

TANGAZA COLLEGE

Catholic University Of Eastern Africa

Topic:
African Trinitology:
A Response to
Ethnocentrism in
Kenya.

Project submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Bachelor of Arts, Religious Studies.

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Excerpts

...the way we see and understand God, the absolute to which everything else is relative is the most fundamental notion in the human mind. Whether we are conscious of it or not, this will determine how we see and understand ourselves and everything around us, how we understand our world and how we shape our world. According as one finds a different notion of God, one finds a different form of society and a different kind of culture. In any particular age, therefore, the prevailing Christian understanding of God will attempt to shape the society of its time in accordance with this understanding. The age will reflect the understanding of God which it professes.

Thomas Marsh The Trine God: a Biblical, Historical, and the Theological Study, (Dublin: The Columbia Press, 1994), 184.

...the Synod Fathers first of all asked: "In a continent full of badnews, how is the Christian message 'Good News' for our people? In the midst of an all-pervading despair, where lie the hope and optimism which the gospel brings? Evangelization stands for many of those essential values which our continent very much lacks; hope, peace, joy, harmony, love and unity.


Ecclesia In Africa, n. 40.

the time for lies on this issue is over and an honest and open national discussion on ethnicity should take place.

Kiraitu Murungi, Ethnicity and Multipatism in Kenya, (Nairobi: Kenya Human Right Commission, 1995), 1.

DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that this long essay is my original work achieved through my personal reading, scientific research method and critical reflections. It is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of 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.

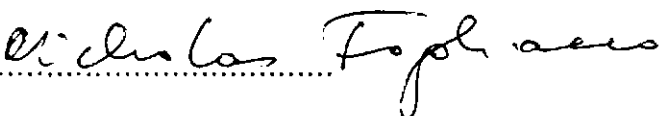
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APPROVAL

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

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Date.....*7/02/2001*

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Finally, it is with deep reverence that I profoundly acknowledge that my help is in the name of the Lord who made heaven and earth.

DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to to the loving memory of my Parish Priest and renowned theologian, Rev Dr Ikenga Metuh, who died in Ivory Coast in the plane crash of January, 2000.

Metuh, Adieu.

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INTRODUCTION

This essay sets out to achieve dual objectives. It serves the purpose of making the doctrine of the most Holy Trinity intelligible to Africans. This intelligibility lies in the essay's focus on the communitarian model of the Trinity, which evokes familiar communitarian sentiments among the Africans. The sentiment is deepened with the use of African communitarian categories like the ancestors and their descendants.

Besides the objective of intelligibility, the other objective is relevance. The essay seeks also to make the communitarian Trinity respond to a specific African problem, ethnocentrism. The relevance of the communitarian Trinity to the question of ethnocentrism makes the essay not just theoretical but also practical and thus dispels the abstract connotation that goes with the traditional doctrine of the Trinity.

Therefore, the goal of the essay is to demonstrate the intelligibility and relevance of the Christian doctrine of the Trinity to an African mindset.

The essay is presented in the methodology of liberation theology designated as pastoral cycle. The methodology begins with an observation and an analysis of the social situation, followed by an evaluation from the gospel point of view of the social situation, and ends with some plans of action(s) towards ameliorating the situation.

Chapter one of this essay tries to analyze the dynamism of ethnocentrism in Kenya. This analysis is presented in a socio-political frame such that it traces the evolution of ethnocentrism in the political history of Kenya. In this section of the essay my sources are both library and some fieldwork. I used some books, journals, and reports of researches especially from the Kenya Human Rights Commission resource center, Nairobi. I also tried to check out some bits of information I got from the library materials

by actually visiting some ethnic clash sites like Molo, Nakuru, and Likoni. At these places, with the help of the Secretariate of Catholic Justice and Peace of Kenya, I was able to interview some of the victims of these clashes. The facts in this chapter represents the fruit of these researches both in the library and in the field.

The second step in pastoral cycle methodology is the evaluation of the social situation in the light of the gospel. This second step is used in chapters two. While chapter one ends with the observation that the reflection on the implications of our belief in the doctrine of the Trinity could respond to ethnocentrism, chapter two exposes a nascent model of the Trinity ascribed as the communitarian model. In this chapter this model is presented and ethnocentrism evaluated from its perspectives.

The final step of the pastoral cycle is planning, the mapping out of courses of actions to combat the social malady. Chapter three of the essay is dedicated to this planning. The chapter advocates for a re-definition of the African concept of community using the trinitarian community as a model and goes further to suggest concrete ways of executing this plan through the declaration of Christ as the Ancestor of the Kenyan citizens, based on the trinitarian ancestral concept of the Trinity. On the trinitarian ancestral interaction is based the christological ancestral relationship to us which forms the point of the unification of the ethnic groups in Kenya. It is in this manner that an African trinitology will respond to ethnocentrism in Kenya. However, before delving into the essay proper, we will present a brief sketch of Kenya.

Kenya lies across the equator in east central Africa on the coast of the Indian Ocean. It is a moderate sized country with an area of 582, 650 square kilometers in which only 25 percent is inhabitable and the vast remaining 75 percent is either arid or

semi-arid.¹ Kenya has a population of 28.7million with an average annual increase rate of 3.4 percent. This population is a conglomeration of 64 ethnic groups ranging from small to large groups. The 1999 population census² puts the percentages of some of the groups as follows: Kikuyu 22 percent, Luhya 14 percent, Luo 13 percent, Kalenjin 12 percent, Kamba 11 percent, Kisii 6 percent, Meru 6 percent, Asian, European and Arab 1 percent and others 15 percent. In view of the diversity of ethnic communities in Kenya, Kenyans speak English language as the official language and Swahili as the national language. There is also a diversity of religions in Kenya. The religious distribution is: Protestants 46 percent, Roman Catholics 30 percent, Traditional religionists 6 percent, Moslems 16 percent and others 2 percent.³

Historically, paleontologists' researches show that human beings inhabited Kenya about 2 million years ago. The Arab seafarers established settlements along the coast and the Portuguese took control of the area in the early 1500. The largest group of the Kenyan ethnic groups, the Kikuyu, migrated to this region at about the 18th century. This whole area became a British protectorate in 1890; a crown colony in 1920 when it was ascribed as British East Africa. In this area, nationalist stirrings erupted in the 1940s and in 1952, when the famous Mau Mau movement rebelled against the colonial government.

Kenya became independent on December 12, 1963 under the leadership of Mzee Jomo Kenyatta. From 1964 to 1992, the Kenyan African National Union (KANU), first under Jomo Kenyatta and then under Daniel Arap Moi, ruled the country of Kenya as one-party state. It took demonstrations, riots and international pressure to get the

¹ Ministry of Planning and National Development, Population Census Atlas of Kenya, 1999, (Nairobi: Central bureau of Statistics, 2000), 5.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

government of Moi to repeal the one party state and accept multi-party elections in 1992. In the Republic of Kenya, there is a one-house National Assembly constituted by 188 members elected for five years by the universal suffrage, 12 nominated members by the president and 2 ex-officio members, to make a sum total of 202 members of Kenyan Parliament.

Among the many problems that besiege economic and political growth in Kenya, is ethnocentrism. Several authors and publications depict this reality.

“Intricately connected to most of the economic and political challenges and problems that Kenya faces today is the question of the place of ethnic groups”⁴ Atieno Odhiambo puts it that, “Ethnicity forms the strongest cleavages in the Kenyan society”⁵ Kiraitu Murungi writing on Multi-Partism in Kenya warns; “We cannot pretend that ethnicity is not an important factor in Kenyan politics. It is part of our historical and social reality.”⁶ He then concludes that “the time for lies on this issue is over and an honest and open national discussion on ethnicity should take place.”⁷

These statements bring us to the end of the introductory pages of this essay. We shall now delve into the essay proper.

⁴ International Commission of Jurists (Kenya Section), The Political Economy of Ethnic Clashes in Kenya, (Nairobi: Scan Communications, 2000), 12.

⁵ Odhiambo, A., and Siasa S., Politics and Nationalism in East Africa, 1919 – 1935, (Nairobi: Kenya Literature Bureau, 1981), 91 –148.

⁶ Kiraitu Murungi, Ethnicity and Multipatism in Kenya, (Kenya Human Right Commission, 1995), 1.

⁷ Kiraitu, ibid., 21

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 THE PHENOMENON OF ETHNOCENTRISM IN KENYA

In this chapter I will briefly define ethnocentrism and the related concepts, trace its evolution in the political history of Kenya and then evaluate the operational dynamics of this phenomenon

1.1 Definition of Terms

(i) **Ethnicity:** An ethnic group's perceived identity⁸ and that which pertains to such group, and its interaction with others. This identity can be formulated by seeing oneself and being seen by others as part of a group based on presumed ancestry, and sharing a common destiny.⁹ The common features which an ethnic group share could be racial, religious, linguistic, cultural practices, universe of meaning, occupational interests, regional interests and historical experiences. A combination of these features often marks the contents of such identity and solidarity. Therefore, ethnicity is natural and morally valueless. As a group's awareness of its identity, which evokes a deep sense of solidarity and cohesion, it is neither good nor bad, but it is the function of an ethnic group.

(ii) **Ethnic Group:** "A distinctive category of the population in a large society whose culture is usually different from its own."¹⁰ Members of such a group are, or conceive themselves to be, united by common ties of emotional bonds,¹¹ cultural heritage, race and nationality. In other words, whenever there is a group of people who share a common

⁸ International Commission of Jurists *ibid.*, 13.

⁹ W. Zenner, "Ethnicity" in *Encyclopedia of Cultural Anthropology*, ed. by D. Levison, and M. Ember, (USA: American Reference Publishing Company, 1991), 363.

¹⁰ H. Morris, "Ethnic Groups" in *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, ed. by D. Sillis, (N.Y.: The Macmillian Company and the Free Press), vols. 5 and 6: 167.

¹¹ T. Shibutani, and M. Kura, *Ethnic Stratification, a Comparative Approach*, (London: Macmillian Press, 1967), 47.

cultural identity and whose identity (way of life) distinguishes it from other groups or people in its vicinity, such a group is recognized as ethnic. The psychological aspect of this group, when it takes cognizance of this identity and distinction among others is ethnicity. The term “ethnic group” was incepted in anthropology in the 1950s as a substitute for words like “race” and “tribe” and as a synonym for “cultural group.” “Ethnic group” was substituted for “race” because of its association with Nazism, and the substitution for “tribe” sprang from the colonialist views of Africans as essentially different from Europeans.¹² This explicates Aiden Southall’s suggestion that “tribe is a conceptual tool, a crystallization at the wrong level, at worst a fabrication of a foreign observer.”¹³ I concur with him that the term and its derivatives be dropped from anthropological vocabulary when dealing with present communities which should be referred to as “ethnic groups.” Therefore in this paper I shall henceforth be using the term “ethnic group” in allusion to the same reality.

(iii) Ethnocentrism: The word “ethnocentrism” became a definite sociological concept in 1907 in the book Folkways written by sociologist William Graham Sumner. For Sumner it is an attitude, which views one’s own ethnic group “as the center of everything and all others are scaled and rated with reference to it.”¹⁴ As an emotional category, it finds expression in “a sympathetic awareness and approval of one’s fellows and their ways (the ‘syngenism’ of Gumpłowicz, the ‘we – feeling’ of Cooley, the ‘consciousness of kind’ of Giddings) and per contra, in a feeling of fear, suspicion and contempt toward outsiders and their ways.”¹⁵ In other words, in the concept of ethnocentrism we find an

¹² Zenner, *ibid.*,

¹³ A. Southall “The Illusion of Tribe,” in The Passing of the Tribal Man in Africa, ed. by P. Gutking (Leiden: Brill E.J., 1970), 32.

¹⁴ D. Levinson, “Ethnocentrism” in D. Levinson, and M. Ember, ed. *ibid.*, 404.

¹⁵ *ibid.*

attitude which projects one's own culture and members of one's own culture as superior to other cultures and the members of one's ethnic community as superior to the members of other communities. An attitude that passes irrational judgment on other cultures using one's own culture as the norm is also ethnocentric.¹⁶

Ethnocentrism as denoted above is a very human attitude towards other cultures. It could be found in some degrees in the interactions of societies and cultures. Usually, people in various cultures would describe their beliefs, customs, and behaviors in stereotypically positive terms like "man," "men of men," "first men," and "possessing the spiritual values of civilization." While the customs and beliefs of other cultures are denoted in stereotypically derogatory terms like "barbarians," "bohnunk," "chink," "nigger."¹⁷ Members of other groups who follow other codes are naturally perverse, immoral, savage or heathen and viewed with suspicion, hostility and contempt. Any difference, especially in culture, is rationalized as an evidence of the superiority of the "in group" and the inferiority of the "out group." Modern theories of racism, extreme nationalism, extreme patriotism, chauvinism, family pride, class-consciousness, and sectionalism are various forms of ethnocentrism.

The pejorative issue about ethnocentrism is not with the mere fact of preference for one's own culture but rather the prejudice in favor of one's own culture (either socially, politically, religiously and economically) to the denigration of other cultures, which are distorted, biased, subjected, estranged and persecuted. A religious group distinguishes its own members as "the faithful," the "true believers," "the chosen people," from "the infidels," "the heathens," and "the gentiles." So it is not so much the

¹⁶ D. Bidney, "Cultural Relativism" in D. Sillis *ibid.*, vol. 3 and 4: 546.

¹⁷ Murdock, *ibid.*

registering of cultural difference that is at stake, rather the tendency for cultural claims to be embedded in claims of superiority or incompatibility with respect to others.¹⁸

The rate and the intensity of ethnocentric sentiments by a group against another may vary according to the extent of cultural and linguistic affinities between them. In general, ethnic groups that are culturally and linguistically similar, that live near one another, and that interact regularly are less ethnocentric toward each other than are groups without such close ties.

In the moment of tension between cultures, ethnocentrism is expressed as mistrust, fear, and actions designed to limit contact with members of the other groups and to discriminate against them. In a critical conflict situation, "ethnocentrism is accompanied by xenophobia, discrimination, prejudice, physical separation of groups, and extreme negative stereotyping which could culminate in ethnic cleansing or ethnocide."¹⁹ This is the struggle of one group to exterminate another group, which they consider as opponents.

Ethnicity can be differentiated from ethnocentrism. Ethnicity is natural to us, but ethnocentrism is a perversion, an exploitation of the natural ethnic sentiments to the detriment of the society. Ethnocentrism is aroused when there is an exclusive concentration on the cultural differences among the ethnic groups in a specific society. This strengthens and intensifies the group's cohesion, incites survival instinct which surfaces in a cultural and economic competition among the groups. In this competitive atmosphere, each of the groups tries to assert itself either by striving to monopolize the

¹⁸ P. Simatei, "Ethnicity and Otherness in Kenya Cultures" in Ethnicity, Nationalism and Democracy in Africa ed. by B. Ogot (Kisumu: Institute of Research and Postgraduate Studies, Maseno University College, 1996), 51.

¹⁹ C. Govers, and H. Vermeulen, The Politics of Ethnic Consciousness, (US: St Martin Press, 1997), 87.

decision making system of the society, or by establishing its own culture as the prevalent one, or by appropriating to itself the lion's share of the resources.²⁰

Several theories can explain ethnocentric phenomena in Africa. However, three of these are prominent: primordialism, instrumentalism, and constructivism.²¹

For the primordialist, ethnocentrism is a natural consequence of ethnicity. Since ethnic differences are natural, the conflict that might erupt from them is intrinsically inevitable. This implies that the Maasai and the Kamba, because of the natural fact of their differences; ancestral, linguistic, and cultural, their encounter would necessarily not be friendly but acrimonious and antagonistic.

The instrumentalists conceive ethnocentrism as an instrument, a mechanism, and a political strategy by which some influential individuals of a group seek to achieve some desirable objectives. These objectives could be access to economic resources and other opportunities on a preferential basis confronted with competition for scarce resources.²²

For the instrumentalist, in Africa, the phenomenon of ethnocentrism has "little independent standing outside the political process in which collective ends are sought."²³

The constructivist school present ethnocentrism as "neither immutable or completely open."²⁴ It is rather a social construct engendered by the prevalent social political and economic forces at any given point in time. In other words, ethnocentrism is dynamically and significantly situational. This justifies the creation of the Kalenjin "as a

²⁰ Smooha, S., "Ethnic Relations" in The Social Science Encyclopedia, ed. by A. Kuper, and J. Kuper, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul 1985), 167.

²¹ M. Salih, and J. Markalis, Ethnicity and the State in East Africa, (Sweden: Elanders Gotab, Stockholm, 1998), 72.

²² International Commission of Jurists, (Kenya Section), ibid., 16.

²³ D. Lake, and D. Rothchild, The International Spread of Ethnic Conflicts, (N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1998), 6.

²⁴ Lake and Rothchild, The International Spread of Ethnic Conflicts, ibid.,

reaction to the situation at the time of formation.” This group was created as a forum to pursue the interests of the small ethnic groups in Kenya against the domination of the larger groups like Kikuyu and Luo.

Examining these theories against the historical background of ethnocentrism in Kenya, I will insist that no one of these theories can be taken in isolation. All these primordial, instrumental and constructivist ideas were simultaneously at work in the history of Kenya with each intermittently predominating the scene. Therefore, there is no single approach to this malady.

Moreover, in the historical development of Kenya, ethnocentrism grew in three successive stages which are tantamount to the three successive regimes of colonialists, Kenyatta and Moi. In this section of the paper, we shall attempt an exposition of the dynamics of ethnocentrism in these regimes beginning with the colonial regime.

1.2 Colonialism And The Implantation Of Ethnocentrism

The European colonial powers and even missionaries for a long time tended to build up ethnic antagonisms. It made it easier to influence the people, if they could find an amenable ethnic group to use against another ethnic group which was hostile.²⁵ It is a common knowledge in African history that the colonial government employed the repugnant policy of divide and rule as its administrative strategy in Africa. In Kenya, this policy ensured the confinement of all activities to ethnic enclaves. Thus encouraged the stereotyping of groups, promoted inequality, segregation and insinuated political and

²⁵ T. Mboya, Freedom and After, (Nairobi: Heinemann Publishers, 1963), 70.

social antagonism among the ethnic groups. All of these culminated in the implantation of ethnocentrism in Kenya.

At the core of the divide and rule policy was the amplification of the differences among the ethnic groups. This was initiated through stereotyping of ethnic groups, hence, "while the Kikuyu were presented as thieves and dishonest, the Luo and the Luhya were good servants."²⁶ Based on this stereotyping, the separation of ethnic groups was promoted in plantations and in urban areas. In towns, residential areas were reserved for specific ethnic groups, even jobs were awarded according to ethnic affiliation and not on merit.²⁷

The colonial power built the subordinate mobilizing agents of its policy at the grass root political structure designated as districts. The districts were carved along ethnic and linguistic lines, such that each group possessed their own district where issues pertaining to the groups were deliberated and formulated. For example, the British government created the Kalenjin and the Luyha groups which today's political nomenclature accepts as single groups. During the colonial regimes, these groups served the colonial purpose of monitoring any nationalistic upsurge but erected barriers, by isolating one ethnic group from another and enforced "an inward looking attitude" on the ethnic groups by denying them the opportunity of interacting with, experiencing, and encountering one another. The pronouncement of the distinctions in the creation of districts engendered strong feelings of local ethnic patriotism, thus, sharpened their respective ethnic consciousnesses.

²⁶G. Ndege, "Ethnicity, Nationalism and the Shaky foundation of Political Multipartyism in Kenya: The Colonial Origins" in Ogot, *ibid.*, 66.

²⁷W. Ochieng, "Tribalism and National Unity: The Kenyan Case" in Politics and Leadership ed. by O. Ojuka, and W. Ochieng, (Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, 1975), 56.

Based on the district organization of the government, mobility was restricted to the districts, which by implication were to the ethnic enclaves. The colonial government issued directives to chiefs to check unauthorized migration of people from one subdivision to another. Mobility was allowed only when individuals were joining the labor force in the service of the European settlers and the colonial state. The areas mostly declared "closed districts" were districts of the Maasai, the Samburu, the Tugen, the Boran and the Somali. The idea was to hinder the infiltration of radical nationalist sentiments from other ethnic groups like the Kikuyu and the Luo. The Kikuyu and the Luo were according to the colonial government "the hostile ethnic groups." However, this strategy degenerated into imbalance in the development of the different ethnic groups. Most ethnic groups in the so-called "restricted districts" lagged behind in development and civilization, thus to date they serve as cultural monuments to attract tourists. This strategy also estranged Africans among themselves. "It tended to create the attitude of 'others' and 'ourselves.' Some even viewed themselves as non-Kenyans."²⁸ There were jokes about people from such districts who would send their people to greet Kenyans when they get to Nairobi. Such was the effect of the immobility of people as promulgated by the colonial state of Kenya.

The only exception to the district restriction pertained to joining the colonial labor force. Some parts of the Rift Valley, Western and Central Provinces were identified as fertile lands and consequently confiscated by the European settlers as agricultural farmlands. The lands belonging to the Maasai and the other communities in Kenya were

²⁸J. Mwaruvie, "Ethnic Imbalances in African States: A Challenge to ideals of Nationalism and Democracy" in Ogot, *ibid.*, 169.

grabbed from them and the agricultural communities like the Kikuyu, overriding the mobility restriction, squeezed into these lands as labor reserves and squatters.²⁹

• As squatters, the Kikuyu and others had no claim on the land they were occupying, and their European masters only settled them. The movement of the Kikuyu and the other members of the agricultural communities into the pastoralists' strong hold exposed the contradictions that attended the colonial state's plan and scheme of zoning communities within their ethnic boundaries. They played one group against the other. While the Maasai from whom the land was taken looked at their traditional holdings in the Rift Valley as lost paradise, the Kikuyu squatters having been squeezed from their traditional land sought to redefine their lives and livelihood within the new environment in the Rift Valley. Thus, the seeds of contestation of the Rift Valley that reached its apogee in the post independence period were in essence being natured by the contradictions of colonialism.

However, politics during the colonial era was marked with district sentiments. The colonial government in the 1950s restricted any nationwide political organization, instead it encouraged the formation of district political associations. It is from these ethno-political organizations that the two pro-independent parties emerged in the 1960s. The Kenyan African Democratic Union (KADU) and the Kenya African National Union (KANU) as the only pro-independent parties were not spared "the ethnocentric smearing." Both parties wanted independence but the safety of the various ethnic groups they represented in the independent state was a severe bone of contention.

KADU led by Ronald Ngala, Masinde Muliro and Daniel Arap Moi represented the interests of the minority groups (the coastal tribes and the Kalenjin). This party

²⁹T. Kango, Squatter and the Roots of Mau Mau, (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1987), 42.

expressed dread over the future domination by the larger groups (Kikuyu and the Luo) and so advocated for a quasi-federal division of power that would leave an African majority government less omnipotent than its colonial predecessors. This implied federation, a devolution of certain powers upon newly created regional assemblies.

The expressed dread of KADU was a consequence of the divide and rule policy of the colonial power. The colonial government stereotyped the Luos and the Kikuyu as “dangerous” issuing from their vigorous pro-independent activities. Such a stereotyping could only elicit suspicion and infect the minorities with the fear of the majorities (the Luo and the Kikuyu). This precipitated the formation of KADU both as a representative organ for the minorities and the colonial organ for the frustration of the nationalistic tendencies of the KANU party. However, KANU led by Jomo Kenyatta, Oginga Odinga, Tom Mboya, and James Gichuru, despite being dominated by the Luo and the Kikuyu purported to be a unitary system that would cater for the interests of all Kenyans and the promotion of national unity.³⁰ For the sake of independence and unity of all Kenyans, the KANU party accepted the KADU proposal as the price for independence. However, a year later, when it won the heart of KADU members, the KANU government abolished all these arrangements.

To conclude this historical exposition of the colonial era, it is to be noted that the colonial powers no doubt employed the technique of divide and rule in Kenya through which it planted ethnocentrism. However, it must also be acknowledged that this policy had also been used by some post independence Kenyan regimes to enhance the interests of their respective ethnic groups to the detriment of the other ethnic groups. Therefore,

³⁰ R. Maxon, East Africa: An Introductory History. (Morgantown: West Virginia University Press, 1986), 236.

the ethnic sentiments that were planted by the colonialists were “watered and manured” by the subsequent regimes.

1.3 The Official Recognition Of Ethnocentrism in The Kenyatta Era (1963- 1977)

The post independent era of many African countries saw the mitigation of the spirit of nationalism, when the greed for power and fear of competition turned former nationalists into ethnicists. The state power was used to solidify the ruling ethnic group against others. Consequently, ethnic strife erupted in greater capacity in the post independent era.

In this era in Kenya, the Kikuyu elite accumulated the presidential powers, established Kikuyu hegemony and dominated the political arena of Kenya to the marginalization of the other ethnic groups.³¹

During the days of Kenyatta’s administration, the internal politics of the only existing political party in Kenya, Kenya African National Union (KANU), came to be subsumed into ethno-regional and personal divisions. Kenyatta’s Kikuyu ethno-regional group dominated the state economic institutions and the political sphere. The larger concentration of this group came from Kenyatta’s own Kiambu upper class. The most powerful of these people included the following: Mbiyu Koinange (the Minister of State in the Office of the President), James Gichuru (the Minister of Defense), Njoroge Mungai (Minister of Foreign Affairs), and Charles Njonjo (the Attorney General). The above named men were considered as the “sacred cows” of Kenyatta’s days because they constituted the members of the “executive inner circle.” They used their strategic

³¹ D. Himbara, Kenyan Capitalists, the State, and Development, (Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, 1994), 26.

positions to foster the Kikuyu hegemony.³² For instance in 1972, 4 out of the 8 Provincial Commissioners were Kikuyu, and 15 out of the 44 District Commissioners were Kikuyu.

Apart from the Kikuyu Kiambu men of the inner cycle, there were other members of the outer cycle comprising people from Kikuyu and their allies, from Embu and Meru. These also controlled the State Corporations, Central Bank, Kenya Commercial Bank, Industrial and Development Banks and Corporations. All these used their respective positions to favor the Kikuyu ethnic group. Hence, the statistics on I.C.D.C. Loan up to April 1966 showed that the Kikuyu received 64 per cent of the industrial loan and 44 per cent of commercial loans. They acquired assets built in the colonial Kenya by the settlers and the Asians and also bought the settler farms using state funds from the state-controlled banks managed by their men.³³

One could argue that Kenyatta in person never supported the ethnocentric acts of the men he appointed. However, this argument may not withstand the evidences of Kenyatta's early association with the Kikuyu Central Association (KCA) whose sole aim was the perpetuation of the Kikuyu hegemony.

The Kikuyu Central Association (KCA) was founded between 1924 –1932 to formulate and represent the Kikuyu interests and culture. It is on records that during the Mau Mau insurgence Kenyatta was the incumbent leader of the KCA, which occasioned his seven years jail. By implication, as one time leader of this group, Jomo Kenyatta is an embodiment of the aspirations of this group, which was the promotion of the Kikuyu interests.³⁴ Hence, his appointment of Kikuyu men to crucial political posts. To this

³² P. Gibbon, *Markets, Civil Society and Democracy in Kenya*, (Sweden: Nordiska Afrika Institutet, 1995), 73.

³³ Gibbon, *ibid.*,

³⁴ E.S. Atieno-Odhiambo, "Reconditioning the terms of Fact: Ethnicity, Nationalism and Democracy as Political Vectors" in Ogot, *ibid.*, 75.

extent, it sounds incredible to assert that he dissented the association and its objectives when he became the President of Kenya.

Moreover, Kenyatta could not have planned dissenting from KCA because of the part the later played in his political carrier. KCA was the propelling force behind the fight for Kenyatta's freedom and was "the architect" of the Kikuyu dominated KANU political party on whose platform Kenyatta was elected. All these indicate the indebtedness of Kenyatta to KCA, which made it unthinkable for Jomo to derail from the association and its aims.

In conclusion, at the time of Kenyatta's death on 22 August 1978, Kenyatta had killed competitive democracy and put "fertilizer" to facilitate the growth and maturity of ethnocentrism. This explicated the constant allusion to his time as an era of the official recognition of ethnocentrism in Kenya. Hence his regime is often described as

Story of spectacular success for his primary constituency, the Agikuyu. He had secured the state for them. He had given them a government to run. He had secured for them a vast homeland in the Rift Valley and along the Kenyan Coast. He had put commerce in their hands, in appropriate alliance with the police, military, intelligence and brutalizing apparatus like the General Service Unit (GSU) with "no nonsense" Gikuyu tough guys like Ben Gethi.³⁵

³⁵ Odhiambo, *ibid.*, 76.

1.4 Arap Moi's Era; (1978-)

The Era Of State Sponsored Ethnic Violence

In the beginning of the 1990's, a series of events in the nation revealed the ebbing influence of the Moi led KANU government in Kenya. This culminated in the public outcry for democratization and multi-partism. In order to maintain itself in power and to preserve its political and economic hegemony the KANU elite created a social disorder that was variously described as "land clashes," "political clashes," "ethnic and tribal clashes." In this section of the paper, I shall expose the historical antecedents to the declining reputation of Moi – government, its violent strategies to remain in power and evidences of involvement in ethnic clashes.

In the 1990s, there were incessant calls for the introduction of the multi-partism in Kenya.³⁶ Multi-partism is a political model, which allows the presence of three or more political parties in a particular state.³⁷ The involvement of the international bodies in this struggle made it imperative for the Kenyan government to repeal the section 2A of the Constitutional Amendment of 1982 that made KANU the only political party in Kenya.³⁸ Therefore, the government paved the way for a legal formation of other political parties parallel to KANU.

However, the ruling party responded to this movement by resorting to a variety of informal methods of intimidating its opponents.³⁹ The most prominent of

³⁶ These calls were initiated on the 1st of January 1990 by Pastor Reverend Timothy Njoya of the Presbyterian Church of East Africa in Nairobi. This was followed by similar calls from personalities like: Bishop Henry Okulu of the Church Province of Kenya, Maseno South Diocese, Kenneth Matiba, Oginga Odinga, and Martin Shikuku.

³⁷ N. Wanjohi, *Political Parties in Kenya: Formation, Policies and Manifestos*, (Nairobi: Views Media, 1997), 9.

³⁸ Despite the government determined efforts to frustrate this rally by refusing them rally license and by apprehending their leaders, the rally took place amidst confrontations between the police and the activists.

³⁹ Kiraitu, *ibid.*, 9.

these methods were the insinuations of “ethnic violence” in the Kenyan multi ethnic provinces through the launching of *Majimboism*⁴⁰.

Joseph Misoi, the then Member of Parliament for Eldoret south and one of the conveyors of the *Majimbo* rallies captured the initial objective of *Majimboism*. He says, “we are saying that unless those clamoring for political pluralism stop, we must devise a protective mechanism by launching this movement.”⁴¹ This political philosophy informed the declaration of the Rift Valley a “KANU Zone,” and “Multi-partism” an anti-Kalenjin movement to eject Moi, a Kalenjin, from power.

In the midst of this plenum of tension in the history of Kenya, a series of unprecedented clashes termed “ethnic” then erupted in different parts of Kenya in the following major sequences.

On October 29 1990, there was a clash at Miteitei farm in Tinderet, Nandi district of the Rift Valley Province between the Kalenjin and the Luo community. By December, violence had extended to large areas of the Rift Valley, Western and Nyanza Provinces with the targets being other ethnic groups living in the Kalenjin dominated areas.

This stretched into November 1991 when violence between the Sabot and the Bukusu exploded. Thousands in Bungoma and trans-Ngozi were forced out of their lands, and farms owned by the Luyha were taken over by the Sabot. The Sabot, a Kalenjin sub-group who occupy the Mt Elgon area had called for a re-drawing of administrative boundaries and a district exclusive to the Sabot.⁴²

⁴⁰ *Majimboism* is a political philosophy which in the 1950s and 1960s was a federal policy geared toward the defence of political rights of minorities. In the 1990s the term became an ideology for ethnic cleansing in Kenya.

⁴¹ Human Rights African Watch, *State Sponsored Ethnic Violence in Kenya*, (N.Y.: November, 1993), 12- 13.

⁴² International Commission for Justice, *ibid.*, 30.

On October 12th 1993, violence erupted, the traditionally armed Maasai torched houses belonging to Kikuyu and by October 15th, 17 Kikuyu had been reported dead and over 30,000 were displaced.⁴³

Following the displacement, about 10,000 Kikuyu who sought refuge at Maela in Nakuru district were, on December 24th 1993, raided by the administration police and some KANU youth wingers. Thus, the Maela camp was razed to the ground and the displaced persons transported and scattered to Ndaragwa by a roadside, at Ol Kalou by the railway lines and at Kirigiti stadium in Kiambu, at night without food or shelter.

On the run-up to the 1997 election, new theatres of violence exploded. Hitherto, peaceful Mombassa witnessed an unforeseen orgy of violence. On the night of August 13th, 1997, armed raiders invaded the Likoni Police station. Initially it seemed a daring but ordinary criminal act but with subsequent raids, it assumed an ethnic and political dimension with some religious traits. The residents of “up country” origin (these include mainly the Kikuyu, Luo and Luhya) who constituted the majority of the opposition sympathizers in this area became the targets. These were killed, displaced and many impelled to leave the coast because of the political philosophy of *Majimboism*.

Since after the 1997 general election there has been fresh violence in most of the multi-ethnic districts in Kenya. Even as I am writing now there are areas like Isiolo where there are ethnic clash activities going on.

Since the eruption of the “first officially acknowledged” ethnic violence in 1992, a number of official researches and reports by different organizations and

⁴³ The Kenya National Council of NGOS, Deception, Dispersal and Abandonment: A narrative Account of the Displaced of Kenyans from Enosupukia and Maela based upon Witness, Church/NGO and Media Accounts, (Nakuru: January 16th, 1995), 7.

committees: governmental and non-governmental, local and international indicate a high-level government involvement in these clashes.

In April 1992, a report entitled "*the Cursed Arrow*" was released by the National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCCK) which linked the violence of 1993 at the Provinces of Rift Valley, Western, Nyanza, to high ranking government officials. The report cited the license numbers of two Isuzu trucks, registered in the name of a Member of Parliament, that were seen transporting armed warriors. The NCCCK report concluded,

The clashes were and are politically motivated ... to achieve through violence what was not achieved in the political platform, i.e., forcing *majimboism* on the Kenyan people. Here the strategy being to create a situation on the ground for a possible political bargain in the debate about the system of government in future Kenya. Obviously, one of the consequences of the clashes is slowing down of the current democratization process. With the clashes, energies and focus have been redirected and ethnicity has become an important factor in the political debate.⁴⁴

The most damning indictment of direct government involvement in the clashes came from the report of an official Parliamentary Select Committee, set up in May 1992. In September 1992, the Committee released a report of 238 pages, which showed that the attacks, far from being spontaneous, was politically motivated and had been orchestrated by Kalenjin and Maasai individuals close to the President, including Vice-President George Saitoti and MPs Ezekiel Barngetuny and Nicholas Biwott. The Kiliku Report as it came to be known, supported the widely held public view that the government was corroborative of the violence. The committee found that numerous Kalenjin government officials and security officers had contributed to the violence. Many of the names cited in the report as behind the organization and

⁴⁴ National Council of Churches in Kenya, *The Cursed Arrow: Organized Violence Against Democracy in Kenya*, (Nairobi: April 1992), 1.

funding of the “warriors” had been involved in the *Majimbo* rallies. The report noted that

Evidence received by the Committee .. indicates that the fighters were on hire and were paid sums ranging from Kshs. 500 for safe return from the clash front, Kshs. 1,000 to 2,000 for killing one person or burning a grass-thatched house and Ksh. 10,000 per permanent house burnt. Several witnesses also alleged that some of the persons funding the wages of the “warriors” were: the Hon. K.N. K. Biwott, EGH, MP; the Hon. Reuben K. Chesire, MP; the Hon. Ezekiel K. Barngetuny, MP; the Proprietor of Guest House at Kedowa market, Kipkelion division; and the Hon. Wilson Leitch, MP.⁴⁵

The report also noted that many of the warriors were actually transported by vehicles, including government cars, to and from the clash areas, citing the registration numbers of the vehicles and their owners. In some cases, government helicopters had transported the warriors. The Committee unanimously agreed that the provincial administration and security forces, by often refusing to assist clash victims and releasing attackers who had been arrested, did not react to the situation with the required urgency.

In addition to this report, *Finance* magazine ran a cover story on “Biwott’s Private Army.”⁴⁶ The issue contained a copy of a sworn affidavit by a Kalenjin man by the name Valentinus Uhuru Kodipo (alias Abdul Kadir arap Kigen) who had given information to the Kiliku Committee during the course of its investigation. Mr. Kodipo claimed to have been recruited into the private army formed by Nicholas Biwott. In the affidavit, Mr Kodipo swore that

in October 1991 we were given thorough rough briefings to the effect that the Rift Valley Province must be cleared and people from other provinces in Kenya removed and that the multi-party system must not be allowed to succeed .. that private army in these camps, we were trained could be called the Kalenjin Liberation Front Army ..that at the camps we were trained by the GSU and anti-stock theft unit personnel and there were regular visits by the people like Captain Belsoi, Nicholas Biwott, George Saitoti, [William] Ole Nūmama, [Kipkalia] Kones, [Ezekiel] Barngetuny and others .. On January 6, 1992, we were mobilized for the Sondu

⁴⁵ Parliament Select Committee, *Republic of Kenya, Report of the Parliament Select Committee to investigate Ethnic Clashes in Western and Other Parts of Kenya*, (Nairobi: Government Press, 1992), 5.

⁴⁶ “Kalenjin Liberation Army,” in *Finance*, (Nairobi: September 15, 1992), 20-26.

operation consisting of sixteen gunmen and ninety personnel armed with fire and poisoned arrows .. the personnel armed with arrows set fire on huts . that after the Sondu operation we were told other major operations would follow in Molo and other places and I participated in similar operations in the areas around Songhor, Chemili and Muhoroni .. that sometime in March 1992 I decided to escape from the Camp in the Maasai Mara because I could not be party any longer to these massacres and destruction.⁴⁷

Stemming from the credibility widely accorded to these reports it is plausible to assert the direct government involvement in the ethnic clashes. It is for this reason that the Kenyan Human Right Commission concludes:

Informal repression styled along ethnic or land clashes is one of the newest threats to human rights in the multi-party era ... this violence has been aimed at creating animosity between communities, to split their political inclinations, to frighten whole communities into voting for the ruling party KANU as an insurance for their security, to drive out "politically incorrect" communities from specific electoral areas and even to kill off communities as a final solution to ensure the political survival of the ruling party and its leaders. Hence, clashes have always invariably erupted on the run up or immediately after election."⁴⁸

The consequence of the violence among others was disruption of the hitherto peaceful co-existence of the different ethnic groups in Kenya. "Distrust between the ethnic groups remains high and the charred remains of buildings are constant reminders of the violence and possibility of renewed violence."⁴⁹ The violence has left a society bleeding and deeply bruised in its political psychology. All over, there is continuing anger and bitterness, continuing lack of trust and confidence, agitation, tension, suspicion of the other, and division. In other words, unprecedented high level of ethnic consciousness.

⁴⁷ "Affidavit of Valentius Uhuru Kodipo of Kadere, Nyanza Province, sworn August 13, 1992" as reported in *Finance*, *ibid.*, 22.

⁴⁸ Kenya Human Rights, *Killing the Vote: State sponsored Violence and Flawed Elections in Kenya*, (Nairobi: Human Rights Commission, 1998), 1.

⁴⁹ Human Rights African Watch, *State Sponsored Ethnic Violence in Kenya*, *ibid.*, 51.

1.5 Evaluation

From the above, it is evident that ethnocentrism is factual in Kenya. As an attitude which views one's own ethnic group as the center of everything and all others scaled and rated with reference to it,⁵⁰ it is unquestionably displayed in the regimes of Kenyatta and Moi. These regimes respectively favored their ethnic groups; while the Kenyatta's Kikuyu confiscated the government establishments during his regime, the Moi's Kalenjin exterminated the other ethnic groups in the rich and fertile Rift Valley province.

Pertaining to the theories of ethnocentrism cited above, ethnocentrism in Kenya has many facets. From the primordialist point of view, it is a possibility that the fact of differences trigger antagonistic sentiments in people. However, from the definitions above, this could be pure ethnicity, which is morally valueless. It is natural to have differences in opinions and cultures but to insist that the interaction of these diverse cultures must of necessity be acrimonious is disputable. It is rather the inordinate and selfishly motivated accentuation of the negative differences among the ethnic groups that degenerates into ethnocentrism.

This is vivid from the instrumentalist stance. In the history of Kenya, the different regimes have exploited the ethnic differences by amplification. The colonial government restricted the interaction among the ethnic groups by stereotyping, segregating, injecting division, and suspicion among the ethnic groups in order to diffuse their nationalistic ambitions. In our era, Moi used ethnic cleansing ticket to maintain himself in power. In both cases, the differences were aroused and ethnic patriotism created.

⁵⁰ Cf. p.5 of this paper.

The constructivist theory could stand when ethnocentric policy of both the colonial and Moi regimes are justified as situational. These regimes resorted to ethnic manipulations as political survival strategy. The colonial regime worked against the Kikuyu and Luo threats by carving out two ethnic groups of Kalenjin and Luhya. These acted as checks over the movements of the dreaded groups. In addition, the Moi regime inaugurated *Majimboism* as its check over multi-party exponents. In these situations, the ethnic sentiments of the people were exploited as responses to political situations. In as much as this theory might try to justify these ethnic oriented acts, one may also wonder whether the price is worth it. Were there no other ways of addressing the situational issues?

It is evident that the contemporary Kenya confronted with these experiences of ethnocentrism is on the verge of disintegration as a nation. The interactions of the citizens are often marked with negative stereotypes, which are manifested in excessive fear of the other ethnic groups and subtle forms of tensed competition. This is overtly acknowledged in the struggle for the possession of the decision-making machinery of the nation. Stemming from the political structure of Kenya, the decision-making system is an effective tool for enhancing an ethnic group's economic and political power and influence. This is responsible for the gross ethnic inequality in the distribution of the country's resources observable in Kenya. The ruling ethnic group while excluding others out of power includes their own men. This is also what makes general election a serious issue. The mentality is that once your ethnic group loses, you are out of power completely, the winner wins all and the loser loses all, no power sharing.

This in turn aggravates animosity and discrimination against the ruling ethnic group for their monopoly of power. The implication is that even at the grass root

level people are ready to do anything either against or to defend the ruling ethnic group. People want their own men at the helm of affairs. This is what enabled the Moi government to mobilize the Kalenjin against the other ethnic groups in the Rift Valley. The Kalenjin interpreted Multi-partism as a ploy to eject their man from power.

The dynamism of ethnocentrism militates against the nationalism and democracy, which are necessary for a developing country like Kenya. The ethnic inequality in the sharing of power, alienates people, and makes them less objective and more indifferent to national issues.

In view of the politicians level of involvement in ethnocentrism, I do not think that there can be any effective change within this class. Instead, since it is a question of change of mentality and focus, I suggest a religious approach. This is not to exonerate the Kenyan religious leaders from ethnocentrism. I do not mention them in this paper because all efforts to get concrete and scholarly evidences of ethnocentrism in the Kenyan Church were fruitless. Moreover, the clerics and religious were reluctant to speak on the issue. Personally, I believe it is there; it only requires another investigation and time.

Nevertheless, from the theological point of view I propose a grassroots exposition, re-interpretation and preaching of the implications of the Christian trinitarian concept of God. In any particular age, the prevailing Christian understanding of God has influenced the age's comprehension of themselves, cosmos, social interaction and government.⁵¹ To this extent, a trinitarian community will offer suggestions to an ethnocentric Kenya, where there is failure in communion, little power sharing, disrespect and dread of differences and gross

exclusion of certain group of people from active politics. It will rather inject into Kenya: fellowship, equality of opportunities, participation of all, interpret differences as richness and show the common elements of our existence. It will infuse nationalism, extinguish our selfishness, ignite the concern for the common good, and become an ideology of inclusiveness. The trinitarian concept of God will inform our thought pattern regarding the ethnic differences by showing that, at the foundation of the differences is a basic unity. We are the children of one Father despite our ethnic distinctions. All these we will explore in the subsequent chapters of this paper.

²¹ T. Marsh, The Triune God: a Biblical, Historical, and the Theological Study, (Dublin: The Columba Press, 1994), 184.

CHAPTER TWO

2.0 COMMUNITARIAN MODEL OF THE TRINITY AND ETHNOCENTRISM

Among the nascent trinitarian models is the communitarian model. The approach hinges on the notion that “God is not the solitude of the Solitary One, but a communion in love of three distinct divine persons.”⁵² This trinitarian perspective teaches that the nature of God is self-giving love, in virtue of which there exist three divine persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Each is a separate “I,” each can address the other two persons as “thou,” and each serves as the bond of union between the other two. What makes them one God instead of three gods is the ongoing process of self-giving love, which is their common nature. Therefore, they constitute a community, which we designate by the generic term “God.”⁵³ In this chapter, we will expose the various elements of this communitarian Trinity and examine its implications for the ethnocentric society of Kenya.

2.1 The Concept of Communion

At the kernel of the communitarian concept of the Trinity is the notion of communion, (*koinonia*), fellowship.⁵⁴ Leonardo Boff gives three approaches towards an understanding of this notion of communion: analytical, philosophical and theological. These can be outlined as follows.

Analytically, communion is a relationship between persons.⁵⁵ It tends to build up the highest sort of socializing and union that is proper to beings gifted with spiritual natures.

⁵² A. Hunt, *What Are They Saying About the Trinity*, (N.Y.: Paulist Press, 1998), 10.

⁵³ J. Bracken, *What Are They Saying About the Trinity*, (N.Y.: Paulist Press, 1979), 50-51.

⁵⁴ L. Boff, *Holy Trinity, Perfect Community*, (N.Y.: Orbis Books, 2000), 3.

⁵⁵ Boff, *ibid.*,

Communal relationship is a relationship marked with the presence of one to another. Being present to another is being open, ability to communicate to another in the expectation and hope of being heard and accepted. It is also a relationship of reciprocity. Reciprocating and con-natural beings feel certain attraction to one another: the greater the attraction, the more perfect the communion between them. However, there will never be fusion because each, must retain its own identity for their to be reciprocity. In the context of reciprocity, immediacy springs. Immediacy is beings in relationship living in intimacy, transparency of intention, and union of hearts and convergence of interests. When the above characters are there the result is usually a community. This is an attitude of togetherness, solidarity valuing of the individuality of everyone, accepting differences as the interchange of riches, establishing personal relationships, including everyone, and doing away with formalities.

The philosophical approach to the explication of communion raises an ontological question: what sort of being is capable of the communion outlined above? It is a being -in - openness in the sense of self transcendence. Only a being open to others can commune with, relate to, and build a community with the other con-natural beings. Being - in - openness is being in freedom, being capable of the love that transfigures the whole universe. Hence, communion requires a being that can effectively transcend itself in order to enter into communion with another, to create a history together, and establish bonds of interdependence. We are, we live, and we exist as human beings who always find themselves in particular communion with others. On its own, the "I" never exists; it is dwelt in by many, since its roots spread outside into others, as others permeate it.

The theological approach treats God as Being-in Communion. This stems from God's discernible presence in human and historical processes.⁵⁶ If analytically one being is present to another, perceives a basic reciprocity with that other, and experiences an immediacy of relationship demanding the formation of a community: if philosophically this particular mode of being demonstrates an existence characterized by self transcendence forming an "us" with whom to relate, then theologically this means that these values and this mode find their deepest roots and ultimate model in God.⁵⁷ Therefore, God is absolute openness, supreme presence, total immediacy, eternal transcendence, and infinite communion.

2.2 God as Being - in – Communion; Scriptural Foundations

In the Old Testament, God is revealed as the God who made a covenant with his people, the God who wishes to assimilate all humanity to himself.⁵⁸ The covenant with the whole people of Israel⁵⁹ is an anticipation and symbol of what God wishes to do with all the nations, to enter into communion with humanity through the covenant.

In the New Testament, God is best presented as a God of communion. Communion is made manifest in history in the shape of the reality of Jesus and the sending of the Spirit. Thus, being in Christ, and in the Son, living with Christ and with the Spirit, these make up the great communion with the Father.⁶⁰

For us human beings, God offers us two channels of communion with him and with one another. St Paul designates these two channels as faith and the Eucharist. Through faith, we are united to the risen Lord, living in him, dying with him, being raised

⁵⁶ L. Boff, *Trinity And Society*, (US: Orbis Books, Maryknoll, 1992), 131.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ Gn 9.

⁵⁹ Ex 19:24.

⁶⁰ J. Moltman, *The Trinity And the Kingdom of God: The Doctrine of God*, (England: SCM Press, Ltd, 1981), 57.

with him, seated in glory with him.⁶¹ Through adhering to Christ, we begin a community of life and destiny with him, even to sharing in his suffering.⁶² This communion is deepened through the Eucharist: by eating the body of the Lord, the community becomes the Body of Christ.⁶³

St John presents this communion as the product of our relationship with the Father through Christ.⁶⁴ We are in communion with the God when we either “remain in” or “be in”⁶⁵ the Father. The communion with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is translated into communion among all. In the early Church, Christians “were together and had all things in common.”⁶⁶ “They sold their possession and goods and distributed them to all.”⁶⁷ These were practical expressions of communion among the members of the early Church.

The above texts illustrate that God has always being the Being-in -and -towards communion. Now how is this God communion from the trinitarian point of view?

2.3 The Trinity As/In Communion: Perichoresis

God is communion precisely because God is a Trinity of persons.⁶⁸ In one God, there are three persons, a simple communion, and a single trinitarian community. This is the best formula with which to represent the Christian God. When we speak of God, we mean the Father, Son and Holy Spirit in the presence of one another, in total reciprocity, in immediacy of loving relationship, being one for another, by another, in another and

⁶¹ Rom 6:6; 8:17.

⁶² Ph 3:10.

⁶³ 1Cor 10:16-18; Rom 12: 2.

⁶⁴ Jn 17: 21.

⁶⁵ Jn 14:20, 15: 4.

⁶⁶ Acts 2:44.

⁶⁷ Acts 2:45.

⁶⁸ J. Bracken, “The Holy Trinity As a Community of Divine Persons,” *Heythrop Journal* 15 (1973): 629.

with another.⁶⁹ No divine person exists alone for his own sake; they are always and eternally in relationship with one another; the Father is Father because he has a Son; the Son is Son only because he has a Father; the Spirit is Spirit only because he is the bond between the Father and the Son. In uttering the Word (the Son), the Father breathes out the divine Breath that is the Holy Spirit. The fruit of this love, the Spirit, loves the Father and the Son and is loved by them in exchange of giving and communion that comes from eternity and ends in eternity.⁷⁰

Richard of St Victor (d.1173) best expresses this communing aspect of the Trinity.⁷¹ He sees God as essentially lovingly communicating himself and establishing communion. The love of the Father generates the Son like fire from the Father's entrails, and to this Son he gives his whole being. The Son, in turn, gives back to the Father all the love that he has received. It is an absolute and eternal meeting, but not the love of exclusive lovers; it expands. Thus the Father and the Son make a mutual gift of themselves; this gift is the Holy Spirit.

Therefore, the Christian God is a process of effusion, of meeting, of communion between distinct beings bound together in life and love. This whole process is traditionally designated in Greek as *perichoresis* and in Latin as *circuminsession* or *circumincessio*.⁷²

The persons exist as persons because of their eternal relationships with one another and these relationships make up the unity of the Trinity. This is a unity peculiar

⁶⁹ Boff, Holy Trinity: Perfect Community, *ibid.*, 53.

⁷⁰ A. Kelly, Trinity Of Love: A Theology of The Christian God, (US: Michael Glazier Inc., 1989), 182.

⁷¹ C. Van Elswik, "Richard of St. Victor," in New Catholic Encyclopedia, ed. by William Mc Donald (USA: The Catholic University of America, 1967), vol. 12:482.

⁷² Both *perichoresis* and *circuminsession* mean the interpenetration and the interweaving of one person of the Trinity with others and others in it.

to the Trinity, hence it is called Tri-unity. St. John indicates this unity when he makes Jesus say; "Father, may they be one in us, as you are in me and I am in you .. That they may be one as we are one... may they be so completely one."⁷³ Their relationship is not one of hierarchical pattern rather one of perichoresis. Each person is in the others and surrounds the others in all sides.⁷⁴ This can be further illustrated with the following phrases: each person occupies the same space like others; each fills the other persons with his presence. Thus, the interpenetration or interweaving of one person with the others and in the others. In this respect, what is produced and what proceeds is intra-trinitarian and interpersonal revelation of the others, hence each is a reflection of the others. So, the always-triadic relationship operating among the persons does not result from the persons, but is simultaneously within them and originates with them. They are what they are because of their intrinsic, essential communion. If this is so it follows that in each of the persons in God, there is the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. The co-ordinate conjunctions "and" is always and everywhere.⁷⁵

The above explicates why the persons of the perichoretic community emerge as three subjects of mutual dialogue, love one another and are intimately related. Each person is for the others, with the others and in the others. The everlasting love that pervades them unites them in a current of life. Unity in the Trinity, as has remarked before, is always a union of persons. It is not something that comes after them, but is simultaneous with them, since they are always one with the others.⁷⁶ Consequently, the Trinity is truly a community.

⁷³ Jn 17: 21-23.

⁷⁴ B. Forte, *The Trinity As History: Saga of the Christian God*, (N.Y.: Paulines, 1989), 189.

⁷⁵ J. Moltman, "Inviting Unity" *Concilium* 177 (1985): 53.

⁷⁶ Moltman, "Inviting Unity," *ibid.*,

2.4 Specific Characters of the Trinitarian Community and Their Implications for an Ethnocentric Kenya

(i) The Oneness of God and Our Oneness in God

The Father, Son and Holy Spirit co-exist simultaneously, are co-eternal, and do not emerge as separated or juxtaposed but always mutually implied and related. The unity is found in the communion among them. There can be unity among them because only persons are intrinsically open to others, exist with others, and are for one another. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit as persons live in unity because of the communion among them. Communion is the expression of a dynamic, overflowing and outreaching love and life. Since the union of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, the eternal co-relatedness, the self surrender of each person to the others is the foundational character of the trinitarian community, then, through love and through reciprocal communion they are one single Being, the one God-love. This is the oneness of God.

Our oneness in God is based on the notion of the Father as the "eternal root" of all sister-and-brotherhood and our common sonship in the Son.

The Father is the one who is eternal, even before any creature existed. If, hypothetically, we could imagine that there had been no creation, the Father would still be Father. It is not because he is creator that the Father is the Father. The Father is Father because he is the Father of the only-begotten Son, because from all eternity he is in communion with the Son in the Holy Spirit.⁷⁷

⁷⁷ T. Aquinas, *Summa Teologica*, Ia.qu.27, art.1.

From a trinitarian point of view, fatherhood is proper to the Father. In generating the Son, the Father projects out from himself all things that can imitate him and the Son. In the Son thus generated are sketched all other sons and daughters created in the image and likeness of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Hence, there is an eternal and filial dimension in creation.⁷⁸ With the love that generates the Son, the Father gives origin to all other beings in the Son, through the Son, with the Son and for the Son.⁷⁹ Because all exist in the Son,⁸⁰ we are all brothers and sisters. Christ, eternal Son, is the “firstborn within a large family.”⁸¹ Hence, God is Father and we are brothers and sisters, not primarily, because he is creator and has created us but because he is the Father of the only begotten Son.⁸² We are envisioned in the eternal Son by the Father in the same movement of love with which the Father “generated” the Son in union with the Holy Spirit. Thus, we are not mere creatures foreign to the trinitarian mystery. Our kinship is rooted in the very mystery of the Father’s fecundity. To mark the difference between the eternal Son and his brothers and sisters, theology uses the expression, “only begotten Son” and “adoptive” sons and daughters.⁸³ The Son is not created but generated out of the very substance of love and communion of the Father.⁸⁴ The Father, together with the Spirit creates us, brothers and sisters of the only begotten Son, out of nothing in the image and likeness of the Son. In any case, the Son’s Father is our Father. Jesus has correctly taught us to call him “our Father.” The Father is never without the Son. The Son is also never without the Father’s other adoptive sons and daughters, and hence he is never without his brothers

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*,

⁷⁹ Jn 1:3; Col 1:15-17.

⁸⁰ Rom 8:29.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*;

⁸² Rom 15:6.

⁸³ A. Kelly, *The Trinity of Love: A Theology of the Christian God*, (US: Micheal Glazier, 1989), 66.

⁸⁴ W., Farrell, *A Companion to the Summa*, (US: Sheed and Ward, 1941),154.

and sisters.⁸⁵ The vision of the Father at the generation of the Son was the creation of all in the Son in order to form the community of equal brothers and sisters, a community akin to the trinitarian community.

Since the creation of human beings is envisioned in the trinitarian interaction, it means that the creation of humanity belongs to the superabundance of life, love and communion in the Trinity⁸⁶ and so human beings are not without a spark of this communion within them. Christian anthropology defines a human being as an image of God taken from Gn 1:27.⁸⁷ How can this be understood in this context? The response to the question is relevant because it is my justification for recommending the Trinity as a model for our society. We can comfortably parallel the trinitarian community to human society because there is something in the human being, which is parallel to the Trinity. There is a resemblance between the ontological nature of humanity in its pure, original state and the trinitarian God. What constitutes this point of resemblance?

It was human and not the lower animals that is made in God's image, thus, the referent of this image must be in connection with features that distinguish humanity from the lower animals. These could be any of the followings: human dignity as God's representative on earth arising from human dominion over the rest of creation; humanity as endowed with responsible power for moral choice; human capacity for communion with God; and human personhood as a being designed for relationship.

The above features are distinctively human, not possessed by other animals and are possessed in infinite degree by God. It is in the possession of these by humanity that

⁸⁵ J. Macmurray, *Persons in Relation*, (N.Y.: Harper and Brothers, 1957), 24.

⁸⁶ Boff, *Trinity and Society*, *ibid.*.

⁸⁷ J. Hastings, *Dictionary of the Bible*, (Edinburgh; T & T Clark and Charles Scribners's Sons, 1963), 413.

he is an image of God. However, in the context of the trinitarian persons, the feature that is possessed by humanity and is apt to the Trinity is the “human being as a person destined for relationship with himself, his environment, and God.”

If the essence of the Trinity is communion,⁸⁸ and human beings are designed for relationship, which is apt for the trinitarian community, it means that the human being is an image of God because he possesses the resemblance of the trinitarian relationality.

By implication, a human being has all the trinitarian characteristics of relationality, reciprocity, solidarity, openness, freedom and the potentiality of creating a community. If this is the case, why do we experience ethnocentrism and other forms of segregation among the human beings? Besides the positive aspect of the human being mentioned above, there is another aspect, which is negative. A human is a being wounded by the original sin and so is in constant need God’s grace. The human being possess the trinitarian relational character but lack the capability to exercise it. The concupiscence which accompanied original sin has disorientated human freedom, hence human freedom is tied.⁸⁹ So the first thing actual grace does for a human being is to begin to free human freedom so that it can cooperate with the trinitarian character within the person. Grace gradually grants the human being faith, desire for union with the indwelling Trinity, defreezes his freedom, lessens the effect of concupiscence, enables and leads the person to respond actively by making a fundamental option to love God and neighbor. In this manner, the human being is disposed by grace to relate lovingly to all creatures and the Creator as well. It is for the possibility of the ability to relate to the Trinity inherent in the

⁸⁸ Bracken, “The Holy Trinity As a Community of Divine Persons,” *ibid.*, 631.

⁸⁹ DS 1555.

human being that we are recommending the Trinitarian community as a model of the human community.⁹⁰

In the interaction of the divine persons, the possibility for the creation of humanity is envisioned, the vision of the Father, in the context of his communion with the Son, could be considered the foundation of the creation of all human beings. Following that all human beings were created out of this foundation, this foundation constitutes the point of the common origin of all human beings despite their differences. This implies that all individuals belonging to different ethnic groups, by virtue of the trinitarian vision of the creation of all human beings, are related in their origin. From this point of view, all human beings have their converge in God and so are both related and are one in God who is a Trinity.

It is because we have a common origin in the trinitarian community that we possess the mark of this trinitarian community in terms of our relational nature which is identified as the image of God in us. On this level of common nature, all human beings are ontologically equal. They possess the same essential nature as against other classes of beings.

There is also another point of our unity in the Son. We have the same Father and are sons and daughters in the Son. The twofold meaning of the sonship of Jesus, inwards and outwards, for God and for man, is respectively expressed in the terms of the “only begotten Son” and “the first-born of many brethren.”

The “only begotten Son” is the Father’s only, own, eternal Son. The Father sends him into the world, that he delivers him up to death on the cross “for us all,” that he raises and exalts him. The idea of the “only begotten Son” invokes the category of

⁹⁰ Boff, *Trinity and Society*, *ibid.*, 119

exclusiveness. It is in this category that he exists; it is in this that he is delivered up and exalted: he and he alone, the one for the many.

“The first born among many brethren,” on the other hand, means the first among many successors, one brother among other brothers and sisters. What the only begotten Son does and suffers is unique; it happens only once. What the first-born brother does and suffers is for the first time, in an open fellowship. In the incarnation the only begotten Son becomes the first born of many brothers and sisters who find the Father through his brotherhood, so becoming free to deliver enslaved creation.⁹¹

“Christ’s divinity” really means Jesus as “only begotten Son” in his exclusiveness and uniqueness. “Christ’s humanity” really has to do with “the first-born among many brethren.” For the one person of Jesus Christ is not a matter of two metaphysically different natures. It is an expression of his exclusive relationship to the Father, by reason of his origin, and his inclusive relationship of fellowship to his many brothers and sisters. His relationship to God is the relationship of God’s own Son to the Father. His relationship to the world is the relationship of eldest to his brethren⁹² and of the first-born of all creation to other created beings.⁹³ There is no brotherhood of Christ without his sonship. However, his sonship is never without his brotherhood.⁹⁴

Through his incarnation, the Son becomes the first-born among many brethren. In the incarnation, he throws open to his brother and sisters his relationship of sonship to the Father, gathering them into his divine liberty and into his rule over God’s people. In fellowship with the only begotten Son, people become co-opted sons and daughters of the

⁹¹ *Ibid.*,

⁹² Rom 8:29.

⁹³ Col 1:15

⁹⁴ Moltmann, *ibid.*.

Father. In this respect, the only begotten Son of the Father is at the same time the leader of salvation and liberty for the brothers and sisters who follow him.

Therefore, in the incarnation of the Son, the Trinity throws itself open, as it were. The Father of the Son becomes the Father of the new, free and united human race. Through the brotherhood of the Son God's children enter into the trinitarian relations of the Son, the Father and the Spirit. As people in the world, they simultaneously exist "in God" and "God in them."

From this above system of thought, we can surmise that we are children of the Father, brothers and sisters of the Son, and brothers and sisters of one another through grace. Since we all belong to the one household of God through baptism, and share in its patrimony, we are not related metaphorically, but ontologically.⁹⁵ At the ontological level, we are in a true sense and in fact, sons and daughters of the Father in the Son through the Spirit and therefore brothers and sisters to one another. By our fellowship with Christ, the Son, we become also sons and daughters of God. In this view, we are to the Son and in him to one another, brothers and sisters, the adopted children of God. This our common sonship in the Son is another area in which we are related. However, the relatedness and unity is not universal as such, it is only for the baptized members of the body of Christ. This is the unity we possess in the Trinity and which our ethnic differences cannot obscure or obliterate.

⁹⁵ Moltman, "Inviting Unity" *ibid.*, 56.

(ii) **The Inclusiveness of the Trinity**

In our experience of the mystery, there is indeed diversity (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) and at the same time a unity because all the three persons constitute one God. The basis of this unity in diversity is the triune God. The Trinity allows identity (the Father), difference of identity (the Son), and the difference of difference (Holy Spirit). Trinity prevents face-to-face confrontation between Father and Son in a “narcissistic” contemplation. Trinity is inclusive because it unites what is separated and excluded (the Father-Son duality). Single and multiple, unity and diversity meet in the Trinity as circumscribed and reunited. “Three” here is not to be understood as an arithmetical number but as an affirmation that the name of God means difference that includes and does not exclude each other. The three persons in God are not opposed to each other, since they are set in communion; a distinction that makes for union. Through being an open reality, this triune God also includes other differences; so that the created universe enters into communion with the divine. By implication, the Trinity is a mystery of inclusion.⁹⁶ The inner dynamics of the three relational persons of the Trinity spills over outwards beyond the trinitarian community and creates other different beings (the cosmos and humankind) for them to be receptacles of the transfusion of the communicative love and the boundless ocean of trinitarian life. In this manner, the Trinity expands itself in the world.⁹⁷

The inclusive character of the trinitarian community when transposed to the human community forces the later to expand its horizon. Like in the trinitarian community, the persons who make up the human community as “icons” of the Trinity are

⁹⁶ Boff, *Trinity and Society*, *ibid.*, 194.

⁹⁷ Forte, *The Trinity As History*, *ibid.*, 147.

beings towards relationship. A human being, as a person in relationship and communion is towards another. His relational nature, aided by grace, impels him towards others, and to the extent he responds to "the inner voice" to that extent does he actualize himself and fulfils his being.

This individual orientation towards others, as depicted in the trinitarian community, is not meant to circulate within a confined horizon. If the communion is genuine, it will expand and include the members of other geographically separated communities. The communal interaction in as much as each human being has the same basic orientation of loving communion, is meant for every human being. Consequently, in each ethnic community, the interaction of its members should be open to non-members. The Luo should allow themselves to be included in the community program of the Kikuyu, and the Kikuyu should actually include the Luo. To the extent to which each of the communities in Kenya includes others, is included, and allows itself to be included in the projects of the others, to that extent is that ethnic community to be enriched, expanded, fulfilled and actualized.

Conversely, any community or individual members of a community which isolates itself, builds up barriers and discriminates against others is subject to retardation, retrogression and death. This happens in an ethnocentric community. Whenever a community shuts itself from life, it works against the deepest yearnings, orientation, and ontological constitution of the members of the community. This creates tension within the individual; he or she is torn apart, and spends a lot of energy in conflict management. If this happens to a vast majority of an ethnic group, the community will be in shambles and the nation at the edge of disintegration. In this consternation, new ideas are

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frustrated, development is retarded, antagonism, hostility, resentment, egocentricism, xenophobia, inordinate competition, ethnic patriotism, and superfluous focus on the differences as justification for the perpetuation of hostility prevail. Are these not happening here in Kenya?

So distilling from the example of the trinitarian community, these issues are addressed when we, in grace, open ourselves in accordance with our orientation and so dispel the inner conflicts and allow the grace of God within us to effect a union of hearts.

(iii) Differences Demonstrate the Richness of the Community

At the root of the trinitarian, mystery of diversity and unity is the Spirit as the principle of differences and communion; in other words, a principle of integration.⁹⁸ The community of those who follow Jesus is built on two columns: the risen Lord and the Spirit. The column of Christ represents the dimension of continuity and permanence, linked to the mystery of the incarnation. The column of the Spirit represents the emergence of newness, which brings discontinuity. Institution and charism march together and make up the living dynamics of the Christian life. Christ is never alone and the Spirit never works except in communion with Christ. Therefore, Paul rightly says that the Spirit is always the Spirit of Christ,⁹⁹ the Spirit of the Lord. The Spirit always leads us to Christ, since “no one can say ‘Jesus is Lord,’ unless he is under the influence of the Spirit.”¹⁰⁰ The Spirit is the one who makes us cling to this Jesus, our Lord. The presence of the Spirit is indicated by the diversity of gifts and services that appear in the

⁹⁸ T. Marsh, *The Triune God: A biblical, historical and theological study*, *ibid.*, 180.

⁹⁹ Rom 8:9, Phil 1:19.

¹⁰⁰ 1Cor 12:3.

community, as the Spirit chooses.¹⁰¹ Paul lists some of these gifts in I Cor. 12: 7-11. There are a variety of gifts but always the same Spirit,¹⁰² since each of these tasks represents a different form of presence and activity of the Holy Spirit himself. The various services are to be used for the good of the community, since the particular way in which the Spirit is given to each person is for a good purpose.¹⁰³

The Spirit is creatively the Spirit of innovation in a group but never in an individualistic sense or self-advancement, it is always for the strengthening of the community working to fulfil its needs. Therefore, the Spirit is the originator of differences on one hand, and on the other, the instigator of communion; "For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body."¹⁰⁴ However different we may be, people are not reduced to a single category nor are their differences suppressed; on the contrary, these differences make up the richness of the community.¹⁰⁵ At Pentecost, the Spirit did not make all those present speak the same language but made them all hear the good news of salvation in their own language. The multiform expressions of vitality and of services in the community are not a threat to unity, but an opportunity for all to be enriched. Communion does not suppress or reduce differences, but integrates them into the purpose of the common good. This unity is the work of the Spirit. What is opposed to charism is not the institution itself, but egoism, the preponderance of some over others; the will to power that usurps the charism of the rest. Such actions constitute an attack on

¹⁰¹ 1Cor 12 11.

¹⁰² 1Cor 12 4.

¹⁰³ 1Cor 12 7.

¹⁰⁴ 1Cor 12:13.

¹⁰⁵ Okechukwu Ogbonnaya, On Communitarian Divinity: An African Interpretation of the Trinity, (NY: Paragon House, 1994), 76.

the building of the community, precisely because they represent the rupture of communion. As St Paul advisedly warns, "Never try to suppress the Spirit."¹⁰⁶

Consequently, in theological parlance we would say that the Spirit is the principle of expansion and union, diversity and communion, the word that reveals the others and is revealed by others. The mission of the Spirit as action and transformation is in a dialectical relationship with that of the Son, with its final reference in that of the Father. The Spirit acts universally in all men and women, not in just one of them, as the Son does in Jesus. He has been sent and poured out into our hearts.¹⁰⁷ The Spirit is present in multiplicity and diversity, creating communion. Pentecost shows the dynamic of the Spirit actions: respecting diversity and creating communion,¹⁰⁸ allowing the same message to be heard in a multiplicity of languages. This presence of the Spirit engenders such enthusiasm that the apostles appeared drunk.¹⁰⁹ The ecstasy of joy and the fascination of creation are the work of the Spirit.

Transposing some of the elements of the action of the Spirit to an ethnocentric community like Kenya, such issues like the question of differences in ethnicities are addressed. Ethnic differences could be viewed as gifts of God's self-communication. The different ethnic groups are gifts, because, each is unique, each occupies a particular space among the rest of the Kenyans and each has its own specific qualities which it contributes to the general welfare of Kenyans as a whole. Each group has a peculiar way in which they ameliorate and enhance life for other Kenyans. For example, it is known that the Kikuyu are very hardworking business people, "the business of men of Kenya" as they

¹⁰⁶ 1Thess 5:19.

¹⁰⁷ Gal 4:6; Rom 5:5.

¹⁰⁸ Acts 2:11.

¹⁰⁹ Acts 2:12.

are called. The Maasai, Samburu, Teso and their allies are the warriors and herdsman of Kenya. The Luo are the fishermen, the Kamba are wood carvers, and a host of others with their particular areas of specializations. Each of these groups enriches other Kenyans with their trade, occupation, and talents. You can imagine what would happen if the Luo, for example, were to be exterminated in Kenya. Definitely, fish will become scarce and consequently expensive. There might be pockets of fishermen in other communities but none can do it in the capacity that Luo do and none can fill the gap of the Luo. We advocate that the presence of the Luo community should be seen from their unique contribution among Kenyans as richness and thus, a gift. In this respect, the presence of the Luo community is a privilege from God. This applies equally to other ethnic groups as well. Therefore, the negative stereotyping should be transcended and the positive elements of each group be brought to the limelight.

If we consider each of the groups in this light, it means that each group is equally important because each group makes a contribution that no other can make. Each group is indispensable, and each group is dependent on others; no ethnic group is independent of others. There is a web of inter-relatedness, inter-dependence, and cross-pollination of ideas. The whole nation depends on the Kamba for seats, and the whole nation depends on the Maasai for milk, meat, and security. The nation depends on the Kikuyu for business and agriculture. The awareness of these respective areas of specialization of each group ought to elicit some appreciation for each group, and support for one another to harness the qualities of each group to the maximum for greater nation building.

It is also pertinent that each group should perceive whatever talent they have as gifts to be placed at the disposal of the entire community. The Spirit, and through

perichoresis the Trinity, as the source of the gifts do not bestow gifts for individual advancement only, the priority is rather always for the community, in fact for all people. Once this “gift for service” mentality is obscured, pride and selfishness will infiltrate our hearts. This is what engenders resentment for the gifts of the respective ethnic groups in Kenya, which consequently insinuates ethnocentrism. Therefore, if we do not want to instill resentment in people for our gifts we must make the gifts available to them.

In view of the different ethnic groups’ indispensable and unique position in Kenya, the presence of these different ethnic groups is not threatening. They constitute our richness as a nation. There is a saying in Meru, which goes literally, “the magnanimity of a great man is determined by the variety of weapons he has in his arsenal.” This is because from the varieties of what this rich man has, he can always respond to any variety of assaults. In other words, the more of the different specifications of weapons he has, the more he is considered richer because this gives him a better advantage to control any situation. When this is applied to a country like Kenya, the more the number of the different ethnic groups with all their qualities and contributions to the general welfare, the more we are richer. The presence of each ethnic group invariably enhances us and supplies the lack in other ethnic groups; each complements others. Therefore, differences are for our enrichment and not a threat to the welfare of others.

On the theological level, since the holy Trinity creates all these differences, the more the differentiation of the ethnic groups in Kenya, the more we can appreciate the creativity of the Trinity. The differences manifest the different faces of the Trinity. The difference is an indisputable mark of God’s presence and active involvement in our history. Earlier we have said that the interaction among the trinitarian persons creates the

possibility of different beings (including different races, ethnic groups, languages, cultures, and religions) whom God includes into his fold. Since the different ethnic groups have their foundation in the Trinity and because of the trinitarian indwelling in each group, each contains an aspect of the Trinity. This explicates the presence of the gifts as areas of specialization which each of the groups possess. These are the different manifestations of the Trinity because the Trinity is the origin of the gifts.

God creates multiple modes of his self-manifestation because he is infinite and the creatures are finite. Thus, the creatures are intrinsically limited to contain the entirety of the totality of an infinite being. To this effect, God shares and gives to each person and each ethnic group something of his aspect. This is why the gifts of each ethnic group are at the service of the entire nation: each gift as an aspect of the Trinity is complementary of others, and not an issue for conflict. The complementarity of each ethnic group's presence fosters unity, harmonization, integration, community and does not frustrate communion.

If the principle of inclusiveness which is inherent in us, stemming from our trinitarian origin, is recognized and affirmed, we will discover differences as really attractive, colorful, exciting, and through cross pollination very enriching. The difference is not inimical to union because the differences are rooted in the oneness of our ontological origin, the Trinity. The reference of the different ethnic groups is still the Trinity; thus, differences cannot be a threat to communion. In the Trinity, divergence and uniqueness perfectly integrate without any tension. From this backdrop, the trinitarian community remains the model for the human community. The inner communal principle working in the Trinity is possessed in a microcosmic degree through grace in a human

being. This principle like all principles impels us towards union. However, as human beings with the effect of the original sin we are not easily swayed by this pull within us. We are still inhibited by selfishness from responding to this yearning for union with others. From this perspective, nothing can satisfy this yearning for union except God himself. This is because albeit we yearn for integration, complementarily, harmonization, and enrichment from others different from ourselves, we lack the full capacity to achieve this. Hence, we are in need of God's grace. It is only the grace of God in us, which can bring us to union with others. It is only the grace of God that can make us respond to the trinitarian invitation for union with God and for union among ourselves.

The stress on the divine action in creation should not obliterate the fact that we have our part to play. However, whatever we do is only a response to the grace of God in us. We can only co-operate with the Trinity who is communion. The question at this juncture is: In what concrete way (s) can we co-operate with the Trinity in order to actualize a community of different ethnic groups free from ethnocentrism? This will be by bringing to the awareness of the different ethnic groups the implication of our belief in the trinitarian concept of God as reflected upon in this section of the paper. This requires some concrete missionary strategies, otherwise what we have reflected upon will remain at the theoretical level. These concrete steps towards the dissemination, inculcation, mobilization, conscientization, of our people on the profound values we can draw from our belief in the trinitarian concept of God will be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

3.0 MISSIONARY STEPS AGAINST ETHNOCENTRISM IN KENYA

In this chapter, I wish to propose some practical ways of skirmishing ethnocentrism by way of inculcating on our people the implication of the trinitarian concept of God as reflected in the previous chapter. The first step is a redefinition of the African concept of community to transcend geographical and biological affinities and based on the trinitarian model of community. The ethnic concept of community can be transcended when a unifying factor among the different ethnic groups in Kenya is posited. The second step establishes Christ the Ancestor of Kenya, as this unifying factor. In the third step, I will suggest forums in which Christ the Ancestor of Kenya can be preached and celebrated.

3.1 The Redefinition of the Traditional African Concept of Community

The African traditional concept of community is based on geographical contiguity and biological affinity. A community is made up of members of a group of extended families who occupy a particular geographical area and share the same culture. Among the members of this community is a mutual interaction, reciprocity and openness to one another. Each member takes interest in the affairs of the others and in the communal affairs.

The mutuality in this community is inspired by a myth of a common ancestor from whom all descended. In view of this common descendancy, each person is related to the others by some proximate and remote biological link to which nothing can take precedence. Each person is a brother or a sister to the other because of this common ancestry. In other words, there is a common heritage and possibly a common destiny.

This unity in a mythological ancestor is used to explicate the common grounds shared by the members of the community like, common value system, common language, common culture and common universe of meaning.

As would be expected, these affinities inspire a strong sense of solidarity, unity and cohesion, which is often manifested in their defense of their community against any attack. The negative aspect of this concept of community is that it is often closed to foreigners and thus exclusive to the members of the community. The non-members of this community are often perceived as enemies and thus are resented from the community.

It is for the exclusive character of this concept of community that it is vulnerable to ethnocentrism. Since at the root of this concept of community there is a perceived link with an ancestor in whom all are one, whoever does not belong to this "ancestral tree" is considered an outcast, and is often treated as subhuman. One might argue against this point by indicating hospitality as an African trait. From my experience as an African, I cannot think of any African who can be hospitable to another whom he does not know. People can be hospitable to you only when you have introduced yourself and you are perceived as harmless and not from a community which is not threatening to their community. What I am presenting here is the initial subconscious attitude we display against foreigners in our communities. A guest might be welcomed after a link between the stranger and someone in the community (may be a friend or a colleague) has being established. If there is no such link usually, the stranger is perceived with suspicion and resentment. This is an attitude that has been there for ages prior to colonialism; thus colonialism and other factors only inflamed it and made it into a monster. Therefore, the

purported African hospitality is not an unlimited hospitality; it is hospitality for the friends of the members of the community only. It is for this negative aspect of this traditional concept of community, which engendered remotely ethnocentrism, that I am advocating for a redefinition of the concept such that it can accommodate foreigners within its ambient.

Royce Josiah in his book, The Problem of Christianity¹⁰⁶ distinguishes two concepts of community: the natural community and the genuine community. A natural community is a community made up of people who share the past and future together in a spirit, which serves as an integrative principle among them. This community is restrictive and exclusive, absorptive and admits only people with biological ties with its members.

On the contrary, a community, in Royce's opinion, is actually genuine

When many contemporary and distinct individual selves interpret each his own personal life, that each says of the other individual's past or of a determinate future event or deed: "that belongs to my life," "that occurred or will occur to me," then these many selves may be defined as hereby constituting in a perfectly definite and objective, but also highly significant, sense, a community.¹⁰⁷

Frank Oppenheim, commenting on what Royce regards as a genuine community notes;

[The genuine community] is one in which a living conscious union of love and loyalty binds members to each other and to their community and it to him. In it, members have been transformed from being "lost individuals" into such wholehearted servants of the community that they are opened to universal loyalty towards all minded beings and to the growth of universal loyalty to everyone.¹⁰⁸

Reflecting on Royce's distinction between the natural and the genuine community, one would notice that the natural community as a community built on biological and geographical affinity and which excludes and resents members of other communities is

¹⁰⁶ J. Royce, The Problem of Christianity (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), 248.

¹⁰⁷ Royce, *ibid.*,

¹⁰⁸ F. Oppenheim, Royce's Mature Philosophy of Religion (Notra Dame Ind: University of Notra Dame Press, 1987), 29.

akin to the African traditional concept of community as earlier demonstrated. It has the same criteria of geographical and biological affinity.

Royce's choice of term in depicting the other type of community as "genuine" shows that the natural type of community is not genuine in the sense of being the better of the two concepts of community. By implication, the traditional African concept of community, which Royce identifies as natural, is less than what a real community ought to be; it is wanting in some aspects. For a community to be genuine, it must be inclusive and open to others. Thus, if the African traditional concept of community is to be genuine, it must expand its horizon, accommodate, and identify with others who have neither geographical nor biological affinities with it.

Royce's genuine community is an ideal community, which welcomes all human beings. It is a community where "distinctive individual selves interpret the other his own self." In other words, a community where each person sees himself or herself in the other (an empathy) such that the other's past present and future belongs as well to his or her life. In this community, each human being takes the other human being as intimately belonging to him because they both share a living conscious union of love and loyalty and this binds them together. The scope of this community is unlimited: it is universal, is open to all human beings and elicits from its members a universal loyalty to every human being. Such a concept of community is what we are advocating for Africa with Kenya in focus. A concept of community which transcends ethnic boundaries; a larger community which welcomes, accommodates and cherishes the distinctive ethnic communities within its scope. A community which will offer a sense of belonging, through a common vision and common heritage, to all irrespective of their respective ethnic backgrounds.

It is interesting to point out that I am not suggesting a disintegration of the already existing ethnic communal structures. Rather a mutual expansion of the horizons of each of the ethnic communities such that each can welcome others and by this manner all the ethnic communities are brought under one larger community. The universalizing of the feelings of relatedness and belonging that are found within the natural community is my interest here. In other words, the broadening of the principle of cohesion within each group such that all are brought under one identifiable ancestry in which all are perceived as brother and sisters. In this way we would establish an ontological affinity among all the different ethnic groups and thus make one community.

Such a desired community of human beings must have the trinitarian community as its model. As we said in chapter two, the trinitarian community offers human community a model of community which is inclusive for all and unifies all people, irrespective of their race and ethnic background. In the trinitarian community, we also see a perfect harmonization of distinctions such that they cannot constitute any conflict within the Trinity. Therefore, if the ethnic communities in Kenya desire to transcend themselves to form a larger community of Kenyans, divorced of ethnocentrism, they must take the trinitarian community as their ideal. In this way, the Kenyan nation will be aspiring to be "a genuine community" in the words of Royce.

In view of the parallel between the community which Royce advocates and trinitarian community, whatever human strategies we may plan, there is still need for God's help with his grace. It is the function of the Spirit to effect the transformation of being in people by granting them the dynamic power of self transcendence, which will

enable them to struggle against their selfishness and sinful pride, and thus receive the ability to live a God centered human existence.

Now in what practical and human way can this desired community be realized? Before we delve into the question, I consider it pertinent to highlight that the new concept of community, which we are proposing, is strictly speaking not African. It is rather what I consider as the Christian contribution to the African culture.¹⁰⁹ Christianity is meant to transform what ever it finds imperfect in every culture. In this case, it will transform the traditional and natural community into a genuine human community, a community that will be universal, inclusive and common to all. In this way, it will be responding to the problem of ethnocentrism created by the natural concept of community.

Regarding the redefinition of the African concept of community, as we have seen earlier, the bedrock of the solidarity among members of the traditional community is the unifying factor constituted by the ancestor. Through the ethnic ancestor, all the members of a community consider themselves as having both biological and geographical affinity. Thus, they are one because they are the descendants of one ancestor. If we adopt this principle to unify all the ethnic groups in Kenya, we need to posit a common ancestor whom all the ethnic groups can accept and identify as their ancestor and they, themselves, as his descendants. This common ancestor may not necessarily evoke a sense of either geographical or biological affinity, but of an ontological affinity. I propose the declaration of Christ, as the Ancestor of Kenya. Christ the Ancestor is to be the foundational principle on which a new bond of relationship will be created among all the

¹⁰⁹The traditional African concept of community as we have seen is limited. To transcend these limitations we need a new different system of thought and this Christianity offers to us. Christianity has the capacity to fill in the gaps of the African concept of community. However, it can only do this conveniently by using the African categories.

different ethnic groups in Kenya. This new web of relationships is to constitute a new universal, inclusive and genuine community of Kenyans. To expound this idea properly, I shall begin by establishing the trinitarian ancestral relationship as the foundation of Christ's ancestorship; this will be followed by the establishment of Christ as Ancestor; and finally of Christ as the Ancestor of the Kenyan citizens and its underlying implications for nation of Kenya.

3.2 Trinitarian Ancestral Relationship

For Nyamiti Charles, to prove the existence of ancestral relationship in the Trinity, one has to apply the ancestral criteria to the trinitarian relationships.¹¹⁰ For a person to be an ancestor there must exist a kinship between the ancestor and his earthly kin. Thus, African ancestorship can be parental, brotherly, sisterly, clanic, and in most cases, the source of life of the ancestors' terrestrial relatives. In God, the obvious parallel to such kinship is the Father – Son relationship between the first two persons. Therefore, if there is any ancestral relationship at all in God, this exists between these two: the Father, being the Parent, would be the ancestor, and the Son would be his descendant.¹¹¹

Another element of ancestorship is that the ancestors usually acquire a new sacred status through their death. Such status includes superhuman vital force and other spiritual qualities obtained through special nearness to the Supreme Being. In God, the pendant of such status is the Father's sanctity (in the sense of *tremendum et fascinosum*) and the consequent unlimited power it implies. Such sanctity possesses eminently all the positive

¹¹⁰ C., Nyamiti, "Trinity From An African Ancestral Perspective," *ACS* 12 (1996): 38.

¹¹¹ C., Nyamiti, , "The Church as Christ' Ancestral Mediation: An Essay on African Ecclesiology" in J.N.K., Mgambi, L, Magesa, (eds.), The Church in African Christianity: Innovative Essays in Ecclesiology. (Nairobi: Initiative Publishers Ltd, 1990), 130.

elements included in the African conception of the ancestral sacredness. Unlike human ancestors, the Father enjoys this quality not through death but in virtue of his divinity.¹¹²

The third element is mediation. An ancestor is believed to mediate between his kin and the Supreme Being. Since the Father cannot be a mediator between the Son and a higher being to himself, there is no mediation in God similar to the one obtainable in the African concept of ancestor. But this lack of mediation does not annul ancestorship in God, because even in Africa mediation is not universally considered as a necessary quality of the ancestorship.

Whoever aspires to be ancestor must have enjoyed the reputation of having led a morally good life. Just as the African ancestor is the exemplar or model of his descendants' conduct, so also is the Father of his divine Son, who is his perfect image in being and activity.

Finally, the ancestor enjoys right or title to regular sacred communication with his earthly kin through prayers and ritual donations. This communication is often perceived as a sign of love, thanksgiving, confidence and homage to the ancestor from his earthly relatives. The ancestor reciprocates to this by being benevolent to such prayers by bestowing bodily and spiritual goods to his kin, as a sign of his love, gratitude, faithfulness and respect towards them.¹¹³

Distilling from the above, Nyamiti concludes that God the Father is analogically speaking the Ancestor of his Son, and the latter is his true Descendant. These two are entitled to eternal reciprocal communication in the Holy Spirit whom they produce as the fruit of their mutual love. The communication takes place through their reciprocal

¹¹² *ibid.*, 41.

¹¹³ Nyamiti, "Trinity From an African Perspective", *ibid.*, 42.

donation of the divine Spirit as their mutual Gift, Oblation and Eucharist. In this way, Nyamiti establishes the existence of ancestral system in the Trinity.¹¹⁴ It is on this basis that Christ is also an Ancestor.

3.3 Christ the Ancestor

The same ancestral qualities we find in the Trinity are also in Christ in his relationship to us. For as God-man he is our brother (kinship); he is absolutely holy (sacredness), he is our mediator (mediation) and model of Christian life; and through his divinity and redemptive function, he is entitled to our perpetual communication with him through prayers and ritual offerings, particularly the eucharistic sacrifice (title to regular sacred communication). Hence, Christ is both our brother and our ancestor. His ancestorship to us is rooted in the mystery of the Trinity, incarnation and redemption. As such, his ancestral status is his redeeming trinitarian Descendancy as incarnate Logos. Through his salvific ministry, his ancestorship to us gradually grew and reached its climax in his paschal glorification.¹¹⁵

It is in the power of the Holy Spirit that Christ exercises his ancestorship on our behalf through the same Spirit. Moreover, it is through Christ's Ancestorship to us that the Father has become our Ancestor. Hence we have two divine ancestors, the Father (as the Parent Ancestor) and the Son (our brother – Ancestor) in the power and the union of the Spirit.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁴ C. Nyamiti, "The Trinity as Source and Soul of African Family Ecclesiology," *ACS* 15 (1999): 37.

¹¹⁵ C. Nyamiti, *Christ an Or Ancestor: Christology from an African Perspective* (Zimbabwe: Mambo Press, 1988), 25.

¹¹⁶ Nyamiti, "The Trinity as Source and Soul of African Family Ecclesiology," *ibid.*, 39

3.4 Christ as the Ancestor of the Kenyan Citizens

Since Christ is the Ancestor of all humankind, as we have shown above, he is the ancestor of all Kenyan citizens, irrespective of their clan and any other ethnic group. In this manner, Christ will become a unifying factor among the different ethnic groups in Kenya. All will see themselves as ontologically related in Christ their Ancestor whose ancestorship is rooted in the trinitarian ancestral relationship. This implies a common descendancy from this Christ despite the ethnic differences. Through incarnation and redemption, Jesus Christ is really our brother in the Father and the source of our divine life. Christ exercises his ancestral mediation towards us through the divine Spirit whom he sends to us in order to bestow on us bodily and spiritual goods. While making us (through the same Spirit) his true brothers and sisters and descendants, he makes us also sons and daughters and descendants of the Father. By this newly found point of union in Christ the Ancestor, a type of solidarity is expected to spring up, a solidarity that transcends ethnic boundaries and defeats ethnocentrism to inspire openness and inclusiveness to others because they are all brothers and sisters among themselves through "Christ our Archancestor." This new web of extended relationship based on supernatural affinity is the new type of concept of community we are advocating for Kenya. It also corresponds to the Royce's genuine community as applied to the Kenyan situation. It is pertinent to say again that the model of this community is always the trinitarian community as expounded in the previous chapter.

One more thing to be discussed is how to evangelize our people to think and "ritualize" the new concept of community which has Christ as the Ancestor, and by perichoresis, the Trinity as its foundation.

3.5 How to Celebrate the New Concept of Community

I would suggest that annually, a week be dedicated to prayer for the unity of all the ethnic groups in Kenya. During this week, a series of preaching, seminar, or workshop on Christ the Ancestor and discussions on its implications for the Kenyan nation be held. This week could be concluded with the celebration of the Feast of “Christ the Ancestor of Kenya.”

In addition, at the celebration of the solemnity of the Trinity, which, in the context of the trinitarian ancestral relationship constitutes the foundation of the concept of Christ the Ancestor, the question of our unity in God could be the theme of the preaching. The trinitarian community has granted us through the mediation of Christ our Ancestor, the grace of building a community made up of people from every race and ethnic background. The preaching should also invite people to respond to this grace by striving to live in awareness of the common relationship of all Kenyans despite the differences in cultures. In fact, the ethnic differences conceived in the light of this new relationship will be seen as an expression of God’s immense benevolence and creativity since all are descendants of Christ the Ancestor. Since, the different ethnic groups belong to the same ancestral tree, each has to be respected, honored, cherished and acknowledged.

Another strategy is by enshrining in the catechetical instruction program some aspects of our unity in God, by exploring the notion of Christ our Ancestor based on the concept of Christ as the first born of the people of God. The implications of our believe in the trinitarian God is also to be part of this catechetical program.

There is a prerequisite for the effective inculturation of the proposals above. This requisite is that the Parish church within which these celebrations, preaching and catechetical instruction are to take place must be a genuine Christian community itself. The Christian community in the Parish is a community of believers who have been adopted through the grace of baptism and bestowed with the freedom and equality of the people of God. As a sacrament, the Church must contain that which it signifies; that is, the equality and togetherness of the people of God. "All of you who have been baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with him. There does not exist among you, Jew or Greek; slave or free person, male or female. All are one in Christ."¹¹⁷ Without social justice in the Church, the equality of persons will not be acknowledged in fact; the diversity of gifts, ministries and works will not be utilized; and harmonious interaction will be replaced by favoritism, conflict and smothering of some members' gifts.

Consequently, the Christian community must be an assembly made up of people from all sections of life, rich and poor, Kikuyu, Kamba, Luo, Kalenjin and a host of others. In this assembly, no one is to be considered greater than the others and the differences of ethnicity must be subsumed into one common Christian culture. The assembly must symbolize for us the basic equality and dignity of every human person vis-a-vis God, and therefore, the rights of every person to a fair share of the earth's resources which are God's gifts for all her children. The Church becomes in reality a community of the children of God, the descendants of Christ our Ancestor, when every member of the Church enjoys equal participatory opportunities without any domination of the parish activities by any particular ethnic group. This could be realized by distributing membership into Parish council such that each group in the Parish is

¹¹⁷ Gal 3:27-28;

represented. This is applicable to other offices in the Parish. Through this strategy, all the ethnic groups in the parish will develop a sense of belonging to the parish and make people understand in reality the idea of Christ as the Ancestor of Kenya. Therefore, for the local church to engage in celebrating the feasts of Christ our Ancestor and the solemnity of the Holy Trinity, the feasts at which I suggest that our common unity and equality should be preached, she must engage in self examination, other wise the church would be a counter sign of the Kingdom.

To conclude, if the majority of Christians in their different parishes and small Christian communities are evangelized to think of Christ as the Ancestor of Kenya, and to think and act in terms of our relatedness in the Trinity, gradually a new consciousness of the unity of the different ethnic groups in Kenya shall begin to emerge. It is the responsibility of these people to evangelize others by their conduct, manifestation of faith and conviction in the trinitarian ancestral relationship on which the Ancestorship of Christ is based.

CONCLUSION

This essay commences with a social analysis of the ethnocentric situation of Kenya. It then posits the exposition of the implications of our belief in the doctrine of the Trinity as the way to address the problem of ethnocentrism. To this effect, it delves into the exposition of the communitarian model of the Trinity and applies it to the Kenya situation. In the trinitarian community, the possibility of the creation of all human beings is envisioned. Thus we are one in the Trinity, both as the children of the Father and as the brothers and sisters of the Son. In this connection, our differences are not threats but rather riches and gifts from God. The way to actualize these implications of the trinitarian community for us is by redefining our traditional concept of community, such that it transcends geographical and biological boundaries. This is initiated by declaring Christ as the Ancestor of the Kenya citizens. The ancestorhood of Christ is based on the trinitarian ancestral relationship. With Christ as the Ancestor of the Kenyan citizens, the mental framework for the unification of the different ethnic groups in Kenya is established. The project is to be spread by the church which is truly an assembly of the people of God, where there is no form of segregation.

In the above manner, the aims of the essay are accomplished. As indicated in the introduction, the essay is geared towards making the Christian concept of Trinity intelligible to the African especially Kenyans. This is achieved in the presentation of the communitarian model of the Trinity. The Trinity as a community makes impact on the African mind because the African is already familiar with the concept of community and its ancestral dynamisms. However, for the African since the trinitarian concept of community is wider than the African concept of community, is invited to transcend the

narrow and familiar concept of community in order to build a community like the trinitarian community. Also by demonstrating and paralleling the ancestral relationship in the Trinity with the ancestral relationship in the community, the idea of Trinity is deepened in the African mind. Therefore, through the processes of comparing and contrasting the concepts of community and its ancestral dynamism, in the Trinity and the traditional African mindset, the African through the grace of God begins to create a mental picture and comprehension of the Christian doctrine of the Trinity based on the African background.

In order not to present the whole idea of the Trinity as an abstract image which has no relevance to our daily life, the essay makes it respond to the problem of ethnocentrism as it is in Kenya. The Trinity displays ethnocentrism as against the original vision of God for human beings, and indicates the inherent resources granted by God in grace to the human being for combating ethnocentrism. In this manner, the Trinity is relevant because it offers the hope of conquering ethnocentrism to Kenya and makes the Christian message a real 'Good News' to a desperate ethnocentric Kenya.

From the communitarian model of the Trinity issues a specific African model of the Trinity, the trinitarian ancestral perspective. As shown in the essay this model of the Trinity is at the foundation of the concept of Christ the Ancestor of the Kenyan citizens which we posited as a concrete response to the ethnocentrism. Christ is an Ancestor because he belongs to the Trinity among whom, there is an ancestral relationship. Thus, the response to ethnocentrism in Kenya is the trinitarian ancestral relationship as an African trinitology.

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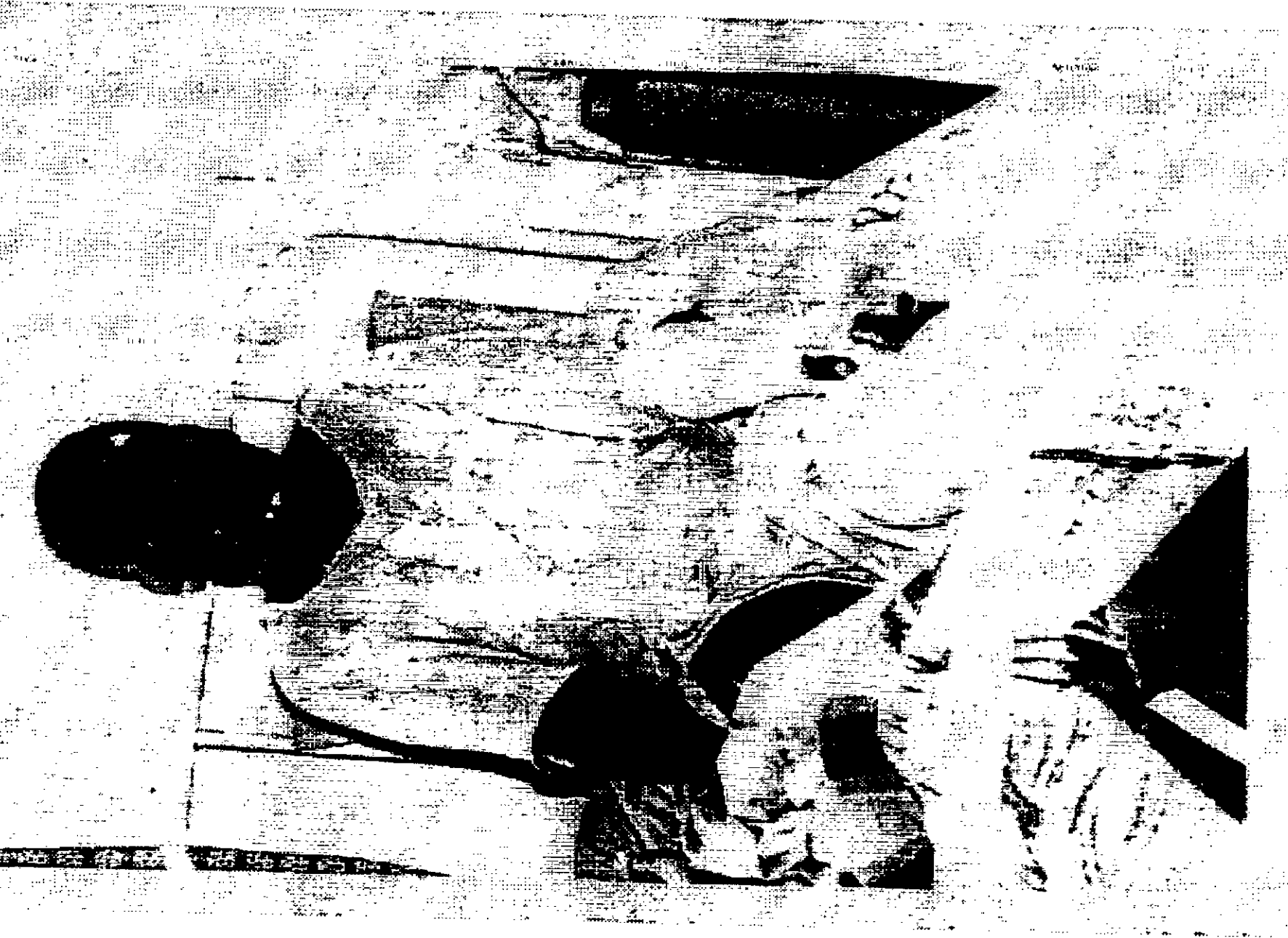
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A victim of ethnic conflict in Molo 1991.



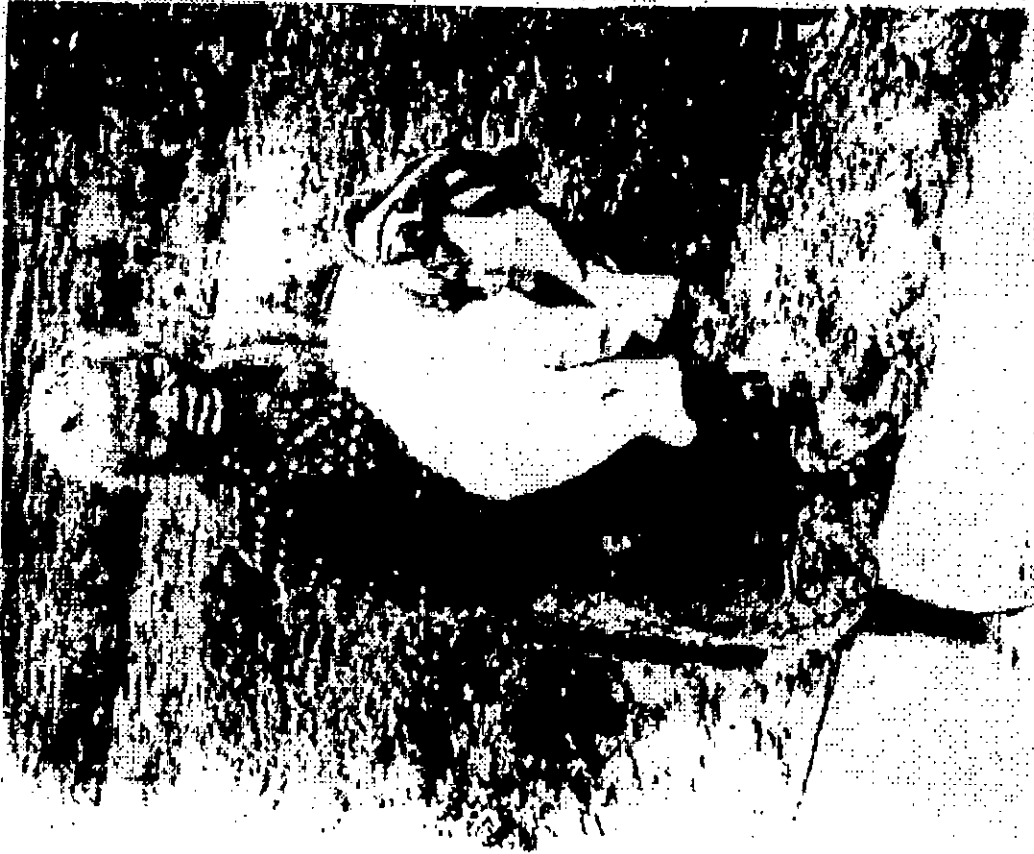
But these bodies are our bodies; the displaced are our refugees; we receive photographs
we cannot publish of corpses sprouting arrows like quills from porembles. These
Heaven fathers, brothers and sons; they





A house burnt during the fracas in Likoni 1997

MAY 1952



This old woman, a death victim from Manila, holds clasped, probably oil that is left in her hands as she prepares the next step and what the future holds.

Witnesses report of Medicine Prisoners.



Man who will arrive.



A Man inspecting his house which was burnt while he was absent ●