

**TANGAZA COLLEGE**

**CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF EASTERN AFRICA**

**PASTORAL DEPARTMENT**

**RECONCILIATION AMONG THE LUO OF KENYA.**

**AN ESSAY SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF ARTS IN RELIGIOUS STUDIES.**

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**FEBUARY 2002**

***NAIROBI- KENYA.***

## STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, do declare that this long essay is my original work achieved through my personal reading, scientific research and critical reflections.

It is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Bachelor of Arts in Religious Studies. It has never been submitted to any other college or university for academic credit. All sources have been cited in full and acknowledged.

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Date:                     13 - 2 - 2002                    

This long essay has been submitted for examination with my approval as the college supervisor.

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## DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my beloved late brother, Charles Oluoch Okong'o and his wife Sarah Achieng who I used to share a lot with on the Luo traditional values. and to my dear mother Anastasia Aoko for giving me the gift of life.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

As I come to the end of my initial theological studies and formation, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my (Okong'o family) and all the formators, friends, relatives, teachers and fellow students who have in one way or another, assisted me to accomplish my theological studies and religious formation.

In a special way, I am greatly indebted to my supervisor, Mr Aloys Otieno Ojore, for his patience, concentration, dedication, constructive criticisms, guidance and many valuable suggestions which enabled me to write this work:

I want to thank Fr. James Cleshan (S.M.A) for his proof readings and encouragements. Further more, my gratitude goes to Fr. Paul Guarise the provincial delegate of Camillians in Kenya for his concern about my education, financial assistance and religious formation.

This research would not have been possible without the co-operation of my informants, who assisted me in the field. In particular, I wish to thank Owino Arende, Ongalo Achayo, Paul Ogola, Onyango Aloth, and Marthlida Akelo who gave thoughtful insights for my research.

I can not forget to thank the staff of Tangaza library who gladly availed to me all the relevant books for my long essay.

Lastly, I would like to extend my thanks to all Camillian theologians, benefactors and all the members of the congregation of who helped and supported me in this academic struggle. To all of you, and those not mentioned here, I can only say a BIG THANK YOU and may God reward you with his blessings.

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

**Can:** Canon Law.

**CUEA:** Catholic University of Eastern Africa

**LG:** Lumen Gentium

**SC:** Sacrosantum Concilium

**NT:** New Testament

**OT:** Old Testament

All Biblical abbreviations taken from the African Bible.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### 1.0

### INTRODUCTION

When we talk of a reconciled community we mean a community of people or disciples who have been attracted by the love of Jesus or common bond of living together. They plan together, praying together with one mind and heart, tolerating one another. In this way also, they fulfill one of the farewell discourses of Jesus that: 'it is by your love for one another that everyone will recognise you as my disciples' (Jn. 13:35).

Although we may be living in the traditional, modern communities or in consecrated communities, still the spirit of dialogue, peace and reconciliation is far from dwelling in the hearts of everyone. There are a number of factors that keep us away from the true spirit of dialogue, peace and reconciliation in our day to day life.

As the future ministers in the Church, we cannot sit back and watch the factors that are disrupting the stability and harmony in the African society. It is an invitation for all of us to find our own African way of solving problems by examining our traditions and customs. As the saying goes; 'it is the one who sleeps in the house who knows the spot that leaks'. An outsider may only help you to mend it. Although the present generation prefers western styles of life, we can still identify the traditional values with regards to the reality of reconciliation.

We have thought it wise in this project, to bring into light the Luo ways of reconciliation as one of the African traditional ways of handling or resolving issues that may disrupt the smooth running of community activities and mutual relationships. Since Vatican II, the Catholic Church has called for a closer study of various cultures. It is only

in this way the African church can boast of a truly inculturated Christian faith and Church in Africa.

Africa has become a theatre of dangerous conflicts, wars, hundreds of thousands killed in Rwanda, Congo, civil war in Mozambique, the Sudan and tribal clashes in Kenya. Infact, every nation, tribe or individual is a potential victim of conflicts. There are intense human emotional, psychological and physical sufferings, destruction or loss of human lives and property. There is poverty, disease, starvation, corruption and displacement of peoples in Africa. All these are a clear manifestation of evil intentions in the human heart. Conflicts, wars and hatred further destroy the fragile foundations for national cohesion, national unity and threat to all human aspects of life: political, physical, spiritual, economic, intellectual, moral hence one cannot think, plan, pray, learn, grow or develop when one is displaced, hungry, mourning or sick.

These consequences of instability in Africa pose challenging issues calling for quick resolutions. Therefore, we are all invited to cultivate a true love in our hearts in order to offer forgiveness and to receive peace, to let go the past, live the present and open up to the future, so that we can procreate and extend forgiveness in our different communities.

In this paper, we have divided the topic into four chapters. In chapter one, we present the background of the study and methodology. In chapter two we give the background of the study and life style of the Luo people. In chapter three we discuss the reconciliation among the Luo and chapter four we discuss reconciliation in the scripture, the challenges and some suggestions or recomendations for the sacrament of the reconciliation in the Church.

## 1.1

### Statement of the Problem

The central point of investigation is that due to the coming of the western missionaries, some of the Luo values have been ignored with serious consequences on morality of the people. Reconciliation and other realities have fallen below normal expectations by the people. Therefore, there is urgency to go back to our roots and identify and understand the Luo values of reconciliation and try to inculcate them within the Christian Sacrament of Reconciliation. We are convinced that only in this way, shall the Luo Christian understand the seriousness of the rite of reconciliation in the church and be saved from the double living of the Christian faith.

There has also been complaint(s) from the minister(s) of the church, that there is a neglect and lack of commitment to the Sacrament of Penance especially by the young generation (youth). It is therefore mandatory for us to investigate the problems surrounding the Sacrament.

In our country Kenya, that there are persistent tribal clashes along the borders. For example, the Maasai against the Kisii, along the Gucha border. Very often even after a lengthy discussion that involves the elders, politicians and church leaders nothing is resolved and conflicts erupt afresh and continue. This is an area of concern for investigation.

Our elected representatives to parliament or African political leaders have failed to preach the politics of unity. Instead, they fuel hatred. This threatens the unity and stability of our African countries.

In the recent past, a day could not pass without reading from the newspapers, radio or television of the strikes or burning of dormitories in various secondary schools in

Kenya. If these students were rooted in their cultures and knew those acts that are prohibited by their cultures they would cultivate in their hearts the fear of God and respect for human life.

Today, people see the courts as the only place where problems are solved. We find that even the trivial issues that could be sorted out at the family, village or clan levels are being rushed to the courts. This has led to enmity hatred and revenge. What comes out of our courts is nothing but accusations and counter accusations which do not solve problems but which perpetually create enmity among those involved.

Marriage as one of the social institutions is losing its importance in our African set up. There are so many divorce cases, children are being abandoned or disowned by their parents. In order to inculcate the Christian morals, we need reconciled and stable marriages.

Therefore, we are called upon to create a desire for forgiveness. Hence, we are called to advocate for a reconciled society living in communion, harmony, peace and stability as a fulfillment and propagation of Christ's farewell discourse commandment. 'I give you a new commandment, love one another as I have loved you, so you also should love one another. This is how all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another' (Jn: 13: 34-35).

## 1.2

### Objectives

This research is an attempt to examine and know some aspects of reconciliation among the Luo traditional society. We make this study in order to:

1. Make the modern youth and students have a deeper understanding and knowledge on some aspects of traditional Luo values on reconciliation.
2. Shed light on the hidden values of reconciliation among the Luo and preserve them for the youth who will then cherish them for future references.
3. Reveal and show the importance of one's culture if properly embraced in reference to living and practice.
4. Make material on Luo reconciliation available for students in colleges, for missionaries or for academic purposes.
5. Show how the Christian church can take up some positive values of the Luo traditional reconciliation in the process of inculturation, thus coming up with inculturated rite to be used in Kisumu Archdiocese that will be of great help and meaningful to the Luo people.

## 1.3

### Research Hypotheses

In this study, the following will be the working hypotheses

1. If the Christian church continues to ignore the Luo traditional rite of reconciliation, then there is bound to be constant misunderstanding between the two.
2. The Luo youths who are living in towns do not understand their own cultural values, if this trend continues, then there will be lack of true commitment to the Christian Sacrament of Reconciliation.

3. As the church advocates for inculturation, if the Luo people do not go back to their traditional cultures, then it will be impossible for them to come up with an inculturate Luo Christian reconciliation rite.
4. If the early missionaries would have taken their time to observe and study the Luo cultural practices and presented integrated Catechesis, then the Luo would have understood in depth the rite of Christian reconciliation.
5. If the missionaries who worked in Kisumu diocese had been open and adhered to the principle of contextualization, then they could have evangelised the Luo properly. As it is, they have produced double faced Christians who are only converts rather than evangelised.
6. It is assumed that a thorough study of the Luo traditional reconciliation will enable pastors come up with a rite which is acceptable and understood by many Luo Christians.

#### **1.4 Sample Frame**

We interviewed 64 respondents who are grounded in Luo culture, knowledge, experience in the present life situation. They are distributed as follows:

25 traditional males and females ranging between 55-75 years

15 professional males and females ranging between 30-75 years

10 catholic priests, 10 religious brothers and sisters

6 Catechists

8 Youths.

## 1.5

### Research Methods

Several methods were used to collect data during the research. Field work was the most common method of collecting the materials used in the work. Information was gathered through oral interviews with different people, youth, middle and old age groups. These were mostly who knew and are grounded in tradition.

Another method was through questionnaires which were distributed to different people; such as elders both men and women and the youth. The researcher also consulted the pastoral ministers within and outside the home parish.

Personal participation, observation, oral interviews, sharing of experience were other methods used in collecting data for this work. We used mainly Tangaza, Hekima, University of Nairobi and CUEA libraries for this research.

## 1.6

### Limitations of this Study

The size of our location of study, that is the Luo of Kenya, was too large to cover. Therefore we decided to limit ourselves to the Luo of Ugenya, this we hoped, would not affect our findings because the style of life of the Luo is generally similar.

Some of the informants have been influenced so much by western culture and modern ideas thus are biased against most of the Luo cultures. On the other hand, some traditionalists were also against Christian rite of reconciliation calling it foreign. During the field work, we were keen and careful not to fall victims to such biases. What we present in this work is nothing but only the synthesized ideas that are necessary.

## CHAPTER TWO

### 2.0

### THE LUO PEOPLE

The Luo people constitute one of the three distinct blocks that make up the Nilotic community. Other blocks are the Shilluk, Nuer, Anuak and the Dinka which constitute the Northern block in Sudan and the central zone are the Acholi, Alur and Jopadhola present in Uganda.

According to the historical records based on oral sources, the Luo migrated from the west of Bahr-el-Gazhal in the Sudan way back in the 15<sup>th</sup> Century. From the information we got from the elders through the interview they only state that we came from Sudan “without specifying where exactly”. The reasons why the Luo migrated are not given with certainty. Some speculate that the Luo being a nomadic group, may have moved in search of pastoral land. Others hold that since they were growing in number, they moved out to find lands after exhausting where they had been. There was need for space for more expansion. Others maintain that the Luo migrated because of tribal wars with those who were around them and due to internal conflicts among themselves. Irrespective of the motivations for their movements, all attest to the view that they followed the waters in their movement (lakes, rivers and river valleys). Since the group kept on enlarging, they kept on also separating themselves moving in varied directions in search for more virginal pastures. In the present Kenya, the Luo are found mostly in Nyanza province in the following districts, Rachuonyo, Migori, Homa-bay, Siaya,

Bondo, Nyando and Kisumu. which are all surrounded by water. *“For the Luo, the lake is the cornucopia. the great horn of plenty from which flows richness and life abundant”*.<sup>1</sup>

Kisumu town built at the Gulf of Kavirondo on the Lake Victoria is the great town, centre of transactions, no matter where the Luo is from, it is the home (Dala). Attachment to Kisumu reaches its peak last year when the town celebrated hundred years of its foundation and eventually elevation to city status.

The name Luo came from a Luo word “Luwo” which means “to follow”. This name must have been ascribed to the tribe because they were following the River Nile in their migrations and that is why the Luo feel proud to call themselves the people of the Lake (Jokanyam). Today the Luo are divided into four major sub-groups according to their territorial and ancestral origin.

1. Joka-Jok: name derived from their great king, Jok.
2. Joka Owiny: they came from the ethnic group Adhola, in Uganda and were led by Owiny.
3. Joka Omolo: of the Northern Uganda origin – who had two sons: Ugenya and Gem. To be more specific, the Luo in consideration in line with my research are the Luo of Ugenya who had these sons: BORO, PUNY, GOR, NYAMUOT, DEJE and GER WALJAR, which at present constitute Siaya district made up by divisions Ukwala and Ugunja. The map of Ugenya will be shown in place of the map.
4. Joka Suba: a blending of the Luo and Bantu who have accepted Dholuo.

The Luo constitute the largest tribe in the Nilotic community and the 4<sup>th</sup> largest tribe in Kenya.

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<sup>1</sup> Jude J., Ongonga, “Life and Death – A Christian/Luo Dialogue” In *Spearhead Series*. Publications, Eldoret: Gaba Publications, No. 78. .7.

It is said that the Luo were originally a nomadic tribe without any king or chief to enforce and preserve law and order. "They were politically autonomous units that respected socio-religious functions of the father, the head of the compound, the medicine man and the elders".<sup>2</sup> Because of influence by other communities they came into contact with, they later consented into being led and governed by a person they called *Ruoth*. The Luo are very much united by their tradition and customs and this is particularly witnessed during the times of crises, especially sickness or death.

As Richard J. Gehman affirms that even professing

*Christians* revert to traditional beliefs and practices. The fact is that superficial customs change easily with the passage of time, but the deep core world view beliefs of a people are very persistent.<sup>3</sup>

The unity of the Luo is based on blood relationship (consanguinity). This relationship is of great importance to the Luo because it offers one support and strength in times of difficulties. It is the clan that determines the boundaries within which one can marry from. Just as the clans are headed by a group of elders, the family, a rather smaller unit is headed by a man. He is referred to as: "*Wuon Pacho*" which means the father/owner of the homestead while the woman is referred to as "*Min Pacho/Min Oot*", the mother of the homestead.

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>3</sup> Richard J., Gehman, African Traditional Religion : In Biblical Perspective, (Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, 1989), 17.

In every family, every member has a role to play, the woman has her specific role to play, different from that of the man. The roles, rights and equality are clearly distinct and stipulated without any conflicts, which is now heightened by the modern gender issues. During my discussion with my sister, she clearly confesses to me that she knows her identity and cannot indulge herself in matters that are beyond her concern and not in line with tradition and custom. The traditional Luo man has the duty of taking care of the family, to go to war, hunting, providing for his family by working on his field and even by fishing.

The extended family plays an important role in the social organisation of the Luo. This consisted in a few families who need not be necessarily from the same clan but provided that there are blood ties relating the families concerned.

The biggest Luo social organization is the chiefdom, composed of different clans (united in) a kind of federation. The chiefdom is governed by "Ruoth" a word which in the modern world is translated as "chief". All these chiefs are independent in their particular jurisdictions. Still on the social aspect of the Luo, the Luo language is called *dholuo* which is a tonal language, meaning that one word can have different meanings depending on the tone, or pitch, applied by the speaker.

"So, for example, a word Kendo can mean" a Jiko "marriage", or "again" because of this tonal characteristic, it is a melodious language, and it is difficult for a non-native speaker to speak correctly even when they have mastered the

vocabulary and grammar. The tones of the words are understood from the context by *dholuo* speakers.<sup>4</sup>

The Luo region experiences two rainy seasons; the long rainy season known as (chwir) and the short rainy season (opon). This permits the possibility of two planting seasons. Common products are maize, millet, sweet potatoes, and cassava for local consumption and sugar cane, cotton, and rice for income.

The economic life of the Luo depends so much on fishing. Fishing is a major source of income to those next to the lakes or rivers. An individual may consider his female children as a source of wealth for they would be married away in exchange of herds of cows. For example my mother, mentioned to me that my father paid 35 cows as a bride wealth to my grandfather. Therefore, the wealth of a family is determined by the number of cattle one owns. Even though male children would use the cows for bride wealth, they are considered to be of higher value, because they do not go anywhere and are the ones with the duty to perpetuate the lineage of the family or clan and care for the elderly, homeless members of the family. As the saying goes in Luo; Wuoyi e Osimbo/Siro e dala, which means "the son is the pillar of the home".

### 2.1.1 **The Religious Life of the Luo**

The Luo of Kenya are commonly known for their traditional beliefs based on religious understanding which influences their whole being and becoming. The Luo knows and believes in the existence of a supreme being, the source of order in the universe and they call him by many names. Nyakalaga (omnipresent) Obongo Were – the

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<sup>4</sup> Awuor Ayodo; The Heritage Library of African Peoples: Luo, (New York : The Rosen Publishing, 1996), 11.

only one (Supreme). They believe and call him chieng, thus they call the sun “Wang Chien” implying that the sun is His eye. The sun illumines the whole world.

For the Luo, everything is understood and explained in reference to religion.

Alyward Shorter writes thus

Obviously the religion of an African people is the product of innumerable, interacting elements, environmental, economic, sociological, historical, psychological and so forth, but none of these taken singly or all together, can account for everything in the ultimate form taken by that religion. Religious experience is both the inner experience of an individual and the mutual affirmation by a community of common insights.<sup>5</sup>

Ongonga confirms this when he writes that:

The Luo do not have needs that are religious without being at the same time social, economic and cultural, and any answer to one of these takes into consideration all others.<sup>6</sup>

Some practical instances to confirm this, are that: when one escaped death narrowly at war, people will exclaim that: “His God has helped him”. The Luo do pray during morning and sunset. The Luo people pray facing the sun saying,

Yaye saye winja nikech atangoni lweta aywagorani ni inena kod joga. Chieng wuogna maber kendo gimarach opodhi gi chieng”: “Oh God listen to me because I open to you my

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<sup>5</sup> Aylward, Shorter, African Christian Spirituality, (New York: Maryknoll, 1978), 96.

<sup>6</sup> Ong'ong'a, Op.Cit., 15.

hands, I cry to you so that you may see me and my people.

May the sun appear to me with fortunes and the bad omens

die with dying sun.<sup>7</sup>

This prayer is conducted by the head of the family.

The Luo does not need a temple, shrine, mosque or chapel where the faithful may gather for liturgical celebrations. The Luo conduct their prayers and sacrifices in some particular places, for example under big trees, big rocks or thick forests which they associated with God's place of dwelling. This designated place for divine dwelling is known as "Hembko" that means the sacred place. When the Luo gather at such places, they offer prayers and sacrifices to the ancestors. God is approached more through the ancestors who are believed to be at closer dwelling to that of God.

We strongly understand that the Luo have a reverence to the ancestors. It is because of their belief in the life after death. The Luo hold strongly that the ancestors truly live among the people but in a different form. The ancestral spirits are thought to continue living in much the same way as they lived it in history. That is to say, they retain their moral character, social status and familial links. As one of the elders concluded during the oral interview that Luo ancestors retain their human person, passions and appetites which are to be gratified in death as in life. Ancestors feel hunger and thirst.

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<sup>7</sup> Owino Arende. (See Page 69).

The ancestors manifest this reality to their relatives in dreams. “Kwere ka dwaro chiemo to biro e lek”<sup>8</sup> which means if the ancestors are hungry they manifest it through dreams. The ancestors are vindictive if neglected but propitious if shown respect. According to Luo understanding; Ancestors are God’s agents and also take part in the maintenance and control of the universe. They are the intermediaries, protectors of the living from harmful happenings. When there is sickness/disease, or misfortune they are consulted because they are involved in day to day running of the affairs of the family to which they belonged while they were still alive.

Families are expected to be grateful for the protection of their ancestors and to reciprocate by performing rituals in order to maintain harmonious relations between them. Those rituals included the provision of a splendid funeral, naming of children after them, invoking their names during sacrifices for example at the moment of planting, harvest and drought. The ancestral relationship continues and the honorable activities must be conducted after their death so to speak.

## **2.2.0 Luo World View**

The Luo world-view is the foundation for the understanding of the practice of reconciliation. We find that anyone who takes to study the Luo practice of reconciliation cannot successfully do so unless he or she first understands the Luo world-view. In this section we shall, therefore, take a look at how a Luo views his/her world and how that influences and shapes his or her daily life in reference to the topic of reconciliation.

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<sup>8</sup> Dominic Odhiambo, (See Page 68).

According to our oral interview one elderly man mentioned to us that “a Luo person conceives his world in terms of relationship”.<sup>9</sup> They see themselves as sharing their existence in this universe with other creatures towards which they must positively relate if they are to fully realise themselves as human persons. At the center of this creatively relationship there are fellow human beings towards whom a Luo must positively conduct herself/himself if he/she is to have a good social survival. Besides the creatively relationship the Luo identify another type of relationship, that is the relationship with the **spirit world**. This spirit world is believed to be pervasive, powerful and timeless. It can create or destroy a human person depending on how one relates to it. This spirit-world belongs to the divinities according to their hierarchies, the ancestors and the living dead therefore one is morally obliged to learn the correct manner of relating to it.

The Luo feel closely connected with the spirit-world and recognise the spirit-world as magic- religious world which is very influential and dictates the human life. These forces can be tapped by diviners, medicine people and magicians and “positively manipulated to serve the society”.<sup>10</sup> The spirits can also be tapped by sorcerers and witchdoctors and manipulated negatively to harm their enemies. To this world belongs to things like the protective medicines, charms and amulets. These objects are believed to have mysterious power which can protect whoever has them or harm those whom they are directed towards.

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<sup>9</sup> Ogola Paul (See Page 68).

<sup>10</sup> Parinder E.G., African Traditional Religion, (3<sup>rd</sup> Edition), (London : Sheldon Press, 1974) 13.

Thus to confirm this as given by Placid Temples.

The African believes that they acquire life, strength or vital force which will enable them to live strongly and also ensure that forces remain perpetually in their prosperity.

The acquisition of the vital force assures them that they are protected from misfortunes or from diminution of life or from those influences that annihilate or diminish them.<sup>11</sup>

### 2.2.1 **The Luo and Community**

In order to understand the rite of reconciliation among the Luo people, it is necessary to discuss also the importance of the community. To stress on the importance of the community life, the Luo have got a proverb which says "Lwedo Achiel ok kuny bur". One finger cannot dig a hole/grave. This expresses a deep conviction of the community and in fact it sums up the greatest need for solidarity and support for one another. A Luo feels connected with each other in their communities. In fact, as Mbiti puts it, "the whole community is united together by a strong bond of kinship. Every African community every individual is a brother, a sister, father, mother, grandfather or grandmother, cousin, uncle or aunt, nephew or niece, son in law or daughter in law, father in law or mother in law, brother in law or sister in law, husband or wife to somebody else".<sup>12</sup>

The kinship network controls the social interaction and determines the mode of behaviour among the members. This means that every individual knows exactly how he

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<sup>11</sup> Placid Temple, Bantu Philosophy, (Paris : Presence Africaine, 1969). 45.

<sup>12</sup> John S. Mbiti, African Religion and Philosophy, (Nairobi : Heinemann Press, 1969). 104.

or she is to relate and to behave towards somebody else in the community. Kinship network also determines the nature of reconciliation in the community. For example among the Luo it is a taboo for a son or a daughter to quarrel or fight his/her parents. If it happens, a special and different reconciliation procedure is taken to settle the matter.

For the Luo the community/clan offers them the possibility to stand out to reality together and gives the individual a chance to grow and an avenue through which one's unique self can be expressed. In the community there is life sharing with a common vision, one finds support and natural encouragement. More than all else, community provides the individual the sense of belonging, identity and security and they express this in a communal festival, that involves drinking, song, story telling, drama and eating. Outside the community a Luo is lost, insecure and without identity. That is why the worst punishment for a Luo can suffer is to be rejected by his/her own community or to be exiled from it.

The individual members of the Luo community are expected to live in accordance with the customs and traditions and actively participate in the community activities, act in solidarity with others and persevere and safeguard the harmony and peace in the community. Whoever does not comply with these requirements, runs the risk of being sanctioned by the community depending on the gravity of the matter. We find that before the community reaches that level of sanctioning a member, all the reconciliatory processes and rituals are taken. If the individual stubbornly refuses to reform and to reconcile with the community, then the community may have no option but to act tough on him/her.

## CHAPTER THREE

### 3.0 RECONCILIATION AMONG THE LUO.

#### 3.1 The Luo Understanding of Sin.

For anyone to understand reconciliation among the Luo, one must first have the understanding of sin in the context of Luo culture. This is so, because Sin is the necessary reality that calls for the reconciliatory move.

Sin is a questioning reality in our being. It stands as one of the greatest impediments to reach full realization, search for value, success, order, blessings and happiness in life. According to the Luo sin is not abstract, but a concrete experience in the dynamic of our daily living. It is understood within the context of life and which is wholly supported by Luo traditional religion. "Sin embraces a whole way of life rather than a fixed body of doctrine and beliefs".<sup>13</sup>

The Luo notion of sin is known as "**Ketho or Richo** which literally means something which should not be done at all. It also describes what we know as sin and evil. Sin is an evil deed which causes severe effects on the individuals, their belongings and the society. The Luo see sin in terms of the relationships in the community thus, sin breaks harmony with each other and in the community. To live in harmony means to observe traditional customs and taboos. When the traditional customs and taboos are broken, it implies that the offender is cut off from the community members, the ancestors and God.

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<sup>13</sup> Ogotu, O. and Roscoe A., Keep My Words; (Nairobi: East Africa Publish, 19). 6.

The state of sin is characterized by the absence of moral good or aesthetic good which comes from human person that maliciously disrupts the harmonious relationship in the community. According to Luo God is intrinsically good and not responsible for sin. Human being is a problem to himself/ herself. He/she is the root cause of evil because of intrinsic desire rooted in the heart of human person. Sin is a breach against the divine rule. It is a vice a scandal, a trespass as well as a transgression. In essence sin (richo/ketho) is a loss of focus on God, traditional customs, ancestors and the universe.

In depths Sin according to the Luo have a social and communal dimension. It does not affect the individual but the entire community. To confirm this as stated by Prof. Mbiti that:

The people believe that if a person does wrong God will sooner or later punish him, and the punishment affects not just individual alone, but the corporate group of which he/she is only a part.<sup>14</sup>

Sin pervades the entire community and renders pain, misfortune, sorrow or suffering, sickness and drought. During the oral interview one aged mother “**Mikayi**” mentioned to me that even the incurable disease Aids is a result of irresponsible sexual behaviours because the younger generation have neglected their traditional customs.

Unless the present generation stops to think and reflect about the past, (Wuoda, podi ibiro mana neno kaji tho mangeny. Richo podi opongo piny). My son, you will continue seeing people dying because of too much evil in the world.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Mbiti, op. Cit., 20.

<sup>15</sup> Adhiambo Nyakan, (See Page 67).

The Luo universe is full of pleasure and order in its basic form and it stands for sacredness; integrity and beauty. Therefore, sin is an accident in creation that originates from the human heart that is: lack of satisfaction and contentment which deviates oneself from the intrinsic good to disorder and sufferings. This is also confirmed in Genesis 3:1-19.

This tells us that Adam and Eve did not accept the limitation. They were not satisfied with God's instructions hence they went out of communion with themselves, which was the beginning of disintegration.

Sin in the Luo thought is wholistic and alienates the self from God's love and communication. The Luo image of God is a loving father, merciful and forgiving. In spite of His anger does not hesitate to provide the essentials for human sustenance such as rain, sunshine and fish. The Luo by extension so to speak "do not believe in coincidence for this seems to run counter the whole meaning of life".<sup>16</sup>

Sin does not just happen, it must be caused by either external or internal causes. There must be a force behind it and that is why the Luo wherever there is a misfortune they have to go back. To their traditional investigation

(**Nyaka jaluo dog chien**) to find out the root cause of such misfortune. They believe in the solutions to the problems left to them by their forefathers. This is clearly stated by Prof. Mbiti that:

there exist, therefore many laws, customs, set forms of behaviours, regulations, rules observances and favours, constituting the moral code and ethics of a given community or society. Some of these are held

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<sup>16</sup> Hesten J. and R. Wanjohi, "Anointing and Healing In Africa" In Spear head No 71 April, 1982, (Eldoret : Gaba Publications), 31.

sacred and believed to have been instituted by God or elders and behaved to have been instituted by God or elders, hence gives sanctity to the customs and regulations of the community.<sup>17</sup>

In the Luo community, there are suspected people working maliciously against their relatives and neighbours through the use of magic, sorcery and witchcraft which is categorise as external or internal cause.

The external causes of sin includes being f**“bewitched”**, being possessed by the evil spirits. Internal cause of sin inheriting a form from one’s lineage. Jasihoho for example a night runner Jajuok Motieno. “Jasihoho”. a man or a woman, with evil eyes that causes stomach ache theft pride and ambition. The Luo believe that such behaviour is in solidarity, which consist not only parents or relatives but also their children. To express this concept, they have a saying; Awendo ok we yiege: The pigeon cannot leave its feathers.

The Luo also have a stratification of sins. This depends on the circumstances, gravity and consequences. Which can be immediate or gradual depending on the nature of sin - The Luo categorize sin according to its consequential effects. The first class of sin is constituted by petty or minor such as cheating, verbal insults and mistakes. The second class are those sins that are more grievous and have a serious consequence than minor sins. This includes theft, adultery, and hatred. The third class is “Masira” which is abominable act which leads to death. Death can be sudden or gradual. Gradual (Mosmos) death is know as “Chira” These kind of sins seen interms of chira are: A woman striking her husband with her inner part, killing, a daughters or by parents, striking a doorpost

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<sup>17</sup> Mbiti. Op, Cit., 205.

with an axe as a result of anger, and a woman striking her thighs in anger and in protest to any sexual relationship with her husband. According to the Luo once sin is done it is done and brings the effects to be experienced in life.

Sin is a breach of integrated human behaviour and causes injury or destruction to moral, social order and peace. Therefore, it must be punished by the corporate community of both the living and the departed, and God may also inflict punishment and bring about justice. Sin is punishable in the Luo community. It is either physical or psychological. Under physical one can pay in form of animals for the damage caused, psychological punishment took the form of curse superstition or Chira. Chira is psychosomatic disorder in which one loses slowly weight and finally dies if there is no immediate traditional medicine for cure. The punishment for sin among the Luo is intended to deter others from doing the same act, to retribute for the damage caused, to reform the offender and to bar one from repeating the same crime in future. Love for the offender and harmony in the community is the primary reason for punishment hence the Luo will not allow sin to prevail in the community because of “sinohonoho” which means it will be a recurring event in the society. There must be some cleaning rituals in order to bring peace, harmony and integrity in the society.

### **3.1.1 The Effects of Sin**

In the Luo community; it is believed that sin has severe consequences on the individual and misfortunes in the society.

- a) Sin brings natural calamities like famine, drought, floods and thunderstorm.
- b) Deaths especially of the young people.

- c) Psychological and social alienation of one from the society.
- d) Infertility in the land, animals and human beings.
- e) Bitter pains during the action of giving birth of a woman and failure of placenta to come out.
- f) The howling/hooting of an owl near the homestead is a sign that things are not all right.
- g) Continuous hatred and conflicts among the individuals in the family or clan.
- h) Prognostication of some bad omens are expected and the same problem as before may re-occur.
- i) Sin therefore connotes failure, suffering and curses of individuals in the society.

### 3.2

#### **Definition of Reconciliation.**

The Luo look at their life as being at oneness with the others in the common effort to reach the fullness of existence. In this common effort, divinity is seen as the central dynamism without which any success and meaningful existence is impossible. It follows therefore, that a conflict, dispute, or quarrel between two individual persons in the society or between two parties does not only destroy the relationship between the two. It also wrecks the harmony existing in the society and divinities. Therefore, the Luo have to look for the best possible ways to solve or rectifying misdeeds. The situation this is taken seriously in order to restore harmony and peace for the stability of human life before things go out of hand.

Given all these, we shall define Reconciliation in the Luo context as **the process by which friendly attitudes between two individuals or parties is restored, harmony in the society is regained, human and divine relationship is rectified.**

For reconciliation to occur, there must be misunderstanding, conflicts or disorder in the society. For the Luo, the word reconciliation is extensive and can be expressed in many words to express the same reality as **Kelo kwe, winjruok** which means: To bring peace or harmonious mutual understanding among the human persons. Another Luo term for Reconciliation is the ceremony of **Ngadoguok** which means cutting the dog into halves among the two conflicting parties. This is done when the two clans or communities have clashed. In order to bring peace the two elders of both sides are chosen. As they stand face to face, a dog is given to them. One holds the forelimbs and the other, the hind limbs. The chief presider of the ceremony breaks the silence saying.

Waneno ka lweny osedhi mabor.

The war has lasted too long.

Yawuowi mathoth osetho.

Many young men have died.

Gik mangeny osekethore nikech lweny.

Many things have been destroyed by the war.

Omiyo wadwaro kelo kue kawuono.

For all this, we want to re-establish peace.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Mboya Paul, *Luo Kitgi Gitimbegi*, (Kisumu; Anyange Press, 1983), 15.

Another elder, the oldest, comes forward and cuts the dog in half. Many goats, sheep and bulls are slaughtered for the warriors. No woman is allowed around. All the meat is roasted over the fire and consumed. Nothing is left, it is men's food. The two sides do not eat separately, but mix freely with each other. This is the climax of the reconciliation ceremony. This reconciliation ceremony was intended to restore peace love and harmony, among the community members. The ceremony is also to educate the young men on the effects of war, to bring healing to all bitterness, anger, so that peace, good relationship and forgiveness may prevail among the conflicting parties. Once Reconciliation is done it restores liberation of oneself and incorporates one in the community.

### 3.3

#### **The Misdeeds.**

In the Luo culture, one is expected to live according to the customs and tradition of his or her people. This is not only to foster order and harmony in the society, but also to fulfill religion obligation. Given that, the Luo religious belief is enshrined in and expressed through their customs and traditions. Many of the Luo customs obligations are expressed in formed of taboos in which no one is to go against otherwise one is to experience a severe ancestor retribution upon him/her.

Going against taboo is the greatest misdeed in the Luo culture. These are the taboos or misdeeds that call for Reconciliation just to mention few.

**Incest**

**Fight between the Husband and Wife.**

**Murder**

**Suicide.**

**Tingo lee (carrying of axe bitterly to fight).**

**Kuongruok (Emotional swearing).**

After presenting some misdeeds, we shall only select few misdeeds and give the corresponding reconciliatory procedures. In the Luo culture, before the ceremony of reconciliation takes place, there must be identification of misdeeds. This is the basic foundation that calls for reconciliation and determines the nature of reconciliation that will corresponds to the act committed.

Reconciliation is one of the pillars or corners-stones for stabilities, progress and, conducive and real human realization in the Luo society (community). Living in the community meant that disputes are unavoidable, it is the maximum penance (maximum penitential) for one to bear in the community life. Therefore, the value and spirit of reconciliation is always sought out to restore the unity of the family (community). For example, during my interview with a *Zambian* student here in Tangaza gave me a proverb that states: **“Bichi bikala pamo bishekana”** Which mean **“Trees that live together have friction”**. They know very well that life in the community is not always a paradise but that problems among the people are possible. In addition to this the Luo are aware of the destructive consequences of sin. A person who has committed experience conflicts and pain. Therefore, for the sake of peace and harmony they are to look for effective and constructive resolutions to conflicts.

To affirm this, an elder of Boro clan Mzee Lando stated that:

“A Luo does not see the conflict between two of their members as a slight matter or private affair of the two. They believe that doing so

will cost them so dearly. Therefore no dispute, difference or offense is too hard to be forgiven no matter how “hot” it may be”.<sup>19</sup>

### **3.4. Management of Conflicts.**

#### **3.4.1 Agents (Elders)**

Among the Luo, when two people have seriously drifted apart from each other the community has to look for reconciliation. It is usually headed by an elder. The elder is the responsible person who presides and leads the reconciliation ceremony. Among the Luo before one is entrusted with this responsibility. There are particular qualities an elder ought to possess.

Elders play a great role in determining and sharing the destiny of the society. Their length of life is believed to have been furnished with experience of life and insights into the ways of human beings. The society looks at them as people of wisdom and the custodians of culture. They can lead the society in the right direction. Elders have a key role of reconciling members in the society and the community respects them and considers them as instruments of peace in the society.

#### **3.4.2 Qualities of Elders ( Jodongo)**

The Luo basically understand an elder to be a married man who has a family and a homestead. A bachelor can not preside over any ceremony. This why the Luo say

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<sup>19</sup> Lando Rarando. (See Page 68).

“Musimba kata iriek manadi singeyo ango which means: However much intilligent Abachelor is he still regarded as nothing inthe society”.<sup>20</sup>

As P. N Wahege clarifies this further when he mentions; “that elderhood is not a thing of one day, it is a process which entails diverse rituals between”.<sup>21</sup>

Therefore, elders are the servants of the people who reconcile and unite members in the society. As servants, elders bear the enslaving burden of the whole community by the way they serve. In that way they liberate the people for righteousness and authentic Luo way of living. In this sense they stand for unity, peace and uprightness among the people. Anything that militates or disrupts harmony must be fought against vigorously.

Elders are called in Luo term “*Jodongo or jokom oganda*”. They are the peace lovers (**OGAYE**) coolers of tempers wherever tension arises. The elders are moved by the desire for the truth. Therefore, they struggle hard to establish it as they listen to the case at hand and make their ruling according. As one elder told the writer that when the elders discover the conflicting information thus making it difficult for them to establish the truth the presiding elder calls for “**MBIR**” known as sacred pot. The elders then order the two to carry it while saying this words **if what I am saying is not true let this pot search my heart**. “It is believed that upon carrying the pot the innocent will be safe

<sup>20</sup> Ongalo Achayo, ( See Page 68).

<sup>21</sup> P. N. Wachege , Jesus Christ Our Muthamaki, (Ideal Reader) (Nairobi: Phoemix Publisher 1992), 17.

While, the liar will be affected. The elders then establish the facts and make their ruling justly".<sup>22</sup>

The Luo elders know well what the society expects from them as reconcilers. Therefore, they try all they can to display fairness to both sides and impartiality to any. They are judges who are good listeners who give fair chances to both the accused and the offended without favouritism. As Wachege says "that the effort to bring peace, calmness and harmony to the community. Elders exercise their responsibilities with prudence, integrity wisdom and detachment".<sup>23</sup> When aggression is involved and violence has erupted, the elders act like cool water to extinguish the burning tempers.

Maturity, shrewdness, knowledge in customs and tradition, tolerance, honest, sincerity and humility are indispensable qualities for an elder in the Luo community. This requires that an elder excels in virtue, sanctity and goodness in the community. This connotes a high degree of human maturity in his behaviours and approach to life. Besides this an elder is expected to ponder upon things before speaking them using wisdom in all he says or does. He is the one who knows how and when to speak, calculate his words and knows what to say and when to say it. He is expected to be a well balanced person who has succeeded to integrate all the elements of human existence. Finally, because of these qualities, the Luo elders are respected, loved and looked upon as true reconcilers in the community. Wherever any of them appears in a ceremonial gathering he is received with honor, respect and reverence.

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<sup>22</sup> Odhiambo Oriaro (See Page 68).

<sup>23</sup> P.N Wachege, Op. Cit., 32.

In the previous section, we talked of reconciliation as the effort of helping the individuals who have fallen out with each other to once, more develop confidence and trust in their relationship. We also found out that guiding two individuals who had developed bitter hatred for each other to a point where they can once move encounter each other in love and trust is a difficult task and sometimes very painful. But, for the sake of peace and harmony in the community, the elders are ready to do it.

Therefore, in this section, it would be impossible to describe all the different reconciliatory procedures adopted by the Luo community. We shall choose four to illustrate how the Luo go about reconciling members of their communities who have fallen out with one another.

**1. Fight between the Father and son.** If a son challenges his father and throws him down, it is considered a very grievous misdeed. A son must ever obey and respect his father. The action is called "Mumma" (an abominable act) it brings a fatal sickness known as "chira" the effect is death and transmission of it to his children. It becomes sinohonoho (recurring event). If there is no immediate reconciliation the offended father consults a local herbalist on what to do. On the day of reconciliation the herbalist is directed to the circle of the elders gathered around the village tree.

The disrespectful boy is pushed into the center of the circle in the presence of all his agemates. He is publicly humiliated and warned never to repeat the offence. The boy must promise to respect his father in the future. The herbalist also offers advise to the boy on how to relate with his father in certain cases. The two then come forward to drink

“**manyasi**” (some liquid made from leaves) in the same calabash as a sign of unity and restoration of the lost relationship. There follows the sprinkling with water, a symbol of cleansing. A big meal comes next to conclude the ceremony. The meal is considered the climax of the rite and as a symbol of welcome, forgiveness and love.

**2. The Fight between Husband and Wife.** Wife - beating is not an uncommon phenomena among the Luo. If out of anger a wife removes her inner pant (siruache maiye) and hits her husband while swearing bitterly saying in these words:

“Ka an nyangane

If I am the daughter of so and so.

Ok in chak ininndie e bamba.

Never will you have any sexual intercourse with me”.<sup>24</sup>

This act is considered very destructive. The husband is to snatch the pant immediately from his wife, keep off from any sexual encounter, send the wife a way for a while because she is still unclean and will continue infecting the husband (**Podi ogak**) for as long as a reconciliation ceremony has not been conducted. The wife is to bring Rombo (lamb) from her home. The in-laws must come to witness the ceremony.

Before the whole assembly, the woman is summoned mercilessly. The woman's pant is burnt and the ashes mix with the manyasi. The wife and the husband are sprinkle with water which is done with special leaves know as owin win ( it is medicinal leaf) then drinking of medicine (manyasi). The lamb for the ritual is brought forward and is

<sup>24</sup> Adhambo Nyaowila. (See Page 67).

slaughtered by the herbalist. Then eating follows where the whole community is involved.

**3. Holding the Axe as a weapon to fight.** This is destructive to the extent that several people can die. Therefore, an elder comes to preside over the purification ritual for the conflicting parties. The elder starts with scrutiny. The scrutiny is meant to help the two to acknowledge their faults so that they can genuinely ask for pardon from each other and from the community. The conflicting parties are also given opportunity to express their bitter feelings against each other. The elder then tells the man; **“Wuonya nyadhi kik wawinj lweny kendo, wachni orum, kue ema obedie”**. That means let us not hear any conflict among you let only peace to dwell amongst you. The log of the axe is burnt and the ashes are mixed with the traditional medicine which is bitter to symbolize the bitter quarrel and the painful sacrifices the two have to make in forgiving each other. The two are then given manyasi in a calabash to drink. Hand- shaking follows to show that they are now reconciled. Then follows by meal sharing. This marks the end of their conflicts. For the first time, the two will end their conflict. They are also accepted back into the community.

**4 Suicide:** This act is abominable and transmitted or inherited. Therefore the Luo cannot tolerate it. The person attempting to commit suicide is to appear before the village assembly. He is summoned strongly. The tree is uprooted and nothing of it remains. The rope used must be burnt. The victim is given traditional medicine to drink and a cock is then slaughtered for a common meal.

Looking at the corresponding reconciliatory procedures to the misdeeds committed, we would like to present the whole procedure in summary. The Reconciliatory procedure among the Luo has the following steps.

### **1. Assembly:**

Reconciliation among the Luo is never private. It is a public affair because of its formative aspect. Those who are involved are **Jodongo (Elder)**, **Jamanyasi (Herbalist)**, **Jaketho (offender)**, **Ngamaokethini (offended)** and the community.

### **2. Settling of dispute:**

It is the elders who call together two parties involved in dispute and the whole community to witness. The victim is summoned strongly and made to confess publicly and promise never to repeat the action. Here the offender expresses his or her feelings (Remorse) to the one offended. The elders then accept and forgiveness is given on behalf of God, the ancestors and those present.

### **3. Shaking of hands:**

The two parties ( the offenders and the community) express their willingness to restart the relationship and embracing each other. Shaking hands is always symbolic and it manifests peace and acceptance of each other.

### **4. Cleansing:**

This ritual is done by sprinkling of water mixed with herbs on the victims.

## **5. Sharing of meals:**

Once all the above rituals have been fulfilled, a traditional meal is served. It is always a white chicken or lamb. The shared meal is the synthesis of restoration of the relationship which had been cut off by the sin of the persons involved. It was the symbol of welcome, unity, love and reconciliation. Nobody can eat with an enemy or when one is still angry. The ceremony is concluded by dancing, singing and rejoicing and beating of drums. It is really a big celebration of welcoming one back into the community.

## CHAPTER FOUR

4.0

### RECONCILIATION IN THE SCRIPTURES

#### PART I

4.1

#### The Old Testament

Reconciliation "is not just one aspect of salvation, it is its heart".<sup>25</sup> It is the core of harmony and mutual existence between the Supreme Being and the human persons. In the Old Testament a number of words are used in reference to reconciliation. These are words like; atonement, covenant, election, grace, justification, righteousness and the forgiveness of sins. Among these, covenant is the one word that we will take as having direct reference to reconciliation in the Old Testament. It entails harmony and agreement between God and His people. We also find that the prophets clearly understood that God Himself came to act on the human heart in order to renew His covenant.

Reconciliation lies at the end of a way of conversion because God's faithfulness does not fail, thus forgiveness exists in God before we asked God for it. Reconciliation in the Old Testament is marked "by hope, trust, change of heart and forgiveness".<sup>26</sup> In Ezekiel, God has said, I do not want the death of a sinner, but that he may turn from his wickedness and live" (Ezekiel 18:23).

Reconciliation is used in the Old Testament to mean the final or last and cohesive act by which the original relationship between God and man is re-established. This act is manifested in the assurance by means of the word of God that Yahweh will once again be Israel's God and Israel once again His people. Thus, reconciliation "is the end result of

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<sup>25</sup> Philippe Beguerie and Claude Duchesneau, How to Understand the Sacraments, (London : Scm Press, Ltd, 1991), 24.

<sup>26</sup> Richard Gula, M., To Walk Together Again: The Sacrament of Reconciliation, (New York: Paulist Press, 1984), 16.

the process of re-establishing the broken relationship".<sup>27</sup> It is clear that it is Yahweh who appears as the one who initiates and brings about what is implied in the expressions about expiation, the forgiveness of sins and atonement.

We have certain texts in the Old Testament that manifest that reconciliation is the process of re-establishing a broken relationship between God and man. In these texts, we come across certain persons that have played important mediating roles in re-establishing peace and harmony out of a broken relationship between God and man. One example is the intercession of Abraham and Abimelech and his house (Gen. 20:17) and also the intercession of Moses (Ex 9:27ff, 33ff 10:16ff). Also the most impressive figure in the Old Testament is the servant of Yahweh in Isaiah 53, who takes upon himself the guilt of all. Hence to summarize, "Reconciliation is the process of re-establishing a broken relationship (covenant) between God and man that includes the removal of guilt and punishment consequent of sin".<sup>28</sup>

#### 4.1.2

#### The New Testament

In the New Testament the idea of reconciliation can be traced in these gospel texts; (Matthew 5:23, 6:14-15) (Luke 6:36-38, 15:11-24, 23:34) (Mark 11:25). Lk 15:11-24, tells us that forgiveness exists in God before we have asked God for it. We can see this from the parable of the prodigal son, where the father waits each day for his absent son to return. But the joyful reunion took place after the son had set off for home to his father.

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<sup>27</sup> Johannes Bauer, *Encyclopedia of Biblical Theology*, Vol. 2. (London : Sheed and Ward 1982). 730.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 732.

In the New Testament, we have a deep understanding of reconciliation in Pauline writing. The theme of reconciliation is for example in (2Cor 5:18-20) (Col 1:20,22) (Romans 5:10). In the theme of saint Paul says that when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him by the death of His son, we go so far to make God our boast through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

Therefore, the New Testament gives us the idea of reconciliation which finds its expression in the mutual hostility and alienation under the law, the power of sin and disobedience (Rom 8:7) and estrangement of man from God (Eph 2:11,12). Hence, in his great love (Rom 5:5-8, Eph 2:4) God has opened a way for many to get out of this hopeless situation. This is fulfilled in Christ event, in the death and resurrection of Jesus, thus God has reconciled the world and humankind to himself and established peace (Rom 5: 1, Eph 2:15) removed hostility (Rom 5:10, Eph 2:14) and saved sinners from His anger (Rom 5:9). Thus, the death of Jesus on the cross brought about the reconciliation of human beings with God, and opened up to them the way to the father and access to grace in order to be imbued with the spirit of life giving.

## **PART II**

### **4.2.0 Theology of Reconciliation in the Church**

From the early beginning of the Church, there was a strong mutual influence on the sacrament of forgiveness based on the death of Christ. By understanding His death, which Jesus communicated to His apostles, Jesus gave Himself because He saw it as the way to rescue us from sin and inviting us (Christians) to do the same for one another.

By Jesus' death, the father has shown his love and mercy by reconciling the world to Himself in Christ and by making peace for all things on earth and in heaven crowned in the blood of Christ on the cross. The Son of God made incarnated and lived among people in order to free people from the slavery of sin and to dwell in his wonderful light. Jesus therefore began His work on earth by preaching repentance and saying "Turn away from sin and believe the good news" (Mk 1:15).

This invitation to repentance had often been promulgated by the prophets, to prepare the hearts of people for the coming of the kingdom through the voice of John the baptist who came "preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins" (Mk1:14).

This call to repentance does not only compel people to abandon their sins and turn wholeheartedly to the Lord but also a welcoming gesture of sinners to be reconciled with the father. Moreover, by healing the sick Jesus signified His power to forgive sin. Jesus died for our sins and rose again for our justification. After His resurrection, Jesus sent the Holy Spirit upon the apostles, empowering them to forgive or retain sins (Matthew 16:9) and sending them to all people to preach repentance and the forgiveness of sins in His name. This reveals to us that Jesus gave to His apostles and their successor's power to forgive sins. Christ instituted in His Church the sacrament of reconciliation.

Therefore, the faithful who fall into sin after baptism may be reconciled with God and renewed in grace. The church possesses both water and tears the water of baptism and the tears of penance.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Le'once Hamelin, Reconciliation in the church, (Minnesota: the liturgical Press, 1980), 73.

Reconciliation as such, includes the forgiveness of sins and becoming one with Christ and with one another, sons and daughters of the father who have entered into a new way of life. Reconciliation is a process that comes first from God. But it also then requires our co-operation and acceptance of God's love. Thus human mind and heart should embrace the father's loving plan to draw all humankind into unity through the saving work of Christ. In the Sacrament of Reconciliation "the faithful obtain from the mercy of God pardon for their sins against him and at same time they are reconciled with the church which they wounded by their sins and which works for their conversion by charity, example and prayer".<sup>30</sup>

The administration of sacrament of reconciliation is the mission of the Church the church has the responsibility "to call people to faith and conversion to call believers to faith and penance".<sup>31</sup>

#### **4.2.1 Contrast between the Church and Luo Reconciliation**

The question we can ask ourselves is whether it is it possible to contrast a Christian Reconciliation and the Luo Reconciliation? The answer is Yes. Because all human beings have prior goals in life geared towards hamony, peace, relationship and union with God and other creatures. Thus to contrast the two will give us integrated analysis of the reconciliation that will be of great help and relevance to contemporary Luo Christians for the practice of faith.

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<sup>30</sup> Lumen Gentium 11.

<sup>31</sup> Sacrosanctum Concilium 9.

#### 4.2.2

#### Similarities

In the early church, there was practice of separating sinners from the community. Paul stated this in (1 cor 5: 1-5). The separation was done so that the sinners' spirit may be saved after repentance. Thereafter, the person should be received back and the community should reaffirm its love for the person (2 cor 2:5-11). In the Luo community, bad acts disrupt the normal life. One cannot participate in all the social and communal activities of the clan. Therefore, there was purification rite for immoral acts. These immoral acts can be equated with mortal sins which must be confessed to the priest who acts on on behalf of the church.

Another similarity is that the Catholic priest must be commissioned by the Church and is validly ordained for this task. He has a standing order among his faithful for the sacrament of confession. The Luo Elder is not an ordinary man who is simply picked. He is properly prepared and has testified in practical life that is worthy of the responsibility. Another element of similarity is the value of meal sharing which is equated with the Eucharist. Penance is a necessary preparation for the celebration of the Lord's supper. The faithful must examine their lives to see whether they are worthy of receiving the Eucharist Practically all Luo Reconciliation ceremonies end with a communal meal. The offender could not participate in the meal before purification ritual symbolised by the sprinkling of water. This reality is present in the Catholic Church that the penitent could not participate in the Eucharist before confession of sins committed and absolution.

Church penance, in the early Church, included inflicting of pain and excommunication. According to the Luo, once one is in a state of serious sin the community must seek possible ways and means for purification.

While administering the sacrament, the Catholic priest does follow a systematic order which sometimes appears mechanical without interior conviction. In the Luo rite, there is no fixed formular. All is left for the elder to organise according to the situation, the nature of offence, the community and its relevance to the local community.

The traditional Luo elder is not bound by any law to keep the knowledge gained at a previous confession. In case of doubt on his ability and competence he could give some cases he has handled in the past in order to justify his position. In the Catholic Church, the clergy is bound by canon law which states that a priest must never betray a penitent in anyway. If he does, the faculty may be withdrawn by the local ordinary (Can. 983) seal of confession.

In the Luo reconciliation both the offender and offended must be present at the reconciliation. In the church, we find that the Christians who are involved in a sinful act go separately to reconcile with God. For the Luo, both are to be present in order to share the guilt of each other. The two come to be absolved together.

Another difference is that the confessor of the Catholic Church uses words to absolve while the Luo essentially used water to sprinkle as final absolution. But words of caution form an important part of reconciliation.

This sacrament is the most misunderstood of all the seven sacraments, because there are preconceived ideas – prejudices which are like barriers that block many Catholics from approaching Jesus and his healing power through the sacrament. If we can only identify what these difficulties (challenges) are and find out for ourselves how we can overcome them, then we can approach Jesus much more easily through confession.

a) The first challenge is **self pride and negative influence** of Catholics from other churches, who have different theology and do not make use of confession the way Catholics do. Other Churches do not seem to understand the importance of going personally to a priest and, with a contrite heart openly confess one's sins. They think going to a priest is degrading oneself to a human being who is vulnerable to sins. As one of the youth from upper hill parish (DON BOSCO) expressed to the writer; "Why do you go to a priest for confession, instead of God? You do not need to do that. Just say sorry to Jesus in your heart and continue praising the Lord".<sup>32</sup> We also find that some Catholics are not grounded and knowledgeable in the church doctrine and when they are approached by Protestants they do not seem to know how to answer and defend their Catholic faith.

b) **Guilty feelings:** The guilt complex afflicts each one of us every time we do something bad. This is a strong feeling of shame and recurring accusation of oneself. There is persistent shame and guilt in the inner self. Thus, we close ourselves and as a result, we find it hard to open ourselves to another person or to a priest during confession.

c) **Intellectual Fantasy:** This imparts confusion in the mind of people and gives improper way of interpreting and understanding sin. To have the proper state of mind to

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<sup>32</sup> Poline Ngina (See Page 68).

say words of repentance is not easy, because one believes he/she has intellectual resolutions in herself/herself. We deceive ourselves because of knowledge and we remain in state of sin and closing our eyes to our self ability. What comes is a drive towards the pagan way of life. This was confirmed to us by Clementina Achieng when she said:

I am able to live on my intellectual ability and I have all answers to my problems. I do not need anybody's mind for my life.<sup>33</sup>

**d) Bad habits:** This is another obstacle to the sacrament of reconciliation for the younger and older Catholics. It prevents people from reaching out to Jesus and His love, because of the problem of committing a sin over and over again. People are tempted to ask; "What is the point in asking forgiveness for something which I keep doing repeatedly?"

**e) Indirect violation of seal of confession:** Some Church ministers take advantage of they hear in the confessional to prepare sermons. This hurts one who had confessed his/her sins. They often think that the priest is talking about them. "This makes the penitent not to go again for the sacrament of confession. One feels demoralize and loses faith in sacrament".<sup>34</sup>

**f) Lack of moral credibility from the Church Ministers:** The Christians come closer to Christ by the moral authority from their spiritual leaders. One Christian mentioned to writer that unity in worship also depends on how a Church minister carries himself among his faithful. She went further to say that "however much one prepares a nice meal

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<sup>33</sup> Clementina Achieng (See Page 67).

<sup>34</sup> Jacinter Wairimu (See Page 69).

but the plates are dirty the desire to such a meal is dead".<sup>35</sup> She implied that first the exterior behaviour attracts and wins faith and confidence of people in the sacrament of confession and the priest.

**g) There is also a problem of catechetical teaching about the moral conscience and about sin:** Many of the faithful have an idea of sin that is not based on the gospel but on common convention of culture in what is socially acceptable".<sup>36</sup>

This problem is still mentioned by the old Christians that in order to be seen as a good Christian, "one had to go for regular confession and to be able to recite a list of transgressions that sounded appropriate to confessional yet one lacked interior conviction".<sup>37</sup>

Going to confess sins to the priest sometimes creates uproars in certain families, village or clan from where the penitent comes from. The family members question the validity of the sacrament of confession in the church. They do ask "How can one go to the priest to confess some sins which are grave in the family or clan, which have not been solved within. One respondent asked; "Suppose he/she meets the person he/she had wrong on the way from the confessional, will she/he react if attacked"?<sup>38</sup>

According to the Luo understanding of sin, they believe that there are particular sins no matter whether one goes to a priest to confess, the community still feels that the person is not yet cleansed, unless it is done in their traditional way. Because if something

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<sup>35</sup> Teresia Nyaguthi (See Page 68).

<sup>36</sup> John Paul II, "Rediscovering the Sacrament of Reconciliation", In *Origins* Vol 30, No 43 12, April 2001.

<sup>37</sup> Monika K. Hellwig, *Sign of Reconciliation and Conversion*, (Wilmington: Micheal Glazier, 1982), 11.

<sup>38</sup> Joseph Kwengu. (See Page 67).

happens to the person, his/her children or any relatives. This is why people will still refer to the past incident if misfortune occurs. The family members will say it happens because he/she never fulfilled or performed the traditional ritual.

For example, a Luo widow confessed to me that she had to perform the death rituals including being “inherited” because of the fear of repercussions on her children. It is through performing traditional rituals that she is reconciled with the Luo ancestors and dead husband otherwise she risks experiencing bad happenings to herself and to her children”.<sup>39</sup>

Another obstacle to the sacrament of confession is on a non Luo Priest. The Luo people wonder how such a priest can absolve sins that he does not understand their nature, impact on the victim and the community? They argue that a Catholic priest should only come in to absolve once purification ritual have been performed in the village. “This will make sense to them and respect the task of a priest as the final reconciler agent between God and human persons”.<sup>40</sup>

Another obstacle to forgiveness is **Power**. This is the sense of feeling that we need to hold something against someone else. One assumes some kind of position of superiority and saying sorry to subjects is a weakness”.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Awino Nyasrek, ( See Page 67).

<sup>40</sup> Nyaruoth, (See Page 68).

<sup>41</sup> Joshua Randago, (See Page 69).

Having seen some challenges the Church is facing with regards to the sacrament of reconciliation, we as the agents of evangelization, are entitled to look for possible suggestions which can be relevant and meaningful. Therefore, in this section, we are going to suggest some practical lines of action to be taken by the Church in trying to redress and cultivate the spirit of interest towards the sacrament of confession.

First reconciliation is a gift from God, the church in Africa should also make it a point as a community to pray over conflicts, hatred and war situations. We should pray to the spirit of the living God to fall a fresh upon His creatures; to recreate a new society; to terminate the fire" of the devil burning in human kind and enkindle the light of his spirit. This is emphasized by St. Paul "if anyone is in Christ, he or she is a new creation, the old has passed away, behold the new has come (2 Cor 5:17ff).

a) **Dialogue: A way to Reconciliation:** In the context of Luo community (Africa), the right path to a new society in which justice, reconciliation and peace will prevail among all the people must include the path of dialogue: this promotes understanding and harmony among tribal groups, in families and schools. This can be effective if and only if people embrace with openness and sincerity. Those involved will be able to let go the past, to live the present and open to the future so that forgiveness can be procreated and extended to all communities in our society. It is only through dialogue that we are able to stand and address issues that are a threat to human harmony and to proclaim the demands of justice and denounce injustices. Thus dialogue promotes co-operations, so that through mutual respect all will be able to work for justice, reconciliation and peace, which will

lead to building a society of brothers and sisters who have and care for each other indiscriminately.

**b) Formation of the small Christian communities:** In order to achieve a good reconciliation, the Christians should take a deep root in small Christian communities. It will be much easier for the Christian members to sort out and settle their differences in the convenient times. Look at the needs and improve their relationships with each other. Thus the Christians will be able to achieve the sense of unity, responsibility and understanding among themselves.

**c) Formation of practical justice and peace commissions:** All the Christian should be practical and committed. This is not a responsibility of one section of certain people but a collective responsibility. At the formal level it should be composed of persons of high moral behaviour, professionally gifted to give practical highlights. The commission should be capable of establishing an effective dialogue with persons at the family, clan, schools or institutions levels based on common good and detect everything that can wound justice and endanger the internal and external peace at tribal, institutions (schools and colleges) and the nation. Through this commission, the Church and society will find concrete means to attain adequate solutions for each analysed situation any community and country. Thus in this way, “the Church would join Christ in breaking down every dividing wall to our human wholeness and the fullness of life”.<sup>42</sup>

**d) Actualisation of Social Commission:** Once the social commission is in effective operations in terms of offering pastoral services to faithful. In this way, the church will be able to encourage collaboration with other churches to condemn immoral acts and

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<sup>42</sup> Robert, A Evans & Alice Frazer Evans, Human Rights: Dialogue Between the First and Third World (New York: Orbis Books, MaryKnoll, 1983), 247

injustices. Thus the church will achieve a step in "restoring justice, peace and reconciliation in human relations".<sup>43</sup>

c) **Educational programmes and formation of conscience:** The church should continue to implement balanced and objective educational programmes to help orient, inspire and stimulate people's consciences through organisation of seminars, symposia and usage of mass media from the grass root levels. In this way the individuals and communities will be conscious of justice, unity and become advocates of reconciliation and peace in their daily living.

Another suggestion for practical reconciliation that will lead to walking together again in a reconciled way of life is the way we think about our offenders.

"Thus, if it is true that how we feel is influenced by how we think, then when two people separate, their reunion will be as good as the thoughts each had about the other while they were apart. The first healing of hurt must take place in the heart".<sup>44</sup>

The next suggestion for a peaceful reconciliation in our Christian faith is the cultivation of the practice of "**letting go**". This word appears to be hard, we always hang on. We do not want to let go. Some see it as a human weakness. Letting go should not be confused with forgiving and forgetting. Forgiveness has to be seen within the context of letting go.

Richard Gula has rightly said that: forgetting is like pressing the erase button on the computers or giving a command "delete all". Erasing and deleting may be proper functions for machines, but not for people. For

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<sup>43</sup> Josph Gremillion, The Gospel of Peace and justice, (New York : Orbis Books. Maryknoll, 1976), 452.

<sup>44</sup> Richard M. Gula, Op. Cit, 26.

us, the past must be reworked, not erased. To erase memory is to lose a rich source of meaning for one's life.<sup>45</sup>

Therefore letting go will bring a healthy healing in the mind and heart. One will be able to recollect, to see a new and reintegrating the past into ones self-understanding with an acceptance that sets each one free.

Another suggestion for a true Christian reconciliation is ability to **recognise and value the good in others**. This will make us overcome gradually in ourselves hatred, jealousy, power and superiority over others, and letting go. Letting go is the beginning of conversion which enables us to live by hope, in trust and appreciation of the goodness in others. Conversion will make our hearts on God and living all things into communication with God, Thus, we shall be able to walk together in a reconciled way.

In his of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2001 address, Pope John Paul II said that "Catholics should not think they can do without the sacrament of penance simply by confessing their sins to God".<sup>46</sup> The Pope insisted that Christ established the sacrament and told his apostles to forgive sins in His name. Catholics should not be influenced by what others think of the sacrament of reconciliation.

Concerning the priests as ministers of the sacrament, they are called upon to be judges, doctors and teachers on behalf of the Church. "A priest cannot propose his own personal morality or his own opinions in the confessional, but the Church's authentic teachings".<sup>47</sup> A priest has a duty to create time for penitents and to hear confessions with patience. The purpose is not simply to help the penitent revisit the past but "to promote

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 26.

<sup>46</sup> John Paul II, *Origins*, Op. Cit 687

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 687.

environment of humility and trust in God's mercy. All the ministers of reconciliation should show ability of welcoming, to be good listeners, good moral behaviours and engage in dialogue together with their ready accessibility".<sup>48</sup>

Another suggestion worth noting from the Luo culture is the involvement of the community in the reconciliation ceremony. For the Luo, nobody lives in isolation. Life is seen and lived in terms of relationship. Life is shared and it is through the community that one gets identification, belonging and security. Therefore reconciliation is not a private affair but a collective responsibility that is projected toward peace, because peace is life for the Luo. To confirm the importance of community involvement in the reconciliation procedures, Pope John II stated that:

"The sacrament of reconciliation forms part of the structure of communion which is the mark of the church. Sin itself cannot be properly understood if it is viewed in a purely "private" way. Forgetting that it inevitably affects the entire community and lowers the levels of holiness within it".<sup>49</sup>

In the Luo community, we find that individual "confession" is a practice of individualistic western society. "In the Luo society, it is more appropriate to emphasize the sacrament of reconciliation as a communal experience with occasional general absolution".<sup>50</sup>

Sometimes it is absurd to find a Catholic Christian rushing to a priest for confession before sorting out and settling disputes, misunderstandings in the family and

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 689.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 687.

<sup>50</sup> Joseph Healey and Donald Sybert, Towards an African Narrative Theology. (Nairobi: Paulist Press, 199). 318.

at the village level first. It is only through solving domestic problems first that one will realize genuine reconciliation. The traditional Luo reconciliation procedures involve deep cultural roots of symbols which must be followed by a penitent, the offended and the community. For example in the Catholic Church we do see that the two people involved in a common sin do not go to the priest together. They go separately.

An important value worth mentioning is the meal aspect of the reconciliation ceremonies. At all levels of Luo reconciliation rites, the conclusion always include a fellowship meal in which all those present share. The reconciled parties eat together from one dish as a sign of further strengthening of the restored peace and love among them that come with reconciliation. As Magesa said that; the Luo fellowship meal has a similarity with the Eucharist”.<sup>51</sup> This practice of meal sharing can be rooted out also in the scripture in the parable of the prodigal son (Lk 15:11-32). The loving reconciliation between the father and son which is crowned with the feast of celebration and rejoicing. As Giriama people say that **to be means to live and “to live means to relate and to relate means eating together”**.<sup>52</sup> Thus eating together is the core of healing the damaged relationship, because enemies cannot eat together.

#### **a) A possible proposed Inculturated Luo Rite of Reconciliation in Kisumu Archdiocese.**

We suggest this rite to be conducted after every two to three months. This activity requires a whole day with enough time dedicated to it. The proposed rite of Luo-Christian reconciliation in the sacrament of forgiveness could begin first by settling disputes in the small Christian communities on their own on any day suitable to them before the

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 318.

<sup>52</sup> Gilbert Juma. (See page 67).

involvement of a priest. This would be followed by symbolic cleansing in which everyone washes each one's hands: That is the priest, penitents and fellow Christians.

After this cleansing, they should follow a solemn procession of return to God by the whole community led by the crucifix two burning candles, priests, the penitents and the rest of the faithful.

On arrival at the venue designed for this rite, the penitential service could begin with a strong introduction that attracts the attention of the faithful.

The liturgy of the word follows with the relevant symbols suitable to the occasion. A short homily relevant and practical to the ceremony enriched with Luo oral literature such as stories, parables sayings and riddles would come next. After this, the rite of exorcism during which the priest sprinkles the congregation with Holy Water, as was done with Manyasi in the Luo traditional healing, then renewal of baptismal promises with Luo content comes next. This may be followed by the veneration of the cross where the faithful could touch it as a sign of returning to God. This would then be followed with concluding a prayer. Individual confessions could follow after this. The priest should listen attentively to the penitents and offer some counselling according to the nature of sins committed. Incorporation of the celebration of the the sacrament of Eucharist is needed, so that Christ's table becomes a sacramental place to express deeply the Luo value of love, peace and reconciliation. Before the communion rite there must be exchange of the sign of peace which is the total union of oneself with others. This must have some Luo cultural expressions in jubilation like the traditional songs, dances, sigalagala (ululation) in any form. The exchange of white clothes and giving of "owinwin" leaf then followed by blessing with sprinkling of water on the congregation.

## **In Summary the Rite Involves**

1. Settling of disputes in the small Christian earlier.
2. Assembling and cleansing (washing of each other's hands with water) priest, penitents and Christians.
3. Solemn procession to the designated place for the celebration of the rite of reconciliation.
4. Introduction on the rite of reconciliation.
5. The liturgy of the word.
6. Homily
7. Rite of exorcism
8. Veneration of the cross
9. A prayer
10. Individual confessions
11. Eucharist - cerebration
12. Sign of peace
13. Traditional meal sharing (brought by penitents and Christians)
14. Exchange of white clothes and giving to each other a leaf (known as Owin Win)
15. Final cleansing and in form of sprinkling of water.

## Conclusion

In a nutshell, the reconciliation rite among the Luo is very formative and necessary for the continuation of good relationship with other communities or people they have come into conflict with. Reconciliation is a healing medicine to broken relationships between God and human beings.

As we have mentioned earlier, that there are persistent conflicts wars in the families, school, tribal borders. There is no way we can develop, plan and care for one another if human life is under tensions and threats. The only weapon to stop misunderstanding is the practice of reconciliation in our lives. By doing this, we become true disciples of Christ who told us to follow his commandment: "Love one another as I have loved you". (Jn 13: 34)

Therefore, we have to establish a ministry of reconciliation which is urgently needed to bring about the healing of humanity, the pursuit of justice and the telling of the truth. As Aylward Shorter says, "the success of reconciliation in traditional Africa rests entirely, as we have seen, on the common desire for peace. As general desire must be established which, can empower the agent of reconciliation. Reconciliation is not a gift which drops from the skies, or miracle that takes place against all expectation and desire".<sup>53</sup> The solution of the problems in Africa will be facilitated as soon as people when the church becomes aware of sins and plays a creative role in bringing about meaningful change from the heart. All people must become incarnate in the struggle for peace and harmony. Christ liberated man by becoming man and this way, brought about true reconciliation not only between God and man but also between man and man. All

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<sup>53</sup> Aylward Shorter, "Reconciliation In African Traditional Spirituality", In Tangaza Occasional Papers, No 4 Pauline Publications Africa, 1997. 14.

Christians are therefore called upon to preach the gospel of liberation from sins in order to become true reconciling agents in situations of conflicts. In any society, we find that a human person is only healthy if his or her heart is at peace. Therefore, it is the duty of an individual or community to pray amidst all these chaotic situations for harmony and stability.

In order to achieve reconciliation, we need to stand up for human rights, proclaim the demand of justice and denounce injustices. Hence, through the dialogue of action, we can try to remove the structures which promotes hatred, conflicts, instability and corrupting human mind with false doctrines.

We also noted that without the pain of abandoning the old life styles, mentality, thoughts, attitudes and prejudices, there can be no reconciliation, just as there can be no resurrection if there is no death in the first place. During a homily given by Archbishop Ndingi Nairobi, he said that: "Unless it pains us deep down in our hearts and letting go, we can not have a true reconciliation"<sup>54</sup>

Therefore, the oppressed and the oppressor must die to their thoughts and anger in order to be reborn in a reconciled way. This means that for reconciliation to take place the oppressor must cease to be oppressor and the oppressed must cease to be oppressed. Thus liberation will be achieved.

According to our findings, it is clear that reconciliation is difficult if one remains fixed in his/her thoughts and not ready to acknowledge his/her failures. Sin is a block in communication and blinds one from dwelling in the glorious reign of God. The Luo

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<sup>54</sup> Bishop Ndingi Homily 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2000 at Homily Basilica Nairobi.

people, see life in terms of mutual relationship and if there is sin one is cut off from the rest of the community. There is no way one can live a happy life in communion with ancestors, fellow human beings and God. The state of holiness is lost due to the influence of sin. Therefore, the Luo have to look for possible reconciliation rituals to restore peace and harmony in the community.

As the Church advocates for inculturation, it is a high time the Church in Kisumu Diocese to promote the need to identify the Luo values in reconciliation. We have also found that there are plenty of similarities between the Church and Luo traditional values that can be incorporated. This will make the liturgy to be understood and relevant to their culture. For example, the symbolic ritual of community involvement in reconciliation and communal sharing of a meal. These are worth incorporating into the liturgy of reconciliation.

For the Church in Africa to become truly the family of God, especially among the Luo people, the value of inculturation and true spirit of reconciliation should be taken into account very seriously. If we have a deep conviction of faith in God in spite of war, poverty, tribalism, nepotism and corruption, we can still have great signs of hope in the human goodness and hope in the human capacity to change and reconcile. Then in the end we can be proud to say we have completed well, we have finished the race, we have kept the faith (2 Tim 4:6-8).

By doing this, we shall become true reconcilers in a manner worthy of our call as children of God and live with one another in humility, gentleness, patience, bearing with one another through love and striving to preserve the unity of the spirit through the bond of peace (Ephesians 4:2-4).

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APPENDICES

Appendix A- Questionnaire

Dear Sir/ Madam.

I am carrying out a pastoral research on the Reconciliation among the Luo as a partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Arts (B. A.) in Religious Studies at Tangaza College - Catholic University of Eastern Africa. You are kindly requested to take part by answering the questions below. Your objectivity is needed and I promise to treat everything mentioned with the strictest confidentiality it deserves.

Name.....(optional)
Age.....
Sex.....
Occupation.....
Religion.....
Date.....

A PASTORAL QUESTIONNAIRE ON THE RECONCILIATION AMONG THE LUO OF KENYA

- Q. 1. Who are the Luo people of Kenya?.....
Q. 2. What kind of God do the Luo people believe in?.....
Q. 3. Is there any connection between the living and the dead among the Luo people?.....
Q. 4. What is the role of the ancestors in the Luo aspect of life?.....

- Q. 5. (a) Do the Luo have sacred places?.....
- (b) Name the Luo term for a sacred place.....
- (c) What are the functions of the sacred places?.....
- Q. 6. (a) Is there the idea of reconciliation among the Luo?.....
- (b) What is your understanding of Reconciliation?.....
- Q. 7. Do words like confession or penance have the same meaning with the reconciliation in the Luo culture?.....
- (b) Explain.....
- Q. 8. What is the Luo term/word for reconciliation?.....
- Q. 9. Is reconciliation considered important among the Luo?.....
- (b) Explain.....
- Q. 9. Is reconciliation considered important among the Luo?.....
- Q. 10.(a) Give the different types of reconciliation ceremonies among the Luo.....
- (b) In case the reconciliation move was not conducted, what are the consequences?.....
- Q.11. (a) Have you ever participated in the reconciliation ceremony?.....
- (b).Who are involved?.....
- Q. 12. (a) Who presides over a reconciliation ceremony?.....
- (b). Give the Luo term for the presider.....
- (c). What are the qualities of the presider?.....
- Q. 13. How is the offender treated in respect to the offense committed?.....
- .....

Q. 14. What materials are used during the ceremony?.....

Q.15.(a). Was there the idea of sharing a meal at the reconciliation ceremony?.....

.....  
(b). Give the significance of the meal.....

Q. 16. (a). How is the Luo reconciliation ceremony different from the one in the Catholic Church?.....

(b). Do you think the present way you celebrate reconciliation in the Catholic Church is meaningful to the Luo People? .....

(c)Explain.....

Q.17. Can you give some challenges the church is facing with regards to the sacrament of penance?.....

(b).What elements do you see in the Luo people that are important for inculturation of the sacrament of reconciliation?.....

## APPENDIX B – INFORMANTS.

List of some names of persons, and those who answered the questionnaires. These were conducted between May, June, July and August 2001.

Name	Occupation	Place of interview	Age	Date of interview
Achieng Clementina	Teacher	Ukwala	56	4/5/2001
Adhiambo Nyadeje	Teacher	Ukwala	57	4/5/2001
Adhiambo Nyakan	House Wife	Gem	60	6/5/2001
Adhiambo Nyaowila	House Wife	Gem	60	6/5/2001
Agilloh Paul	Head Teacher	Kamalunga	56	8/5/2001
Akelo Mathlida	An Ederly Lady	Uriya	65	12/5/2001
Akinyi Grace	Youth	Alego	30	12/5/2001
Anyango Catherine	Religious Sister	Mbaga	32	20/5/2001
Anyango Celine	Religious Sister	Mbaga	34	20/5/2001
Apiyo Benta	Religious Sister	Mbaga	48	24/5/2001
Aringo Margaret	Religious Sister	Mbaga	48	20/6/2001
Awino Mary	Religious Sister	Rangala	22	21/6/2001
Awino Miriam	Nurse	Yimbo	30	21/6/2001
Awino Nyasrek	Elderly Lady	Seme	60	24/6/2001
Awino Owila	Elderly Lady	Seme	65	24/6/2001
Juma Gilbert	Catechist	Seme	49	24/6/2001
Kajimba Oscar	Youth	Karungu	22	25/6/2001
Kwengu Joseph	Magistrate	Karungu	60	26/6/2001

Lando Rarando	Village Elder	Karungu	27	27/6/2001
Mbugua John	Youth	Karungu	25	28/6/2001
Mangit Raphael	Catholic Priest	Karungu	36	28/6/2001
Musanya Oriaro	Accountant	Masat	49	28/6/2001
Nduta Roseline	Youth	Masat	23	29/6/2001
Ngina Poline	Youth	Umine	20	1/7/2001
Nina Eunice	Catechist	Ukwala	50	2/7/2001
Nyaguthi Teresia	Catechist	Ukwala	51	2/7/2001
Nyayenga	Accountant	Ambira	45	3/7/2001
Nyaruoth	Nurse	Ugunja	42	3/7/2001
Oballa John	Catholic Priest	Kisumu	52	3/7/2001
Ochieng Bede	Catholic Priest	Sega	45	4/7/2001
Ochieng Gradus	Catholic Priest	Ukwala	52	4/7/2001
Oduol George	Catholic Priest	Alego	40	4/7/2001
Odhiambo Dominic	Retired Teacher	Ukwala	58	4/7/2001
Odhiambo Oriaro	Retired Security Officer	Masat	58	9/7/2001
Odhiambo Wadhai	Civil Servant	Masat	49	12/7/2001
Ogola Paul	Retired Officer	Nyaharwa	70	12/7/2001
Okeyo Augustine	Catechist	Ukwala	38	12/7/2001
Onditi John	Catholic Deacon	Awasi	29	14/7/2001
Ongalo Achayo	Village Elder	Karuoth	74	14/7/2001
Onyango Aloth	Village Elder	Kamalunga	75	14/7/2001

Omollo Joakim	Catholic Priest	Ukwala	56	16/7/2001
Omondi Nyakesa	Student	Ukwala	24	16/7/2001
Omondi William	Religious Brother	Sega	35	16/7/2001
Otieno Nyakesa	Student	Ukwala	26	20/7/2001
Otieno Lwande	Catholic Priest	Sega	56	20/7/2001
Owino Arende	Village Elder	Ukwala	80	25/7/2001
Owino Nicholas	Catholic Priest	Ukwala	38	26/7/2001
Owino Titus	Catechist	Simuru	62	25/7/2001
Owiyo John	Civil Servant	Siaya	40	29/7/2001
Raburu Nyarek	Catechist	Siaya	45	29/7/2001
Rabuogi Joseph	Religious Brother	Uwai	38	30/7/2001
Randango Joseph	Catechist	Uwai	60	2/8/2001
Ragondi Risper	Business Man	Alego	48	2/8/2001
Reri Peter	Religious Sister	Alego	32	2/8/2001
Reru William	Religious Brother	Nyamuot	31	2/8/2001
Ramuol Owino	University Student	Nyamuot	30	2/8/2001
Ramwulla Joseph	Religious Brother	Nyamuot	48	6/8/2001
Rateng John	Business Man	Karadolo	42	6/8/2001
Wadhai Jacklyne	Youth	Upperhill	18	20/8/2001
Wadhai Nyamuot	House Wife	Upperhill	52	20/8/2001
Wairimu Jecinter	Youth	Upperhill	20	20/8/2001
Wanjiru Margaret	Youth	Upperhill	19	29/8/2001
Wanzala Otieno	Religious Brother	Langata	30	29/8/2001

Wuoroya Joseph	Student	Langata	30	29/8/2001
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## APPENDIX C – LUO GLOSSARY

Awendo	-	Bird
Chiemo	-	Food
Chieng	-	Sun
Chira	-	Taboo
Chwir	-	Long rainy season
Dala	-	Home
Dholuo	-	Luo language
Guok	-	Dog
Jasihoho	-	A person with evil eye
Jodongo	-	Elders
Jokanyanam	-	People from the lake
Ketho	-	Sin/Evil
Kwe	-	Peace
Lee	-	Axe
Lek	-	Dream
Luwo	-	Follow
Lweny	-	War
Manyasi	-	Luo traditional medicine made from herbs and leaves
Masira	-	Abominable
Mbir	-	Luo pot for swearing
Mikayi	-	First wife
Min Pacho	-	Mother of homestead

Ngado	-	Cut
Ngamaokethni	-	Offended
Nyakalaga	-	Omnipresent
Obongo Were	-	Only one
Ogaye	-	Elders (Peacelovers/coolers of tempers)
Opon	-	Short rainy Season
Osimbo	-	Pillar
Piny	-	World
Rombo	-	Lamb
Ruoth	-	Chief/King
Sinohonoho	-	Re-curring event
Siruache Maiye-		Inner pant
Wuon Pacho	-	Father of homestead
Wuoyi	-	Son

# MAP OF UGENYA

