diviner.

"*Liswi lya Nguluvi*" means "the authoritative utterance of God". Likewise, and very unfortunately, women and children were also denied the privilege of coming forth with a *Liswi*. They could come forth with a *lukani* or *lulongwa*. Youngsters were also denied a *liswi*. They were also denied a *lukani*. They were understood to have a *sida*, which is *shida* in Swahili and it means "a problem". The common saying among the Hehe "*Ndimugaya sida ndinywa we ndifulika* (I do not have any problem, albeit without clothing, I have food and drink)." This arises from the notion that an adult person should never be counted as having problems so long as there is food and drink. Apparently, where there is beer there is food (Makilika 25-08-1999: Isagwa).

The group that was interviewed in Isagwa confirmed that an adult person is expected to have a concern (*lukani*) or an issue (*lulongwa*) and a leader should have a word (*liswi*). According to the Hehe, only children, immigrants and slaves can have *sida* (problems). This adds to the fact that *Liswi*, and especially *Liswi lya Nguluvi* has a lot of credibility amongst the Hehe. Never would any person with a sound mind, of any religious affiliation, ridicule the Word of God even if that person does not believe in what is said. It is thus obvious that the Hehe people listen to the message of salvation because it is *Liswi lya Nguluvi* (the Word of God).

The translation of John 1:1-2 in Hehe reads, *Pamuvango kwali kwina Liswi, kangi iLiswi ilyo lyali kwa Nguluvi, kangi iliswi lilyo yali Nguluvi. Liswi ali kwa Nguluvi baho pamuvango.* (In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with

God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning). Translated from NIV). The importance of this text as seen from the Hehe context is that there is power and authority in the Word because only a person with authority utters it. It is therefore apparent that beyond human thinking, search and speculation there is God and since God is the creator, there is a beginning and that beginning is in the Word of the beginner. It is also evident in the Hehe context that an utterance causes action (Cf. Mtt 8:8-10). The Hehe would simply ask, where else could the Word of God be if not with God and how can you separate the Word and the one who utters it?

We will therefore reconsider John 1:14 where "*iLiswi (iLidzwi) lyave munu neke ikale ukwetu.*" (The Word became flesh and dwelt among us). This text is important because both the Swahili and the Hehe idioms of becoming human literally means taking human form or shape, which implies that the Word of God was transformed into human form and shape. It could also signify the attainment of human body. Walls argues that,

Further, as Christian faith is about translation, it is about conversion. ... Conversion is not the substitution of something new for something old (in the great act of translation into humanity, Christ took nothing away from humanity made in God's image); nor the addition of something new to something old (in the great act of translation, Christ added nothing to humanity as made in God's image) (1996:28).

This implies that God converted to humanity in order that humanity can convert to God. In incarnation, the Word was made available for any people group who were created in the image of God. Hence, comes the breakthrough that God brings forth a prototype of self-availability. This becomes a translation where God who has turned to us through the Word can transform us through the same Word, which then becomes part of the human family. For the Hehe God was translated as a member of families. Being a member of a family implies

belongingness not only to those who are present but also those who were present and those to come, hence joining the ancestral lineage.

This kind of belongingness will be discussed further in the fifth chapter that deals with indications of authentic conversion. Nevertheless, some highlights will be given hereafter concerning incarnation and the receptor culture or language, which in this thesis is the Hehe. The notion of receptor language or culture is not directly found in the gospels but it is frequently implied. Matthew uses a broader expression as he quotes the angel by saying "The virgin will be with a child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel", which means "God with us." (Mtt.1: 23). John as cited above, elaborates this idea of "God with us" further. He says, "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father full of grace and truth." (Jn. 1:14). The apostles remind us that incarnation is at the centre of God's activity to human beings. It is thus rightly asserted,

The incarnation testifies the covenant that God has made with man. Indeed, the basis for all of God's acts of conversion, every turn he makes toward man in mercy, lies in His own conversion in the incarnation. In a marginal gloss to Psalm 84:7 Luther explains the two words *converte* and *converses* in the text indicate God is converted and converts us; He assumes our nature and we by faith assume his nature (Harran 1983:64).

Paul the apostle underlines the ideas from Matthew and John by saying, "God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ," (2Cor. 5:19). There are three notions that have to be given special attention in these arguments. These are God "among us", "dwelling among us" and "reconciling Himself to the world". These Biblical ideas remind us the kind of God who is portrayed in Christian theology. It is the God who desires to communicate with people by becoming a person and who desires to convert people by converting to them. In the Old Testament God communicated with people through prophets but now

God communicates through his son Jesus Christ (Heb1:14). God communicates through Jesus Christ because Jesus Christ has been transformed (converted) to humanity and, in that, he dwells among us and reconciles us with the Father. Kraft (in Smalley 1984: 486-487) argues that God who saw fit to communicate in the Hebrew culture and language saw also fit to communicate in Greek, Latin, German, Arabic, English, Swahili and in all cultures in which people are wrapped in, including Hehe.

With these conjectures, it is reasonable to state that in the incarnation God has fulfilled the promise of salvation to all people. The fulfilment of God's promise becomes viable when dwelling and bringing reconciliation signify direct communication. Direct communication should signify acknowledgement of the presence of God amongst the people in the given culture. Bediako stresses,

Three aspects of his life and ministry make Christ unique. First, the incarnation in which God becomes vulnerable man. Second, the Cross, in which God's will for reconciliation through redemptive suffering is expressed. Third, the Last Supper, where the communion with the Lord is celebrated in a human community that transcends all borders, nations and languages (Visser and Bediako 2000:xi).

Bediako comes to the core of the conception of incarnation and the Word as studied from the Hehe perspective that takes us to the next set of arguments. Firstly, the incarnation, life and ministry of Jesus Christ cannot be separated. Jesus Christ lived among people for more than thirty years. His life and actions were translating and interpreting God wherever Jesus Christ happened to be. Jesus Christ showed that not only does he become vulnerable among the vulnerable and not only did he look towards the cross for crucifixion but he also initiated a binding communion with people so that he could always be a full participant of daily life among all people of all ethnic origins.

The participation of Jesus Christ in the life of the Hehe can be reflected from the relationship that existed between ancestors and the Hehe. We have seen



in the previous section that the Hehe related to ancestors in every aspect of their life and livelihood. All information that seemed to be vital in the family or community was shared with the ancestors.

In the course of conversion, for a period of more than one hundred years, three patterns of relationships between the living and ancestors have arisen. In all congregations where the interviews were done, the issue was commented and it showed that there were three patterns. The first pattern consists of church members who claim that they have totally abstained from any kind of veneration that is ancestor oriented but they respect ancestors. Since human observations are exterior, it is possible to say such people have chosen to surrender totally to Jesus Christ.

The second pattern consists of church members who claim that they do take part in ancestor veneration but they use other family and clan members who are not baptised, or those who have excommunicated themselves from the church to go and consult diviners and sacrifice to ancestors on their behalf. The third pattern consists of people who have divided their allegiances in halves. They accept Jesus Christ and ancestors on equivalent levels of relationship. For them ancestors have their own roles and responsibilities and so does Jesus Christ.

The Christian Church has taught Hehe Christians that a continued affiliation to ancestral worship is idolatry. This might seem strange but not new to the Hehe. During the celebration of one hundred years of the message of salvation in Iringa, the first African (Hehe) Roman Catholic bishop of Iringa (1969-1984) once warned the Hehe Roman Catholics (RC) against double allegiance and he said;

*... walifanye kanisa hilo liwe la "kimahalia". Hapa nataka kusema kile ambacho Sinodi ya Afrika imesisitiza sana. "Utamadunisho wa Injili".*

*Sisemi neno jipya maana "Neno alitwaa mwili na akakaa nasi", (Yoh 1:14). Ndiyo Habari Njema, Neno lake Kristo lisimike mizizi yake katika maisha na mazingira ya wakazi wa Iringa. Waumbike katika*

*fikra, mienendo na harakati zao katika mwanga wa Injili. Nataka kusema pasiwepo "ndumila kuwili": asubuhi tumo katika yatuhusuyo na Yesu, Mwana wa Mungu na Maria. Jioni jua linapokuwa magharibi tumo katika yale yasemwayo "kienyeji chetu". Tuumbike kuwa wa Yesu tu basi (Mgulunde 1997:19).*

(... that they could bring forth an "indigenised" church. I want to reiterate that, which has been highly emphasised by the African Synod: "The primacy of the contextualisation of the Gospel". I am not saying anything new because, "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us" (Jn 1:14). This is the Good News; The Word of Jesus Christ must have deep roots in the life and all circumstances of the inhabitants of Iringa. Thus, in the light of the gospel they can be transformed in their thinking, behaviour, and all their endeavours. I want to say people of "double standards" should not be there. In the morning, we involve ourselves with Jesus the Son of God and Mary in the evening at sundown we involve ourselves with our so-called "traditional beliefs". Let us be transformed to Jesus alone).  
Translated by the researcher.

Rt. Rev. Mgulunde is currently the Archbishop of Tabora since 1985. He has touched a number of issues, which the researcher does not want to repeat. However, his emphasis is clear. The Word of God should have deep roots in the life and all that surrounds a Hehe person because the Word was incarnate and lives among the Hehe. He makes a direct denunciation of allegiance to AR and Christianity on the same level and he calls such behaviour as double standards.

The three behavioural patterns were discussed at Isagwa (25-08-1999 and 27-10-2003) and also between the researcher and two Bena scholars of the University of Natal namely Bukaza Chachage and Habakkuk Lwendo (08-12-2003). There was a clear concurrence that the issue of ancestor veneration and rituals has never been fully addressed by the Church in Tanzania. It seems that for more than one hundred years the Church in Tanzania implanted an excessively negative attitude about ancestors and worshipping with them.

Hehe (and Bena) Christians have had their own way of dealing with the issue besides the church approach that the Church has taken. Some church members bring ancestorology to Christology others send the church to ancestors.

According to Chachage and Lwendo the Church might not have grasped or simply ignored the in-depth nature of ancestorology amongst the Hehe and Bena. It is apparent that most Africans count ancestors as family members who are always with them to exercise supernatural powers against evil. These are called *mizimu ya mababu* or *misoka ja vakuku* (ancestral spirits) in Swahili and Hehe or Bena, respectively.

For Lwendo and Chachage, the first group that do not worship with ancestors represents those Christians who have fully believed in Jesus Christ and have been convinced that Jesus Christ fulfils all the roles of ancestors and diviners and even beyond that, as far as more power, authority and love are concerned. However, they still respect their ancestors. Accordingly, these should be accepted and encouraged to give ancestors their due respect and move forward with their faith in Jesus Christ. The second group that relates to ancestors indirectly, according to the interviewees in congregations and specifically Isagwa, claims that ancestors obey Jesus Christ because he unites their families with God and through that unity ancestors become people of God as well. According to the Isagwa interviewees, the third group was described as that which goes to ancestors to socialise, to remind themselves about family issues and to experience their "spiritual warmth" (Chavala, 27-10-2003: Isagwa).

It was observed that the Lutheran Church in Tanzania, especially in the Southern part of Tanzania, which has a strong evangelical and pietistic background, interprets any relation with ancestors as idolatry. The behaviour of the two groups that relate to ancestors closely would be described as "syncretistic". The researcher is of the opinion that while the church remains faithful to its teaching it should at the same time look for ways to understand the behavioural patterns of its members with the intention of coming closer to what Christians think about ancestors and their family members who still belong to AR. It might happen that the way in which Christian converts relate to ancestors contradict the Word of God. When such relationship between the ancestors and

the living Christian community contradicts the Word of God the practices causing contradictions will have to acquiesce to the Word of God. The arguments are substantiated by this assertion, "Naturally the encounter has also produced its own problems; but for our purposes we shall concentrate on the more positive areas of the process" (Mbiti 1978:309).

Since conversion is turning from one perspective to another perspective, it is obvious that there should be a clear sign that the Hehe have turned from dependence on ancestors to dependence in Jesus Christ. Conversion is transformation into faith, obedience and repentance. Hence, the researcher agrees with Archbishop Mgulunde that the so-called "double standards" should not be sanctioned. Nevertheless, the researcher has problems of seeing the principle that might be used to determine the "double standards". Otherwise, the researcher has the assumption that the church has assumed the "teacher and judge complex" where it claims the right to determine the path and the results of the translatability of the message of salvation. However, the researcher proposes that a close mutual exchange of ideas between all groups of Hehe Christian believers should determine the yardstick that allows the Hehe to see the place of ancestors in the message of salvation through continuous theologisation.

What we see in those three groups calls for a dialogue and not legalistic restrictions. What we see in those three groups is the body of Jesus Christ whose members have many ways of translating the message of salvation in relation to the faith that they had prior to conversion. The gospel as the message of salvation ought to be the norm that allows a room for a round table dialogue between Christians and adherents of AR and between church leaders and the so called "double standards" people and where church leaders do not determine the final results or come to the table of dialogue with answers.

One could interpret the second and third groups as people who have been unable to separate ancestors from the family. They have assigned them roles that they believe that they do not belong to Jesus and church servants. The researcher

is making a suggestion that in spite of the fact that all Christian Churches in Iringa discourage and sometimes condemn, or even excommunicate those who participate in ancestor veneration, yet there is room for discussion with those church members. Thus, the researcher suggests further that those preachers, pastors, missionaries and other church leaders should know that their functions in the society might not have filled the roles that the ancestors have been performing. Hence Christians are calling the church to give attention to the Word of God while at the same time they explore in concrete terms the encounter between AR and Christianity at grassroots level. Bediako (1986:229; 2000:17) call such endeavours grassroots theology. The actions of the people at the grassroots of the church are calling the church to have painstaking theological engagements with AR. For the sake of translating the incarnation, the church is hard-pressed to articulate avenues for dialogue.

It seems that the issue of ancestors is still important among African Christians. A direct denunciation does not solve the problem. One approach would be to seek to know as O' Donovan says,

In what ways do traditional beliefs help a person to understand the truth of God and in what ways do they lead people away from the truth of God? What does the Bible say about the spirits of the dead? What happens to the dead after they die? Does God want the living to have any relationship with the dead? (O' Donovan 1996:219).

Christians in the second group who argue about "socialisations with ancestors" or "experiencing warmth" have insisted that even Jesus Christ wanted to experience the same socialisation or warmth from Elijah and Moses before he could confront death (Lk. 9:31) (Mgawo 22-10-2003: Kidamali). The researcher is of the opinion that a harsh approach to such people has worsened the situation. One could say the Church has taken a low profile in dealing with the issue of ancestors and it has not seen how ancestor veneration and rituals are deeply rooted among Africans. A careful interpretation of the Biblical texts such

as Lk. 16:19-31 about the dead rich man and Lazarus could set a stage for an exchange of ideas between church ministers and ancestor venerators. An in-depth study and mutual discussions of the Bible texts that warn against ancestor veneration and socialisations or consultations (Cf. Dt. 18:10-11, 1Sam 28:8-19; Lev. 19:31 and Lk. 9: 28-32) and more others could be the right approach to the matter.

The above considerations about ancestors and Christianity seek to investigate the link between the Old and New Testaments concerning AR belief and African culture in the encounter with the Christian faith and the ministry of Jesus Christ. The preceding deliberations are intended to take us to the life and ministry of Jesus Christ as well as the historical developments of the propagation of Christian faith in an encounter with other beliefs and cultures.

We will use the four gospels to set the basis of the discussions because the life and ministry of Jesus Christ is based on those four gospels. Almost all New Testament commentaries and Jesus Christ himself have indicated that Jesus Christ became human in order that he may fulfil the Old Testament Scripture (Cf, Mtt 1:22-23; 2:15-18; 4: 14-16; 5:17; 8:17; 12:17-21; 13:35; 27:9-10). With these verses, Matthew purports the idea that other than fulfilling the Old Testament Scriptures, Jesus Christ is the Messiah whose life recapitulates the hope of Israel as the chosen people of God. Mark puts emphasis on the aspect of suffering. The cross becomes the main emphasis (Cf, Mk.1: 12-13; 8:34-38; 12:12, 14:1-2; 15:10). Luke's central message was that there is place for Gentile people in the Kingdom of God (Lk 7:1-10; 8: 19-21; 10:25-37; 14:15-24;). Luke was inclined to the universality of salvation and in the book of Acts he clearly indicates that God Jesus Christ is for all people of the whole world Acts 4:12). John's message is clear. "These are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name" (20:31).

As we move from the ministry of Jesus Christ we come across the practical movement of Christianity in the Book of Acts. Sanneh traces the historical developments of the early church and argues,

First, primitive Christians inherited in Judaism the law and the synagogue as the exclusive standards of religious truth. Second, from their understanding of the life and work of Jesus Christ, they came to a fresh view about God's impartial action in all cultures. The "many tongues" of Pentecost affirmed God's acceptance of all cultures within the scheme of salvation, reinforcing the position that Jews and Gentiles were equal before God. Third the gentile breakthrough became the paradigm for the church's missionary expansion (Sanneh 1991:46).

We learn from Sanneh that right from the beginning, soon after Pentecost, the Word of God was propagated as the message of God to humanity that crossed all cultural frontiers and did not consider any culture as absolute instead the message of salvation became translatable the Jewish and Gentile cultural setting. We seen in this section that the event of incarnation affirmed the notion that Jesus Christ who is the Word of God became translatable in every cultural setting by translating the life and ministry of Jesus Christ, which in turn motivated people to convert to Christianity. To affirm his arguments Sanneh says,

Paul formulated pluralism as the necessary outworking of the religion he believed Jesus preached. That pluralism was rooted for Paul in the Gentile breakthrough, which in turn justified cross-cultural tolerance in Christian mission. One idea in Paul's thought is that God does not absolutise any one culture, whatever the esteem in which God holds culture. The second is that all cultures have cast upon them the breath of God's favour, thus cleansing them of all stigmas of inferiority and untouchability (Sanneh 1991:47).

From the Biblical remarks above and the assertions from Sanneh the researcher underlines five major concerns. First, the message of salvation that is based on the event of Christ is marked by cultural adaptability. Second, the

concept of translatability of the message of salvation is founded on the notion that there is neither divine nor secular culture, neither megastar or derelict culture. Third, the message of salvation is the gift of grace to all humanity. Fourth, the message of salvation is a leaven and a mustard seed to all cultures. Fifth, for the fact that the message of salvation is translatable in all cultures it means that it has the role of being the prophet that continually challenges the universal sinfulness that is found in every culture to bring forth the salvation of God that is proclaimed in the event of Christ.

### *3.3.1 Reflections of translatability of the Incarnation among the Hehe*

Incarnation is not a Hehe concept but some reflections around the notion are to be found in Hehe traditions. Reflections of incarnation were also found among the Maasai during research. One elderly Maasai who lives in the Kiwere area in Iringa accepted a dialogue between him and a young Maasai evangelist who is studying theology at Tumaini University and it led the elderly man to conversion. The point that attracted him towards conversion was the assertion by the evangelist that Jesus Christ is a Maasai.

We will start with the Hehe reflections. Missionaries collected and used local stories from the Hehe to explain the salvation story and story of Jesus Christ. Such stories helped people to understand the gospel message in a simpler way. We will allude to the concise form of the Mwanambehele story. The story is about a king who was known as Mbehele. Herman Neuberg got the story from Leah Mkemwa and Elizabeth Mkemwa. Gustaph Luwoneko narrated the story to the researcher on 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2002 at Ipalamwa. More details concerning Luwoneko and the questions pertaining to the interaction are in appendix IVA, pp 8-9. For Swahili speakers the recorded information is found in the cassette labelled III-IPA/ACCAC/22/8/2002 from [saraowden@hotmail.com](mailto:saraowden@hotmail.com)

The story portrays Mbehele as a prosperous and successful king who ruled a big portion of the land. He was renowned for his goodness, power and



richness. Unfortunately, he had only one son whose name was Mwanambehele. Mwanambehele was an inherited name from his grandfather, which meant "the rejected son". Mwanambehele grew in wisdom and stature. He was obedient to his father, he liked the slaves of his father and the slaves liked him as well. He proved his integrity and suitability to inherit the leadership of the kingdom.

The time came for Mwanambehele to be tested by his father on his ability to rule. He chose for him twenty young men and forty slaves who would travel with him to an alien land. He was told not to identify himself as a prince. He was also instructed to fight against all enemies and any violence that might befall him. However, he was cautioned that conditions might force him to be sold into slavery. Mbehele advised his son Mwanambehele to move in all directions of his kingdom before going to an alien land. Mwanambehele did as his father instructed him.

He left fully armed with his twenty bodyguards and forty slaves. They moved around the kingdom and left for an alien land that was far away from his father's kingdom. As they went along, they had to fight against slave raiders, and sometimes to subdue small kingdoms that prohibited them from moving farther. They had food scarcity on many occasions. In the course of time, many of his slaves and bodyguards were exhausted and dropped out one after another. Finally, Mwanambehele was left alone.

He went further and his food got finished. He passed a desert with much exhaustion and finally he saw a hilly green grazing land far away. He used his last bit of energy to reach the area. His clothes were torn and he was weak and weary. As dusk drew nearer, he met a girl who grazed her sheep. The first thing he did was to ask for food. The girl was afraid but offered him some food and water. Soon after eating Mwanambehele fell asleep in the hut that the girl used for food storage and resting the weather was hot. Mwanambehele spent the night there and the shepherd girl by the name Sisi went home with the sheep. She did not report the matter to her parents because she had grown interested in the

stranger. Her father was the local leader of the area and that could endanger the stranger.

The next day Sisi went to the grazing area where she had left Mwanambehele. Mwanambehele had rejuvenated. He looked handsome and a man of good stature but dressed in ragged clothes. Sisi got more interested in Mwanambehele. Sisi was a beautiful young girl in her teenage. She had not yet met a man. She attracted Mwanambehele. The two wanted to know more about each other. Mwanambehele did not want to travel farther and Sisi did not want him to leave. They spent the day shepherding together and learning about each other. It came to their knowledge that Sisi was the only daughter and the only child of the local chief just as Mwanambehele was the only son of Mbehele. The two found common things among them and were happy on what they discovered about each other.

Sisi left home every day and went to her shepherding task happily. She took food for herself and for her boyfriend. Mwanambehele lived in the hut at the grazing area. Sisi did not want to tell her parents about her boyfriend because she was afraid that they would kill him or sell him to slavery due to the fact that foreigners were considered as enemies or spies. As time passed, Mwanambehele revealed the secret that he was a prince of the renowned kingdom that was ruled by Mbehele. This made Sisi feel at ease in accepting marriage to a prince as it was prohibited for a princess to marry a ordinary people. Sisi and Mwanambehele succumbed to the love affair that had grown among them and Sisi got pregnant.

Changes started to take place and Sisi's behaviour changed drastically. Her parents became suspicious. Her parents asked her about the changes but she completely refused to reveal the secret. When her mother insisted on the changes of her breasts she responded that she was milk-feeding some angelic puppies. In Hehe the phrase reads, *Ndangosa figudugudu fya vanyamwanza*. That response did not satisfy the suspicious of her parents.

One day her parents decided to follow her secretly to the grazing area. They went ahead of her and hid in a bushy area close to the hut. Sisi came and was happily met by her boyfriend. Her parents saw all that took place and knew exactly what had happened to their daughter. They saw a young and attractive man. Their first reaction was the joy that they were going to have a boy in the family who by stature deserved to marry a princess. The only problem that lingered in their minds was the probability that he would not be a prince or a soldier. However, they withheld their reaction until evening when they told Sisi all that they had seen and wanted her to tell the truth of the whole matter. Sisi was terrified that the secret was known and that her beloved was going to be killed or sold to slavery.

There was no way out except to reveal the whole information about their encounter and that Mwanambehele was a prince of the famous kingdom ruled by Mbehele, of which most of the people even in the distant lands had heard. Her parents were happy to hear the news because they had heard about Mbehele and allowed her to proceed with their relationship. Sisi relayed the news to her beloved and welcomed him to her parents' home. Mwanambehele was introduced to the chiefdom but not as a legal son in law until such time that Sisi's parents would be satisfied that he had adapted to the culture, traditions, taboos, norms and values of the chiefdom. Thus, he had to live as a favoured slave until such time when he would be declared as a citizen and a son in-law. Sisi was allowed to stay home and nurse her pregnancy while Mwanambehele was charged to the task of shepherding.

The time for delivery came and they got a baby boy who took his grandfathers name of Mbehele. Sisi and Mwanambehele were happy that the heir of the Mbehele would unite the two rulers and their subjects. Mwanambehele knew that he was going to return home someday with the expected heir.

After a long time of good service to his in-laws, Mwanambehele expected the reward of having the right of a free son in law but that did not happen that way. Instead, Mwanambehele was sold to slavery. An Arab merchant passed by and sold good clothes, beads, porcelain, guns and other attractive commodities, which his in-laws wanted to buy. It so happened that the merchant refused any other commodity for exchange except slaves. The chief had no slaves except his approbatory son in law. So, he sadly gave Mwanambehele to slavery.

Sisi was extremely grieved. She lamented daily and refused any consolation. She had problems with eating, grew weak, and could not work anymore. Her parents' relatives blamed the chief and his wife for what they had done but the parents did not heed to her lamentations or the blame from their relatives. Sisi waited for a day when her parents had gone to the farm to cultivate and herd the sheep as there was no shepherded any more. She washed and dressed in her best, took a stool and her walking stick, known as *lukwego* in Hehe and with the son on her back and sat outside the house and sang in lamentation.

Ancestral spirits heard from deep down the earth as she continued lamenting. The earth cracked apart at the very place where Sisi and her son were sitting. The earth swallowed them slowly until they were completely lost and the crack closed completely. When Sisi's parents came home there was nobody to be seen. They were perplexed. They waited for three days thinking that Sisi had gone to look for her husband but there weren't such indications. It was later discovered that the stool and the walking stick were missing. There was no other way except to consult a wise diviner who would tell them what had happened.

The diviner told them that Sisi and her son Mbehele were taken by ancestors because her parents had treated her unjustly by giving her husband to slavery and her dirge was heard by ancestors who received her and her son. Nevertheless, the diviner instructed them that if they wanted to remedy the

situation and get her back they should look for a special dove that would bring her back and show them where Mwanambehele was serving as a slave. They should also be ready to compensate for Mwanambehele and bring him back home. The special dove was described as *Nziva ludandali* (a dove with special blue and grey colours). The dove was to be caught by the diviner.

The diviner further instructed them that they must call all relatives to a special ancestral worship where all had to sing one song that would kindle the anger of ancestors and make the dove call Sisi back and guide them to bring back Mwanambehele. While this song was repeated with excitement and dance, the earth cracked into two parts. The walking stick started to appear, then came the head of Sisi, followed by the boy on the back and finally the stool and thus was Sisi recovered. The dove was handed over to Sisi who was then asked to sing her song of lamentation to the dove for the recovery of her husband. Sisi did as she was instructed and the dove flew towards the path where Mwanambehele was taken to slavery.

The chief and his relatives followed the dove every day for twenty days and Mwanambehele was found and freed. It took another twenty days to travel back with Mwanambehele to his wife and their son. On his arrival, a big celebration was prepared and the family was reunited. Mbehele was officially announced as the chief's son in law.

Mwanambehele and Sisi with their son Mbehele stayed with the ruler for two years that gave time for their son to grow stronger before engaging into another long journey back. After the two years, permission was granted and Mwanambehele started looking for his contingent of slaves and bodyguards to travel with him back to his kingdom. The group went back by the same route, which Mwanambehele had travelled many years before. As they approached the Mbehele kingdom from afar, Mwanambehele showed his wife and his son the beauty of his kingdom that he was anticipating for enthronement. His wife Sisi would be crowned as the queen and their son Mbehele as the prince.

### 3.3.1.1 Corresponding Theological Themes

The Mwanambehele story has several theological themes that correspond with the Christian teaching. The researcher thinks that Christian preachers amongst the Hehe might have used the corresponding themes to elucidate the Christian concepts to the Hehe. The first theme could be about Mwanambehele being the only son, which could be associated with the notion of Jesus Christ being "Only begotten Son" (Jn. 3:16). The second theme could be about Mwanambehele being the heir of his father's throne and all that belonged to his father. This could be associated with the notion of Jesus Christ being the heir (cf. Mtt. 21: 38, Mtt. 28:18) and Christian believers being the heirs of God's kingdom (cf. Rom 8:17; Gal. 4:1; Eph 3:6 and Heb 11:7). The third theme could be the whole issue of vulnerability. In order to test his son the King Mbehele took the risk of allowing his son to experience the state of being vulnerable to violence, danger and uncertainty that prevailed in the society. A comparison could be made with the kind of vulnerability in which Jesus went through especially in the days of his infancy. The fourth theme could be about the suffering to which Mwanambehele was subjected. Mwanambehele was subjected to poverty, hunger, nakedness, thirsty and homelessness. This could be one way of explaining the theology of the cross over and against the theology of glory. Mwanambehele could be compared with Jesus Christ who left his glory and accepted suffering. The fifth theme could be related to the evil practice of slave trade. This could be related to the experience of the Israelites in Egypt and the experiences of Africa concerning slave trade and how Christianity has fought against it. The sixth theme could be the notion of recovering Sisi, the Son Mbehele and Mwanambehele himself. This could be related to the concept of the resurrection. The seventh theme could be the role of the Holy Spirit as compared to what is narrated about the dove and the diviners. The eighth theme could be the final victory and enthronement, which could also be compared to the resurrection, ascension and enthronement. The interpretation of the story might

not fit exactly to the themes but it could give the necessary reflections of translatability from the Christian thought to the Hehe audiences.

### 3.3.1.2 Corresponding Experiences Among the Hehe

Besides the theological themes that have been identified above, there are corresponding social, religious and leadership experiences amongst the Hehe. By 1850, the Hehe had become an established chiefdom. Three kinds of leadership were also established by that time. These included the chieftainship, religious leadership, and clan leadership. Family leadership was basically bound to the nucleus family. Clan leadership brought together all families that had a near or distant direct or indirect blood relationship.

The first son inherited chieftainship. A different heir would be chosen if the first son proved ineligible. The chief was addressed as *mutwa* (Lord) and under him were *vatwa* or *vatemala* (sub chiefs or rulers), who ruled the five Hehe sub-tribes. *Vanzagila* (ward leaders) were in the next level of leaders. These were responsible for several villages and under them were the *Lunanzi* (community leader) who were responsible for leading villages.

The Mwanambehele story was an imagined ideal leadership, which might have arisen as a legend that grew out of leadership development amongst the Hehe. The emphasis of the story is for the leaders to understand that gaining acceptance from the subjects required the leader to experience the actuality and crux of vulnerability.

In the story there are two theological aspects that support the notion of authenticity in vulnerability. The vortex of vulnerability reminds us of the Hehe experience during the early years of their conversion. In spite of the fact that they were colonised, discriminated, isolated and sometimes oppressed by their colonial masters and missionaries, nonetheless, when Jesus Christ came with the message of salvation, the Hehe discovered that in the Word of God there was a true promise of love, justice, righteousness and peace. The Word freed them from

fear and a sense of guilt because they heard of Jesus Christ who also experienced vulnerability but he was not afraid just like Mwanambehele.

It is also understandable that missionaries could not have attained their goals without accepting the vortex of vulnerabilities of the local circumstances. In many cases, they themselves became vulnerable to diseases, hunger, floods, drought, war and even experiencing extreme poverty. They lived amidst the poor, remote and vulnerable people like those in Itonya, Muhanga, Mapanda, Uhafiwa, Malangali and many more places in Africa that are still remote and most vulnerable situations even today. They accepted to be in the crux of vulnerability so that they could study the Hehe language and culture and through them they could obtain relevant idioms, proverbs, sayings, legends and stories that could in turn help them to translate the Word of God. The knowledge of language and culture helped missionaries to teach the Hehe how to read, write and do basic arithmetic. By so doing, they liberated African men and women not only spiritually but also in the secular surroundings. That liberation penetrated in the varied uneven relations and cultural elements and has continually brought forth not only authentic Christian conversion but also authentic living in the Hehe society.

The Mwanambehele story gives reflections to the translatability of the incarnation by underlining the notion that, "Christ came to initiate in us this process of liberation from enslaving elements of our culture, a liberation which can make that culture something living and authentic" (Porter 1983:319). Christian conversion is authentic when the converts remain as genuine liberated members of the community in which Christ meets them. Incarnation is translated to a people group when "Conversion implies an inward change accompanied by a corresponding outward manifestation in both life and conduct (Rom. 10:9-11,13)." (Oshun 1983: 403).

The Mwanambehele story cannot be directly applied to the Word of God but allegorically viable. The first theme is about God who sent his only begotten



son Jesus Christ to the world (Jn. 3:16). Neuberg used this metaphorically to convey the risk that God took to bring forth our salvation. For Neuberg, Mbehele represented God who symbolically took such a risk and sent Jesus Christ to the world for the salvation of all people. Such a risk is akin to the one that Abraham took upon his son Isaac (Gen 22:1-11).

The second theme is the symbolic representation of Jesus Christ by Mwana mbehele. Mwanambehele in Hehe, Bena and Gogo is the distorted form of *Mwana mubile* (the rejected child). According to John 1:11, the Jewish community depicted Jesus Christ as Mwanamubihile. It is very likely that when the Hehe heard about Jesus Christ, they got the impression of a good leader who deserved to be called *Mutwa* (Lord) because he provided a model of servant leadership. Just like Mwanambehele, Jesus Christ had to suffer, was despised and rejected, betrayed and deserted by his friends (Isa 53:3-5).

The third theme is about sin, repentance and death. In Mwanambehele's story, death is not directed to Jesus Christ. However, the story indicates how injustice can bring harm to the whole family and community. Injustice could be related to sin, with the idea that sin caused the disappearance of Sisi and her son Mbehele. The story continues to show that sin failed to hold Sisi and Mbehele because the parents of Sisi showed regret, which signifies repentance. Through sincere repentance and with the help of diviners and ancestors Sisi and her son Mbehele were brought back to life. It is apparent that in Christianity is overcome not by the help of diviners but by the blood of the "chief physician Jesus Christ.

The fourth theme is about the dove (*nziva ludandali*). This depicted the Holy Spirit coming in as the agent of recovery, power and hope. For the Hehe the dove depicted the reality of the interaction between the spiritual realm and the physical realm. Furthermore, one most important theme, which Neuberg might have not addressed, is the importance of the relationship between the spiritually real, the ancestors and the living community. The ancestors told Sisi and Mbehele to show the evil that was done by Sisi's parents. They are also the

same ones who gave power to diviners and enforced confession and repentance. The role of ancestors in the family and the community, and the involvement of the spiritual realm are very significant to the Hehe.

The concept of God being with us is understood among Africans from all three levels of relationships. God is with us at the level of the Supreme Being as one who is present but unreachable and unsearchable. God is with us at the level of families and clans where he identifies with the community through Jesus Christ who is both a natural person and the supernatural one. God is with at the Spirit level. The Spirit level is equated to the concept of the spiritual realm in the AR belief and experience. It is from such themes and perspectives that the researcher claims authenticity because the message of salvation was understood and formed a foundation in which the Hehe perceived God's calling.

### *3.3.2 Reflections on the Translatability of the Incarnation amongst the Maasai*

The Maasai are in Tanzania and Kenya. They are one of the dominant tribes in Arusha, in Northern Tanzania and in the Kajiado area of Southern Kenya. Some of them have migrated along the Rift Valley and the areas surrounding it. Some live in Iringa amidst the Hehe, in the Rift Valley and the areas close to those surroundings. There were many conversion stories that could be used as reflections of translatability amongst the Maasai but an essay from one of the Maasai students at Tumaini University, Iringa University College was chosen because it gave a broader perspective of the Maasai concerning Jesus Christ. The essay was written in Swahili with the heading *Yesu ni Maasai* (Jesus is a Maasai). (The Swahili version is found in appendix X)

The essay is a result of evangelistic activities, which the author of the essay has been involved with his fellow students under a teacher's supervision as part of their practicum. While evangelising, students met a *Laibon* (Maasai prophet) who asked the evangelisers as to why they wanted to introduce a

foreign God among the Maasai? The response to that question developed into dialogue and later on, the student wrote the essay as translated hereafter.

Jesus is a Maasai (Ole-Kurupashi 13-08-2003: Iringa).

There is enough evidence from the Old Testament prophecy, the genealogy of Jesus Christ, his ministry, his life and his death that Jesus Christ can be identified with, and as a fellow Maasai. Primarily, prophecy is a common practice in the Maasai community and it is actively practised even in these days. Prophecy among the Maasai, like any other society, is intended to warn and benefit the community. Prophets are called *Ilbonok* and prophecy is termed *Enaibon*. The leader of prophets is called *Laibon* in singular and *Loibonon* in plural.

Old Testament prophets had foretold about Jesus Christ as a male child born of the virgin and whose name would be Immanuel (Mt 1:23). This implied that God would be among human beings. That God who would be among human beings is Jesus Christ (Isa 7:14).

Currently, there are Maasai *Ilbonock* (prophetic) clans such as the *Irwalakishu* and *Irkelinikishu*. According to the Maasai traditions Jesus Christ would be easily identified as belonging to those two clans because he was also a prophet and above all the Maasai would describe him as the greatest prophet. He healed the sick, he was able to foresee peoples problems before the problems were made known he performed more miracles than what has ever been performed by all prophets. Jesus Christ is thus the chief *Laibon*.

Jesus Christ can be identified with the Maasai because he hails from a nomadic lineage of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. These were livestock keepers with large herds and wandered in Ur, Haran, Egypt (Goshen) and then they travelled back to Canaan with their livestock just as the Maasai do today.

The prophecy about the birth of Jesus Christ identifies him as the son of David. Jesus Christ is biologically the son of Mary and was adopted by Joseph. Mary belongs to the Davidic genealogy. Jesus Christ is called the son of David to

signify the patrilineal system of Judaism. The patrilineal system is fundamental in the Maasai culture.

Moreover, Jesus Christ is a Maasai because he hails from the community that worships God who appeared to them on the Mountain of Sinai and gave them the Ten Commandments. Through the utterance of *Loibonok* the Maasai worship God who appeared at Sinai even today. You will hear them saying *Enkayai Pasinai* (Oh! my God of Sinai).

One other important aspect that identifies Jesus Christ with the Maasai is the fact that he was born in a cow shed and his first bed was the manger. Such is not strange to livestock keepers. Had he not been a Maasai he would have been born elsewhere such as a farmhouse for a farmer's son and a market place for son of a businessman or woman. Furthermore, the first people to receive the information about his birth were the *moran* (shepherds). In addition, the first people to congratulate Jesus Christ and give presents for the first happy birthday were shepherds who were tending their herds out in the *lonjo* (pastures). The angels went to the *lonjo* and rejoiced with the *moran* because Jesus Christ was a *Laibon*, born from a *Laibon* genealogy. It is practiced even today that men must be the first to see a newborn *Laibon* but to the contrary it is not necessary for men to see a newborn baby from other non-prophetic clans.

Jesus Christ was circumcised because he was a Maasai. Circumcision is obligatory for being initiated and accepted in the Maasai community. Had he not been circumcised he would be an *Ormeeki* (an inferior person in the society). Upon circumcision, he became an *Ormurani* (a respected person in the society). Jesus is a Maasai because he is an *Ormurani* and not an *Ormeeki*.

One of the most important characteristics of an *Ormurani* is to serve and protect the society. Jesus Christ served his immediate community and the society at large through teaching, leading, healing, offering food, protecting human rights and standing on the course of truth. Being a *laibon* (prophet) he foretold about the future and revealed the concealed information. Sometimes such

revelations caused misunderstandings between him and Jewish religious leaders or made him unpopular.

In his task of a *moran* he chose twelve other *moran* to work with him. He did not choose women because in the Maasai culture men, especially the *moran*, do most of the social service. Women are expected to bear and nurture children.

For any true Maasai who knows and respects the Maasai culture with its traditions and customs, such a person will also respect prophecy and prophets. Such a person should therefore concur with the prophecy that to us *Ormurani* is born. "For to us the child is born, to us a son is given (Isa 9:6). This one is the greatest *Loibonok* and one who will lead all people. He will start with his own people and later on he will lead the rest of the people in the whole world so that they may be saved and inherit eternal life. (The Swahili version is in Appendix X).

We comment on this essay with the understanding that Ole-Kurupashi knows very well that Jesus Christ is a Jew by birth and nationality. However, Ole-Kurupashi shows to us very clearly the fact of the translatability of the incarnation in the message of salvation. He shows how an African enjoys the story of salvation and specifically that of Jesus Christ and how Jesus Christ is identified with, and in many cultural backgrounds and circumstances. It is this identification that sets the ground for authentic conversion to Christianity. It was the arguments that are shown in the essay that led the Maasai *laibon* convert to Christianity.

We will now comment on various aspects that appear in the essay. Our first comments relate to the essay and the Mwanambehele fairy tale. The two examples show how the exposure to the translated Word of God becomes meaningful to a member of AR. The stories about Moses, Joshua, David and Jesus would appeal to Hehe and Ngoni readers because they were courageous, good leaders and warriors. The message about Jesus Christ goes further and explicates not only a good leader but also one who is superior but accepts

vulnerability. Jesus Christ attracts Africans and those who convert to Christianity take Jesus as a member of the community in which they belong. We could as well sing, "How sweet is the message of salvation that is translated from the Holy Bible to both suffering and zealous African ears? It soothes sorrows, it heals wounds and drives away all fears" (Paraphrased from "How Sweet the name of Jesus sounds in a believers ear" from Church Hymnal 1960:81).

The second set of comments examines the notion of prophecy amongst the Maasai as compared to the Hehe perspectives. An in-depth interview between the researcher with Ole-Kurupashi and other Maasai students at Tumaini University indicated that prophets amongst the Maasai practice healing and divination. Likewise, diviners mostly do prophecy amongst the Hehe and Bena. In addition, prophets (these could be diviners amongst the Hehe) amongst the Maasai can perform some form of miracles, such as making a thief of cows to behave like a stolen cow by running with legs and hands together like a four-legged animal or bellow like a cow.

For the Hehe, diviners can perform miracles like the Maasai by detecting and identifying culprits. For example, a person who has stolen grain from someone's barn or field will remain with the grain on the head or shoulder for hours or days until a confession is done. If the grain is eaten, the culprit will behave in a manner that that will make everybody in the community identify the culprit. The Hehe would therefore identify the *laibon* with the most powerful diviner. It is thus very unfortunate that those of us who were born in Christian homes were inculcated with a very negative stigma attended to diviners and African medicine men and women. That negative stigma was also inculcated against herbalists, especially in the Southern part of Tanzania amongst the Lutherans and other Protestant denominations with an evangelical inclination. These issues will be discussed further in the fifth chapter. However, both the Hehe and Maasai cherish in the hymn "*Mganga wetu ni karibu hashindwi na uchawi*" (Hunter 1877. In *Mwimbieni Bwana* 2000: No 265) (The great physician is

near: Sacred Songs and Solos- SS&S 89). For the Hehe, the Swahili translation has the direct connotation that the greatest diviner is very near and no witchcraft can defeat him. For the Maasai it has the connotation that the greatest prophet so near that witchcraft cannot defeat us.

The third set of comments concerns the God of Sinai. Ole-Kurupashi might be right that the Maasai have a concept of the God of Sinai. It is possible that the concept developed out of a legend, which reflected the Jewish or Ancient Near East (ANE) Sinaitic stories. The Maasai are Nilo-Hamites, most of them live in the rift valley and have other origins or related origins with the Hamites and Nilo-Hamites along the Nile valley, Ethiopia and Somalia. It is possible that the Sinaitic legends about Jews and Arabs were adapted among the Maasai and became part of their traditions without going deep into what that God of Sinai meant. When the Maasai heard the salvation story, they easily related it to their traditional legends including that of God of Sinai. Ole-Kurupashi argues that the Maasai prophets are the ones who have been telling about the God of Sinai. Sanneh claims that Donovan discovered the Maasai have used Abraham as "their cultural champion as they despoil neighbouring tribes" (Sanneh 1993:161). Therefore, the arguments by Ole -Kurupash might hold true as legends, although they are not easily proved.

The fourth set of arguments examine the assumption by Ole-Kurupashi that the first people to be informed about the birth of Jesus Christ and wish him a happy birthday were the shepherds. This view is vital in this research. This research looks at authentic Christian conversion as a phenomenon that has its foundation in grassroots theology. Authentic Christian conversion that arises from the concept of translatability, incarnation and universality theologises with people where they are and who they are. It shows who Jesus Christ is in all vocations, experience and existence. The visit of the angelic realm to the shepherds fits well in Luke's way of explaining who Jesus Christ is. The researcher has the assumption that the birth of Jesus Christ was calling the world

to think not only of the rulers and the renowned people but to think of the people who toiled for the survival of the society first. If the angels were to behave like Jews, they would have visited the high priests, the priests, the scribes and the leaders of the people. If they were to behave like Romans, they would have told the rulers first and if they were to behave like Greeks, they would have consulted the intellectuals first. The angels come with a very different approach. They visit the servants first because the one who was born was the shepherd and the servant of God. This is what Ole-Kurupashi calls the *moran*; people who are in the wilderness for the sake of their society. This answers partly the censures that will be addressed in the fourth chapter.

The assumption is that Jesus Christ can be known through emperors, religious (church) leaders and intellectuals but authentic conversion to Christianity is realised differently. Authentic conversion is real when Jesus Christ makes a self-translation to an individual who hears the Word of God and perceives in what and who that individual is, and specifically in what the individual perceives as the language of life, love and relationship, which is the mother tongue.

### *3.4 Translatability of Suffering and Death*

The second aspect of the second criterion of this chapter is the suffering and death of Jesus Christ. Suffering and death on the cross of Jesus Christ has been a dominant theme in Lutheran theology since 1518 and it is elaborated in the *theologia crucis* (theology of the cross). This section of this chapter will be in two parts. The first part will explain suffering and death in the Hehe context. The second part will relate the suffering and death of the Hehe context to Luther's theology of the cross. Both parts will give reflections on how the suffering and death of Jesus Christ become the criterion of authentic conversion to Christianity.



Suffering is common to all people. Suffering confronts the rich and the poor. It challenges the so called developed and the underdeveloped, the so called civilised and uncivilised. Causes of suffering are countless and some are beyond comprehension. Luther's theology of the cross comes at the peak of the saving event because it touches the peak of human tragedy. If Jesus Christ is indeed God amidst us, then he is God amidst our suffering. His suffering and death on the cross prove that he is the suffering God. The fact that Jesus Christ ended up to be the crucified God proves that he is at the heart of translating and directing the human suffering to the cross where there is salvation.

#### *3.4.1 Suffering and Death in AR among the Hehe*

Consistent with the summary by the researcher and his assistants from Pommern, Ipalamwa, Iringa Cathedral, Ihemu and Ilula and other urban and rural congregations suffering among the Hehe can be attributed to eight main causes. The first cause is thought to be from God. The notion arises from the belief that anything that cannot be cured or comprehended is from God as expressed in the previous section. Suffering from incurable diseases like HIV/AIDS is expressed as *ugonjwa wa Mungu* (the disease from God) (Luhwago 27-8-1999: Pommern). Any suffering or deaths, which diviners cannot detect, are also believed to originate from God. In such situations, the Hehe simply say, "*Nyela iyo Nguluvi, ulukani ulo mululeke*" (please understand, the issue has to be left in the hands of God) (Kikoti 27-08-1999: Pommern). The second cause is believed to be from witchcraft and malevolent spirits and this is thought to be the most common cause. Sorcerers, witches and witchdoctors who use the alleged *uchawi* in Swahili or *wuhavi* in Hehe (black magic) are believed to use poison, supernatural powers and malevolent spirits to harm or kill people.

The third cause arises from impaired relationships between a person and parents or ancestors. In Hehe it is expressed as *vakuku vagonile fibi* (the ancestors

are restless) (Mbeyunge 30-08-1999: Iringa)<sup>10</sup>. The fourth cause arises from natural circumstances that might be inflicted to a person or a people group as a curse or a punishment due to lack of obedience, ingratitude or insulting parents, elderly people and ancestors. Such suffering is called *ng'oto* (curse). The fifth cause befalls people as a punishment from lack of confession. A culprit or an offender is always expected to seek clemency. When that does not happen the offended seek help from diviners who would inflict suffering on the culprit, who would then be forced to confess or suffer and even die. This is what we referred to as *litego* (trap) in the previous section.

The sixth cause arises from selfish or power hungry people. Power mongers are egotistic. They can cause hatred, war and confusion, which in turn can cause hunger, homelessness and diseases. It is commonplace in Africa to face such situation.

The seventh cause arises from ignorance, laziness that leads to poverty. The Hehe have saying that warn against those circumstances. Some of the sayings included the following: *Uluhala kwa mtegibada, aniye kumwanza* (the ignorant rat catcher blocked the rat path with faeces) (Mnyamoga A. 21-08-1999: Ipalamwa). The literal meaning is that people who have not been trained will act against their fortune, which will lead to suffering. *Nyakilumbi, uwuhuma mumbele; imilawu singulalika* ("Crow, you are always lazy and late. I won't invite you tomorrow") (Kaywanga A. 21-08-1999: Ipalamwa). This is another saying that warns against laziness. It alerts people to the fact that laziness and sluggishness will cause famine and poverty and all friends will forsake you. There is another saying among the Hehe that has been adapted from Bena. The saying is, *Iligimilo ni nyengo ye dado nu yuwo* ("the hoe is your father and the [Hehe kind of] machete is your mother") (Mnyawami, E. 21-08-1999: Iringa).

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<sup>10</sup>Mbeyunge, Beatus had suffered from this kind of impaired relations. He had sold a farm as well as the *fyanga* (burial place of his parents hence ancestors).

This indicates that a person who does not work will live like an orphan and hence will suffer from famine.

The Hehe do not openly express the eighth cause but the researcher found it in the course of work experience and through this research. The eighth cause arises from discrimination. It is the suffering that is rampant, experienced daily and seen as normal, silent but brutal. Women, children and weak members in the society do suffer. Women are overworked and overburdened. Women and children are deprived of some of basic human rights such as the rights of participating in decision-making; the right to inheritance; the right to free expression. Some women and children are treated violently, insulted, and then deprived from legal rights thereof.

In conjunction with the eight causes of suffering which have been motioned so far, the first president of Tanzania *Mwalimu* (teacher) Nyerere summarised the root causes of suffering in the country as ignorance, diseases and poverty and he called them the enemies of the nation. He said,

It is during those first years that our need for assistance will be at its most urgent if our economic activity is to start off with a momentum great enough to ensure success in overcoming the poverty, disease, and ignorance which is our legacy (Nyerere 1959: 73).

The three-root causes account for the presence of the eight causes of suffering in Tanzania and the Hehe are not exempted from them. In spite of the fact that Heheland is an agricultural area and its people have not suffered so much from extreme hunger but ignorance, disease and poverty still prevail and these lead to other evils, such as corruption, discrimination and insecurity in the society. In the introductory remarks Nyerere said, "There is no human dignity in extreme poverty or debilitating disease, nor in the ignorance which buttresses these things" (1967: 15).

For the Hehe, the end result of suffering is death. Much has been said in the previous section of this chapter concerning ancestors. Nevertheless, in this

subsection some reflections will be made concerning death and the Hehe in view of the suffering death of Jesus Christ. The researcher had written about "Dying, death and life after death in the traditional society and Christian faith" (Mdegella 29-08-1985:79). The assertions that are relevant to this research will be cited.

In traditional religions, death is an everlasting pleasant prison. Traditional religions do not preach resurrection but an immortality of some kind, in which man [sic] undergoes both physical and metaphysical transformation, losing the material body to attain some supernaturality and immateriality (Mdegella 1985:79).<sup>11</sup>

The common idiom alluded to the above quotation is *kufwa kunoga* (dying is being good). This is in a way a point of courage and despair. For the Hehe, dying is good when it relieves a person from a long-term suffering or from an unnecessary suffering that cannot be avoided. Dying is also good when there is the right cause towards that death, such as defending the tribe, personal integrity and currently, the nation. Otherwise, when the Hehe say, "*Sigale ndi vakiki, mbi ndiva nyadikwa?*" ("Why should I continue living? Am I a selected seed?") (Mella 22-08-1999:Iringa). Such a saying is melancholic and signifies hopelessness. The researcher asked Mella the in-depth nature of such a statement. His comments were not different from what the researcher had written in 1985. Precisely it means,

Whatever the cause of death might be, natural and unnatural, Africans feel that death is the means of "returning home". Among the Hehe the phenomenon is elaborated in relation to the graveyards, which is the sacred ground for the clan. This burial place is the mother-place for the whole clan; a place we all definitely go to (Mdegella 1985:79).

The traditional view of death among the Hehe is both positive and negative. One controversial cause of death is being merciful. The Hehe say, *Masungu mawulasi* or *ulusungu lwa nzogolo lwamusindike kw' limage neke vasile ku-*

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<sup>11</sup> The expression "pleasant prison" is not found among adherents of AR. Christians who compare death to a place of undisturbed confinement use that expression.

*Kitonga* ("Mercy kills or the merciful cock ended up in Image village and was buried in the Kitonga escarpment") (Daniel Duma 10-04-1999: Masisiwe). The terms "*Limage*" in Hehe means a big sharp knife and "*kitonga*" means a cooking pot.<sup>12</sup> The real meaning is that excessive mercifulness leads to suffering that culminates in death. People who spend much time defending the weak will end up suffering in the place of or together with the weak and when danger arises, the weak might become safe and those who protect them will suffer on their behalf or together with them and finally die. This has a lot to say about Jesus Christ, as we interpret from the Hehe perspective. He suffered and died because of his mission of grace. He died because he had to give eternal protection and salvation to the weak and fallen humanity. Consistent to that is the Hehe chorus, "*Yesu vamuwulige vamuvasile bee, Yesu vamuwulige vamuvasil' ulusungu*" (Do you know why they killed Jesus? You know what? The reason was due to his mercifulness). This leads us to *theologia crucis* (the theology of the cross).

### 3.4.2 Reflections on the Translatability of Luther's Theology of the Cross

A choir of the Catholic Church in Tanzania expresses Luther's theology of the cross in a song that says, "*Nimemuona yule ninayemtafuta na neema zake*" ("I have seen him whom I seek for his grace"). The text speaks of the suffering God as alluded to, in Matthew 25: 34-40 and the song says,

<i>Kibwagizo</i>	<i>Chorus</i>
<i>Nimemuona yule ninayemtafuta</i>	(I have seen him,
<i>na neema zake,</i>	whom I seek for his grace,
<i>Nimemuona leo nimemuona</i>	I have seen him today, I
<i>Mungu,</i>	have seen God,
<i>Mkononi mwaka anao uzima</i>	He has eternal life in his,
<i>tena ni wa milele</i>	hand,
<i>Mkononi mwake anao</i>	He has eternal life that I
<i>uzima ninaoutafuta,</i>	seek,

<sup>12</sup> The legend about Image concerns white settlers in several villages whose early presence threatened the local people. The term warned against the danger of being killed by cruel white settlers. Kitonga has been thus referred because the escarpment is cool on the top and very warm at the bottom. It demarcates the highlands of Iringa and the Rift Valley. Kitonga escarpment is generally a dangerous area even today.

*Na uzima huo anatoa bure  
kwa walio tayari,  
Lakini kuna kanuni moja.  
ya kwamba uwajali watu*

He gives eternal life to  
those who are ready,  
But, one rule is to  
care for the needy).

*1. Nimemuona Mungu yu mtupu  
yu hana nguo,  
Anatamani mimi niende  
nikamvishe,  
Nimemuona Mungu ana  
njaa hana chakula,  
Anatamani mimi  
niende nikamlishe,  
Nimemuona Mungu ni  
mgonjwa yu kitandani,  
Anatamani mimi  
niende kumtazama.*

(I have seen a naked God,  
without clothes,  
He wishes that  
I clothe him,  
I have seen a hungry  
God, one without food,  
He wishes that  
I go and feed him,  
I have seen a sick God,  
admitted and in bed,  
He wishes that  
I should go and see him).

*2. Nimemuona Mungu  
amefungwa yu gerezani,  
Anatamani mimi  
niende kumfariji  
Nimemuona Mungu ni  
mkimbizi mipakani,  
Anatamani mimi  
niende kumpokea,  
Nimemuona Mungu ,  
ni yatima hana wazazi  
Anatamani mimi  
niende nikamtunze*

(I have seen God damned  
and imprisoned,  
He wishes that I go  
and comfort him,  
I have seen God, a  
refugee around the borders),  
He wishes that  
I go and receive him,  
I have seen  
an orphaned God),  
He wishes that  
I go and care for him).

*3. Nimemuona Mungu  
ni mjane hana matunzo,  
Anatamani mimi  
niende kumhifadhi,  
Nimemuona Mungu  
amefiwa ana majonzi,  
Anatamani mimi  
niende kumfariji,  
Nimemuona Mungu  
ni kilema na hajiwezi,  
Anatamani mimi  
niende kumuinua,*

(I have seen God in  
an abandoned widow,  
She wishes that I  
go and attend to her needs,  
I have seen a  
bereaved God in sorrows,  
She wishes that  
I go and console her,  
I have seen a  
disabled and lame God,  
She wishes that  
I go and lift her),

4. <i>Nimemuona Mungu</i>	(I have seen God,
<i>katolewa angalivimba,</i>	a swollen outcast,
<i>Anatamani mimi</i>	He wishes that
<i>niende kumtetea,</i>	I go and defend him,
<i>Nimemuona Mungu</i>	I have seen
<i>anapigwa kwa makombora,</i>	a bombed God,
<i>Anatamani mimi</i>	He wishes that
<i>niende kusuluhisha,</i>	I go and bring reconciliation,
<i>Nimemuona Mungu</i>	I have seen God
<i>ni mtumwa ananyanyaswa,</i>	in a humiliated slave,
<i>Anatamani mimi</i>	He wishes that
<i>niende kumtetea,</i>	I go and defend him).

( This song is found in the Cassette, "Mungu Yuleee... Mitaani na mashambani mwetu... (Behold that God, the one in our streets and farms)" Composed by Mukasa, B, Vol 9. 2003: In *Kwaya ya Mt. Kizito, Parokia ya Mwenye heri Anuarite-Makuburi* (St. Kizito Choir from the Blessed Anuarite Parish: Dar-Es-Salaam). Translated by the researcher.

The interpretation of the message conveyed in this song especially the main gist of the song "Behold that God, the one in our streets and farms". That is the main gist of Luther's theology of the cross, the main gist of translatability for Bediako, Sanneh and Walls. That is also the main gist for Maluleke's Christology who says:

The "natural home" of these liturgies are the garage-services, house-churches, tree-churches, train-churches, women's churches and youth-churches. An important if not central theme of these "churches" (and therefore an important aspect of the theological of which we speak) is Christology. For this reason, alongside the Bible; Jesus is the most invoked person and "symbol" of the Christian faith-invoked in liturgy, work and play (Maluleke 2000:83).

Luther's theology of the cross (*Theologia crucis*) came up in 1518 during the Heidelberg Disputation. A contrast of two theologies namely, the theology of glory (*Theologia gloriae*) and the theology of the cross (*Theologia crucis*) was made and Luther was convinced that true theology was not that of glory but the

theology of the cross that was understood in the suffering of Jesus Christ. Below is the definition of the theology of the cross from the Luther's perspective.

The theology of the cross (*theologia crucis*) is the short formulation of the true faith chosen by Martin Luther in the early period of the Reformation. In the Heidelberg Disputation (1518) he makes a schematic contrast between his *theologia crucis* and the *theologia gloriae* which had been dominant hitherto, with its scholastic and mystical speculation: God is known in the cross of Christ and experienced through suffering (Bowden and Richardson 1994:135).

Luther argued that the real knowledge of God comes only through the cross of Christ. Therefore, there was no other way to know God other than understanding God from the suffering of Jesus Christ on the cross. He thus described those who wanted to know God outside the cross as non-theologians. He said,

19. That person does not deserve to be called a theologian who looks upon the invisible things of God as though they were clearly perceptible in those things which have actually happened (Luther in Loewenich 1976:18).

20. He deserves to be called a theologian, however, who comprehends the visible and manifest things of God seen through suffering and the cross (Luther in Lull 1989: 31).

The translation in Loewenich does not use the numbers 19 and 20 but Lull does. The wording in thesis 19 is the same for Loewenich and Lull, but Lull adds a Biblical reference from Romans 1:20. McGrath criticizes the English translation of Luther's Theology of the Cross by Loewenich as "seriously inaccurate at several points of importance" (McGrath 1985:148). An example is cited from the translation of the 20<sup>th</sup> thesis. The notion of *posteriori Dei* is given as one example of inaccurate translation, which is translated as 'the manifest things of God', to which McGrath describes as "clearly unacceptable" (1985:148). Owing to that McGrath brings forth what is thought to be the correct translation of the two theses as quoted below.



19. The man who looks upon the invisible things of God, as they are perceived in created things does not deserve to be called a theologian.

20. The man who perceives the visible rearward parts of God as seen in suffering and the cross does, however, deserve to be called a theologian (McGrath:148).

In spite of the disputations, as shown above, concerning the translations, the central contrast between the two theses is the knowledge of God (Loewenich 1976:18). Four theologians (Althaus 1981:26, Loewenich 1976:18, Lull 1989:43, McGrath: 149) agree that Luther opposes the attempt to reach the knowledge of God by the way of creation.

The concern of our thesis is not about the knowledge of God as portrayed by the arguments concerning the theology of the cross and that of glory. Our concern is whether there is or there is not an authentic Christian conversion amongst the Hehe (Africans) that has been translated in relations to suffering and death. The relevance of the arguments by Western theologians come when we borrow some ideas of Luther's theology as represented by Loewenich (1976:17-24). With Loewenich the cross of Jesus Christ becomes significant in relation to authentic Christian conversion, salvation and redemption because the cross is the centre that provides the primary prospect for all theological statements, the doctrine of God and the work of Christ. In *propter Christum* (for the sake of Christ) Luther claims that there is no dogmatic topic conceivable for which the cross of Christ is not the point of reference. For Luther the cross of Jesus Christ has a place in the doctrine of vicarious atonement and constitutes the interpreting element for all Christian knowledge (Luther, in Loewenich:18).

We try to simplify these arguments in the African context by taking the notion of the Catholic choir of Dar- Es- Salaam in Maluleke's version once again, as he says,

In a continent ravaged first by slave trade then by colonialism, then by neo-colonialism, then by internecine wars, dictatorship and hunger; it is remarkable that African Christians

persist in affirming the presence and the resurrection of Christ. How astounding it is this bold, ironic and stupefying claim that Christ appears daily in the war-torn African villages; that he resides in the squalid slum-cities of Africa, that he is being crucified in the emaciated and flea-ridden bodies of Africa's starving, dying children; this stubborn insistence that God's image resides in Africa-reminiscent of Las Casas' insistence that Christ was in the Indian- this is truly astounding (Maluleke 2000:83-84).

It is the "astounding" aspect that Maluleke refers to which is reflected in the difference between the two theologies; the theology of glory as opposed to the theology of the cross. The theology of the cross is not interested in the doctrine concerning God's attributes that are dormant and abstract. It perceives God as wanting to be known in concrete terms. By this approach, we understand Luther as saying it is at the cross of Jesus Christ that God is real, tangible, existential and substantial to human suffering and knowledge. It is at the cross, where Jesus Christ receives the highest peak of human humiliation and shame that human beings have to seek to understand God who has revealed Jesus Christ (Althaus 1981:19). Jesus Christ reveals the kind of God, which, according to Luther, it is possible to see, *posteriora Dei* (from the back). As mortal beings, "we are denied a direct knowledge of God, or a vision of his face" (McGrath 1985:149). It is for the same reasons that Moses was placed in a cleft of the rock and God's hand held him until God's glory had passed away. Moses saw only God's back but not His face full of glory (Ex. 33: 18-20). The researcher interprets the suffering of Africans as *posteriora Dei* because if we were able to see the face of God in glory we would be shocked of how sinful the world has contributed to the suffering of Africans and that shock would make us die.

The author of the Gospel according to John shows that Philip asked Jesus Christ to show them God the father (Jn. 14:8-12). Jesus Christ responded to Philip that what he saw in and through him was the true picture of God. We deduce that Philip might have asked that question because he was not aware that God was revealed in Jesus Christ. We deduce further that Philip might have seen

in Jesus Christ what Paul calls “human nature”, “weakness” and “folly” (1 Cor. 1: 25). We concur with Paul that it is in the human folly that God makes a self-translation and brings forth authentic conversion in all contexts of all human beings.

A contemporary Lutheran theologian has simplified Luther’s theology of the cross in this way,

The God of the Gospel appears in weakness as the crucified one;  
 In this crucified one, the sinner is grasped by grace and is justified  
 apart from human attempts to justify the self;  
 Revelation of the true God is in the crucified one and not in reason,  
 which claims to find God in the splendour of creation and the  
 natural order;  
 Good works do not lead to salvation; rather Christians must  
 exercise extreme care to avoid being deceived into self-justification  
 by good works;  
 As Jesus lived in weakness and was subject to suffering, the  
 Christian should expect the same in life; and suffering is God’s way  
 of driving humans to the foot of the cross.  
 Christ who lives in persons through faith creates good works  
 within and through them (Thomsen 2003:99).

Compatible with this contemporary formulation is the emphasis that God’s appearance in human weakness is the language that human cultures are wrapped in and it is in those human cultures that the language of the cross of Jesus Christ speaks distinctly. It is in our cultural human folly that God decided to be revealed. Thomsen adds that beyond human folly, the theology of the cross emphasizes salvation as God’s gift that God has spoken through the suffering of Jesus Christ and it is possible to authenticate God’s salvation in distinct human languages of human suffering. He says,

In his theology of the cross, Luther rightly emphasized that salvation was God’s gift through Christ, whose suffering and death made justification and the conquest of death a reality. God’s saving power was revealed in seeming weakness as the Son of God hung on a cross. Luther spoke of the hiddenness (seeing in the back side) of God since the crucified Son did not appear to manifest the power of God. This focus upon the hiddenness of God and the suffering

Son has tremendous value in articulating a missiology for the twenty first century (Thomsen 2003:99)

Criticisms, therefore, against the conversion of the Hehe from AR to Christianity amidst suffering can be responded to by alluding to the theology of the cross. Firstly, faith in Jesus Christ has enabled the Hehe to see suffering as a human and divine reality. Secondly, God's love is more vivid and translatable through suffering because God suffers with us. Thirdly, suffering is the first viable meeting place between God and us. For it is certain that in Jesus Christ God suffered more than we can suffer. Moreover, we cannot attain God's glory but God has attained our poorest stage of suffering. "In his compassion God shows that he takes the reality of mankind seriously" (Martiny 1985:105). Thus, there is more hope in *theologia crucis* than *theologia gloriae*. Precisely, there is more authenticity in the conversion of Africans in the reality of suffering than in the abstract of glorious creation.

Bediako illustrates how an illiterate midwife of Ghana by the name Afua Kuma expresses what the researcher calls the theology of the cross at grassroots level.

She does with images that, translated into a shared language, come alive for Africans from different parts of the continent. "Jesus the grinding stone, the lion of the grasslands, the Big Tree, the Great Doctor." The cross is the fishing net with which men are caught. Jesus is present in nature and at birth. He gives food. The sun and the moon are his robe. These images derived from nature, from the daily struggle for life, from the fight against the powers of darkness. ... This theology of the grassroots makes it clear that the Christian faith is not a western religion but an authentic African experience. It is the spontaneous theology of the open air, the market and the home. (Bediako and Visser 2000:x)

Summing up, the imageries of Jesus Christ in Africa have shown him as anthropocentric. "Yesu Kristo ni mtu katikati ya watu (Jesus Christ is a person among people)" (Mgovano 13.12.1999:Makambako). Jesus Christ in Africa has a community aspect and as Ole Kurupash and Luwoneko show in *Yesu ni Mmasai*

and the Mwanambehele story, Jesus Christ has community roles in support of life. The suffering of Jesus Christ is depicted in the suffering of the people. Jesus Christ a full participant in death and ascendancy to ancestorship. In the theology of the cross, the Hehe should be understood in this way:

They meet in the identity-constituting function the Jesus event has for their peoples. In the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ God has shared in their suffering and accepted them. Thereby, poverty and racism (discrimination) have been revealed as sins against God. The Jesus event opens life towards the future and gives hope to human beings in their daily existence (Kuester 1995: 108-109).

### *3.5 Pentecost: The hallmark of Translation and Universality*

One wonders whether Luke knew how much the two paragraphs illustrated in Acts 2:1-13 are characteristic of “the vernacular (mother-tongue) languages as essential vehicles of religious transition” (Bediako and Visser 2000: xi). In the event of the Pentecost, recorded by Luke, God is depicted as one who would speak all languages in the whole world of today. Although Luke said there were devout Jews dwelling in Jerusalem from every nation under heaven (Ac. 2:5) in his day there were no Jews dwelling in Tanzania. Luke prophetically wrote that what happened in Jerusalem would happen in the whole world because one day God would speak Swahili, Hehe, Bena, Nyakyusa Kinga and Wanji.<sup>13</sup> It is worth quoting some of the important verses from Luke in Acts for an in-depth study.

The core for our deliberations are as quoted below.

All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them. ... When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard them speaking in his own language. ... The how is it that each of us hears them in his own native language? (Ac.2: 4, 6 and 8).

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<sup>13</sup> Nyakyusa, Kinga and Wanji are tribes that are close to the Hehe and the translators of these languages were missionaries from Berlin since 1891-1913).

While giving a every high opinion to devoted missionaries who came to Africa and translated the Bible in the vernacular of every people group to which they preached, the researcher is of the view that the guidance for those efforts were from a divine source. The researcher states further that the experience of the Pentecost is "God's *pneumatological* incarnation in the world" (Fung 2003:43). In it, the Holy Spirit officially inaugurated the universality and the basis of authenticity of Christian conversion. In portraying this idea, Luke quoted Joel saying, "In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people" (Acts 2:17a). This argument is intended to show that when Jesus Christ had fulfilled all what God required for salvation he sent the Holy Spirit that manifested itself in all native languages that were present on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:6-12). The manifestation affirmed the notion that Christianity shall be proclaimed or declared in all languages and be translated in all cultures as Luke writes, "-we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!" (Acts 2:11b). Luke's declaration is the declaration of the Hehe that we have converted to Christianity because first we heard Germans followed by Swedes, our Bena neighbours and finally our own people declare the wonders of God in our own tongues.

Neuberg (1899), one of the first Lutheran missionaries noted that many adherents of AR were keen to listen to the Word of God. The text as translated by Koebler (1998) says,

*Wapagani wengi wanahudhuria ibada, watu 400 hadi 1000. ... Watu wankaribia toka pande zote, machifu wakiwatangulia. Wanasikiliza kwa makini tunapowasimulia historia takatifu za Biblia* (Many pagans attend the church service, they range between 400 to 1000. They come from all corners with their chiefs leading them. They listen very keenly when we tell them about the Bible history (Koebler 1998:7). Translated by the researcher.

The so-called pagans are Hehe adherents of AR. By population, Muhanga and the villages around it few people. An attendance of 400-1000 is quite big.

Many of the Hehe responded to the call because they had interest in hearing about God. According to Neuberg (1899) as translated by Koebler (1998) shows that Germans missionaries thought the Hehe gathered to see the German national flag and the wonders of trumpets. Neuberg said,

*Ili wajue kwamba siku ni ya ibada tunapandisha asubuhi mapema sana benderea ya nyeusi-nyeupe-nyekundu ya kijerumani yenye mslaba katikati. Saa tatu tunapiga tarumbeta ibadiliyo kengele* (For them to know that it is a day of worship we raise the German flag very early in the morning, the flag that has black white and red colours with the cross in the middle. At nine o'clock, we blow the trumpets instead of the bell (Koebler 1998:7). Translated by the researcher.

It is upsetting to learn that the first German missionaries among the Hehe thought that people came to admire them. One Hehe at Idete near Muhanga made an unusual comment that his father told him that they went to see if Whites had ankles on their knees and if they ever went to the toilet (Magava 01-09-1999:Idete). We cannot rule out ulterior motives in any event but we have to be rational to see the prime motive. The chiefs led the Hehe. They were serious on what they were going to hear and see because no Hehe would clown around with the calling of *Lidwzi lya Nguluvi* (God's authority) even if they would end up in disbelief but they would listen because no one, German or Hehe can be silly with *Nguluvi* and live.

In an interview with a Roman Catholic sister concerning her first encounter with the word of God Sr. Mpwapwa said,

*Padre mzungu alihubiri kwa lugha ya Kilatini na mwafrica mmoja alimtafisiri kwa Kiswahili na Kihehe. Tuliambiwa tumgeukie Mungu. Akasema tusipomgeukia tutaungua motoni na wale wasiogeuka wakifa hawatafika kwa Mungu.* (The White priest preached in Latin and one African translated in Swahili and Hehe. We were urged to turn to God. He said if we do not turn to God we will burn in fire (hell fire) and those who refuse to turn would never be accepted to be in the presence of God) (Sr. Mpwapwa 30-10-2003: Iringa). Translated by the researcher.

The sentiments from Muhanga and this message from Sr. Mpwapwa are vital for our deliberations on the issue of authenticity. We will try to interpret the sentiments and the message from the Hehe pre-Christian experience as well as in the new encounter with the message of salvation. The interpretation will have two aspects. The first aspect is about the preachers and the consequence of hearing the Word of God. The second aspect is about turning to God with the fear that God will burn sinners in hell of the fire, especially those who will reject God's call for salvation. Conversely, Mkemwa (14-08-1997:Ipalamwa and Msigomba 11-07-1999:Ilula)<sup>14</sup> claimed that the first message from missionaries, both German and Swedes was about the love of God. Uhlin categorically asserted that in her first encounter with the people of Ilula she taught about the love of God and the first song was *Mungu ni Pendo* (God is love) (Uhlin 01-08-1997:Upsalla).

### *3.5.1 Hearing the translated Word in the Vernacular*

The preacher did it in Latin but there was no other way of authenticating the message to the hearers except by translating it in the perceptible language of the hearers. What happened in Madibira, in Iringa among the Hehe as narrated by Sister Mpwapwa is the notion that an authentic message of salvation is one that is transmitted within the context of the host culture and the tool for the host culture is the vernacular. That is what Luke is conveying concerning the action of the Holy Spirit that people spoke in all vernaculars there were present on the day of Pentecost.

Another Catholic priest said, "Our first task was to study the language of the people; how could we proceed with evangelisation without the knowledge of the local language; the sayings and idioms?" (Fr. Riddle 3-11-2003:Dar-es-Salaam). The priest says almost in the same way as Paul, "how can they believe in the one whom they have not heard?" (Rom.10: 14b). Hearing the word of God

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<sup>14</sup> Msigomba, Phoebe was one of the research assistants as it has been cited in the research methodology.



is different from hearing a drum or a horn of a car or mere sound or noise. Hearing the Word of God is having a conversation with God. Conversation among the Hehe involves acquaintance. In that view Luther says,

God is ever with the Word. ... Remember that God has said: "When the Word of Christ is preached, I am in your mouth, and I pass with the Word through your ears into your heart". So then, we have a sure sign and know that when the gospel is preached, God is present and would have Himself found there (Luther, in Plass 1959:1460-1461).

This should be interpreted that as the Word of God is preached, it becomes a conversation that acts and it requires people to respond to it. That is why it is sometimes put symbolically, like burning in the fire and many more others. The intention is to put the message in the most perceptible, understandable language and life of the recipients. One of the favourite songs in the Lutheran Church is "God Himself is present" (Schwarzburg 1633-1708). How is God present? Present in the Word that is translated in the mother tongue where people can hear the mighty acts of God.

As far as Lutherans are concerned in Iringa, German missionaries had three approaches. Gloeckner (1891) shows that the first approach was to travel with interpreters (Koebler 1998:2). The main task of interpreters was to convey the preached message in the language of the local people. The second approach was to study the local language. We have evidences of a book published in 1914 entitled *Bena Fibeli* as the second edition (*Zweite Auflage, Berlin No. 43*). The first one to be published is not yet known. Most of the respondents had the opinion that there were no specific books that were used to teach reading and writing skills. Missionaries used their own initiatives until 1914. *Bena Fibeli* was reprinted in 1935 and was called *I Hate Indongodzi ya Kibena* (Introduction to Bena Language). These books were used to teach the Hehe and Bena how to read and write. The knowledge to read and write was a pre-condition for adult baptism and confirmation (Mgovano 15-05-1999).

Pastor Priebush (1935), a German missionary published another book later to help other German missionaries to understand the vernacular. The book was entitled *Bena-Hehe Gramatik* (Bena-Hehe Grammar). It is worth noting that by the time Catholic, Lutheran and Moravian Missionaries came to East Africa, the Church Mission Society (CMS) of the Anglican Church had sent a Lutheran pastor John Ludwig Krapf in 1843 as a missionary to Kenya. According to Anderson (1977:3), "Krapf concentrated on language study. By 1846 when his colleague John Rebmann arrived, Krapf had translated most of the New Testament into Swahili" (1977:2). Mugambi puts it in a manner where translation is vital. He says,

Dr. Krapf won no converts at the coast. Instead, he lost his wife and child, and his health deteriorated. However, as a result of his work, Kiswahili has developed as a *lingua franca* of Eastern Africa. His pioneer efforts paved the way for modern translation of the Bible into Kiswahili (Mugambi 1989:10).

In addition to what Mugambi says Olson had this to say, "Although Swahili had been written for many years in Arabic script the first systematic Swahili grammar was published in 1850 by Johann Ludwig Krapf (Olson 1971:26)". The work of Krapf was revised by Bishop Edward Steere of the Universities' Mission to Central Africa (UMCA) and published in 1870 (Olson: 26). From the work of these two Anglican missionaries, revised editions have continued until today. Swahili became an official national language of Tanzania in 1967 (Olson:28). In 1983 it was declared as the national language of Kenya. Swahili has been used concurrently with other vernacular languages along the coast of East Africa since 1500 during the first attempt of Portuguese commercial Catholic missions. The Arabic influence followed later, accompanied by the slave trade. Swahili was thus born from the need of communicating with the Portuguese and Arabs and other foreigners. Swahili being mainly Bantu has also a mixture with Arabic, Portuguese, Spanish, German and English. The primary task of making Swahili an East African vernacular was done by this missionary

named Krapf. Another missionary known as Bishop Steer did the secondary task of making Swahili more contemporary.

In a discussion between the researcher and Canon Hauli (13-11-2003: Iringa), it became apparent that, while the Anglican Church has been in the lead in officiating Swahili as the basic national language it also translated the gospel in the native vernacular wherever it was established. The Roman Catholic Church used Swahili as the basic media for communicating the gospel while the vernacular tribal languages were used as the second media of propagating the message of salvation. It has now become apparent that the translatability of Christianity opened the door for a language that has become one of the main languages for several nations and for African Unity. Swahili has become a tool of empowering the people of Africa.

### *3.5.2 Turning to God as an African Pentecost Perspective*

Sister Mpwapwa has stated that the missionary urged them to turn to God. The same sentiments were expressed by most of the people in the Lutheran Church and the Anglican Church. The first reaction from the researcher is this: What were the missionaries thinking about the Hehe and God? Is it possible that missionaries thought that the Hehe had turned away from God, or that they had never lived a "God-ward" life? The researcher has found through interviews that according to the Hehe AR it is beyond possibility that a person can turn away from God or ancestors. The researcher has the assumption that turning to God for the Hehe meant improving the relationship between them and God. Moreover, what does that improvement of relationship mean? The researcher interprets that the preacher was able to show the weak areas of relationship, which we will show hereafter.

The Hehe believed in God without any reservation as we have seen in the previous chapter. The main concern was on how to relate to God. We have also shown in the previous chapter that there are claims that the Hehe related to God

through ancestors but there is also a contra claim that the ancestors are afraid of God. The researcher accepts that according to the concepts of God amongst the Hehe God is an "ineffable beyond" but the presence, the activities and the concern of God among people is felt daily as it has been elaborated in the previous chapter. However, it is certain amongst the Hehe and Bena that ancestors live at *Uwulungu* (A supernatural world, a spiritual realm). The living community sometimes asks ancestors to use their influence to beseech God to have mercy on them when an individual or a community commits a serious *wuhosi* (felony). Serious offences have also been explained in the previous chapter. When missionaries preached about turning to God the Hehe thought of turning to *Nguluvi* from a Hehe mindset. Turning to God in the Hehe mindset after the missionary message is taking Jesus Christ seriously because Jesus Christ brings forth a link between people and God. A link that was either non-existent or partially experienced through ancestors. Another view of turning to God is to accept the experience of the new worldview where God, who was unreachable, is now reachable. God who dealt with people indirectly and remotely deals with people directly and closely. God who was believed as being able to see the human offences and dealt with such offences without any communication was now communicating and even claiming that God is a God of love. The translation that is being discussed here is not only that of the gospel from foreign languages to Hehe but also the paradigm shift of who God is in the same concept of *Nguluvi* and the fact that *Nguluvi* relates to people through Jesus Christ.

Turning to God for Lutherans was more because of the love or, so to say, the grace of God. An authentic example is given by one of the missionaries as stated hereafter concerning one of the translators who accompanied missionaries from Durban to Tanzania. The example is as elucidated hereafter.

It so happened that between 1891 and 1898 the first German missionaries travelled with a Zulu adherent of AR named Africa, from Durban to Kidugala in Njombe among the Bena in the Iringa Region. Africa and Nathaniel were two

Zulu interpreters who accompanied the missionary expedition from Durban to Southern Tanzania. Nathaniel was baptised but Africa, even though a good interpreter, refused baptism. Gloekner (1891) a German missionary narrates the conversion of Africa. The narrative was in the German language. Koebler translated it into the Swahili. We have translated it into English. It says;

When I told Africa that he will never have joy in his pagan life, he burst into laughter and responded: "I have more joy than all of your adherents, because I can do what I want and leave what I do not want. I do not want to believe because Christians are not allowed to enjoy as much as we pagans do. I will remain a pagan". To my amazement, I wondered one day when he said he wanted to be a Christian. He explained thus: "The Word about the love of Jesus Christ, which you preached last Sunday has defeated me". Gloekner added that although the baptismal instructions seemed to be tough to him he was diligent and attended all classes. He was finally baptised with the same name Africa. After his baptism, he continued with a good Christian life, attending all worship and prayer services. He worked hard and was never found in African beer clubs (as he did before) (Koebler 1998: 2).

We deduce that although Africa heard the Word many times before his baptism, and even if he interpreted it to his fellow Africans, the Word had not yet been translated in his personal religious background to make him understand that what he called "pagan life" was the life that was given through the love of God. It is candidly clear from the narrative that Africa did not believe in the Word that was preached by the missionary *per se* but the Word about the love of Jesus Christ in his inner language, the mother tongue, made him convert. For Africa, the conversion to Jesus Christ was achieved when Jesus Christ met him as an individual who needed his love. This account portrays how Jesus Christ met Africa in his lifestyle and cultural and religious background. God who was harsh and fearsome was in fact the God of love. The barriers, which he called "doing what he wanted" were far inferior to the love of God.

Love is a strong message to African men and women. It speaks about the humanness, which the Zulu call *Ubuntu* and the Hehe call *Uwunu*. This *uwunu*,

as frequently said, "*Uwunu wa umunu avanu*" (the integrity of a person is the community) has deep roots of religious beliefs, belongingness, identity and the relationship as well as the communion with ancestors. It affirms human integrity. It is the word of love, which is the word of deep humanity and divinity of the African pre-Christian experience that defeated Africa. It is indeed the Word of God in mother tongue in which Africa would say "I have heard the missionary speak the mighty works of God in my own tongue (Ac. 2:8,11)". It is in view of the fact that ancestors also hate a person who is not loved by God. A person who is hated by ancestors cannot have humanness.

In that moment of personal revelation to Africa, he discovered that God actually cared for him. We can as well say, Jesus Christ uses the Word as his power to lift up all people of all races and cultural backgrounds so that they may recognise how he cares for them in their well-being and circumstantial predicaments. With the assertions as stated hitherto, we are speaking about the criteria of authentic conversion of Africans as arising from the universality of the message of salvation and Luther's theology of the cross, all being based on translatability of the event of Christ in the mother tongue.

### ***3.5.3 Pentecost: The Reality of Translation and Universality***

Translation is the characteristic of Christianity that claims universality. Christianity has spread in the world under conducive and adverse conditions. It has spread in dynamic, hospitable and amiable cultures. It has also spread in inhibitive, inhospitable and repulsive cultures. It has spread in the public places and in the underground. It has been able to tolerate the mistranslation. It has accommodated alternative terms and different virtues of reality. It has drawn theological perspectives of cerebral (intellectual) coldness of the Northern Hemisphere to emotional and celebrative warmth of Africa.

A summarised version according to Walls (1996:3-7) shows that Christianity started in a typical Jewish environment. It was in actual sense, a

branch of Judaism that had accepted Jesus Christ as the Messiah of God. By 37 CE,<sup>15</sup> almost all Christians were Jews. They worshiped in the temple, held fast to the Jewish traditions and religious rituals, including animal sacrifice. They held fast to the Jewish law and covenant. They therefore worshipped on the Sabbath and met only on the first day of the week to commemorate instituted Holy Communion and the instructions that Jesus Christ had given them. They were organised like an *Ujamaa* community (Walls 1996:3).

By 325 CE Christianity is seen as having undergone a tremendous change. It had already gone through many linguistic and cultural translations surrounding the Mediterranean Sea such as Greek, Roman, African, Arabic Spanish, Portuguese and part of Southern Europe. At such time, Christianity was in the state of affairs relating to the assembly of Nicea. Jews are no longer part of that contingent and members of the council are overtly hostile to the Jews Walls:3-4). At that time, Church leaders did have children because they considered marriage as an inferior practice. Circumcision is no longer a covenantal requirement but considered as a betrayal of faith. Sabbath day remains a day of worship for Jews but a normal working day for the rest of the Christian community. The Church as a whole worship on Sunday and are not as strict as the Jews are with the Sabbath day.

By implication, without the characteristic of translatability, Christianity would have remained as a branch of Judaism. The first council of the apostles in Jerusalem (Ac. 15:1-21), almost three hundred years before the council of Nicea, all of them being Jews, had accepted the inclusion of the Gentiles in the community of Christian believers. They accepted the relinquishing of Jewish demands such as circumcision and gave a lenient and intercultural approach to issues connected with sacrifices. The whole issue was to free the church from one cultural bondage and declare its universality and continuous translation.

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<sup>15</sup> Walls uses CE, which the researcher presumes the abbreviation of Christ Event, which is usually abbreviated as AD.

The council of Jerusalem was affirming the Pentecost as if the resolutions were saying; "Church of Jesus Christ, you shall translate yourself and multiply the believers of Jesus Christ through the channels of every culture and be heard in each mother tongue in the whole world".

It could be argued that if the Holy Spirit had not sanctioned translatability the Church would have been weakened by Judaism, made an intellectual exercise by Greeks and annihilated by excessive Roman enculturation. The message of Pentecost protects and resuscitates the future and the spread of Christianity. Certain circumstances of translatability can be problematic, especially to people who do not belong to the culture and circumstances in which Christianity was translated.

Following the arguments of Walls (1996: 4-7), by 600-1500 Christianity had been translated in many cultural and religious contexts. One may be tempted to consider some of those avenues of translatability as being chaotic, but since translatability is a permanent characteristic of Christianity, it would not be fair to use the term "chaotic". By 600, the Church had moved westwards. Looking at some areas of the church such as Ireland, we find monasticism having being reckoned as one of the powers in the Church. Walls shows how some of the monks made voluntary torture with the intension of meriting the justification of God. An example is given hereafter.

A number of monks are gathered on a rocky coastline. Several are standing in ice-cold water up to their necks, reciting the psalms. Some are standing immobile, praying-with their arms outstretched in the form of a cross. One is receiving six strokes of lash because he did not answer "Amen" when the grace was said at the last meal of brown bread and dulse (Walls 1996:4).

The translatability of Christianity did not end there. Church history tells us that there came a point in time when the translation of the Bible in the mother tongue had ceased and church members were not allowed to read the Bible. The forgiveness of sins was sold under the controversial indulgences (Iserloh, Glazik



and Jedin 1980:42-46). Besides the denial of indulgence, other theological claims were voiced. These included the primacy of the priesthood of believers and the famous justification by grace through faith. Most important to our thesis was the need to translate the Bible into the vernacular. This was not only a major demand of the Protestant Reformation but also major demand of the Pentecost. Arguing in the same line Bediako says,

All human languages are vernacular languages in their appropriate contexts. In the history of the expansion of Christianity, the pivotal role of the vernacular was equally demonstrated in the Protestant Reformation in Europe in the sixteenth century. Reformation and its subsequent flowering in renewed intellectual and spiritual life and activity in Europe can equally well be understood to be the result of the European rediscovery and repossession of the Gospel through the medium of European vernacular languages (Bediako 1995: 61).

By 1840, the Anglican Church had had enough influence from David Livingstone and was discussing about mission in Africa. They did not have a specific emphasis on translating the Bible in the vernacular but had missionaries armed with Bibles, most probably in English, and cotton seeds to introduce agriculture that would help in ending the slave trade. They were also proposing to the British Government to fight against the slave trade and bring it to an end. Missionaries came to East Africa by 1843 and English bibles were of no use for conversion. Cottonseeds, the necessary education, and life skills for agriculture were inapplicable until a media of communication was established and that was the dictionary in Swahili and the New Testament in Swahili. How could missionaries be witnesses of Jesus Christ without "receiving the power?" (Ac. 1:8). In spite of all ulterior motives that missionaries and potential converts might have, the Holy Spirit has bestowed the power of authentic conversion in the mother tongue.

We have followed the arguments by Walls just to show that all the four lines of thought as shown in the introduction and Herbert's question of "Why

did Africans accept Christianity?" fall short in defining the kind of Christianity that was expected to be accepted by Africans. Is it the Jewish Christianity? Nicean Christianity, Christianity from the monks of Ireland? Was it the Western Christianity of the 18<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> century with colonial powers and imperialism? Fortunately, Africans did not accept any of those. They accepted Christianity that was seen in the suffering servant of God, their brother Jesus Christ whom they suffer with until today. They accepted Christianity in which all of them could hear God speak to them in their mother tongue, within their pre-Christian religious experiences; and in which they heard about the love of God (John 3:16) and got defeated like their Zulu brother Africa.

They accepted Christianity that showed them the mighty wonders of God that promised them freedom and liberation against discrimination of any kind. They accepted a Christianity that was continually self-translating even without missionaries as it is seen in African Initiated Churches. Principally, Africans, and specifically the Hehe, accepted Christianity because of its universality that is found in the power of *Nguluvi* (God), which the Word of God in the mother tongue affirms that *Nguluvi* forgives sins. Obvious as it is in the Hehe context, who else can forgive sins except God who can do anything as He wishes? The Hehe are authentic converts of Jesus Christ who speaks Hehe, dwells in their homes, eats with them in the Holy communion and shares the symbolic initiation of the Christian community in water and in Word. The Hehe are authentic converts of Jesus Christ because they draw the authority of their faith from the very book that all draw, which is the Bible that speaks their deepest heartfelt speech of God.

### ***3.6 Universal Calling: Translatability and Transformation***

Considerations on the divine initiative for salvation and therefore conversion start from the story of the fall of mankind (Gen 3:1-14) and the promised plan of salvation (Gen 3:15). The doctrine of the benevolence of God

the father towards the fallen sinner purports that the fallen person was not able to save himself. Salvation for the fallen person was possible only through the acts of divine grace. According to Luther, the root of redemption is in God's appropriation of the divine and human nature, which in this thesis is the translatability of the incarnation and the suffering and death of Jesus Christ. In the interpretation of Gn. 3:15 Luther says,

As he says, "her seed." It is as if he is saying: "Through the woman, you Satan, set upon and seduced the man, so that through sin you might be their head and master. But I, in turn shall lie in wait for you by means of the same instrument. I shall snatch away the woman, and from her I shall produce a Seed, and that seed will crush your head. You have corrupted flesh through sin and have made it subject to death, but from that very flesh, I shall bring forth a man who will crush and prostrate you and all your powers" (Luther, in Pelikan 1958:193).

The doctrine of incarnation that has been illustrated in 3.2 is vivid in the quotation above. It is apparent that without the self-translation of God through incarnation people are the object of God's wrath. With the incarnation and the penalty of suffering that God took in Jesus Christ, people of all nations are objects of God's love. The death of Jesus Christ on the cross signifies how God's wrath is incompatible with his love. People cannot withstand the wrath of God. For that reason, God gave his son so that whoever believes in him may not perish (Jn. 3:16). God's wrath is in co-existence with his majesty (Luther in Althaus 1981:169). God's love comes to people without God's majesty. It comes in God's son, through suffering and human weakness.

Regarding the love of God, Luther's interpretation of John 3:16 says,

But now we have to make the practical application and learn why the person who is God and man came in the world. Christ teaches us this too when he says that any believer in Him shall be delivered from eternal death and be assured of eternal life. It was not an angel, a principality, or any of the world's mighty who became incarnate and died for us - no, both the angelic and the human nature would have been too weak - but it was the divine nature

that assumed humanity. It was Christ who adopted our flesh and blood that we might be saved through Him. (Luther in Pelikan 1957:352).

The main concern of this section is the universal calling of God that transforms all humanity within their social and cultural contexts. The calling goes beyond our transformation and assures all people the forgiveness of sins and the call to God's fellowship. We have made claims that once the Word of God had been proclaimed to the Hehe in their cultural context they understood that God was speaking to them in their mother tongue. We have also made claims that the incarnation, suffering and death of Jesus Christ and the gift of the Holy Spirit made the Hehe part of God's family.

Having reached that stage, transformation is inevitable. Jesus Christ is God incarnate in the Hehe society, hence the Hehe cannot escape God's calling. God can take them and transform them into what he wants them to be (Walls 1996:8). Paul (1Cor. 5:17) says, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old is gone, the new has come!" Paul's argument is that if God has accepted the Hehe and has become one of them and dwelt among them then the Hehe have no excuse of not heeding to the call for transformation. We have shown in the previous chapter that AR was *preparatio evangelica*. We have also argued in 3.2 that Jesus Christ is the Mwanambehele, a ruler amongst the Hehe and a Maasai prophet. It is thus obvious that when Jesus calls both the Hehe by the authority of *Lidzwi* and Maasai by his prophetic authority, none of them would show hesitation or have a prejudice that God wants to destroy their religion or repudiate their culture. Instead, those who hear the word would see how God is perfecting their faith towards God through Jesus Christ.

This implies that when God calls the Hehe within their context of faith and daily life, the acts and the processes of salvation are established beyond human standards. It is in the divine initiative, will and love that the message that is preached in Swahili, Bena and Hehe accomplish the calling for conversion

and salvation. Since the message of salvation rests on the divine initiative, it is unlimited and not imposed upon the Hehe from foreign manipulation. On the contrary, it cuts across all human limitations and stumbling blocks of the missionaries and the recipients, calls all of them again, and again to Jesus Christ. The divine initiative arises from the unbounded divine love of God. Aulen says,

To conceive of divine activity as an act of salvation is to emphasize that which faith has primarily to say about the action of divine love. ...The act of salvation is that act in and through which God establishes a communion and fellowship between himself and humanity, which is sinful and lost. In the word salvation there is this twofold implication: on the one hand man is, by reason of sin, separated from God; and on the other that God overcomes that which separates him from man (Aulen 1960:163).

This divine initiative, which is the gracious will of God, is called the universal or general will or the benevolence of God (Schmid 1961:270). When it is considered in itself, it refers to the assumption that all people have gone astray and the grace of God is demonstrated in preparing the means of redemption for all and offers the same opportunity for all people.

A historical study from East Africa shows that several attempts of Christianising East Africa had taken place before the missionary endeavours of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It is known in East African history that between the 15<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries Portuguese missionaries failed to establish churches because the initial aim was focused on their own explorative adventures and commercial entrepreneurships. Mugambi confirms this information by saying;

Thus Christianity reached East Africa through the sea route round the southern cape, which Vasco Da Gama had pioneered in his search for sea passage to the Far East. It is noted that although the Portuguese voyages in the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries had Christian crews and called at ports along the East African coast, Christianity did not become established among the peoples around such ports. Effective evangelisation waited until a later period.

One of the reasons for the failure to achieve effective evangelisation during that period of discovery and mercantilism was that the missionaries went out with the chief aim of "saving" souls, and not establishing local Christian communities (Mugambi 1989:37).

While Mugambi rightly expresses that those discoverers, explorers and merchants called their endeavours as "saving souls," nonetheless, their motivations did not meet the criteria that would make Africans accept Christianity. The criteria that would call Africans to Jesus Christ came in 1843 when the Bible was translated into Swahili. Mugambi argues that those missionaries should have established local communities. We ask, how should they establish them? After all, local communities were already established. Mugambi argues that effective evangelisation waited for another period. He is right but which period? Church history and missiology have the answer. It waited for the time when missionaries would give priority to the divine Word of God in the mother tongue. It waited for the time when people in East Africa would have an experience of Jesus Christ and compare that experience with the one they had in AR. It was thus not a matter of establishing local communities but availing the Word of God in the vernacular so that the Hehe can experience Jesus Christ who is the Word of God. As the Hehe experienced Jesus Christ, he in turned participated and experienced their human suffering and daily predicaments. It is in that exchange that faith and repentance was achieved (Lk 5:11). Smith argues about such an experience in the perspective of authentic conversion and says,

Authentic conversion is first and foremost an experience of Christ. ..., any truly Christian conversion experience in an encounter with Christ. Christ Jesus is the focal point of the experience or the experience is not genuinely motivated and sustained by the Holy Spirit.

Second, an authentic conversion is one that establishes a person on a course of spiritual maturity and transformation. An authentic conversion is in its definition, not an end, but a beginning. It is actually the means by which a person turns the

corner and then pursues a lifetime of radical discipleship. To become a Christian is to become a disciple; the very act of coming to faith in Christ both commits and enables one to pursue transformation that comes through the gracious work of the Spirit.

From this perspective, then, conversion is an act of response to the initiative—the call and the enabling of the Spirit. The character of this initiative is different from each person. ..., in the end, each person needs to come to terms with how God is calling for a response to the initiative of the Spirit (Smith 2003:4).

The common expression for authentic Christian conversion and for the universal calling is the translatability of the event of Jesus Christ. The language of universal calling among the Hehe is the understanding that Jesus Christ has given the answer to the riddle, which the Hehe had not found a direct answer. The riddle was how to communicate with God. The message about Jesus Christ being in the father, and one with the father was one way of way of answering the riddle. This might seem strange but the previous chapter has shown the centrality of ancestors in worship, sacrifices, libations and communion. This explains how Jesus Christ becomes not only the Son of God but also the real link of human and divine life, natural and supernatural or physical and metaphysical, spiritual and secular realms. It is from this juncture that we can speak about the universal calling as the revealed will and love of God through the Word of God that is preached, heard and responded to as on that is touching the realities of life. Althaus says,

The word has the divine power to convince our spirit of its truth, that is, that it is God's word. Therefore, the gospel does not need to be authorised or guaranteed by some other authority such as the church. No one needs to tell me where the word of God, the gospel, is. We simply feel it; the word takes us captive and proves to us directly that it is God's word. This is the "testimony of the Holy Spirit" in the heart (Althaus 1981:38).

We carry the arguments further that when the Word of God is preached God speaks to people. Wherever God speaks to people, Christ is present. Wherever and whenever Christ is present, there is the calling for transformation.

Whenever there is a calling for transformation, a response in faith and repentance is expected. Where there is a response of faith and repentance there is forgiveness of sins as a sign of reconciliation and a call for fellowship with God. Hence, positive responses pertaining to the acts of divine grace include the awareness of the divine calling, being enlightened with the truth from the Word of God, and being aware of what God does as functions of the perceptions pertaining to conversion.

We suppose that the divine calling is an act that pertains to the grace of God and the Holy Spirit creating awareness of that calling. Luther says,

What is the divine calling? According to Paul, the divine calling is an act that God does in the hearts of people whom he has predestined for justification and glorification. He thus asserts, "And those he predestined, he also called; those who he called he also justified; and those he justified, he also glorified " (Ro. 8:30). Luther makes comments on Paul's views by adding his own phrases. With those additions in italics the text reads as follows; "And those he predestined, *proposed or chose*, he also called, *to faith through the Word*, those who he called he also justified *through the Spirit of faith*, and those he justified, he also glorified." Instead of glorified he used magnified to indicate that those who were glorified were glorified to eternal life (Luther in Oswald 1972: 75-76).

How does the calling take place? It starts with the translation of the Word of God followed by hearing that translated Word of God. Hearing the word of God can include all possibilities through which a person gets the exposure to the gospel. The exposure can be a personal encounter, a long or short-term interaction or socialisation with Christian converts. Most Christian literature describes the means through which this call becomes effective as the work of the Holy Spirit after the exposure to the Word of God.

Thus, the whole root and origin of our salvation lies in God who sends. And if He does not send, those who preach preach falsely; and this preaching is the same as not preaching, indeed, it would be better not to preach. And they who hear hear falsely, and it would be better not to hear at all. And they who believe them



believe falsely, and it would be better not to believe. And they, who invoke God, invoke Him falsely, and it would be better not to invoke Him. Since preachers of this kind do not preach, the hearers do not hear, the believers do not believe, those who call upon God do not call upon Him, and those who are not saved are damned (Luther, in Oswald 1972:413).

Luther argues further that when God sends forth his Word, there is power within that Word that convicts not only acquaintances or those who applaud it but it speaks to enemies and all those who resist it (Luther, in Oswald 1972:414). These arguments imply that the calling as predestined and initiated by God addresses people in their fullness of humanity. Linking to Luther, Bediako says,

In Jesus Christ, The Holy Spirit reveals to us a divine paradigm which confronts all religions, challenging men and women in three specific areas- in our understanding of power and weakness, in our response to evil, and in our response to cultural and social enmity and exclusiveness. It is by these down to earth clues to the divine paradigm disclosed in the ministry of Jesus Christ that all religions are challenged and invited to make an equally concrete response, in faith, repentance and obedience. In this respect, Christianity too, in all its different traditions and denominations, being formally equivalent to the other religions as traditions of response, is challenged to respond to the unique Christ who is the Lord (Bediako2000:42).

In addition to the above quotation Walls says, "It is not Christianity that saves, but Christ" (1996:66). The challenges that Bediako and Walls make concerning the call for turning and transformation underline the fact of universality not only in culture but in the situation where many religious faith meet. Christian conversion cannot be fully described without the context of other faiths. As for the Hehe repentance, both in AR and Christianity is the act of turning away from sin and faith is the act of turning to cordial relationship with ancestors and sometimes with God. Repentance in AR and Christianity expresses the response of sorrow, regret and guilt about sin and seeking to reconcile with

ancestors or God. "This response consists of turning away from a life of rebellion, inertia or perversity, and turning to God in Christ with faith" (Rambo 1994:499).

Looking from the Christian and Jewish perspectives, we find that the Old Testament prophets proclaimed repentance more often than faith hence providing a background to the New Testament proclamation. The New Testament has proclaimed faith more often than repentance hence relating to the concept of conversion. Repentance comes as a counter action against the human predicament of being separated from God. The New Testament describes this separation as darkness and dullness in the human soul and mind (Mt. 13: 15)

The call for transformation is directly related to regeneration. Regeneration is the actual transformation. In regeneration the saving power of the new being in Jesus Christ is dependent upon the response of the person. It should be understood that the power of the new being must lay hold of the person who is still in bondage to the old being. The classic terms that are used in this respect are new birth or new creature. Regeneration is thus the resultant effect of hearing, receiving and responding to the Word of God that calls for transformation. The message brings the challenge whereby a person is asked to turn from old realities to new realities. Regeneration is thus the state of being drawn into the new reality as manifested in Jesus Christ. On being drawn to the new reality a person is baptised as an initiation to Christ in the new being and the new reality. "Baptism is the washing of regeneration which effects forgiveness of sins, the deliverance from death and the devil, and grants eternal life" (Schlink 1975:148).

Another term that is related to the calling for transformation and forgiveness of sins is justification. Justification presupposes faith. It brings the element of "in spite of", in this thesis; hence, the whole concept of conversion and salvation is contained therein. In illustrating this basic element, we use Luther's theology of the cross as stated by Althaus that says,

Together with Paul (Rom 4:1ff.) Luther ordinarily understands justification as God's act of crediting, imputing, or recognising (*imputare, reputare*) as righteous, that is, as the act through which God grants a man value in relationship to him. In the case of the gospel, it is the act by which God considers and receives the sinner who is unrighteous before him as righteous. This means, first, that justification consists in the fact God does not impute sin but forgives it (cf Ps. 32:1). ... Described positively, the forgiveness of sins or nonimputation of sin is imputation of righteousness. The righteousness of Christ is imputed to the sinner. God sees the sinner as one with Christ (Luther in Althaus 1981:227).

Justification is the objective eternal truth and act of God in which he accepts the estranged as not estranged and grants us acceptance into his fellowship and participation in the new life of Christ, which Luther calls "alien" righteousness (Luther, in Althaus 1976:227) This means, in spite of estrangement God converts and saves the sinner. In spite of guilt and shame, God sets the standards and principles for regeneration, reconciliation and forgiveness of sins that affirms, transformation that is conversion unto salvation.

Justification is thus the acceptance of the unacceptable. This then brings the concept of *simul peccator, simul justus* (simultaneous sinful and just) and underlines the characteristic Lutheran element of "in spite of": Justified in spite of being a sinner.

The in-spite-of character is decisive for the whole Christian message as the salvation from despair about one's guilt. It is actually the only way to overcome the anxiety of guilt; it enables man to look away from himself and his state of estrangement and self-destruction to the justifying act of God (Tillich 1978:178).

Nevertheless, justification seems to be the end result but the new being in the community is not the end of purification from sin. The struggle continues so long as we live this earthly life. Even though we are imputed and the law is fulfilled for us, we are always just in the process of fulfilling the law. This means God has accepted us by forgiving our unacceptable condition and has called us into his fellowship. He has granted us participation in the new life of Christ and

has initiated a process in which our old sinful life is constantly being overcome by the new life of Christ.

### 3.7 Conclusion

We have argued that the criteria of authentic Christian conversion are determined in a given cultural context by people who know that particular context, the mother tongue and the religious beliefs prior to Christianisation. We have also argued that the authenticity of Christian conversion in any given context does not depend on the agents of Christianisation per se but several factors are involved. The first and foremost are God's initiative, will and love. Agents must be sent by God in God's anointed time-the *Kairos*. Second, the message must be translated in the mother tongue or the vernacular of the receptor culture. Third, authentic conversion is possible when translatability has taken place in the receptor culture. Translatability takes place in the receptor culture when God is incarnate and when the suffering and death of Jesus Christ receive interpretation and identity among the people to whom the message of salvation is proclaimed.

Translatability is first seen in the self-translation of God into humanity. It is seen in the incarnation where God is transformed from invincible divine to a vulnerable human being. Secondly, it is seen when God makes a self-translation in the suffering and death of Jesus Christ on the cross, followed by the victorious resurrection. In the victorious resurrection, God made a self-translation that brought forth the core of Christian faith and hope. Thirdly, translatability is perceived when Jesus Christ sends the Holy Spirit. In that act God officiates the unending translation of the Bible into every mother tongue where the gospel would be preached hence making a hallmark and characteristic of Christianity. It becomes a nature of Christianity to translate itself. Fourthly, translatability leads to the calling of all humanity for transformation, forgiveness of sins, and the fellowship with God. So long as the Word of God is translated in the mother

tongue and adapted in the culture of a people group, the triune God is inevitably expressed in the language, symbols and life of the indigenous people.

As a result, translatability portrays God who is transformed in the linguistic Word and in the human nature of Jesus Christ. Authentic conversion is thus the faith in the human God in Jesus Christ (Rom 10:9) because Jesus Christ is the Word of God in human language.

Having the Bible in Bena, Swahili and Hehe languages confirms that the Hehe have heard God speak in their vernacular and more specifically in their mother tongue. The conversion of the Hehe to Christianity has arisen from what God has been saying and doing in the perceptions of the Hehe in their mother tongue because Christian faith rests on the divine act of translation where the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us (John 1:14).

*“Liswi lya Nguluvi”* means the authoritative utterance of God. It is thus obvious that the Hehe people listen to the message of salvation because *Liswi lya Nguluvi* embodies God’s authority, which no person can run away from. In spite of the invincible authority, God desires to communicate with people by becoming a person. It is thus affirmed God communicated with people through prophets in the Old testament now communicates through his Son Jesus Christ (Heb1:14). Hence, incarnation, life and ministry of Jesus Christ cannot be separated because Jesus Christ was translating and interpreting God wherever he happened to be.

God is with us as an unreachable Supreme Being, God is with the families and with the community through the proto ancestor Jesus Christ who is both natural and the supernatural. Hence, God is with us in the spiritual realm. It is from such themes and perspectives that the researcher claims authenticity because the message of salvation found a place where it could build up God’s calling to the Hehe. It has found a place where Jesus Christ has real, concrete, existential and substantial participation to human suffering and knowledge.

Compatible with this contemporary formulation is the emphasis that God's appearance in human weakness is the language that human cultures are wrapped in and it is in those human cultures that the language of the cross of Jesus Christ speaks distinctly. It is in our cultural human folly that God decided to be revealed. The theology of the cross emphasizes salvation as God's gift that God has spoken through the suffering of Jesus Christ and it is possible to authenticate God's salvation in distinct human languages of human suffering.

The universal calling for transformation refers us back to the concept of turning to God. When missionaries preached about turning to God the Hehe understood God as *Nguluvi* whom they always knew in AR. Turning in the Hehe mindset with Jesus Christ being the mediator meant that Jesus Christ became the link between people and God. Principally, Africans, and specifically the Hehe, accepted Christianity because of its universality that is found in the power of *Nguluvi* (God) who saves and forgives sins. Furthermore, the Hehe are authentic converts of Jesus Christ who speaks Hehe, dwells in their homes, eats with them in the Holy communion and shares the symbolic initiation of the Christian community in water and in Word. The Hehe are authentic converts of Jesus Christ because they draw the authority of their faith from the very book that all draw, which is the Bible that speaks in their deepest heartfelt speech of God. Authentic conversion for the Hehe is first and foremost an experience of Christ. Any truly Christian conversion experience is an encounter with Christ. Christ Jesus is the focal point of the experience genuinely motivated and sustained by the Holy Spirit. An authentic conversion is one that establishes a person on a course of spiritual maturity and transformation. An authentic conversion is not an end, but a beginning. To become a Christian is to become a disciple. The very act of coming to faith in Christ both commits and enables us to pursue transformation that comes through the gracious work of the Spirit.

Conversion is an act of response to the initiative-the call and the enabling of the Spirit. This explains how Jesus Christ becomes not only the Son of God

but also the real link of human and divine life, natural and supernatural or physical and metaphysical, spiritual and secular realms. As for the Hehe repentance, both in AR and Christianity is the act of turning away from sin and faith is the act of turning to cordial relationship with ancestors and sometimes with God. Repentance in AR and Christianity expresses the response of sorrow, regret and guilt about sin and seeking to reconcile with ancestors or God. This response consists of turning away from a life of rebellion, inertia or perversity, and turning to God in Christ with faith. Regeneration is thus the resultant effect of hearing, receiving and responding to the Word of God that calls for transformation. Justification presupposes faith. It brings the element of "in spite of", in this thesis; hence, the whole concept of conversion and salvation.

Justification is the objective eternal truth and an act of God in which he accepts the estranged as not estranged and grants us acceptance into his fellowship and participation in the new life of Christ, which Luther calls "alien" righteousness. This means, in spite of estrangement God converts and saves the sinner. In spite of guilt and shame, God sets the standards and principles for regeneration, reconciliation and forgiveness of sins that affirms, transformation that is conversion unto salvation. This means God has accepted us by forgiving our unacceptable condition and has called us into his fellowship. He has granted us participation in the new life of Christ and has initiated a process in which our old sinful life is constantly being overcome by the new life of the resurrected Jesus Christ.

Having dealt with the criteria of authentic conversion, the subsequent discussions will deal with the indications of authentic conversion. The main intention is to give reflections of what has been happening amongst the Hehe as indicators of authentic conversion. The fourth chapter is the continuation of the second and third chapters. The second chapter was focused at showing the foundation of *Missio Dei* and translatability as the pre-Christian experience. The concept of *Preparatio Evangelica* has been the emphasis of the second chapter as a

way of underlining the understanding that in the concept of *missio Dei*, God preceded missionaries in Africa. Since the third chapter has dealt with the translatability of the event of Christ, the fourth chapter will investigate the practical aspects of the second and third chapters.



## CHAPTER 4

### 4. INDICATIONS OF AUTHENTIC CONVERSION

#### *4.1 Introduction*

This chapter tries to link the discussions of the first three chapters. It intends to answer the following questions: Are there any concrete aspects of the pre-Christian experience in the Lutheran and Roman Catholic or any other Western missionary oriented Church in Tanzania today? Is it possible to find concrete reflections of Luther's theology of the cross in the light of the pre-Christian experience that is portrayed in the second chapter and the concept of translatability that is portrayed in the third chapter? What were the practical measures that can show the presence and the continuity of the translatability in the Churches where the research is being done? Is it a fair assumption that God communicated with the Hehe even when the Hehe were not aware or uncertain of God's communication?

The phrase "indications of authentic Christian conversion" takes the notion that the Hehe perceived God's initiative of communicating with them in their religious and cultural setting when the Word of God was perceived in their mother tongue and when they were able to worship God in a manner that satisfied their zeal towards the love of God. Thus, the discussion in this chapter depict the perceptions of the indications of authentic conversion in relation to what has happened amongst the Hehe over the period of one hundred years and makes a comparison of what is happening in the Church in Iringa in the present time.

The chapter thus is guided by the third question and its hypothesis, which is thus formulated: What are the indications of authentic Christian conversion amongst the Hehe? Hypothesis: The availability and the continuous translation of the Bible and hymnal books into Swahili, Bena and Hehe, the continuity of God's Mission, and the continuity of theologisation, contextualisation and

indigenisation are the indications of authentic Christian conversion amongst the Hehe.

The expression "the availability and continuous translation ... into Swahili, Bena and Hehe" puts an emphasis that the basic Christian literature has to be continually available in the contemporary language of the local people. Sanneh calls the availability of the Scripture as "the familiarity that breeds faith" (Sanneh 1991:192). The emphasis is fundamental to the Lutheran teaching that the Bible ought to be in the vernacular so that all people can hear God's speech in their mother tongue. By the expression "availability" it means that one sign of authentic conversion is that the Hehe people have the Bible, which they can read in the vernacular thus "giving people the Word of God in their own language, through the idioms (that) may (even) seem strange to us" (Nida 1952: 23 in Sanneh 1991:192). The expression "continuous translation" takes the connotation that the propagation of Christian faith makes deliberate efforts to establish links and dialogue with adherent of African Religion in order that the Hehe culture that contains the religion and the language are continually studied. It is considered that the language that contains old and new idioms and expressions make God more and more understandable in the local context. Continuous translation also means being able to discover the areas of similarities and the areas of conflict between Christianity and AR or culture amongst the Hehe.

In order to achieve the envisioned objective the chapter has been divided into five sections. The first section is this one that introduces the chapter. The second section elucidates the indications of authentic conversion as perceived by the availability of the scripture into Swahili, Bena and Hehe. The basic argument here is the awareness on the primacy and power of the mother tongue in influencing culture and belief. The third section investigates the continuity of God's Mission. The emphasis is on the continuity of God's mission that starts with the continuity of scripture translation. Community, communion, evangelism and church growth, service and fellowship, a prophetic dimension

and ecumenism are presumed to be the signs of the authentic presence and the impact of the church in society. A church might not have these entire components and qualities. It is thus asserted that these are some of the signs of an authentic local church whose establishment, presence and continuity do not depend on foreign manipulation. The fourth section investigates the continuous theologisation, contextualisation and indigenisation. In these, the indications of authentic conversion are investigated in relation to what the church means and how it has been able to be established in the local context as an institution with functional structures, a local leadership, and a form of worship and celebration. The fifth section concludes the chapter.

#### *4.2 Availability of the Scripture and Literature in the Vernacular*

It has been argued through this thesis that the Hehe and Bena languages have much in common. However, they are two dialects that do not have only similarities but also have also some difference in their manner of speaking. The manner of speaking is also common amongst the Hehe themselves in their five sub-groups as indicated in 1.5.2 (p. 15-16). The Bena experience the same thing because they are also divided into eight sub-groups namely the Sovi, Kilawugi, Twangabita, Nyikolwe, Bena-Matono, Bena-Manga Maswitule, and Masagati (Lwendo 01-09-2004:Pietermaritzburg). These sub-tribal groups speak the same language but also differ in parlance. In 1931 German missionaries translated the Bible and the hymnal book into Bena for use amongst Bena, Sangu, Hehe, Lulanga, Pangwa and Masagati tribes (Koebler 1998:9). The second edition of the hymnal book took place in 1958. The above named tribes and the other tribes in Southern Tanzania are in appendix IV.

Besides the Bena themselves, other tribes had to learn some of the idioms and phraseologies. However, Bena was the closest language to the Hehe, in fact closer than Swahili. The decision to use one language for several ethnic groups

that had linguistic similarities was adopted from the ideas of Warneck as stated hereafter,

Lutherans and Moravians, who made a late appearance in the protectorate of East Africa, were influenced by Gustav Warneck and his theory of *Volkschristianisierung* (christianisation of a "folk" or group of people as whole) (Ludwig 1999:2).

Lutheran missionaries from Berlin had first clustered the ethnic groups of Southern Tanzania into three major *Volkstum* (linguistic characteristics) namely, Nyakyusa, Bena and Kinga (Ludwig 1999:21). According to the information found during research the Kinga were later included in the Nyakyusa *volkstum*. This group comprised of Nyakyusa Kinga and Wanji. The Hehe remained in the Bena *Volkstum*.

#### **4.2.1 Bible Translations**

The "Karl-Roehl's version" was the first Swahili Bible that reached the Hehe and Bena. Karl Roehl was a Lutheran missionary from Bethel Mission who had worked in Rwanda, Usambara in North Eastern Tanzania and Dar-Es-Salaam. While in Usambara he translated the New Testament into the Shamabala language (Sundkler and Steed 2000:869). By 1937 he and his helpers had translated the whole Bible into Swahili when he worked as a missionary in Dar-Es-Salaam. This Bible version named "Karl-Roehl's version".

Whereas the first Swahili Bible to reach Christians in Bena-Hehe Synod was the Karl-Roehl version, the translation of the Bible into the Swahili followed a given pattern that will be demonstrated hereafter. The subsequent information pertaining to that pattern has been summarised by Mojola (2000: 511-522).

The first translation by Krapf (1884-1888) was in the *Kimvita* dialect, which is a Swahili dialect of the Kenyan coast and the coast of Northern Tanzania. Krapf started the translation as soon as he commenced his work in 1844. The New Testament into the *Kimvita* dialect was completed in 1846. In 1847

he had published the book of Genesis. The Bible into the *Kimvita* dialect was completed in 1914.

Bishop Steere initiated the second Bible translation in 1868. His translation was in the *Kiunguja* dialect. The name "*Kiunguja*" refers to the Swahili that is mostly spoken in Zanzibar and Pemba islands. An important point to note here is the participation of a Muslim sheik named Abd al-Aziz who assisted Richard L. Pennel in translating the gospel of Luke and some epistles.

Karl-Roehl was the third person who got involved in the Swahili Bible translation in 1920. His main aim was to rework the *Kiunguja* translation so as to minimise Arabic lexical borrowing and maximize the use of Bantu lexical roots from the interior of Tanganyika. All Protestant German Mission Societies, especially Lutheran and Moravians that worked in Tanganyika, supported Roehl's endeavours. He started by revising the New Testament that had been started by Klamroth, a missionary who was sent by Berlin Mission Society to Southern Tanzania.

In 1928 came the idea of having a common Swahili Bible in Standard Swahili that would bring together the *Kimvita*, and the *Kiunguja* versions as well as CMS and UMCA traditions. This was given impetus by the Conference on the Standardization of the Swahili held at Dar-Es-Salaam in 1925 and Mombasa in 1928. Meetings after meetings followed and ultimately in 1952 came the Union Version. This translation has been recommended as the pulpit Bible for daily use. As Swahili has changed in many ways, the Bible Society came up with another translation that was meant to help Bible readers to understand the Word of God in modern speech. To that effect came the *Habari Njema* (Good News) version in 1996. Thus the Swahili Bible translations follow this chronological order: The *Kimvita* translation started in 1884 and was completed in 1914. The *Kiunguja* translation started in 1868 and was completed in 1891. The Karl Roehl translation started in 1920 and was completed in 1937. The Union version translation started in 1928 and was completed in 1952. The *Habari Njema* translation started in 1973

and was completed in 1996. The basic point is that all these translations were part of the efforts to make Jesus Christ incarnate and alive in the deepest expression of the people of Tanzania. As far as the indications of authentic conversion are concerned, we are led to acknowledge the efforts and commitment of Christians and non-Christians who have continually translated the Bible. Through translation and availability of the Scripture, the Word of God has become one of the most common books in almost every Christian home. It is like one of the most common domestic appliances in every Christian home. It was for most of the early Christians the first book to read soon after having the ability to read (R. Mgeveke 14-08-1997: Ipalamwa).

The continuity of Bible translation from the various Swahili dialects and in Bantu languages like Hehe, Bena, Nyakyusa, Kinga, Wanji and all other tribes in the interior of Tanzania indicate that people continually experience God's presence through Jesus Christ. That continuous experience is one indication that Christianity was not imposed on the people groups but grew naturally as a continuous missionary enterprise. The indication of authentic conversion in this aspect is thus the continuity of translation in many languages of Africa and the awareness of how God's Word ought to meet the contemporary linguistic requirements. The researcher recognizes the value of the combined views of Bediako and Sanneh. Bediako says,

In Africa, the continent of language and languages, the significance of this has been far reaching. For, as Lamin Sanneh has graphically put it, the import of Scripture translation and its priority in missionary work is an indication that "God was not disdainful of Africans as to be incommunicable in their languages" (Sanneh 1983:166). This, Sanneh goes on, not only "imbued African cultures with eternal significance and endowed African languages with a transcendent range" it is also presumed that the God of the Bible had preceded the missionary into the receptor culture". As, through the very process of Scripture translation "the central categories of Christian theology - God, Jesus Christ, creation, history- are transposed into their local equivalence, suggesting that Christianity had been adequately anticipated". They create in

indigenous languages, resonance far beyond what the missionary transmission conceived. The centrality of Scripture translation points the significance of African pre-Christian religious cultures, not only as a “valid carriage for the divine revelation”, but also as providing the idiom for Christian apprehension, as any one who knows the origins of Christian names for God will understand (Bediako 2000:16).

It is, however, critical after the above assertions to learn that in spite of all the efforts that were put in those Swahili translations, German missionaries in Southern Tanzania and the African leaders that took over from them did not put effort in translating the Old Testament either into Bena or Hehe. There is no official translation of the Old Testament for that language cluster. There is a scanty and incomplete work known as *Inongwa dza Nguluvi* (God’s Covenant), which was published in 1935 as a draft and a summary of the Old Testament translation into Bena. Missionaries and church leaders in Southern Tanzania thought that the Swahili translations of the Old Testament in various versions were satisfactory. Nevertheless, this lack of translation of the Old Testament in Bena or Hehe is a challenge. It weakens the in-depth understanding of the Word of God especially when fully understand that African Religion is closer the Old Testament than the New Testament. The lack of translation is thus seen as an error on the part of missionaries, African theologians and the local church leaders and the Bible Society of Tanzania.

It is worth mentioning that while Protestant missionaries concentrated on translating the Bible, Roman Catholic missionaries spent most of their efforts in translating the Catechism, the hymnal and the prayer book into the Swahili and the vernacular (Riddle 01.11.2004: Dar-es-Salaam). The same observations were found in Ufipa in Southern Tanzania as shown henceforth

In addition, children were the main focus of catechism classes run by male catechist teachers in the village. Catholic missions differed significantly from Protestant missions in that they rarely translated the Bible, but they did make the catechism available in the vernacular (Smythe 1999:134).

#### 4.2.2. Availability of Hymnals in Bena, Hehe and Swahili

Besides the Bena and Swahili Bible is the Bena hymnal book. The Bena hymnal book has a total two hundred and seventy three (273) and only twenty-seven (27) songs are from local tunes. That means only about ten percent (10%) are from local tunes. the remaining ninety percent (90%) are from Europe and America and in fact most of them are from Germany. Koebler translated the daily notes of Nauhas and Schumann from Berlin Mission archive and said,

*Chombo muhimu cha uinjilisti tangu mwanzo: Nyimbo za Kikristo katika lugha ya wenyeji. Hasa Nauhaus na Schumann walijitahidi kutafsiri nyimbo za Kijerumani na kutunga nyimbo za Kikristo wakitumia sauti za Kibena. Wakristo kama [sic] wapagani walipenda sana nyimbo hizo (Koebler 1998:19) (One vital tool for evangelism right from the beginning: Christian songs in Swahili in local languages. Nauhaus and Schumann worked hard to translate German songs and composed Christian songs by using Bena melodies. Christians as well as pagans liked those songs so much). Translated by the researcher.*

Koebler's assertion indicates four important aspects. First, it shows that missionaries were serious about translation. That was one sign of an anticipated authenticity of Christian conversion amongst the Bena and Hehe. The second is the proof that they mainly translated German songs, as it has been stated hitherto. That was somewhat an unfair treatment of the local people. The researcher is of the opinion that they should have incorporated gifted African (Bena and Hehe) musicians to help them to collect more local songs instead of translating more German songs.

The third aspect is the composition of local songs. Koebler is very clear in showing the myopic view of missionaries concerning the Hehe and Bena. We have shown in 2.3 that missionaries considered the Bena and Hehe as one and the same tribe. They did the same in composing songs. They thought Bena songs were also Hehe songs. That view has over the years proven wrong. The researcher has composed songs from Hehe and Bena melodies and has found that Hehe tunes are more vigorous than Bena melodies. Both Hehe and Bena are



cordial in their music but Bena poetry has a tendency of introversion while the Hehe poetry has a tendency of ardent extroversion. A Hehe sings, *"Indembo ya kumilanzi twayivadzile ulupembe ulwelu... Vayawe nofile yigwe ndina hute saba tatu"* (We killed the elephant of Milanzi because of its white tusk... Fellows! I have shot it down; I have a gun numbered seventy-three). A Bena sings, *"Ulutego lwa kweni vala kuno umunyanyi yakututega"* (Do you know the tricky persons? It is our ruler). A Hehe sings, *"Lung'ulye nene, lung'ulye pe ndimwana ndimudodo lung'ulye..Isawuti yangu yibita kuKalenga ngalonge isangu ndiyaule"* (No, it is too much for me, I am too young to bear. ... I am going to say it all to the chief in Kalenga and it will be over). A Bena sings, *"Pevilongana vanya ng'olo wepage ulavemba. Tanu kwihnza mung'ani, suladzela vitepwise, ulavemba."* (Stay away from quarrels among kinsmen. Do not meddle with them, run away. Otherwise you will weep when they reconcile). These are traditional songs from both tribes. The Hehe seems to be aggressive, and wanting to say everything. The Bena seems to be cautious, standing on the safe side and not saying everything.

These behavioural patterns are observed in traditional music. These are part of what the researcher calls "the continuity of translation". The point that is made here is that missionaries did not draw much from local people in translating songs, which are vital in understanding the expressions of the people. Currently much more is drawn from such melodies, as it will be established in the fourth section.

The fourth aspect is in the first and last sentence. Koebler asserts in the first line that songs are vital for evangelism. In the last sentence he says Christians and pagans like the local melodies. He is very right. If that were the case why did they have more Western songs than African songs? There are two possible answers. Either they did not have enough time for that task of collecting more African songs or they did not involve enough African converts and non-converts were not even considered at all. We can simply say this was an infant

stage towards authenticating Christianity amongst the Bena and Hehe but it is practised at the present.

The preceding arguments are supported by the assertions of Smith in Sanneh who says,

Men need two kinds of language, in fact; a language of the home, of emotion, of unexpressed associations; and a language of knowledge, exact argument, scientific truth, one in which words are world-current and steadfast in the meanings. Where the mother tongue does not answer both needs, the people must inevitably become bilingual; but however fluent they may succeed being in the foreign speech, its words can never feel to them as their native words (Smith in Sanneh 1991:108).

We carry the same arguments for songs translated in Bena from the German language that a Bena song in Bena language spoke more than the translated one. Likewise, we argue that the New Testament in Bena or Hehe met the unexpressed associations than the Swahili Bible. Swahili is not a foreign language for Hehe or Bena but it is the second language thus it does not have the in-depth vernacular expression. Moreover, it was not the school language for most of the early converts in Southern Tanzania. The researcher argues that the combination of Swahili and vernacular meets the comprehensive linguistic demand for Christianisation in Iringa and in Tanzania than if it were translated to Swahili alone. Arguing in the same line, having both Hehe and Bena songs in the hymnal book would have met the comprehensive linguistic demand for evangelisation among the Hehe. To be precise, the Hehe have had to come up with local Christian music after independence to comply with the need of the emotional language, the language of home and the language of unexpressed associations. Y. Msola was one of the Hehe Christians who translated fifty songs from Swahili and Bena into Hehe even before independence. In affirming this he said,

*"Ndawene avayetu mbevali, Avabena, Avawanji, Avanyakyusa, be; na Vakinga vinafitabu fya nzimbo neke hwehwe ha! Nda mukwi ndatige apo nayinene nikangadze nzandike!"* (Msola 11-07-1999: Ilula). ("I found

that all other tribes had a hymnal in their mother tongue, the Bena, the Wanji, the Nyakyusa, look here; even the Kinga but we did not have one! Surely, I said I must write"). Translation by the researcher.

During the interview with Msola, it was found out that the researcher was the second Hehe to get involved collecting and writing songs in Hehe. Msigomba and Somela who assisted the researcher and found this out. Nevertheless, Msola translated songs that were already in the hymnal books. The researcher collected traditional Hehe songs and composed Christian music. For example, the first one was in 1970. The song was composed from typical Dzungwa folk song known as "*Mele inzolo kategele kimwanihomoni ichawulige umwana vangu chamuvadzile likagenge*". (Give me the trap I want to catch the clever bird that killed my son as they quarrelled over meat). The Hehe melody and the poetic metre were fully retained. The Hehe theme for this song was full of bitterness with the intention of revenge. The Christian theme was the promise of relief, healing irregular relations and salvation from God. The song was first sung by Mkwawa High School during the *Cantate* of 1970. More than one thousand people in the church got to their feet, some clapped hands, some danced and others ululated in rhythm with the drumbeat. The Hehe traditional tunes came into church music. Currently there are two songs in the national Lutheran hymnal book composed by this researcher. The fourth section will show other Hehe composers who followed after that *Cantate*.

Msola is currently involved in Hehe Bible translation, which was initiated by the researcher in 1989. Soon after the translation of the synoptic gospels, a Para-Church organisation named Life Ministry came up with the idea of having the film of the life of Jesus in Hehe and the project has been successful. When Msola saw the film he told the researcher in Hehe saying, "*Be, mukwi nachene veve ukatupelye ifyeti fya kwingilila kuchanya- Yesu ilonga ikihehe?*" ("Hallow, certainly; you have given us the certificates of entering heaven- Unbelievable!

Jesus speaks Hehe?") (Msola 18-08-2002: Iringa). For Msola, seeing the film of Jesus in Hehe was being at the peak of his Christian faith. Indeed, the Word of God in the vernacular was for him the true incarnation, the doorway to authentic conversion and according to Msola, the "certificate" for salvation. Msola was baptised in 1942 but his utmost joy of being a Christian came sixty years later in 2002 when he felt that Jesus was speaking Hehe, which he translated. The researcher calls Msola's "certificate" the message of salvation in the mother tongue, based on the event of Christ.

Koebler in 4.2.2 above has expressed that Christian and non-Christian Africans liked to hear Christian songs in the African melodies. The same sentiment applies to the Jesus Film when it is shown to the Hehe people in the Hehe language. Observations that were confirmed by T. Kulanga (17-10-2003:Iringa) from the department of evangelism, mission and ecumenism show that both Christians and non-Christians appreciate the Jesus film in the Hehe language. Mella, who supervised the recording from Swahili to Hehe said (mixing English, Swahili and Hehe), "*Teknolojia ya digital imekutana na lugha ya mama muludungu; neke ulwiha wacha kabisa!*" (Mella 18-08-2002: Iringa). ("The digital technology has met my mother's language of the womb; it is sweetness is beyond words"). Translated by the researcher.

Commenting on the above observations one could say, firstly, on the whole, the indications of authentic conversion are seen in the presence, the use, the improvement of communicating the gospel and the appreciation of the Word of God through church music in the Hehe language. In affirming this argument one theologian asserts,

The nature of the quest for African Christology is to translate Jesus Christ to the tongue, style, genius, character, and the cultures of African people. If African peoples, as Mbiti observes, are more conscious of a relationship with God based on living contacts, in concrete situations and experiences, it is easy to appreciate the importance of the religious authorities who in some very real way symbolise God's presence among the people (Waruta 1991:56).

Secondly, one could also say the indications of authentic conversion are also seen in the current technological and sociological developments. Both the Bible translation and the Hehe church music use modern technology and in that use they are being applicable amongst the Hehe, hence having a positive impact in the life of Christians and non-Christians. It should not be interpreted that the use of modern technology in conveying the gospel message is an indication of authentic conversion. Instead the emphasis is the point that the Hehe, and as it might apply to other Africans, that even if faith can be expressed in creeds and theological statements but it is much more appealing when faith is expressed "in day-to-day encounter with the challenges of life. Every encounter is understood in its temporal or material sense as well as its religious or supernatural sense" (Waruta 1991:57). Through modern technology Bible translators in the Hehe language have found a way in which the Hehe can experience Christian faith in a manner that is closer to their day-to-day experiences.

Thirdly, with the two indications above comes the third indication where the sayings, idioms, proverbs, songs and dances of the pre-Christian experience, hence the AR experiences are being appreciated, adopted and used in conveying the message of salvation. Makilika (27-10-2003) in Isagwa said, "*Nani anayekwenda kwa mwenzake zaidi, Mkristo au mtu wa mila?*" ("Who goes more to the other, a Christian or a member of AR?"). By this he meant, who needs the other more, a Christian to a non-Christian or a non-Christian to a Christian? The researcher responded, "For the sake of Jesus Christ, they need each other." One other way of responding to Makilika, and thus affirming the argument of the researcher is the assertion below.

There was change involved in this, for while it might be possible in the pre-Christian period for Africans to think of God in highly refracted social and ethnic terms, now a new scale of identity was introduced that included critical self-reflection in the transcribed medium of language, a language, in the bargain, that retained the marks of people's tongue (Sanneh 1993:86).

Taking Sanneh's assertions, the indications of authentic conversion are viable through the mutual enrichment and appreciation between Christianity and AR. The indication is that on the one hand Christianity delights in identifying with AR and culture that form the pre-Christian experiences amongst the Hehe and on the other hand members of AR appreciate and identify with what has been translated by Christian propagators of the gospel message in the Hehe language.

#### *4.3 Continuity of God's Mission*

This section commences with alluding to some Christian teachings according to the evangelical faith that the living church is a church that is sent and therefore "the Christian Church is a missionary Church" (Stott 1978:435). However, Bosch argues from the perspective of the ecumenical missionary paradigm that "We cannot without ado claim that what we do is identical to the *missio Dei*; our missionary activities are only authentic insofar as they reflect participation in the mission of God" (Bosch 1991:391). Therefore the Church is sent to fulfil God's Mission. The assumption of this section is that the indications of authentic conversion can be found amongst the Hehe so long as the Hehe themselves respond to and participate in the activities of a witnessing Church "to the fullness of the promise of God's reign and participates in the ongoing struggle between that reign and the powers of darkness and evil" (Scherer 1987:84 in Bosch 1991:391). The arguments put forth by Stott, Bosch and Scherer concerning the discussion about the indications of authentic conversion in relation to the continuity of God's Mission in Iringa are founded in the conviction that mission is an attribute of God because "God is a missionary God" (Aagaard 1974: 421 in Bosch 1991: 390). The continuity of God's Mission amongst the Hehe could be perceived in four main themes.

First, is the continuity of Scripture translation that considers that God was doing mission amongst the Hehe even before the arrival of missionaries, hence taking the pre-Christian experience seriously as one way in which God was doing mission. Bible translators confirm the indications of authentic conversion when they open their minds and learn the kind of struggles in which the Hehe were undergoing between God's reign and "the powers of darkness and evil" as stated above even in AR perspective. By this argument the researcher brings forth the notion that the "powers of darkness and evil" have always been all over the world to all ethnic groups and they have never stopped operating as a result of the Church being established in a special location of the world. The researcher is postulating that "powers of darkness and evil" were and still are, in Europe and America even when missionaries were coming to Africa. The postulation goes further to propose that missionaries came to Africa because God continued to do mission in Europe and America thus sending the Church of Europe and America to participate in that mission in Africa where there was and still is the mission of God that is in opposition to the "powers of darkness and evil" in Africa. It is argued further that Western missionaries continued with the mission which God was doing in Africa prior to their coming and Africans are continuing to do that same mission in the contemporary context by continuing to translate the event of Christ in the current African expressions of faith in the vernacular. The continuity of translation could be expressed as the continued consolidation of Christian witness that continually overcomes the "powers of darkness and evil" within the Hehe context.

A Hehe saying goes this way, "*Umuhuma kwivala aye libaga*" ("A foreigner got burnt from porridge"). The literal sense of the saying is that being a foreigner is an obvious limitation and a foreigner can suffer or be harmed even by simple things like porridge. A Swahili saying goes this way, "*Kuku mgeni hakosi kamba mguuini*" ("A foreign chicken is never left without a rope in one of its legs"). The literal meaning is that a foreigner is ever limited. These

discussions underline the notion that the indications of authentic conversion in as far as the continuity of translation and God's mission are concerned are expected to have three basic qualities. First, the Bible translation and Christian mission have integrated more elements and approaches of African culture and African Religion.

Second, is the continuity of a witnessing Christian community that is in communion and fellowship. The witnessing Christian community is one that continues with the proclamation of the Word of God, through evangelism, teaching and nurture thus bringing forth new witnesses to the Church who commit themselves to the community through conversion and are affirmed in baptism. One could ask: How does this differ with what missionaries did? The answer from the researcher refers back to the previous chapter by considering the manifestation of the Holy Spirit in the Book of Acts. The phrase above that says, "the continuity of a witnessing Christian community that is in communion and fellowship" entail that there is the continued manifestation of the Holy Spirit in the Church in Iringa amongst the Hehe and the continued commitment of church members to unity and to the course of God's mission that enhances the spirit of mutuality and love. In other words, the continued activity of the Holy Spirit and the continued active participation of men and women in Iringa to the course of what God is doing in Iringa is a sign that should be found in the extended family-hood of the Hehe. A précis from O' Donovan (1996: 154-156) outlines several indications of an authentic church in the African context as outlined below.

An authentic Church in Africa is observable from the perspective of an extended family. It is in the extended family that an African is initiated. It is in the extended family that an African gets a name. The African extended family form the local community as well as the local church. The arguments continue with these assertions,



The extended family is the community where you get your values and beliefs and your early training in life. It is the community where you establish the deepest and most enduring relationship of life. It is the group of people from which you derive your name and your identity as a person. It is the community in which you find sense of purpose in life because you help to make it what it is (O'Donovan 1996:155).

The researcher is arguing from the same viewpoint as O'Donovan that the Church amongst the Hehe has those qualities of a community that is derived from the experiences of African extended families. The Church has turned to be the community where the Hehe get the values and beliefs in their early training of Christian life and the life in the community. The Church has turned out to be the community where Hehe converts establish the deepest and enduring relationship and a fellowship of sharing, praying together and where they find the sense of life and service to the community. Most importantly these aspects are not only imitated but also intertwined with the African way of life.

Out of those two indications the third, which is the continuity of serving (*diaconia*) and carry out the prophetic role to the society has developed. The fourth one has also developed, which is the continuity of ecumenism wherein church denominations seek common grounds of sharing and taking care the society and for creation. At the same time the Church as the Body of Jesus Christ is engaged in dialogue with other faiths not in the manner of replication from the Western Church but as a need that arises from the spirit of co-existence within the context of Iringa. By the phrase "the context of Iringa" means, amongst other things the inevitable co-existence of Christians of various denominations, Muslims and members of AR.

#### ***4.3.1 Continuity of the Scripture Translation***

We will start this sub-section by alluding to the views expressed by the retired Bishop Moyo of Zimbabwe who said,

Christian witness in Africa takes place within the context of religious pluralism. What is that Christianity is offering which makes it more attractive than the other religious traditions? (Moyo 1997:1).

The Tanzanian context is more challenging in the area of religious pluralism than most of other countries in Eastern and Southern Africa. The religious distribution by 1994 was 42% Christians, 33% Muslims, 25% adherents of African Religion (AR). Other religions such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism and Bahaism as well as other oriental religions such as Shintoism were not considered by the author (Baur 1998:542). There are many other versions of this religious distribution but the Christian Council of Tanzania (CCT) together with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT) and the Roman Catholic-Tanzania Episcopal Conference (TEC), through Christian Social Services Commission (CSSC), which is the common instrument for social service in Tanzania for those Churches; came up with this distribution, 47% Christians, 33% Muslims, 17% AR and 3% members of other religious groups (CSSC 1999: Dar-Es-Salaam, CSSC File, Vol. I).

Written sources show that Islam was in Tanzania since the 12<sup>th</sup> century (Hildebrandt 1987:51). African Religion (AR) has always been there. Members of Hinduism and other oriental religions have always sailed with the Monsoon Winds back and forth for many centuries to the coast of East Africa. Christianisation of Africa between the 15<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries failed.

Christianity that was introduced in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries has been in Tanzania for only one century and has won the majority. Is it possible that the answers are also found in the translatability of the event of Christ and the continuity of God's Mission? The answer can be asserted in the frame of this thesis that there is "the translatability of the event of Jesus Christ", where the continued witnessing of the gospel develops a relationship between the Tanzanians and Jesus Christ and in which God is understood in the daily human

experiences. "The clue to what happened lies not so much in the African genius in religion, as in the nature of Christian Faith itself; in the "infinite cultural translatability" of the Gospel" (Walls, 1981:39).

Asserting from the previous section and the previous chapter it can as well be stated that God has made a dwelling in the extended families of Tanzanians and has met the heart language of the vulnerable and suffering Africans within the daily AR context. Amidst that vulnerability and suffering, Africans have heard God who is continually speaking to them in their contemporary situations and idioms. Christianity, for that matter, has been able to fit in the daily struggles of AR in area of spiritual and secular needs. One could assert that when Tanzanians hear the Word, in the Swahili and the tribal languages, God's Mission is fulfilled. One could also say God's mission is performed through daily organised and interactive evangelism, through social service and the multi-faith peaceful co-existence that necessitates mutuality and dialogue in love.

#### *4.3.2 Continuity of Community, Evangelism and Service*

It has been indicated in the previous sections that one of the answers concerning the fast growth of Christianity in Tanzania is the continuity of God's Mission through Scripture translation in both the pre-Christian experience context and the contemporary context. One other explanation concerning the fast growth of the Church in Tanzania was well framed by a Roman Catholic priest Fr. Peter Wisa. In responding to the researcher's question concerning the continuity of God's Mission he said,

The Church came in Africa and found communities that came together in clans. The church could not dismantle those clan communities. Instead, it created larger communities and brought together different clans through baptism and Holy Communion (Wisa 31-10-2003:Iringa).

What was Fr. Wisa trying to convey? The essence of the quotation above is that the indication for authentic conversion in the African context is the continuity of God's Mission in the context of the community. Africans belong to a community. The researcher understood Fr. Wisa as saying, unless the church finds and forms a community amongst the Hehe to identify with it will hardly have any sustainable mission. Thus, community is a vital sign of authentic Christianity and God's Mission in the African context. For us to show the indications of authentic conversion in the continuity of God's Mission we have to answer two questions. First, is the church part of the African community? Second, have African converts found a community in the church?

It has been indicated in the previous section that the church in Tanzania has been formed in the system of the African community through the framework of an extended family. The basic perceptions are community, being, identity and religion. It is observable through what we see and read everyday that Africans have their being and identity in religion and in the community. Thus the researcher postulates that unless a religion forms and confirms a community an African can hardly accept it. AR is a community bound religion. Islam is also a community bound religion. In confirming about AR and community Sanneh says,

A basic persistent trait of African societies is the importance of religion. It falls like a shaft of light across the entire spectrum of life, fused and undifferentiated as one end, and refracted and highly refined at the other. From casual, daily, and spontaneous contexts to sombre, highly structured public occasions, it is the focus of elaborate and detailed interest. In art, ritual, and speech, work and leisure, in field, home and travel, on land or water, in health and in sickness, in need and in contentment, religion occurs with authoritative force. African communities have consequently lived, moved and had their being in religion (Sanneh, in Walls and Shenk 1990:64).

Apparently, this explains the formation of African Initiated Churches. It is likely that one of the reasons for the formation of some of those churches was in

the attempt of finding a community to identify with or the reciprocal case that the community that they had identified with did not give them the expected recognition. So they found themselves as outcasts of the community and left it to form another one that will assure them their being and identity. This has been apparent also among those who left the church and joined AR as demonstrated in 6.3, pp 355-363. We therefore underscore that one important indication of authentic conversion among the Hehe is the observation that the Hehe have found their being and identity in Christianity and Christianity has formed a sustainable community.

Cassidy (1978:73) calls this community aspect as finding each other in Jesus Christ. Wisa said the community is finding Jesus Christ in each other. This is how he framed it in Swahili. "*Sista aliyetufundisha vipindi vya dini shule ya msingi alisema lazima kila mmoja awe mwana wa mama Maria kwa mwenzake*" (Wisa 31-10-2003: Iringa) ("The sister who taught us religion in primary school said every one of us ought to be sons of the holy mother Mary to each other"). So what did Christianity do to form a community where the Hehe could find one another in Jesus Christ as well as being sons of Mary to one another?

G. Malanagalila (15-09-1999:Mlolo) could help us to start answering the question. For Malanagalila the African community is religiously and clan wise bound to *Lisoka Iya Mulukolo ulwa danda* (the ancestral spirit of the pure blood clan) (Cf. 3.4.1, p 114). For him ancestors bound the community together and each member of the community found the other through that spirit. For Christians amongst the Hehe to be bound together, ancestors must be replaced or relieved from their roles. For replacement or role reallocation Sr. Mpwapwa said "*Tuliambiwa tuache matambiko na dini za mila halafu tumfuate Yesu mwana wa Mungu na mwana wa Maria*" (30-10-2003: Iringa). ("We were told to abandon our ancestral rituals and follow Jesus the Son of God and the son Mary").

For Sr. Mpwapwa the new community was bonded together by Jesus Christ the Son of God and the son of Mary. It is not easy for a person who does

not know the Hehe culture to understand the essence of community and continuity in what Sr. Mpwapwa was saying. In actual fact she expressed the establishment of the new community in the Hehe format. The Father of Jesus Christ who is God heads the community. Jesus Christ directs the community in the unending presence of his mother Mary. The new community worships God through Jesus Christ and Mary is always present. Presumably, this has a lot that agrees with the Hehe line of religious and community authority. Refer to 2.4.1,p 58-59. This is also very vivid in the cover photograph of the book that was written to commemorate the one hundred years of the presence of Roman Catholic Church amongst the Hehe, entitled: *Historia ya Jimbo la Iringa –100: 1896-1897*. (The History for the Diocese of Iringa-100: 1896-1897). On the top of the cover photograph is the cathedral. The interpretation from a Hehe perspective is that the Church symbolises the house of God. At the bottom left is Jesus Christ in the loving hands of Mary, which may be interpreted as representing the pre-eminence of *wazee* (parents or elders) in the community. On the bottom right is Jesus Christ who becomes the new role model of the Christian community and could be considered as replacing the ancestors. Fr. G. Battifolo was asked to comment on the photograph. He said, "You are asking too much but it is true that Jesus Christ took the role of ancestor of binding the African community to the Church" (30-10-2003:Tosamaganga).

For Fr. Wisa, Jesus Christ the Son of God and son of Mary and the same Jesus who has the highest esteem of her mother, heads the new community. Fr. Wisa asked the researcher, "*Kwani mtu hupata heshima lini akiwa kijana au Mzee? Kwani Yesu atapata heshima ya uzee pasipo mama Maria?*" Wisa (31-10-2003:Iringa) ("When does a person deserve recognition, as a youth or as elderly person. ... How can Jesus Christ deserve recognition of an elder or ancestor without Mary the mother")?

Thus for Fr. Battifolo, Sr. Mpwapwa and Fr. Wisa the foundation of the Christian community, according to the interpretation of the researcher is the

translatability of the event of Jesus Christ in the incarnation within the Hehe pre-Christian and Christian context. We also interpret from them that Jesus Christ is now at the centre of God's Mission within the Hehe community because he is the very centre of being, identity and religious authority.

The researcher has summarised an opinion from five Lutherans namely Hammerton Mdegela and Samson Mkemwa (14-8-1997), Damian Ngandango, Christina Kivamba and Martin Chuma (04-03-1998) who agreed in principle that the continuity of God's Mission and the presence of the new community arose from the transformation of the AR Hehe perspective to the Christian perspective. Hereafter is the summary of their opinion.

Prior to Christianity clans were suspicious and sometimes hostile to one another. Some clans were superior and others were inferior. Intermingling with certain clans was insignificant. The church overturned the whole thing. Clans came together under the new religious community. They learnt slowly to build trust, equality hence intermingling. As with time and with teaching, Jesus Christ prevailed over the ancestors (14-08-1997:Ipalamwa and Muhiliwa 03-04-1998).

For them the continuity of God's Mission, the community and religion depended on what Christianity offered that could convince members AR that Christianity had better alternatives of bringing people together. For them the transformation from ancestor bound community to the community that is bound through Jesus Christ required the removal of barriers such as suspicion, hatred, hostility and lack of the common link. For them there was a missing link between clans. Jesus Christ brought forth the link, which ancestral spirits could not. Thus far, the underlying points for both Roman Catholic and Lutheran Christians for the continuity of God's Mission and the indications of authentic conversion in the African community have a base in the pre-Christian experience where ancestors prepared the ground for the being and identity of the community. For Roman Catholics Jesus Christ came and built the foundation of the community by replacing and taking the role of ancestors. For the Lutherans,

Jesus Christ was transformed and he also transformed the relations between clans thus surpassing the ancestors by being the link that brought smaller communities together and formed a new community within the various social settings and brought forth those communities to the universal setting. Thus, God's Mission among the Hehe has grown from the AR community context and has continued with the translatability of the event of Jesus Christ through incarnation.

From the observations above, we deduce that ancestors are never left out of African thought. It is apparent from the Roman Catholics and Lutherans hitherto that the new community of God's Mission has a beginning in what ancestors have been doing. Christian converts have taken Jesus to stand in the place of ancestors. The deduction is that the translatability of the event of Jesus Christ from the perspective of incarnation starts with him becoming an ancestor who forms the being, the identity, and the religious core of the new community.

Mugambi points out that Jesus Christ has taken the place of ancestors, while the theology of the communion of saints brings the notion of the living and the dead being together as one communion and the theology of the Holy Spirit has replaced the functions of the ancestors. He says,

The widely held African belief in ancestors as mediators between God and man, and between man and man, was replaced in the African expression of Christianity by faith in Jesus Christ, by belief in the communion of saints, and by belief in the power of the Holy Spirit. In Christianity, the communion of saints was believed to consist of all those who belonged to the Christian household of faith, and this "household" was universal communion stretching across and beyond racial and national backgrounds (Mugambi 1989: 67).

Two other African theologians give us vital considerations to ancestors. These are John Pobee and Gwinyai Muzorewa. Muzorewa sees ancestors as agents whom God used to prepare Africans to receive the gospel. He reckons them as people whose authority was derived from God. He went further and



acknowledged the power of ancestors as being endowed from God for the survival of Africans.

Muzorewa started by saying, "I believe that God chooses the agents, in this case the ancestors, who relate to a particular people and God works through those agents to save the people", then he continued by quoting from Pobee saying,

It is in this sense that Pobee says: "there is a dependence of the living on the ancestors whose authority is nevertheless derived from God." Since the ancestors have been endowed with the power to enable African survival, Pobee concludes, "the attitude of the living toward the ancestors is something more than veneration" (Muzorewa 1987:13-14).

One of the opinions concerning the ancestors is that, whether the ancestors exist or not, the concept about them qualifies them to be called agents because they made Africans think of God and an intermediary. They are rightly called agents because they created a theological perception among the living Africans, which was used by God to place Jesus Christ in the African culture. The deduction from our observations as argued herein is that God used the belief in ancestors in the minds of Africans as method of preparing their minds to seek an intermediary who turned out to be Jesus Christ. The consideration goes further that the ancestor concept endowed Africans with the power that enabled them to survive as a religious community in which God's Mission has found its continuity and communion.

Bediako takes a humbler stand and looks at the theology of ancestors and not the ancestors themselves. He advocates a positive consideration of that theology and recommends that it is relevant in reading and interpreting the Gospel in the African context. He takes the theology of ancestors as necessary for the African religious world-view.

It is such an appropriation of Scriptures, rooted in a positive theology of ancestors, which enable us to read the Gospel as having something to do with us in the present. The relevance of the

Scriptures as the interpreter of the past, therefore, establishes their validity for the present. A theology of ancestors connects with an Ancestor-Christology in which Christ features as Lord among the ancestors too. In this way, the continued significance of ancestor within the life of African Christianity comes to pass through the prism of Christology, revealing in the process, the many-sided manner in which the ancestors have been part of the story of the marking of Christian Africa (Bediako 1995:228).

The indications of authentic Christian conversion in the Hehe context have a practical Christology that links the concept of ancestors and the living community. It is in that community that we find communion and *diakonia*. Henceforth, we will investigate the indications of authentic conversion within the community that is in communion and *diakonia* as derived from the preceding observations and deductions. The term "communion" refers to the spiritual unity, empathy, concern, and care (Cf. Ac. 4:32-37). We could use the notion of communion amongst the Hehe Christians as having borrowed four Cs from AR. The four Cs arise from the concept of community and they include communion, contact, concern and care. A Swahili proverb says, "*Fimbo ya mbali haiui nyoka.*" (A distant stick does not kill a snake). A constant contact with ancestors and among clans-people meant constant communication, sharing concerns and caring for ancestors' needs and for the needs of all people in the clan and neighbourhood.

The practice has been adopted in Christianity and it is seen in the life of Tanzanian Christians. This has also been observed in Iringa and Njombe amongst the Bena and Hehe by Joachim Vikstroem (2002:67) and Fredric Svensaeter (2002:123). The practice was observed through fellowships of praying together or for one another, common undertakings in sickness and funerals or marriages between two or more people, interchange of thoughts or interests that went as far as establishing financial loans amongst Christians, the practice of *liganza*, which entails free giving and receiving in agreement and friendship. *Liganza* is a Hehe practice that forms a family relationship between friends and

that relationship might turn out to form a permanent family union that can be perpetuated by future generations.

Such fellowships or partnerships are Biblical (Cf. Ac. 2:42; 2Co. 6:4; Gal 2:9; Phi 3:10 and 1Jn. 1:3). One could say they have been adopted in the Church of Tanzania as one way of cross fertilisation as it has been argued in the second chapter. The concept of *liganza* is also seen in Christianity. Sometimes it means the free will to participate in communion 1Co.10: 16, but in other cases it means participation in availing aid and relief are seen in Heb.13: 16 and Rom. 15:26. Paul describes *koinonia* as readiness to communicate in a roundtable, under a liberated and beneficent atmosphere (1Tim 6:18).

A reflection of rituals and rites in the second chapter from 2.3-2.5 indicates that almost all the interpretations that have been shown so far had been in practice under AR in a different approaches and arrangements. The emphasis of Christian *koinonia* is in the participation of life in Jesus Christ where participants eat and drink in the presence of the Lord. The Hehe ate in the presence of ancestors when they performed rituals and when they offered sacrifices. According to Mwilafi (14-08-1997:Ipalamwa) a celebration took place with ancestors with much joy and vigorous dancing but also with much reverence. Mwilafi added, "In Christianity we approach God without the vigorous dancing but we relate to God with a deep heart-felt human insight as we seek to have a positive response to the genuine generosity of God" (4-08-1997).

Do these summaries have anything to do with the indications of authentic Christian conversion in the Hehe context? Yes, they do. First we will refer to the second chapter then we will examine other observations. AR has rituals that are analogous to the Christian communion and fellowship. These are family rituals as seen in 2.4.1 p. 57-59, rites of passage as seen in 2.4.2, p. 59-60, and corporate rituals as demonstrated in 2.4.3, p. 60-61. In these rites and rituals the Hehe performed in the spirit of strengthening family and clan bonds. In communal rituals the intention was to bring many clans together for beseeching ancestors to

mediate with God to remove calamities at hand or to stop impending ones. Sacrifices were offered in terms of cows, chickens, doves (rarely) and sheep. Most of those sacrificial animals and fowl were either black or white in colour depending on the kind of ritual. According to Lwanzali (29-10-2003:Ilula) and other diviners and all adherents of AR who were interviewed, confirmed the observation that all rituals had one or all of the following aspects: First, a need, a requirement or a problem that had arisen in the family or clan as demonstrated in the second chapter. Secondly, in every ritual or sacrifice common undertakings, concerns, interchange of ideas, sharing of problems and success or needs were assessed. It was the time that the living shared with ancestors and expressed the necessity of sharing among themselves and especially caring for the needy. Thus, it was the time that they dealt with issues of widows, orphans, and the disabled and elderly people. It was the time when those who showed selfishness and any kind of misconduct were reprimanded or rebuked. The communion and fellowship that is found in the church today would as well be called the continuity of what was happening in AR but not at the same degree. The centres of rituals were the ancestors. In Christianity the centre of sacrifice, fellowship and communion is Jesus Christ. In AR the offerings were in form of cereal and meat with abundance of alcohol. Thus, rituals involved animal or fowl blood, cereal, meat and drinking. The use of cereals, meat, blood and alcohol are seen in the Old Testament. The New Testament uses bread and wine to signify the sacrifice offered by Jesus Christ. Therefore, there are similarities that are observable as signs of continuity between AR and Christianity. Hehe who convert to Christianity are not expected to regret that they miss AR rituals. They do have them in another set-up. Smythe substantiates these arguments from Fipa context in another area of Southern among the Roman Catholics as she says,

In presenting the new religion, missionaries emphasized the congruence between Fipa religion and Catholicism. ... Missionaries thus did not openly condemn Fipa religion, but noted instead how religion was similar but superior. ... One elderly man

likened the female and male leaders of Fipa worship ceremonies to priests and sisters of the catholic worship. ...Missionary priests recognised the strength of community in the Fipa society and, in particular the strength of the clan and family (Smythe 1999: 136-137).

We have cited these observations to prove that the indications of authentic Christian conversion in the African context are viable in many contexts and are matched with the pre-Christian experience. Communion and fellowship (*Koinonia*) are among some of the innate characteristics of AR that the Church found them there. Furthermore, Western civilisation and influence have not been able to weaken or moderate them. We can as well say that the fundamental nature and the basic elements as well as the philosophy, the procedure and expectations the communion in the AR and that of Christianity are comparable. The differences appear in the person who does the mediation and the way to reach the anticipated salvation.

#### ***4.3.3 Continuity of Evangelism and Church Growth***

Stott says, "Evangelism is an essential part of the Church's Mission" (1975:9). The researcher thinks that evangelism is an essential component of God's Mission to which the Church has been mandated and commissioned. An interest in acquiring the information about African Christianity cannot be fully achieved through literary resources. It has to include the interaction with African Christians. It has to be participatory through interviews and conversations. Christian witnessing is taking place everywhere in Africa in many forms than what is found in literary resources. According to the arguments of the third chapter concerning the concept of translatability, the kind of witnessing that is purported might have been happening as soon as the first African converts had the Bible in the vernacular in their hands. Those Africans who have not been recognized, some of whom will never be acknowledged properly are the ones have made Jesus Christ known in their families and clans. Lubawa has

committed a whole chapter on these volunteering evangelisers and he has called them “the missing link” (2002: 201-265). These are in homes, in the market places, in workplaces, at farms and gardens. They are also among the nomads, lumbermen, hunters and men and women of all walks of life who are actively witnessing the salvation of Jesus Christ daily. Some are stationed to volunteer in preaching points and others are itinerant evangelists who preach on community occasions such as weddings, burial ceremonies and youth rallies in drinking clubs and during impromptu meetings in urban and rural areas.

It is not possible to mention all but the best way to see the indications of authentic Christian conversion in the African context investigate African Christianity from an African perspective and experience. To see Christianity from an African perspective is to have an understanding of AR and see it from the perspective of God’s Mission as the pre-Christian experience, which God ordained as *preparatio evangelica*. The Christian Church had been taught that the Old Testament was, and still is, God’s Mission amongst the Jews for the coming of Jesus Christ. We take the understanding from our observations that AR was God’s Mission amongst Africans for the translatability of the event of Jesus Christ. By this it does not mean that Christianity is superior and AR is inferior, rather it means AR is the channel of translating the message of salvation based on the event of Jesus Christ as it has been argued in the third chapter.

Concerning experiencing African Christianity, we think that it is about the right time to forget about a missionary church in Africa today. We acknowledge the present notion that missionaries come to Tanzania as co-workers, led by Africans to fulfil what the African Church is doing and not what they want to do. What missionaries want to do ended way back, soon after independence and on the day when the local people took leadership. Otherwise, Christianity has found a home in African clans, families and communities.

Responding to an interview conducted by theology students from Sweden the researcher made assertions that support the ideas of the preceding paragraph

and are consequently framed: "It is expected in a Christian home that every family leader is a priest" (Vickstroem 2002:40). This notion of a family leader being an agent of mission and a priest is borrowed not only from the Small Catechism of Martin Luther but also from AR experience.

Currently, the Iringa Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT-IRD) has a membership of approximately 77,000 (ELCT Calendar 2004:46). In 1914 it had only a handful of Bena converts who had settled in Iringa, Ihemi, Ifunda and Pommern (Samson Mkemwa (14-08-1997: Ipalamwa). These are shown in the charts in appendix VIII. This information was also affirmed by Nyalusi (23-04-1999: Ihemi), Nyadwike (27-08-1999: Pommern) and Lugala (06-08-1999: Isimani). Otherwise by that time most of the Hehe Christians were Roman Catholics. Fr. Wisa (31-10-1003) affirmed that baptismal classes in the Roman Catholic Church took three years, while all Lutheran interviewees said it took four years and catechumens had to be able to read and write before baptism.

Vigorous Lutheran evangelism amongst the Hehe started when the first two Hehe were baptised. These were Lupituko Mkemwa and Aaron Kikoti. They started preaching in the sitting rooms of their mothers to their brothers, sisters, cousins, in-laws, in the clan and the whole extended family kinship (Elizabeth Mkemwa 14-08-1997: Ipalamwa and Martin Mkemwa 14-09-1997: Iringa).

Pastor Anderson of the Scottish mission who was the caretaker of the work that was under the Berlin Mission during WWI, as shown by Koebler (1998:19), baptised many Hehe who had been attending baptism classes but whom German missionaries had yet to accept them for baptism. Martin Mkemwa (14-09-1997: Iringa) and Hosea Chusi (11-07-1997: Ilula) recounted that Pastor Anderson baptised many Hehe between 1918 and 1925. Soon after baptism most of them became preachers to their neighbours and relatives. Zechariah Kihongosi confirmed that most of the Hehe converts in Iringa

especially in rural areas and the areas that were far from the mission station were evangelised by their fellow Hehe or Bena. In addition, he asked and commented,

*Ino lwe tulongele mumwene. Nyenye nye va Askofu mwamukudalika kufijiji panili? Ngata na vao va Mwambetani na va Changalakiki vagitige ndawe yinyenye. Vadzige swe vakudzabika vanu vetufundise hwehwe, swe tukuliyi ng'uku swe vakwasi mituka kwaheli! I kasi iyisige twafwanyige hwehwe (02-09-1999: Ilamba). (Now let us be frank. With due respect to your honour Bishop, Where- and when do you evangelise in the preaching points? Even Mwambetani-that is Wilhelm Neuberger, and Changalakiki-his son Herman Neuberger did the same. They came and baptised people we had taught, then we had a good chicken meal, then they switched their cars and, bye-bye they went! We were left to do the remaining work). Translated by the researcher.*

Kihongosi was right. The laity are the pillars of ELCT. In every congregation and preaching point the founders were the laity. Today Iringa Diocese has five main tools for evangelism and Church Growth that are in the hands of the laity. These are, first, the lay evangelists trained through Theological Education by Extension and Bible Schools; second, the basic literature in the vernacular, which includes the Bible, the Hymnal Book with liturgy and order of worship and Luther's Small Catechism; third, groups organised by congregations such as choirs, youth and women; fourth, ministering through prayer, healing sessions, counselling and involvement in availing basic human needs. The fourth tool has been dealt with partly in 4.3.2.1 and it will be clarified further in the next section under contextualisation.

However, a question could be asked, "Does the Church have a positive impact in the daily lives of the people in Iringa?" This would be one of the fair questions but not necessarily one that determines the indications of authentic conversion. Nevertheless, Jesus Christ as recorded by the apostle John said, "I came that they have life, and have it abundantly" (Jn. 10:10b). We have argued in the fourth and fifth chapters that Jesus Christ is understood amongst the Hehe as one who identifies with the vulnerable, suffering and poor. Jesus Christ does not



end up just identifying with them but he proclaims the Good News of salvation, he saves, he serves, he teaches, he heals, he reconciles them with God, he calls them to his fellowship (*koinonia*) and shares with them at the Holy Table his own sacrificial offering and forgives their sins and thus creating the communion of the new community.

The Churches in Iringa today, especially the Protestants and Roman Catholics, are servants of the society. It is commonplace for churches to be requested by the society to make interventions over disaster or pressing social and development services. The churches under the servant spirit have responded to requests positively. The word of God inculcates the servant spirit just as the Lord of the Church Jesus Christ himself, "even as the Son of man did not come to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mtt. 20:28). The churches as mentioned above have responded to the requests and needs of the Iringa community in areas of education from nurseries to universities. It has responded to health needs, orphanages, and centres for street children, and to the call for HIV/AIDS prevention and sensitisation. It is involved in the projects that help the communities in Iringa to get water, to improve agricultural skills and nutrition. It is also involved in the projects of micro electrification, ecology and communication without prejudice or discrimination. The second African Roman Catholic bishop of Iringa now the Arch bishop of Songea said,

*Tunafaidi neema hii mara nyingi bila kutambua kwa kina au kuonja sana magumu na taabu walizopata wale waliotuletea imani hii na wale walioiendeleza hadi leo. Yale tunayoyatambua ni machache tu. ... Tunamtukuza mwenyezi Mungu kwa ustawi wote unaoonekana na hata usioonekana (Mtega 1997:9 and 11). (We benefit so much from this grace in many ways without recognising the depth and without tasting the hardships and difficulties that those who brought and those who carried over the faith until today have encountered. What we know is very little. .... We glorify Almighty God for the establishment that is seen and that is unseen). Translated by the researcher.*

The Archbishop could be interpreted as saying that the indications of an authentic conversion Church in Iringa amongst the Hehe is significant in the daily life of the people of all walks of life. The archbishops could also be inferred as saying that the in-depth effect of what the Church means to Hehe converts cannot be fully comprehended. For the archbishop it is not possible to fully comprehend the event of Jesus Christ who transformed himself in the life of the Hehe and whose self-transformation has transformed the Hehe. In so doing Jesus Christ has translated and transformed both the joy and suffering of the Hehe through the messengers of salvation.

#### *4.4 Continuity of Theologisation, Contextualisation and Indigenisation*

The assumption in this section is that evangelisation and theologisation move together. Evangelisation and theologisation are preceded by translation. Translation motivates contextualisation and indigenisation. We therefore deduce that the presence of theologisation, contextualisation and indigenisation are indicators that translatability has taken place. This whole thesis is thus based on the main argument that where translatability has taken place there is authentic conversion.

Knowingly or unknowingly, on the commencement of Christian mission in East Africa, Johann Ludwig Krapf considered the translation of the Bible in the vernacular as the first and foremost task of God's Mission. According to this thesis, he was very right. He knew that he would not win people to Jesus Christ without the Word of God in the vernacular. Thus, he went straight into a *Christological* endeavour that branched into the theologies of incarnation, *soteriology*, Luther's theology of the cross, the New Testament *pneumatology* and the universality of the church. He got engaged in the concept of the translatability of the event of Jesus Christ in the East African context. He showed that *Missio Dei* (God's Mission) was the undisputable continuous contextual theologisation.

According to Mbiti, and according to the setting of this thesis, the first area of theologisation is the awareness of pre-Christian experience. To affirm this Mbiti once said,

The process of continuity means that the Christian Faith establishes links with the areas of African Religion, which largely resemble Christian teaching. At these points, the same or similar ideas meet and merge into each other without conflict and people feel "at home" (Mbiti 1978:309).

It will be indicated in the sixth chapter, 6.4, that in 1908 Axenfeld, the inspector of Berlin Mission Society, advised missionaries to take deliberate efforts in understanding the beliefs and practices of the local people. Those efforts would pave the way for contextual theology and indigenisation. According to Hesselgrave and Rommen, "contextualization, culture, and theology all have a simultaneous beginning" (1989:27). That simultaneous beginning is what Sanneh (1991:9) calls "translating the message". A straightforward definition of contextualisation would be the proactive role of the church and its mission in responding to the circumstances and requirements of the local context. Contextualisation for a missionary would mean finding ways of communicating the message of salvation in culturally relevant terms (Hesselgrave and Rommen 1989:1). For Mbiti it would mean making the gospel relevant to every generation, in every culture and every nation (1978:275). For Kraft theology would be the endeavour to achieve the meaning of the message of salvation in a given cultural context. Contextualisation would be the functions of the translated message and the mission of the church in a given cultural context. Indigenisation would mean the forms of expressing the translated message of salvation within a given context (Summarised from Kraft 1978: 304-307).

#### *4.4.1 Continuity of Theologisation in the Hehe Context*

This subsection carries the notion that the mission of God that is carried by the Church is established if the Church continues theologise. The continuity

of theologisation arises from the assumption that once the Church is established it will have to strive to understand the pertinent theological issues of the immediate community and those of whole society in which it identifies itself. Theologising in God's mission in the context of this thesis necessitate the ELCT to pay attention to the problems, the struggles and the successes of the Hehe and the rest of Tanzanians in their daily living.

There are many theological issues that are being pursued amongst the Hehe and the rest of Tanzanians. It has been indicated in the previous chapters and preceding sections of this chapter that there are pertinent theological issues that need special attention. The second section of the second chapter calls the Christian Church in Iringa to dig deeper into the understanding God from the AR perspective. Together with that is the need of an in-depth study and dialogue between the Church and the adherents of AR concerning the ancestors. Fr. Wisa said,

Even though the issue of ancestors is intricate and so much bound to AR the church cannot simply ignore it. The theology of purgatory in the Roman Catholic Church shows that the dead are not lost. The Hehe people know for sure that life is never lost; it is just transformed. Our problem is that they still perform rituals in favour of ancestors (Wisa 31-10-2003:Iringa).

Dononda, a staunch Lutheran, said, "I am the leader of our family. I do not participate in ancestral rituals but our family members cannot perform the rituals without my permission" (Pommern 27-08-1999). The so-called family members are Christians in various denominations, adherents of AR and Moslems. This indicates that ancestor veneration and the related rituals are themes for theologisation amongst the Hehe and Bena Christians.

There are other theological issues amongst the Hehe that are shown below. Some of them belong to this subsection; others belong to the sections that deal with contextualisation and indigenisation, as it will be shown later. The other theological issues which this thesis and the thesis by Lubawa (2003) as well

as other theologians in Iringa have looked into, include those that were identified by Axenfeld in 1908 (Cf. 6.4.1 p. 376-377). Those theological issues that the ELCT in Iringa Diocese is involved are summarised below.

According to Axenfeld, this researcher, Lubawa and other Christian theologians in the Lutheran Church continue to look into the history and the social setting of the Hehe tribe. Some are involved in studying the socio-economic setting while others look into the subject matters that are related to the socio-economic setting with special focus on property, hereditary procedures and personal protection against malevolent forces and spirits or the protection of property against thieves. Theological issues that are related to ancestor veneration and related rituals in the Hehe social setting include the primacy of the family, the significance of kinship and extended family hood in the life of the Church; the impact of Christian marriage procedures in the Hehe society, the relation between parents and children in the AR as compared with what is currently taught in Christianity. Other theological issues that are being discussed in the Lutheran Church in Iringa today include church and alcohol, church and polygamy, affliction of curses, the concept of spirits, prophecy, dreams and visions as well as the challenge of charismatic movements.

In process of theologisation the Church is expected to learn from the Hehe concerning sorcery, divination, the notion of benevolent and malevolent supernatural forces as well as the notion of the spiritual realm. The other themes of continued theologisation would include some aspects of indigenisation, as it will be seen later. The aspects of indigenisation that are expected include the collection and analysis of proverbs and sayings, stories and songs, legends and symbols.

#### ***4.4.2 Continuity of Contextualisation***

The basic assumption concerning continuous contextualisation is the way in which the Church interprets change and challenges in the context in which it

performs God's mission. The Christian Church teaches that God does not change but people and circumstances change. As people and circumstances change the Church gets affected by the change. Contextual theology takes the assumption that,

The Christian Church is always in the process of becoming; the church of the present is both the product of the past and the seed of the future. For this reason, theology must not be pursued as an attempt at reconstructing the pristine past and its truths; rather, theology is a reflection on the church's own life experience (Bosch 1991:422).

This thesis has treated contextual theology as that practice of interpreting the social, political, intellectual and any other circumstantial issues so as to make them to be relevant to the church members in the given context. According to Hesselgrave and Rommen "contextualisation involves knowledge of both a message and an audience" (1989:128). The involvement of the ELCT Iringa Diocese in interpreting and undertaking the tasks of community development, globalisation, gender issues, health issues and caring for the marginalised members of the community are understood as the practical aspects of contextual theology. Involvement in community development includes the interpretation of the notions such as self-reliance, poverty alleviation and the right approach towards the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

#### ***4.4.3 Indigenisation: Reclamation and Continuity***

According to the literature, archival information and responses from interviews, indigenisation has been classified it into three main categories relevant to this research. The first one concerns ethnicity. The second one concerns leadership and authority in the hands of native people and the third one concerns culture and African identity.

The first category that focused on ethnicity was more of a missionary endeavour. Missionaries Gutman, Axenfeld, and Lucas (Ludwig 1999: 25)

wanted to indigenise the church from its early stages by establishing it according to tribal groups upon which converts would abide to their culture. Gutman in Kilimanjaro went as far as establishing Christianity in the clan structure (Ludwig: 25). Lucas, an Anglican bishop in Southern Tanzania, was interested in preventing the wave of modernisation. "He considered the process of modernization and destabilization of the African Society to be dangerous" (Ludwig: 25).

Siegfried Knack, the successor of Axenfeld, emphasized that Africans should remain committed to the traditional social order. Ludwig says,

He too stressed that even after baptism, a person remained subjected to the social demands of the traditional order as long as these did not contradict the basic Christian teachings and their commands: "The habits of the people together with the Christian habits are the strongest protection against the dangers which emanate from Europe" he wrote (Ludwig 1999:26).

These missionaries respected African culture and they did not want African Christians to be undermined by Western culture. Nothing is heard from them concerning church leadership or worship and celebration.

Concerning the second category of indigenisation, a clear weakness is observable in that missionaries remained in power during almost the whole time of the colonial rule. Handing over the leadership and authority to Tanzanians seems to have been prompted by the agitation for national independence. According to Ludwig (1999: 43-44), the first African in the Roman Catholic Church was Cardinal Rugambwa who was appointed as a bishop in 1952. The first Lutheran leader was Bishop Moshi of Northern Tanzania who was elected in 1958, three years before independence. Other leaders like Bishop Josia Kibira and Rev. Thomas Musa were elected in 1960. Ludwig also shows that missionaries in Southern Tanzania delayed handing over the leadership and authority to local people because they thought there were too many ethnic groups and they were hostile to one another. He says, "Since the missionaries believed that the existing

conditions did not permit indigenous Christians to exercise self-government, they themselves continued to be the main authority" (Ludwig: 26). For example, the first pastors were ordained in 1939, which is forty-eight years, almost half a century since the inception of the church in the area.

The missionary assumption that Africans were not able to take leadership due to ethnic hostilities is not valid amongst the Bena and Hehe because the missionaries came to the Bena through the invitation of chiefs. When they came to the Hehe, albeit their fear of Mkwawa and their joy of his death, yet they were well received by the local leadership. In fact, missionaries and colonisers destabilised the Hehe leadership and authority, as we will see in the sixth chapter.

Indigenisation of leadership and authority was tried in 1939 by appointing Nyagawa as the first African leader of the Evangelical Church in Southern Tanganyika. That appointment did not last even for a year. Missionaries deposed Nyagawa and Martin Nordfeldt from Swedish Evangelical Mission took over the leadership (Koebler 1998:13). The insinuation is that even though missionaries encouraged indigenisation they not want the leadership to be in the hands of local people.

Otherwise, viable indigenisation in relation to top leadership and authority, both in the Lutheran and Roman Catholic Church took place after national independence. The first top local Lutheran leader, Rev. Judah M. Kiwovele was elected in 1965 (Ludwig 1999: 44). The first top local Roman Catholic leader, currently the archbishop of Tabora, was appointed in 1969 and consecrated on 15<sup>th</sup> February 1970. Fr. Joseph Chusi (1997:65) wrote, "*IV. KANISA MAHALIA. Kanisa hilo linaanza tangu tarehe 15 Februari, 1970, Askofu mzalendo alipotawazwa kuliongoza Jimbo hili la Iringa*". ("The Indigenous Church. That Church commenced from the 15<sup>th</sup> of February 1970, when the first native was consecrated to lead this Diocese of Iringa"). Translated by the researcher.



The archbishop Norbert Mtega of Songea sees indigenisation as the time when the natives receive and persevere in God's holy calling. He says,

*Jubilei ya miaka 100 inatufanya tuwakumbuke na kuwashukuru sana na kwa namna ya pekee mapadre wanajimbo, kati yao kukatoka maaskofu watatu, mabradha wanajimbo, wa SCIM na Masista wanajimbo WATERESINA-Hawa siyo tu wametoa mchango mkubwa na wa kudumu katika Jimbo, bali uwepo wao ndiyo alama wazi inayoonekana ya ustawi wa miito mitakatifu, ilyo zawadi kuu ya Mwenyezi Mungu kwa Kanisa mahalia (1997:11).* (The 100 years Jubilee inclines us to remember with much gratitude and in a special way the priests of the Diocese, from whom three are bishops, the SCIM brothers of the Diocese, the TERESINA sisters- These have not only contributed greatly and permanently in the diocese but their perseverance and presence is a clear indication of the established holy calling, which are the highest gift from the Almighty God and to the indigenous Church). Translated by the researcher.<sup>16</sup>

The archbishop Nobert Mtega and Zechariah Kihongosi as cited hitherto see indigenisation as the involvement of the natives in the church ministries, which the Archbishop calls "the holy calling" of the ordained and the laity. The "holy calling" as seen in the practical aspects of translatability is what Sanneh calls "power, community and wholeness" (1990:71). For Sanneh these are imbedded in the whole array of the spiritual gifts through religious agents who convey the message of salvation to Christian and non-Christian communities in the local context. Those agents convey the message that conforms to the grammar, the cognitive system and the diverse manifestations of emotions and expressions of the people deep down in their daily experiences. Svensater (2001:117-138) shares the same views and sees contextualisation, theologisation and indigenisation as being viable in the Church in Iringa through the understanding of the power of Jesus Christ.

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<sup>16</sup> By 1997 there were four bishops who originate from the RC Diocese of Iringa. These are Rt.Rev. Mario Mgulunde, Rt.Rev. Mwalunyungu and Rt.Rev. Evaristo Chengula and Rt.Rev. Tarcisius Ngalalekumtwa, who was, and still is the bishop of Iringa since 1993. As of this date there is another bishop of Kahama, Rt.Rev. Dalu from the same Diocese making a total of five.

The third category of indigenisation is observable in the expressions and church symbols. Indigenisation amongst the Hehe is not a new programme it is a reclamation and continuity of what existed before the missionary endeavour and cultural repression. Adherents of AR might have retained most of what church members practised secretly. Those aspects are reclaimed and overtly practised.

In his presidential inaugural address, Nyerere blamed the colonial rulers for attempting to weaken or even eradicate African culture. He said,

I have done this because I believe that its culture is the essence and the spirit of any nation. A country which lacks its own culture is no more than a collection of people without the spirit which makes them a nation. Of all the crimes of colonialism there is none worse than the attempt to make us believe we had no indigenous culture of our own; or that what we did have was worthless-something of which we should be ashamed, instead of a source of pride (1962:186).

We fully agreed and acknowledge that African culture was undermined and Nyerere officially instigated and announced the process of reclamation and continuity of indigenisation. However, for practical reasons, we ask ourselves: In spite of those colonial efforts, was it at all possible to brainwash the Africans to renounce their innate cultural norms and values through schools or work places? Did Africans eat and sleep in offices, churches, schools or other work places that they could not be in their authentic African communities at the end of the day? Was it possible for example for the Hehe to abandon dances such *kiduo*, *mseya*, *mlatu* and *mangala*? Was it possible to obliterate the rhythmic drumbeats in the mind of a Hehe? Did the Hehe really reject their musical instruments such as *kipango*, *marimba*, *lugombogombo*, *ndole*, *limandwendwe*, *limadindi* and *ndudzi*? These instruments are in appendix IX.

These questions are intended to justify the use of the terms “reclamation” and “continuity” because in whatever circumstances Africans remained Africans. We affirm the responses to Collin’s assertions and the fourth line of thought, as shown in the introduction that, in spite of the fact that the Westerners

mishandled the local people, they were not able to extinguish their culture and identity. Part of what we respond to, in Collin's letter says, ... (missionaries) "extinguished some of the most innate traditions that made up Tanzanian society. The outlawing of dancing on most occasions, initiation procedures, defining acceptable clothing and changing marital laws are some examples" (1.1, p. 4 and appendix I). The fourth line of thought states that the continued presence of missionaries in Africa was, and still is, detrimental to the Church in Africa, that is why missionary initiated churches lack the indigenous identity and are replicas of the Western church and civilisation. Consequently, they argue that African community life and religion were undermined.

Nyerere added the blame not only to colonialists but also to school owners, which indirectly included missionaries. The situation might be a little bit different with some missionaries, as we have demonstrated in the previous chapter and in this chapter. Nevertheless, Nyerere said,

When we were at school we were taught to sing the songs of the Europeans. How many of us were taught the songs of the Wanyamwezi or of the Wahehe? ... But how many of us can dance, or have even heard of the *Gombe Sugu*, the *Mangala*, the *Konge*, *Nyang'umumi*, *Kiduo* or *Lele Mama*. ... How many Africans in Tanganyika, particularly among the educated, can play the *nanga*, or the *zeze* or the marimba, the *kilanzi*, *ligombo* or the *imangala*? ... It is hard for any man to get much real excitement from dances and music which are not in his blood (1962:186).

The situation in 1962 in Tanzania was indeed that situation that has been described by Nyerere. Nonetheless, we think it was a deception on the part of colonialists and missionaries to think that they had brainwashed the Hehe and the rest of Tanzanians to be out of their cultural identity. What they did was to force Africans to behave in what could erroneously be called "hypocrisy" but on the contrary they behaved justly because they could not betray their conscience. Notwithstanding, the researcher maintains that they behaved sincerely,

naturally, in an inborn manner within their native character against the imposed hypocrisy.

Mbunga's arguments show the inability of missionaries to adopt the indigenous music in worship and celebration during the early stages of their mission work. According to Mbunga, most missionaries were faced with difficulties of a strange land, people, language, culture, customs and music. In addition, most of the early missionaries did not have much time, capacity, or patience to go into these matters sufficiently (Mdegella 1984:16). The arguments by Mbunga are correct. Nonetheless, Olson (1968:361-380) indicates that some indigenous music was applied in church worship in some places since 1890s. Such claims might be misleading, but those of 1911, the 1930's and 1956 are true to the Lutheran and Moravian Church in Southern Tanzania. That means there were some missionaries who took indigenous music seriously. Such missionaries include Von Sicard, Jasper and H. Olson.

According to von Sicard, there was an ecumenical conference in Dar-Es-salaam in 1956 with delegates from the Berlin, Bethel, CMS and Leipzig and Moravian missions. Among other things was the discussion of a common hymnal that would include indigenous hymns. It is noteworthy that from that time, von Sicard got involved in collecting indigenous songs, the work that was handed over to Gehardt Jasper and finally to Howard Olson. That work has brought forth the only hymnal book in the ELCT with traditional melodies called *Tumshangilie Mungu*. The work has been under the supervision of Makumira University College. Those developments of collecting traditional hymns entered another stage when in 1970s the ELCT got engaged in changing the liturgy as well. The liturgy is now in the traditional melodies (Summarised from Mdegella 1984:19).

The present situation is such that the church has the official hymnal book but people have their own indigenous choruses and hymns that they sing in the church, in community gatherings, wedding ceremonies, burial ceremonies,

evangelistic campaigns and especially during the charismatic meetings during the week and on Sunday afternoons. The use of drums and traditional musical instruments has overshadowed Western instruments. Mella, a Lutheran musician and Mhenga, a Catholic musician, confirmed that in both of their respective churches traditional music has surpassed the use of Western music (30-10-2003:Iringa). Dancing and moments that are acceptable in both AR and Christianity are common in both Churches. In spite of the early missionaries' lack of acceptance of indigenous forms of worship, there are enough indications at present that the Church has reclaimed and continued with indigenisation to an extent that Christianity among Lutherans and Roman Catholics can be described as indigenised.

Our final considerations are about celebration and symbols. There are six Christian symbols or symbolic actions and concepts that were easily indigenised in the Hehe culture. These include bread and wine as symbols of the flesh and blood for remembrance of Jesus Christ and forgives of sins; the Lamb of God as the symbol of Christ's sacrifice; the dove as the symbol of the Holy Spirit; angels as signifiers of the mystic or spiritual realm and for Roman Catholics, Mary the mother of Jesus Christ as the symbol of family link, norms and values; finally the conflicting symbolic meaning of black and white colours.

#### **4.4.3.1. Bread and Wine as Symbols of Flesh and Blood**

In the church at Ihemu, 40km away South of Iringa, Nyagawa wrote in 1950s, "*Nene ye nene ye ndiwugali wa wumi*" ("I am the maize meal of life"). (Researcher's observation in 1983 and 31-10-2003). Nyagawa used these words as a translation of John 6:35a "I am the bread of life." This translation is theologically contextual and the initial step for indigenisation. The use of the expression "*wugali*" implies that, Christians who partake the Holy Communion in the elements of bread and wine, remember Jesus Christ and the daily food of the Hehe. That is one indication of authentic conversion. The use of the

expression "*wugali*" means that Jesus Christ has been translated in the most common Hehe experience.

Maize for the Hehe forms the living, the source of income, and the source of revenue for tax collectors, the most common way of self-employment for peasants, an occupation for commercial farmers. One could say wheat and bread were the same for Jews. Thus, wheat or bread and wine were not only for food but also for occupation, trade, work and business for the Jewish society.

Partaking of the Holy Communion as the flesh, remembrance and forgiveness of sins, being the elements instituted by Jesus Christ, remind the Hehe about their livelihood, the necessity for sacrifice and reconciliation as demonstrated in the third chapter. The blood that is symbolised by wine is not a strange phenomenon. The Hehe use blood to sprinkle on the graves of ancestors when they perform rituals. After rituals they eat *uwugali*, they eat so much meat and drink *uwugimbi* after which they dance excessively for one to three days (cf. 2.3, p. 35). This kind of celebration connects the living with their ancestors. It is the celebration for communion, for the unity of the community of the living and the dead and for remembrance that marks the continuity.

#### **4.4.3.2 Jesus Christ the Lamb of God: Christ's Symbolic Sacrifice.**

The spotless, healthy black lamb is most common sacrificial animal to annul curse, obliterate witchcraft and sorcery, malevolent spirits and deadly vengeance amongst the Hehe (Lwanzali 29-10-2003:Ilula).

The animals and fowls that are used for communal rituals especially for rainmaking are a black male cow, a black mail lamb and a white chicken. A White or brown lamb, male or female can be used to appease the ancestors. A black chicken can be used as a fine for conciliation within the family disputes. The male black lamb is the highest family sacrifice whose offering unites all generations of the family or clan (Lwanzali 29-10-2003: Ilula, and Mdenying'afu

28.10.2003: Wotalisoli). Christ the Lamb of God has been indigenised as the highest sacrifice of the Christian community.

#### **4.4.3.3 The Dove as the symbol of the Holy Spirit**

The dove appears in this thesis in the practical perspectives of translatability amongst the Hehe in the Mwanambehele legend. In this it appears as the agent of the diviners in bringing back the sorrowing Sisi and her son Mbehele who had been swallowed in the ground and also showing where Mwanambehele was sold to slavery. The dove appears as *nziva ludandali*.

*Nziva ludandali* is a special dove with blue, or white, and grey colours. Its appearances create attention to diviners and the Hehe who can interpret the Hehe spiritual realm. Several people have claimed that when such a dove appears you must seek explanation from elders or diviners. Sometimes this dove comes with a letter held in its mouth or a band tied to its legs or its neck. This observation is common among Christians and Muslims. Mnyonge-a Mulims sheikh confirmed this (28-10-2003: Iringa). Elichansi Shoo-a Christian narrated an occasion where she had seen such a dove (28-10-2003: Iringa). Both Kidanganyike, a member of AR and Mdenying'afu, former RC now a diviner affirmed the information concerning the mystic doves (29-10-2003: Wotalisoli). The symbolic representation of the dove for the Holy Spirit fits very well in the Hehe context as far as the pre-Christian experience is concerned.

#### **4.4.3.4 Angels as Signifiers of the mystic Spiritual realm**

Angels are not common in the Hehe culture and AR. They appear only once in this thesis in the Mwanambehele legend. The researcher wanted to know what that meant to the Hehe Christians. Hehe Christians were not able to give convincing explanation. Makilika and Mdunange (27-10-2003: Isagwa) gave some convincing vindication. What follows hereafter, is a summary of their vindication.

The Hehe do not call them angels. They refer them as *miitu* (mystic creatures) or *nyamwitu* (from the mystic realm). For a Hehe a person can appear and convey a message and disappear. Some can come in homes and eat food and disappear and others can appear in forms of animals like lions, hyenas, dogs and cats, when there are special events, calamities or demands and disappear. Angels are called *vanyamwanza* to show that they are mystical but not harmful. *Vanyamwanza* is a Hehe word that signifies a person who comes mystically but with good news. The concept of angels is well indigenised.

#### **4.4.3.5 Mary the mother of Jesus Christ: The symbol of family link**

Fr. Wisa (28-10-2003) and Sr. Mpwepwa (27-10-2003: Iringa) conveyed this information. According to these two church servants and respondents who are members of the Roman Catholic Church, an African family takes parents as role models. Parents are religious leaders, perpetuators and moral moulders, thus custodians of norms and values in the community. For them, it is very likely that the Hehe understand and respect Mary as the mother who performed those duties during the infancy of our Lord Jesus Christ and is the role model of the church today amongst the Hehe.

#### **4.4.3.6 Black and White colours**

The symbolic representation of black as weak, wicked, failing and a sign of misfortune has caused a lot of resentment for most adherents of AR. To make matters worse missionaries made another grave misrepresentation where the black colour represents sinfulness and the white colour represents holiness. Ngandango (02-07-2003: Pommern) strongly advises Christians to take an extra care and even refrain from that symbolisation when they are doing evangelism to adherents of AR.



#### *4.5 Conclusion*

An attempt has been made in this chapter to show that the availability of the Bible and other Christian literature in the vernacular are the basic indication that the Church has foundations in the context. The continuity of God's Mission, as seen in continuous theologisation, contextualisation and indigenisation have been named as other indications of authentic Christian conversion amongst the Hehe. Special emphases have been given to the continued Bible translation, community, communion, evangelism and church growth, service and fellowship, prophetic role and ecumenism are presumed to be signs authentic presence and impact of the church in the respective society.

The indications of authentic conversion are observable through the availability of the scripture and other Christian literature into Swahili, Bena and Hehe. The continuity of scripture translation shows that the Hehe need to hear Jesus Christ in the mother tongue that has relevance to the contemporary community. The continuity of Bible translation into various Swahili dialects and in Bantu languages are central features of Christian theology. Christian teachings concerning God, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, creation, church history and the story of salvation are transposed into their local equivalence through continued Bible translations that meet the anticipations of every generation.

The Church has been perceived as the community of Christian believers. The concept of community amongst the Hehe is of great significance. The Hehe have found a community in Christianity that serves similar purposes to the AR community. The AR community met during rituals and had communion and information sharing among the living-living and between the living-living and the living dead. Such experiences are found in the Church when Christians hear the Word of God, make the confessions, worship and perpetuate the traditions of the church that have been handed over from the time when Jesus Christ was on earth to the present time. The Holy Communion confirms the bonding force of the community and the fellowship of Christian believers.

Evangelism that has led to rapid church growth has been performed within families, common meeting places of the Hehe and organised evangelistic rallies. Evangelism has also combined diaconial service and fellowship with the vulnerable and marginalized. The approach has appealed to the Hehe religious instincts and the Hehe can identify with Christianity as their religion. The prophetic and ecumenical dimension of the church especially in the religious pluralistic setting has credited the Church to find acceptance even to non-Christians hence proving its authentic presence in the society.

Translation motivates continuous theologisation, contextualisation and indigenisation. Continuous theologisation refers to the process of interpreting Christian faith in the Hehe community by establishing links between AR beliefs and Christian beliefs. The nature of theologising in relation to translation is to make Jesus Christ belong to the tongue, style, genius, character, and the cultures of the Hehe people.

Continuous contextualisation refers to the interpretations and functions of the Church in relation to the event of Jesus Christ. As for this thesis contextualisation means the interpretation of incarnation, the suffering and death of Jesus Christ. It also refers to the linguistic identification of God amongst the Hehe through the manifestation of the Holy Spirit. Hence contextualisation is continuous when it explains the relevance, the signs of time, the contemporary meaning of mission and their implications in the socio-economic context.

Contextualisation is continuous in Iringa because the Church is active in studying and taking a leading role in looking for solutions of the oppressive systems in the Church itself and in the society. Thus it tries to provide answers to the suffering, the poor, the sick the vulnerable and those who are marginalized or discriminated because of their gender, creed and political opinion or because of the stigma against those infected by the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Globalisation is another challenge for contextual theology.

Indigenisation is an indication of authentic conversion that is viable in many ways. It is viable in the endeavours of collecting Hehe musical melodies, the use of Hehe traditional musical instruments in the Church and the Jesus Film in the Hehe language. Indigenisation has proven its influence of authenticating the presence of Christianity in the Hehe society by having all leaders of the Christian denominations being the natives amongst the Hehe.

Indigenisation is also seen in the context of the African extended family. The African extended family forms the local community as well as the local church. The Church has turned to be the community where the Hehe get the values and beliefs in their early training of Christian life and the life in the community. The Church has turned out to be the community where Hehe converts establish the deepest and enduring relationship and a fellowship of sharing, praying together finding the sense of life and offering mutual services.

According to the Roman Catholic Church, the new community is bonded together by Jesus Christ the Son of God and the son of Mary. The Father of Jesus Christ who is God who heads the community. Jesus Christ is the Son of God who directs the community through the unending presence of his mother Mary.

For both Hehe Lutherans and Roman Catholics Jesus Christ and Mary represent the family unity and fellowship. The Hehe had fellowship in the presence of ancestors when they performed rituals and when they offered sacrifices. The Holy Communion is analogous to the Hehe communion and fellowship. In Christianity the centre of sacrifice, fellowship and communion is Jesus Christ. In Hehe the centre of sacrifice, rituals and common meals were the ancestors. The Eucharist has replaced AR rituals thus proving the continuity between AR and Christianity. Hehe who convert to Christianity are not expected to regret that they miss AR rituals.

Six symbols have been classified in worship and celebration. These include bread and wine, the Lamb of God, the dove, Mary the mother of Jesus Christ as the symbol of family link, norms and values, and finally the conflicting

symbol of black and white colours. For the Hehe bread symbolises daily food and livelihood. The Hehe use blood to sprinkle on the graves of ancestors when they perform rituals has shown how it correlates to the Christian concept of blood forgiveness of sins in Christianity. The spotless, healthy black lamb has been identified as a unifying concept between Christianity and AR because its sacrifice is most common amongst the Hehe and it annul curse, obliterates witchcraft and sorcery, malevolent spirits and deadly vengeance.

The symbolic representation of the dove for the Holy Spirit has been found to fit in the Hehe context because of its connotation of the pre-Christian experience. Angels have been found to be uncommon the Hehe culture and AR. However, the Hehe describe people and creatures as angelic that come and perform some mystic actions and disappear. Angels are expected to bring good news.

After the discussions concerning the indications of authentic conversion that have been developed from the basis and the criteria of authentic conversion the next chapter will investigate on the motivations of Christian conversion. The motivations of Christian conversion are envisioned to have arisen from the compliance with God's activity and the whole project of modernisation.

## CHAPTER 5

### 5. MOTIVATIONS OF CHRISTIAN CONVERSION: COMPLIANCE WITH GOD'S ACTIVITY AND THE PROJECT OF MODERNITY

#### *5.1 Introduction*

The previous chapter dealt with the indications of authentic conversion. The discussions concerning the indications have concentrated upon the viable aspects of continuous translation of the scripture and other Christian literature in the vernacular. The translation of the Jesus film into the Hehe language has contributed to the continuation of God's mission in the local context, and the continuation of contextual theologisation and indigenisation. These have shown that they contribute to the fast growth of the church.

This chapter links the discussion of the previous chapters and concerns itself with the fourth question and its hypothesis, which is thus formulated: What were the motivations of the Hehe to convert to Christianity? Hypothesis: Compliance with God's calling for mission and the project of modernity were the motivations for missionaries' endeavours and of Africans to convert to Christianity.

The presupposition of this chapter is that besides what God had done in the incarnation, suffering and death of Jesus Christ and the sending of the Holy Spirit that has led to the translation of the gospel in the mother tongue, there were also a series of events that were involved in the course of translation and conversion. These are interpreted as the practical aspects that accompanied the missionary endeavour. Whereas the concept of translatability has been identified with the transformation of faith in the culture, the motivations of conversion to Christianity focus on the changes and innovations that influenced the Hehe society as they encountered the wave of Christianisation. Compliance with God's calling and the project of modernity have been identified as the practical aspects

of spiritual, social, political, philosophical and intellectual transformations. Such transformations inevitably involve the quest for power. In spite of the manifold positive aspects that have been observed through this research the changes that came together with the Christian missionaries and especially those who came on the eve of colonisation had wrong notions about Africans. These wrong notions will be discussed in the next chapter.

The investigations in this chapter are meant to look into the reasons, the incentives, inspirations, factors, and drives that were viable and were used as accompaniments to the propagation of the gospel. The investigations go deeper and ask whether those motivations helped the Hehe to acknowledge the need for conversion, hence becoming full participants in the translation of the Word of God within their cultural context.

It is taken as an assumption from the third and fourth chapters that God does not impose conversion on an individual or a people group. The third chapter has shown that God walks together with the potential converts, communicating with them and allowing an open participation of the potential converts to understand what is happening, and specifically to answer the questions why things happen the way they do. The participant ways of acting or reacting to the series of events and encounters have been termed motivations. Therefore, conversion involves a reciprocal awareness of the agents of change and the recipients of change concerning not only the beliefs and the expected transformation but also the perceptions of reality. As a result, we concur with the assertion that “cognition and beliefs play a dominant role in human motivation” (Ferguson 1994:432).

Other than accounting for the motivations, this chapter will also account for the situations in which the Hehe found themselves when the four forces of power were in their midst. First, there was the force of new faith where leaders of AR presumably lost power and influence. Secondly, unfortunately, Christianisation in the 19th and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries moved together with colonialism.

There was therefore a force of foreign rule and manipulation that undermined the power of the local leadership and authority. The third was the new economic power where alternative methods were being introduced. The slave trade and the chiefs' economic supremacy were destabilized. The fourth were the introduction of modern education and medicine as well as new approaches to social service, social integration, justice, and communication as well as community development.

Therefore, it is not possible to rule out the factor of modernity that accompanied the issue of power on the part of missionaries, colonialists and the local people. Consequently, modernity became part and parcel of the Christianisation process. As a result, Christianity can as well be labelled as an agent in the process of modernisation. For some of the Hehe power was lost and for others power was gained. The involvement of the losers and those who gained is precisely what we call the project of modernity and we qualify with this assertion,

Modernity is a way of understanding and ordering experienced reality. It is not the only way but it's the most dominant and powerful way. Indeed, it could be said that modernity is all about power. It is about learning how to master and control one's environment. Survival of human communities depends on the extent to which those communities are able to understand it, adapt to it, and work with it. Those who do it best are the strongest. Those who do it worst are the weakest. Those who don't do it at all barely survive. Understanding it or misunderstanding it, accepting it or rejecting it, agreeing with it or disagreeing with it- does not alter the fact that it is, and that is a rewarder of those who diligently seek its workings (Balcomb 1996: 12).

The assertions by Balcomb affirm what has been said hitherto and carry further the perception that human society is in constant change. Constant change involves powers of decision-making and managing the society that is affected by change. The project of modernity in this context refers to the need and the ability to interpret and respond to contemporary situations and absorb

the change. The inception of Christianity among the Hehe was one way of introducing a transformation process that was both spiritual and secular. Since modernisation involves power and conversion involves transformation the two came together and placed the Hehe society in a situation where they had to see how they would cope with the new situation.

In that case, motivations are like the steering wheel of a car. The driver uses it to direct the car so that the passengers in it may reach the desired goal. Modernity influences the kind of driver and the right kind of car that can take passengers to the desired goal. The demands of modernity raise two questions. First, who is in charge of what? Secondly, who fits where, in which situation, under whose control towards which objective? For a clearer perspective of this thesis we briefly explicate the two concepts separately.

#### *5.1.1 Motivations of Conversion from a Theological Perspective*

Motivations of Christian conversion in the context of this thesis are intended to describe the processes that led the Hehe and missionaries to the desired goals as objectives towards tangible results. Christian sociologists define motivations in relation to decision-making, enthusiasm, behaviour, experiences and influence. Parrot says,

Motivations are the forces that arouse and direct human behaviour. Motivation is similar to learning because it influences the direction of both thought and behaviour. However, while learning emphasizes events in the past (experience), motivation emphasizes factors that influence present behaviour. Also, learning tends to be long-term while motivation is not (Parrot 1990:761).

Rambo brings the idea of motivations from a psychological approach and expresses the views of another psychologist saying,

Epstein postulates four basic motivations for human beings: the need to experience pleasure and avoid pain; the need for a conceptual system; the need to enhance self-esteem; and the need to establish and maintain relationships (1993:63).



Hesselgrave has characterised the motivations that are found in The New Testament into three categories. He calls the three categories as self-oriented, God-oriented and society-oriented (Hesselgrave 1989: 239). This kind of categorisation does not seem to give a fair view. Hesselgrave argues further that self-oriented motivations are such as that of a leper going to Jesus and asking for cleansing (Mk. 1:40), and blind Bartholomew requesting sight (Mk. 10:51). He says, "Both men were motivated by the desire for a better life in the here and now" (Hesselgrave 1989:239).<sup>16</sup> The researcher thinks that Hesselgrave is relatively prejudiced. The researcher is of the view that none of us knows what the leper and Bartholomew had in mind concerning their faith in God and in Jesus. Moreover, none of us knows the kind of paradigm shift that took place in the society, which the leper and Bartholomew belonged, especially for the fact that many people had heard about Jesus Christ. It might have happened that the two had been oriented to believe that the solution to their problem was Jesus Christ. In addition, Hesselgrave also argues that the rich young man in Lk.18: 18 was motivated by the personal desire of inheriting God's kingdom. According to Hesselgrave the rich young man was concerned about his future (1989:240). Again such assertions might be ruling out the likely perception that God or the society had influenced the rich young man in the way that is unknown to us.

Adding to the assertions above, Hesselgrave observes that Paul the apostle would be a good example of God-oriented motivations. Hesselgrave interprets Luke in Acts that Paul knew about God through the Old Testament and that he had the zeal to please God even though what he did not please God (1989: 240-2422). The fact that God had a personal encounter with Paul where Paul saw the light; he heard the voice and was blinded and put in a situation where he had to enquire about what had happened might be enough reasons for us to think that Paul did not have only God-oriented motivations but there were

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<sup>16</sup> See also Mat.9: 27-31,

also self-oriented motivations. Nevertheless, according to Luke in Acts, Paul is presented as a person who had not yet believed that Jesus Christ was both God and human. Upon the dramatic encounter the then Saul asked, "Who are you Lord?" The reply was, "I am Jesus whom you are persecuting", (Ac. 9:5). The response to what had happened shows that Paul's motivation for converting to Christianity was not God-oriented but initiated and executed by God. Thus it is right to call it God-orient but rather call it God-initiated.

The summarised views from Hesselgrave claim that society-oriented motivations are evident when an individual seeks for the well being of other people or a social group to which an individual belongs. According to Hesselgrave, such motivations were apparent in the New Testament times when people brought the sick and the afflicted to Jesus Christ (Cf. Mt 9:32-33; 12:22-23; 15:21-31) Hesselgrave 239-242). In contrast, the people who sent the sick person to Jesus Christ were motivated by what they had heard about Jesus Christ.

In reflecting on what has been said, one could argue that the three orientations of the motivations either operate together or in a manner that it is not possible to identify and ascribe in terms of specific motivation, to a specific individual at a given specific time. In the same way, it is not easy to say specifically that the motivations that were directly involved in the conversion of the Hehe were purely on those three orientations. It is therefore, perceptible that the categories by Hesselgrave are different from our discussions. We therefore prefer to use the expressions "compliance to God's calling for mission", "a new awareness to God's activity" and "the execution of the project for modernity".

At the inception of Christianity, the Hehe had the desire to achieve some meaningful solutions associated with new faith, new life, new socialisations, new beginnings and new hopes. Rambo says,

We should bear in mind that conversion is actively constructed by a religious group and by the wishes, expectations, and aspirations of the converts or potential convert. .... The process of conversion is a product of interactions among the convert's aspirations, needs, and

orientations, the nature of the group into which she or he is being converted, the particular social matrix in which the process is taking place (Rambo 1993:7).

In view of the above considerations, we consider that both the missionaries and the Hehe wanted to comply with God's calling to witness and to transform. In compliance, other than fulfilling the commission of God, missionaries learnt from the Hehe and the Hehe learnt from missionaries. The need to learn from each other was inevitable even when one or both parties were not ready to do so. By learning from each other, both missionaries and Hehe found that they needed to have common approaches towards daily interactions. The Hehe needed to acknowledge missionaries and missionaries needed to do the same. Out of learning and acknowledging each other, we arrive to the idea of the project for modernity and the new awareness of God's activity.

The assumption of the two expressions, "the project of modernity and the new awareness of God's activity" arises from the consideration that missionaries had to introduce new economic alternatives and a new approaches to community development. Balcomb says,

The missionary never simply brought a message without it being packaged in the missionaries' own culture. This was impossible. Western concepts of time inevitably clashed and mixed with African concepts of time, western values inevitably clashed and mixed with African values, western notions of success, money, agriculture, education, medicine, and many other things came with the package and clashed and mixed with African notions of the same. It remains for us to try to unravel and understand what happened at the interface of the cultures of the sending and receiving people (Balcomb 2004:8).<sup>17</sup>

These considerations above can be interpreted in many ways. Some of the interpretations include the predictable need of either protecting or seeking solutions to both the conflicting and consistent patterns of changes in the

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<sup>17</sup> Pages have not been indicated but the quotation is from the 8<sup>th</sup> leaf of Balcombs' lecture, which he gave in Ghana in October 2004.

encounter of missionaries and the local people. One of such encounters is that most local chiefs wanted missionaries in their areas so that they could retain power within the respective area or be protected from hostile tribes (Bunk 1898 in Koebler 1998:6). In the course of interaction between the missionaries and local people various changes that accompanied Christian conversion took place. In the course of time most of the local leaders who had resisted conversion found that they were losing control over their subjects. In the case of the Hehe, some of the Hehe people, especially the youths, considered the church as a place of safety and considerable social advancement, as well as acquisition of knowledge (Malangalila, G. 15.09.1999). Likewise, local chiefs sent their children to school so that they could comply with the rising tide of modernity.

#### *5.1.2 The Project of Modernity in the Perspective of this Thesis*

Before we go into to the discussions of this subsection, there is a need to make an interpretation of the expression “the project of modernity” in the context of this thesis.<sup>18</sup> Other than the definition in the footnote below modernity has a wide range of varying interpretations and definitions. A summary of the interpretations is taken from Balcomb (1996: 12-20) and Giddens (1990: 4-53) in relation to what was observed during the fieldwork. The three authors provide the terminology that is used to explain what happened amongst the Hehe.

Firstly there was the destabilising of the Hehe society due to some members of the society converting to the new religion and discontinuing some important family responsibilities and rituals in accordance with the old religion. This discontinuity weakened family bonds. Another area of discontinuity was

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<sup>18</sup> Balcomb (1996: 12) defines modernity as a way of understanding and ordering experienced reality and a way of learning how to master and control one’s environment. For Giddens (1990:4-5) modernity is change that displaces the traditional types of social order and brings a new one in an unprecedented fashion. It can be an innovation, an improvement, and advancement with novelty but also it can be with disruption, commotion and uncertainties of the old order.

the kind of education that was offered by the new powers. The Hehe type of traditional education that was vital for boys and girls was no longer important as it used to be. Most of those who converted to Christianity did not participate in that education. This will be explained further in the next chapter. Christians seemed to adhere more to the missionary norms and values than those of the traditional community, especially in the early days when they lived in Christian villages.

The second kind of change that took place was to do with the shift from traditional roles in the society to “modern” ones. People who previously enjoyed some kind of status in traditional society now became “houseboys” and “house-girls” or watchmen of urban inhabitants. Moreover, the enforced peace that came from the colonial power meant that traditional enemies had now become “friends”. Tribes that were seen as inferior were given responsibilities through the system of modernity and ruled over those tribes that believed that they were superior.

The third kind of change was to do with the economy. It changed from local to national; from the exchange of commodities, with Arab traders to the use of money; from the monopolised trade to the free market.

The fourth kind of change was to do the nature of social institutions (Giddens 1990:6). The units of family and clan broadened to include the whole society, from selected inclusiveness to unselected inclusiveness, such as mixing with “inferior” tribes, going to school and church together with clans that had nothing in common. With these changes came new geographical demarcations such as districts, regions and nation. Towns and cities started to grow. Churches and schools took the place of clans and kinships.

The fifth kind of change was to do with new relationships of trust, over and against risk (Giddens: 7). German rulers had conquered the Hehe in 1894 but the Hehe chief was not captured until 1898 when he decided to commit suicide. German missionaries, both Catholics and Lutherans, came to the Hehe in

1898. The death of the chief made the Hehe insecure. The Hehe would hardly trust both missionaries and colonial rulers because both were “Whites” from Germany. Whether the Hehe people accepted Christianity at that early stage or not one could see the motive of joining the church or compromising with missionaries and colonial rulers involved the need to surrender trust to the new authorities. This was difficult. The Hehe obviously doubted that they would be secure in the hands of foreigners.

The sixth kind of change was the shift from African communalism to capitalism. According to Giddens (1990:11) modernity promoted capitalism. The Hehe society has strong foundations in the extended family and kinship. With that foundation sharing, helping one another in basic needs was not optional. Nyerere did not discover the concept of “*ujamaa*” (family-hood, community-focused or kinship). He simply institutionalised it.<sup>19</sup> Sharing and helping each other in the Christian community was practised from a relatively different approach. There were too many foreign restrictions to members of the church. Thus profit making and policies that focused at investment even at the level of villages was introduced. This was more of a disruption of the Hehe community but the Hehe had no option except to conform to it.

The seventh kind of change was to do with time and space (Balcomb 1996:13) and (Giddens (1990:17). In the traditional Hehe culture life was marked by events, the level of the sun during the day and the features of creation such as the moon, the wind and the rain. Missionaries and colonialists came with the watch and the map and the year was marked by hours, days, weeks and months. Christianity came with new festivals that ignored the festivals of AR. The government forced everybody to participate or take holidays during Christian and Islamic festivals but not those of the AR. Life had to be managed by timetables, appointments and locality. Thus planning for “what, when and

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<sup>19</sup> Nyerere, the first president of Tanzania spoke of *Ujamaa* as the basis of African Socialism in 1962. Tanzania adopted *Ujamaa* as the national policy in 1967 as the result of Arusha declaration. The Arusha Declaration refers to the ruling party (TANU) resolutions that were made in 1967 in Arusha.

where” became the new norm of life and activities. It was relatively too much and too intense.

The eighth kind of change was what Giddens calls the disembedding tendency of modernity. Social activities and relations were lifted out from localised contexts and reorganised across large time-space distances (Giddens 1990:53). The Hehe were forced to stop thinking locally but conform to the global perspective. They were made to think of national and international relations. The media of communication changed from verbal to written, the symbolic tokens changed from specific to expert systems hence less emphasis was given to unspecified systems to specific systems; from experience to professionalism. One was not recognised by who one was but what one could do or be. How successful one could be intellectually and economically was more important than one’s traditional identity, which was shaped through kinship.

The ninth kind of change concerns the line of authority, which in the Hehe community was centred on the chief and his assistants, the diviners and family “priests”. Family priests denote those leaders of rituals and rites according to the Hehe line of command (cf. 2.4.1, p. 60). The power went to priests who had no family bond. Schoolteachers commanded the community through schools (cf. the Uhafiwa case study (Cf. 2.5.2, p. 81-92) instead of *vavina* (the superior) of the community. Through the changes of modernity unfamiliar governors were appointed to lead the Hehe people instead of their traditional chiefs. Taxation and labour were forced instead of *kwifuge* (being under the chiefs authority) and *kwomola* (selecting people to work for the chief). For “better and for worse,” it seems that the church became central in the changes.

The tenth kind of change can be deduced from the previous ones. It was to do with changed statuses of women, youth and children. Considerations in this kind of change will be focused on women. Considerations concerning youth and children interweave with the relationship between adult men and women. When those nine kinds of change took place women were the ones who were

affected most. The traditional ways of relating with men were disrupted. The participation of men in domestic matters changed. Instead of working for the family they had to run from one place to another to get money for taxes. Those who remained home were taken for forced labour. Instead of herding the livestock children went to school. Mothers had to make sure that their children were well prepared to go to school very early in the morning. These children came back home late and hungry. The mother was the one who had to make sure that they eat. This caused more disparity between female and male children. Mothers wanted to remain with some one at home to take care of the little ones and help with the work at home. As a result most mothers did not want to send girls to school. Fathers supported the motives because they wanted their daughters to get married so that they could get money and property through dowry that would help them to pay taxes and school fees for boys. One could say modernity consolidated the gender imbalance.

In traditional society women were not as under privileged as it has happened in the wave of modernity. One of the challenges for the church today is to be in solidarity with women in order to reclaim the status of women. Since there is a growing awareness among women for participatory leadership, the need for inclusiveness in decision-making, it is the role of the church to advocate those endeavours.

The Lutheran Church in Iringa might also claim that since its early beginnings it had allowed a limited participation of women in church leadership and worship or liturgical functions.<sup>21</sup> This may be true in the sense that every Christian has been called to witness the Christian faith and this has been vivid in the context of Iringa and all dioceses in Southern Tanzania. This implies that all baptised adults, regardless of their gender, have always been included in the propagation of the gospel out of which many preaching points have arisen. Most

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<sup>21</sup> In AR women participated in rituals ordered through men. If they had to perform or instruct functions in rituals or sacrifices they had to do it by speaking to a man from the back.



men and women, young and old, have always been allowed to officiate in worship services and leave only those functions that are done by ordained ministers such as baptism, administration of the Holy Communion, officiating at marriages, and installing church elders. We can thus assert that the Lutheran Church in Iringa has included all Christian converts, males and females, young and old to participate in God's mission to the Church without discrimination. Right from the beginning the Church created opportunities for Hehe converts, men and women, boys and girls to participate in evangelisation by sharing stories, proverbs, sayings and songs as tools of making a breakthrough in propagating the gospel (Mbilinyi 13-07-1997: Ihemi).

Christianisation did not come up with something new but modernisation and evangelisation moved together. Thus it was modernity that speeded up both the necessary and unnecessary changes. There were cases where Christianisation contributed positively to gender balance and sensitivity but there are also cases where Christianisation failed. One practical example is family leadership and priestly roles. In the Hehe culture the first-born is the leader of the family regardless of the gender. The first born, whether male or female, had some priestly roles, but as stated hitherto, women had to dictate their directives through men. Either the uncle or the younger brother received the dictation. Christianisation could not escape the prophetic role of advocating social justice, human rights and peace to the society and among its members. Gender discrimination and the need for gender balance at various levels are continuing agenda of the Church. The Church has not yet found a clear solution to that. Several trials were made by the Church to protect women. For example it was strictly forbidden for a man to beat his wife. If he did, the church excommunicated such a person thus barring him from partaking the Holy Communion for a period of not less than six months. Such a person had to sit in the back of the church. It might seem strange for the church to be involved in such jurisdictional issues, but it should be understood that civil law was not

strong enough to protect women and children. However, such punishments were not effective and addressed only the minor issues of the uneven relationship between men and women.

Other examples include the direct involvement of missionaries to protect women and children. Missionaries reported cases where civil servants harassed or raped women as we have seen in the third chapter. One missionary reported "soldiers have taken people's property, treated them with cruelty and caused a lot of annoyance to girls and women" (Groeschel 1901, in Koebler 1998: 11). On another occasion he wrote, "One person reported to me that soldiers had taken away his two wives because he had not paid tax but I was able to recover the two wives and the soldiers ran away" (Groeshel 1901, in Koebler 1998: 11). Another missionary wrote that, "We heard that ten women were ambushed and raped. We met some of them. For example, a girl who was still breast-feeding was raped and so was an elderly woman who was raped by four men" (Klamroth 1901, in Koebler 1998:11).

These examples have been cited to show that the church was compelled to protect its members especially women, youth and children. These examples are vital because even if the Church could not execute human rights and gender balance properly it was compelled to abide by the teaching that both women and men, young and old were created in the image of God and deserved the same human dignity.

There is still much that has to be done by the church to change its attitude concerning women and to show more gender sensitivity and refrain from discriminatory tendencies. Most of the church members in the Lutheran Church in Iringa are women. It is hoped that their membership will be more meaningful if the church acknowledges and respects their human dignity and treats them with gender equity. It is thus worthwhile to mentioning that the Iringa Diocese was the first diocese of the ELCT to ordain women and is the first diocese in the

Lutheran Church in whole Africa that appointed female pastor to the position of a district pastor.

The resolution to ordain women in the ELCT was passed in July 1990. Iringa diocese was the first to ordain them in November 1990. The late Rev. Tuseline Madembo+ and Rev. Pirkko Lundgren (Notko) were ordained on 20<sup>th</sup> November 1990. Rev. Mrs Agnes Kulanga was elected as a district pastor on 17<sup>th</sup> December 1998. A district pastor is responsible for more than ten pastors as an assistant to the bishop in a given area. Sometimes they are called rural deans or superintendents.

The changes mentioned above were brought by various means. First, there was the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885 (Sehmsdorf 20.05.1991:7),<sup>22</sup> when European nations divide up Africa. "At the Berlin conference of 1884 [sic] (1884-1885), the European powers carved up and shared out Africa. Almost overnight Africa found itself part of the global chess game" (Balcomb 1996:14-15). Consequently, the whole of Africa was put in a path of no return.

Secondly, the new wave of missionary enterprises that resulted from explorers' reports such as that of David Livingstone and the campaign against the slave trade were sufficient reasons to put Africa in the global political, economic and religious maps. Thirdly, Africa was forced to become part of the Western cultural dynamism that affected all people. Modernism took place through education, commerce and other foreign influences. Fourthly, colonialism brought forth the need for new kinds of governance that required knowledge and new skills. Bureaucratic administration replaced the traditional communal leadership and authority. Bureaucracy required specific offices, uniforms and foreign disciplines. Fifthly, the commodity modifications of the society were inevitable. The better the product the broader the market and the broader the market, the higher the demand.

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<sup>22</sup> The Berlin Conference is mostly dated 1884 but some historians date it in 1885. The truth of the matter is that it started officially on 15<sup>th</sup> November 1884 and its Act was adopted on 26<sup>th</sup> February 1885 at the same venue (Cf. McEwan (ed) 1968:219 and 222, Lucas, C. 1922:82, Pekanham, T. 1991: 239-250).

When foreign religion, politics, economics, authority and leadership took the Western trend Africans had to follow the tide but they had to be motivated to reach decisions. In some cases, Africans were forced to make certain decisions or follow certain changes by the contemporary circumstances. Thus, modernisation was in most cases a struggle amidst powers of change that were inevitable. This was a struggle for power, survival and identity. Africans felt that it was not fair for them to lose their power and influence in their respective communities. They wanted to be sure that even if they were colonised they would still live as people with will and power and retain their identity.

### *5.2 Compliance with God's calling for Mission: Missionary Motives*

Above the front door, between the first and second floor of the Berlin Mission in Georgenkirch Strasse in Berlin city is the inscription of Matthew 28:19a in German "*Darum gehet hin und machet zu Junger alle Volker*" ("Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations"). In spite of all other forces at work during the missionary enterprise including modernity and colonialism the main impetus for missionaries to come to Africa in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries came from the Great Commission. The commission to go to all nations did not come from the German Government or nationalistic motives. It was, and still is, stated in the Words of Jesus Christ. Even if German missionaries had apparently incompatible motivations (which the next chapter will argue, lasted for only fourteen years), they were not the ones who prepared the Hehe to receive Jesus Christ. God prepared the Hehe people and allowed the inception of Christianity because they had been prepared by God to accept an intercultural fertilization that led to the translation of the message of salvation into the vernacular.

Christianity, according to the Lutheran faith, teaches that God prepares nations and tribal groups in conditions that will make them receptive to the gospel. It has been argued that God prepared the birth of Jesus Christ under the Roman Empire because there was peace and Greek was the "commonwealth

language” of those days in a large area of the ancient world.<sup>23</sup> Later on, unfriendly conditions of the Jewish environment forced the apostles to move to other nations. They faced persecutions but they persisted and some suffered martyrdom, but Christianity, being different from Judaism, from which it was born, went to other nations. Green (1970:17) and other theologians argue that God had prepared people and nations in such way that the church was established in various areas around the Mediterranean Sea, in Ancient Near East and Eastern Europe. Likewise, the explorative visits of Livingstone, Stanley, Speke and Burton opened the ears of the Church in Europe to rethink God’s mission in Africa. The information that was heard in the Church and academic institutions from the explorers sparked the interest of colonisers as well (Parslaw 1999:10-11). However, it should be born in mind that missionaries came to East Africa before colonisation. Johann Ludwig Krapf, his wife Rosine, Johann Rebman and Erhardt, came to East Africa between 1843-44 more than forty years before the colonisers (Isichei 1995: 79). These missionaries had very little or nothing to do with colonisation other than suffering, and some of them died.<sup>24</sup>

The missionary societies, the Holy Ghost Fathers 1876, the universities’ Mission to Central Africa 1876, the Church Mission Society 1844, the White Fathers 1878 and the Berlin [sic] Mission 1887 established their work on mainland Tanzania before the German Colonial Government was officially proclaimed on May 25<sup>th</sup>, 1887 (Bahendwa 1990:86).<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Melito, in Eusebius. *Historia Ecclesiastica* 4.26.5-11, as found in Michael Green (1990:343) end notes: *Evangelism in the Early Church*; says, “the greatest proof that our faith flourished for good along with the empire in its noble beginnings is the fact that it met no persecutions in the reign of Augustus, but on the contrary was thought splendid and glorious and just what men [sic] were praying for” (Eusebius H.E. 4.26.8).

<sup>24</sup> Isichei rightly calls the death of Rosine Krapf, nee Dietrich as the foundation stone of evangelization in East Africa.

<sup>25</sup> Fr. Riddle said they are not White Fathers by origin. They are Missionaries to Africa. They were called “White Fathers” in Africa because of their white cassocks that they used in the past. He also confirmed that their missionaries who were sent to Africa did not think of colonization but they were more concerned on the media of communication. He thus asserted, “Our main task was to study the language and the culture”. After all, colonizers of Tanganyika were Germans and Britons. Most of our first missionaries came from Belgium and France (Riddle 10.10.2003). In addition, the researcher understands that the Berlin Mission came to Tanzania in 1891. The one mentioned by Bahendwa is Bethel mission. Berlin Missionaries came during the colonial time with the specific aim, “to evangelize in the Germany colony”, as it will be illustrated in the next chapter. See also Parslaw (1999:11-14).

On the basis of such things this thesis argues that in spite of the various motivations for doing mission in Africa the primary aspects of God's mission were implemented. Hence, there are four concepts that recur in this thesis and always move together. These are mission, evangelism, salvation and conversion. We have defined conversion and salvation in the second chapter. We will briefly look into mission and evangelism with the intention of demonstrating the compliance with God's calling and commission.

In the ecclesiological and theological developments, the term "mission" has been woven into the church foundation and has come to signify the activity of God in the world through the Church. It is thus stated,

"Mission" is an activity of God arising out of the very nature of God. The living God of the Bible is a sending God, which is what mission means. He sent prophets to Israel. He sent His son into the world. His Son sent apostles and the seventy, and the Church. He also sent his Spirit to the Church and sends him into our hearts today (Stott 1975:6).

In spite of the faults that we might find in missionaries, they were servants of the *Missio Dei* so long as we can find three qualities in them. The first was their readiness to translate the Word of God in the vernacular, the second was the content of their message, whether they were evangelising or not, and the third was their ability to suffer with the local communities and be of service to them.

The mission of the universal Church is born out of God's mission and God moulds it continually. While we cling to the version of Matthew 28:19-20 and Mark 16:15-16 as the gist of mission, we should at the same time remember that Jesus said, "As the father has sent me, I am sending you" (Jn. 20:21). While translatability is the nature of Christianity, sending is the nature of mission. The living Church is a missionary Church. It is a sending Church.

The church itself has been sent into the world to fulfil the will of God, which is the mission of God. The Church was never sent into the world to fulfil the will of emperors, even though sometimes they want the Church to fulfil their will and protect their power. In the course of research, all informants, including adherents of AR, affirmed that God sent the missionaries. Here are some of the responses. Mella (01-10-1997: Iringa) said, "*Wale ni ndugu zetu*" (Those are our kindred). Msola (11-07-1999: Ilula) said, "*Vala vayetuu*" (Those are our beloved). E. Hauli (15-07-2003:Iringa) said, "*Kwani ni nani wenye mashaka na kutumwa kwa wamisionari?*" (Who are they that have doubts with missionaries?). She added, "*Hiyo ni shida ya wasomi, kwani Biblia hamuisomi?*" (That is a problem of academicians. Don't you read the Bible?). Then she quoted from Rom. 10:14-19). Kulanga A. (15-07-2003:Iringa) said, "*Sawa wamisionari wawe wabaya, wazuri ni nani?*" (Fine, let missionaries be faulty, who are not faulty?).

A strong sentiment about Hermann Neuberg one of the long-term German missionaries amongst the Hehe, nicknamed as, *Changalakiki* (the invincible) came from Harran Ngede. Ngede is the Headmaster of Mtera Secondary School of the Iringa Diocese in the Northern boarder of Iringa and Dodoma. Mtera is infested with malaria. The personnel officer of the Iringa Diocese had a discussion with Ngede and thought of transferring him with the aim of relieving him from malaria. Ngede responded: "*Ne ndi Changalakiki; ukubita kuvanu neke udalike, neke uhamile kuko, neke ufwile kuko neke vasile kuko*" (08-06-2003). ("I am Changalakiki; you go to people, and preach to them, stay there, die there and be buried there"). Neuberg is one of the most loved missionaries amongst the Hehe; but he was also one of the most controversial missionaries. He came with his father Wilhelm Neuberg, who was the first missionary among the Hehe in 1898 and lived in Uhafiwa and Muhanga and amongst the Hehe and in Milo amongst the Manda of Rudewa District near Lake Nyasa. He was interned during the First World War. Herman Neuberg, the son of Wilhelm Neuberg, came back to Tanganyika as a missionary in Dar-es-Salaam but was

also interned in 1939-1945 during the Second World War. Neuberg finally got a missionary position amongst the Hehe and was posted to Pommern, the historical centre of the Lutheran Church amongst the Hehe in Iringa. On his arrival in 1955 he said, "I will live here, I will preach amongst the Hehe, I will die here and I will be buried here" (Changa 18-08-1999: Iringa). Indeed, Neuberg died of heart failure in 1969 amongst the Hehe and he is buried in Pommern.

Ngede, like many other Hehe, has a very high regard for *Changalakiki* (Neuberg). *Changalakiki* is the Hehe term that means invincible. The name was given to him because of his character. He was tough when it came to the relationship with Catholics. He chased them away from the Eastern part of Iringa with the claim that it was predominantly a Lutheran area. Luhawago A. (27—08-1999) accused him of discriminating against Africans but Mgovano defended him saying that Neuberg used discriminative terms and expressions in a sense of humour and jokes. For example, at one occasion he called Africans "*mabeva matitu tululu*" (Big and extremely black rats). How could such a missionary have such a high regard amongst Africans? There are two possible reasons. First, in spite of his jovial discrimination, he proved otherwise in his daily work. He proclaimed the gospel and showed love in his service apparently to prove that the Church, which God had commissioned, had sent him. Second, while missiologist might contend otherwise, Neuberg had found a home in Iringa amongst the Hehe because the Hehe were the people he grew up with during his childhood. Tanzania, at that time Tanganyika, was his home where, according to him, the unsuccessful German regime had interned him twice. When he came for the third time, the Hehe were in his heart as his people where he had experienced the peace of mind and civil peace. We can as well use a Swahili idiom: "*Yeye na Wahehe walikuwa damu damu*" ("The Hehe were in his blood just as he was in their blood").

It is evident that we as human beings cannot imitate Jesus Christ in everything. Nonetheless, every Christian has been sent in the world just as the



Church has been sent. Human weaknesses are inevitable but it can as well be said that God has chosen human beings as tools of his mission in the world. Correspondingly, Jesus Christ was sent in the world by God not as a mere visitor from space or like an alien with an alien divine culture to the world but as the saviour of the world. He was therefore sent to take humanity, which is our flesh and blood as it has been argued in the third chapter. He was sent so that he can become *damu damu* (He in their blood and they in his blood) to the people of the world. "He actually became one of us and experienced our frailty, our suffering, [sic] our temptations. He even bore our sin and died our death" (Stott 1975:6).

In spite of weaknesses and faults, which have been expressed in the introduction, and the accusation that missionaries destroyed AR and dominated Africans, (which Ester Hauli calls the problem of scholars) thus far the Hehe presumably understand that German, Swedish, Finnish, Danish and American missionaries were sent, and are still sent, and will be sent by God. They understand them as fellow human beings just like any other Hehe. Wagner, repeatedly said, " God does not do anything on earth, except by using human beings. He chose to save the world in the human form and now he sends the church in the human form to the world" (Wagner 1991). The accentuation is missiologically true that God has sent all believers as the Church in God's mission in the world and experience the vortex of vulnerability in the same way that Jesus Christ experienced it. It can as well be said that the Church is sent to express the sacrificial death of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is with such prominence that the motivation for the conversion of the Hehe, both from missionaries and the Hehe, has to be complied with. It is from the same emphasis that the researcher has affinity to the event of Christ as the criteria of authentic conversion because it is motivated by *Missio Dei*. It is thus rightly asserted,

We have seldom taken seriously this principle of Incarnation. 'As our Lord took on our flesh, so he calls his Church to take on the secular world. This is easy to say and sacrificial to do'. But it comes more natural to us to shout the Gospel at people from a distance

than to involve ourselves deeply in their lives, to think ourselves into their problems and to feel with their pains (Stott 1975:6)

The second important aspect of God's mission, which evaluators of the missionaries and the African converts do not see, is the sacrificial service which the Church has rendered to the people of Africa. The point will be demonstrated further in the subsequent sections. The basis to which the church offers service is in the words of Jesus Christ. "Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and give his life as a ransom for many" (Mtt. 20:28). The service that Jesus Christ offered in his life and ministry is the core phenomenon of what the church is expected to do in complying with God's calling for mission. The motivation for mission arises from the understanding that Jesus Christ sought us, he saved us, and now he serves. He came in the translatable word and translatable service. "But Jesus knew he had to serve before he would be served and to endure suffering before he could have dominion" (Stott 1975:7).

The Roman Catholic Choir of Dar- Es- Salaam has expressed the primacy of service in God's mission. The previous chapter argued that the motivation for our mission in serving the society in which we belong, and any society that is in affliction, is the fact that Jesus Christ came to give his life. That is why we have to give our service to people who have the image of God and who Jesus Christ died for. Jesus Christ proclaimed the Kingdom of God in its holistic form. He gave himself in a selfless manner in order to serve others.

The researcher knew about the Dar-Es-salaam choir when he was having an interview with Pastor H. Myenda. In a continued discussion concerning the song "*Nimemuona Mungu* " and the motivations of Christian conversion in relation to serving other people Myenda expressed the views of the choir as summarised and illustrated hereafter.

Imagine you are living with Jesus Christ who cannot read and write; just imagine that you are living with Jesus Christ who cannot keep his records in the store because he just cannot add, subtract, multiply or divide! Just imagine that you are living with Jesus

Christ who cannot deliver a baby just because of a simple complication that needs a minor operation. Just imagine that you are living with Jesus Christ who healed many and cannot heal himself. Just imagine you live with Jesus Christ who goes from one dustbin to another, being a food scavenger just because his parents and relatives died of cholera. Just imagine you are living with Jesus Christ who is lame because of polio and the parents have to lock him in the house when they go out to farms for the fear that his appearance in the community might be misinterpreted as calamity (Myenda 17-10-2003: Iringa).

This startling picture created by Myenda is a powerful argument that missionaries served the Hehe out of love. Under weaknesses and strengths, under poverty and richness, missionaries, or witnesses of Jesus Christ, have been called to serve. Being in God's mission and service to the neighbour caused many missionaries to die. In every mission station one finds graves of missionaries and their children and it is hard to find a rich missionary. It is indeed salutary and true to honour Luther's theology of the cross. Where and how would Africa be without these committed men and women of Christ who suffered loss of their friends and family members as they were serving us in God's mission? It is appropriate to assert that mission is service but it is more appropriate to say mission is love, which is compelled by God, who calls, sends, and saves.

Subsequent to this are a few examples of missionaries who lost their lives because of service and love. Johann Ludwig Krapf and his wife Rosine Dietrich, who both had a zeal for mission, were in Africa in the early 1880s. Dietrich died after three years of her mission work. This is one example of a woman who had committed her life to God's calling for mission. Commenting on the commitment of early missionaries Isichei said,

Some women married men they scarcely knew, out of desire for a missionary life. Rosine Dietrich was engaged to a missionary who died. She travelled to Ethiopia to marry Johann Ludwig Krapf, the pioneer of Protestant mission in East Africa, who wrote in his memoirs, "but my experience in Abyssinia convinced me that an unmarried missionary could not prosper" (Krapf 1838: 86). She

buried a new baby in Shoa, and died soon after bearing a second; both lie in a grave near Mombasa. Krapf did not remarry until his return to Europe (Isichei 1995:79-80).

Even after the death of his wife and the second child, Krapf did not lose heart to continue with the mission that he was called for. Instead, he encouraged other missionaries to come. Out of love to God and to the people of Africa, this is what he wrote.

“Tell our friends at home that there is now on the East African coast a lonely missionary grave. This is a sign that you have commenced the struggle ... as the victories of the Church are gained by stepping over the graves of her members, you may be more convinced that the hour is at hand when you are summoned to the conversion of Africa from its eastern shore” (Anderson 1977:1).

There are many cases where missionaries sacrificed their lives. Their coming to Africa during that time made them vulnerable to martyrdom, as in the case of Anglican missionaries in Uganda (Anderson 1977:33). The first Berlin mission station in Southern Tanzania at *Kipangamasi* (*Wangemannshoehe*) is marked by the first missionary grave of Gertrude Schumann who died of malaria during the delivery of her first baby. When despair and loss of hope were expected from Schumann, the bereaved husband wrote these words of hope and courage; “But now, this is what the Lord says - he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: “Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine” (Isaiah 43:1).

There are also examples of missionaries’ tribulations, hardships, and suffering in Iringa. Brief reports from Wilhelm Neuberg, Martin Priebusch and Greta Uhlin show some of those examples. Neuberg (1898) narrated this,

Very close to Mafinga station, I was suddenly confronted with four big elephants. In fury and speed, they rushed towards me crushing trees like grass. I stood still and thanks are to God, because they came so near, turned and went away.

I failed to stay in my first hut because of the numerous rats and snakes. Hyenas come near the house and stole skins. At night, they excavate graves of the natives and cry in a very strange and threatening manner. The worst of all are the black leopards. They take away goats and calves and are very difficult to kill (Koebler 1998:6).

Priebush reported the hunger that had stricken Muhanga in Iringa in 1899. He and his family had to suffer together with the rest of the people because like all other Berlin missionaries of his time, he lived in the mission station that was in a remote area and not in the townships where the colonial administrators established themselves.

In 1899 the missionary newsletter thus reported: "The life of missionaries in Uvena<sup>26</sup> is very difficult. Natives have been impoverished by war; they do not have any food. They live on wild roots. Priebusch, our missionary, reports that he failed to buy even a can of sweet potatoes" (Priebusch 1899, in Koebler: 6).

Holmstrom (07-10-1997:Uppsala) narrated how Swedish missionaries started their work in Tanzania under very difficult conditions. Sweden itself was hunger stricken and many of their missionaries had died in Ethiopia and Somalia. He recounted that when the Swedish Evangelical Mission heard that they were being invited to a mission field in Tanzania they highly rejoiced because that news was a comfort in their grief about the mission that had failed in Ethiopia and Somalia. Many of their missionaries in Ethiopia died from malaria and fundamentalists Muslims had killed of their missionaries.

Sweden was at this time experiencing a food scarcity. Some people mixed wheat flour with wood powder to increase the quantity of porridge. The news of the call to Tanzania was announced one Sunday in the church at Stockholm and an offering was requested. People sitting upstairs in the galleries of the church dropped money "like rain" to the ground floor for the ushers to collect.

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<sup>26</sup> This is the common interchangeable use and confusion of Bena and Hehe among German missionaries. Muhanga is not in Benaland it is far away from the Bena. It is a village in a remote area of the Hehe tribe and none of the Bena has settled there even today.

The church was filled with joy. When the researcher asked the reason for joy Holmstrom responded, "Our mission society knew that the Church had a call for mission and that call could not be satiated by anything other than doing mission" (07-10-1997:Uppsala). Yes indeed, what satisfies the compliance to God's calling for mission is doing mission in love for the sake of conversion, salvation and service.

A critic of mission work would simply see Holmstrom as expressing the zeal of a Western cultural and religious imposition on other cultures and religions. A missiologist would respond with the words of Paul that God has committed the great treasure to missionaries albeit their human limitations and that they are to fulfil God's commission of mission. Consequently, Paul asserts, "But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God not from us" (2Co. 4:7 cf. 2Ti 2: 20).

One of the most painful experiences for both German and Swedish missionaries was financial dearth. Both the Berlin Mission Society (BMS) and the Swedish Evangelical Mission (SEM) had a pietistic background. They did not belong to the state church. Their resources depended on the economic situation of their members. Most of the missionaries reported financial paucity. Because of that, some missionaries started large farms for generating local income but they were not very successful (Schimanowski 20-06-1996: Berlin).

Many African Christians and theologians who have come to the heart of God's mission have expressed gratitude to missionaries. We have two examples in that approach. The first example says,

The introduction of the Gospel to Africa, which came at the expense of many a European missionary's life (at least in the initial stages, until quinine was discovered in South America) will forever be venerated. We stand in deep gratitude to their unselfish service and will remind ourselves as Africans of our debt to others that have not heard the Good News (Wambuta 1978:720).

The comments of Bishop Tutu form a precise version and a conclusion of what Africans feel today about the dedication and self-sacrifice of missionaries who have brought Africa not only to Christianity but have eradicated ignorance, disease and in some places helped to overcome injustice, insecurity, hatred and poverty.

But whatever one might think of some missionary policies, one cannot but admire the courage and the dedication of these often much vilified men and women. Their exploits produce a stirring account. .... We are bound to be moved by their willingness to die in order to spread the Good News of the Son of God to all his creation. Even when we call for an authentic African Christianity, we are obliged to pay our tribute to these men and women from across the seas who brought this splendid treasure beyond price to the shores of the so-called Dark Continent. Their early converts must have caught something of their enthusiasm for and dedication to the Gospel, for they too were soon to spill their blood for this new faith. Indeed the blood of the martyrs, both black and white, proved once more to be the seed of the Church even here in Africa (Tutu, quoted in Anderson 1977: the first page of the foreword).

Convincingly, the credibility of the Church is God's mission and the credibility of God's mission is the gospel and service. The credibility of gospel and service is love. This is also Paul's emphasis in ICor.13: 1-13. Out of love to the world is the prominence of God's motivation to bring forth the event of Jesus Christ (Jn. 3:16). Three aspects intertwine in this motivation. First, God loved the world and gave his Son for salvation. Second, the Son came to serve, to suffer, to die, to overcome death, to establish the Church and to empower it with God's Spirit; the Holy Spirit. Third, the Holy Spirit came to send the Church into God's Mission with the power of being translatable in every mother tongue. Hence, the motivations of Christian conversion in the African context are the love of God that prompted God's mission and the compliance to God's calling of the translated message of salvation towards God's grace as seen in the event of Jesus Christ.

The concepts that have been dealt with so far are interrelated. These are *preparatio evangelica* in 2.3-2.5, translatability in 3.3-3.6 and *Missio Dei* in 5.2. *Preparatio Evangelica* has been illustrated as God's way of communicating with people prior to the translatability of the event of Christ. It has demonstrated that it builds an awareness of God's mission. We postulate that translatability bridges the gap between *preparatio evangelica* and *Missio Dei*. We also postulate that *Missio Dei* affirms translatability and brings evangelism, love and service to the pre-Christian experience to motivate people in a given religious and cultural background towards authentic Christian conversion. In view of the preceding arguments it could be said that mission is love, service, and suffering in recognition of the cost of discipleship and the credence of forgiveness. Incarnation, as emphasised by the Catholic Church and the theology of the cross, as emphasised by the Protestant evangelicals and Luther's theology are apparently the basis for mission. It seems that the message of salvation in Luther's Theology of the cross together with the concepts of incarnation and translatability are the richest sources that explain the authenticity of Christian conversion and the integrity of mission in the African context.

### ***5.3 Modernity and the New Awareness of God's Activity***

There are several case studies that the researcher came across. In most cases, the quest for power acquisition, retention and affirmation were observable. Converts to Christianity had new experiences that created new awareness of God's activity among them. However, those experiences involved power encounter. Traditional leaders in religion, divination, and the herbalist as well as leaders in the society at large felt the threat that they were losing power and control over their respective communities.

Christian preachers, teachers in schools and church medical workers as well as people with new skills who worked for missionaries or in mission stations, were seen by the rest of the people in their respective communities as



having an upper hand over those who were not. Likewise, the introduction of Western education over and against traditional education was one way of changing power proprietors. Traditionally local chiefs, elders, males and diviners were the possessors of power. When education was introduced, the power shifted to those more men and women who were more able to negotiate the new regime. The motivations of Christian conversion were therefore fully intertwined with the pursuit of influence, power and authority. As a result, we will investigate the dynamics of modernisation.

### *5.3.1 The Sick Donkey: Validation of the Missionaries' Influence*

Ilula was the first Swedish mission station amongst the Hehe that was established in 1938. It is situated in the northeastern part of Iringa Diocese. Swedish missionaries came to take over the work of German missionaries during WWII. Out of curiosity, the Hehe sub-chief of Ilula wanted to validate the power of Swedish missionaries in civil, religious and medical spheres. The sub-chief used a sick donkey for that experiment. Upon arrival in Ilula, Swedish missionaries came up with the normal triple establishment of a church, a school and a dispensary even before they had won any converts. The dispensary was ready before the church and the school.

The Hehe sub-chief of Ilula was curious and suspicious of the missionaries. It so happened that he had a sick donkey. Uhlin reported that the sub-chief used that sick donkey to test the work of missionaries through the Lutheran dispensary. The donkey happened to be the first patient since the construction of the dispensary.

The sub-chief decided to test the white people's medicine through his donkey that had a boil. In order to test the reliability of the advertised clinic and the missionaries the sub-chief went with his donkey and asked for treatment. Uhlin went to her room and put on her decorative Swedish nurse's uniform. She thought the sub-chief had come for his own treatment and was delighted to have

him as her first patient. She was ready to attend to the patient, but the sub-chief just stood outside with his donkey. Uhlin walked out and invited the sub-chief to enter the dispensary. He did not move but just showed the swollen leg of his donkey. Uhlin was annoyed and hesitated to treat the donkey, but for the sake of building cordial relations, she agreed to do so.

On that same day, the sub-chief sent his messengers to all his subjects with the "*Lidzwi lwa Mutemi*" ("A word from the ruler"),<sup>27</sup> proclaiming that they could go for treatment to "*umuhinza umusungu*", ("the young white girl"). In the following days Ilula dispensary was inundated with women and children and a few male adults - ready for treatment. Uhlin used these opportunities to preach the gospel message and that was the first breakthrough for the propagation of the gospel (Uhlin 1996:87-92 and 07-10- 1997: Upsalla).

There are five important observations in this narrative. First, Why did the chief go with the donkey? Where were donkeys treated prior to the construction of the dispensary? In response to these two questions Pastor Kinyaga (02-09-2003) said, "*Avahehe vana lutogo*" ("the Hehe have a very high self-esteem"). By this he meant that it would not be possible to allow a person to go to the dispensary without validating the motivation of the missionaries and without ascertaining that missionaries were not intending to harm the Hehe or take their power. It also means that the Hehe wanted to test whether the missionaries had the qualities of trust and ability to deal with their subjects.

Sagga (02-09-2003), the current medical doctor in Ilula came with the second observation. He said, "Our first question should be why did sick people wait for the announcement from the chief?" According to him, the sick people would hardly go to the dispensary without the permission of the sub-chief, especially since the missionaries had not yet baptised any person; all people were under the authority and power of the sub-chief. Indeed, they waited for the "*iLidzwi lya Mutemi*".

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<sup>27</sup> *Lidzwi lya Mutemi* is the authoritative pronouncement of the ruler. As it has been illustrated in 4.2.

These two observations lead us to the third observation. The sub-chief is the one who allocated land to missionaries. According to John Msigomba (30-07-1997), the missionaries were given the land that was at a reasonable distance away from areas of ancestral veneration and from any easy interaction with the local people. The basic point here is that any interaction with missionaries in every area amongst the Hehe depended so much on what the local leader felt about missionaries. This has happened in Muhanga as seen in 4.3. The local leader's permission was the major breakthrough.

The third observation was to test the medicine. It should be remembered that prior to modern health clinics, people went to diviners and herbalists. The only people who could test the new medicine that was advertised were either the sub-chief's assistants or the chief himself depending on the seriousness of the matter. In this case, it was the sub-chief who made the test. This observation tells more than what we could imagine. The Hehe of Ilula met and discussed about the new dispensary and the presence of missionaries and how they should relate to them. On serious matters, they asked the sub-chief to validate the genuineness of what was transpiring among them. The word that was proclaimed by the chief's messengers was a result of the experiment. The sub-chief was satisfied with the missionaries' endeavours in the medical service. There are many cases where missionaries and church leaders have convinced themselves that people accept them instead of their local leaders. The notion is not true. Africans never despise their local leaders without proper reasons. Even in evangelisation, local leaders have an important role to play.

Our fourth and final observation is the inundation of the dispensary just the next day. This tells us that people were eager to go to the new dispensary but the Hehe evaluate a person's judgemental ability from the way the individual gives worth to the community. When new events or phenomena occur in the society, the Hehe approach them as a community. When it comes to

a point where an individual decision is necessary, the Hehe say "*ulugahaga*" ("the matter is in your own hands").

The dispensary was inundated because people wanted to go to the new dispensary on the motivation from the quest of acquiring knowledge and new alternatives of life and overcoming disease. However, the sub-chief knew that a day would come where he would be unpopular and lose control if people went to the dispensary without his consent. He was the only person who could speak on behalf of the community and in that way retain power and control even in the new state of affairs.

From the dispensary, Uhlin became popular and she was accepted in the society more than the male missionaries, namely Martin Nordfeldt and Carlson. Uhlin narrated another story that showed how she was used by God and the community for God's mission.

She claimed that she had a vision at night that directed her to buy two bags of salt. In that vision, she was directed to take the salt to a certain rock nearby, fill her hands with the salt and stretch them out. She did that on the next morning at about ten o'clock. She closed her eyes and stretched out her hands for about half an hour; then some people took the salt from her hands. She opened her eyes and saw no more salt in her hands. A few minutes later, there was laughter of children who yelled, "*Chumvi, chumvi, chumvi*" ("salt, salt, salt"). Then all of a sudden there was a crowd of children asking for more salt, to take to their mothers. It was not long before the mothers came with their cloths and small baskets to collect salt. From them she made many friends.

This was the second major breakthrough. Uhlin started telling stories about Jesus Christ. Children and women listened to her as she preached each day. She taught them short songs like "*Mungu ni pendo apenda watu*" ("God is love, God loves people") (Uhlin 1996: 61-65; 07-10-1997: Upsalla). Besides the dispensary and salt story Uhlin became popular and visited people when they had communal farming. The Hehe liked her because she had become a friend.

Three aspects are clear from our previous section. In Uhlin we see the mission of love, service and the propagation of the gospel. We see how she complied with her calling and God's commission. The motivation for conversion is seen in the validity of love and service.

There are many stories that indicate that the initial encounter between missionaries and the Hehe was for learning what Christianity and Christian mission meant. Through that learning exercise, missionaries knew how to relate and speak to the Hehe and the Hehe learnt about the new religion and God who was proclaimed in that religion. They learnt about salvation and its history, about Jesus and the Holy Spirit and about God's calling for salvation to all people. They learnt about God's love, reconciliation, sin, faith and repentance. Luther's Small Catechism guided catechumens in lessons that led to baptism (Uhlin 07-10-1997: Uppsala; Msola 11-07-1999: Ilula).

Out of these two stories from Uhlin, we can see four aspects that the Hehe wanted to know. In the donkey story the chief wanted to know whether it was necessary to consult a diviner and whether the white girl had the powers of the diviner. Uhlin thought that the chief admired her service and the medical care that she gave to the donkey. We think the sub-chief admired the divination that was done easily and without sacrifice. Even today, a common Hehe who goes for medical treatment would not say "I have been well attended to or treated", but would say "The divination has been well performed" (*"Alagwe kunoga wuli"*). The announcement to his subjects that people should go to the young white girl for treatment was not because the chief trusted white medication but because he had found validity in modern medicine and that his power and that of diviners was not threatened. Uhlin was in fact equated with herbalists. Diviners were still consulted when there were severe cases. The white young girl would treat simple diseases like boils, diarrhoea, common headache and common fever.

### ***5.3.2 The New Faith in Role Reclassification and Reallocation***

We have seen what Uhlin did through medical service and evangelistic activities. This sub-section discusses the ministry of prayer to the sick and how it has helped many adherents of AR to understand Christianity. Besides serving people through medical activities ELCT Iringa Diocese has adopted the practice of praying for the sick (Swedish student-Kihesa). Ngimba and Kashina (18-02-1999: Mbuyuni) expressed their experiences as adherents of AR who turned to Christianity through prayer. Kashina and Ngimba had consulted many diviners, they had consulted ancestors many times and performed rituals and offered sacrifice many times. They hoped that they would be healed one day but the expected healing was not achieved.

#### **5.3.2.1 Jesus is more than a Diviner: Ngimba's Story and its Critique**

The interview with Ngimba took place on 18<sup>th</sup> February 1998 at Mtera. More than twenty members of the congregation were present. Together with the researcher were the research assistants, Phoebe Msigomba and Alfred Somela. Pastor Aikam Chavala and Harran Ngedede also attended the session as leaders of the congregation. The interview was participatory. Ngimba was responding to the first, second and thirteenth questions of appendix VIIA. The questions were as follows: 1. How did your conversion take place? 2. Who were the people who preached to you? 13. What were the motivations of the Hehe to convert to Christianity?

Ngimba's healing was not new to the congregation. Members of the congregation encouraged him to give his story. The researcher and his assistants wrote it and made a review in his presence and the rest of the people who were around to check whether it was properly recorded.

This information was chosen because it showed that Ngimba was an adherent of AR who knew about Christianity. There was no specific person who preached to him as a way of enticing him to convert to Christianity. However,

his co-existence with Christians helped him to hear about Jesus Christ and God's healing power. One could say his conversion to Christianity was self motivated or divinely initiated.

Ngimba's healing took place in Mtera. Ngimba claimed that he had offered sheep, goats, chicken, cows and clothes to the diviners and went from one herbalist to another but the expected healing was not achieved. Even though he was an adherent of AR Ngimba decided to try the church for a healing prayer. The healing prayer was offered and he was advised to go for check up to the nearest clinic. He did as he was instructed. Ngimba claimed that he received the healing on the same day when the healing prayer was conducted. He said, "I felt something like hot steam moving fast from my feet to my head then I was all at once relieved" (Ngimba 18-02-1998:Mbuyuni). He claimed further that he went to the clinic just because he wanted to obey the instructions of those who ministered him. Upon receiving healing, he decided to convert to Christianity. Being the head of the family he had to forfeit his family priestly roles of leading during the family rituals and sacrifices. His wife was amazed of his decision. He enticed his wife and children to follow him.

A concise analysis to the story showed that Ngimba had heard about the *healing prayer ministry* that was frequently done in the church. The kind of healing which Ngimba received has been practised in the Iringa Diocese since 1985. Prior to that such healings were uncommon. The normal treatment routine for a sick person in Iringa would depend on the religious belief. A Christian would be expected to go to a modern clinic (dispensary or hospital). Some Christians would simply use herbs for diseases that have been classified as common ones. Other Christians would consult herbalists although some churches prohibit their members to consult herbalists. All churches in Tanzania prohibit or discourage their church members to consult diviners.

The common routine of treatment for adherents of AR would start with the use of herbs. If the disease would persist an herbalist would be consulted. If

the herbalist would not treat the disease, either a modern clinic or a diviner would be consulted. Ngimba had consulted many diviners and modern clinics simultaneously without success.

The healing prayer ministry was introduced in the Iringa Diocese with the intention of responding to the request of many Christians who did not want to consult diviners or those who wanted to consult diviners but were prohibited by the church discipline. Some Christians claimed that they were demon possessed and modern medical treatment was not able to heal them. Many of those who have been ministered through the healing prayer have claimed that they have received healing. Some church members have claimed that they have received healing even with incurable diseases such as cancer. Such healings require deep faith in the healing power of God.

Opting for a healing prayer ministry for Ngimba would be described as the last resort that arose from "a complete trust in the power of God, especially the power to heal" (Brown 1978:409). One could ask: How could an adherent of AR trust in the Christian God? That question has been answered in the second, third and fourth chapters that the Hehe believe in one God, the same God who is believed by Christians. The main difference between AR and Christianity is the mediation. In Christianity Jesus Christ is the mediator between people and God while in AR; Africans believe that the ancestors stand as mediators between them and God. According to Siyovelwa (04-03-1999:Iringa), the ancestors mediate between the "living" and God in the way that is known only to God and ancestors. This assertion retains the notion of a hidden God. According to the Hehe, Ngimba had come to a point where he said "*nyela iyi Nguluvi*" (Well! God alone has the answer). This is comparable to the last sentence of page 43. Ngimba had come to a point where he believed that his disease was beyond human knowledge and only God had the final solution. Ngimba decided to consult the Lord of ultimate power through the church who would respond "to the call of human faith" (Brown:409)



### 5.3.2.2 Jesus is the Healing Stream: Kashina's Story and its Critique

Kashina is another person who had a healing experience. Kashina is a woman who had suffered from a number of diseases for more than fifteen years. She had no priestly roles like Ngimba but she had leadership roles as the first wife of Selele. Like Ngimba, she had consulted many diviners and had offered much out of her livestock and poultry. According to the information that she gave during the fieldwork, she had paid more than thirty goats, fifteen chicken, five sheep and one cow but there was no recovery. Two of her children died despite the sacrifice of two goats for the first one and three goats and a sheep for the second one, but all was in vain.

One day she was enticed to go to a Lutheran evangelistic seminar where pastors and other assistants would pray for her and her children who had survived. Kashina asked permission from her polygamous husband but he completely refused and threatened to beat and even divorce her if she dared to attend the Christian seminar. It should be remembered that we cited in the third chapter (3.3, p.165-167) that it is not usual for the Hehe and even Maasai to prohibit someone to listen to the Word of God. Kashina's husband prohibited his wife because he guessed that if his wife attended the seminar for the whole week she would definitely be enticed to seek the prayer-healing ministry. While the seminar was going on Kashina got was seriously ill. One of the diviners suggested that she should borrow a cow from the younger wives and offer a sacrifice for better treatment. Kashina did not concur to the suggestion instead she asked for such help from her sister who was a Christian. Her sister reported the matter to her husband who then took the matter to the local civil leader.<sup>28</sup> The local civil leader advised Kashina's husband to allow her to try her luck in the church and if he found it unworthy he could do whatever he wanted. Kashina's husband, named Selele, accepted on the condition that if the healing did not take place Kashina should never return home. Kashina was taken on a

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<sup>28</sup> *Lunanzi* were the local traditional civil leaders who headed at least twenty to fifty families.

stretcher to the seminar. Selele ordered all Kashina's children, boys and girls, to accompany their mother and come back only if she was healed. The order was followed. Kashina was kept in one of the church sacristy rooms while the Word of God was preached. When healing prayer time came Kashina was taken out of the room and brought to the sanctuary. The healing prayer was conducted for her and she got healed. She said,

*Niligundua na nilisikia watu walioanza kuomba, Lakini baadaye kuna kitu kilitokea. Nilijisikia usingizi nikalala. Akaja kijana mmoja akaninyunyuzia maji ya baridi sana na mara nikashtuka, nikaamka nikagundua kuwa nilikuwa naomberwa ila yule kijana akawa haonekani. Nikauliza, "yuko wapi?" Wakasema "nani?" Nikasema "yule kijana aliyoninyunyuzia maji ya baridi sana na mazuri mno". Wakaniambia "hakuna mtu kama huyo". Nilianza kulia kwa nguvu sana maana nilitamani kumwona yule kijana maana maji aliyoninyunyuzia yaliniburudisha mno. Nilisimama nikatembea nikaona watoto wangu na ndugu zangu wanafurahi na wengine wanalia nikajua Ahaaa, nimepona! Furaha tuliyokuwa nayo haielezeki. Waombaji waliniambia wimbo unaosema "Pana jito lina maji mazuri" (Kashina 18-02-2004).*

(I noticed and heard when they started the prayer, and then something went wrong. I felt asleep and I had a dream. One young man came and sprinkled very cold water on me and I got shocked, I woke up and I remembered that people were praying for me but that young man was not one of them. I asked, "Where is he?" They replied, "Who?" I said, "That young man who sprinkled on me the coldest water ever that was also the most soothing". They said, "there is no one like him here". I started crying loudly because I wanted to see that young man. The water he sprinkled on me was highly reinvigorating. I stood on my feet, stretched myself and walked along the aisle back and forth yelling in joy. I saw my children and relatives, some were crying in joy and others were so joyful. The joy that filled us was comprehension. The congregation burst out in exuberating glorification to God singing, "O have you not heard of the Stream?" (Song from Torrey B. Jr. : Sunday School Union 1870 originally, *Ich weise einen Strom* ). Translated by the researcher.

Immediately, Kashina asked whether she could be baptised but the pastor was hesitant. She persisted that she would not go home without baptism.

Pastors consulted each other for some minutes and finally agreed to baptise her and her children. This is what she said concerning her healing and baptism,

There is no experience that I will ever compare to that of my healing and there is no name that I will ever give honour to than the name of Jesus. There is nothing that I will ever compare with the love of God. The only words I heard before I fell asleep were "*Kwa jina la Yesu pokea uponyaji, Yesu anakupenda. Mungu anakupenda. Mungu anataka kukuokoa*". ("In the name of Jesus receive the healing. Jesus loves you. God loves you. God wants to save you") (Kashina 18-02-1998:Mbuyuni).

As dusk approached Kashina walked back home with her children full of health and joy. The bed in which she was carried was left at the church. Selele could not believe his eyes and ears. He abandoned Kashina and her children for more than three months and when she came back they were all well and happy. Selele tried to challenge Kashina by asking her to denounce Jesus Christ or accept divorce. Kashina responded and I quote in her own words, "If I have to deny my healer for a husband then I'd rather divorce" (Kashina 18-02-1998: Mbuyuni).<sup>29</sup> Selele did not divorce but they separated for three years then Selele returned to Kashina and asked for baptism as well. When Selele was asked about his baptism as compared to the torture that he had inflicted on his wife he said,

Jesus is the only man who has won my soul. He has been speaking to me for all these three years through dreams and meetings with Christians. I hated Christians for those three years but one day a young man came at night in white clothes and asked, "why do you hate me, I healed your wife". I went to diviners and they said they knew that the man was Jesus. I went to the pastor and he said the same. I asked my friends and they said the same. I had to accept baptism (Selele 18-02-1998:Mbuyuni).

Selele added that one of the things that made him resist baptism was the condition that he would have to divorce his other wives. That fear was unfounded because the church did not tell him to do so. Selele and Kashina are

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<sup>29</sup> Divorce is one of the bitterest experiences in Africa. Instead of divorce men are encouraged to take more wives or leave the wife alone with her children. The philosophy is that if marriage does not work with one wife take a second one and if it does not work with two take three and so on.

Maasai because he belongs the Maasai tribe, which the church has permitted those who are already in polygamy to be accepted for baptism without divorcing the later wives. The practice of divorcing other wives is another anomaly in the Lutheran Church that has been discussed in the previous chapter.

A critique to the story shows an example of a woman who did not recoil from her new faith even under the threat of abandonment and divorce. We are also shown how pastors and other church members became instruments of God's calling to that woman, her children and her husband. Persistence in faith is one aspect, which we learn in these two examples, but the other aspect is the persistence of doing God's mission and expecting God to fulfil that mission in his own way.

In responding to the question of how she compared AR and Christianity she said, "My eyes are opened and they will close only at death. Christ is my salvation, my healing and my leader" (Kashina 18-02-1997: Mbuyuni). One could say, naturally, Kashina is a true example of the theology of the cross. The young man is presupposed to Jesus Christ who came to her with the invigorating water. God made a self-revelation through the name and the love of Jesus Christ and the will of God to save. In responding to a question of what she liked most in the church she said,

I like to hear that Christ loves me because when I was sick I was told that God was angry with me that was why my sacrifices and rituals did not work. In my healing I paid nothing and I did nothing. Other people prayed and a young man from the unknown healed me and ran away. Oh, that young man until today he has not returned. I love Jesus! (Kashina 18-02-1998: Mbuyuni).

The validation of the new religious faith as seen from the conversion stories of Ngimba, Kasina and Selele indicate that it came through the new awareness about God's activity. God remained unchanged and the belief in God from AR perspective was confirmed through Christ that God existed, always present in power and one who acts faithfully. The same God who was, and still

is, believed in AR showed that He was and still is, the God who is not far but near. The nearness of God in AR was not directly expressed. The indirect expression was that of *Nguluvi pwali* (God is present or has a presence) (Cf. 2.3.2 p.43). In the case of Kashina, the young man was Jesus Christ. In her responses she showed that she believed in the presence and appearance of God through the young man who sprinkled water on her and healed her. It was difficult for her to perceive that other people did not see the young man. She cried bitterly because she wanted to get hold of the exceptional young man but he was not tangible but one who acts concretely.

Kashina had sacrificed and performed rituals to ancestors and consulted diviners. Jesus Christ happened to perform the role of ancestors and diviners and was more successful, effective and efficient than theirs. These observations should not be interpreted that the diviners and ancestors were invalidated. As an alternative, their roles were reclassified. It became apparent that the role of ancestors remains to be the unity of the family but as far as ritual and sacrifice are concerned and as far as the role of healing the sick. That kind of role was allocated to Jesus Christ.

For the Kashina family Jesus Christ did exactly what they expected from *Nguluvi* (God) whenever they sacrificed and performed rituals. They expected God to do what Christian theology calls salvation and what the Hehe called "*wima kunoga*" (salvation). Healing diseases that had proven impossible and as Selele said, "Silencing the sorcerers and bring the fear of sorcery and witchcraft to obliteration" (Selele 18-02-1998:Mbuyuni) was indeed the message of salvation based on the God's activity through Jesus Christ.

The other validation of the new religious faith was the affirmation of the spiritual realm in which the Hehe believed. The Hehe believe in a cosmology where the spiritual realm is a living reality. The belief in the spiritual realm validates the presence of the Holy Spirit, which is the Spirit of *Nguluvi*, who is the Supreme Being and whom Christian theology taught was the Living God.

The very God who has always been believed in AR and was the God who was preached by the Christians in a new approach was being manifested in the church in Mbuyuni.

The other way of validating the new religious faith could be described as that of Ngimba, which require some *pneumatological* investigation. In Luke 7:10 we find a centurion's slave being healed through some kind of "remote control". Jesus Christ did not enter or even visit the centurion's house but he just ordered the healing and it happened in the very moment in which Jesus Christ ordered. The narrative of Ngimbas healing shows that something happened but there is no scientific explanation to it.

Ostensibly, a *pneumatological* response is found in John 4:24 where Jesus Christ said, "God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and truth" (NIV 1989 Version). The simple interpretation from a Hehe context is that those worshipers at Mbuyuni believed that they were assembling in the Spirit of God and wanted to worship God in spirit. They believed in the nearest presence of God as well as the most remote presence of God. God was in Mbuyuni and Mtera. The Spirit of the Living God was in full command at Mbuyuni and Mtera. Such an awareness of God's activity is also seen in John 4:43-53. In verses 49-53, it shows that the official believed in what Jesus had said that the official's son would be healed and it happened as Jesus had said at the same moment even though Jesus was far away. *Pneumatologically* the Hehe believe that there is power in what God pronounces. Christianity teaches that there is power in faith. Bonding the two together, we postulate that faith in God affirms the power of the Holy Spirit that is present everywhere and is active whenever people call upon the name of Jesus Christ.

### 5.3.2.3 Ngimba and Kashina Stories': The Validation of the New Faith

One could also argue from the perspective of tensions between Christianity and AR. The validation of the new religious faith can also be

observed in the interface of religious and social control from that of the ancestral line to that of Jesus Christ. The tension between traditional leadership and the new leadership set-up in the eve of introducing Christianity amongst the Hehe is exemplified in the Uhafiwa case study as narrated in 2.5.2, pp. 81-86. Accordingly, the power encounter at Uhafiwa was to do with the quest for power and control over and against the tide of changes, which were taking place in the society. The presence of the church school introduced a system where children were no longer answerable to parents alone even if parents needed their children during school days for AR rituals or divination. This system threatened the power and control of local traditional authorities. Local authorities did not want to give up their power and control to the new way of social control. The tension went to an extent where a power encounter was inevitable. However, this encounter motivated many Hehe people to convert to Christianity.

The researcher is partly in agreement with the way Nurnberger expresses the presence of Christianity among the Basotho but also partly in disagreement with the use of the phrase "manipulation of dynamistic power hitherto unknown to them" as stated hereafter,

In the first place the Basotho encountered the Christian faith as the life force of a new community. ... The Basotho were frightened by this new power. At the same time, they were intrigued by it. It seemed to open a new realm of manipulation of dynamistic power hitherto unknown to them (Nurberger 1975:192)

We could simply change the Basotho and put the Hehe in the quotation above but we could also change the term "manipulation" and put "manifestation", which would be in agreement with what was observed in fieldwork amongst the Hehe. The researcher interviewed three Hehe diviners namely, Kilovele (18-07-2003: Itimbo), Lwanzali (29-10-2003: Ilula) and Ngasakwa (16-08-2003: Lusinga). All three were once baptised in the Roman Catholic and Lutheran Churches. Kilovele and Ngasakwa were baptised in the Roman Catholic Church and Lwanzali was baptised in the Lutheran Church, but all

three left the church and opted to concentrate on divination. All three diviners acknowledge that divination and ancestral rituals were for the Hehe some kind of “Old Covenant”. Kilovele asked, “What else could people do when there was no hospital or church? Who else could confront the sorcerers and witches and witchdoctors other than ancestors and diviners?” (10-07-2003: Itimbo). Lwanzali, who mixes Christian teaching and his so-called “ancestral spiritual revelations” said, “*Avanu vavisaka uwima kunoga*” (People are always in search of being well) (29-10-2003). By using the term *wima kunoga* Lwanzali used the Christian term that means salvation. Ngasakwa said, *Nyenyene na hwehwe twatukusaka ing’asi yeyifulwike yitange avanu avakutedzeka* (“You and us do seek ways of relieving people who are suffering”) (16-08-2003). What Ngasakwa was saying has both positive and negative connotations. It is true that amidst suffering people look for salvation but if Christianity and divination were both offering salvation then the three diviners would not have left the church.

Many people who converted from AR to Christianity have different opinions to those of Kilovele, Lwanzali and Ngasakwa. According to most of them, the difference between the Christian perspective of God and that of AR is “the way” (Kalenga 08-10-2003:Ilogombe, Yohana Chusi 02-07- 2003 and Mbembe 08—07-2003:Pommern). The researcher had an interview with another person who was also a member of the Roman Catholic Church but who left and decided to be a diviner. The diviner named A. Mdenying’afu said,

*Nyenyene nye vakilisiti muna luwole lwe mwakukola. Ilisoka lyenyu lyemutige Yesu Kilisiti; Ha mukwi ana ludali. Avaloma vaitala ukusuka kwa Uyuve va Yesu vatige Malia. Uyo alikibakiba. Neke wone vatambule Yesu, nda mukwi ipo nambi ke widehwe yu tinuka .Nda simwaideta uyo Muswamuve va Nguluvi (A. Mdenying’afu 28.10.2003: Wotalisoli).* (You Christians have a different a way in which you pass. Your Spirit, whom you call Jesus Christ, is indisputably powerful. Romans (Catholics) ask the mother of Jesus first, they call her Mary; well she is tolerable. But, once Jesus Christ is mentioned I swear, even if you were not attentive you will be petrified. No you do not cheat us: He is the Son of God) Translated by the researcher.



The researcher wanted to know why these diviners left the church. Lwanzali said he had been not only a member of the church but also a lay preacher for twelve years. He was also a political leader for twelve years. The spirit of divination entered him without his will. However, the spirit of divination told him that his life as a member of the church and as a preacher rendered him nothing but poor. His life as a political leader also rendered him poor. That "spirit of divination" told him that he would be a rich person with many cows. He confirmed that now he has many cows and more money than during the time when he reached and participated in political leadership. He is a registered member of the Ilula congregation and makes his annual pledges, he gives his harvest offerings and his wives and children are baptised.

Lwanzali had a very long explanation of the way in which the divination spirit entered him and how he does his work. In brief, it is true that Lwanzali did not intend to become a diviner but he was in contact with diviners frequently and for a long time. There were times of trouble when he contacted diviners and confessed to church leaders. The researcher, albeit a human being, but one who has to make logical deductions made an inference to what might have been in his heart. As he had frequent long-term visits, contacts and consultations with diviners, he saw how diviners got money. He found out that all diviners were rich and powerful people in the society. It is presumable that when "the spirit" told him that he had wasted his time as a preacher and as a politician, he was convinced and wanted to become rich but he does not want to abandon the church completely.

Mdenying'afu and Kilovele happen to be cousins. They share common grand parents. Mdenying'afu's father was a diviner, but baptised his son by the name Aloyce when he was young because her mother was a Christian. Kilovele's mother is Mdenying'afu's aunt and a herbalist. Kilovele's father was an assistant to a diviner. Kilovele was also baptised at a young age by the name of Alberto. These two cousins are of the same age. The researcher deduced from

the interview that both of them came to a point where they admired diviners because of their power, social status, spiritual inspirations and wealth. The two are well off. Kilovele said, "*Nda bela tulinguwo wuhono*" ("Yes we well wrapped in cotton wool") (18-07-2003).<sup>30</sup>

Ngasakwa admitted that he was not the one to inherit the divination spirits from his matrilineal uncle. His brother was the one chosen by the spirits but he refused completely, even under severe punishment. Therefore he inherited the spirits and all medical appliances from his uncle Ngamulagosi, known by his famous surname "Mwamugoba". On the verge of death Mwamugoba wanted an heir. The spirits denied all of his sons and daughters. It went to Mwamugoba's sister who was married to Ngasakwa's father and wanted one of Ngasakwa's sons who happened to be an evangelist. This is the one who refused. His younger brother accepted. The motivation, according to the researcher, was just like the other three namely, power, social status, wealth, spiritual inspirations and social admiration.

Having said why the four diviners left the church we want to analyse the assertion above by Mdenying'afu concerning the Christian "way and Spirit" over and against the "*lisoka lya muganga*" ("spirit of divination"). Mdenying'afu has said much in the above quotation.

Christians understand that Jesus Christ speaks to God directly. Mdenying'afu describes Jesus Christ as "*lisoka lyenyu*", which in concrete terms means "your ancestral spirit". Adherents of AR and diviners believe that Jesus Christ is an ancestral spirit. According to Christian faith Jesus was born, he lived among people, he has a clan and a family. Adherents of AR and especially diviners say the sonship of Jesus Christ is in the hands of God. The informants of Isagwa and all four diviners said "*ulo manyi yimwene Nguluvi*" ("That is up to God", cf. 3.2-Nguluvi is *Manyi yimwene*). Nevertheless, Christians believe and teach that Jesus Christ died and rose from the dead. From death, he appeared in

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<sup>30</sup> This is an idiom, which in Hehe means "we have all what we need".

a supernatural manner then he went to his father and sent his *iLisoka Ilimike* (Holy Spirit). Adherents of AR call the Holy Spirit *iLisoka Ilimike*, which literally means the “unfailing ancestral Spirit”. Hehe and Bena Christians use the term *uMubepo Umwimike* but *umubepo* is closer to *mapepo*, which are malevolent spirits. On the contrary, *amasoka* or *lisoka* is benevolent and protects the clan or family. Thus *umubepo* for the Holy Spirit is a mistranslation. Unfortunately, translators of the Bible avoided the nearness of the translation between AR and Christianity just to bring a term that is closer to Swahili but vague in daily application.

Adherents of AR believe that the God of AR is the same God for Christians. They also believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God whose life, suffering, death, the visit to the dead (ancestor) and resurrection, followed by ascension and the sending of the Holy Spirit directly qualifies him as the most powerful and most articulate ancestor. The Holy Spirit for adherents of AR is none other than the Spirit of the Living God revealed and sent through God’s son Jesus Christ. It is also deeply rooted in AR among the Hehe that the real son adheres to what the father does and the ancestral spirits are in the lineage of the father and the son. Therefore, it is not strange that God sent his son and the Son, upon attaining ancestral power, sent the Spirit.

### ***5.3.3 Peace, Security and Power Retention in the wave of Modernity***

Scholars have written about the slave trade, colonisation and exploration as practised by Arabs and Europeans. Much has also been written about missionaries as agents of colonialism and the negative effects thereof. Not much has been written about African tyranny, economic exploitation, and the ruthlessness of chiefs, gender imbalance, domestic violence and deprivation of justice and basic human rights. Neither has much been written about impaired relations between clans and families. Some of the problems recur in this age, such as civil wars and tribal or ethnic discrimination. African culture and social setting as well as AR have been for most of the time presented as clean and pure.

Colonisation has been in most cases referred to from the time of the Berlin Conference in 1884-85. Studies show that East Africa experienced colonisation and economic exploitation with the notorious slave trade since the beginning of the fifteenth century. Arabs mainly from Persia occupied the East Coast of Africa during the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries. By the 15<sup>th</sup> century, they had established themselves as traders, colonial rulers and estate farm owners. Their goal was not focused on religious conversion. Slavery was at its full bloom and the slave trade was picking up fast. The information henceforth shows how Africans were colonised and exploited for a long time before the eve of official Christianisation and colonisation.

By 1400, the inhabitants can be considered as falling into three classes in most of the important settlements. The ruling class was of mixed Arab and African ancestry, brown in colour, well read in the faith of Islam. Such would probably be also landowners, skilled artisans, and most of the religious functionaries and merchants. Inferior to them (in many cases in a state of slavery) were pureblood Africans who performed menial tasks and tilled the fields (Hildebrant 1987:51-52).

Africans have had long historical experience of subjugation from foreign powers that have always taken colonisation and even enslavement together with religion. African chiefs were used to selling their fellow Africans to servitude or slavery. Both chiefs and civilians who were victimised have been looking for authentic living. Christianity came and started liberating slaves. That was one motivation to convert to Christianity for those who were freed and those who wanted to run away from victimisation. The Hehe were not sold to slavery but they had other bitter experiences that motivated them to convert to Christianity, as we shall see later. However, Hehe chiefs, especially Mkwawa, (refer to the first chapter, 1.5 p.15) was involved in selling slaves who were either war captives or people who were ambushed from other tribes.

On the one hand, this section tries to demonstrate how Christian missionaries were used to protect power, as agents of security and as agents of

community development and modern living. On the other hand, it demonstrates how the Hehe and Bena who were grouped together by German missionaries, were motivated to accept Christianity as one way of coping with the new powers of religion, politics, economics, new knowledge, new medical services and new authorities.

### **5.3.3.1 Missionaries for Peace, Security and Power Retention**

The lines that divide the concepts of liberation, human rights, freedom, peace, justice and salvation are either too thin or unnoticeable in African philosophy, thus one cannot think about salvation without the other concepts. Let us consider one example of a political situation where unrest abounded.

The Bena people do not have a fighting culture, but tribes that had a fighting culture surrounded it. To the North were the Hehe; to the South were the Ngoni who had migrated from South Africa (Ebner 1987:51-54 and 61-62). To the East were the Ndamba and Pogoro who protected themselves strongly through diviners. To the West were the Sangu who were like the Ngoni and Hehe. Think of the Bena. They lived in an avalanche of crises such as tribal wars, famine, migration, threats of sorcery within the tribal settings and the surrounding tribes.

On the one hand, the Bena were surrounded by trouble, on the other hand, the Hehe and their fighting contemporaries were not at peace. They were full of anxiety, fear, mistrust, hatred and projected enmity within the tribe because a fighting culture has an enemy within and outside its boundaries. Peace is normally not so much expected in a society where men, young and old, die because of war every year. Fighting societies live under suspicion within themselves and with their neighbours. This was the case with the Hehe and the other tribes that surrounded them such as the Bena.

Studies from the Berlin Mission archive as found in Koebler (1998:4) show that Ngela, the Bena chief, called German missionaries to work in his area and

convert people to Christianity because he was fed up with the unrest of fighting chiefs around him. According to Nyagava, S. (1999:79) the Hehe ambushed the Bena and took them as captives in order to sell them into slavery or to subject them to unpaid servitude at the Hehe chiefs' headquarters. Bunk said,

The Bena were severely oppressed and their rights grossly abused by the Hehe, Ngoni and Sangu for a lengthy period. They were frequently attacked. They therefore sought for ways to live in peace, and finally resolved to work in solidarity with German missionaries. Chief Ngela of Kidugala sent a message to missionaries (on 3<sup>rd</sup> May 1897) at Ikombe, asking missionaries to go and work in his area. When they delayed to go he sent one hundred and forty three (143) men to Ikombe, in June 1897[sic] to stay there until such time that the missionaries were ready to go and establish a station in Kidugala. Missionaries, Bunk, Groeschel, Priebusch and Neuberg went to Kidugala through the mountains of the Kinga (Bunk 1898, in Koebler 1998:2).<sup>31</sup>

Chief Ngela and Kiswaga agreed to call Lutheran missionaries from Berlin who were already in the neighbouring Nyakyusa and Kinga tribes so that they could be protected from tribal wars of the Hehe, Ngoni and Sangu. They also wanted political stability in their area and for their citizens. Political stability meant certainty of cultivation, protection from slave trade raids, missionary education for the Bena, granting of permission for missionary medical attention and assurance of peace in the society. It is thus evident that Chief Ngela and Kiswaga wanted missionaries to retain and protect their power and authority. They found that they would lose nothing, but instead benefit from what

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<sup>31</sup> The quotation above needs some clarification. Records do not show exactly how long these people from Ngela stayed in Ikombe but Groeschel's daily notes show that the journey from Ikombe to Kidugala started on 1<sup>st</sup> July 1898 with those one hundred and forty three men (143) arriving at Kidugala on 15<sup>th</sup> July 1898 (Groeschel as translated by Schimanowski 20.02.1997:Iringa). This, according to Koebler implies that the Bena contingent remained in Ikombe for almost a year (Koebler 1998:2). The information from Koebler is not right because the normal journey from Ikombe to Kidugala by short cuts through the mountains takes four days but due to the jungle of those days, it might have taken ten to fourteen days. Additionally, Koebler himself shows that a one-way journey took fifteen days. With this in mind, Schimanowski seems to be right that the Bena contingent remained at Ikombe for less than one month (about two to three weeks) and left with the missionaries to Kidugala. The date according to Schimanowski is 1898, which is in agreement with the records from Groeschel as translated by Koebler himself. The year 1897 by Koebler might be a typographical error.

missionaries would do in their chiefdoms. The fact that their subjects would become Christians did not matter so much to them so long as they remained in power. This is postulated from the observation that none of the chiefs converted to Christianity. There are explanations that they could not be baptised because of polygamy but most of the Bena and Hehe who were baptised had to do away with polygamy. Why not the chiefs? Moreover, the researcher has observed that the same chiefs who called missionaries participated in *Majimaji*<sup>32</sup> uprising against all whites including missionaries. This will be elaborated further in the next chapter.

### 5.3.3.2 Search for Human Rights

Turning to the Hehe, the situation among them was not different from many other African communities. For example, chiefs had the right to human life. They could give orders for people to die without allowing the possibility for self-defence or for the chief to establish enough evidence that would lead to a death sentence. In addition, chiefs had excessive powers that included the right to take properties from their subjects as penalty for suspected disobedience (Mkemwa E. 14-08-1997:Iplamwa).

There were other injustices that people experienced and from which they wanted to be free. For example, the most beautiful woman, young or adult, married or unmarried, was subject to be taken to the chief's headquarters as long as, and whenever, the chief willed. Most of the beautiful girls were taken to the chief's headquarters known as *kwifuge* (to live under constriction), where they had to dance, sing and serve the chief, his wives and children without any wage. Some were forced to marry the chiefs or their assistants and army commanders. Tuhuvilage Mkemwa had her buttocks burnt with *misonogo* (hot and sharp thin

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<sup>32</sup> *Majimaji* literally means nothing else but water. This was an expression that was used by a diviner called Kinjeketile (1905-1907) who enticed people in Southern Tanzania, especially in Ruvuma and Iringa Regions to rise up against all whites. Lutheran and Catholic missionaries were counted among the whites. Kinjeketile sprinkled some "black magic" to the fighters, which he claimed that it would turn the bullets of the whites into water. The claim was false because when Africans fought the whites the bullets killed them.

iron rods used to make holes in wood), because she refused to marry one of the chief's close associates (Elizabeth Mkwawa 14-08-1997: Ipalamwa). The researcher was once told that Mkwawa's commanders took one of his aunts as she was returning from fetching water just because she was pale brown and beautiful. No one knows what happened to her until today (Moses Mdegela 15-02-1991: Ipalamwa). These experiences are not very different from what Samuel the prophet and judge had warned the Israelites about the King that they demanded.

He will take your daughters to be perfumers and cooks and bakers. He will take the best of your fields and vineyards and olive orchards and give them to his servants. He will take the men servants and maidservants, and the best of your cattle and your asses, and put them to his work. He will take the tenth of your flocks and you shall be his slaves (1Sam. 8:13-17)

Leveru (22-08-2002) described how some women in the Pare tribe experienced much bitterness because children who were born outside of wedlock were killed. Albinos had to die at an age of one to two years. Albinos were counted as signs of curse or calamity and they were not introduced to ancestors. Albinos who were known on the day of their birth were slain on the spot and declared as still-children. Some midwives waited until they grew up to six months or above, in order to prove that they were not simply lighter in complexion or born with blue eyes but that they were truly albinos. Upon approval, such children were killed by poison. Midwives were instructed to kill children who were born with disabilities. Children who were born with teeth or signs of teeth had to die because they were perceived as *uchuro* (ill omen).

Other practices were counted as religious or cultural within the Hehe social setting, but were economically exploitative. Before and even during the early colonial days African chiefs exploited their subjects on the pretext of culture and respect. It was common to hear that the best of the livestock or poultry belonged to the chief. The best part of the land belonged to the chief.



The best yield of the fields, gardens and forests belonged to the chief. The best part of the meat belonged to the chief (Kimbavala 27-08-1999: Pommern). Young men and women were selected annually to cultivate, weed and harvest for the chief. Some returned home, some did not. Parents and family members considered those who did not return home as lost or dead (Moses Mdegela 15-02-1991: Ipalamwa). The *Mwangwada* clan took care of the chief's cattle without pay. The *Vakami* kinship hunted for the chief. The *Vategeta* were ironsmiths of the chiefs and if they did anything for themselves, they had to seek permission from the chief. These and many more stories of exploitation were known, but the worst part of it is the fact that those people worked without any wage (Martin Mkemwa, Elizabeth Mkemwa, Hosea Chusi, Hammerton Mdegela and Rachel Mgeveke 14-08-1997: Ipalamwa).

The situation was relatively odd because the chief was feared as a half-deity. Nonetheless, the situation changed dramatically after the interaction with Christian missionaries, especially after introducing skills, schools and paid labour. Missionaries hired people such as houseboys and girls, cooks, gardeners, and baby sitters, building assistants, clinic assistants, cleaners and many others as they wished and paid them monthly. Payments were relatively low but they were better than nothing. Moreover, missionaries gave holidays for one month every year to their labourers and assistants. Missionaries did not take food items from people without paying. They bought or exercised some kind of a barter trade (Lungwa 13-12-1998: Isimani).

Let us make an analysis of the motivations for conversion in view of what we have observed so far. Our first approach will be to scrutinize what the Hehe said during fieldwork. Our second approach will be reflected from the religious behaviour. The third approach will be reflected from historical experiences as seen in the wave of modernisation.

Luhwago (02-07-2003: Pommern)<sup>33</sup>, a long-term servant of the church, had the sentiment that the Hehe were motivated to convert to Christianity not because missionaries behaved justly but because Christian teaching pointed towards justice. According to Luhwago, missionaries executed rudimentary justice and human rights. Luhwago added that Christian missionaries condemned some African practices such as those of burying a chief with a live person (cf. 2.4.4, p. 64-65). The researcher wanted to know Luhwago's opinion towards the condemnation. He asked, don't you think missionaries helped us to eradicate that practice? Luhwago reacted with this sentiment,

On the one hand, it is right to say they helped us but on the other hand, what could we say about the incomprehensible injustices, which the white men did to us? Didn't they bury us alive with our children and wives in our own homes? (Luhwago 02-07-2003:Pommern).

The comment from Luhwago was rather hurtful but Dononda (02-07-2003: Pommern) who was present during this interaction said Luhwago has always been very critical of missionaries and had squabbles with them many times. Commenting on what Dononda said, Luhwago reacted with this phrase, "*Be, ikinofu Ilidzwi, neke avanu tulivanu ng'ani, ukutugila kwali yalikiba?*" (Hallow, it is only the Word of God that is right but all of us as human beings are the same, do you think there is anyone better?) This is very clear. Luhwago was motivated by the Word of God, which he heard in his mother tongue. For him Africans and Europeans are the same, no one is better than the other.

Dononda reminded Luhwago that missionaries taught that all people were created in the image of God but Luhwago responded that it was not the missionaries who taught that; it is the Word of God that teaches about equality and the image of God. Luhwago, as radical as he is, added, "Which image of God were they teaching? The Black one or the White one"? Then he emphasised this

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<sup>33</sup> The researcher revisited some of the interviewees to make deeper enquiries of the previous interviews. Luhwago, Dononda and Nyadwike were interviewed in 1999 and 2003.

in the Hehe language saying, "*Nene nige ulwa nachene luli mulidzwi*" ("I affirm, the truth is in the Word"). Luhwago's wife, SeMakongwa opposed her husband saying,

You remember Helemani (Herman Neuberg-the one nicknamed Changelakiki) advocated human rights and the value of human life as God breathed. Didn't he teach about the love of God for all people and that God expected a good neighbourly relationship and mutual respect (Makongwa 02-07- 2003:Pommern).

Luhwago stood by his arguments and asked, "Yes he did teach as you say but do you remember what he told me when I was appointed to be the chief postmaster of the mission. Didn't he say '*kibudibudi kote uwukok?*' ("Bat! Here is the burnt food").<sup>35</sup> As cited before, Neuberg had rude jokes in Hehe and in Bena languages. Perhaps this happened due to the fact that he was so fluent in the two languages to the extent that he was not even able to preach in Swahili. However, some people say Germans do have discourteous jokes even among themselves (Figur 08-07-2003: Dar-es-Salaam). Nonetheless, the idiom meant that Luhwago as an African was proud of the new post, which was equivalent to the food remains of what the whites had consumed.

One would ask, why did Luhwago remain a Christian with such insults? In addition, what was the motivation for Neuberg to be a missionary? These are some of the sentiments that are expressed in the introduction of this thesis. The answers to these questions are three. The link between Neuberg and Luhwago that kept both of them in the church was the translated Word, in the mother tongue of each of them. They met in the church at the foot of the cross of Jesus Christ and worshipped together, and quarrelled frequently then forgave each other daily because the Word of God taught them to do so; given that the call and the will to forgive each other is a Christian virtue (Mtt. 6:12).

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<sup>35</sup> Bat refers to the nocturnal mouse-like flying animal. This joke is very derogative. It symbolizes a person who moves like a bat looking for food remains and cooks do put the burnt food remains outside the kitchen for rats and bats.

Forgiving one another as seen in this discussion is the link of the criteria and the motivations of conversion to Christianity as we illustrate hereafter. The need to forgive and reconcile in Hehe are expressed by two words namely *kudegepela* (forgive) and *kwitepudza* (reconcile). *Kedegepela* arises from an individual's initiative or as a need requested by the family, clan or community leadership, where the offended individual or group is implored to forgive and forget the offence. *Kwitepudza* involves a penalty, which the offender has to pay and it ends with a fellowship meal and shaking of hands.

The case of Luhwago and Neuberg reminds us of another important fact about mission and translation. The researcher is of the opinion that both Neuberg and Luhwago knew that they differed in culture but they did not differ in the need for God's grace. In spite of their differences, they both felt the need to forgive and forget and came to the Holy Communion for a fellowship meal that was prepared by Jesus Christ who paid for the penalty of each of them.

Apparently, we come to one more discovery about mission that arises from the translatability of the message of salvation and the concept of complying with God's calling for mission. The discovery is that other than evangelism, service, love and dialogue mission is also about forgiveness. We presume that we are all in God's mission because we are forgiven sinners who whether we are able or unable to see our own sins and the sins of our brother and sister we are still able to forgive each other. In this perspective, Luther's theology of the cross comes once again. We are in God's mission and we have been motivated to convert to Christianity because we have been enabled to see Jesus Christ at the cross. That is why we are able say with Jesus, "Father, forgive them" (Lk 23:34), and "Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors" (Mt. 6:12).

#### ***5.4 Missio Dei and the Advocacy towards Justice and Human Rights***

We are all aware that the Protestant and Roman Catholic Churches fought against the slave trade in Africa. The first converts in East Africa were freed

slaves (Anderson 1977:9-10). It is possible to give clear explanations of how the Church undertook the work of abolishing the slave trade and how its mission was God's activity for advocating justice and human rights. It is however, very difficult to explain how the same activity by God can liberate people from mystic powers whose dynamics cannot be easily proved. Nevertheless, the narrative that will follow concerns itself with the motivations of Christian conversion and the dynamics of power that made the Church to be the centre to advocate justice and human rights. Advocacy for justice and human rights motivated many people whose security was threatened and who were not given the right to justice and human rights to come in big numbers for Christian conversion.

#### 5.4.1 The Wanyambuda Myth: A threat to Security and Justice

Smedjebacka gave the narrative concerning the *Wanyambuda* on 12<sup>th</sup> July 1997 in Helsinki. This was another case study that was narrated in response to two questions of appendix VIID. The questions were as follows 1. What is your opinion concerning the conversion of Africans from African Religion to Christianity? 7. How would you describe modernity in view of the changes that took place during the conversion of the Wanji? The Wanji were used in this question instead of the Hehe because Smedjebacka worked as one of the pioneer missionaries amongst the Wanji.

The contact information of Pastor Dr Henrick Smedjebacka is [Smedjebacka@felm.org](mailto:Smedjebacka@felm.org) or [www.mission.fi](http://www.mission.fi). Present at the interview were former Finnish missionaries in Tanzania and Namibia as well as some officers of Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission (FELM). Among them was Pastor Erikk Helminen who was by that time the Africa Secretary of FELM. His contact is [erikk.heminnen@evL.fi](mailto:erikk.heminnen@evL.fi). More information concerning Smedjebacka is in appendix IV.

The researcher counterchecked the validity of this information in three occasions. The first occasion was an interview with pastor Aaron Mbena. The

second occasion was an interview with two lay Christians namely Andrew Kilale and Christopher Mbwilo. These counter checks were all done in 1997. While the researcher was going through the whole thesis he came across Internet news by *ippmedia.com* in the Guardian and *Nipashe* News papers of Tanzania headed "Outrageous witchcraft murders in Makete" (Mvungi A. 03.08. 2004:Makete). In Swahili it read, "*Watu saba wauawa kwa Mapanga na Mikuki*" ("seven people murdered by machetes and spears"). As the researcher enquired further he met four people from Wanjiland namely, Lena Nsemwa Pastor Japhet Mbwaji (06.08.2004), Bishop Job Mbwilo and a retired Pastor Benneth Msigwa (19.08.2004). According to them the murders were directly associated with the *wanyambuda* myths. It was apparent to them that the *wanyambuda* myth is still practised until today and whoever overcomes the practise is a hero in Wanjiland. They added that the *wanyambuda* myth is associated with power dynamics from a very severe practice of witchcraft. It involves a kind sorcery where a person is taken alive and benumbed then butchered, blood sucked, part of the flesh eaten and sexual organs and fat kept for power acquisition. That is what most Tanzanians would call superstition with moral decadence of the highest order.

This narrative was chosen because in order to show the first encounter between dreadful cultural elements in the African society and the how paternalistic approach of a Western missionary was able to solve the problem partially. It was also chosen to show that the advocacy of peace, security, justice and human right motivated many people to convert to Christianity.

After fifty years the problem is still there. Lena Nsemwa a female church social worker said,

Currently anonymous youngsters have decided to take power and judgement in their hands. It is neither a mob justice nor an order from diviners and civil leader but a cry for justice, security and human rights against the *Wanyambuda* within the Wanji society (Nsemwa 06.08.2004).

We have seen that sixteen people have been killed on the suspicion that they are the *wanyambudas*. We are therefore confronted with three questions. Firstly, why did the people convert to Christianity in big numbers after the defeat of the *Wanyambuda* during the time of the Smedjebacka? Secondly, who should stop the *wanyambuda* myth in Wanjiland and how? Thirdly, what is the role of the church today? These questions will be answered after the narrative. Now follows the narrative.

The narrative concerns a dreadful group of people called the *wanyambuda* (the mysterious killers). According to Smedjebacka, "*wanyambuda*" is the name given to a secret league that murders people and either suck their blood, take out their skin or take out what Tanzanians call the secret parts. Secret parts are male or female sexual organs. Members of the league believe that successful people had special gifts in their blood. If members of the league wanted to succeed, they had to kill one of the successful people in the society and drink their blood. Sometimes the blood was taken to a fortune-teller or diviner, who would mix that blood with a certain kind of medicine. The *wanyambuda* believed that by drinking that medicine they would know the future and be more successful than the people they had killed. It was also believed that unsuccessful persons were to be killed so that their blood would be mixed with some poison to kill other people through revenge.

It was a known league amongst the Wanji but people feared exposing the members of the group because whoever dared to expose them would become a victim. The local authorities knew about the secret league but did not take any stern measures because they feared them. Local authorities claimed that the information that they had about the *wanyambuda* was not enough to convict them. It was also observed that some of the local leaders had consulted them for some kind of magic that would keep them in power. This made the matter worse.

The *wanyambuda* decided without fear when and whom to kill. Smedjebacka had heard about it but could not get proper information because even his African host pastor Ngajilo was not ready to tell him. One day a woman came trembling to the missionary nurse of the church dispensary. She was not able to explain her problem but was showing only three fingers and making a sign of slaughter on her neck. There was no interpretation for some time. The nurse understood the signs that indicated that there were three people who wanted to kill her but she was not able to relate the killing with the dispensary where the girl ran into. The nurse sought help from the carpenter. The carpenter understood the sign language and interpreted to the nurse. The woman was complaining about three *wanyambuda* who had vowed to kill her.

The reason for the intended murder was that the woman had been married to a husband who left Wanjiland in Tanzania even before the wife had conceived and went to look for a job in the mines in Zambia (then Northern Rhodesia). Eight months had gone and the husband did not return. Since the woman was not pregnant, it was assumed that she was barren and would bring a curse to the society (Kilale 13-07-1997:Ihemi). The *Wanyambuda* wanted to kill her and mix her blood with poison, which was to be used for revenge. They thought it was high time to kill the barren woman (Mbwilo 27-09-1997:Iringa).

While the woman was in the dispensary the information reached Smedjebacka and Ngajilo. The two met the woman at the dispensary but she was so terrified that she did not open up. Smedjebacka insisted on knowing the truth. Ngajilo took him to a room where only the two of them confided and he was finally told about the evil practices of the *Wanyambuda*. Smedjebacka insisted on knowing the names of those who threatened the woman and through the help of Ngajilo, the three killers were named.

Smedjebacka asked for Ngajilo's advice on what to do but Ngajilo was once again undecided. Smedjebacka summoned the leaders of thirty-seven villages and requested a meeting of all adults from those villages. He asked



village leaders to preside over the meeting but to allow him to introduce the agenda and give his views. He told them the agenda and asked the village leaders if they were willing to co-operate in eradicating the problem. The leaders were willing to co-operate but were afraid of the *Wanyambuda*.

After a long discussion, it was agreed that all the people be summoned and Smedjebacka should address the meeting. They agreed because they knew that Smedjebacka was not going to succeed. Smedjebacka was seen as a master of some kind who had authority beyond that of a normal missionary because he was confident, tenacious and uncompromising. However, they knew this time he was going to be the loser because even the district commissioner who was also a white man with government authority, had failed to apprehend the *Wanyambuda*.

The day came and the villagers gathered. Smedjebacka, escorted by his friend Ngajilo, made a short speech on how bad it was to kill another person. He put papers and pencils on the table and told the people that he was leaving the meeting and asked that in one hour's time the papers should have the names of all the *Wanyambuda*. It so happened that when he returned after one hour the papers were full of more than 130 names of the *Wanyambuda*. Three of them were elders of Magoye church and members of the parish council. The three who had threatened the woman were among the one hundred and thirty (130).

Smedjebacka consulted with Ngajilo on what to do with those names. As usual, Ngajilo had no solution. Smedjebacka consulted the district commissioner (D.C.) and the police. The D.C. sent three policemen who took a low profile in the role. They just made threats without taking any real steps because they were also afraid. The *Wanyambuda* continued killing even after the police had visited the area. When the D.C. failed to curb the situation, Smedjebacka took the matter to another D.C. of the neighbouring district but the situation was even stranger than the first one. He threatened Smedjebacka that if he did not stop tracing the *Wanyambuda* league he would suggest to the government that Smedjebacka be declared a *persona non grata* (unwanted person). The D.C. warned Smedjebacka

that he was endangering himself over a problem that was deep in the African Religion and no D.C. would guarantee him any security. The D.C. went as far as denying any responsibility if Smedjebacka were to die on his pursuit.

Smedjebacka took another alternative, this time he asked if the murderous *Wanayambuda* would make self-confession and seek reconciliation but no one appeared to confess. He summoned the tribal chief and gave him the names. The tribal chief promised to take measures but after some weeks, he seemed not to do anything. Smedjebacka sent Ngajilo to the chief to enquire as to what was transpiring. The report came back that the *Wanyambuda* went to the chief and threatened to kill him if he were to intervene. It was further speculated that the chief's father had been a member of the league. This in itself implied that the chief himself would not act. Some of the *Wanyambuda* claimed that the chief had been given his father's blood, which was tapped by the *Wanyambuda* during his death so that it would be given to his successor. It was thus clear that the chief could never betray the *Wanyambuda*.

Smedjebacka asked for another meeting of the whole tribe. In that meeting, he was the main speaker and boldly asked the whole tribe whether they wanted the *Wanyambuda* and they all with one accord said no. He then asked them what should be done to them and all said they should be expelled from all villages and from the tribe. People responded that way because they knew that Smedjebacka did not have that ability. To their amazement, Smedjebacka stood up in public with courage and read one name after the other, asking the people whose names were read to stand in a line and face the public. When all one hundred and thirty stood, he said to the crowd,

These are the murderers of your people; they will still kill if they remain in the tribe. Now I give them orders to go away from this tribe. They should not be seen in the villages of this tribe by tomorrow morning (Smedjebacka 25-08-1997:Helsinki).

First, they were highly ashamed, perplexed and terrified. Secondly, they never expected that there could be such a courageous person who would denounce them in public. That was too much for them. They ran away from Wanjiland that same night and migrated to Sanguland, which is heavily infested by malaria. They lived briefly then most of them died. It is also believed that the Sangu poisoned them because people feared that they would still practice the *unyambuda*. Above all, they did not have the usual identity papers that people had from their chiefs because there was no letter from any Wanji chief that identified them to the Sangu chiefs due to their expulsion.

Three points are worth elaborating from the paragraphs above. According to Mbwilo the Wanji were fed up with the *Wanyambuda*. The crowd would put to death anyone who would stand to defend the *Wanyambuda* in public. Their league practised sorcery and had developed close links with local leaders and diviners with the claim that the parents or grandparents of the local leaders or diviners had drunk the blood from some of the *Wanyambuda*. The *Wanyambuda* claimed further that anyone who was in leadership or exercised special gifts came from those whose parents had been given some of the *Wanyambuda*-sucked blood. Such claims silenced leaders from dealing with them (Mbwilo 27-09-1997: Iringa). The second point is that Smedjebacka was feared because of his God, the Christian God. It should be remembered that Smedjebacka was the one who went into the huts of the Wanji ancestors and did not become blind. The third point is about identity papers. The *wanyambuda* case happened in 1956. By this time all people had identity cards that were made from hard paper measuring four by six inches. These cards were also used to show that a person had paid head tax (Kilale 13-07-1997: Ihemi).

On searching for further verification Mbena (07-08-1998:Iringa) felt that one hundred and thirty was a small number. He had the feeling that not all the *Wanyambuda* were listed. For him it was quite possible that the list consisted of their leaders only. Mbena continued to argue that the society knew that the

followers who remained did not function because they were afraid of being expelled and would die like their leaders. Some ran away on their own because after the leaders had left, the villagers threatened to burn their houses. Most of the *Wanyambuda* were afraid and scared, so they dispersed.

Three of the *Wanyambuda* leaders who were in the parish council tried to remain behind as they believed people would pity them, thinking that they were wrongly identified. On the contrary, church members complained that they should also be kicked out of the community. Smedjebacka made an inquiry and proved that they were indeed members of the *Wanyambuda* clique. He took the matter to the parish council and the council decided that the following be done: First, that they be expelled from the council and be excommunicated from the church. Secondly, that they should be forbidden to take any meals together with other Christians. Thirdly, that they should leave the Christian village and Wanji community and join their former heathen community with immediate effect. They were to leave the community lest the angry relatives of those who were murdered by the group should kill them or the church would be accused of favouritism and cannibalism.

The decisions had to be read in the church on Sunday by the parish pastor Ngajilo. He read the first two resolutions but did not read the third because once again he was afraid. Smedjebacka was unhappy with the hypocritical behaviour of Ngajilo. He asked him why he did not read the third resolution and the pastor simply replied that he was afraid because the people were so influential. He thought the first two resolutions were strong enough to make them leave on their own. Smedjebacka went ahead and read the third resolutions and on Monday morning, he went to their respective houses soon after the Morning Prayer and reminded them about the third resolution. They responded, "We will do whatever you tell us". They left Wanjiland and went to Mbeya.

The whole of Wanjiland was speaking and singing about Smedjebacka (Mbwilo 27-09-1997: Iringa). They said; "He is a young man, nobody was

supposed to fear him. He is a young man he should fear chiefs and D.Cs but he fears God and people fear him". Mbwilo ascertained that people feared him not because he was a white man but because of the way, God had acted through him. They believed that the courage, which Smedjebacka had, came from God who is the very *Nguluvi* summoned in the name of Jesus Christ (Mbwani 10-08-2004).<sup>36</sup> The *Wanyambuda* knew for sure that if he prayed to God they would die (Mbwilo 27-09-1997:Iringa). The result of this event was a big increase of people who registered for baptism.

#### 5.4.2 A Critique to the Wanyambuda Narrative

According to Mbwani (06-08-2004), the defeat of the *Wanyambuda* was a full-strength victory that opened up a new paradigm for justice, security and human rights. Many women had the courage to reveal the brutalities, which were done against them by their husbands and other males in their villages. The church became a centre for the advocacy of justice, human rights and security.

This narrative shows that all human beings all over the world have the same basic needs. They have the right to live as long as God allows them to live and in Bantu philosophy, as long as ancestors are happy and God is not angry. Sorcerers are understood as people who use malevolent forces to destroy other peoples' lives, as it has been illustrated in 5.3.2.1. According to Mbwani, the *Wanyambuda* have always been considered as worse than sorcerers because they do not induce a disease as other sorcerers do but they benumb a person and suck the blood or remove the skin or sexual organs before the person is dead. The researcher thinks Mbwani argues from a point of a legend that cannot be easily

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<sup>36</sup> The same sentiments were expressed by Y. Chusi, I. Mbembe, D. Ngandango and I. Nyadwike (02-07-2003) that Christians were understood by adherents of AR that they prayed to the same God in whom they believed by the name *Nguluvi* but the difference was the way in which people approached God. The way for Christians was Jesus Christ. The way for adherents of AR was for the living and ancestors to petition together to God through rituals and sacrifice (Ngandango and Nyadwike). Mbembe, Chusi and Kikoti have the opinion that ancestors were afraid of God and so were the living but the living made rituals to ancestors, sacrifices to God and petitioned the ancestors to beseech God through the sacrifices. Out of this controversy it is possible to say the Bantu prayed to God and believed that ancestors had intermediary supernatural powers.

proven. However, he is talking about the atrocities of the *wanyambuda* practise and how the Wanji perceive it. In fact, they fear it and extremely hate it. Whoever would overcome the *Wanyambuda* from any approach, whether from Smedjebacka's approach or from the current approach of the youth, would be counted as a hero and probably a person sent by God. Smedjebacka was admired as a person sent by God to do away with the *Wanyambuda* who denied the right of other people to live and created anxiety and insecurity in the society. Even the most "primitive" society, so to say, even though unwarranted, understands that the right to live and to be secure comes from God. Whoever comes and speaks in the name of God and advocates justice, peace, security and human rights will be well received by any society. Many people turned for baptism because God in whom they believed and experienced in AR had sent missionaries who came with the modern approach of advocating and defending justice, peace, security and human rights. The researcher is of the opinion that missionaries did not bring human rights but they served as agents of human rights through God's activity and intervention in the African society. People turned in big numbers to the church because what Smedjebacka did was in agreement with the Word of God. These arguments have a direct ramification to the theology of the cross. Smedjebacka's courage portrayed the pinch of the suffering of Jesus Christ in the Wanji people. The Word of God became the message of salvation because it was spoken and acted upon to bring forth liberation from fear and death.

Our second question in the beginning of the narrative was, who should stop the *wanyambuda* myth in Wanjiland and how? We have observed in the beginning of this narrative that the *wanyambuda* myth continues even today and it has claimed more than twenty lives in this year, 2004. It is apparent that after Smedjebacka's courageous action, even though paternalistic, no one else continued to confront the *Wanyambuda*. The researcher was once asked by one of the advisors as to why the Wanji people did not stop this flamboyant young missionary. The answer to that question is simple as we summarise in a

paraphrased form from Nsemwa and Mbwanji (06-08-2004:Iringa). The Wanji hate the *Wanyambuda*. They look for a permanent solution but it is not yet found. Many people in the society know the members of the *Wanyambuda* clique but they fear them. This year 2004, the youth decided to kill them. In any case, the *wanyambuda* myth call upon the civil law to protect the society but civil law cannot deal with the spiritual realm or so to say things that are not tangible. The police are in Wanjiland even today trying to catch the killers of the *Wanyambuda* but they are confronted with other unresolved issues because there are people who have been murdered by the *Wanyambuda* clique and the society has evidences of the atrocities.

The role of stopping the *wanyambuda* cult goes back to the church. Moreover, it is not only the *wanyambuda* myth but also many other myths among the Hehe, the Bena, the Nyakyusa, the Kinga and all tribes in Tanzania that deny justice, peace, security and basic human rights. It is the role of the Church to address such myths because it has the commission of God's Mission, it has the power of the Word of God that transforms the spirit, and that Word can transform the *Wanyambuda*. This takes us to the third question, what is the role of the church?

The role of the church is to make a direct and total involvement in identifying with the suffering community. It has the task of portraying the presence of God, to translate the Word and proclaim the message of salvation as the apostle John quotes Jesus Christ saying, "I have come that they may have life and have it to the full" (Jn. 10:10b). On the contrary, the myths like those of the *wanyambuda* in every African society, so long as they deprive people from the right to live and be defended by the law, should be considered in the words of Jesus Christ who said, "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy;" (Jn. 10:10a). The role of the church is to take the theology of the cross into practice. When the theology of the cross is taken into practice, it will help the youngsters who murdered the suspected *Wanyambuda* to see their sin, look at the cross of

Jesus and think of mission as forgiveness. They will seek God's intervention instead of taking judgement in their hands because they cannot prove for sure that they killed only the *Wanyambuda*. It is possible that some of those who were murdered were not in the *Wanyambuda* myth. It is also the role of the church to bring the *Wanyambuda* under the cross of Jesus Christ.

Smedjebacka thought he had brought forth a solution by sending the *Wanyambuda* away from Wanjiland. Aaron Mbená (07-08-1997:Iringa) told the researcher that the myth is there to stay. Mbwanji (06-08-2004:Iringa) told the researcher that the myth comes from the Kinga and it is amongst the Bena but it fails to function because the Bena sorcerers deny it and have stronger malevolent spirits that easily silence the *Wanyambuda* myth. Such assertions, and especially from pastors who have studied theology for three years in the Bible School and five years in the theological seminary call upon nothing else other than contextual theology that can meet the *Wanyambuda* where and what they are.<sup>36</sup> The *wanyambuda* do not have to be expelled from their people because wherever they will be their problem will remain unresolved. That is why it keeps recurring. It is assumed that both the *Wanyambuda* and the fearful and avenging Wanji need to hear Jesus Christ speaking to them saying, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke and learn from me, for I am gentle, and humble in heart, and you will find rest in your souls" (Mt. 11:28-29). It is also assumed that both the *Wanyambuda* and the fearful avenging Wanji need faith and repentance, hence *pistis* (faith) *epistrephein* (turning) and *metanoia* (transformation) as illustrated in the second chapter (2.2). Contextual theology is needed to transform the society so that they can be transparent and speak the truth to one another. It is apparent from this story that most of the Wanji know who the *Wanyambuda* are but they have not yet found a

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<sup>36</sup> Mbená and Mbwanji are Wanji by tribe, Mbwanji serves amongst the Hehe and Mbená served amongst the Hehe for five years before returning to home to the Wanji. Both are ordained pastors who took three years in the Bible School in Kidugala and five years of a certificate in theology in Makumira.



transparent way of facing the problem. Hopefully, the transparent way is to know the truth that makes them free.

The motivations of those who registered for baptism classes as far as this narrative is concerned are many but we can summarise them by reflecting back to 5.2. Many people were motivated to come to Church not precisely for baptism and join the new religious faith. They were motivated by the new awareness of God's mission. Baptism and joining the new religious faith was the resultant effect. Otherwise, we repeat, God did not change from that one of AR and that of Christians. God remained and remains the same. On the one hand, God's Mission to all human beings has always been the same. On the other hand, the presence of God's speech, which is the Word of God in the mother tongue, created a new awareness of God's action amidst the suffering of Africans and motivated them to seek to know more and be freed. The motivations were centred on the theology of the cross in this sense: The church had identified itself with the suffering of the people. For a Church that does not identify itself with the suffering of Jesus Christ in the people where it is present, it will not serve them. A church that does not serve people is not in God's mission. A church that is not in God's mission lacks the proper qualification of a Church. For the church has one mission, it is God's Mission. The Church has one ministry it is the ministry of reconciliation (Bahendwa 1990:48). The Lutheran Church in Tanzania will motivate more people to convert to Christianity if it engages in reconciliation.

### *5.5 The Need for Social Services, Skills and Development*

A church, a school, a health clinic and a missionary house were common marks of a Lutheran mission station in Southern Tanzania. Houses of Christians and mission farms surrounded the mission stations. These can be observed even today in all mission stations in all places where missionaries began to work. These mission stations in Southern Tanzania are as seen in appendix V

According to that map, this thesis discusses two stations that are in the Iringa diocese namely Pommern and Ilula.

The church was both a place for religious instruction and a school where reading and writing were taught before official schools were built. Health clinics were established to avail medical services to missionaries, converts and non-converts. In the long run, these clinics proved to be very helpful for women, especially for prenatal and postnatal care. Moreover, Christian converts were advised to stay around the mission station as a way of avoiding syncretism or a return to AR. Some converts preferred to leave their community because they were afraid that they would be forced to return to AR practices. Together with what has been stated herein, missionaries preferred Christian converts to surround them because they were not sure how non-Christians would behave at any given time. This led to the formation of Christian villages. Mission stations owned large church farms for agricultural work and livestock keeping. Later on, Christian converts and non-converts were hired to work on those farms.

It should be understood that there is no intention of deriding the traditional African educational system or traditional African medicine. The researcher is aware that African communities, organized under clans and families educated their children and youths orally. That education was focused on practical matters of life such as work, building houses, morals, and all other aspects that were related to skills, socialization and induction of cultural norms and values of the community (Omari 1976:33). Herbalists, medicine men and women provided traditional medical services. They were not inferior to the Western medicine but had less of the facts known to the rest of the medical world.

Missionaries had these priorities in mind: Firstly to evangelise, secondly was to offer education and the thirdly to offer health services. Education was intended to enable Africans to read the Bible, to follow the order of worship and to be able to read the hymnal book. Education was also intended to bring forth

servants who could read and write hence being able to assist the missionaries in activities such as evangelising, medical services, teaching in elementary (bush) schools, and supervising in activities such as building, agriculture and carpentry.

Missionaries complained frequently that they did not have enough time to evangelise because they were involved in other tasks. Their initial primary tasks were to build both temporary and permanent houses for missionaries, stores, and the worship sanctuary (church building), classes, animal barns and garages (Koebler 1998:2).

In another small booklet that was written to commemorate the hundred years of the gospel message in Iringa, with information collected by various Hehe pastors and journalists has a relatively different version in describing the reasons for baptizing the first Africans. It says,

Missionaries deliberately baptised the first African converts who were able to read and write so that they could immediately assist in preaching and overseeing the ever increasing preaching points and stations (Mkemwa and Somela 1999:1).

The general understanding out of these two versions is that the missionaries educated people and baptised African people so that they could be followers of Jesus Christ, hence complying with God's call for mission but they also educated Africans so that they could assist them in what they as missionaries were doing. As these two intentions were practised, it was felt that the church gained strength through the erudite. One former teacher of church schools asserts,

They established a school teaching basic literacy and beliefs of the Christian faith. At first, the education process proved to be long and slow with little apparent result for many years of hard and patient toil. Yet, Krapf and Rebmann were convinced that the surest way to establish the Christian faith in East Africa was through education. Succeeding missionaries followed their example in giving high priority to education. .... Later the Berlin Mission workers to the southern part of Tanganyika about the same time as the Moravians ... came to regard the provision of schools as an essential part of their missionary programme (Lema 1972: 85-87).

In spite of the fact that in the early days missionaries educated people to assist them in what they were doing, as time went on education proved to be one of the basic motivations for Christian witness. "They (the missionaries) promoted education because it was their basic belief that Christian faith was at the heart of all education" (Lema: 77). Education has a direct link with mission, service and development, hence directly linked to the motivations of Christian conversion.

### **5.5.1 Educational Motivations of Conversion: The Hehe Experience**

Most of what is reported in this subsection is a summary of almost all interviewees. The researcher made the summary with the help of the research assistants namely, Phoebe Msigomba, Alfred Somela and Aikam Chavala. The researcher also sought some proof concerning AR and some Hehe traditions from Hammerton Mdegela, Samson Mkemwa (05-07-2003:Iplalamwa) and from Mdenying'afu Kidanganyike and Mahula Kilovele who are adherents of AR (07-07-2003:Itimbo). The researcher also contacted a Catholic nun, Ema Mpwapwa (08-07-2003:Iringa) and a Catholic priest, Fr. Peter Wisa (09-07-2003:Iringa). Consequently, the summary will have few citations because most of the material comes from that endeavour.

According to the summary, the Hehe had four main types of education where each family had a way of handing over knowledge from one generation to another. The first type focused on religious and moral education. By religious education we mean the understanding of AR and the basic norms and values of the family, community and society at large. The second type of education was gender prejudiced. Fathers taught male children about male tailored tasks and so did mothers to female children for female tailored tasks. That approach had both negative and positive consequences that were not felt until the new type of education came. Male children were taught to use their muscles. Women were taught to be submissive. Hunting, fighting in battles and preparing farms were

tasks designated to men. Cooking, taking care of the (children and the father) family, fetching water, pounding or grinding flour and all tasks that ended up in the kitchen were designated for women. Boys took care of cows or did tasks that were outside the house or the kitchen. Girls were kitchen bound.

The third type of education was about adulthood. At the stage of puberty, each adolescent was given special lessons concerning the life of being an adult. Girls were taken to a valley where they were taught what it means to be a woman and boys were taken to a forest where they were taught how to behave like men. That education served its purposes and the disparity between men and women was strongly felt. The society counted a man as *umugosi* (a sturdy male) and a woman as *mung'inetu* (a frail mother). With this education, a man was to be found at the lounge room as *munyidamwa* (the owner of the living room) and a woman was to be found in the cooking or sleeping room as *munyangati* (one who belongs to the inner rooms). By that classification, a man was for external affairs and a woman was for internal affairs. As we shall see later, church education took both of them out in the public and introduced a new method of sharing, participation and the quest for equality.

The fourth type of education involved the whole Hehe tribe. The Hehe have a fighting culture. All males had to learn to defend themselves, the family, the clan and fight for the security and supremacy of the tribe. Other than fighting for and defending the tribe each clan had to learn a skill. All Hehe have clan names designated according to their specific trade or vocation. The hunters belong to the *Mkami* clan. The smiths belong to the *Mtegeta* clan. The fishermen and women belong to the *Kalova* clan. Legends show that in the past people were told to retain their identity through those "trademarks" and youngsters were trained to perpetuate those skills. During battles or tribal celebrations, before colonialism people were assigned to perform duties according to their trade. Most of the *Vategeta* were expected to make weapons, especially spears. *Vakami* were expected to bring meat from hunting and so were other clans to

produce according to their trade. The *mahuvi* clan was expected to bring good news. This kind of training had one major component where sons and daughters of rulers at all levels felt that they were superior to the rest of the people in the society. The “trademark” identities were also intended to serve like a caste system. We have stated in the third chapter that the *Tagamutwa* and the *Mwamufimba* clans were buried with chiefs and chiefs’ wives or children.

The introduction of schools through the church and partly through the government changed the whole educational system that had existed before. A new faith had come with a new educational system. Those who seemed superior were no longer superior. Those who were leaders in AR were not necessarily the new leaders in the new religion. The norms and values underwent a great paradigm shift. Morals were in some cases enhanced and in some cases they were let loose. Punishments for culprits were no longer determined by rulers but by the law of the land. Teachers had to decide as to when children should be at home and when they should be in school. Parents lost their grip on children. Girls and boys who were in schools or in confirmation classes were not allowed to get married even if they were old enough to have their own families. There were real changes that challenged the society. What were the motivations of Christian conversion that accompanied the new educational system?

It is possible to have many answers but few of those that were observed will be shown hereafter. First, and foremost is the fact and effect of modernity. The presence and the praxis of God’s mission brought forth innovations where new ideas, self-discoveries, new social interactions, and cultural systems became sources of change. “Innovative ideas can substantially restructure social systems and lives of those who live in them” (Babbie 1983:653).

One pastor asserted that,

The discovery came in schools where sons and daughters of chiefs were not the best in their respective classes. Most of them were

found to have the same intellectual ability as other children. Others were found to be even less able than most of the children. It was during examinations and competitions in sports and extra curricula activities that most of the chiefs' children were discovered to be weak, less gifted and unable (Chuma 1998: Muhiliwa).

In the then modern approach to life, the more intelligent and efficient you were the more recognition and acceptance you received. Through schools and other Christian institutions, new interactions and self-discoveries arose. Another former church schoolteacher confirms the assertion above that many Christians discovered and accepted their worth and natural gifts through the church and its schools.

I did not know that I was more intelligent than our sub-chiefs' children and some of our close relatives until examination results came out in the first term of our school. Most of those who considered themselves as belonging to a superior echelon ranked low in the class. Not all and in fact very few sons and daughters of sub-chiefs and their assistants were among the best in class. They were not smarter than others, nor were they the best in sports, singing, dance or art. We considered the claim of superiority by white missionaries as insignificant and that of our fellow Africans with disdain. (Mdegela: 14-08-1997:Ipalamwa).

The two comments as quoted above indicate directly that the introduction of Western education through the Church motivated people to convert to Christianity not only on the basis of being disciples of Jesus Christ but there was an obvious search of social change and cultural dynamism. In social change, sociologists have found that some of the non-economic institutional changes that take place are directly associated with modernity. These are grouped into family, religion, education and government (Babbie 1983: 658). This grouping is so similar to the Hehe traditional system of education.

The changes that took place amongst the Hehe when the new educational system came transformed the perceptions concerning the roles of women and men. It also changed the perception concerning the intellectual ability of men

and women to the effect that it did not depend on gender or social stratification. Children of leaders and subjects came together. Families that could not easily mix were forced to mix in the church and in the school. The inference is that the changed touched families of converts and non-converts.

Education brought forth changes in the religious perspectives to the Hehe. Religion got out of family and clan and brought all families and clans together. Family and clan spirits lost their power and identity in the new set up. Religious values and norms were modified to conform to the Old Testament and New Testament. Christian religion became more of a book religion than an orally handed over religion. Knowledge of reading and writing became pre-conditions of initiation to the new religion.

Concerning education itself, being intertwined with Christian witness and as the basic agent of change other than spiritual transformation, it had its own impact on the process of modernisation and conversion to Christianity. According to Chuma and Mdegela as quoted above, and their arguments being supported by the first secretary of education amongst the Hehe, Edward Mnyawami: Education opened up the Hehe to a new worldview (Mnyawami 10-08-2004:Iringa). It called upon the marginalized, the minorities, the poor, the so-called, inferior and the so-called superior together. Since education was formalised, it became a liberating agent especially to women. Some women joined school to run away from forced marriages (Mnyawami 10-08-2003:Iringa).

Since leadership in the church and in the government require knowledge, and since most of the work that had to be done both in the Church and in the secular required education, the church became the source of the required manpower in the society as well. Graduates from church schools replaced them former Muslim *Akidas* (local government and tax collectors) and manned both the church and the state.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> *Akidas* were knowledgeable in Swahili and had attended the basic *madrassa* that qualified them as the elite in the commencement of colonialism (History of Tanganyika).



By the time WWI started, the German missionaries had established one hundred and thirty five bush-schools, with 6,000 pupils amongst the Bena and Hehe. Small industries had been started such as the iron-smith and shoe factory in Ilembula (one of the pioneer mission stations-see appendix XI) and a printing and binding factory at Kidugala (the first German mission station among the Bena also in appendix XI). These factories created employment to people who knew how to read, write and do basic arithmetic. These were mostly Christians.

This shows clearly that to be a member of a church was an advancement of some kind to an individual and in the society. Christians became more skilled in speech and in dealing with issues in the society. Besides preparing Africans to work in line with the missionary intentions, education brought about self-esteem, self-discovery of natural gifts and an avenue for different African clans to interact. According to the Hehe culture and in the AR practices, clans came to worship together only on very special occasions. Otherwise, each clan worshipped alone among blood relatives. Suspicions between clans were common. Marriages and working together were constricted to clans. In Christianity, clans came together every Sunday. Through schools and worshipping together clans were able to interact hence reducing suspicion and enmity among them. Marriages between former hostile clans started to take place albeit the previous hesitations. With such changes, Balcomb is right when he says,

Modernity destabilizes pre-modern society by replacing tradition with reason. But reason itself is subverted by reflexivity-the ability to question the reasoning process itself. In other words, through the process of reflexivity knowledge itself continually changes. In such a situation there is no certainty, only change (Balcomb 1996: 14).

Looking back to the Hehe we recollect from Mdegela and Chuma that clans and individuals who had considered themselves superior due to their civil and religious authority lost influence, control and status over to Christians and colonialists. Those who depended on sorcery and divination found that

Christians were no longer afraid of them and diviners were not consulted as they used to be before conversion. When festivals and celebrations came, Christians were perceived as singing with better skills. They played flutes and drummed in a school band skilfully (Chuma 04-03-1998: Muhiliwa). Sports such as football and netball attracted most of the young people and Christian girls and boys were the ones privileged the sports. This did not mean that non-Christians were not allowed to participate in the sports but the situation dictated in such way that those who went to school were the ones who had the privilege to attend to the sports (Mnyawami 10-08-2003: Iringa). On Sundays, Christians recited verses from the Bible and spoke about the Word of God with confidence even in the presence of white men and women (Msigomba 27-07-1997: Iringa).

Chiefs, sub-chiefs and other local religious and civil leaders had no other option for retaining their authority and leadership positions than sending their children to schools. Local leaders found that the only way to regain social status and control was to have someone in their home that could read and write. They came to know that unless some of their children had the same skills as Christians they would easily lose their authority over the people who were under their control. In this way they sent their children to mission schools and most of them were baptized. Some remained committed to the church; some left the church later (Chuma 04-03-1998: Muhiliwa).

### *5.5.2 Medical and Diaconal Services: Experiences of Women*

Let us look at the motivations from the medical and diaconal services' point of view. The researcher heard many stories during fieldwork. Two stories from women gave a clear indication that some people were motivated to convert to Christianity because they were in search of life assurance and security. Some women were moved to join the church during pregnancy and delivery (Mkemwa, E. 14-08-1997: Ipalamwa, Kivamba A. 04-03-1998: Muhiliwa, Kiswaga and Msola 11-07-1999: Ilula). It so happened that most women who delivered

their babies at church dispensaries did not lose their babies and few mothers lost their lives. We do not intend to degrade the traditional midwives but one has to accept the fact that missionary medical practitioners, nurses and midwives had attained more training than those with traditional skills especially when there were complications with pregnancies. In most cases, church health clinics were better equipped than the traditional delivery homes, which in many cases were temporarily constructed grass huts from the walls to the roof.

Most women were traumatised when they were close to delivery because there was the possibility they could lose their lives as well as their babies. In support of the above assertion, two pastors narrated stories of women who craved baptism after delivering their children in church dispensaries (Fue and Ndelwa 15-07-1999: Iringa). Fue narrated the story of a mother (the name was concealed for cultural reasons) who had seen a neighbour who failed to deliver and emergence, and relatively hard methods were applied to make her deliver. A traditional mid-wife had to sit on her stomach until the baby was close to being delivered then a sharp knife was used for *episiotomies* (pave the delivery way) without *anaesthesia* (being benumbed). Some local medicine was applied to heal that wound. The woman who saw this went to a mission dispensary and according to her, she had the safest delivery. She then forced her baptism by vowing not to go home without baptism. Normally she would have been required to undergo a two-year baptismal class but she pleaded with the dispensary personnel that she should be baptised with the child at the dispensary. Due to her insistent pleading, she was accepted for baptism after one week of baptismal teaching. A firm promise of continuing with baptismal classes for two years had to be made (Fue 15.07.1999: Iringa).

Another young mother was unable to deliver for almost two days in a remote village where traditional midwives faithfully and with all their skills attended to her. As the last resort, she was rushed to a mission health clinic when both she and the baby were in their last hours of survival. The medical

personnel and a midwife did something to her that was not understood by the patient, but she had a safe delivery within a short time. The baby was the first to be delivered in that clinic. The young mother asked to be baptised in the name of the nurse who helped her. The baptism was accepted after lengthy discussions but instead of her being given the name of the nurse, the dispensary was called by the name of the young mother. Many women who had the chance to deliver babies at church dispensaries made similar requests of baptism (Ndelwa 15-07-1999:Iringa). The above observations are comparatively fewer than what actually happened daily in the communities amongst the Hehe and other communities in Africa.

Other experiences were subject to debate and they are more inclined to social changes and diaconal services. Some women who lived in Christian villages (villages that surrounded the mission station) added claims that they found peace in the villages because they were free to attend church activities and hear the gospel whenever there was worship and participated in church activities without interruptions from non-Christians. This statement might be judged as inappropriate but they explained further that they felt that they were experiencing a comfortable life in Christian villages because most men and women lived a sober and ethically sound life. Two informants, Mnyawami (10-08-2003:Iringa) and Nyadwike (27-08-1999:Pommern) substantiate these claims and add that most women preferred Christian villages because their husbands would not be enticed to become polygamists.

There were claims that most people in Christian villages were friendly but the researcher thinks that clan hostilities in villages subsided and men and women met many times, they had meals together many times and their children were together most of the time hence creating an atmosphere of a reduced amount of suspicion. As far as sorcery and witchcraft is concerned many women claimed that there were no threats of civil brutality around them so long as

missionaries protected them. This information is found in the daily notes of Klamroth (1901), Oelke (1909) and Schumann (1909) (Koebler 1998:8' 11).<sup>38</sup>

Most Christian women and men confessed that they lived without fear so long as they remained in Christian villages. The motivations were there prompted by peace and security. Most of the people in Christian villages were in their homes before dark. They did not take much alcohol and by 1947, alcohol was completely forbidden for Christians (Lugala 06-08-1999: Isimani). The issue of church and alcohol will be addressed further in the sixth chapter. Christians also commented that abstention from alcohol formed a group of people with good rapport (Kihongosi 02-09-1999: Kidabaga).

Ideas borrowed and paraphrased from Falk can validate the arguments as asserted in the paragraph above. By its very nature and its message, Christianity exerted a spiritual, moral, and legal influence. The humanitarian aspect of the mission stations was their presentation of communities in which all people's rights were respected. The freed slaves and the refugees worked, planted fields, and legally obtained their livelihood. They studied trades and learned how to use tools they had not known previously. New crops were introduced. Medical care was generally offered, even though in some cases it was rudimentary and limited. The settlements provided a sense of security, whereas the villages were frequently attacked and pillaged by the slave traders. Consequently, the people around the mission station and in the Christian villages respected the stations and the community therein (Falk 1985:246).

### *5.6 Conclusion*

This chapter has dealt with some practical issues in an effort to answer the questions why missionaries came to Africa and how they convinced Africans to accept to and convert to Christianity, hence answering the question why

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<sup>38</sup> This will be reflected in depth in the next chapter on censures against Missionaries, in the section of mission and colonialism.

Africans accepted Christianity. Thus, motivations of Christian conversion in the context of this thesis are intended to describe the processes that led the Hehe and missionaries to reach to the common desired goals as objectives of Christian conversion.

Christian sociologists define motivations in relation to decision-making, enthusiasm, behaviour, experiences and influence. In reflecting on what happened amongst the Hehe it has become apparent that God-oriented motivations could also be described as the compliance with God's calling for mission. Society-oriented motivations can simply be described as the project of modernity. Both society and self oriented motivations focused at power, control and security.

In compliance with God's calling and in fulfilling the commission of God, missionaries learnt from the Hehe and the Hehe learnt from missionaries. The Hehe needed to acknowledge missionaries and missionaries needed to do the same. Society-oriented motivations are thus considered from the assumption that missionaries had to introduce new economic alternatives and new approaches to community development. Most local chiefs wanted missionaries so that they could remain in power or be protected from hostile tribes. In the course of most subjects being converted, most of the local leaders found that they were losing control over their subjects because the church became the centre that complied with modernity.

God prepared the people of Africa and allowed the inception of Christianity in various places of Africa when there were people who were also prepared by God to accept an intercultural fertilization and translate the message of salvation in the vernacular. In the ecclesiological and theological developments, the term "mission" has been woven into the church foundation and has come to signify the activity of God in the world through the Church. Mission is an activity of God arising out of the very nature of God. The living God of the Bible is a sending God, which is what mission means. The mission of the universal Church

is born out of God's mission and God moulds it continually. The living Church is a missionary Church. It is a sending Church.

Every Christian has been sent in the world just as the Church has been sent. Human weaknesses are inevitable but God has chosen human beings as tools of his mission in the world. God does not do anything on earth, except by using human beings. The accentuation is missiologically true that God has sent all believers as the missionary Church in the world and experience the vertex of vulnerability in the same way that Jesus Christ experienced. The Church is sent to express the sacrificial death of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is with such prominence that the motivation for the conversion of the Hehe both from missionaries and the Hehe has to be complied with.

The basis on which the church offers service is in the words of Jesus Christ. The service that Jesus Christ offered in his life and ministry is the core phenomenon of what the church is expected to do in complying with God's calling for mission. The motivation for mission arises from the understanding that Jesus Christ sought us, saved us, and serves us. Under powerlessness and potency, under poverty and prosperity, missionaries or witnesses of Jesus Christ have to serve. Many missionaries died in God's mission and service to the neighbour. In every mission station one finds graves of missionaries and their children. Where and how would Africa be without these committed men and women of Christ who suffered lost their friends and family members as they were serving us in God's mission?

In the course of validating the new religious faith there were many power encounters. Some of the major power encounters involved the confrontation between sorcery and Christian faith. Sorcery, though controversial since the inception of the church in Africa, challenged the Christian missions. Many Hehe converted to Christianity because Christianity confronted malevolent powers and fulfilled the needs, which many Hehe have been yearning for as they offered sacrifice and performed rituals to ancestors and sought answers from diviners.

Jesus Christ performed the role of ancestors and diviners and was more successful than them. For them Jesus Christ did exactly what the Hehe expected from *Nguluwi* (God). They expected God to silence the sorcerers and get rid of fear.

The African concept of salvation explains some of their expectations of the church. The motivations of converting to Christianity among the Hehe could be accounted for in three ways. First, Christian faith had brought forth a new alternative of life in the community. Secondly, the large numbers of people who turned to Christianity indicate that Africans were in search of salvation. Thirdly, the approach that God used through Western and African missionaries met the needs of people in the areas of security, social control and answering questions that came with the wave of modernity. Thus, God wanted to evangelise the Hehe in their religious philosophy and social context.

In spite of many criticisms that can be said about the church and Christian missions, yet it is undoubtedly true that it advocated justice, peace, security and human rights will be well received by any society. Many people turned to baptism because God in whom they believed and experienced in AR had sent missionaries who came with the modern approach of advocating and defending justice, peace, security and human rights. The researcher is of the opinion that missionaries did not bring human rights but they served as agents of human rights through God's activity and intervention to the African society

Many people were motivated to come to Church not precisely for baptism and join the new religious faith. They were motivated by the new awareness of God's Mission. The church had identified itself with the suffering of the people.

Education became a link between mission, service and development, hence directly linked to the motivations of Christian conversion. The presence and the praxis of God's mission brought forth innovations where new ideas, self-discoveries, new social interactions, and cultural systems became sources of change. Other than education, health service motivated vulnerable women and



men who would have lost their lives if the church did not intervene through diaconal and social services. The humanitarian practices of the church mission presented new possibilities of life even to the handicapped and lame.

This chapter has tried to respond to the second, third and fourth lines of thought concerning the motivations of conversion to Christianity amongst the Hehe. The conclusion of this chapter is in part an attestation of the behaviour of the missionaries, the colonialists and the African converts as well as the church workers of the colonial times and post-colonial times. The need arises from the understanding that the same three lines of thought namely the second; third and fourth have to be investigated from the perspectives of the evaluators of the mission work. The next chapter will try to answer three questions. First, what happened in practical terms concerning mission, colonialism and imperialism amongst the Hehe? Second, is it true that the Hehe accepted Christianity because of poverty, hunger and other material or temporal benefits? Third, was the presence of the missionaries detrimental to the African culture, community life and religion that it caused the Hehe to lose their identity?

Thus, the sixth chapter will investigate the problems that accompanied the Christianisation of the Hehe. The chapter will respond to the censures and accusations that have been expressed in the three lines of thought as expressed in the question forms above. The main focus will be on the problems that accompanied the Christianisation of the Hehe in the area of colonialism, political subjugation, economic exploitation, conversion for material and temporal gains and the notion of cultural repression.

## CHAPTER 6

### 6. PROBLEMS ACCOMPANYING THE CHRISTIANISATION OF THE HEHE

#### *6.1 Introduction*

The previous chapter investigated the motivations of Christian conversion amongst the Hehe and their relevance to the missionary endeavours. The deliberations of the chapter showed that the motivation of Christian conversion were the compliance with God's calling for mission and the simultaneous execution of the project of modernity. The argument was based on the fact that since the Berlin Conference in 1884-1885, Africa became part of the worldwide changes. We make an assumption that all aspects of life were affected by modernisation. The spheres of life that were highly affected included religion, politics, economics, social status, knowledge, technology, and gender relations. All these came together with colonisation and Christianisation hence touching other spheres of life such as the need for peace, security, power relations, human rights, justice and the validation of Christian faith in those aspects.

This chapter is a synthesis and a complementary investigation to the fifth chapter. It deals with the problems that accompanied the Christianisation of the Hehe by re-examining the issues of colonialism, paternalism, cruelty and humiliation. These are examined in the light of Christianisation in contrast with the criticisms and accusations of the second, third and fourth lines of thought (cf. 1.1, p. 3-5). That is: that the Christianisation of Africa was an extension of Western imperialism and the project of colonisation was at the heart of Christian mission; that Africans accepted Christianity because of poverty, hunger and other material and temporal benefits; that the presence of missionaries in Africa was, and still is, detrimental to the Church in Africa because of its negative effect on culture, community life, religion and identity. In addition, missionary

initiated churches lack indigenous identity and are replicas of the Western church and civilisation.

This chapter is guided by the fourth question and its hypothesis. The formulation is stated hereafter. What are the problems that accompanied the Christianisation of the Hehe? Hypothesis: The close collaboration between missionaries and colonialists, political subjugation of the local people, the imprecise notion of conversion for temporal gains, cultural intolerance and repression of African identity were the problems that accompanied the Christianisation of the Hehe.

Impediments and mishandlings of the local situations in the history and the course of Christianisation have always been there since its inception in Jerusalem. The third, fourth and fifth chapters have partly responded to the criticisms and impediments of Christianising the Hehe. Demonstrating the basis, the criteria and the motivations for Africans to convert to Christianity is one way of elucidating the responses. The basis has been identified as the pre-Christian experience, which has been termed as *preparatio evangelica* in concurrence with scholars in African Christianity such as Bediako and Mbiti. The criteria have been identified as the translatability of the message of salvation based on the event of Christ with a special emphasis on the incarnation, the theology of the cross, the Pentecostal manifestation that officiated every mother tongue to be the language for the Word of God, and the universal calling for transformation and fellowship with God as argued by scholars such as Bediako, Sanneh and Walls. The motivations have been identified as the compliance with *Missio Dei* (God's mission), the project of modernity and the identification of the church with the suffering of the people as well as its advocacy for the abolition of slave trade, justice, peace, human rights and involvement in eradicating ignorance and disease. Love, forgiveness and communion at the foot of the cross of Jesus Christ have been identified as the gist of the motivations.

One of the main tasks of this chapter is first to show through fieldwork, library resources and archival sources what happened in Iringa amongst the Hehe concerning mission and colonialism, mission with community life and culture, mission and the economic situation as well as mission and political dynamics. These are done first to enhance and harmonize with what has been discussed in the previous chapters and respond to the second, third and fourth lines of thought as stated in the introduction and as summarised below so as to respond that the censures, problems and accusations that have been voiced were temporary, and socially or culturally circumstantial as the researcher will argue in the subsequent sections of this chapter. Their presence did not prevent the mission of God (*Missio Dei*) amongst the Hehe.

The chapter is planned in such a manner that the first section introduces the chapter. The second section investigates the claims that the colonial project was at the heart of the church's mission in Africa and brought forth political subjugation. The third section investigates the claims that Africans converted to Christianity not for *soteric* (salvation-oriented) reasons but for reasons that had to do more with what the West can offer in terms of economic enhancement and improved quality of life. The fourth section investigates the claims that accuse Africans that they traded off their religion, culture, integrity and identity for the goods that the West could offer due to inferiority. We have responded to some of those censures and accusations from theological and missiological perspectives in the previous chapters. This chapter will investigate the historical and practical aspects.

### ***6.2 Mission, Colonialism and Political Subjugation***

The claims that the colonial project was at the heart of church mission could be affirmed by this statement, "*Zum zentralen Thema wurde die Losung: Deutsche Missionare fur deutsche Kolonien*" (Sehmsdorf 1991:7). ("The central theme was the motto: German Missionaries for German colonies") Fortunately

this theme did not survive for more than twenty-three years. These sentiments are also clear in the words of Neuberg:

*Bwana Mungu alitumia kwa mapenzi yake Wakristo wa Udachi kuileta na kuieneza Injili nchi ya Kusini ya Tanzania.... chama cha Berlin Mission kiliona wajibu wake pia kutuma wamissionari waipoleke Injili Tanganyika ya Kusini. Waliona ni vema neno la Mungu liwepo wakati serikali ya Ujerumani ikitawala. (Neuberg 1967:1).<sup>39</sup>*

(The Lord our God, by his own will, used the Christians of Germany to bring the Gospel in the Southern part of Tanzania. ... The Berlin Missionary Society found that it was part of its responsibility to send missionaries to proclaim the Gospel in Southern Tanganyika. They found it necessary that the word of God be preached in an area where the German government rules).  
Translated by the researcher.

Neuberg could be fairly interpreted as supporting the collaboration of mission and colonialism. Neuberg wrote this in 1976. His statement becomes more controversial when Neuberg puts God at the centre of colonial interests. The statement could be interpreted that German missionaries felt that it was a good opportunity for the gospel to be preached because their colonial collaborators were in power. It is therefore reasonable to assume that Neuberg as a German missionary was not annoyed by the presence of the German colonial government. The implication goes further that German missionaries would have not come to Tanzania if the colonisers were not from Germany. Such sentiments are akin to a saying among the Hehe that when the black ants meet they greet each other with a word of comradeship saying; *Nyasata ndi mutitu muyago*. (Black ants don't forget that they are both black). That means a black ant cannot betray a fellow black ant. The same applies to the notion that German missionaries who came to Tanzania during those days of colonisation and mission supported each other.

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<sup>39</sup> The name Neuberg might be confusing. There were two Neubergs; the first one was Wilhelm Neuberg, who was also the first German missionary amongst the Hehe. The second one was Herman Neuberg, the son of Wilhelm Neuberg. Herman Neuberg was posted for the second time in 1955 as a missionary amongst the Hehe and in 1967 he wrote a booklet about the work of the Berlin Mission in Southern Tanzania to mark the seventy-five years' celebrations.

### 6.2.1 Historical background: A General Perspective

The historical background of the relationship between the German colonising power and the German missionaries can be investigated deeper from the archival findings. The subsequent information was adopted from the original German text of Sehmsdorf (1991: 7-9) who gathered it from the Berlin Mission Archives. Pastors Georg Scriba (24.11.2003:Pietermaritzburg) and Farles Ilomo (April 2004: Tandala) translated the text from the German language into English. The German missionaries are the only ones concerned in this section as far as Iringa and the Hehe Lutherans as well as the Roman Catholics are concerned. The translation is long. Comments will be made concerning the issues that will arise within the translated text.

On 26<sup>th</sup> February 1885 the Berlin Conference ended with celebrations. From 15<sup>th</sup> November 1884, fourteen European countries and the United States of America (USA) set a colonial policy in Africa and decided how to divide the continent for themselves. The outcome of the partition of Africa was the occupation of the German colonies in the following countries. Togo in July 1884. Cameroon in July 1884. South West Africa, now Namibia on 24<sup>th</sup> April 1884. German East Africa (*Deutsch-Ostafrika*, abbreviated as DOA, on 27<sup>th</sup> February 1885. These regions were known as German colonies or protectorates (*Schutzgebiete*). DOA was at first a protectorate (Sehmsdorf:7).

The so-called German East Africa is Tanzania. The general view shows that the whole Europe and the United States of America (USA) were involved in the partition and occupation of Africa. Even if USA did not have any colonies in Africa, it cannot be excluded from being a supporter in the whole project of colonisation, occupation, and exploitation as well as "Christianisation" of Africa. The comment by Collins in appendix I that Christianity was a religion of those in power could be applicable.

The colonisation of German East Africa (DOA) was undertaken by an organisation founded on 2<sup>nd</sup> April 1885 by Carl Peters and his colleagues. It was known as *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Gesellschaft*, abbreviated as DOAG. (German East African

Organisation; or Colonisation Company). The colony under control was 995,000 sq km, which was twice as big as the other colonies that Germany had occupied before. The permanent boundary included the "Helgoland", which is Zanzibar and a contract was made between Germany and Great Britain. In 1890 the contract was internationally recognised (Sehmdorf:7).

When colonisation started the people of hinterland of Tanzania were mainly adherents of AR. Zanzibar and the slave trade routes were under the Islamic influence. Some Anglican and Roman Catholic missionaries had already started working in Tanzania, especially among the slaves (cf. Isichei 1995:79 and chapter 5 (p. 268). The German colonisers took the vast colony of Tanzania mainland and to make it more prestigious they took Zanzibar from the Britons. However, in spite of the colonisers' zeal for prestige, Sehmsdorf (p.7) reports that DOAG was not well prepared to administer the vast colony. He says,

DOAG proved to be weak in administering the protectorate. The uprising of the coastal people under Bushiri attacked the German colonised region. In an effort to curb the resistance the protectorate became a crown colony in 1890. The colonial supervisory clique of DOAG that took responsibility under the Germany Empire was having disputes among themselves (Sehmdorf:7).

Colonisation was planned in Europe and implemented in Africa. One could say the whole process was naïve. Tanzania has more than one hundred and thirty tribes. Each tribe had one or more chiefs. Arabs had been in Tanzania since the 10<sup>th</sup> Century and had established trade links with the local people. German coloniser did not have enough preparations for the proper management of the colony and the resistance from Arabs and local people. At some point, they sought help from the missionaries.

In the Parliament that met on 26<sup>th</sup> January 1889 Dr. Bamberger, a member of the parliament complained saying, "The outcome of this society shows that everywhere in the coast where peaceful business could be done, what is now taking place is shooting, murder and

devastation. Dear gentlemen, the result of this company is to destroy the German name among the coastal population. I have compiled a report from four eyewitness missionaries. All reports explain how corrupt the colonial personnel is, ... Funny enough Mr. Merensky has personally given positive remarks to acknowledge the activity of this East African Colonial Company" (Sehmsdorf:7).

Unfortunately, when the people of the colonising company failed to use logic they used force. When they failed to learn from the local people they used guns. Some missionaries were not happy with the colonisation process even if they might have concurred with the concept but they disagreed with the methodology. Regrettably, Merensky, one of the highly regarded pioneer missionaries in Southern Tanzania supported the use of force.

Germany had established in a short period of time some colonies and requested mission societies and the German people who assisted in mission work to give an opinion on the situation of the colonies. Many of these societies had already worked in many parts of Africa and Asia under different "flags" (colonising countries). The central theme was the motto: "German missionaries for German colonies" (Sehmsdorf:7).

Apparently, the combination of nationalism in Germany and the missionary awakening, having fused together with colonisation, could be rightly described a false start of God's mission. Requesting the mission societies to give their opinion concerning colonisation could be fair if the coloniser did not seek any support from the mission societies. The excerpt from Sehmsdorf gives an impression that the colonisers wanted the mission societies to support them. However, the mission societies differed in opinion as quoted below.

On the extraordinary Mission Conference of 27-29 February 1885 in Bremen there were two main groups within the mission movement. The one movement that was represented by the Inspector of Rhenish Mission, Mr. Fabri and by the Inspector of Gossner Mission, Mr. Plath, which was also called Berlin II. These were of the opinion that their experience in India showed that the reasons for establishing mission work was to assist colonialism



(Pave way for colonial activities). The other movement, however, which was represented by older mission societies, had a critical evaluation of the colonial period and they did not refrain from showing that they were against colonialism. Inspector Zahn of the North German Mission Society and the popular mission theologian Gustav Warneck spearheaded this movement. These saw that there was a danger for church mission to work for colonial interests. They wanted to maintain the international character of mission work (Sehmsdorf:7).

The excerpt above shows one example of the missionaries and mission societies that denied the merger of mission and colonialism quite at an early stage. The solution that was reached initiated a new perspective that gradually separated the two activities.

The solution was finally reached to reject the motto: "German missionaries for German colonies" because of its national and colonial connotation. In a circular letter of 1895 to the congregations and friends of Berlin Mission Society, which was called Berlin I, Superintendent Petrich remarked by saying, "The enthusiasm for colonies was not free from human misconception. Many people interpreted the past mission endeavours as if they belong to the Old Iron Age. German East Africa and German-Australian Mission Societies have been understood as if the Lord Jesus Christ told them, "go to your colonies and not "go to the whole world." Surprisingly, most of the elites would have preferred that missionaries should not send the message of salvation from sin but should speak about learning the worldly wisdom and work skills, as if the Lord Jesus Christ said, "Go and make heathens profitable labourers" and not "Go and preach the gospel to the heathens" (Sehmdorf:8).

The paragraph above gives part of the answer to the claims of Collins in appendix I. The practice of using the missionaries for colonisation or for fostering economic exploitation and oppression were denied at Bremen. Nevertheless, there were still some supporters of the Berlin Mission who were slow to understand the separation between mission, German nationalism, discipline and order. This shows that the problem was not "mission and colonialism". The problem was the misconception of Christianity and God's

mission in the whole Western society. Presumably, that seems to be part of the problem even in the contemporary Western society. That is why some theologians still ask, "why did Africans accept Christianity?" As if Christianity belongs to the "White people". Below is an example of such misconceptions.

Congregations that were supporting the Berlin Mission especially in the Prussian province, East of Elbe, in Pommern, Schlesia and East Prussia did not understand the dispute between the two movements. They were not well informed of what was happening in the colonies and in mission field. In these circles there was a lively support for the German Emperor and for nationalism. Their main expectation was to see "German discipline and order" being exercised in all colonial states as the best order. Their national highest expectation after 1871 emphasised that mission friends in Germany should understand that it is their duty to bring all people who are outside the German Empire under the obedience of their Caesar (German Emperor) as a message of Jesus Christ (Sehmsdorf: 8).

It might not be unfair to say, in spite of the positive impact of the information that David Livingstone publicized in Europe concerning Africa, nonetheless, the same information opened the door for the inappropriate amalgamation of the three Cs namely, colonisation, Christianisation and commercialisation. The excerpt below brings forth that unfortunate historical development.

The report from David Livingstone that was heard all over Europe drew the interest of Germans concerning Africa, especially about the awful practise of Arabs that they were hunting people (like animals) for slave trade. The interest of Germany about Africa was awakened further when they heard about the Mahdist Uprising, which was a political and religious freedom war in East Sudan as it was reported in various books between 1883 and 1889 (Sehmdorf:8).

The information from David Livingstone, even if it prepared some Christian and humanitarian groups that fought against slave trade, it also paved the way for the German colonisers, commercial exploiters the missionaries in

Africa. It shows from the excerpt by Sehmsdorf that there were no specific and significant criticisms against the colonial thoughts in the European and North American society. Sehmsdorf does not show any criticism against the colonial powers from the public at that time. Thus there were no controversies against the colonial thinking. Instead, the main emphasis was laid on the role of mission so that the Church would get involved in the historical transformational process of Africa. Therefore one could say before the Bremen conference, nearly all missionaries at the beginning were supportive of a European colonial expansion. In spite of what we have just stated, the agenda of mission and colonial expansion lost its influence. Sehmsdorf says,

At later stages the congregations and the supporters of mission that had colonial interest changed their inclinations and made efforts to revive the real role of church missions in the colonies. They came to understand that mission would fail if it were not focused on its commission. In Germany two mission societies were in position to advocate for this objective of mission. Therefore, on 25<sup>th</sup> January 1886 Pastor Ittameyer founded in Bavaria a Society for Evangelical Lutheran Mission in East Africa. They started their work among the Kamba, which is in Kenya. Kenya was by that time a British colony (Sehmsdorf 1991:7-8).

There are several concerns that arise in this information from Sehmsdorf. First, from 27<sup>th</sup> February 1885 Tanzania, and therefore the Hehe were unknowingly put into the world of continuous world politics, economics, beliefs and culture. This has been expressed in 5.1.2, as part of the project of modernity. Secondly, the German colonial powers and the mission societies seem as if they ignored the presence of other missionaries who came before colonisation as stated in 5.2, pp. 304-305. It is also apparent that both missionaries and colonialists desired the vast colony without considering how they would administer or evangelise it. Thirdly, the misconception of the church mission and the colonial authority as instruments of modernisation and productivity without resistance were false expectations. The historical narrative by Sehmsdorf shows

that between 1885 and 1914 there was an over emphasis on the German civilisation, manipulation and productivity more than the emphasis on proper mission endeavours and proper administration of the colony. The fourth issue that is raised in the information from Sehmsdorf is the urgency for abolishing the slave trade and freeing those who were already captured.

The fifth consideration concerns Merensky; the pioneer missionary who led the mission expedition to Southern Tanzania, but he was also the main supporter of colonisation. It is thus affirmed, "Some church leaders like Mission Superintendent Alexander Merensky were not only members of their respective church societies but also of the Society for German Colonisation and the German East Africa Company" (Nyagava 1979:3). More details about Merensky will be given later. Even though the agenda of German missionaries for German colonies was officially closed in 1895 at Bremen for Berlin Missionaries in Southern Tanzania, but not only Merensky continued with the practise. There were other missionaries who did the same until the beginning of the First World War. Fortunately, other missionaries abandoned the idea soon after the Bremen Conference. This will also be demonstrated later.

The sixth concern is about David Livingstone. Much blame has been given to him that he opened Africa for colonisation. We have made some comments in light of those errors. On the one hand, Livingstone was very instrumental in telling the world how people who were created in the image of God in Africa were suffering under the atrocities of Arabs and fellow African chiefs. Arabs and African chiefs who wanted to attain power and wealth cannot be excused of their ill practice of trading their fellow human beings like commercial commodities. On the other hand, it is very difficult for us Africans to declare even today that all the Europeans and Americans are free from paternalism, colonial mentality, superiority complex, economic power and arrogance, and in some parts, even racial discrimination. It is noteworthy that the African society is still struggling against Western domination almost in the same problematic areas as it were in

the days of David Livingstone. Western political domination is still there. Religious domination is still there and in some parts of Africa it has caused the formation of African Independent Churches. Economic domination that is supported by technology is seen all over Africa. How much is David Livingstone different from most of the Europeans and Americans today?

### *6.2.2 Practical Aspects of Mission and Colonialism among the Hehe*

While colonial authorities were in Tanzania since 1885 the Hehe came into the picture in 1891. In 1891, German missionaries, sent by the Berlin Mission Society, arrived in Southern Tanzania, in the present Mbeya region, which is the neighbouring region to Iringa. The Berlin Mission Society, which was already working in South Africa, assembled an expedition that was called upon to start mission work in Tanzania, which was then German East Africa. The expedition was assembled in Durban, Natal in June 1891 under the command of Alexander Merensky. Besides Merensky, who would remain only for one year, three other young men went as future missionaries for a longer term. These were Carl Nauhaus, Christoph Schumann and Christoph Bunk (Wright 1971:45-46). Wilhelm Neuberg joined them later (Schimanowski 20-08-1997: Iringa).

Mwakisunga (1991:14) argues that there were five missionary theologians and one of them by the name of Franke got sick on the way and returned to South Africa where he died in 1892. Three other non-theologian missionaries were builders. Their names were Roring, Krause and Thomas Nauhaus (a younger brother of Carl Nauhaus). These German missionaries travelled with two African (Zulu) interpreters named Nathanael and Africa. It is indicated that six African interpreters were added in Malawi at Bandawe. Bandawe was a Livingstonian mission station. In addition, these Zulus had travelled in Eastern and Southern Africa. They could speak Swahili, Nyakyusa, and Ngoni. In Karonga, they added another African interpreter known by the name of Kumoga who was fluent in the Nyakyusa and Ngonde languages. These additional

interpreters were needed to help missionaries who would be dispersed. Nahaus started learning Swahili (Mwakisunga 1991:15).

Both Lutheran and Moravian missionaries arrived at Ikombe on the Northern shores of Lake Nyasa in September 1891. In that same year, the Hehe under the leadership of their famous chief Mkwawa fought the German colonising army in August and defeated them. The news concerning the defeat of German soldiers spread all over German East Africa. The news reached the newly arrived German missionaries who were establishing mission stations amongst the Nyakyusa in Mbeya. This created fear among the missionaries and they stopped moving northwards.

Nevertheless, in 1894 the German colonising army came with weapons that were more sophisticated, and a stronger army thus defeating the brave Hehe and their chief. The defeated chief Mkwawa was hunted until 1898 when he committed suicide. Christianisation of the Hehe started that same year. The first Christian missionaries amongst the Hehe were Roman Catholics of the Benedictine order from Germany who arrived on 1<sup>st</sup> January 1887 at Tosamaganga and on 15<sup>th</sup> Mya 1887 they arrived in Madibira (Mgulunde 1997:18). Their first station was at Tosamaganga near Kalenga, close to the former headquarters of the Hehe chief. Lutheran missionaries moved northwards from Lake Nyasa through Kingaland and Benaland since 1893 and arrived in Heheland at Tosamaganga in August 1898. They spent the night with their Roman Catholic counterparts at Tosamaganga.

Both Catholic and Lutheran missionaries expressed sighs of relief over the death of the Hehe chief Mkwawa because they were afraid of him. The Catholic missionaries told the Lutheran missionaries that, "We are here already and you have arrived among the Hehe not one moment too early" (Bunk 1898). Nevertheless, in order to continue with Christian missions both Catholics and Lutherans made peace treaties with the successors of Mkwawa.

The successors of Mkwawa, even though they were members of AR, responded positively and granted permission for the Christianisation of their subjects. Bunk reports that the brother of the chief's advisor welcomed them saying,

You missionaries are allowed to go anywhere and you will not be attacked. Your business people came to look for ivory. Your soldiers have come to take our country. Instead, you have come to look for us (Koebler 1998:6).

The words of welcome by the brother of the chief's advisor give us two indications. Firstly that the Hehe did not expect missionaries to take interest in political issues hence the colonial issues but to concentrate on the welfare of the people. The second is the assurance of security, which was expressed as a way of showing that the Hehe expect missionaries to assure them security and they did not expect them to behave like the Arab businessmen whose interests were not for the people but only on making profit. The Hehe looked at missionaries as people who were different and more interested in godly service. It is apparent that Arab traders scared the Hehe even if Mkwawa was interested in trading with Arabs. The Hehe were scared of trading with Arabs because the trade involved selling slaves. Slaves amongst the Hehe were people who were captured by raiding the neighbouring tribes or from convicted Hehe criminals. Besides the slave trade, Arabs took ivory, animal skins and rhinoceros horns in exchange for guns, clothes and beads that did not benefit the rest of the society except the chief and some of his immediate assistants.

While the Hehe expected Roman Catholic and Lutheran missionaries to abstain from colonial collaboration it is disturbing to learn that Christian missionaries would rejoice over the defeat of a local chief under the colonial powers. One German scholar and colonial administrator expressed his disappointment over the death of Mkwawa. Having followed up all that took place, Dr. Stierling who had persistently advised his colonial government to

continue with the dialogue towards a peaceful treaty between the Hehe and the colonising society said,

With the death of Quawa(sic), the last Sultan of the Wahehe: the already seven-year war by these brave and proud mountain people against the German rule had, hopefully for good, found its conclusion [sic- the war came to an end]. Unfortunately, that means, at the same time the downfall of these people. The handful remaining men of the Kihehe ethnic group who are still there cannot hold on in their own anymore. They will integrate with other tribes; and in place of brave warriors and great hunters, they will be sheer porters like the majority of other Negroes in our colonies. (Stierling 1899: 257, translated by Madumula 1995: 5).<sup>40</sup>

What Stierling said was somehow prophetic. Since the death of Mkwawa the Hehe people have been down trodden. The former strong warriors have turned out to be labourers and poor peasants or livestock keepers with small herds. For almost a century the Hehe have remained with a big name but with minimal development. Although there are no longer porters in Tanzania, yet Iringa district and other districts of Iringa region are the sources of "houseboys" and "housegirls", and labourers of lower cadre. People who would be warriors are now watchmen of the rich Indians, Arabs and people from tribes that in the past were considered inferior.

Furthermore, if the Hehe and the people from other tribes had converted to Christianity for material benefits as Collins stated in the introduction of the first chapter (cf. 1.1, p.4) then they would be the prosperous people of Iringa. If they converted to get farm implements as Collins claimed, then the Bena, Kinga and Nyakyusa would not have migrated to Iringa because they could have received fertilizers in their respective areas where Christian missionaries arrived before Iringa. They would have owned big farms, hence not becoming labourers of white settlers and other rich people of Iringa. The Hehe would have maintained their pride through the church when colonialism had diminished it.

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<sup>40</sup> The language in this quotation is copied from Madumula as it is found in the Tanzania National archive. Quawa stands for Mkwawa and Kihehe or Wahehe stands for the Hehe tribe.



Bunk admitted that the Hehe were civilised people with integrity and confidence. Upon their arrival in Iringa, Bunk reports that they found a different civilization. According to him, the Hehe were different from the Nyakyusa, Kinga and Bena. Here is an excerpt from daily the notes of Bunk as recorded on 10<sup>th</sup> August 1898.

We have arrived in Heheland, a land with plenty of food. There are groundnuts, maize, finger millet, sweet potatoes, beans, honey and plenty of nice local beer. ... The Hehe are people of self-confidence and high esteem. When you meet them, they stand straight and face you eyeball to eyeball and greet. Men and women dress well, unlike the other tribes. Their clothes are made of animal skins but chiefs and rich people have started dressing with normal clothes and calico gowns (Koebler 1998:4).

Records from the Tanzania National Archives, the Berlin Missions Archives and Kidugala Archives concerning the Bena-Hehe Synod (1898 to 1939) as collected by Nyagava have much information about the relationship between missionaries and colonialists. Nyagava argues that Protestant and Roman Catholic missionaries helped to establish the German colonial rule in the Southern Highlands and the rest of Southern Tanzania even after the conference of Bremen. He argues further that the colonial administration was not able to establish a stable rule in Southern Tanzania until the First World War due to frequent resistance from Arabs, local leaders such as Mchemba of Lindi, chief Mkwawa of the Hehe in Iringa and the MajiMaji resistance among the Ngoni, Pangwa and Bena. He says,

For example, except for the German missionary presence, after 1890, the colonial administration had not yet been fully established in the Southern Highlands of Tanzania even up to the beginning of World War I.... Fuchs gives as reasons for this "step mother" treatment as resulting from resistance and unrest in Kilwa, by Hassan bin Omar and his followers after he was hanged in 1895. Then the Mchemba resistance in Lindi is another reason.<sup>41</sup> From

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<sup>41</sup> Nyagava considers the Mchemba resistance in Lindi as another reason that caused Southern Tanzania to be given a "step mother's" treatment.

the interior there was the famous Hehe resistance and later the *Maji Maji* Rebellion of 1905-1907. To stem off the resistance the German East Africa Company and later the German colonial Government needed money and manpower. But the resources were in short supply. Consequently, the Government turned to missionaries for help. Further, the Government saw such close working together helpful and suitable, as Niessel has observed in his *Kolonialverwaltung und Missionen in Deutsch Ostafrika 1890-1915* (Nyangava 1983:6)

The *MajiMaji* resistance was staged by a diviner named Kinjeketile against the German colonial rule in revolt against the brutality, during tax collection and forced labour. Africans believed that all Germans, regardless of whether they were colonisers or missionaries, acted in the same manner of cruelty against them. Kinjeketile enticed Africans to kill every white person that they came across and destroy any property of a white person. He convinced Africans not to fear the bullets of the white persons because they would turn into water once they were shot. Water is *maji* in Swahili, thus the resistance is named after water.

Wright complements to the assertion of Nyagava by saying;

In the matter of Uhehe, however, Merensky and the committee stood firmly in control and intended to take full advantage of the publicity generated by the Hehe Wars to gain popularity for the East African work. In 1895 when local missionaries suggested a deflection from the route into Uhehe, the Berlin Committee reaffirmed its intentions to follow up the military occupation of Uhehe, and Merensky went further to emphasize that the mission would spread further, "to the sea" (1971:66-67).

Mwakisunga (1991:18) feels that the close co-operation of the missionaries and colonialists in the Southern Highlands and their inability to see the atrocities of colonialism is an indication that the philosophy of "German missionaries for German colonies" and the notion of 1871 that said, "German discipline and order" for all German colonies was fully practised and adhered to by colonisers and missionaries. Wright (1971:69) goes further by showing that the German missionaries rejoiced in the fall of the local empires where they were intending to

do mission. She indicates that Lutheran missionaries came to Uhehe soon after the collapse of the chiefdom. She also cites that the fall of the chiefdom was partly contributed to by the presence of German and (Swahili) Muslim soldiers as well as the presence of Catholic missionaries. This shows that the Hehe were no longer able to defend themselves because there were possibilities that some secret information was relayed to the German colonisers by Roman Catholic missionaries on how to defeat the Hehe. This sentiment arises from the statement below.

The Hehe came into the world picture in 1891 when they defeated a German army and resisted the German colonisation for seven years. Germans took keen interest in the Hehe and wrote as much as they could about them because no other tribe in the whole of German East Africa had staged such a strong resistance and had cost Germany so much blood as the Hehe (Redmayne1974:37).

With Redmayne's assertion who could have written about the Hehe if not the elite colonisers and missionaries? Nyagava associates Merensky in seizing the colony when he says, "but more important still was Merensky's own participation in more adventurous activities, which included advising Carl Peters on matters of colonisation or how to seize a colony" (Nyagava 1979:10).

The way Nyagava, Wright and the researcher portray this information is not meant to contradict the fifth chapter and not even to deride the work of missionaries but to show what happened in the mission field since 1891 to 1914 and how mission and colonialism was invalidated at Bremen but how some protestant missionaries glorified the state and strayed from the essence of mission and the Christian calling. Therefore Nyagava says,

For both reasons missionaries, preferably Protestants were encouraged to become agents of occupation. Not only that but further sought political reports from missionaries at Mkwawa's back arguing them to make informal contacts with Mkwawa who was still at large. ... The missionaries also actively participated in the colonial policy reforms by conducting surveys and filling in questionnaires about different customs, political and military

aspects of the various ethnic groups in German East Africa up to 1910 (Nyangava 1983: 7).

On another occasion, Nyagava presented a paper at Karl Marx University in Leipzig on the role of missionaries in the colonisation of the Southern Highlands of Tanzania as a case study of the Berlin Missionary Society. In the paper, he pointed out names of missionaries from the Berlin Missionary Society who had direct impact on colonisation. These were Alexander Merensky, Paul Goreschel, Christopher Bunk, Jacob Janer and Karl Rud (Nyangava 1979:6-21). Nyagava responded in a questionnaire regarding this research and reinstated his observations saying,

This was true in the first group of missionaries like Alexander Merensky, Christoph Bunk, Schumann and all those of the rebel group of 1895 Bremen meeting on the role of missionaries and colonialism. In fact, Christoph Bunk volunteered to work as a government adjunct in disarming Mkwawa's supporters. Merensky said it very clearly that church and state should work together in issues of colonialism (12-09-2002:Iringa)

Observations other than those of Nyagava indicate that Merensky was pessimistic about Africans. This information is summarized hence paraphrased from Ustorf (2000: 149). Ustorf says,

In 1886 Alexander Merensky (1837-1918), a prominent missionary from the Berlin Missionary Society, had won the first prize in a national competition with his answer to the question of "*How to educate Negroes for work on plantations*"? His proposal was both simple and brutal: "*As long as the Africans remained landholders or had other means of ownership, they would never voluntarily work- for whites*". The solution he suggested was violent- "*to drive them off their land, deprive them of their livelihood and, consequently, force them to earn their income as hired labourers on white plantations*" (Ustorf 2000:149).

Merensky said this when he had already been a missionary in South Africa. He said this when Carl Peters was making treaties with African chiefs in Tanzania for German colonisation. Merensky, with that attitude and as a

missionary in South Africa, became the pioneer and the leader of the Lutheran Missionaries in Southern Tanzania five years later.

It is now apparent that early German missionaries, being a product of their culture with the nationalistic pride of their time, failed to separate the relationship between Church and State in the context of Germany. Church and state were so close that it was not easy to see the obvious demarcation between them. Sehmsdorf (1991:8) has shown that there were some exceptions to the collaboration between missionaries and colonialists. Gustav Warneck, the founder of missiology and the editor of the *Allgemeine Missionszeitschrift*, was strongly against the partnership between missionaries and colonialists and one missiologist says,

Warneck was tireless in warning the Christian public in Germany against this adulteration of missionary motive by wholly irrelevant considerations, against the spirit of narrow national pride, which could find nothing good to say about the work of the missions of other nations (Neill 1966:395-396).

Contrary to Warneck, those who were in favour of Christianising for the sake of colonising, hence without true interest to mission, had unpleasant statements such as the one quoted hereafter.

We do not acquire the colonies in order to convert the blacks, and not in the first place for their benefit, but for us white men. Anyone who opposes us in this accomplishment of this purpose must just be swept out of the way (Neill: 395).

Amidst colonialism, Lutheran missionaries went ahead and established mission stations among the Hehe and motivated them to convert to Christianity. This is one of the key areas in which evaluators of the mission work want a response as they ask why did Africans accept Christianity? To add to this, Wilhelm Neuberg (1898), the first German missionary amongst the Hehe in Muhanga said, "*Ili wajue kwamba ni siku ya Ibada tunapandisha asubuhi mapema sana bendera ya nyeusi-nyeupe-nyekundu yenye mslaba katikati*" (Koebler 1998:7). (For

them to know that it is a day of worship, we raise the flag [of Germany] very early in the morning, with black, white, red with the cross in the middle).

The mixture is easily observable. The German flag of that time had the cross in the middle. The evaluators of Christianisation in Africa would have been fair if they asked, "How could Western missionaries bring about authentic Christianity in Africa when their Christianity in Europe and America was so much inauthentic?" They would also be fair if they asked, "How could Lutheran missionaries who claim to hold to the theology of Luther bring forth an authentic Lutheran Church in Africa while they were so much inclined to the theology of glory than the theology of the cross? The answers to those questions would be this way; *they tried to bring the church through the theology of glory but they failed to do so because the religious and social setting of Africa prior to Christianisation did not allow it.* Missionaries expected glory and security from the colonial masters but that was not achieved. They were subject to suffering with the suffering Africans. Besides suffering, they preached the gospel in the mother tongue of Africans, contrary to the colonial mentality, and that defeated their inauthentic approach.

In addition, the relationship between missionaries and colonialists was not always sweet. There were times when relations seemed sour, bitter and even intolerable. For example: Missionaries reported cases where African civil servants harassed or raped women. Groeschel (1901) reported, "soldiers have taken people's property, treated them with cruelty and caused a lot of annoyance to girls and women" (Koebler 1998:11). On another occasion he wrote,

One person reported to me that government messengers had taken away his two wives because he had not paid the head tax but I was able to find the two wives. The soldiers ran away and I sent the wives back to their husband (Koebler:11).

Another missionary wrote that,

We heard that ten women were ambushed and raped. We met some of them. For example, a girl who was still breast-feeding was

raped and so was an elderly woman who was raped by four African civil servants (Koebler:11).

It is indeed true and fair to ask whether such inclinations of missionaries would bring forth authentic Christianity. Our responses will focus on what happened in Iringa amongst the Hehe. The answer from a practical point of view is that the collaboration ended in 1914 at the commencement of the First World War. Due to such collaboration the German missionaries were deported back to Germany. Anderson (1925) reported the the Presbyterian Livingstonia Mission of the Scottish Church that was working in Malawi took over the work of the Berlin Mission in Southern Tanzania in 1918 (Koebler 1998:19). According to Anderson, as reported by Koebler, the Scottish missionaries reported that they found most of the stations ruined, robbed, vandalised and devastated. Participation on Sundays had diminished. We account for the vandalism and the impeded church growth as arising from lack of ownership of the church vision and mission on the part of the local converts. Fr. George of the Roman Catholic Church accounted for the vandalism as arising mostly from non-Christians who cherished the internment of missionaries (29-10-2003:Iringa). Pastor Mkemwa (14-08-1997) said, "*Ni ujinga na umaskini tu*". ("It was sheer ignorance and poverty").

In spite of what happened in mission stations, the propagation of the gospel continued in homes and in the extended families and kinships. We have evidence of this because people like Lupituko Mkemwa and Aaron Kikoti, the first Hehe Christians, were baptised in Dar-es-Salaam when they escorted missionaries who were interned, but they preached in their homes when they came back from Dar-es-Salaam and won converts among whom are the parents of the researcher.

The close collaboration of missionaries and colonialists in Iringa took place for a period of only sixteen years. Only the pioneer missionaries can be accused of that collaboration. On the eve of the Second World War, Swedish

missionaries were already in Iringa at Ilula. These have been cited in 5.2, pp 271-275). There is no evidence or indication that the Swedish missionaries were interested in collaborating with the British colonising authority. The only indication we find is that they wanted power, credit and control. First, they manipulated the elimination of Pastor Yohane Nyagawa from the position of superintended of the Evangelical Church in Southern Tanzania (Kilimuhana 1991: 27-28). Secondly, the researcher makes a deduction that they did not want other Africans to take leadership because if Nyagawa had problems then they would have elected another African. Thirdly, the researcher is aware of the observation European missionaries relinquished the power to Africans only after independence (Ludwig 1999:44; 1991:47).

We have shown in the previous sections that the pioneer missionaries to the Hehe were from Germany. However, there are no direct indications that Roman Catholics missionaries of the Benedictine Order participated in colonising activities except from the observations by Nyagawa that Carl Peters visited the Pope in Rome to request him to allow Roman Catholic missionaries to participate in the colonising endeavour. Nyagawa does not tell how the Pope responded (Nyagawa 1979:7).

### *6.2.3 Comments on the Practical Aspects*

It is important at this point to make a special note that the Berlin missionaries from Durban in South Africa travelled with interpreters. While our major concern is mission and colonialism we have seen so far from the practical point of view that the need for interpreters was inexorable. What we see clearly is the pre-eminence of local languages in mission. We can even say what was needed was not the colonial presence but the channel of mission, which is the local language. Thus, there can be mission without the colonial power but there is no mission without translation. Sanneh says,



The introduction of Western art in the mission field took place in the context of translation, and that produced a new situation altogether. Missionaries accepted the indigenous culture as the final designation of the message, and they were prepared to go to similar lengths in renouncing Western culture as normative pattern for all peoples. Mission had brought the missionaries to the point of radical tension with their own culture (Sanneh 1991:93).

The evaluators of the missionaries' endeavour and even church historians, sociologists or social scientists and anthropologists do not easily see the importance of the African translators who travelled with missionaries. In spite of all the negative observations, which we have shown in the previous sections, Lutheran missionaries who travelled from Durban in South Africa to Iringa in Tanzania were impelled to travel with interpreters. Archival records show that from Durban to Malawi they travelled with two Zulus namely Nathanael and Africa. Six more interpreters were added in Malawi. Their names are not even mentioned. Kumoga was added at Karonga at the border between Tanzania and Malawi.

It is important for the evaluators of the mission work to understand that those nine interpreters who travelled with missionaries were the most important channels of authentic conversion. Their interpretation of the message that was proclaimed by missionaries met the hearts of Tanzanians through the vernacular. The significance of the presence of the nine interpreters makes those all factual criticisms and false censures or accusations that have been voiced by various academic, political and social settings to be considered as insignificant. In spite of what missionaries might have looked at or treated these interpreters, yet one could say those nine interpreters were the divine secret of the Pentecost manifestation of God's mission in Southern Tanzania. As it is asserted,

Christianity (capital C), on the other hand, is at once more than and less than its cultural manifestations. This Christianity is supracultural, absolute, universally applicable, yet one visible to finite, culture-bound mankind as expressed in culture-seen only dimly and partially, as in reflections. Nevertheless, the glimpses

are there-many [sic], including that of God in human form (Kraft 1984:491).

The assertions by Kraft form the basis of the argument that those Africans who travelled with the missionaries translated the local languages for missionaries and interpreted when missionaries preached. In doing this they caused the people of Southern Tanzania with the people in Jerusalem at the first Pentecost, "South Africans, Malawians and Tanzanians, we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God." (Cf. Ac. 2:11). Such unrecognised people in Africa are numerous but they are the ones who have been very instrumental in God's Mission. They are the polygamists who were denied baptism but who told missionaries the right things to say and do. They are the old *bibi* (grandmothers) and *babu* (grandfather) who sat around the fire and told stories such as those of the Mwanambehele (cf. 3.3.1, p. 183-190) to their grand children and missionaries about the power and the will of God in vulnerability hence making the incarnation comprehensible.

Looking at the Hehe the researcher has been taught through the interactions of the informants and from what has been demonstrated in the third, fourth and fifth chapters that the work of conveying the message of salvation was introduced by missionaries to very few African converts. These in turn became the messengers to their fellow Africans. The propagation of the message of salvation was therefore done at home, in social and community gatherings such as weddings and funerals, even at *pombe* (local beer) clubs, especially with Roman Catholics, who interacted with other Protestants and non-Christians there in the clubs and where missionaries barely participated. It was this message that was communicated without the official church service that had more impact than the one that was conveyed at church meetings.

However, the native preachers needed to be equipped with the translated message of salvation. Therefore, in spite of the colonial mentality, which we see in the missionaries during early stages of mission work amongst the Hehe, we

should also acknowledge the fact that the same missionaries are the ones who took the trouble to translate the Word of God in the vernacular. The translated gospel was the power that contributed very positively to the conversion of the Hehe. The ability to translate the Word of God required substantive time and energy to study the local languages. Evaluators of the mission work have said that the zealousness of missionaries to study the language, the culture, the music melodies and proverbs was intended to be the tool of controlling African (Ngasakwa 22-10-2003: Lusinga). Even if that would have been the intention yet it turned to be a blessing that led to the translation of the New Testament into the vernacular and native preachers used it to call their kinsmen and women to Jesus Christ.

In view of the preceding argument it follows that the three pillars of this thesis namely the pre-Christian experience, the translatability of the event of Christ and the concept of God's mission overshadow all four criticisms against the Christianisation of Africa. The accusation that Africans should remain with AR is responded by the deliberations of the second and third chapters that the Christian God is the same as the God of AR. The observations add that much of what was experienced in AR has found meaning and relevance in Christianity. The concept of God's mission that engulfs God's initiative and calling is the one that annulled the motto of "German missionaries for German" colonies hence the close collaboration between missionaries and colonialists.

The last argument above is proven by the observation that when the German missionaries were deported other missionaries came and joined hands with the native preachers for the continuation of God's mission. When German missionaries came back in 1925, after the First World War, Tanganyika was under another colonial authority. One could say, since British authorities were the ones who took the colony, and since the Britons defeat the Germans, God wanted to show German missionaries that what they needed for the conversion of the Hehe was not the German ruler but the translated Jesus Christ. In other

words, what they needed for the authentic conversion of the Hehe was not the glory of the German Caesar but the suffering human and multi-lingua Jesus Christ.

Was the project of colonisation at the heart of Christian mission? He Observations by Sehmsdorf (cf. 338-341) show that some missionaries wanted it that way but the project of translating the message overshadowed all ulterior motives. It appears as if the project of translating the message behaved like light in the darkness. Once the gospel was available in the vernacular Christian converts at grassroots level took the message faster and farther than what was planned and expected.

Moreover, if missionaries were to succeed in maintaining their dominance and subjugation of African culture they should have refrained from two things. Firstly, they could have desisted from translating the message of salvation and availing it in the hands of the natives. Secondly, they should have not taught people how to read and write. The intention here is to emphasize the point that all evaluators of the mission work ought to perceive that authentic Christian conversion cannot be hindered by any obstacle if people have the Word of God in their mother tongue and read it in their homes. We are tempted to say, the authenticity of Christian conversion in the African context is rooted in the Bible in the vernacular in the homes of people. More importantly, in Africa religion is family or home centred. Most people do not go to Church to know Jesus but they go to Church because they know Jesus and they gather to affirm their faith and knowledge.

The observation from interviews and from archival records from the Berlin Mission as translated and put graphically by Koebler (1998:15) indicate that between 1898 and 1913 only about 300 people were baptised in the whole Bena-Hehe Synod. Out of these only a few Hehe in Mufindi were baptised otherwise no Hehe were baptised in the current Iringa Diocese where the research is done. There were only catechumens. There are several reasons that

led to this situation. Several reasons might have contributed to that. The first reason that might have led to such inadequate results was the excessive concentration of the early Berlin missionaries on issues that were not geared to conversion. These included the time they spent in serving the colonial masters and colonial administrative issues that included either conflicts between missionaries and colonialists or colonialists and Christian converts, catechumens and other local people who needed defence and protection from missionaries. The second reason might be the unnecessarily prolonged period of training the Hehe for baptism. This prolonged time had both positive and negative aspects. The positive aspect is that no catechumen was accepted for baptism until the candidate was able to read, count and write. The negative aspect is that such a demand repelled adult Hehe people from joining the Church. Christianity was therefore a school religion. The third reason might have been the denial of baptism to polygamists. As it stood, many adult Hehe were polygamists and Lutheranism as well as Catholicism denied baptism to polygamous men unless they left all other wives and remained with one. This was a theological oversight.

We will briefly look into the problem of refusing baptism to polygamists. The practice amongst the Hehe is polygyny. Refusing baptism to the polygynists does not have a direct Biblical authorization. On the one hand monogamy could be expressed as God's intention since creation (Gen 2:18ff). On the other hand, polygamy seems to be an acceptable practice in the ancient Israel. "Subsequently, polygamy was allowed and its practice became rather common in the ancient Israel" (cf. Det 21: 15ff) (Henry 1973:514). Some of the prominent persons in the Old Testament times who practised polygamy include Lamech (Gen. 4:19); Elkanah (ISa. 1:1-2); Joash (2Chr. 24:1-3), Gideon (Judg. 8:30); David (2Sa. 3:2-5; 5:13-16); Solomon (IKi. 11:3).

In the New Testament monogamy is largely proposed as the ideal kind of marriage for church membership and the creation order is affirmed (cf. Mtt. 19:3-9; Mk. 10:1-12; ICor. 6:16; 7:1,2; Eph 5:22-33; ITim 3:2). Missionaries held to the

New Testament order. Nonetheless, "Jesus was apparently careful not to condemn polygamists. There is no scriptural warrant to enforce the dissolution of polygamous marriages or exclude believing polygamists from full church membership" (Igenoza 1995:673).

Nevertheless, the New Testament is invariably clear that church leaders have to be monogamous (ITim 3:2). Conversely, monogamy being a pastoral regulation for the bishop (*overseer*) or the deacon, brings forth the inference that "polygamous Jews (or indeed Gentiles with extramarital concubines) existed as full members in the Church (ITim 3:2,12; Tit 1:6)" (Igenoza 1995:673).

Returning to the practical aspects that impeded the growth of the church in its early phase we come across the fourth reason. The fourth reason might have been excessive involvement in building mission houses, tilling gardens, building sheds for their horses and other livestock and poultry that fitted their Western standards. Such involvements retarded the evangelistic efforts but once the Word was in vernacular and in the hands of natives the church grew faster and so it does today.

### *6.3 Conversion for Temporal Gains: An Imprecise Notion*

The previous chapter has deliberated on the motivations of Christian conversion. The first and second sections of this chapter have shown the kind of missionaries and they have denied the notion of linking Christian conversion with colonialism or the Western influence. Instead, Christian conversion has been fully linked to the translated message of salvation. The intention of this section is to establish that the accusation that Africans accepted Christianity for material or temporal gains is unmerited. The notion that is portrayed by Collins in appendix I is about a rich European missionary who came to Africa with the Western might to the weak, poor and frail Africans. The African is portrayed as a person who abandons his faith and goes to the Church to receive money,

fertilisers, clothing and food or medical supplies and not to listen to the Word of God.

In spite of the notion being unjustified, we shown in the fifth chapter that the missionaries from Berlin were not rich. Fieldwork and archival records do not indicate any of the claims such as the Hehe being given farm implements, clothes and other material benefits being distributed to the Hehe Lutherans as part of the Christianisation process. There are no records for food aid. On the contrary Bunk (1898) acknowledged that the Hehe had plenty of food and beer (Koebler 1998: 6). In addition, we learn from Oelke (1899) about the starving missionary in Muhanga (Koebler 1998: 6). Furthermore, missionaries worked in a very vast area. It took them two to three years to all reach church members. Some catechumens had to travel to the mission station for baptism because the missionary was not able to visit them. How could such a missionary distribute material things? It is emphasised that the conversion of Africans took place in the environment of suffering but with the Word of God in African homes. It is therefore important for us to understand that “the message that the missionary brought cannot therefore be understood without analysing the entire framework in which that message was communicated” (Balcomb 2004: 1).

In order to know about authentic conversion of Christianity in Africa we ought to take politics, economics and material gains or the project of modernisation as secondary or even tertiary motives. The primary motivation lies in the translation of the scripture. It is in the language and therefore the culture that Africans find their faith, identity, pride and wholeness.

While it has been hard to prove that there were any Hehe people who converted on the grounds of material gains, it will also be uncritical to rule out that there were ulterior motives of joining the Church. Joining the Church with ulterior motives is described by Jesus Christ as the presence of weeds in the wheat field (Mtt.13: 25ff) and could be seen by the fruit (Mtt 7:16ff; 12:33ff).

The notion that African Christianity is not authentic due to the conversion that was motivated by ulterior motives and cultural subjugation rules out the fact of translatability, hence the nature of Christianity. Translatability looks at the motivation of authentic conversion from the perspectives of transformation through culture and religious beliefs. Sanneh says,

Translation is primarily a matter of language, but it is not only that, for language itself is a living expression of the culture. Lexical resources must be deepened with the force of usage, customs, and tradition in order to become meaningful, particularly if we want to represent the dynamic quality of life. Language is not just the "soul" of a people, as if it belongs to some sort of elite Gnostic circle. Language is also the garment that gives shape, decorum, and vitality to conscious life, enabling us to appreciate the visible texture of life in its subtle, intricate variety and possibility.

The efforts of scriptural translators to come as close as possible to the speech of ordinary, everyday life is a remarkable example of their confidence that the profoundest spiritual truths are compatible with commonplace words, ideas, and concepts (Sanneh 1991:200).

#### *6.4 Mission, Culture and African Identity*

We will start this subsection with views from some of the evaluators of mission, culture and identity. A long term Finnish missionary to Tanzania criticised the researcher who in his capacity as the Board Chairman of Tumaini University at Iringa appointed an American missionary to the position of the Provost. She exclaimed that there was no use her coming to Africa if the church in Africa was a mere a reduplication of the church in Europe or America (Peltola 26-07-1998: Iringa). Peltola and those who argue along this line have expressed a number of concerns as shown in the questions below. Why be a Christian in Africa when it is clear that it is still a white person's enterprise? What might be the motivation for conversion when it means losing a person's identity? Such claims are found in Omari (1999:196) and he refers to Sundkler (1948) and Barret



(1968) that most African independent Churches have arisen because of reclaiming African identity. Such are the claims of the fourth line of thought that the continued presence of missionaries in Africa was, and still is detrimental to the Church in Africa and diminishes African Christian identity.

A German volunteer who had visited Southern Tanzania several times could also stand as a representative of the fourth line of thought. With bitterness she asked:

Why do I go to church and find everything German? Bells call people to church instead of the common African drums, the clergy come dressed in western style, the service starts in the same old western style, choirs sing German and other European songs and very little or almost no African melodies. How should I understand this church? Did missionaries propagate Christianity or Western civilisation and culture? Did Africans convert to become Whites or Christians? (Zigelkowitz 15-12-1987:Iranga). The question is in the personal notes of the researcher as referred in appendix IIA.

One could simply respond to those concerns by saying that it would have not been easy for Tanzanians to do away with the Western superimposition in the church in Africa because the church as an institution has been identified with missionaries for more than eight decades out of ten of its existence. Moreover, Christianity has been in Europe for a long time that Western culture and Christianity have been wrongly identified as one and the same, as Omari remarks, "It is an unfortunate situation that Christianity was hijacked by Western culture and as a result western cultural heritages have been blended with Christianity which was planted in Africa" (Omari 1976:13). In addition, the leadership, finances, the theological training and decision making of what should and should not be in the church in Africa has been in the hands of missionaries since the establishment of the church until the time after independence. This counts from 1891 to 1971 for church leadership and 1891 to the present for financial and theological control. It could also be stated that there are efforts to

indigenise the church in all aspects but such a process requires time, human and financial resources.

Otherwise, we affirm from the perspective of translatability that our real African identity in the Christian Church in Africa is in four irrevocable aspects. Firstly, God is among us through the incarnation of Jesus Christ. The third chapter outlined how God could be identified with the Hehe and the Maasai as well as all tribes where the incarnate Jesus Christ through his Word has been translated. Secondly, Jesus Christ is God who identifies with the daily living and suffering of Africans and makes Africans understand him through the channel of African culture. Thirdly, through the power of the Holy Spirit God speaks in our mother tongues and God hears us when we pray, worship and praise him in our mother tongues. Fourthly, theology and culture are not static they are always in a dynamic transition of cross-fertilisation and reclamation. These are for the researcher more important than drums or bells, clothes and leadership positions.

Equally important are the observations of some African scholars in social transformation who are of the opinions that Christian missionaries who propagated the gospel had both positive and negative influence on African life, culture and religion. Omari says,

Early missionaries' contribution to the understanding of African societies can be grouped as negative and positive, depending on which aspect is being looked at and in relation to the historical context. Either conclusion may be correct (Omari 1984: 14).

As we investigate further, we come across some severe and stinging negative descriptions of Christian missionaries by scholars like Ayandele. He made a comparison between the influence of Christianity and Islam on the African society. He described missionaries in the assertions below.

Moreover, in the nineteenth century, he came to Africa with preconceived ideas of the superiority of his race, his religion and the customs and institutions of his country...

We have no space but it is essential to compare his attitude to Africans with that of his Muslim counterpart already mentioned.

His attitude was largely patronizing. Everything about him bore the air of superiority and separateness. His diet was different, his clothing was different, and his house sometimes may have seemed to many African chiefs more of a threatening fort than a building intended for peace-loving strangers. He encouraged his wards to imitate himself in all respects and gave them the impression that Christian missionary lectured the chiefs about the barbarity of their ways and ridiculed polygamy, tattooing, slavery, bride-price and wakes as 'unchristian' (Ayandele 1970:135).<sup>42</sup>

Ayandele's assertions are from a West African context. Some are true but others could be exaggerated as far as East Africa and especially the Southern Tanzanian contexts are concerned. We remind ourselves that Lutheran Christianity was introduced among the Hehe when missionaries had experienced many cultures among Africans. Missionaries from Berlin had been in South Africa among the Zulu, Pedi, Xhosa and Venda. They had some experience or information about the Shona and Ndebele of Zimbabwe. They also had met the Nyanja and Ngonde of Malawi. They had passed through other places amongst the Nyakyusa, Kinga South of Iringa and finally the Bena who have much in common with the Hehe (Sundkler and Steed 2000:386-391, 434-435, 445-448, 473). In all these experiences, missionaries from Berlin were to mix with Africans easily. It is therefore expected that those missionaries with such vast African experience would have wide knowledge of African culture and life style.

As they preached the gospel to various African audiences, they would have been exposed to various African worldviews. They would have been adapted to the behaviour of Africans towards the gospel and towards the missionaries. The missionaries were expected to be also adapted to the Gospel in the African context.

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<sup>42</sup> The term "wakes" does not appear in most dictionaries except in Nielson, W.A. (et. al. eds 1934:2866), where it means a period of festivity and merry making. These are usually associated with family affairs or with burial ceremonies, as described by Langenscheidt's English Dictionary (1999): A Merriam-Webster's English Dictionary (1997: 824-825).

Indeed, not only does the Scripture reveal a salvific core, it also reveals that the salvific core was adapted to various audiences - not to their prejudice and taste in order to make the message palatable, but to their worldview and knowledge in order to make it understandable (Hesselgrave 1989:207).

We want to contest the assertions by Ayandele that in spite of the various colonial inclinations that have been shown concerning German missionaries in the first section of this chapter we are aware that all German missionaries who worked among Africans influenced Africans and African audiences influenced them. If all the vast experiences of those missionaries in various African audiences had not changed those missionaries then all Ayandele's criticisms would be right. Otherwise, the criticisms are not right. According to the Comaroffs missionaries who wanted to change Africans were also changed.

In the long conversation between the colonisers and the colonised - a conversation that was full of arguments of words and images - many of the signifiers of the colonising culture became unfixed. They were seized by the Africans and, sometimes refashioned, put to symbolic and practical ends previously unforeseen, certainly unintended. Conversely, some of the ways of the Africans interpolated themselves, again detached and transformed, into the habitus of the missionaries. Here, then, was a process in which signifiers were set afloat, fought over, and recaptured on both sides of the colonial encounter (Comaroffs in Balcomb 1998:4).

#### *6.4.1 Missionaries' Views of Culture and Identity amongst the Hehe*

What was the perception of German and Swedish missionaries who worked in the Southern Tanzania and especially amongst the Hehe concerning culture and African identity? An investigation in this subsection will involve tracing through archival records and counterchecking with what people said in fieldwork. It has been demonstrated in the third chapter that missionaries studied African culture in order that they could translate the Bible, write hymns, teach in schools, teach working skills and theologise.

One of the major strengths of missionaries from Berlin in Southern Tanzania was their zealousness to study local languages and to evangelise. In order to achieve that, they used local interpreters as much as they could. There was one occasion where Nauhaus preached in Zulu to a Ngoni who interpreted in Nyanja and the Nyanja person interpreted it in Ngonde and the Ngonde person interpreted in Nyakyusa (Koebler 1998:2). The point here is that Zulus in South Africa and Ngonis in Malawi and Tanzania do not speak exactly the same language but the Ngoni are migrants from the Zulu Kingdom at the time of Chaka. Thus, the breakthroughs were both the similarities in languages and culture. The same applied for Ngoni to Nyanja, Nyanja to Ngonde and Ngonde to Nyakyusa. In other words, language and culture are inseparable. A person who studies a language studies the respective culture as well. A person who studies a given culture will at one stage be culture tolerant. Koebler (1998:5) stresses that most of the problems that missionaries faced arose from lack of sufficient knowledge in what people think, belief, say and lack of sufficient knowledge of the general working environment. In elaborating this point Mgovano said,

Pastor Chungu wrote to the people in Lupembe saying "*mwikaligage inguwo*". He was warning them to be careful in responding to the missionary Nordfeldt about drinking *Ulanzi* (bamboo beer). Missionary Nordfeldt took the letter, he read it and he was pleased because he thought Chungu had advised the people of Lupembe to sit while well dressed in the presence of a missionary. Indeed Chungu was successful because the people in Lupembe never responded in the way Nordfeldt expected. They did not reveal the problem of drinking *ulanzi* in the area (Mgovano 13-12-1999: Makambako).

Nordfeldt wanted to make sure that no single Christian drank *ulanzi*. The researcher is of the opinion that Nordfeldt wanted to bring spiritual transformation to the Christians by using the law instead of the gospel and against their cultural context. The German missionaries had seen the fact that it

was crucial for the missionaries to know the culture, the idioms and sayings of the people in the mission field. In 1908 Axenfeld the inspector of the Berlin Mission Society advised the missionaries with these words,

Our work will be established when we strive to understand the views of the local people. Our feelings of resentment on superstition arise from our Western and modern thinking. We do not pay attention to the problems, which our members face, and the struggles that confront them daily. Had we been successful in that we could not judge prematurely that our members were stiff hearted. We could instead pity them (Koebler 1998:5).

Axenfeld did not end with the assertion above but he also suggested a number of issues to be investigated as listed hereafter. The suggestion was put in several clusters of theological and social issues. The first cluster consisted of studying the history of the tribe and the relationship between the chief or any other immediate local authorities and the people. The second cluster consisted of issues related to property, personal protection and protection of property against theft and hereditary procedures. The third cluster consisted of family relations in a tribe, ethnic group, clan and kinship. This was expected to deal with issues of marriage, parents and children. The fourth cluster was concerned with sorcery; how people understood it and how they related it to divination. He therefore suggested an investigation of the people who were identified as sorcerers and those who were known as diviners. His view was that they should be asked about their feelings and understandings of what people were saying about them and how they reacted towards those accusations or identifications. The main intention was to help the missionaries to understand the impact of sorcery and divination in the African culture and how the Church could help in overcoming the fear of sorcery and an over-dependence on divination. The fifth cluster consisted of the need to collect proverbs and sayings, stories and songs. The missionaries were asked to learn what the local people expressed about their religious life and use all positive aspects of those findings in establishing a local

Christian church. The sixth cluster included a study on creation, life after death and ancestral veneration. The seventh cluster included puberty rituals, rites of passages and festivals in African communities. The eighth cluster consisted of a study concerning the human being and the spiritual realms in relation to visions and dreams (Koebler 1998: 5).

Oelke emphasized to catechumens that they had to be “true” Benas and “true” Christians. This was referred to in the previous chapter (5.3.2). This means that the German missionaries were in favour of indigenisation and contextualisation. For the researcher “indigenisation” is more inclined to the institutional expression of the church while “contextualisation” takes both the institutional church in the context and in the continuous theologisation that is in the universal church.

In spite of all positive aspects, which we have said so far, we can still point out a number of cases where missionaries did not take the Hehe culture with enough seriousness. Some African cultural values and norms were continually undermined. African cultural forms and symbols that would have been instrumental in expediting the propagation of the good news of salvation were repudiated through missionary influence. One pioneer missionary concedes to these deficiencies of contextualisation and accepts that religious forms, ways of linguistic and musical expressions, vital norms and values, traditions and symbols that were sometimes repudiated by missionaries would have been useful for the propagation of the gospel if missionaries had know them. He says,

These incidents and many more show that we missionaries have sometimes acted in a culture-destroying manner. Whether through misinterpreting the Great Commission, pride, culture shock, or simple inability to comprehend the values of others, we have needlessly opposed customs we did not understand. Some, had we understood them, might have served as communication keys for the gospel (Richardson 1981:482).

#### 6.4.2 Africans' Views of Culture and Identity in Relation to the Hehe

Lack of toleration to the African culture seemed to increase among the Swedish missionaries because most of the restrictions to have happened between 1938 and the 1970s. For example, it was reported during the research that some of the most esteemed Hehe dances namely *kiduo*, *lingunguwi*, *msey*, and *mlatu* were forbidden for all Christians (Mnyamoga 1997:Iringa). Hehe musical instruments such as drums, marimba, *kipango*, *limandwendwe*, *ndole*, *mangala*, *mlomo*, *kiwepelo* and *lugombogombo* were described as instruments that served the devil (Zechariah Duma 10-04-1999:Masisiwe).

An African theologian complains about this false labelling and says, For example, traditional music and dancing that accompanies it in Africa was rejected as "heathen." African Christians were required to sing hymns imported from Europe and America which were set to unfamiliar and, therefore, hardly singable music. The basic African musical instruments, the drum, xylophone and rattle, were not allowed into churches or Christian schools. Many African teachers lost their jobs or were censored for permitting their pupils to dance to innocent folk music (Wakamata 1976:15).

In 1938, some missionaries had a different opinion and decided to adopt Gutman's way of tolerating and assimilating African cultural forms in church music and liturgy. Gutman was a missionary in Northern Tanzania who was sent by the Leipzig Mission (Anderson 1997:98-100). That move was good in its essence but unbecoming in practice because missionaries decided what was to be tolerated and what was not, what was to be adapted and what was not, what to be accepted and what was to be rejected. The only dance that was allowed was *Ngadule* of the Bena. Other Bena dances and instruments were also forbidden. African converts, community leaders and wise elders were not consulted in this exercise of deciding what should be tolerated and what should be forbidden.

It is worthwhile noting at this juncture that singing and dancing in the African culture cannot be easily separated. Africans who are used to sing and dance were forbidden to do so in the church. Church services were to be hushed



and solemn. The question now comes whether it was possible to prevent Africans from singing and dancing. The researcher found that it was indeed a self-deception on the part of missionaries. A few African Church leaders pretended not to know what was happening. All African leaders knew that to prohibit African people from dancing was like depriving them their breath. Dancing was done in privacy and never confessed as a sin. Celebrations were forbidden beyond 6 o'clock p.m. in Christian villages but Christian converts went to visit their relatives outside Christian villages or simply sneaked out at night and had a chance to sing and dance in secret with their fellow Africans during festivals and funerals especially on those days when the moon was not shining. Such was the imposed hypocrisy upon many African converts (Hosea Chusi 14-08-1998:Iringa).

Makunike voices these concerns and shows that there is an African cultural revival that brings back what could be described as authentic African expression. He says,

Thus, the thudding of African drums, the uninhibited singing and vigorous African dances were silenced in favour of the quiet "dignity" of church organs and pianos, which accompanied the songs of foreign beat and rhythm as the message of Christ was introduced on the African soil. I must hasten to say, though, that thanks to the efforts of some present-day prophetic Christians, both blacks and whites, we are now witnessing the revival of authentic African traditional forms as effective tools of deeper evangelism (Makunike 1974:58).

There are many stories pertaining to what has been contended so far. It is not possible to record them all, but let us use one story to substantiate the arguments as put forth in this section. Lazaro Mnyamoga once narrated a story about his uncle who was nicknamed *Wugimbitogwa* (alcohol in non-alcoholic beer), because he danced the popular Hehe dance known as *kiduo* during one of the evenings and he was also suspected of taking an alcoholic drink. The matter

came to be known and Nyamoga's uncle was excommunicated (Mnyamoga 13-08-1998:Iringa).

The story goes this way. Jared Mnyamoga was a church elder of the Kimala congregation. He was good in Hehe dances before baptism but could not practise them because they were considered as unchristian. It was taught that good Christians should completely abstain from tribal dances and that would differentiate them from non-Christians. It was also, and still is the case as part of church discipline that since 1946 Lutheran Christians in Southern Tanzania had to abstain from taking alcohol.

Furthermore, we take note that the issue of church and alcohol in Southern Tanzania among Lutherans has been repeatedly controversial. According to Schimanowski (20-06-1996:Berlin) the first missionaries were concerned only with drunkenness. The Synod assembly of Ilembula in 1931 forbade Christians to drink any kind of alcohol but the resolution did not hold long because most Christians drank in secret when they visited their relatives who had not yet converted to Christianity (Koebler 1998:18). In 1933, the resolution had to be revised and an in-depth letter was written to all Christians to explain why self-control was necessary in alcohol taking. A précis of the letter reads,

In the past we had given you a mission law that drinking alcohol especially bamboo beer was forbidden while beer from finger millet was permitted because it was believed to be more nutritious and people who took it exercised self control. All bamboo trees were supposed to be cut. Now we have realised that such a law is not good. Those who had cut their bamboo trees boasted that they were the best Christians while they knew for sure that the bamboo trees that had been cut have sprouted better and gave more bamboo beer than before. Moreover, they themselves take bamboo beer in secret places. We are saying these people are wrong because they are behaving like Pharisees and they are committing a greater sin of hypocrisy. These people think they are cheating the missionary who does not see them but in fact, they are cheating themselves because they cannot cheat God. We therefore resolve that ... a

person who gets drunk is a slave of alcohol. ...We have to remember that Christians are free to eat and drink everything but we must not be slaves of food or drink and we should not make our neighbours stumble. ... Now we say drink and thank God but do not get drunk (Koebler: 18-19).

In 1939 the issue erupted again and Yohane Nyagawa (1939) wrote to all Christians saying, "Drink, but who ever gets drunk shall have a case to answer to the congregation and will be given a fine to pay or be excommunicated" (Schinmanowski 20-06-1996:Berlin). In 1946 the Synod assembly chaired by Swedish the missionaries at Itete resolved that alcohol drinking should be strictly forbidden for Lutheran Christians (Lugala 06-08-1999: Isimani). The rule is still there, however, many people do not adhere to those rules anymore. Currently the Lutheran Church condemns drunkenness. It does not excommunicate those who take alcohol and continues to teach and counsel drunkards to refrain from that habit.

With this information we can see where the problem with Jared Mnyamoga started. It was the issue of church, community and alcohol. Within the Hehe there is a neighbourhood-help scheme. Christians and non-Christians among the Hehe have a practice of helping one another in farming and other activities such as roofing houses or harvesting, in a form of cell groups, normally ten in a cluster of up to twenty households. This practice is called *lugota* in Hehe and *mugove* in Bena. The one who calls for help prepares local beer known as *wugimbi* for non-Christians and a non-alcoholic beer known as *togwa* for Christians. *Togwa* and *wugimbi* are prepared from finger millet flour or a mixture of maize flour and finger millet flour. *Wugimbi* is with alcohol and *togwa* is without alcohol. It was part of the church discipline that *togwa* was also not allowed to stay for more than three days because it would naturally ferment and become alcoholic.

Mnyamoga went to the household help scheme. Mnyamoga shared the help scheme with many non-Christians. After the help scheme they went home

where Christians drank *togwa* and non-Christians drank *wugimbi*. Evening came and non-Christians, who were relatively drunk, sang, played drums and danced enthusiastically. Mnyamoga could not resist the temptation. He stood and tried to dance for the first time, but hesitated a while. He stood for the second time and lamented in the Hehe language, *mukunzambusa* (you are getting me into trouble). He said this because the dance was irresistible. He stood and danced. The "cell" members were very happy to see him dance, young and old men clapped their hands to motivate him, women yelled in ululation, but church members of that cell were quiet and angry.

The matter was reported to the congregation with two cases to answer. One case was the dance and the accusers alleged that he would have not danced if he had not taken *wugimbi* instead of *togwa*. They claimed further that if he had taken *togwa* he would have resisted the temptation of dancing. He was then asked to defend himself before the congregation and explain why he should not be excommunicated. Mnyamoga, said, "I danced because they sang very well and the dance was irresistible, but as for drinking, I did not drink beer, I drank *togwa*". One of the accusers stood and said, "You might have mixed *wugimbi* and *togwa*". He denied the mixture but they forced him saying, "How couldn't you resist dancing if you were not drunk? " Mnyamoga replied, "*Manyi nye vanu nyenye, we wula mbewuli hela na dzi togwa dzali wugimbi togwa*" (Please understand, all the juice in that house had fermented, even the so called non-alcoholic juice was half beer). With this they nicknamed him *Wugimbitogwa* as a way of ridiculing him as a person who mixes beer and non-alcoholic beer. The council of church elders reported the matter to the congregation and Mnyamoga was excommunicated.

It might be reasonable to consider that in such situations many Hehe were bound to behave hypocritically under the pretext of Christianity. The researcher does not see how a Hehe people would be able to escape from all cultural obligations and responsibilities in the community such as attending burial

ceremonies, puberty rituals and weddings of their relatives who were not baptised for the fear that they might unknowingly find themselves in an unexpected situation and be excommunicated. The worst part, as reported by Kimbavala (05-03-1999: Pommern) was when Christians were forbidden to marry non-Christians. What non-Christians did was to accept baptism then leave the church after marriage. Phoebe Msigomba (30-07-1999: Pommern) adds that in extreme cases, some fundamentalist Christians refused even to eat with non-Christians (Mwakabana 1996: 23).

Likewise, Wakamata complains from a Zimbabwean context about the suppression of Africans and African culture in church circles as he says,

Traditional African dress is also "heathen" and Western dress "Christian." Many missionary presentations shown to church audiences in America picture the 'heathen' wearing traditional native dress. The same person is then shown after he becomes a Christian and guess what! He is now wearing a shirt, tie and pants. His spiritual conversion is thus depicted by a change from native dress to Western dress (Wakamata 1976:14).

The concerns that have been considered so far bring the notion that Christianity has been in Europe for so long that Western culture and Christianity have been wrongly identified as one and the same. "It is an unfortunate situation that Christianity was hijacked by western culture and as a result Western cultural heritages have been blended with Christianity which was planted in Africa" (Omari 1976:13).

Concerns that have been raised indicate that even some African converts confused Christianity with European civilisation and culture. African converts were subjected to bow to Western civilisation and they were forced under circumstances to express themselves in the Western culture. Makunike says,

Unfortunately, at the beginning of the century, because of the new tools and weapons they had developed, Westerners felt culturally superior and looked upon the non - white world in a patronising way. And missionaries were not free from this, even though we had problems with it. To be sure, we were a bit slow to listen to the

wisdom of the non-white world. The early missionaries, perhaps believing that Africa was religiously a “dark continent” concluded that the very cultural setting of Africa negated the basis for acceptance and practice of the Christian way of life (Makunike 1974:57-58).

Coming back to the question of the censures and accusations in relation to the issue of authenticity of Christian conversion for Africans, the researcher responds to all evaluators of the mission work that, in spite of all inappropriate handlings of the local situation, the cultural intolerance and attempts to extinguish African culture and identity, the translatability of the event of Jesus Christ still remains the criterion for the authenticity of Christian conversion in the African context. The researcher suggests that Jesus Christ respects African culture, he lives in houses where missionaries will have never lived and entered. He dances with Africans in the night, he attends weddings just as he did in Galilee and when *pilau* (spiced rice) *soda* (cold drinks), *togwa* and even *wugimbi* become scarce he calls upon neighbours to come with miracles of their spare food and drink to keep the celebrations going. By this the researcher underlines the notion that African converts knew who Jesus Christ was and what Christianity meant for them, completely different from what Western missionaries taught because what translates the message of salvation is not the missionary but the Word of God itself in the mother tongue.

The last observation in this section is the use of traditional medicine. The prohibition on the use of traditional medicine without proper explanation is another problem that the researcher encountered in fieldwork. Zechariah Duma (10-04-1999: Masisiwe) defended the church and its leaders that traditional medicine was forbidden to Christians because there was a need to understand how traditional medicine is related to rituals, prayers to ancestors and sacrifices before allowing its use. The question of standards was also supposed to be dealt with in a form of a dialogue but not with derision. Missionaries and African Christian leaders taught their members to refrain or even abstain from using any

form of traditional medicine for fear they might be tempted to practice divination, or build relationships with diviners and sorcerers. According to Daniel Duma all people who lived in Christian villages were not allowed to use any herbal medicine or any kind of medicine that was acquired from non-Christians lest they entice the whole Christian community to be attracted back to AR, (10-04-1999:Masisiwe). Tuluwene Gavile (05-03-1999:Pommern) said, "Christian villages were like seminaries for Christian converts and each Christian checked on the behaviour of the other".

Many theologians and missiologists have written of and appreciated the service that has been rendered by missionaries in the health sector but it is rare to find documents where missionaries studied African medicine. African converts were taught to look down on African medicine and medical skills. Some African converts do not take any other medicine except from a hospital. Some describe local medicine as demonic. Nevertheless, most African converts use herbal medicine. Those who give or use such medicines in public are seen as "lukewarm" Christians even today.

These sentiments were proven in 1998. While the researcher was collecting information, he came across a Lutheran revival group at Muhiliwa that forbade its members to use herbal medicine. The researcher being the chief leader of the Lutheran Church in the area had to plan a three-day seminar later to explain to the group the Biblical understanding of traditional or herbal medicine and the justification or limitations of using such medicine. The researcher observed that although there is an increasing awareness in the use of local medicine in Tanzania and in many African nations, many Christians feel guilty about using local medicine because of its so-called former association with sorcery and "the church has not been active enough to overcome that negative connotation" (Kivamba 04-03-1998: Muhiliwa).

### *6.5 Conclusion*

The problems that accompanied the Christianisation of the Hehe have been expressed as the close collaboration between missionaries and colonialists in the first sixteen years of introducing Christianity amongst the Hehe. Political subjugation of the local people has also been observed that it was strong in the first sixteen years. After sixteen years the situation changed especially after the First World War. The internment of German missionaries who closely collaborated with the colonial rulers helped to change the approach to the mission enterprise. The close collaboration was abandoned. However, all the time before independence missionaries seemed to favour the presence of the colonial rule.

The claim that the Hehe converted for material benefits, temporal gains, status enhancement and evasion from hunger and poverty have been rejected because they do not have any validity and diminish the spirituality of Africans. The claim portrays Africans as people whose faith in God depends on what the West can offer in material needs and how much they can be politically and economically dominated. The claims of such conversion have been analysed and found that they are aspects of the project for modernity, effects of mistranslation and lack of proper definition of the power base of AR and Christianity. The so-called "inappropriate motivations" are non-existent amongst the Hehe and the notion of "inauthentic conversion" cannot be empirically achieved. Therefore the basis of the claims and criticisms right from the introduction of the first chapter that African Christianity lacks authenticity do not have firm grounds of validation.

Cultural intolerance and loss of African identity have also been voiced as part of the problems that accompanied the Christianisation of the Hehe. The arguments of the evaluators of the mission work are apparently true. There are many indications that have been expressed in this chapter that missionaries repressed African culture. The areas of African culture that were mostly affected



include the repression of traditional education, outlawing some African dance, outlawing some African instruments and limiting the use of African melodies and styles of expressions, worship and celebration.

In the analysis of mission, colonialism and political subjugation it has been established that the claims that the colonial project was at the heart of church mission was officially abandoned in 1895 at the Bremen Conference. However, this dissenting group lasted for only twenty years. The alliance between missionaries and colonialists ended at the commencement of the First World War.

It has been observed that German colonisation faced resistance in the Southern and the coastal region of Tanzania. The Hehe chief Mkwawa was one of the local rulers who did not succumb to foreign manipulation. Evangelisation amongst the Hehe took place after the colonial rulers had defeated the Hehe chief. This caused some suspicion and impeded the establishment of the Lutheran Church amongst the Hehe. The Roman Catholic Church grew faster because of its self-distancing from politics and economic exploitation. Hehe leaders who welcomed Lutheran missionaries expressed the need for such self-distancing of the church. The Hehe looked at the missionaries as people who were different and more interest in a godly service. While the Hehe expected Roman Catholic and Lutheran missionaries to abstain from colonial collaboration it is disturbing to learn that Christian missionaries rejoiced over the defeat of a local chief under the colonial powers.

It has been proved that there were Hehe people who converted to Christianity for material benefits. However, we have suggested that such conversion is common and it should be expected in any church and in any cultural setting. Furthermore, we have ascribed such conversion to deficiency in the translation of the event of Christ and not a cultural, political or economic issue. Thus, the question of authenticity of Christian conversion is relevant to all

people in the world today and it might be more important to secularised societies that are suffocating with materialism.

It is important to make a special note that the Berlin missionaries from Durban in South Africa travelled with interpreters. Evaluators of what has been done in God's mission ought to pay tribute to those important people in mission. We have argued that these people were the divine secret Pentecost manifestation of God's mission in Southern Tanzania and the rest of Africa. As they translated the language to missionaries and as they interpreted when missionaries preached, they caused the people of Southern Tanzania to hear the mighty acts of God.

The researcher has argued that in spite of all true and imprecise criticisms, accusation and negative sentiments that have been voiced against African converts and missionaries, Christianisation of Africa was God's objective and authentic Christian conversion did not depend on the behaviour of missionaries but on the continuity of the Pentecostal emancipation and manifestation in the *multi lingua* and the universality of Christianity.

Concerning mission, culture and African identity, we affirmed from the perspective of pre-Christian experience that belief in God as found in AR has not changed but rather affirmed. We have also affirmed that the translatability of Jesus Christ through incarnation is another reality of African identity in the Christian Church in Africa because Jesus Christ is God who identifies with the daily living and suffering of Africans and makes Africans understand him through the channel of African culture. We have also affirmed the presence of the Holy Spirit in the church through the Bible in the mother tongue and the continued activity of God's mission through the gifts of God's people in the Church in Africa.

With the views above, we have also affirmed that God's mission was established when missionaries strived to understand the views and experiences of the local people as they were expressed in religious and daily life. The

missionaries and the local church leaders were encouraged to be in favour of indigenisation, contextualisation and theologisation as processes of continuity in the universal church. The observations call the Church in Africa to revisit and revive all useful aspects of AR and African culture for church use. The quest of power and the project of modernisation seem to appear as one of the pertinent problems that appears through those who leave the church and needs to be addressed.

## CHAPTER 7

### 7. CONCLUSION

#### *7.1 An Overview of the Thesis*

This thesis has dealt with authentic Christian conversion, which is a difficult concept but a permanent characteristic of the Church. The background of this thesis required an explanation of whether the conversion of Africans from AR to Christianity was authentic or not authentic. To decide whether something as intangible and personal as religious conversion is authentic or not is not an easy task. In many ways, only God knows whether someone is truly converted or not. However, since there have been very specific criticisms made against very specific people (in this case by Europeans against Africans) concerning the authenticity of their conversion from African Religion to Christianity it was found appropriate that the criticisms be responded to by an African.

The criticisms that are being responded to are in four lines of thought. Firstly, it was claimed by the evaluators of the mission work that God chose a specific religion for every ethnic or people group. Accordingly, African Religion was for Africans and Christianity for Europeans. It was argued further that it was unfair for European missionaries to come to Africa and spread Christianity at the cost of destroying African Religion. Those who argued along this line thought Africans lived a more authentic life as a religious and a social community under AR than under Christianity.

Secondly, it was also claimed that the Christianisation of Africans was an extension of Western imperialism and the execution of the project of colonisation that was at the heart of Christian mission. With that point of view, the evaluators of the mission work thought that Christianity was a religion of those in power and those who wanted to perpetuate Western imperialism. Similarly, Africans were forced to become Christians not because they wanted to but because they were coerced and subjected to political, social, religious and economic repression and the only option for Africans to live a successful life

were to identify with those in power. Those were colonialists and missionaries. It was thus claimed that such a situation would not allow an authentic conversion to Christianity.

Thirdly, the evaluators of the mission work accused Africans that given the above claims of the first and second line of thought, one other reason for Africans to accept Christianity could have arisen from the need for surmounting poverty, hunger and lack of material and temporal needs. With this it was claimed further that since Christianity was on the side of those in power as argued in the second line of thought, the only way to retain status for those who had social status was to join Christianity; for those who did not have social, political or economic status could only gain by becoming Christians. It was added further that Christianity helped people to acquire employment. It was thus claimed that such motivations for converting to Christianity would not bring forth authentic Christian converts.

Fourthly, evaluators of the mission work accused missionaries that their presence in Africa was detrimental to the Church in Africa hence to the culture, community life, religion and African identity. Therefore, Western missionary initiated churches lacked indigenous identity and were replicas of the Western church and civilisation. This fourth line just consolidated the first, second and third lines of thought that the authenticity of Christian conversion in Africa, especially in the Western missionary oriented churches was not possible because Africans lost not only their religious belief but their culture and identity.

While these criticisms might apply to any time, people and place they have been directed towards Africa. This thesis is therefore an attempt to respond to them from a very specific context, that of the Hehe people in Iringa, Tanzania among the members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT). The author of this thesis is a member of the tribe, language group and the church under investigation. Taking into account that the accusations and criticisms were made many times, it was found necessary that they should be taken seriously.

There has been a deliberate resistance from the temptation of pointing the finger back at those who have made the criticisms in the first place, even though there have been reasons to do so. Instead, the attempt has been to analyse as dispassionately as possible the historical facts of the matter, the dynamics involved between the missionaries and the "objects" of their mission, and the nature of the shift from African Religion to Christianity. An attempt was also made to determine the possible decisive factors involved in the conversion, the rationale for the changes and the social and cultural indications that the changes have been authentic. The problems encountered during Christianisation were analysed and contrasted with the rest of the factors that have been analysed and established as stated hitherto.

The preferred approach to undertake the investigation was to hear from the converts themselves, to hear contrasting views from members of AR, to hear from missionaries and learn from archival records concerning the missionaries, endeavours and experiences. In order to achieve that it was necessary to conduct interviews that opened interactions with the Hehe people. The interactions involved asking questions, allowing the informants to ask questions, engaging in discussions and dialogue and allowing some of the converts to narrate their conversion stories or experiences. It was also found necessary to hear from the converts concerning the Hehe legends and myths that were used as breakthroughs and whose use that led to conversion of the Hehe people. There were narratives of power encounters which some of the Hehe converts experienced, and either heard or witnessed from specific events and circumstances in the course of Christianising the Hehe or neighbouring tribes.

The other approach was to hear from people who were involved in mission work. Other than searching from missionary records by perusing through the missionaries' daily notes from the archives the necessity to interview some of the pioneer and contemporary missionaries was inevitable. Members and leaders of the Roman Catholic Church were consulted, interviewed and

dialogued with as a way of counterchecking whether they had similar or different experiences. Members of AR and some of the diviners were interviewed and consulted.

### *7.2 Attempts and Analyses*

Through the interactions that have been mentioned above it became apparent that an in-depth study of African Religion was inescapable and an attempt was made towards that. Through that study it became perceptible that the pre-Christian experience through African Religion had set the *missio Dei* (God's mission) in motion. African Religion had set forth a situation where people had developed the need to hear more about God, new alternatives of relating with God and with one another and the need for and salvation. It has been established in the second chapter that AR set forth a foundation through which Christian propagation was well received. Many African theologians have conceded to this, and Mbiti calls it *preparatio evangelica* (groundwork for evangelisation).

It was also observed that the Hehe people heard the Word of God in the vernacular. Through the propagation of the message of salvation, the understanding of God was affirmed and not altered but also refined. Furthermore, a new intermediary called Jesus Christ was introduced and he happened to fit into most of the categories and functions of ancestors. There were, of course, some theological adjustments that needed to be made concerning the understanding of the person of Jesus Christ as compared to that of ancestors. The role of ancestors to protect and maintain the continuity of communication and communion in the Hehe families and clans was reclassified. Some of the roles were expected to be performed by Jesus Christ; especially those of protection, communication through prayer and communion. The continuity of the community that was maintained through the ancestral lineage is still strong.

In addition to that, Christianity in Africa has adopted the concept and practical aspects of the extended family within its setting in the Hehe context.

Other than what has been observed about the ancestors, it was also observed that through AR the Hehe people believed in a spiritual realm. It seems even today that the spiritual realm for the Hehe is a living reality. In that spiritual realm the ancestors had strong bonds with the living people and the diviners and the benevolent spiritual forces. Due to that the Christian teaching of the Holy Spirit found an entry point within the Hehe AR beliefs. The spiritual realm consisted of both benevolent and malevolent spirits. In order to counter the actions and influences of malevolent spiritual forces the Hehe society needed diviners.

Diviners have viewed the coming of Christianity with mixed feelings, as it appeared to undermine their authority. Nevertheless, diviners played an important role in the process of Christianisation. They were the custodians of the knowledge and functions of benevolent spirits. It was usual for Hehe people as individuals and as a community to consult diviners when they sought for protection against malevolent spirits and forces, for guidance towards important decisions, judgements, rituals, sacrifices and other social and political concerns. Christian converts have reclassified those roles to Jesus Christ and to the manifestations of the charismatic gifted people within the church community. Others have reclassified those roles to intellectualism where some concerns are addressed through the legal systems, counselling opportunities, sociological and psychological researches as well as opportunities for prayer and healing ministries within the church community.

An attempt was made to determine the criteria of authentic conversion. It was found out that the three occasions of the life of Jesus Christ namely the incarnation, the suffering and death and the sending of the Holy Spirit made God's self translation distinct. In incarnation Jesus Christ was understood as one who appears in the human form of a Hehe person. Jesus Christ was portrayed as



God who had an ancestry, a community, a family lineage and a location in the world. Being male and the first born in the family of Mary and Joseph meant that he had the right to inherit the family priestly roles from the ancestral lineage as it has been portrayed in the second chapter, in figure 3, p 59.

The life of Jesus Christ was portrayed as that of a person who had special spirits and Christianity taught that he had the Spirit of God and named that Spirit as the Holy Spirit. Christianity taught that there were occasions when Jesus Christ spoke with the Moses and Elijah who were departed ancestors. In summary, Christianity came up with explanations that made Jesus Christ be understood and accepted in the Hehe culture, religious beliefs and philosophy.

The underlying point was that translation comprised the criteria of authentic conversion. An attempt has been made to show that Jesus Christ made the self-translation of God in the context of the Hehe through the events of incarnation, the ministry, suffering, the sending of the Holy Spirit and the calling for the Hehe to be transformed and be reconciled with God. In translation, the Word of God, which in Hehe indicates the authority of God; had been translated in the vernacular. Its proclamation amongst the Hehe meant that God was not only speaking to the Hehe but one who lived among them and participated in all realities of life including the reality of the universality of sin and its catastrophes. This made the presence of Jesus Christ to be felt amidst human weakness, vulnerability humiliation and suffering. With this the divine authority and omnipotence of God had accepted to share and identify with the human frailty. It has thus been established that Jesus Christ became incarnate amongst the Hehe. The incarnation has been established as the first criterion of authentic conversion. The claim comes from the notion that once the Word of God was translated into the vernacular there was no other human institution could hinder it from being owned and counted as the authority amongst the Hehe. The proclaimed Word brought forth the transformation because it was able to cut through the cultural, political, intellectual, economic, religious, social and

philosophical spheres of life amongst the Hehe. Those who proclaimed the Word of God to them came from Europe but the translation arose from the culture and the hearts of the Hehe people. Therefore, since there was the translation of the Word of God into the mother tongue there was the message of salvation based on the translatability of the event of Jesus Christ that led to authentic conversion of the Hehe.

Jesus Christ was translated further in the suffering and the death of the cross. It is commonplace for the Hehe that a person who knows suffering can bring salvation. Bearing in mind that suffering is common among Africans it became apparent amongst the Hehe that the suffering of Jesus Christ was God's way of making the self-translation that went deep in the daily pains, anxieties and groaning of the Hehe people. It was thus implicit that as the Hehe read the Word of God and actualised the suffering of Jesus Christ in their daily life, they at the same time believed that there was no other human institution or religious faith that could understand how the Hehe suffer more than Jesus Christ who experienced the utmost suffering for the sake of sinners. In that way the translation of suffering formed the second criterion of authentic conversion. The Hehe converted to a person who knows suffering and one who proclaimed the unending willingness to suffer with them in order to save them.

Translation involves a linguistic practice but this in thesis it implies both the linguistic and the transforming process. The attempts that were made in the act of linguistic translation are related to the Pentecostal manifestation that is taught in the Christian faith. It was observed that during Pentecost as indicated in Acts 2: 18, God made the self-translation in the speech, the culture and the faith of the Hehe people. The Christian teaching that during the Pentecost all people who were present in Galilee heard the mighty Word of God in their mother tongue underlines the third criterion of authentic Christian conversion. The criterion is that the Pentecost officiated the unending characteristic, unquenchable power and an unlimited demeanour of Christianity. From that

day on, Christianity has spread in the whole world through translation in the cultural context of the recipients, which accounts for its authenticity. Therefore, translation has been acknowledged as having the same purpose, that is that the universality of the gospel may be made specific and that every culture has the right to have the Word of God translated in the vernacular. Translating the Word of God into the vernacular implies that every culture has the right to find an identity in Jesus Christ.

An attempt was therefore made to analyse the motivations of the missionaries as well as the factors that attracted the Hehe to convert to Christianity as the practical aspects of translatability. The analysis came up with many observations and the basic inference was that the translatability of the event of Christ is the model of mission. It was observed that while Christianity has the nature of translatability the impetus of translatability is the Great Commission. The zeal to go to other people and witness about Jesus Christ is neither human initiated nor human oriented. It is God initiated and oriented. Christian witnesses who are called missionaries have been expressed in this thesis as people who are compelled by God's nature as a missionary God. In the Great Commission, Jesus Christ seems to have made himself available for all people of all nations. Missionaries had nothing of their own. They were required to comply with God's calling and commission for sending the message of salvation to other people. For the reason that Mission is God's nature, an attempt has been made to show that God was doing mission among the Hehe even in the time when the Hehe did not know about Jesus Christ and when missionaries had not yet reached them. The impression is made that God does the mission always but people understand that mission when it is translated into the human form, suffering and language through the event of Jesus Christ. That means that Jesus Christ is the translation of God's mission. An attempt has been made to show that God's revelation is translation and translation is transformation. Transformation is conversion. Consequently, missionaries can

be messengers of authentic conversion when God is first converted in the human limitation and when the human being in limitation understands God's transformation in the human language.

It has therefore been implied that the coming of the Western missionaries to the Hehe was part of the human response of faith and obedience to the Word of God and the mandate of Jesus Christ to go and make disciples. God sent the missionaries to bring the message of salvation and transformation to the Hehe during God's time frame. The missionaries were told by the Word of God what to do. Sometimes they did what they were expected to do and at other times they did not do what they were expected to do. Nonetheless, they conformed to the basic requirements of complying with God's mission. First and foremost, they learnt the language and the culture of the people. Johann Ludwig Krapf the first missionary to Eastern Africa in the nineteenth century wrote the first Swahili dictionary and translated the New Testament into Swahili. With his contribution, which came as an obedience and compliance with God's calling to mission, Swahili has become one of the most useful languages in Eastern and Central Africa and it is now one of the African Unity (AU) main languages.

Secondly, missionaries travelled with interpreters. Wherever missionaries went, they learn the language of the people and communicated the Word of God in the language of the people and not in the language of the missionary. Most of the missionaries in the nineteenth century lived with people in the remote areas. In Hehe land they chose productive and cool areas where their health was secure and where food could be obtained. The observation is apparent that they dealt with the grassroots people amongst the Hehe. In spite of some failures in complying with God's mission, missionaries were not always safe. Some suffered greatly and others died but the common observation is that God had committed a great treasure of love in the missionaries that prompted them to continue with the mission even under difficult situations like war, deaths of some of the missionaries, danger of wild animals and lack of food.

mentality and paternalism of the Western missionaries have been clarified that they have nothing to do with the concept of translation.

### *7.3 Accomplishment and Recommendations*

This thesis has attempted to refute the accusations made by some Europeans that conversion to Christianity has not been authentic in Africa. The thesis has attempted to show how African Religion contributed to the process of Christianising the Hehe and how the Hehe culture became interwoven with the process of translation. It has therefore been acknowledged that Christianity has become deeply entrenched in the life experiences and worldviews of Africans to the extent that Christianity in Africa can no longer be called a Western religion. With these annotations the thesis has given the impression that is stated in the words of Bediako that Christianity in Africa has been “renewed” as a “non-Western religion”.<sup>43</sup> It is thus implied that whatever the motivations of all the parties concerned, messengers and receivers of the message of salvation, it is God who is the author of mission. It is also God who will have the final say in the debate around conversion.

The debate around authenticity or otherwise of religious conversion is one that asks how and why people have made the kind of choices that they made. Other than the African Religion to which the Africans belonged the Hehe would have opted to become Muslims because Islam was in Tanzania since the tenth century. Arab traders who are Muslims by religious faith were trading with many Africans including the Hehe of Tanzania in Iringa. The representative of the Hehe chief made a clear answer in 1898 that since Christianity did not concern itself with commerce and acquisition of political power, it would be welcomed amongst the Hehe (cf. 6.2.2 p. 344). Thus the choice for Africans becomes visible in the fact of translatability. In translatability God is seen as one of the African people. Accepting Christianity or otherwise depended

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<sup>43</sup> This is a reference to Bediako’s book – *Christianity in Africa, the Renewal of a Non-Western Religion*.

on the fact that it was translatable. Adding to translatability was the wave of modernity. In the light of the fact that Christianity came with modernity over and against slave trade, civil war, ignorance, diseases and many other calamities it is doubtful that many could have opted for a different choice. Modernity itself, in spite of its possible negative effects, it was hardly a matter of choice. It had come and it was affecting everybody and the church was at the centre of it.

Finally, it is considered that with this thesis there is at least some information that has been gathered from Christian believers at grassroots level concerning their conversion and the academic and Christian world can hear from them and avoid the prejudice that Africans were manipulated or coerced to convert to Christianity. At the same time there is at least some information from the missionaries themselves. That information is vital to the present generations to understand how God fulfilled the divine mission amongst the Africans and made them accept Christianity. This thesis calls upon African theologians to inform the rest of the world how and what African Christianity means to an African. It also calls upon the dialogue between Christianity and African Religion. It has reminded the Church that there are many beliefs and practices of AR that have been carried forward by African Christians in the Church today, including some of those that might have been forbidden. However, due to the reality of the translatability of the message of salvation Africans have interpreted the Bible in their own way that is beyond what we see and hear and they follow the Word of God even in the practices that need more theologisation and, or contextualisation.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX I: COLLINS LETTER

Bishop Owedeburg Mdegella  
 Iringa Lutheran Center  
 Iringa  
 TANZANIA

12.2.99

January 20, 1999

Dear Bishop,

I am writing in response to the copy of your thesis that you presented to me while I was in Pommern over the summer. I apologize for the delay, but wanted to send you a copy of the paper I wrote for my independent study on my observations and research done on Tanzania.

I am truly fascinated with the subject concerning the motivations behind Africans converting to Christianity. You state in your thesis that the reasons were purely for salvation, and believe in Western missionary presence in Tanzania. Since I was unable to find a lot of reasons, facts, or other cited publish works in your thesis, I am assuming that you prove this view in the sections that I have not read.

Through my experience of research and personal observation, which I recognize and appreciate as fairly nominal, I would have to disagree with you. This is centered on ~~the~~ elevated social status that was, and I believe still is, coupled with being a Christian. Beginning with Germans and followed by British, Western Christianity was the religion of those in power. Africans were coerced to convert in order to gain certain favors and items such as cloth, seeds, and farming machinery. Possession of these material goods increased one's social standing in the community. Anyone trying to raise a family and have income would apt to adopt such a religion because of the monumental material and social benefits.

I believe some of the missionaries' goals for bringing light to the "Darkest Africa" were quite construed and extinguished some of the most innate traditions that made up Tanzanian society. The outlawing of dancing on most occasions, initiation procedures, defining acceptable clothing, and changing marital laws are some examples.

Christianity to Africa, but rather change African Traditional Religion into Western Christianity.

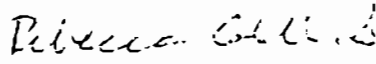
In my paper I discuss my observations of the differences in gender with regards to cultural traditions, education, and religion. My research was guided by Dr. Kathleen Smythe and interviews were with Smythe and Father Magesa. Dr. Kathleen Smythe has spent years in South Western Tanzania, studying the Fipa society and is a scholar in African history. Father Magesa is a Tanzanian Catholic priest who lives in Northern Tanzania, and was at my university teaching theology for a semester. Both people were an integral part in the writing and research for this paper.

Thank you for the opportunity to read the beginnings of your thesis. If possible to send or e-mail, I would enjoy reading the finished product, or what you have written since we left off. Your comments on my paper would be a huge asset, and I would appreciate hearing them. My address is:

Rebecca Collins  
3756 Ledgewood Dr  
Cincinnati, Ohio 45207  
U.S.A

My e-mail address is [157952@xavieru.edu](mailto:157952@xavieru.edu). Thank you again for your patience in receiving a response. I pray that you are well and the new year brings you much joy and happiness. Please give my love and prayers to Pommern. May God be with you.

Sincerely,

  
Rebecca Collins

## Appendix I

### A Summarised Response to the Letter: Thesis Reflections

Collins letter has been addressed in the thesis. However, a summarized response is written hereafter. Some specific references will be made to relevant pages that have directly responded to the letter. In the letter the first claim said, "Western Christianity was a religion of those is [sic] power."

In the first place the claim is too general. Collins wants us to believe that all Christians in the eighteenth to the twentieth century in Germany and Great Britain and the rest of Europe and most probably America were more interested in the dynamics of political and economic power than the Word of God. Secondly, Collins wants us to take the assumption that even the interest for mission work had little to do with God's calling to God's mission but rather an implementation of what the Western rulers wanted.

The third, fourth, fifth and sixth chapters have shown that the missionaries who came before colonization, such as those who were sent by the CMS namely Krapf, Rebmann, Rosine Krapf, and Erhardt as well as the White Fathers and the Holy Ghost Fathers spent most of their time in establishing the foundations of God's mission in the context (cf. pp. 181-181, 207, 237, 272-272, 278 and 398). Those missionaries studied the languages, and therefore the culture. They translated the Bible and wrote the Swahili dictionary. They introduced commercial crops to create an economic base for the poor. They preached to the liberated slaves. There were no dynamics of power, colonialism or economic exploitation but rather an endeavour of economic development.

Mission and power dynamics had been in Eastern Africa in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries as describe by Mugambi (1983:33 and p.9 of this thesis), but those missions that got involved in power dynamics failed. The whole sixth chapter of this thesis has been devoted to respond to the subject of mission and colonialism. It has been indicated that during the first phase of doing mission in Tanzania the subject matters of colonisation and subjugation were emphasized. Nevertheless,

the chapter has also indicated that the subject matter changed after the Bremen Conference of 1895. It is therefore apparent that the claim of Christianity being the religion of those in power could no longer hold in Eastern Africa. Instead it became a religion of the powerless.

By the phrase "those in power" Collins implied not only the political power but also the economic power. She therefore added the second claim and said, "Africans were coerced in order to gain favours and items such as cloth, seeds and farming machinery." The claim is not only humiliating to the Africans but it is also inaccurate. First of all, such things did not happen in Iringa amongst the Hehe (cf. pp. 369-371). Secondly, if material goods were the basic motivation of conversion then most of the Hehe would have become Moslems (cf. pp.180-181, 302-303 and 346-347). Thirdly, the concept God and the centrality of ancestors in AR could not be traded off or simply repudiated because of material goods. In addition, the concept of AR being the *preparatio evangelica* indicates that the basic motivation for the Hehe to convert to Christianity was in the pre-Christian experience coupled with proclaimed message and not what the Western missionaries could offer in terms of material goods. By the phrase "the proclaimed message" we mean the message that was in the vernacular and that it directed the Hehe people to the salvation that came as the result of the suffering Jesus Christ. Fourthly, the accusation about coercion is incorrect. According to the field work, the German and the Swedish missionaries who worked in Iringa amongst the Hehe from 1898 to 1950s have been blamed that they had put too many and too difficult requirements for accepting the Hehe to baptism. The Hehe were not coerced but hindered (cf. pp.22,82, 180, 234, 293, 321-324, 334, 365-368 and 370).

The third claim by Collins said, "Possession of these material goods increased ones status in the community". The claim was not fully analysed. The material goods that enhanced the status were amongst the Hehe even before colonisation. Even after so many years of Western influence, cattle are the

symbol of wealth and status. In addition, Arabs were selling guns and clothes in exchange of ivory, animal skins and slaves many years before the missionaries and the colonisers came. However, we have indicated that the Hehe accepted the missionaries because they believed that they would not get involved in business activities or power struggle with the local people (cf. p.364).

The fourth claim said,

I believe some of the missionaries' goals fro bringing the light to the "Darkest Africa" were quite construed [sic] and extinguished some of the most innate traditions that made up Tanzania society. The outlawing of dancing on most occasions, initiation procedures, defining acceptable clothing, and changing marital laws are some of the examples (Cf. last paragraph in page 1).

We have conceded by giving examples that the claim is correct. However, we have also shown that the Western missionaries cheated themselves. The example of the first case study about Ngajilo and Smedjebacka was common all over Tanzania (cf. p 67-72 and 378-386). Africans adhered to most of their cultural heritage but they did not want to show it in the open. Mwakabana (1996:23-24 and p.72 of this thesis) says Africans were forced to behave hypocritically. We have said they were forced to behave with extra care because they used the African philosophy that is in the two idioms that say, "*Funika kombe mwanaharamu apite*" (Cover the cup and let the bastard pass) or "*Mwarabu mbaya kiatu chake dawa*" (Even though an Arab is bad his shoes bring healing). The literal meaning of the first saying is that "do not allow a bastard (foreigner) to know the secrets of your family". Accept the bad foreigner's view so long as that view brings peace and prosperity to the community but do not allow the foreigner to exercise free movements lest the foreigner induces an unbecoming behaviour to the community.

We also commented about Jared Mnyamoga who danced at the ten-cell help scheme (cf. pp 378-386). We commented that it quite inappropriate on the part of the missionaries to try to extinguish African culture and identity.



Nonetheless, the missionaries translated of the Word of God in the vernacular and made Jesus Christ one of the Africans who respects the African culture. The translation of the Word in the vernacular made Jesus, lives in houses of Africans where missionaries had never lived. While the Hehe were forbidden to dance physically, they danced in their hearts together with Jesus. African converts knew who Jesus Christ was and what Christianity meant for them; completely different from what Western missionaries thought and taught.

Conclusively, the missionaries had one view of what true Christianity ought to be and the Africans had their own. Finally, Christianity in Tanzania turned out to be the religion of the poor, the vulnerable, the weak, the suffering, the colonised, the oppressed and those who were denied their right to their true self, hence the African identity.

## APPENDIX II: EXERPTS FROM PERSONAL DAILY NOTES

These Excerpts are mainly from the evaluators of the mission work. Below is their summary and thereafter are the daily notes which were taken during the interaction. The interaction with Peltola was verbal. There were no notes taken.

NAME	DATE	PLACE	GENDER	APPEN -DIX	COMMENTS
Collins, Rebecca	10.1.1999	Pommern	Female	I	Criticism in the letter found in the appendix.
Zimmermann Hans	11.9.1998	Iringa	Male	II A	Hand written interaction in the appendix.
Zigelkow, Antje	11.9.1998	Iringa	Female	II B	Hand written interaction in the appendix.
Helmut, Paul	17.6.1989	Berlin	Male	II C	Hand written interaction in the appendix.
Schmidt, Wiebke	17.6.1989	Berlin	Female	II D	Hand written interaction in the appendix.
Herbert Anderson	20.6.1993	Chicago	Male	II E	Hand written interaction in the appendix.
Peltola, Sirkka	26.7.1998	Iringa	Female		Verbal Criticism.

Appendix II A: Interaction with Zimmermann (p. 3 of the thesis)

Question 1 - Volunteer orientation (22)  
 September 11 '98 - Lutheran Centre  
 Zimmermann: Kusena - Ukwisho we Africa  
 hama mizigi rshiku - "Christianity"  
 Africa is not authentic? - Eti kusabwa  
 missionaries were collaborators of colonial  
 authority, knity full of imperialism, econ  
 exploitation, discrimination - oppression  
 and paternalism?

- Answer:
- ① Which missionaries?
  - ② How could it survive in Europe if it was that way?
  - ③ What does he mean?  
 - Knity that was brought by missionaries is not true?
  - ④ Negative sentiments on missionaries
  - ⑤ Naive judgement on Africans
  - ⑥ Is Christianity in Germany Christian?

Zigellkow A.

Question 2 - ~~Is~~ Christianity in Africa  
 replicating Western Knity - EA. How  
 can Africa knity claim authenticity?  
 PCU

Appendix IIC: Interaction with Helmut (p. 7 of the thesis). Schmidt continues to the next page

Kirchentag  
Berlin Africa Group June 17/89 (15)

HELMUT - Difference between a missionary + a colonialist.

- ② Missionaries have a bad reputation?
- ③ Why send missionaries?

SCHIMIDI

- ① Why accept Xinty
- ② Don't you have your own Religion?
- ③ Why do still missionaries destroy ATR + culture?

Responses = Q 1 is outdated  
Tanzania is independent.  
Colonialism + mission workers  
come from Europe. Even today  
there are many people in TZ  
are they colonialist?

- ≠ Missionaries bad rep? - Which?
- ≠ Why send missionaries? Ask God.

Appendix II D: Interaction with Schmidt continued from the previous page (p. 7 of this thesis)

(16) Answers to Q 2

Why accept this? Just like their  
 own fathers did. When was becoming  
 Christian unity of so to say is  
 a branch of Judaism it is  
 Jewish by birth & nature.

2 - A. If... many religions -  
 it is a matter of...  
 2. Muslim's destroy ACR -  
 They will... they will  
 fight in Africa

2 Europe destroys Africa today  
 more than missionaries did (at  
 times more).

Appendix II E: Interaction with Herbert and Fischer (p.7 of this thesis). Fischer is not cited because he did not criticise the conversion of Africans but he asked a vital question that is relevant to this thesis.

Chicago  
 Twin Lakes  
 Church  
 20.6.43  
 Tax Receipt  
 (33)

Q4: Herbert Anderson

Why did Africans accept Xnty?

Ad: ~~Africans~~ <sup>Europeans</sup> committed evils  
 - enslavement, colonization,  
 discrimination & many others?

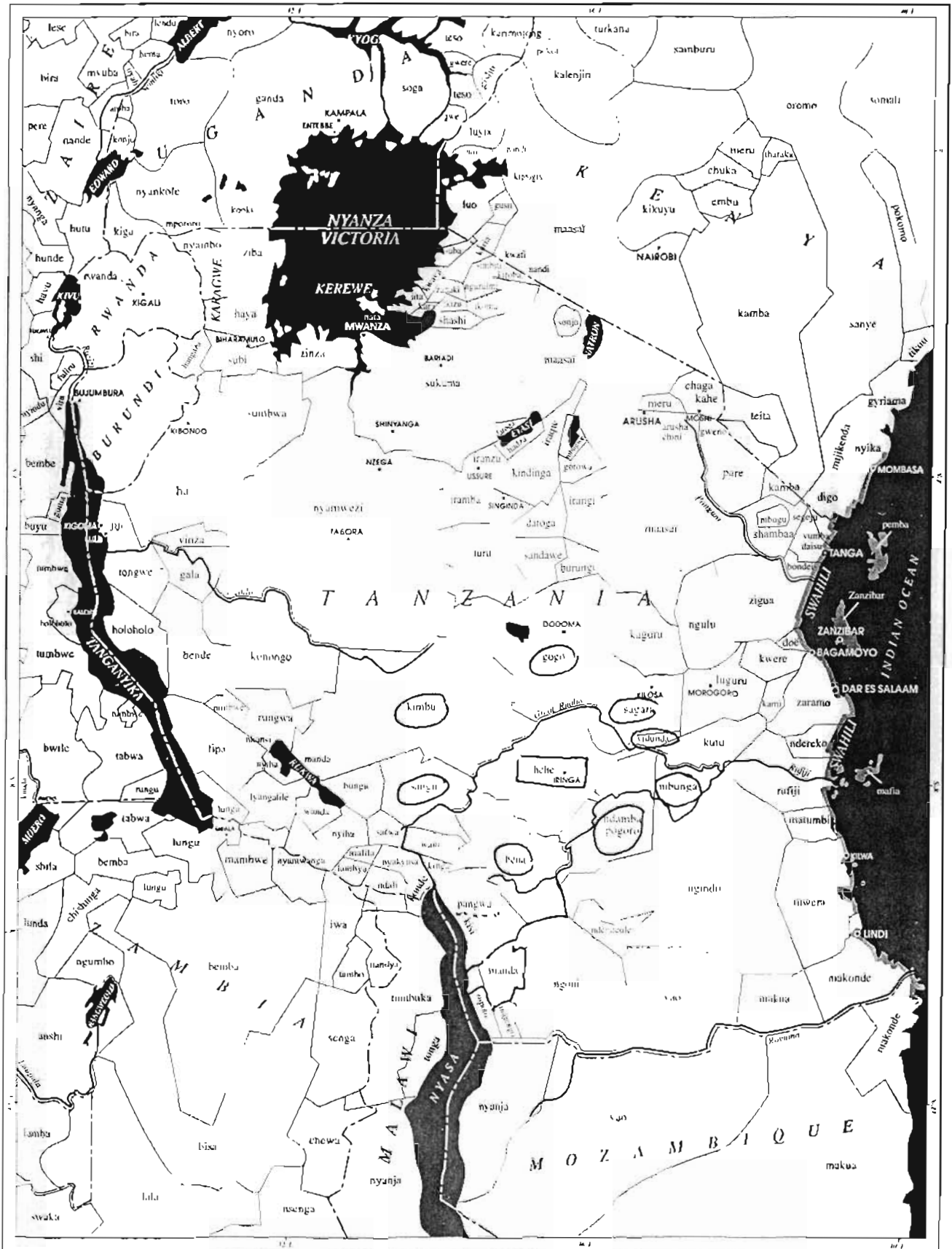
(1) Why did I convert him well?

(2) Evils committed against Africans  
 were not done - true name of  
 Christ & if it was done so it  
 is not founded from Xnty or  
 or Christ himself.

Q5: Fischer, Tom

Is there a difference b/w  
 African Xnty & Western Xnty  
 in terms of grace & salvation?

Appendix III: Sub-tribal Setting of the Hehe and their neighbours (Jahn, J. 1994:36)



**APPENDIX IV**  
**CITED INFORMANTS AND SELECTED RERESENTATIVES**

<b>NAME</b>	<b>DATE</b>	<b>PLACE</b>	<b>GENDER</b>	<b>AGE</b>
Abrahamson, R	1.8.1997	Upsalla	Female	73
Battifalo, A.	30.10.2003	Tosamaganga	Male	63
Chachage B.	08.12.2003	Pietermaritzburg	Male	37
Chang'a E.	18.08.1999	Iringa	Male	72
Chaula, V.	20.4.1999	Iringa	Male	48
Chavala T.	25.08.1999	Isagwa	Male	68
Chavala A.	04.07.2003	Iringa	Male	42
Chuma, M.	4.3.1998	Muhiliwa	Male	71
Chusi, H.	11.7.1999	Ilula	Male	56
Chusi, Y.	8.7.1999 02.07.2003	Kitapilimwa	Male	64
Dononda, L	28.08.1999 02.07.2003	Pommern	Male	68
Duma, D.	10.4.1999	Masisiwe	Male	80
Duma, Z.	10.4.1999	Masisiwe	Male	77
Fue,P.	20.4.1999	Iringa	Male	48
Figur J.	08.07.2003	Dar es Salaam	Male	48
Gaifalo,Y	12.7.2002	Ilula	Male	66
Gavile,T.	27.8.1999	Pommern	Male	70
Hauli E.	13.11.2003	Iringa	Female	60
Herbert, W.	23.7.1993	Chicago	Male	35



Holmstrom, S.	7.10.1997	Iringa	Male	47
Kalenga, A.	8.10.2003	Ilogombe	Male	67
Kalengela, C.	27.8.1999	Ifuwa	Male	70
Kashina, R.	18.2.1998	Mbuyuni	Female	40
Kaywanga N.	14.08.1997	Ipalamwa	Male	75
Kidava, B.	27.09.1997 14.08.1997	Ipalamwa	Male	78
Kidanganyike A.	28.10.2003	Wotalisoli	Male	71
Kidwangidze T.	27.08.1999	Wotalisoli	Female	48
Kihongosi, Z.	2.9.1999	Ilamba	Male	61
Kilale U.	13.7.1997	Ihemi	Male	80
Kikoti, L.	1.9.1999	Muhanga	Male	94
Kikoti M.	27.08.1997	Pommern	Male	78
Kilemile, L.	1.9.1999	Muhanga	Female	56
Kilovele, A.	18.07.2003	Itimbo	Male	52
Kimavala. L	5.3.1999	Pommern	Male	58
Kiponda, I.	10.01.1997	Iringa	Male	59
Kiswaga, T.	11.7.1999	Ilula	Male	45
Kivamba, C.	04.03.1998	Muhiliwa	Female	65
Kiwola, G.	27.08.1999	Wotalisoli	Female	65
Kiwovele, Y.	30.10.1997	Njombe	Male	69

Konga, R.	29.08.1999	Ihemi	Female	58
Kulanga, A.	7.10.1997	Iringa	Female	55
Leveri, M.	22.08.2002	Pare	Male	59
Lugala, L.	6.8.1999	Isimani	Male	82
Luhwago, A.	27.8.1999 02.07.2003	Pommern	Male	74
Lungwa, L.	18.2.1998	Mbuyuni	Female	65
Lungwa, M.	9.6.1998 13.12.1998	Isimani	Male	46
Lwanzali, L.	22.8.1999 29.10.2003	Ilula	Male	56
Lwendo H.	08.12.2003	Pietermarizburg	Male	54
Mbembe, I.	29.8.1999 08.07.2003	Ihemi	Male	68
Mbena, A.	7.8.1998	Iringa	Male	47
Mbilinyi, M.	13.7.1997	Ihemi	Female	45
Mbwilo, C.	27.9.1997 22.09.2004	Iringa	Male	56
Makongwa, L.	29.9.1997	Ipalamwa	Male	70
Makongwa, T.	02.07.2003	Pommern	Female	68
Makilika, K.	25.8.1999	Isagwa	Male	54
Malangalila, F.	15.9.1999	Iringa	Male	56
Malangalila, G.	15.9.1999	Mlolo	Male	83
Mbwanji, J.	27.8.1999	Pommern	Male	57
Mbeyunge, B.	30.08.1999	Iringa	Male	43
Mdegela, H.	14.8.1997	Ipalamwa	Male	60

Mdegella, M.	12. 3.1991	Ipalamwa	Male	90
Mdenying'afu, A.	28.10.2003	Wotalisoli	Male	43
Mdunange M.	25.8.1999	Isagwa	Male	76
Mdzigula, K.	13. 12. 1997	Isimani	Male	65
Mella, O.	22.08.1999 18.08.2002	Iringa	Male	54
Mengele, I.	28.09.2004	Iringa	Male	52
Mgeveke, R.	14.8.1997	Ipalamwa	Male	66
Mgawo, M.	22.10.2003	Kidamali	Male	56
Mgovano, A.	13.12.1997	Makambako	Male	64
Mhenga G.	28.10.1997	Iringa	Male	50
Mkemwa, E.	14.8.1997	Ipalamwa	Female	76
Mkemwa, M.	14.9.1997	Iringa	Male	80
Mkemwa, S.	14.8.1997	Ipalamwa	Male	63
Mkini, M.	27.8.1999	Pommern	Female	68
Mnyawami, E.	30.7.1997 06.07.2003	Iringa	Male	70
Mnyamoga, L.	13.08.1998	Iringa	Male	57
Moto, D.	02.09.1998	Kidabaga	Male	67
Msigomba, J.	30.7.1997 22.10.1997	Iringa	Male	57
Msigomba, P.	30.07.1997 11.07.1999	Iringa	Female	64
Msigwa, A.	29.8.1999 19.08.2004	Ihemi	Male	65
Msola, Y.	11.7.1999 18.08.2002	Ilula	Male	70

Msume, D.	20.07.2003	Luganga	Male	70
Msungu, E.	1.9.1999	Muhanga	Male	58
Mungai, J.	2.2.1999	Mufindi	Male	63
Muyenze, T.	1.9.1999	Idete	Male	72
Myenda, H.	17.10.2003	Iringa	Male	36
Mwamuwumbe	27.8.1999	Pommern	Male	74
Mwakabana, H.	02.10.2003	Moshi	Male	64
Mwedikibalula	25.8.1999	Ipalamwa	Male	61
Mwilafi, P.	14.08.1997	Ipalamwa	Male	68
Ndelwa, O.	15.7.1999	Iringa	Male	43
Ndolela H.	25.08.1999	Isagwa	Male	58
Ngahatilwa, M.	1.9.1999	Muhanga	Male	88
Ngahatilwa, N.	1.9.1999	Idete	Male	68
Ngalembula, J.	25.8.1999	Isagwa	Male	61
Ngandango, D.	11.12.1998	Mhiliwa	Male	59
Ngasakwa, N.	14.5.1997 16.08.2003	Muhanga	Male	36
Ngasakwa, S.				
Ngede, H.	08.06.2003	Mtera	Male	42
Ngimba, S.	18.2.1998	Mbuyuni	Female	67
Nselu, L.	02.08.1997	Ilambilole	Male	65
Nsemwa, L.	06.08.2004	Iringa	Female	27
Nyadwike, E.	23.04.1999	Pommern	Male	63

Nyalusi J.	29.8.1999	Ihemi	Male	78
Nyambo, E.	18.2. 1998	Mbuyuni	Female	55
Nyato, A.	09.06.1998	Isimani	Male	66
Ole-Kurupashi	13.08.2003	Iringa	Male	37
Parsalaw, J.	12.05.2004	Makumira	Male	51
Peltola, S.	7.8.1998	Iringa	Female	50
Riddle, G.	03-11-2003	Dar-es-Salaam	Male	65
Saga, M.	02.09.2003	Ilula	Male	53
Saning'o, E.	9.6.1998	Isimani	Male	56
Sanga, A.	1.8.1999	Iringa	Female	52
Sanga L.	30.07.1997	Kihesa	Male	42
Schimanowski	20.08.1997	Iringa	Male	56
Selele, D.	18.3.1998	Isimani	Male	46
Siyovelwa, P.	04.03.1999	Iringa	Male	62
Smedjebacka, H.	12.07.1997	Helsinki	Male	67
Sr. Mpwepwa, E.	30.10.2003	Iringa	Female	77
Somela, A.	04.07.2003	Iringa	Male	40
Swallo, S.	12.2.2002	Iringa	Male	68
Tagamtwa, J.	27.8.1999	Pommern	Male	32
Wisa, P.	31.10.2003	Iringa	Male	43
Zigekow, A.	5.1.1987	Iringa	Iringa	26

### Appendix IV A-E: Selected Informants

Out of many informants who are listed from the first to the sixth page of this index, some were selected and some detailed information was requested from them. These were selected according to the categories that have been explained in section 1.6. The selection considered the main five groups namely, the Lutherans of the Iringa Diocese and a few others from other dioceses, some of the Lutheran missionaries who worked in Iringa or in Southern Tanzania and some members of the Roman Catholic Church. Some adherents of African Religion and some of the diviners were also asked to give some details of their lives. It was difficult to get information from some of the informants because some did not want to give any information about their lives others were not able to remember even the basic information such as the day of birth.

#### Appendix IV A: Selected Lutheran informants

Name	Age	Gender	Date	Place	Profession
Chuma, M.	64	Male	12.11.1998	Muhiliwa	Pastor

Pastor Martin Chuma has been cited several times. He has provided much information concerning the motivations of Christian conversion. Chuma was born in 1934 at Kidabaga. He had his primary education at Mlandege in Iringa from 1947 to 1952. He was baptized in 1950. He took vocational education at Tosamaganga in 1953 where he specialised in carpentry. He got married to Christina Kivamba in 1956.

He has served the Lutheran Church in various capacities as listed below. From 1954 to 1956 he was a Bush School teacher at Isele. In 1957 he was a Bush School teacher at Lulanzi and from 1958 to 1964 he was a Bush School teacher at Kising'a. In all these stations he was a teacher, a preacher and a supervisor of the other preaching points on behalf of the pastor.

He attended Kidugala Bible School from 1965 from 1969 where he took courses in evangelism and deaconship. He attended a Special Course for Pastors at Mafinga in 1974. He also attended an in-service course at

Makumira in 1979. He has served as an evangelist, a deacon and a pastor in various congregations as listed below.

1968 – 1969 – A deacon at Nyanzwa.

1970 – 1971 – A deacon at Mafinga.

1972 – 1973 – A deacon at Mapanda.

1975 – 1976 – A pastor at Ihimbo.

1977 - 1981 – A pastor at Ilula.

1982 – A pastor at Pommern.

1983 – 1991 – A Pastor at Ihimbo.

1992 – 2002 – A pastor at Muhiliwa.

Pastor Chuma's life and the many transfers explain how he was willing to serve the Church in all conditions. When he was asked about the series of transfers he said, " I am the donkey of the Lord". This has shown how he valued God's calling and compliance to God's mission.

Name	Age	Gender	Date	Place	Profession
Luwoneko, G.	60	Male	14.08.1997	Ipalamwa	Peasant

Luwoneko has been specifically used in the Mwanambehele legend that is found in chapter 3.3.1, pp.145-151. The interview was recorded and it is found in cassette numbered III-IPA/ ACCAC/22/8/2002. For Swahili speakers the information can be found from the author through this E- mail: saraowden@hotmail.com

The information was obtained as a result of the question concerning the methods that were used by Western missionaries to make breakthroughs in convincing the Hehe to convert. The interaction went as follows:

**Question:** What were the methods, which missionaries used to draw the attention of the Hehe to the message that was proclaimed?

**One of the responses:** They used stories, myths and legends that were collected from the local people.

**Additional Question:** Do you know any of those legends?

**Response:** Yes I know a Hehe legend of Mwanambehele that Herman Neuberg used as a breakthrough for teaching several Christian themes.

**Question:** How and where did Neuberg get the legend?

**Response:** Leah Mkemwa and Elizabeth Mkemwa narrated the legend to him.

**Questions:** How and where did Leah and Elizabeth get the legend?

**Response:** It was a common legend which grand parents narrated to their grand children.

**Question:** What was the legend?

**Response:** The legend was about Chief Mbehele who had to test his son before he crowned him as his heir.

Luwoneko is the third born of Elizabeth Mkemwa. He knew about this legend from his young age. He has not written the legend but Hammerton Mdegela and Samson Mkemwa as well as Damian Ngandango affirmed that they knew the legend.

Luwoneko's attended the Bush school at Fikano from 1945 to 1946. He attended Ilula Primary School from 1947 to 1951. After the basic primary education he went back home where he joined his father in the timber business. From 1956 to 1958 he was employed as a secretary of a cooperative society at Mazombe. From 1959 to 1963 he went back to the timber business in his home village. At his home village he was appointed to serve as a volunteering preacher and as a church music teacher. He has also held several political positions in the village such as the village chairman, village executive officer and chairman of the opposition party called Tanzania Labour Party.

Name	Age	Gender	Date	Place	Profession
Mgeveke R.	86	Female	14.08.1997	Ipalamwa	Peasant

This was one of the oldest informants. She was baptized in 1928. She could remember a few things about the interned missionaries. She was married to the renowned preacher Yotham Mkemwa in 1929. Her main contribution, other than what has been cited in the text was about Church



ethics especially about church and alcohol. She argued that there was an urgent need for the Church to revisit some of the Hehe customs and see how they could help to strengthen church ethics currently. She thought that Church ethics were becoming weaker and weaker each year because they do not draw much from African Culture. Otherwise, she did not agree with the decree of the Church for the complete abstinence from alcohol.

Name	Age	Gender	Date	Place	Profession
Mdegela , H.	60	Male	14.08.1997	Ipalamwa	Teacher

The transcribe information from Swahili to English is in cassette numbered II-IPA/ACCAC 97/8/14. Hammerton Mdegela responded to many questions, which have been cited in the text. He also gave a conversion story of the people in Uhafiwa, which is in 2.5.2 case study II, pp. 80 - 86. This appended section summarizes some of the responses that relate to the cited information.

Hammerton Mdegela was born in 1937 in Kibomo village in Kilolo district of Iringa Region. He attended all levels of church schools starting with the Bush School at Fikano for two years, Lower Primary School at Ihimbo from 1954 to 1957. He joined Kalenga Upper Primary School in 1958 and completed standard eight in 1961. From 1962 to 1963 he attended the Kinampanda Teacher's Training College where he graduated as Grade IIIC teacher. He upgraded himself to the level of a grade IIIA teacher.

Being a teacher he taught in the Primary Schools that are listed below:

1964 – 1967: Teacher and assistant head teacher at Bomalang'ombe;

1968 – 1973: The head teacher at Uhafiwa;

1973 – 1975: The head teacher in Matana;

1976 – 1979: The head teacher at Mdabulo;

1980 – 1982 The head teacher at Ludilo;

1982 – 1985 the head teacher at Mtili.

In 1986 he left teaching and concentrated on reforestation and agriculture in his home village of Ipalamwa. In addition in 1990 he devoted most of his time in politics, and community development. He is currently the chairman of the ruling party in Ukwega area. He has a strong conviction that Christian conversion was a process that took a natural course and people opted for a more profound alternative as far as faith was concerned. He also accepts that the project of modernisation was one of the main motivations for the Hehe to accept Christianity.

Name	Age	Gender	Date	Place	Profession
Mkemwa, E.	83	Female	14.08.1997	Ipalamwa	Peasant

This biographical information will start with the family of Ms. Elizabeth Mkemwa in order to show how conversion took place from AR to Christianity without much involvement of the Western missionaries. The parents of Elizabeth Mkemwa namely Mayuta Mkemwa and Songamadete Msungu were members of African Religion. Songamadete was baptized in 1958 with the name of Tufuwage that means we ought to believe. By that time all her children and her grand children had turned to Christianity. Mayuta Mkemwa her husband was not baptized until his death that occurred in 1952. It was reported that Mayuta was not a keen adherent of AR. It was also reported that he did not pay much attention to diviners and sometimes he treated them with disdain. Most of the people who were interviewed gave four reasons concerning Mayuta's refusal to baptism. First, he had two wives and the condition for his baptism required him to send away one of the wives. He did not concede to that condition. Second, the first person that preached to him about Christianity was his first born named Lupituko Mkemwa. Therefore, Christianity for him was a good new religion for young people but also one with excessive and unnecessary restrictions for adults. Third, the Lutheran condition that no one would be baptized without the knowledge of reading and writing was a draw back for most of the adults. Furthermore, it

surrounded not only by baptized brothers and sisters but also by a group of singers and preachers. Jeremiah Msola, testified that three Mkemwas namely Lupituko, Yotham and Paul were renowned preachers in Ilula and in many other places amongst the Hehe. It was obvious that Elizabeth Mkemwa had a very little chance to know about African Religion. Her attitude towards AR was clearly negative and she brought up all her children with the stigma of AR. Her husband Moses Mdegela grew up in typical AR surroundings. He had a relatively positive view of AR concerning God, ancestors and diviners but he was somehow disdainful of the power of malevolent forces and diviners who used black magic to resolve problems in the community.

Name	Age	Gender	Date	Place	Profession
Mkemwa, S.	65	Male	14.08.1997	Ipalamwa	Pastor

The transcribe information from Swahili to English is in cassette numbered I- IPA/ACCAC /97/8/14 and it has been used in case study III: Discerning the Weakness of Sorcery, pp. 90-95. In addition, Mkemwa has been cited several times in the text.

Mkemwa had his basic educational skills through the extended Bush School at Fikano. He took four years instead of the basic two years because he was selected for further tuition so that he could teach others at a later stage. He started teaching in a Bush School at Mangawe in 1947 (at the age of 15). He became a full preacher in 1949. In 1955 he was elected as a youth leader of the whole Uhehe Church District. He joined Kidugala Bible School in 1961. He served the Church an evangelist since 1963. In 1967 he attended a deacons course thus being ordained as a deacon in 1968. In 1979 he was ordained as a pastor. He has served as a congregational pastor, a district pastor, an acting assistant to the bishop in 1999 and from 2001 to 2002.

Besides being cited several times he had some other views concerning his conversion. He said, "*Nimekuwa Mkristo ili niwe na Bwana daima*" ("I converted to Christianity so that I can be with the Lord throughout my life").

Concerning AR he said "*Babu Mayuta hakuzithamini sana, ila bibi Madete alikuwa anafuata miiko fulani*" ("Our grandfather Mayuta did not give much attention to most of AR practices but our grand mother did give some attention to certain taboos"). Samson Mkemwa seemed to give little attention to AR, may be because he was born in a Christian home. However, he had experienced several power encounters between Christianity and AR.

Name	Age	Gender	Date	Place	Profession
Ngandango, D.	55	Male	12.11.1998	Muhiliwa	Pastor

Ngandango was born in 1943 at Fibwa Filunde. He has been cited in the text several times. His responses were specially focused at rituals and the basic beliefs of African Religion. His parents denied him to join the baptismal class but he begged them so much and after two years he was allowed to join the Lutheran Primary School at Ihimbo. It was during his primary school time that he attended baptismal classes. He was baptized in 1959.

His training was as shown below. From 1958 to 1961 he attended the primary school. From 1975 to 1976 he attended the Kidugala Bible School for the course of evangelists. From 1982 to 1983 he took a Special Course in pastoral education at Kidugala Bible School.

He has served the Church and the society in various capacities as listed below.

From 1962 to 1963 he was a Bush School teacher at Fibwa Filunde. From 1964 to 1967 he was a sisal-cutting labourer of George Kales in Image and a preacher at *Namba Saba* village. From 1968 to 1974 he was appointed by the church to be a preacher at Muhiliwa. After completing his training as an evangelist and as a pastor he served the church in various capacities as listed below.

1977 – 1978- an evangelist at Ifuwa.

1979 – 1981-an evangelist of Ifunda.

1984 – 1986- the pastor of Kimala Congregation.

1987 – 1992- the District Pastor of Idete.

1993 – 1998- the District Pastor of Ilula.

1999– 2002- the pastor of Ipogolo Congregation.

Pastor Ngandango participated in AR rituals before his baptism but it was during his young age. Ngandango repeatedly claimed that the ancestors are intermediaries between God and people. He, like Siyovelwa affirmed that the Hehe people believed that the ancestors had the power to communicate with God but any living person did not know the way in which the ancestors communicated with God.

#### **Appendix IV B: Selected Informants from the missionaries**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Place</b>	<b>Profession</b>
Smedjebacka, H.	72	Male	12.7.1997	Helsinki	Pastor

The information from Smedjebacka has been used in case study I, in section 2.4.6, pp 66 – 73. Another information has been used in chapter 5 (5.4), pp. 305 – 317.

Smedjebacka was interviewed and the information was written and showed to him for his approval. The comments to the two case studies were not shown to him. On the one hand, Smedjebacka represents the kind of missionaries who did not take part in translating the gospel but one preached the gospel that was already translated. His attitude towards AR shows that he did not have enough dialogue with leaders and adherents of AR. On the other hand, Smedjebacka represents those missionaries who stood firm to fight against all sorts of practices against peace, human rights and justice.

Smedjebacka, H. is a native of Terjarv on the Swedish speaking West coast of Finland. He was born in 1925. He studied theology at the Abo Akademi University 1947 to 1950, and was ordained in 1950. After his ordination he served in local parishes in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Finland from 1950 to 1951. He then joined the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission (FELM). He served for a few years in Finland. From 1955 to 1965 he

to abandon ancestral rituals, sacrifices and veneration and it was also unfair for Christianity to forbid them. Secondly, they thought it was unfair for Christianity to forbid polygamy. Thirdly, they thought Christianity forbade divination without giving an equivalent alternative solution.

According to Sr. Mpwapwa, after some year's, adherents of AR sent their children to church schools. It was apparent that the children of the relatives and friend who had gone to school showed to be better in many ways than those children who remained at home. It seemed clear from the responses of Sr. Mpwapwa that the project of modernisation was one major factor that brought many Hehe to Christianity. Concerning the propagation of the Gospel, Sr. Mpwapwa had the conviction that the laity spread the gospel more than the ordained ministers. The laity includes no-ordained brothers, Sisters, catechists and volunteering lay preachers.

Name	Age	Gender	Date	Place	Profession
Malangalila G.	83	Male	15.9.1999	Mlolo	Medical Assistant

Gaudenzio Malangalila joined the Roman Catholic Church at a young age. He was baptised in 1928. He attended the Lower Primary School from 1926 to 1929 at Tosamaganga. According to the system of that time, he joined the Middle School in Malangali where he graduated at standard ten. Thereafter, he joined the Tanganyika Medical School in Dar-Es-Salaam where he graduated as a Medical Assistant, which today would be described as the Diploma in Clinical Medicine. He remained in the profession until his retirement. He belongs to the Hehe royal family of Mkwawa.

His views concerning AR and Christianity have been cited in the text several times what is presented in this appendix is a short version of his main ideas. For Malangalila, the *lisoka* (ancestral spirit) is part of the family. The difference between the ancestral spirit in the AR and the Holy Spirit in Christianity is that the *lisoka* is restricted to the family while the Christian Holy Spirit is for all believers. There are some similarities in the roles of both

the *lisoka* of the AR and that of the Christian Holy Spirit. Both have the role to admonish, remind, guard and bring the family or community of believers together.

Malangalila had a very positive opinion concerning Christianisation and the project of modernization. He said in Hehe, *Nda muyawe, iyo yali ng'uka* (No young man that was like floods). *Ng'uka* literally meant that modernity was irresistible. According to Hehe *ng'uka* sweeps away whoever stands against it. He then added that the missionaries have done a lot in the development in Tanzania. They are the ones who built most of the schools, dispensaries, orphanages and diaconal centres.

For him missionaries trained people who are the leaders of Tanzania today. He accepted the claim that the people who were trained through the church and become teachers, medical doctors, preachers, carpenters, drivers, masons and the other elite of the society gained more recognition and status in the society. Sometimes they seemed to be above the local leaders. This caused some tension. Such sentiments caused Christians to regard as arrogant. Their argumentative attitude of the elite Christian group against some of the directives that were given by non-learned local leaders brought about that tension.

Name	Age	Gender	Date	Place	Profession
Ngalembula, Joseph.	76	Male	25.8.1999	Isagwa	Peasant

Ngalembula is a peasant by profession. He was baptised in 1950 at Ilula. Ngalembula has the basic skills of reading and writing. He is a staunch Roman Catholic. He lives in an area where there are many adherents of AR and most of them are polygamous. One of his sons is a priest of the Roman Catholic Church. Ngalembula converted to Christianity as an adult. He did not have a stigma against AR. According to Ngalembula, God is the same for both AR and Christianity but for him Christianity has a clearer and deeper explanation about God than AR. According to him Christian preachers should

not under estimate the impact of ancestors in the Hehe society. Instead they should try to understand them because most Christians still respect and venerate them.

However, as far as Christian conversion is concerned he said, "It is a matter of choice, either to remain a faithful adherent of AR or turn to Jesus Christ and worship God through him". According to him those who have followed Jesus Christ have been more successful than those who have adhered to the ancestors. Makilika (25-08-1999:Isagwa) opposed the argument on the spot. Nonetheless, Ngalembula emphasised that the difference between AR and Christianity concerning God is the way in which each religion wants to come to the true knowledge and relationship with God. Ngalembula has a firm conviction that the roles of ancestors have been taken by Jesus Christ and are performed in a more effective way than what ancestor and diviners did. According to Ngalembula, the Holy Spirit has taken the roles of the *Lisoka lya lukolo* (aclan or ancestral sprit).

Ngalembula believes that Mary, the mother of Jesus Christ is the real representative of ancestral activity and veneration. He also described Mary as the role model of family relations in the Christian community. He despised polygamy and said, "*Wisaka avang'inetu avolofu veki we na uyumwi hela ahwanile akukulema* (Why do you need many wives when it is sometimes impossible to manage even only one wife)?

Name	Age	Gender	Date	Place	Profession
Siyovelwa, Peter Saidi	69	Male	4.3.1999	Iringa	Administrator

He is a Public Administrator by profession. He was baptised in 1939. Siyovelwa is currently the chairperson of All Local Authorities of Tanzania (ALAT) and also the chairman of the Local Authorities of East Africa (LAEA). This means he is also the chairperson of the local government assembly of Iringa Region.



He has served in the Tanzanian Government since the colonial time as Tax Collector, the District Commissioner of Njombe, Mbeya and Same. He has also served as the Regional Commissioner of Arusha, Kigoma and Mbeya. He has held higher positions in the government such as the Minister for Home Affairs in the President's Office, the Director of the National Intelligence and the Member of Parliament for the Eastern constituency. He is currently the local government representative of Kalenga East.

Siyovelwa has been cited in the text several times. His main contribution has been in the area of African Religion and Hehe culture. He is the one who had detailed explanation about God, ancestors, rituals and sacrifices, as cited in the second chapter. He contended that Christian converts should venerate ancestors. He believes that ancestors need the living and the living need the ancestors. He thinks some constant communication through the passage rites and the gathering of the family for meals and drink to remember the *avagolo avanofu* (the innocent and immaculate) ancestors is non-controversial to Christianity.

#### **Appendix IV D: Selected Informants from Members of African Religion**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Place</b>	<b>Profession</b>
Makilika,	69	Male	25.8.1999 27.10.2003	Isagwa	Peasant

Makilika is a faithful adherent of African Religion. According to his own statement he affirmed that he had never been interested in converting to Christianity. He has heard many people who preached to him about Jesus Christ and some of his wives and children are members of the Roman Catholic Church. He is one of the adherents of AR who gave an in-depth explanation concerning God, ancestors and the spiritual realm. Some of the responses are cited in the text. Makilika believes that most of the Hehe Christians still go back to AR to seek answers for their problems when they do not find those answers in the Church. He is also the one who claimed that

adherents of AR do not go to Christian to perform rituals or sacrifices. They also do not seek answers from Christian priest because if Christian priests would take the tasks of the diviners they would require the adherents of AR to convert and be baptised. On the contrary when Christians return to AR rituals and sacrifices or consult diviners they do not need to reconvert to AR even if they would be seen as backsliders.

For him Christians are more inclined to AR than AR members being inclined to Christianity. He described Christians who participate in AR rituals and sacrifices as people who take Christianity like a coat. They wear it when it is cold and hang it when it is warm. By that statement he meant that some Christians remain in the Church when conditions are conducive but run away when conditions are not conducive. He gave an example that some Christians in Isagwa pretend to be good Christians when they do not have problems that would force them to consult diviners but once they face problems that oblige them to consult diviners they either ask their relatives who are adherents of AR to consult diviners on their behalf or they opt for a self- excommunication until their problems are solved. Makilika asked, "Why should I convert to Christianity and be a hypocrite?"

Name	Age	Gender	Date	Place	Profession
Kiwola N.	66	Female	26.8.1999 25.10.2003	Wotalisoli	Peasant

Kiwola had both positive and negative views concerning the conversion of the Hehe from AR to Christianity. For her most of the people joined Christianity as a result of curiosity. He commented that some reasons that attracted people to join Christianity were to live near the "white people" at the mission stations where they would be protected. She said, "*Avanu vawendige ukwikala pipi na vadzugu*" (People wanted to stay close to the "white

people"). They wanted to know the food they ate. Some wondered whether the "white people" went to the toilet or not and others wondered about their hair. They thought their hair was like maize tassels. Since most of the people in the mountains had not seen white people they thought the white people might have come with a disease that destroyed knees and toes hence forcing missionaries to wear long and strange clothes, which meant gowns and trousers. They thought that shoes were meant to hide damaged toes. The white colour was compared to that of the albinos who were counted as a curse in the Hehe society and some said that the White people had the skin of chicken.

According to Kiwola some of the Hehe people wondered how those Africans who accompanied the missionaries were able to understand the foreign language and translate it into the Hehe. Young people got interested in learning how to read and write. Kiwola is one of the wives of Kidanganyike. She is the first wife and she was not bothered about the other three wives. When she was asked how she felt about polygamy she did not respond. Instead of responding to the question she called the other wives to respond to the question. Whether they were taught what to respond or not they all said, "What is wrong with polygamy if our husband loves more than one woman?" One of them who got married after baptism said, "There was no one to marry me in the church and I found someone outside the church who loves me. Why should I deny him" (Kidwangidze 27-08-1999: Wotalisoli).

After those responses Kiwola said, "There is nothing-strange about my husband. I have lived with him for more than forty years and our marriage seems more stable than some your church members who accuse each other to legal authorities almost every three months". There are many responses that indicate that polygamy is not only a wish of men but also an issue that has

deep roots in the African community and in some cases, it has acceptance from women.

#### **Appendix IV E: Selected Informants from the Diviners**

Diviners are highly respected and are seen as the encyclopaedia of the society. Adherents of AR look for answers from them. Five diviners were interviewed. Two of them seemed to have taken interest in the practice of divination from the time when they were young. Those were Kilovele and Mdenying'afu. Even though they have been quoted in the text but it was relatively difficult to follow their path of gaining the power of divination. They gave the same stories of how they acquired their power, just like any other diviner would give. However we have already commented in the text that they wanted to become diviners in order to gain status and wealth, which they saw from their parents.

Otherwise, two diviners were selected to represent the rest. These were Lwanzali and Ngasakwa. These two had authentic similarities and differences that were logical. The fifth diviner named Elima Mgeni was not cited in the text. In spite of interviewing her two times, her information remained to be highly controversial and difficult to follow.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Place</b>	<b>Profession</b>
Lwanzali, Lumuliko G	65	Male	22.8.1999 29.10.2003	Ilula	Diviner

Lwanzali is a backslider among the registered members of the Lutheran Church in Ilula. He does not participate in the normal AR rituals but he claimed that he was once forced by his divination spirits to perform a communal sacrifice for rainmaking; otherwise he is a professional diviner.

Much has been quoted in the text concerning divination, communal rituals and sacrifices. Lwanzali attended the Bush School for his basic education. Lwanzali was baptised at the age of twelve in the Lutheran

Church. He started leading the youth at the age of sixteen. He became a leading preacher at one of the preaching points at the age of eighteen. He did this work for twenty years. Later on he joined politics and chaired Mkalanga village for twelve years.

He claimed that one day he felt cold and ill. In the evening a certain power possessed him and made him to speak things, which he did not understand. Sometime he spoke a language, which was not understood by the people around him. He and other people knew that he had a *Lisoka* or *masoka*. Later on that power identified itself as the spirit of the long-gone ancestors. They named themselves starting with diviners who according to the calculations and logic seemed to cover six generations. One way of determining the time was the agreement of information concerning the diviners who helped the first Hehe chief to bring the tribe together. There is a legend in Iringa that one of such diviners was known by the surname of name Kikoti who lived at Ipogoro in one of the suburbs of Iringa town. Kikoti was one of the long-gone ancestors who identified himself as one of the spirits that had possessed Lwanzali. Kikoti was good at foretelling about the war and in preparing the *Migoda ja mahomelo* (magic for war). The spirit of Kikoti named the contingent of other ancestors who were with him and who had come specifically to confer the power of divination to Lwanzali.

These spirits took him to a thick forest called *Nyumba nitu* (the black house), which is now part of Udzungwa National Park. Lwanzali reported that there is a large *litemela* (swamp) in the *Nyumba nitu* forest. He also claimed that he was taken deep down into the *litemela*. Deep down in the swamp he met many people who died in less than four past decades. Those ancestors introduced themselves and told him what would happen to him as a diviner. He claimed that they told him that he would be empowered by seventeen spirits who would be symbolised by seventeen cowbells. The seventeen spirits were both male and female. He was told that the bells would give him the required authority and wealth but his wealth would consist of cows. The spirits reminded him that he had served the church for twenty

years and he had also spent twelve years as a political leader but he was still poor. The spirits were to give him power, status and wealth. It is true that Lwanzali has many cows. He can be described as wealthy, according to the standards of Ilula and amidst the poor Tanzanians.

The spirits called themselves “*kitu* (thing)” and gave the directives to him how he would be successful if he listened and obeyed the “thing”. The “thing” would tell him what to do whenever he performed the divination. It would tell him the kind of problems and diseases of the client then prescribe the respective solution. The solution would be either to take herbal or any other medicine from him and sometimes the “thing” would allow the use hospital medicine and at other times it prescribed rituals or sacrifices that were to be performed.

Lwanzali claimed further that the “thing” told him that all medicine is made from plants, some minerals (*madini mbalimbali*) and other living creatures (*viombe mablimbali*). Out of these Europeans have made medicine and they are making money. Nonetheless, Europeans despise African medicine that is made from the same ingredients because they want to be the only rich people. Lwanzali was therefore reminded to use herbal medicine more than hospital medicine. However he was strongly warned that he should never use any “black magic”, poison and any kind of magic for revenge. Instead, he was empowered to counter the malevolent forces of the witchdoctors and sorcerers. Lwanzali confessed that when that “thing” (spirits) does not possess him he behaves like any other normal human being, but once the “thing” catches him he becomes ecstatic and weird.

Name	Age	Gender	Date	Place	Profession
Ngasakwa, Sabiti	28	Male	16.8.2003	Lusinga	Diviner

Ngasakwa was baptised in the Roman Catholic Church but after being possessed by the spirits of divination he left the Church and rejoined the African Religion. He makes his living through divination.

Ngasakwa inherited derivational tools and magic power from his uncle named Ngamulagosi Mwamugoba. According to his elder brother Nathan Ngasakwa, Mwamugoba was a famous diviner who lived in Ukwega but one who invariably denied conversion to Christianity, hence baptism. He told all people who evangelised to him that he had a contract with the head of the spirits that empowered him. The contract was that should never accept baptism. There was no chance to interview *Mwamugoba* because he died before this research took place. However, his two nephews namely Nathan Ngasakwa who denied to inherited the divination spirits from him and Sabiti Ngasakwa who was possessed by the spirits without his will, gave the necessary information that showed how Sabit Ngasakwa became a diviner.

Sabit Ngasakwa was a primary school pupil when the spirits of divination from Mwamugoba possessed him. Sabit Ngasakwa left the school in Lusinga and went to assist his uncle Mwamugoba who lived in Ukwega in the work of divination. When *Mwamugoba* approached death the spirits turned against Sabit Ngasakwa and disqualified him with the explanation that he was poor in handling some of the cases because he had little education hence he lacked wisdom. The spirits liked his elder brother Nathan Ngasakwa. Nathan Ngasakwa was by then a lay preacher at Lusinga. Nathan Ngasakwa was told about the appointment by spirits. He absolutely refused the appointment. He underwent severe mystic suffering and diseases but he did not give in to the appointment.

The sprits were then asked to accept Sabiti. They accepted him through several rituals and sacrifices that were thought to compensate for his ignorance, lack of wisdom and being a novice. Different from Lwanzali and Mdeningafu, Ngasakwa inherited some magic power that can catch culprits by inflicting a disease or cause strange events to take place to the culprit. In some cases culprits can be caused to behave strangely to the point that people will notice that there must be something wrong. If the respective culprits do not show up to pay the penalty of the offence a chain of deaths will occur in the family and the culprits will be the last to die. For example if a person

steals honey, Sabit Ngasakwa would make such a person a beehive. Bees would go in and out of that person through the anus and people would know that the culprit had stolen honey. To catch people who committed adultery Sabit Ngasakwa would make some black magic that would force the culprits to remain in the sexual action without being separated for several days until the offended catches them.

Consequently, Sabit Ngasakwa as a diviner can deal with cases that do not have direct answers in the court of law, the police investigation or other legal authorities. He claimed that he could detect and catch the most notorious thieves, sorcerers and witches or witchdoctors. He also claimed that he could help the bewitched people to recover from the inflicted diseases.

The divination empowerment process of Sabit Ngasakwa started in the same way as Lwanzali. He remembered that after the necessary rituals and sacrifices for his inheritance and cleansing he was also taken to a thick forest in Lulanga, which is in Morogoro along the Eastern border of Iringa. While in the forest he was taken first to the *litemela* (swamp) where he met more than thirty long-gone ancestors who introduced themselves and empowered him. Some days later he was taken to the Indian Ocean. While in the Indian Ocean he was taken to a place deep down in the ocean where he met Mwamugoba again and other strange people who empowered him with the special magic power, which the other three diviners did not have. When he came from that exercise he became ecstatic and hysteric for some weeks. Upon recovering from that state he started doing the divination with the same power of Mwamugoba but whenever he tried to attend any church service he fell down and became unconscious for two to three minutes. Like Mwamugoba his power is invariably against Jesus Christ and the Church.

Some of these stories are hardly believable but they have been shown in this appendix so as to give a glimpse of what was found in the fieldwork in relation to what has been quoted in the text. Sabit Ngasakwa is polygamous, wealthy and one who commands respect in the community.



## APPENDIX V

### Uhlin, G.: An Example of Women's involvement in God's Mission.

This is a continuation of the selected informants. Uhlin represents the Lutheran pioneer missionaries. Her brief biographical information is given below and there after are some of the highlights of her experiences in mission work.

Name	Age	Gender	Date	Place	Profession
Uhlin G.	85	Female	07.07.1997	Upsalla	Nurse

Uhlin was a missionary who was sent to the Hehe by the Swedish Evangelical Mission (SEM). She came to Tanzania 1939 to join two other couples of the missionaries in Ilula. The couples of in Ilula were those of Nordfeldt and Carlson who came to Ilula in 1938. G. Uhlin came as the first medical personnel of Ilula. She married H. Uhlin in 1941. H. and G. Uhlin served as missionaries in Ilula, Dongobesh, Makumira and Mafinga. Much of the information from her has been used in chapter 5, subsection 5.3.1.

It was found necessary to show in this appendix the practical aspects of the theology of the cross and the compliancy with God's mission in the story of G. Uhlin. The subsequent illustrations have been taken from her book *Hon for Till Africa* as found in the bibliography. The first illustration shows the mission area in Uhehe where Greta Uhlin moved from a city to a very small remote village in Ilula. The second illustration shows G. Uhlin in the train on the departure day from Sweden to Tanganyika. She took the risk to leave her home and go to an unknown foreign land. The third illustration shows the journey from Dar-Es-Salaam to Ilula in 1939. The missionaries were perceived as rich because they had cars, but in the real sense they were not rich. The fourth illustration shows a deadly danger and one example of how missionaries were vulnerable to the unpredictable crucial circumstances. Uhlin almost touched the most poisonous snake that was in the middle of construction stones and when

- Uhlin in the train as she left Sweden on her way to Tanganyika (Uhlin: 13). She was not interested in economic or colonisation projects but being of service in God's Mission to God's people of Iringa.



3. The journey from Dar-Es- Salaam to Iringa took one full day (Uhlen: 28). Missionaries were given the means for transportation. Cars made them to be perceived as rich, while in reality they were not. However, they came, they lived with and served the poor.



SAFARI DAR ES SALAAM -  
IRINGA

4. The snake in the middle of construction stones. Uhlin almost touched one of the most poisonous snakes (Uhlin: p. 58). Missionaries were vulnerable to dreadful danger and death.



NYONA KATI YA MAWE YA  
 KUJENGA JLULA.  
 MALAIKA PAMOJA NAMI!

5. The *Chumvi chumvi* story (Uhlin: 63). This is cited on p. 283 of this thesis. This was the beginning of proclaiming the Word of God in Ilula. The first audience constituted of children, mothers followed and men came last. Msola Y. and Msigomba P. who have been cited frequently were in the group of the first Hehe people to baptised at Ilula and Msola remembered having gone to receive the salt from Uhlin.



CHUMVI KATIKA MIKANO YAWAU  
 MWANZO WA KAZI ILULA - 1989

## APPENDIX VI

### CITED BIBLICAL ABBREVIATIONS IN ALPHABETICAL OREDR

Ac.	Acts of Apostles
Chr.	Chronicles
Col.	Colossians
Cor.	Corinthians
Dt.	Deuteronomy
Eph.	Ephesians
Ex.	Exodus
Gal.	Galatians
Gen.	Genesis
Heb.	Hebrews
Isa.	Isaiah
Jn.	John
Josh.	Joshua
Lev.	Leviticus
Lk.	Luke
Mk.	Mark
Mtt.	Matthew
Phi.	Philippines
Phl.	Philemon
Rom.	Romans
Sam.	Samuel
Tim.	Timothy
Tit.	Titus

## APPENDIX VII

### Interview Questions and Questionnaire

#### A: General Questions to Christian Converts

1. How did your conversion take place?
2. Who were the people who preached to you?
3. How much do you know about AR?
4. How have you participated in AR?
  - (a) Did you have any role?
  - (b) What are the basic beliefs and practices of AR?
5. What do you think about God in AR and Christianity?
6. What do you think about ancestors?
7. How would you compare AR concepts of spirits and that of Christianity?
8. What do you know about missionaries?
9. How would you describe them?
10. How do you relate missionaries and colonialist?
11. What is your experience with missionaries concerning the following?
  - (a) Relations with local people
  - (b) Their attitude to culture
  - (c) Their status in the Hehe Society
12. What would be the benchmarks of Lutheranism in the Hehe Society?
13. What would you describe as the motivations of the Hehe to convert to Christianity?
14. What would you describe as the problems that were experienced during the Christianisation of the Hehe?

#### B: Questions to Members of African Religion

1. Have you ever come across and or listened to a person who was preaching about Jesus Christ?
  - (a) What was your opinion?

- (b) Did you ever consider turning to Christianity?
2. What do you know about God?
  3. What do you know about ancestors?
  4. What are the basic African Religious rituals and sacrifices?
  5. How are they performed?
  6. What has been your role in African Religion
  7. What do you know about spirits in African Religion?
  8. How would you relate divination to:-
    - (a) Spirits
    - (b) Diseases
    - (c) Rituals and Sacrifices
    - (d) The general life of Africans and the understanding of the society about divination?
  9. Do you participate in divination? If yes or no. Why?
  10. What do you know about Christians concerning:-
    - (a) African Religion rituals?
    - (b) Divination?
    - (c) Ancestral spirit possession?
  11. Were there any hindrances or rules that prohibited you to convert to Christianity?
  12. How do you relate to Church and Christians nowadays

### **C: Questions to the Diviners**

1. How did you become a diviner?
2. What did you do prior to being a diviner?
3. Did you participate in any acts of divination directly or indirectly prior to your divination empowerment?
4. Could you give a brief history of your family or clan?  
(This arose from the discussions)



5. The society describes you with high regard and some relate to you with fear. Some think diviners are rich and others think diviners are miracle workers because they have solutions to many answers.

How would you comment about that?

6. How do you relate to:-

(a) African Religion (*Dini ya mababu*)

(b) Christianity

7. Do Christians consult diviners?

(a) If Yes, on which issues?

(b) How do you understand them?

(c) How do you deal with them?

**D: Questionnaire: This was given to the elite group**

1. What is your opinion concerning the conversion of Africans from African Religion to Christianity?
2. According to what you know, how would you describe the African Religion (A.R.)?
3. Have you ever participated in African Religion rituals or sacrifices?  
Yes/No. If Yes, please describe how.
4. Do you have any relatives who are members of African Rituals?
  - (a) If Yes – would you kindly give your opinion, as far as you might know: Why don't they want to convert to Christianity.
  - (b) Do you know anything about Christian rules that might have hindered your relatives to convert to Christianity?
5. How could you describe Christian missionaries?
6. How would you describe the relationship between Christianity and colonialism?
7. How would you describe modernity in view of changes that took place during the conversion of the Hehe?

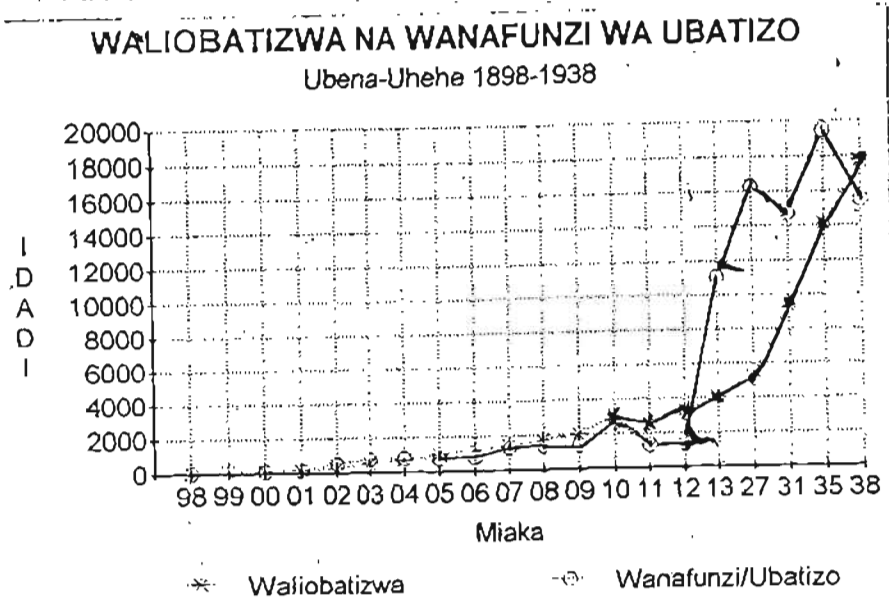
8. What were the motivations of the Hehe to convert to Christianity?
9. Do you know any problems that might have accompanied the conversion of the Hehe from African Religion to Christianity?
10. How could you describe the following: -
  - (a) Christian missionaries and their view of the Hehe culture?
  - (b) The Lutheran Church amongst the Hehe?
  - (c) The growth of the Lutheran Church and Hehe culture?

## APPENDIX VIII

### Naming Numbering the Recorded Information

<b>Cassette Number</b>	<b>Identification</b>	<b>Informants</b>
NO.1 IPA	ACCAC/14/08/1997	Mkemwa S.
NO.II IPA	ACCAC/14/08/1997	Mdegela H.
NO.III IPA	ACCAC/14/08/1997	Luwoneko G.
NO. IV ILA	ACCAC/29/10/2003	Lwanzali L.
NO.V. LUS	ACCAC16/08/2003	Ngasakwa S.
NO.VI. ITI	ACCAC/18/07/2003	Kilovele A. Mdenying'afu A.
NO. V. DAR	ACCAC: Music/14/08/1997	Nimemwona Mungu
NO.VI. ISA	ACCAC/28/09/1999	Isagwa Group 2003

Appendix IX: Graphic Charts of 1898-1913 (Refer to 4.3.3 pp 231-233)



Key Idadi= membership (how many) *Waliobatizwa*= the baptised  
*wasiobatizwa*= the unbaptised

Chart A: The Baptised and The Catechumens

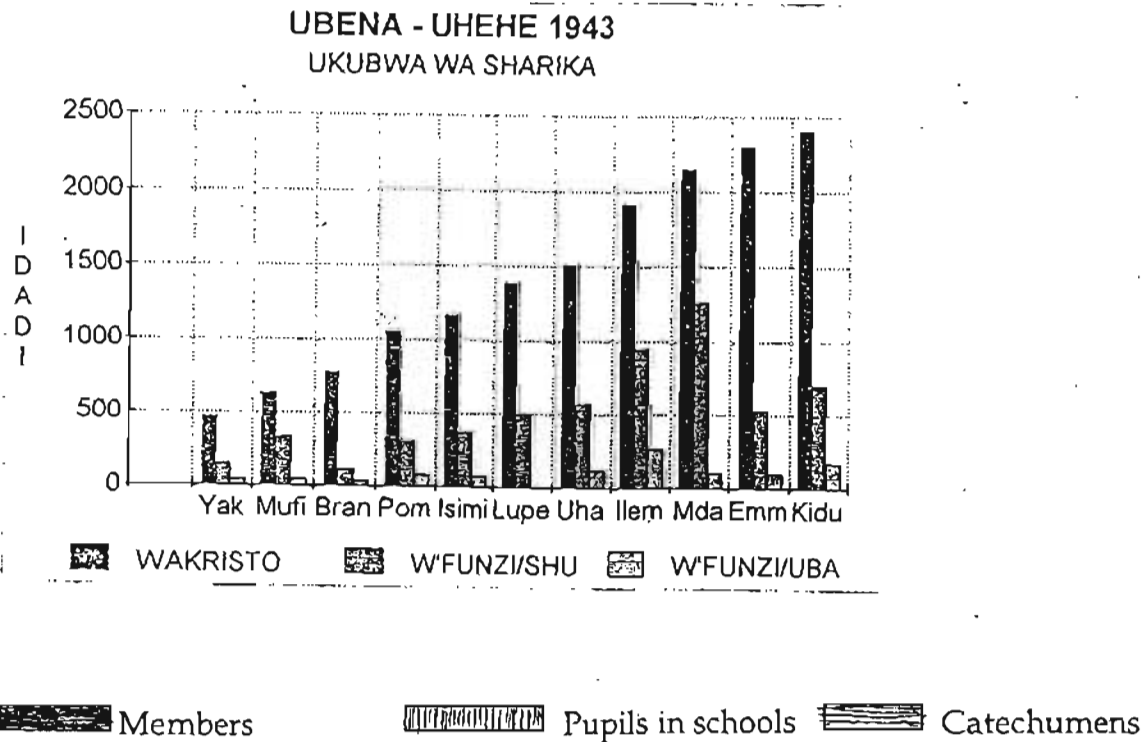
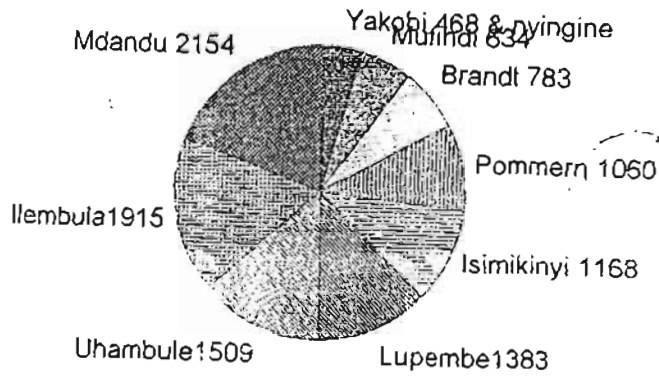


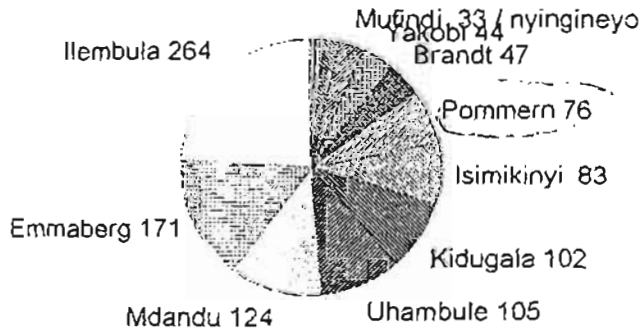
Chart B: The Composition of the Congregations

**UBENA - UHEHE SYNOD 1943**  
 UWIANO WA SHARIKA: WAKRISTO WOTE: 16009



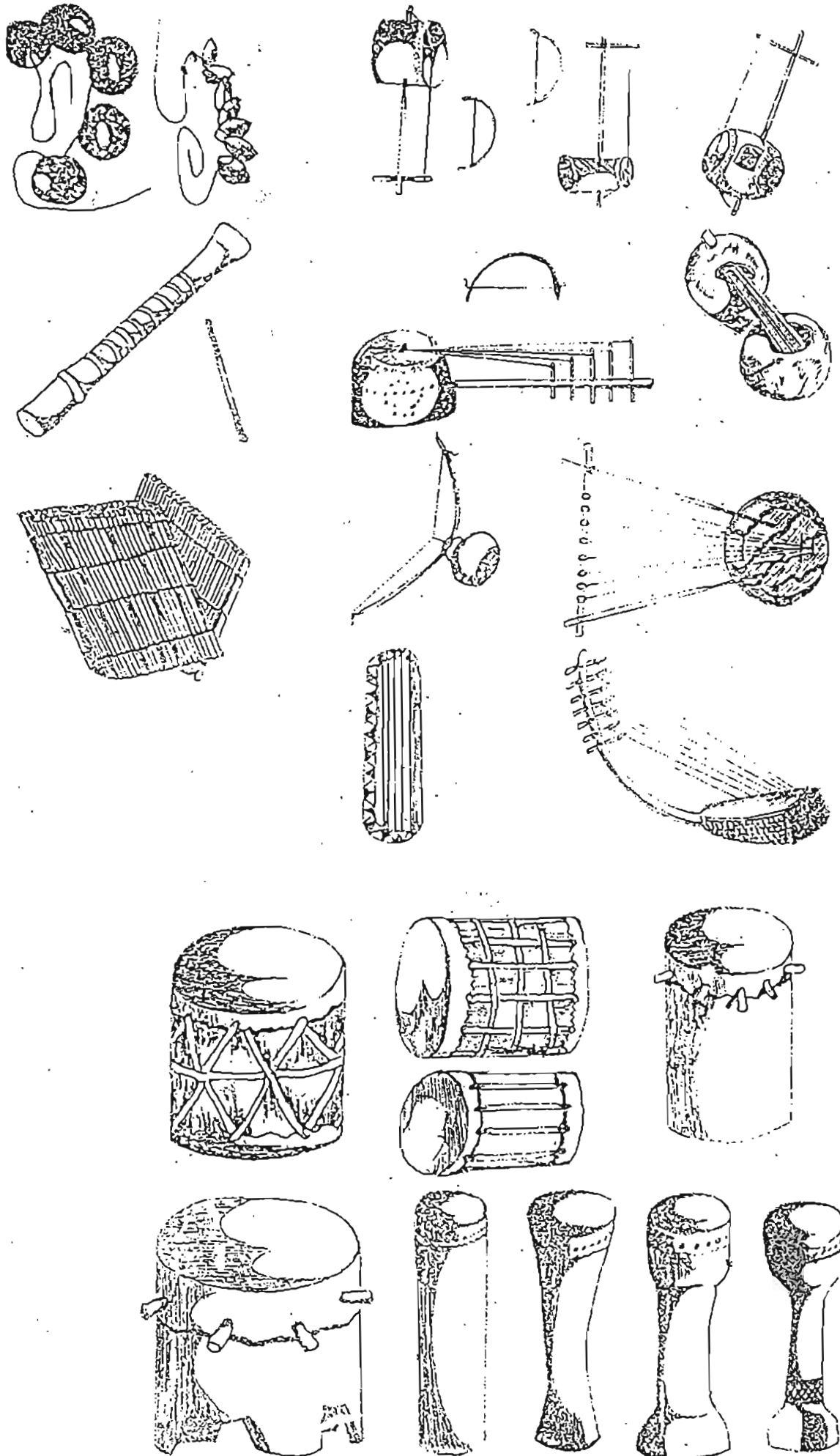
C: The Pie Chart ratio of all members: 16,009 by 1943

**WANAFUNZI WA UBATIZO**  
 Uhehe-Ubena 1943



D: Catechumens of Bena and Hehe Synod 1943

Appendix X: Hehe Musical Instruments (Mdegella 1984:57-62)



## APPENDIX XI YESU NI MAASAI

Huu ni ukweli usiopingika kwamba, tangu unabii wa Agano la kale, ukoo wa Yeau kuzaliwa, huduma ya Yesu hadi kufa kwake inaonyesha kuwa Yesu ni Maasai. Unabii unaopatikana katika Agano la kale na Manabii waliyotoa unabii ndani ya jamii yao kwa ajili ya jamii, jambo hilo si geni katika jamiii ya wamaasai kwani mpaka leo hii manabii wapo na wanafanya kazi ya kuhudumia Jamii nao wanaaita "ILOBONOK" na huduma yenyewe inawitwa "ENAIBON" na hatwa Loiboni wa ABANO LA KALE ndio wlio tabiri kuwa hapo badaye atazaliwa mtoto mwanaume na binti Mariamu naye ataitwa jina lake Emanueli yaani Mungu pamoja nasi, kwa maana kwamba Mungu atakaa nasi kwa njia ya mwanadamu hapa Duniani, naye ndiye Yesu. Isaya : 7:14.

Leo hii zipo koo za kimaasai ambazo ni za ILOBONOK, wenye kutoa unabii nao nikama ukoo wa IRWALAKISHU na IRKELININKISHU, kwa hiyo inawezekana yesu ni wa ukoo wa Irwalakishu au Irkelinkishu ndani ya jamii ya wamaasai, hata yeye Yesu alikuwa ni nabii tena mkuu sana maana aliponya magonjwa, alijua shida ya mtu kabla hajaambiwa na alifanya miumiza mengi kuliko malaiboni wa wamaasai wa leo hivyo yey ndiye laiboni mkuu kuliko wote.

Vile vile Yesu ni maasai kwa sababu niwa jamii ya kifugaji maana tangu Abrahamu Isaka na Yakobo walikuwa wafugaji wenye mifugo mingi waliooa wake wengi na tena wanaohama hama, walitoka Uru wokaenda Harani na baadaye Misri (Gosheni) na tena kurudi kanaani, kama wamaasai wanavyo hama hama leo. Na unabii huu ndio uliosema kuwa atazaliwa mtoto katika ukoo wa Daudi, maana yake ukoo unakuwa kwa baba kama wamasai kwani isingekuwa hivyo basi Yesu asingekuwa wa ukoo wa Daudi, wangepuata uloo wa Mariamu yaani wa mama au wasinge jail kuwa ni ukoo upi kama jamii zingine leo wasivyo jalikuwa mtoto anafuata ukoo upi, wa baba au wa mama.

Pia Yesu ni maasai kwa sababu jamii yake katika Agano la kale wana mwabudu Mungu aliyejitokeza kwenye Mlima wa SINAI kwa kuwapa Amri kumi, hadi leo hii jamii ya wamaasai wanamwabudu Mungu aliye watokea pale SINAI kea njia ya Loibonok(manabii) wao, utasikia mara nyingi wakisema "ENKAYAI PASINAI" wakimaanisha (MUNGU WANGU WA SINAI).

Kwa sababu pia Yesu ni maasai imewezekana kuzaliwa kwenye zizi la Ng'ombe maana jamii karivu yote wana mifugo kama asingekuwa maasai Yeau angezaliwa shambani au sokoni. Na watu wa Kwanza kwenda kumwona Yesu alipozaliwa walikuwa Morani waokuwa wakichunga Ng'ombe porini, "Lonjo" na sababu ya kwenda kwa Morani ni kwamba Yeye ni LAIBONI aliyezaliwa kwenye ukoo wa kilaiboni kwani hata leo mtoto wa ukoo wa laiboni anapozaliwa wanaume wanakuw wakwanza kwenda kumwona mtoto lakini koo zingine sio lazima wanaume wakamwone.

Yesu alitahirwa kwa sababu yeye ni maasai, jamii yake wanadesturi ya kutahirwa ili akublike na jamii kwani bila tohara asingekuwa maasai angekuwa "ORMEEKI" yaani angekuwa mtu wa jai ya wasio tahiri na baada ya kutahirwa akawa "ORMURANI". Tohara ni jambo muhimu sana katika jamii ya wamaasai, hivyo Yesu ni maasai na sio ORMEEK (Jamii ya watu wasio tahirwa).

Yesu ni maasai na ni morani kweli kweli kwani alifanya kazi ya umorani ya kuihudumia jamii yake kwa kuifundisha, kuwaongoza, kuwatibu magonjwa, kuwapa

*Chakula na kulinda haki na kutetea kweli katika jamii yake, na kwa sababu Yesu alikuwa na kipawa cha pekee unabii ulikuwepo ndani yake ("ulaiboni") aliweza kuzungumza mambo ambyo hayakufahamika sana katika jamii yake hivyo jamii hikumavelewa sana ingawa alijitambulisha.*

*Pia katika kazi ya umorani ya kuihudumia jamii Yesu alifanya na Morani wenzake kumi na watwili kwani wanawake harwaenzi kuhusika sana na mambo mengi ya jamii wao kazi yao kubwa ni kuzaa watoto na kuwatunza nyumbani na kupika chakula tu. Hivyo kama werwe ni maasai kweli kweli unayejua mila na Desturi za wamaasai za kuheshimu unabii wa manabii(Loibonok) basi, utaweza kukubaliana na unabii huu kuwa amezaliwa Mtoto ambaye ndiye aliye Loiboni mkuu kuliko wote ili arwaongoze watu wote wakianza wanyumbani kwake, wamaasai na baadaye watu wengine ili wapate kurithi uzima wa milele na kupata wokovu, naye ni YESU KRISTO.*

*By Ole Kurupashi*



Appendix XII: Pioneer Mission Stations (Lehman:Backleaf)

