

Death and Burial Rites Among the Bukusu Quakers of Bungoma County in Western  
Kenya

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MARYKNOLL INSTITUTE OF AFRICAN STUDIES  
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NAIROBI AND WINONA, MN

As members of the Maryknoll Institute of African Studies of Saint Mary's University, MN faculty, we have evaluated the COLLOQUIUM PRESENTATION:

“Death and Burial Rites Among the Bukusu Quakers of Bungoma County in Western  
Kenya”

by

Zacharie Kyungu Kolala

and recommend that the degree of Master of African Studies be conferred upon  
the candidate.

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Thesis Advisor

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Thesis Reader

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Program Director

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Date

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OF SAINT MARY'S UNIVERSITY  
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### Dedication

To the Xaverian Brothers: those still alive, especially Bro. George Willenbrink, Bro. Lawrence Harvey, Bro. Placide Ngoie Munanga, Bro. Victor Kazadi Lenge, Bro. Philip Revell, Bro. Adalbert Degroote, Bro. Adrien Vulsteke, Bro. Crispin Kibao, Bro. David Mahoney, Bro François Musongo, Bro Jean de la Croix Kalumba, Bro. François Kilonda, Bro. Anani Kazadi, Bro. Daniel Ongeso, Bro Dominique Olondo, Bro. Germain Kisimba, Bro. Vincent Misiati, and Bro. Raphael Wanjala; and the departed, particularly Bro. Joris Degroote and Bro. Bernard Philpot.

To my late beloved father Edmond Kulongeziwa Masuka, my late beloved mother Marguerite Adalia Waziri Binti Mukwawa, and my late brother Kitanika Kulongeziwa, to the late Mama Stephanie Polombwe and to our former Xaverian Brothers in Africa who have passed away, Adolphin Kabwita Yava and José Katatula Kanganika.

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### Abstract

The thesis aims at understanding Bukusu death and burial rites in Bungoma and Kimilili, Western Kenya. The research was carried out among Bukusu in general, with a particular attention to Bukusu Quakers of different gender, age categories, married and single.

The study explored traditional death and burial rites as practiced by Ababukusu today in relation to Christian funeral rites. Cultural diversity and exposure to practices of neighboring ethnic groups, and to Christianity, have played an important role in the evolution of traditional death rites. Those who become Christians usually adopt the Christian burial rite and abandon the complicated traditional rituals. Africans yearning for modernization have often found themselves at crossroads when choosing which death rites to follow. Events such as funerals cause Africans be “Africans”, different from any others in the world. Certain questions constantly arise. What is missing in Christian practice that is an important part of Bukusu tradition? Is it possible to fill this void?

Thus, the study has revealed that Bukusu Quakers of Western Kenya continue to perform traditional death and burial rites because they believe that if they do not perform rites of purification, the spirit of the deceased will harm them. Examination of traditional ritual process and Christian funeral rites reveals that Bukusu Christians live with combination of fears: of misfortunes from ancestors, and of rejection by the Christian community. Because they feel that the Christian funeral rites lack important elements, they are forced to integrate traditional and Christian rites. Thus emerges the behavior pattern of “Christian by day, African by night.” Obviously, church leaders have become more concerned with issues of death and burial rites, and some still hold onto the early missionary prejudices that African traditional rites of passage are evil and demonic.

The research, therefore, suggests the necessity of an inculturation process among Bukusu of Western Kenya Province in their interactions with Christianity. Traditional death and burial rites among Bukusu cry out to be preserved today for the sake of family

welfare and safety. Many traditional rituals and practices have value because they bind people together; however, those that engage people in immorality or lead to financial ruin need not to be preserved. Changes in the traditional funeral rites are inevitable and to be expected. Community members ought not to ignore and reject those which are compatible with modernity and Christianity.

The study has made use of oral interviews, observations, in Bungoma County with the aim of pointing out new directions for the Bukusu. This study concludes that a dialogue is needed between African Traditional Religion and Christianity in order to create an environment which allows people to continue with their cultural practices insofar as they are compatible with Christianity. Such a dialogue can strengthen the Christian faith of the Bukusu and enable it to take deeper root.

This thesis recommends the establishment of competent Family Ministries in the various churches with qualified pastoral agents to help people as they move to other stages of their lives. Traditional rites of passage especially funeral rites, with all their rich cultural backgrounds, should be utilized by churches to comfort the bereaved. When people suffer the loss of a loved one, both the ancestors and the Christian God can sustain them.

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

ABC: African Bible Commentary

Act: Acts of Apostles

AEA: Association of Evangelical of Africa.

AIDS: Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome

AIPCA: African Independent Church of Africa

AMECEA: Association of Member Episcopal Conferences in Eastern Africa

ATR: African Traditional Religion

BGM: Bungoma

CUEA: Catholic University of Eastern Africa

DRC: Democratic Republic of Congo

EV: Evangelium Vitae

Ex: Exodus

HIV: Human Immunodeficiency Virus

Jn: Gospel of Saint John

Ksh: Kenyan Shilling

Lk: Gospel of Saint Luke

MIASMU: Maryknoll Institute of African Studies of Saint Mary's University

Mk: Gospel of Saint Mark

Mt: Gospel of Saint Matthew

PMFR: Pastoral Ministry in Funeral Rituals

Ps: Psalms

SCC: Small Christian Community

Sj.: Society of Jesus/Jesuit

SPSS: Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

USA: United States of America

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## Chapter One

### Introduction

#### 1.0. Background/Problem of the Study

Societies have developed different death and burial rites along the way in different geographical areas. These are performed with specific purposes such as to pay last respects to the dead, to console the family, to show sympathy to the bereaved family and to indicate companionship and solidarity. To attend a funeral, therefore, becomes one way to show innocence that one is not responsible for the death.

Among the Baluhya in general and the Bukusu in particular, people mourn and grieve by wailing, crying, and singing dirges to express feelings of personal and community loss. In the context of the ritual, almost every article used, every gesture employed, every song sung, every prayer recited, and every unit of space and time occupied means something more than what people can see. For instance, the Bukusu perform special burial rituals of shaving hair and slaughtering animals to express their grief and to show that they are not involved in the death of their community member (Kirwen, 2010, p. 150). Van Gennep quoted by Turner (1967) states that death and burial rites share the same process in three stages: separation, transition and incorporation (p. 94). Separation is seen in ritual context as a detachment of the deceased person's relatives from an earlier state. The individual and the family members then pass through a middle realm that makes members of the family not look back to the past as they are in a transition. To conclude the process, they symbolically mark a reentry into social visibility through incorporation.

However, the traditional concept of death is first of all a fact of the profane world. Then burial introduces one into a transition or transformation which is organized to express the individual's seclusion from secular life. In the process, rites of purification are meant to be a celebration of the removal of the pollution of death. Death and burial rites in Africa are therefore performed within the context of kinship. They are

also an expression of African philosophical and religious concepts of community and social life which are different from those of western culture.

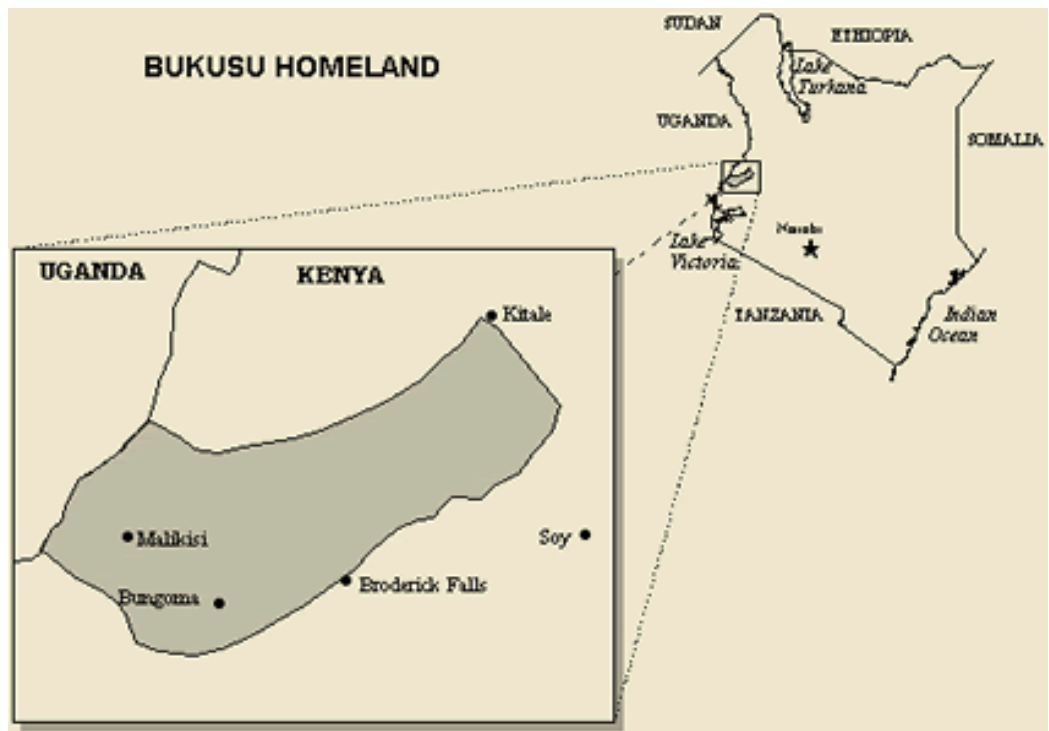
On one hand, people such as Bukusu engage in traditional rituals not only to transmit collective messages to themselves and to communicate with the spirits, they feel content and secure when they perform burial rites as a community. The underlying idea, as in African ritual systems, is communication in order to change human situations.

On the other hand, Christian death and burial rites characterized by some aspects of European culture seem not to satisfy per se the needs of people in the African context, and this is no less true among the Bukusu. Christian rites for death and burial are considered inappropriate because they make people to feel insecure and without power and vital force.

Indeed, this research is a further development and expansion of earlier research done at Miasmu for the course, African Traditional Religion Interprets the Bible, entitled, "The Place and Role of Symbols in Religious Communities in the Bible in the The Luo Traditional Society." That paper discussed the meaning of different symbols (objects and animals) both in the religious communities in the Bible and Luo traditional society. It emerged that the symbols of both contexts were used as networking tools to communicate with the spiritual world during the ritual process. Now, however, the task is to explore why the Bukusu of Western Kenya, despite being Christians, continue to perform traditional death rituals.

Before delving further into the study, a brief presentation of the geographical, historical, socio-economic, cultural and religious background of the Bukusu in general and the Bukusu Quakers in particular is necessary for readers to understand the context in which the study was carried out.

### 1.0.1. Socio-cultural, Religious, and Historical Background of the Bukusu



Map 1: Bukusu Homeland

The Bukusu are a Bantu group who belong to the larger Luhya ethnic group in Western Province of Kenya, Bungoma County. Their language is Lubukusu. Of the 98% of Bukusu who are Christians, 55% are evangelical. Their main source of income is subsistence farming and cattle rearing; other domestic animals also play an important role in their economy. Sugar cane and coffee are the two of their most important cash crops but now they are increasingly turning to maize and cassava as the main subsistence crops.

Quite a number of traditional customs have been maintained, some with adaptation. For instance, initiation rites still take place among virtually all sections of the population, but the timing has been adapted to coincide with school vacations, so as not interfere with the child's education.

The Bukusu have traditionally resisted modern influence. This was most vividly expressed in the Dini ya Msambwa (traditional church) movement, led by Elijah Masinde. The movement blends traditional religion with some Christian elements. It manifested itself clearly as a protest movement against colonial authorities. Its leader

was detained several times, mainly because of attacks carried out on administrative institutions. A ban was reinstated even after independence, because of an anti-establishment attitude in word and deed. As for religion, sacrifice was the basic ritual for the movement, just as for the traditional religion. Ancestor worship also played an important role. Despite Masinde's death several years ago, the movement still commands some following (Namulundah, 2011).

#### 1.0.2. Religious and Historical Background of the Bukusu Quakers

Western Kenya was the first place to receive Quaker Missionaries, in Kaimosi in 1902-3, though other missions soon followed. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, various Christian missions provided most of the schools in Kenya, and Quakers played an important role in the social and education sectors of the Kenyan society. Quakers and their schools are concentrated in Western Kenya to this day because of the tendencies of other missionaries from other churches to divide the country between them to avoid competition. However, education was offered primarily to support the mission work. The first school opened at Kaimosi in 1903 and over the next few years new mission stations and other schools were established in the surrounding areas and to the north, with the founding of Lugulu mission in 1913. The education on offer was limited to 2 years in most cases. The focus was on learning to read the Bible. To make this possible, the Bible and related study texts were gradually translated into Luragoli, the language spoken in the Kaimosi area. Joel Litu, an early convert and teacher, played a key role in translation. From the beginning, the missionaries encouraged girls to attend, and after some initial hesitation due to parents' reluctance to allow them to be educated, girls and were soon participating in broadly equal numbers with boys.

Kenya was a British colony at that time and after the trauma of the First World War (1914-19) it became increasingly evident to Kenyans that they needed education that would help them understand the ways of the West, and enable them to thrive in these circumstances, as teachers, local officials, medical workers, farmers and business

people. Quaker numbers grew from about 1000 in 1921 to about 7500 in 1929 and the schools expanded rapidly to meet these new needs. This meant that the schools became much more focused on vocational education and less on evangelization. The Kenya Legislative Council saw these new needs too, and in 1924, began to invest resources in schools and to influence their curricula and teaching quality. As part of this, Quakers set up two intermediate schools at Kaimosi, one for boys and one for girls for five years study program.

Kenyans became increasingly involved as teachers and preachers, in the growing Quaker church and its schools, under the leadership of the missionaries, who could not possibly meet all the needs themselves. Some significant early teachers include Yohano Amugune, Joel Litu, Daudi Lung'aho, Maria Atiamuga, Maria Maraga and Rasoah Mutua. The Quakers church was gradually organized into the typical Quaker substructure of local and monthly meetings, and they set up Quakers schools in their localities. The church and its schools grew, with strong community values, and many prospered.

After the Second World War, the campaign for independence in Kenya grew rapidly, and religious independence became part of that. It also stimulated more demand for schools, and for more advanced education. This increased the need for teachers with the professional skills to handle advanced work, and many of these were not missionaries in the old sense. Some saw themselves as missionaries with a professional role and others saw themselves as professionals who were also Quakers. At secondary level, many were still expatriate, though the Kaimosi Teachers College trained many primary teachers.

Some intermediate schools were recommended for upgrading to secondary status in 1949, including the boys and girls schools at Kaimosi, causing great tension amongst Quakers, as the northern area around Lugulu felt that far too much was concentrated in the south, at Kaimosi. In the end it was agreed that the boys' school be

transferred to the north, and where it became Kamusinga Quakers School in 1957. Secondary schooling meant participation in public examinations, which at that time were the Cambridge Overseas Certificates. The American Mission Board recognized this, and deliberately recruited a British head, Allan Bradley, to be the founding head of Kamusinga, to reflect the need to match the British secondary system. At independence in 1963, the Government of Kenya took control of all schools. Quakers Schools continue up to today, but they are very much part of the State system.

In short, Western Province is the home of the Luhya: the second largest ethnic group in Kenya after the Kikuyu. Almost everyone in Western Province is Luhya. There are more Quakers in Kenya than any other country in the world. Kenyan Quakers estimate at least 10,000 per yearly meeting with 150,000 or more. It is estimated that 3% percent of the population in Western Kenya, Bukusu included, is Quaker ([www.quakers in the world](http://www.quakers.in.the.world)).

### 1.1. Academic Discipline

This thesis has conceptualized, interpreted, expressed, presented and argued through the discipline of cultural anthropology. Its findings and observations will be grounded on field data collected by means of anthropological, sociological research methods and techniques, enabling an evaluation of the dynamism of society of the Bukusu of Western Kenya, especially, in the face of modern lifestyles.

Most African rites of passage, it must be understood, present as clear-cut pictures of death, burial and resurrection. In fact, the way people used to perform death and burial rites might change due to current economic, religious and political influences. As an illustration of social change in the face of such influences, the death and burial rites of Bukusu Quakers merit examination.

### 1.2. Statement of the Problem

Bukusu Quakers still cling to their traditional practices with regard to death and burial, despite embracing and professing Christianity. What is the explanation for this

“duality”? In African societies, death is associated with pollution. This pollution is often believed to be removed through appropriate rituals. Sometimes, the sexual act is included in these rituals. At times, the slaughter of a cock is used to remove the pollution. However, pollution is distinguished from sin. It is a quality of impurity and danger, while sin is an act against the moral order that places the actor in danger from the community. While sin is an intentional act, pollution may come from accidents or events beyond one’s control.

Some people might argue that traditional death and burial rites belong to the past; but it is important to ask whether the Gospel has fully penetrated all aspects of traditional rituals of death and burial. For contemporary African Christians, rites of death and burial are not yet a thing of the past. Bukusu Quaker will have no problem fulfilling traditional rituals after the death of a member of the community. But what about a Christian Bukusu girl who gets pregnant and dies in labor? Her family is not Christian but her aunt, with whom she lived, is. How is her aunt to prevent her father from performing rituals to prevent other girls in his family from dying before they give birth? What about a widow who is a Christian? How is she to prevent her in-laws from insisting that she fulfil death and burial rituals according to the traditional prescriptions in order to chase away the spirit of the deceased? If she refuses to comply, how is she to respond to the family’s accusations that her non-compliance was the cause of subsequent deaths in the family? What can be done to facilitate dialogue between Christianity and the Bukusu traditions of death and burial?

### 1.3. Hypothesis

The Bukusu Quakers of Western Kenya continue to perform traditional death and burial rites of purification because they believe these rites are effective in stopping the spirit of death from further harming them, something Christian death and burial rites do not achieve. Bukusu Quakers continue to perform traditional rituals because they believe that their great-grandfathers and -grandmothers were blessed, and they

considered the traditional rituals as a blessing to the community. To refuse to perform traditional rituals and go for the Christian ones only, is considered a disobedience to the ancestors, who believed and trusted that traditional rites of passage bring peace and love among their people.

However, among the Bukusu the rites of passage in general and the funeral ceremonies in particular are the areas of African culture least touched by the Gospel, even today. The Bukusu feel they are strongly connected to their ancestors through traditional rituals. That feeling is so strongly embedded in their subconscious that when anyone dies, the community will pay last respects in the traditional way, an action that is unquestionable. They enthusiastically undertake traditional rituals, because they believe that if one refuses to perform them, misfortune will befall them.

Moreover, traditional rituals are believed to have the power of cleansing the community and appeasing the spirits of ancestors. For instance, if a child dies by accident, a ritual must be performed to stop the spirit of death from killing more people in the community. The belief persists, even for those converted to Christianity. Nevertheless, traditional rituals can only be enlightened by the Gospel message if God's Word is as powerful in other cultures as it is in the Christian culture. In the dialogue between Bukusu traditional rituals and Christian rituals, both sides must acknowledge that African rites of passage serve as powerful communicators. In this way, the Bukusu Quakers in particular will attain a clearer understanding of and growth in their Christian life.

#### 1.4. Research Questions

- a) How do the Bukusu Quakers understand death and its causes?

Death and its causes cry out to be understood. For traditional Africans, as for those of many cultures in the world, death is associated with evil spirits and death brings pollution into the community. The Bukusu of Western Kenya associate death with evil, invisible, darkness, bisexuality or wilderness. For example, some Bukusu believe that

death is caused by magic power such as witchcraft that is motivated by envy or jealousy based on, for example, economic success of the person against whom witchcraft is directed. It may be also occur between co-wives driven by competition for the husband's attention, love and favors.

b) What are the traditional rituals of purification after death and why are they performed by Bukusu Quakers?

Bukusu traditional rituals after death can be viewed as an act of communion and communication with the spirits. Death and burial rites remove the pollution of death and restore normal social relations. Rituals among the Bukusu are performed to show respect to the dead and also to appease the deceased so that they may not come back as bad spirits to disturb the family and even cause another death. For example, rituals must be performed when a widow or a widower is remarrying. These are normally done close to the grave of the deceased man or woman and are open only to strictly chosen people. Another example is "Makumba." It is carried mainly to appease the spirits of the deceased and to wipe away any curses that might have befallen the family.

c) What are the conditions and circumstances surrounding the performance of purification rituals among the Bukusu Quakers and why?

The manner of death of a community member dictates the appropriate rituals to be performed. Bukusu Quakers perform purification rituals for a member of their community who has died a normal death. Those who die through suicide are not buried by relatives; the task is rendered by outsiders.

For example, only an older man with good moral standards is considered qualified to inherit a widow and to carry out a legitimate purification ritual. Young men and women are kept off because they are considered unworthy to conduct such a ritual. Women are kept out because they are regarded as unclean, while young men are disallowed because of their immaturity and lack of experience in life. Calamities such as drought are believed to result from the angry spirits of ancestors. Thus, purification

must be performed to appease the spirits and restore the normalities of weather in the community. Incest or murder, which are becoming increasingly common in the Bukusu community, are considered grave. Indeed, purification must be initiated immediately to obtain a remedy. In the light of contemporary changes, it is worthwhile to understand the reasons why Bukusu continue to perform traditional funeral rituals.

d) How does the death of a community member among the Bukusu Quakers affect the way of living of close relatives and why?

The Bukusu live and manage difficult moments in their community as any other community among the Luhya when death occurs. For instance, close relatives of the deceased suffer psychological and emotional pain. They lose happiness and the relationship with the deceased. The situation of the family becomes more difficult for those who have lost the bread winner of the family. More often, family members disagree on the distribution of wealth left by the deceased due to the lack of a testament indicating the legacy of inheritance. Sometimes, it might be rejection, enmity and disrespect of certain family members towards the bereaved, especially to women who are seen as the cause of vices in the Bukusu community. This was confirmed by Lucy when her brother died. Since he had drowned, some members of the extended family had not assisted them, because such a death is considered a curse in the Bukusu culture (cf. App.C. no.18). Eventually, the understanding of the effects of death on the community in this study is to enable us evaluate the necessity of a dialogue between Bukusu rituals and Christian ones.

e) Are there any Christian rituals that the Bukusu Quakers perform to purify the family members of the deceased? How are they similar or different from the traditional rituals?

Christianity is considered a salvation enterprise aimed at liberating people from the slavery of sin. Before one is buried, the celebrant says some prayers and then sprinkles holy water on the coffin and later in the grave or simply says prayers and

throws soil into the grave. Usually, close family members of the deceased are asked to say something as a tribute to the dead before the burial.

These Christian rituals seem ineffective in appeasing the spirit of the dead and calming the anxieties and fear of the bereaved. As a matter of fact, Christianity is seriously challenged today to the point that many families prefer traditional rituals which they consider more meaningful. Highlighted by both traditional and Christian funeral rites, this study cries out to find the effectiveness of Christian rituals, similarities and differences between Christian and Bukusu rituals in the life of the Bukusu.

f) Why have the Bukusu Quakers continued to perform traditional rites of purification despite their being Christian?

The reasons why the Bukusu Quakers persist in performing traditional rites of purification despite their Christian affiliation is the core of the current research. Some observers may say the faith of the Bukusu is not strong enough to deal with challenges such as death, hence their tendency to seek comfort in ritual and/or magic.

The researcher, obviously, sought to find out if the whole ritual system among the Bukusu has become a positive force as opposed to Christian rituals and, to determine whether Christian rituals are seen as inappropriate ceremonies without power or vital force, hence resulting in insecurity among the Bukusu.

g) How can dialogue be initiated between Bukusu traditional rites and Christian rituals of purification?

Dialogue between African Traditional Religion (ATR) and Christianity may be possible in looking at peoples' life experience. To illustrate, a young widow may be helped by the church to remarry. In the Bukusu tradition, this woman is meant to remarry - through wife inheritance. Although both traditions (Bukusu and Christianity) have room for remarriage, the difference lies in the approach. This matter provides an opportunity for dialogue between the Christian faith and Bukusu culture on wife inheritance. Another example is that of a very pious Christian. Throughout his life, he

has observed all the dogmas of Christianity. But he also belongs to a certain traditional upbringing, namely the Bukusu. When he dies, the church will acknowledge his faith and accord him a Christian burial. However, tradition will also play its part, whether this is prohibited by the church or not. As a Bukusu, he must be buried facing a certain direction; his body must be washed in a particular way and by specific people. He must also be buried in a certain style such as sitting, facing downwards, upwards or sideways. Sometimes, tradition may demand that the body be shaved or dressed in a particular manner.

Again, here is an opportunity for dialogue between Bukusu tradition and Christianity. In the dialogic encounters between religions and particular cultures, consensus is necessary as Bukusu tradition encounters the Christian faith. The Bukusu in general and Bukusu Quakers in particular ought to be given an opportunity and be encouraged to observe the teachings of the Gospel while upholding traditional practices that are meaningful to them and which are compatible with Christianity. In other words, they should be allowed to continue practising their traditions but in a new framework, one that is enriched by the Gospel. This way, the Bukusu Quakers will still feel secure in calling upon Jesus as part of their ancestral inheritance during traditional rituals. Jesus is invoked here as an ancestor who also confers security in the realm of traditions, in the same way that the traditional ancestors do. This is the inculturation goal towards which this research strives to make a contribution, such as to enable a meaningful dialogue and sharing between Christianity and the African/Bukusu culture. Therefore, the possibility of utilizing both Bukusu traditional and Christian rituals as powerful Gospel communicators need to be explored in order to encourage Bukusu converts to understand and to grow in their Christian life.

### 1.5. Significance of the Thesis

This research is important because it addresses contemporary challenges facing African Christians. In some cultures in Africa, the Gospel has rarely perpetrated all

aspects of the funeral. By focusing on death and burial rites which may be considered a resilient feature of the culture of the Bukusu of Western Kenya, this research offers a significant contribution for a better understanding of why Bukusu Quakers continue to perform traditional rituals.

With the influence of modernity, it is worthwhile to acknowledge that African culture is undergoing continuous changes just like Wafula, one of our respondent depicted the influence of modern life as we interacted with him. It was noticed that he was ignorant of most of important traditional funeral rites of the Bukusu community. For Wafula and some others, issues of culture and tradition seem not to meet their daily expectations. Wafula was unable to give a correct explanation on death and burial rites and yet, he attended a funeral just before he was asked questions on funeral rites. (cf. App.C. no. 28). These changes make the African culture to lose its identity and its family, community, socio-cultural and spiritual values including the rites of passage. Moreover, this research brings a significant contribution in the framework of African studies on the discussion about the inculturation process throughout rites of passage in the African context, particularly death and burial rituals among the Bukusu.

Indeed, findings in this study have proven right the changes which have modified traditional rituals into a sort of new traditional ways of burying people based on the influence of Christianity and modernity. Finally, this research is a stepping stone for researchers who want to do studies on the Bukusu as they commit to different kinds of forms of life like to belonging to a Quaker Church, joining religious life in the Roman Catholic Church, assuming religious leadership and other social leadership positions.

#### 1.6. Assumptions

1. The Bukusu Quakers understand the death of a community member as complete devastation and powerlessness which results in insecurity and loss of vital force. This study assumed that Bukusu Quakers understand death as an evil spirit which has the power of destruction. That is why when a young man or woman dies whether by accident

or through natural phenomenon, the Bukusu will always want to find out the cause of death - not by consulting a pastor or priest, but a diviner who is expected to decipher the misfortune or curse behind the death. They also consider death as a quality of impurity and danger which infects the community accidentally.

Indeed; this assumption was proven right by the majority of all the respondents. They argued that death is a disaster especially when it is caused by witchcraft, drowning, at child birth, diseases, murder, accidents, poisoning, and so on. Indeed, Bukusu believe that when a person dies, it is a great loss to the family and it is a devastation situation changes their life more often into a catastrophe. However, the respondents who did not agree especially women, gave a sort of theological explanation of death due to their remarkable presence and commitment in the church. They urged that death is just a transition from physical to spiritual dimension of existence.

Notwithstanding, most of the people we interviewed confirmed that in any circumstance death occurs, it is chaos and people show signs of grief for whichever age is the deceased person. Bungoma County refers to Kamasika as a mourning period of a parent or one of the relatives in the village or in the neighborhood.

2. The Bukusu perform traditional death and burial rituals in order to stop the spirit of death and other misfortunes destroying life among them.

This assumption aimed at checking if the importance and the necessity of performing traditional death and burial rituals among the Bukusu was to stop the spirit of death from harming people. The result findings on this assumption tested positive. It has been shown that out off one hundred and ninety-five respondents from different age groups, marital status, gender and religion; the majority had confirmed that Bukusu perform traditional death and burial rituals in order to stop the spirit of death from harming them. They argued that for most of the Bukusu traditional rituals imply first and most importantly as social support to the bereaved family accept the loss and

continue life with another outlook. It was also understood as a therapeutic process in the traditional society.

The necessity to chase away evils of death (Bisieno) has been very much stressed by many respondents who did share their experience about the importance of rituals. For example, Khulotia rite, to bring the spirit of the deceased back at home which has stayed outside the home for a long time and Kamasanyagila rite, to bring the spirit of the dead especially those who have died through accident, are the two rituals that go on up-to-date. Most of the time people slaughter a cow and celebrate in honor of the late beloved one. As a result, they experience harmony and peace after they have performed that ritual and life comes back to the normal (cf. app.C. nos. 21, 23, 30).

Without undermining, the opinion of the respondents who disagreed with this assumption, it is right and just to say that traditional rituals such as the burial of a barren women and the burial of twins undergo some challenges which are related to the cultural dynamism due to the modern lifestyle among Bukusu. Some traditional rituals, however, are being adapted in accordance with their situation and position in the Christian community. For example, some of the respondents affirmed that most Christians are against the Bukusu rituals and educated Bukusu disregard such rituals while the youth have no interest in rituals due to urbanization. Youth have no idea of what rituals mean for them and they also ignore the socio-cultural impact of rituals in their life. Despite these challenges, it has been affirmed that the Bukusu believe that traditional rituals are used to cleanse the community and to bring peace among the people. In most of the cases, the rituals are performed by Bukusu despite their being Christian. In fact, some of these men are catechists in their respective parishes while others are staunch Christian believers.

3. Purification rituals among the Bukusu are usually performed by elders early in the morning when spirits are not yet awake.

The research assumed that the Bukusu prefer to perform rituals at particular moments of the day when some people and other spirits cannot interfere with the ceremony. It also was assumed that the best times were early in the morning and late in the evening and that; young men and women cannot perform rituals since they are regarded as inexperienced and unclean people.

Bukusu avoid compromising the peace and harmony in the community. Regarding the importance of the ritual process, Bukusu respect very much the timing for the rituals to take place. Fear to deliberately provoke the spirits of ancestors, they also make sure that rituals are performed by the right people within the community in case of a normal death, but in case of suicide, the dead will be buried at night by few people or by outsiders so that misfortunes cannot come upon the entire community. Obviously, the large majority of the respondents who have proven the assumption right declared young men or women or any old man of bad moral standard not entitled to perform traditional rituals because of their social status. Indeed, young men are seen to lack life experience and unworthy due to some of their irresponsible behaviors; women are seen to be unworthy because of their menstruation. Admittedly they confirmed the assumption that this category of people namely young men, women and immoral old men, would likely endanger the Bukusu community once they are given a chance to perform rituals. They also confirmedly said that rituals among the Bukusu are performed early in the morning or late during the night around 11 p.m. and 4 a.m. (Cf. App.C. nos. 5, 16, 21, 30).

4. The death of an individual in the Bukusu community causes fear among close relatives because it pollutes life.

This study assumed that when an individual dies in the Bukusu community, the relatives fear to get into contact with belongings and other items of the deceased. The spirit of the deceased is believed to harm them if they do not behave correctly according to the dead's will. Further, it was assumed that the Bukusu fear getting into contact with

the corpse and with anything the dead person has been using since this is considered unclean. All the items which belong to the dead must be washed and not used until certain rituals are performed at the end of the mourning. Clothing of the deceased may be preserved for one year and then distributed at other another occasion in memory of the deceased.

Indeed, almost all the respondents from various variables confirmed the assumption. They observed that families would likely be confronted to haunting by the evil spirits, to the division in the family, to death caused by the evil spirits to name but a few. Actually, only few respondents disagreed with this assumption based on many of their life experiences, which include the conversion to Christianity. They eventually wish to get rid of Bukusu tradition.

Without willful lack of care and attention to the opinion of those who disapproved this assumption, it, therefore, explored the effects of the rites of purification as a tool to get rid of the pollution of death, and at the same time, to evaluate the effectiveness of traditional rituals as compared to the Christian ones.

5. Christian death and burial rites are considered ineffective among the Bukusu because they fear a resultant insecurity, a loss of vital force.

Christian death and burial rites are assumed fallacious because of their Western characteristics. In most of the African culture in general and the Bukusu in particular, they appear foreign and, so they are assumed inappropriate to the extent of being harmful to the community. For example, if a husband and a wife are Christians and one of them dies, in most cases the bereaved will be allowed to participate in Christian burial rites during the day. During that evening, members of the family, relatives and fellow widows or widowers will pay the bereaved a purposeful visit which will aim at convincing him/or her to go for traditional cleansing. On that occasion, bad experiences will be narrated to justify the reasons why and the benefit of going for traditional rituals regarding what happened to other bereaved who refused traditional rituals. Such a

person can embrace traditional rituals and thus consider Christian rituals to be ineffective and a source of insecurity in the community. Most of these cases are assumed to happen without the knowledge of the priest or pastor.

Without undermining the influence of Christianity and modern life style, some Bukusu have found themselves in an ambiguous position as they cling to their ancestral beliefs and being Christian at the same time. They feel part and parcel of the Christian community. This concurs with the following preaching on Christian commitment as it is said,

God wants us to put obedience to Him and seeking His righteousness and His Kingdom ahead of everything else in this life. Our commitment to serve Him wholeheartedly, however, may present us with difficult choices. Paul explains: All who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution (2Timothy 3:12). Therefore we need to evaluate, ahead of time, how strong our commitment to God is so we will be prepared to make the choices He wants us to make(<http://www.ucg.org/bible-study-lesson/bible-study-course-lesson-8-what-christian-conversation/faith-choice-and-commitment/>)

This kind of preaching is an excellent example that may influence people and make them hesitate on whether they have to go for traditional rituals or the Christian ones. Obviously when one is asked if he/or she would prefer to perform traditional rituals during funeral rites, the person will spontaneously say no. Thus, going for Christian rituals are effective and they look modern and acceptable by the Christian community, assuming that traditional rituals belong to private matters of the individual inasmuch as they are usually performed at critical hours: early in the morning or late during the night. In this way, it is, eventually, difficult for church leaders to interfere with the traditional ritual process. This assumption was, indeed, disapproved by the majority of our respondents from across all the variables analysed. They said for example that Christian death and burial rites are effective because people have strong

faith based on the truth of the gospel. With Christian rituals, people save time and money. Nowadays, people find Christian rituals to be more useful and so, they prefer them to the traditional ones.

This assumption, therefore, explored individuals' point of views which declined from the problem statement that Bukusu continue to go for traditional rituals and pretend to perform Christian ones, however, their wholehearted commitment to serve the church may be, something they would love to do openly during the day in the presence of church leaders.

6. Bukusu Quakers prefer traditional death and burial rites to the Christian ones because they feel content, safe and secure after performing the traditional rites.

This assumption emanated from the problem statement and the research hypothesis which states that, Bukusu continue to perform traditional death and burial rites of purification because they believe these rites are effective in stopping the spirit of the death from harming them, something that Christian death and burial rites does not achieve.

This study assumed that traditional death and burial rites confer safety and security to those who perform them. People feel that rituals are a means of putting at the service of social order the very forces of disorder that have been brought to the community unexpectedly through death. In addition to this, the study assumes that people believe the spirits of their ancestors are effective in protecting them when misfortune and curse come upon them. The effects of traditional rituals seem to be immediate and the results are right there in front of them as opposed to Christian rituals.

This assumption was confirmed true in some ways by respondents. The study shows, however, from the field work that many among the Bukusu had a story to tell of how the spirits have worked for them when they needed to appreciate and to appeal for peace and recovery. For some reasons, Christian rituals have proved unhelpful when they face the challenge of death. For example, some respondents like Nangendo,

Vicent, Masika and many others observed that the church is not able to implement the practice of Christian rituals among the peoples; that Christians are so divided and they fail to address adequately these issues. They also reported that it was even more embarrassing for them to find out that some church leaders were secretly involved in performing the traditional rituals; as a result, they fail to deal with traditional funeral rites in a more effective way. Moreover, sometimes church leaders, especially those from evangelical churches, simply condemn traditional rites without explanations. (Cf. App. C. nos. 5, 9, 19, 20, 30).

This is captured by a recent dispute between the Catholic Church and Bukusu elders on what position people should be buried in just as the Balunda clan among the Bukusu bury their beloved ones in an horizontal position up to this time. Nalianya reported that:

The Bukusu sub-tribe of the Luhyia community have for many years buried the dead in a sitting position as a sign of respect to mostly, prominent people. Some have abandoned the practice because after joining new religions, but traditionalists have kept it. Yesterday, the head priest of the Catholic Church in Kimatuni parish said he will not conduct any burial mass unless the two clans stop the practice. "How on earth can you expect the church to participate in such an archaic practice in the 21st century?" Fr. Sebastian Mang'oli posed. In response, the chairmen of the two clans - Martin Wanyonyi of the Balunda and Patrick Wabala of the Batura Bakhibi - said they are not ready to let go of their "culture that has been in existence for over 100 years". "It is our fathers who introduced the Catholic Church in the region in the 1920s and subsequently donated pieces of land to put up the churches. We don't want any conflict with the church, but our argument is that our culture must be respected," Wabala said. "The clergy should concentrate on matters of the soul and show us in the

Bible where the practice of burying people while in a sitting position is discouraged." (Nalianya, J., The Star. 4 July 2012).

7. Bukusu Quakers can deal successfully with issues of death and burial rites if they facilitate penetration of the Gospel in every aspect of traditional funerals.

This assumption underlined the insufficiency of Christian death and burial rituals among the Bukusu Quakers in Kimilili and Bungoma. The Gospel message is still assumed to be predominantly western and is based on a partial understanding and misconception of African rites of passage. It has proven to lack a pastoral ministry capable of addressing adequately the reasons why Bukusu Quakers continue to perform traditional death and burial rituals. The researcher was, therefore, convinced that possibilities of integrating African rites of passage in communicating the Gospel were to be explored.

Notwithstanding the challenges people have in expressing their Christian faith in regard to death and burial rituals, it was assumed in this study that there might be a possible dialogue between African Traditional Religion (ATR) and Christianity if one has to accommodate the other. In fact, Christianity would have been more effective in the traditional ritual process if it was opened to an inculturation process that requires it to utilise rites of passage as a powerful communicator of the gospel. This can be illustrated as follows. When a couple is in conflict and they receive a remarkable visitor from far, they will observe a ceasefire for the duration of the visit. They will do everything to hide their dispute and pretend to live in peace. The more the visitor stays around, the longer peace will prevail in the house. The 'welcome process' of the visitor has made the two spouses to disarm themselves in order to accommodate the visitor. If they do not do so, their home will be cursed and nobody will visit.

If Jesus is accommodated in the traditional ritual process as an ancestor, in some cases the Bukusu Quakers would continue to do traditional rituals with a new outlook, just as the large majority of respondents who approved this assumption said

that they would wish dialogue between Christianity and African Traditional Religion to be possible, in this case a dialogue on death and burial rites. By doing so, Bukusu people and the rest of their neighbors come up with a better understanding of the cultural mutations in their lives. Further outcomes of this process will be better care and treatment of widows and orphans who are the most venerable when death strikes in the Bukusu community.

### 1.7. Limitation and Scope

Death and burial rituals are an expression of a community's communication with the spirits in the family context. Family is considered the basic unit of every human society in which rituals take place. This research was based on the Bukusu community of Western Kenya and has been conducted in Bungoma County. The research variables were limited demographically to men and women, both Quakers and non-Quakers from the Bukusu community. Adult men and women were among the two most important targets because they played an important role in the ritual process. In fact, they were an important resource to our research in getting the right information on how effective the traditional ritual process is.

These respondents have helped the researcher to get information on how the perception of traditional rituals has evolved in the Bukusu community versus the Christian one. The researcher took in consideration aspects of both literate and illiterate respondents in order to get different views on the challenges of the whole ritual process. This, however, was a way of taking into account changes and challenges that occur in the Bukusu community that is exposed now to the waves of modernism. The minimum age for respondents was 25 years old. Besides, assumably a young man of this age has gone through initiation and he is married or he is yet-to- get married. This could give him the right to participate fully in different activities under restrictive roles he will play during the ritual process in the community.

In many cases, it was found out that young men were associated to the ritual process in providing their energy and strength when they were needed for the purpose of the ritual in digging the grave; carrying the coffin to the grave and slaughtering animals. At the same time, these young men served as “field assistants” to the elders while being initiated on how the ritual process should be conducted. Eventually, young men were resourceful to this study in their role as participant observers. In a concise manner, this study has mainly analysed four variables among the Bukusu: 1) gender which comprised men and women 2) Marital status, both married and unmarried people, 3) The age variable comprised respondents of twenty five years and above, 4) Religion was based on Christians with a special attention to Quakers, but also including various Christians such as Roman Catholics, Protestants from mainstream churches and those from evangelical churches.

#### 1.8. Definition of Terms

**African cultural values:** They are beliefs, customs and practices from which individuals or a community in an African setting derive life’s meaning. They are not only considered as devices to mould and to evaluate way of life, but they are also used as the moral cord which the society is supposed to maintain as a status quo.

**Burial Rites:** Like any other Luhya community, the Bukusu define burial rites as an expression of grief over loss and an appropriate way of giving the deceased a decent leave of the world and to enter the spirit world. These rites are considered as networking systems to communicate with ancestral spirits as one moves the living world to the ancestral world.

**Death:** Bukusu define death as something evil and negative, something that people do not speak about in ordinary life. It was also defined as diatral situation which brings chaos and pollution within the community.

**Pollution:** This is defined as a quality of impurity and danger which may result from accidents or events beyond one’s control, to say it in other words, people believe

that pollution is the result of impurity one has brought to the community as death occurs. So, whoever is in contact with the dead person or the ones who are related to the deceased are automatically contaminated by the impurity of death. Therefore, a proper ritual is to be performed in order to remove it otherwise it can harm people in the community.

**Purification:** This is the act of purifying or removing contaminants from something or somebody. For example among the Bukusu, a death ritual is a procedure that helps the community to appease the spirits of death as they send off their beloved one or else as a procedure that people follow as they purify the community from bad spirits in case of an abnormal death such as suicide and drowning.

**Ritual:** It is a religious or solemn ceremony involving a series of actions performed according to a prescribed order.

### 1.9. Description of Remaining Chapters

This research has five chapters. Chapter one is concerned with the presentation of the work as far as death and burial rites among the Bukusu are concerned. A clear presentation of the academic discipline and field are provided according to the topic of the thesis. It clearly explains the research hypothesis which was checked out through the result findings from the respondents in accordance with the problem statement. This chapter, therefore, clarifies and expands the research questions used for the collection of data. It also gives the significance of the thesis, by way of explanation the importance and more especially the contribution, this study can make to the academic field and to the society in general. Moreover, this chapter provides explanations of assumptions made for the research and it crosschecks them whether they were confirmed or rejected by the respondents. In the end, it presents the areas in which the research was carried out and defines the different terms and words used throughout the thesis.

Chapter two outlines how the collection of data was carried out. It describes the methodology used for the study and explains in details the method and approaches used

to collect the data. This chapter displays the sociological approach, the interviews and the in-depth interviews conducted to gather the data without undermining the dynamism, the challenges and changes on how Bukusu of Western Kenya deal with death and burial rites in Bungoma County. Both qualitative and quantitative data were gathered and evaluated in regard to the validity of the findings and conclusions. It finally describes all the variables explored in this research, namely age, gender, marital status and religion.

Chapter three presents results from the field related to the topic, the problem statement, hypothesis, significance of the thesis and findings to research questions. It also gives results on assumptions, limitations and scope of the study. It systematically analyses the data gathered in relation to the topic, the problem statement, the hypothesis of the research, the significance of the thesis, the research questions and all the assumptions. This chapter is a sort of valve on the grounds of this study, it; therefore, analyses the quantitative and qualitative data and findings on the worldview of death, the changes and challenges it has been going through among the Bukusu. Thus, statistics, thematic, frequency distributions and chart are used in this chapter in order to present and to analyse the research findings.

Chapter four deals with literature review related to the whole work as described in Chapter three. It presents the literature reviewed in accordance with the topic. Academic materials available for this study such as published articles, reports, books, documents are used in this chapter to support or to disapprove the result findings of the field research.

At the end, Chapter five presents the discussion, summary, conclusions and recommendations for the reader and for further study. It discusses the results findings and the literature review. Eventually, the hypothesis, the statement of the problem, the research question, the significance of the thesis and the literature review are brought

forth for discussion and interpretation. This chapter, finally, presents the personal point of view of the researcher, the recommendations and conclusions of the thesis.

## Chapter Two

### Methodology

#### 2.0. Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodology used in this study. It describes the methods and approaches used in this study. Thus, ethnographic studies helped the researcher to look at the dynamism of the cultural behaviors among the social structures of the Bukusu whereas the sociological approach was employed in the various observation made and while recording the findings.

Indeed, the investigation has confirmed various implications of the modern life style and the exposure to Christianity to be a source of conflict and a great impact in the changes of behavior and on the cultural practices as it is the case of funeral rites among Bukusu of Bungoma County in this study.

This chapter, therefore, describes the sociological approach, interviews, observations and in-depth interviews conducted during the field work. It also took into account the changes and challenges during the funeral rite among the Bukusu. The sample procedures, the kind of population and different criteria used were closely looking at in order to collect data and to evaluate the church's implication on issues of death and burial rites. It describes all the variables (Age, gender, marital status and religion) explored and explains the kinds of data quantitatively and qualitatively collected and finally makes evaluation regarding the validity of the findings and conclusions.

#### 2.1. Field Research Process

This section describes the methods and steps that were used in field work. It explains how the research was undertaken, including collection of quantitative and qualitative data. The researcher gathered quantitative data through two hundred self-administered questionnaires which were distributed to respondents with the help of a field assistant. The questionnaires were filled at the convenience of the respondents. We

distributed during work days and on Sundays, especially when people gather for Sunday church service for those who are Christians especially Quakers. We actually did not meet a Bukusu who claimed to be a non-Christian. But we rather met those who do not go to church regularly. Thus, the questionnaires were distributed to these categories of Christians in the afternoons because this was the leisure time period for most people in Bungoma and Kimilili.

The researcher was deeply involved with the social situations of Kimilili and Bungoma areas through eighteen (18) home visitations and meeting thirty-five (35) individuals for oral, face-to-face interviews using structured questions. We distributed the questionnaires and carried oral interviews in the following places: in Bungoma County we went to Kabula, Kanduyi, Kibabi, Kimatuni, Kimwanga, Kitinda, Mamasha, Marobo, Mateka, Mayandja, Musikoma, Namamuka, Nashiyanda, Siaka village, Samoya, Sangalo, Shiyanda, Bungoma town, Mukholi village and Temba Temba, plus Kimilili town.

These interviews took place in various steps. In this study, however, contacts with people were made in advance through home visitations. Interestingly, most of the respondents directed us to other respondents identified as wise and more knowledgeable on Bukusu culture. For places around Bungoma town, the interviews were conducted during evening times because most of those people were available at that time. It usually went up to 9 p.m. Long distances such as Marobo, Kimilili, Kimwanga, Nashiyanda or Temba Temba, interviewed were conducted during the day from morning to evening (9 a.m. to 6 p.m.). Unfortunately Group interviews were almost impossible to achieve. Only four groups interviews were achieved in this study due to its coincidence with the time of political campaigns. It also made the collection of some questionnaires difficult to realize on time and day due. For example, it became dangerous to do more visits in Kimilili because of some killings which were going on based on political competitions. So, people fear to be seen in groups during that time.

Nevertheless, the main approach was qualitative. It, eventually focused on the stories, the expressions, the sayings and events that respondents narrated on their personal life experience in relation to death and burial rites among the Bukusu today. Thus, the data collected was systematically organized, filters and recorded according to the outline of the topic for a further analysis.

The use of quantitative approach consisted in distributing two hundred self-administered questionnaires to various respondents with the help of the field assistant. The respondents were requested to fill them in. Most of them did it in two weeks' time or on their own convenience and they were collected later by both the researcher and the field assistant. In fact, the quantitative data was mainly numbers or statistics related to the respondents various situations, events or challenges which were given to the researcher. Participation in the social situation of the Bukusu in Bungoma County and Kimilili through home visitations, meeting people, attending four funeral ceremonies as part of the participant observation (which all a mixture of traditional burial rites and the Christian ones), helped to respond to the problem statement, test the hypotheses, answer the research questions, show the significance of the thesis and confirm or negate the assumptions.

## 2.2. Field Assistant

A qualified field assistant was employed for this work and he adequately trained to collaborate and facilitate the work. Before going to the field, at least forty-five minutes in each meeting were spent to plan and instruct him on how the interviews and questionnaires were supposed to be administrated and collected. He was available, indeed, for a period of two months during which he assisted the researcher with data collection.

He was an educated man and a person of high moral standing, understanding and familiar with the research areas, namely Bungoma County due to the fact that he is a Bukusu and native of the areas. He was fluent in Lubukusu and Kiswahili, the

common local languages spoken in these areas. Having these on his C.V., he was very helpful working with the researcher in advising him on how to behave in the Bukusu culture while approaching the respondents. He also taught the researcher some of the habits, customs and taboos in a Bukusu culture. For example, it is not good sign for a visitor to refuse food and for that matter, Bukusu people cherish very much a visitor and they make sure there is food available for those who come to visit. In most of the cases, a chicken was prepared for both the researcher and the field assistant. They were called “Bakeni, Bhasakhulu”(the visitors, the elders). In case, a chicken is not prepared, they were given one or two chickens to carry home.

This helped the work to be done smoothly and to learn how to partially understand the culture of Bukusu in order to avoid any cultural shock, misunderstanding, prejudices and conflicts. From this came spontaneously the expression, Babukusu basima barende, meaning Bukusu like/love foreigners, outsiders or aliens.

However, his key responsibility was to assist the researcher to find respondents, to conduct oral interviews, to administer the self-administered questionnaires and the collection of questionnaires for analysis was very well achieved. The field assistant, eventually, helped the researcher in translating some data from Lubukusu and Kiswahili to English where there was need.

### 2.3. Research Instruments

The research aimed at getting enough relevant and diversified information on the Quaker Church’s evangelisation vis-à-vis traditional practices on death and burial rites among the Bukusu. To reach our goal, various research instruments were used namely, self-administered questionnaires, stream of consciousness and in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, group interviews and active participant observation.

The researcher did a pilot survey of forty questionnaires, and then self-administered questionnaires were distributed to two hundred (200) individuals, both men and women, the Quakers and non-Quakers and social-economic backgrounds so as to get their views and opinions on the topic at hand. The questionnaires had forty-five questions in all related to the topic, the problem statement, the hypothesis, the significance of the thesis, the seven research questions, the seven assumptions and the limitations and scope. They were collected later by the researcher or the field assistant for analysis. But only one hundred and sixty (160) were collected back. This questionnaire was helpful in the sense that it allowed to gain time for more oral interviews. At this point the data collected were easily quantified for statistical analysis. But many respondents complained that questions were many to answer and some felt that they could only answer half way. To them questions looked alike. Some other respondents said that they wanted an explanation about it before filling it. To illustrate, one of our respondents remarked that “the number of questions is relatively high. This is likely to affect the objectivity of some respondents as it requires a lot of time, just like an examination. Some of your terms are not well defined or your target group has been mixed. So, this questionnaire may have been meant for the faithful of this church. However, it has handed into the hands of respondents of mixed faiths who may not give correct responses as envisaged”. To put it in other words, it lacked an interaction between the researcher and the respondents, especially the group targeted. As a result, about three per cent of all the questions asked in the questionnaires did not have all the answers which the research had no control over it.

Thirty-five (35) in depth interviews including streams of consciousness interviews were conducted. Most of the data was collected with individuals who were identified in advance. There were thirty-nine questions with at least two questions related the hypothesis, the problem statement, the limitation and scope, the significance of the thesis, the seven research questions and the seven assumptions. Based on

Spradley (1980) research methods namely descriptive, structural, hypothetical, incident/story, functional, contrast and personal, it is quite evident that these questions were not asked in a formal way with a systematic order. They were asked at random and the answers which came in were flowing from the respondents as in a normal conversation. It took approximately two hours to finish up an interview. Moreover, the researcher's knowledge of English, Kiswahili and a bit of Lubukusu facilitated the data collection.

Group interviews: it was found out that Bungoma County had different groups organized in terms of quarterly Quaker meetings. It was, however difficult to meet them because their schedule was not compatible with the time to get there and the distance. So, there were only one group of pastors, two groups of elders, and one group of early adults that were interviewed.

Active participant observation: during the time spent in Bungoma County and Kimilili, there were opportunities to attend funeral rites. The aim was to observe how the funeral rites were conducted in different places with a special attention to the way church leaders were dealing with the ritual process. During that moment, the researcher could observe how people still bury their loved ones without undermining some traditional practices despite their being Christians. This was one way to confirm some of correspondents' observations and comments about the Church ministry on families as Bukusu engage in funeral rites.

Eventually, these instruments helped to gather the views of respondents on the effect of traditional death and burial rites as compared to the Christian ones and how the Church's evangelisation process addresses them.

#### 2.4. Research Methodology

This section of research thoroughly explains and justifies the approach used in the study. It also justifies and explains the selection of the population, the sample size, the sample methods, the criterion for inclusion and different variables.

### 2.4.1. Populations

The population in this research is Bukusu of Western Kenya living in Bungoma County because of its rich cultural heritage through the decade. Bungoma County is a county in the former Western Province of Kenya. Its capital is Bungoma but its largest town is Kimilili. Kimilili has a population of 1,375,063 and an area of 2,069 km<sup>2</sup>. The Bukusu, however, occupy much of the county; they are resilient and flamboyant people who stood up against British rule in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Moreover, they have produced many prominent people that have served in the Kenyan public life among them such as the late Hon Wamawla kiijana(former vice president), the late Elijah Masinde (founder of Dini ya Musambwa), Sudi Namachaja (chief during colonial days), Liuka Namulala (community fore teller) to name but a few. Indeed, Kimilili is a town occupied mainly by the Bukusu and Sabaot communities. Its proximity to the fertile slopes of Mt Elgon, on the Kenya-Uganda border, has made it a trading center for agricultural goods and services (<http://www.statoids.com/yke.html>).

The population of the study was accessible because of its geographical location and the language spoken (Kiswahili and English) by the majority of the people. But, sometimes, transportation on a motorbike “Boda” (local name of public means of transport by motorbikes) was not easy to handle because it used to carry two people at one seat. The other reason of the selection of this population was because of its different socio-cultural diversity. This was resourceful in this study as different challenges in the funeral rites were encountered by the Bukusu as they converted to Christianity. Without undermining its potentiality in population, it is worthwhile to note that all the Bukusu from different clans and religion were not interviewed since the research was focused on Bukusu Quakers of Bungoma and Kimilili.

### 2.4.2. Sampling Procedures

Due to the fact that Bungoma County is large, the target population was limited to Bungoma Town and some of its neighborhood locations in order to have a clear

picture of the topic of the research which was Death and Burial Rites among the Bukusu Quakers of Western Kenya.

As mentioned before, the population was randomly selected from among the residents Bungoma County. These were places where the Quaker church is located in Bungoma County. This was helpful to both the researcher and the field assistant in identifying places to administer the two hundred questionnaires to individuals related to our variables.

However, the population studied, consisted of the churches in the list that corresponded to the numbers in the simple random sample (1, 3, 5, 7). This is because same phenomenon in more than one locality enriched the study. This simple random sampling was applied to help choosing respondents randomly, so it enabled the researcher to reach people in their remote places such as Marobo, Samoya, kanduyi, kibabi, Kabula, Siaka Village, to mention but a few.

This research employed two sampling techniques. First, we used the snowball method where a family or interviewed referred us to another family or individual. It was used where families have gone through difficult funeral rites and they seemed to be rejected by the church and their families. So, an individual interviewed will direct us to another for more information. Finally, we used the purposive or judgment sampling method which helped us in sampling groups of elders, religious and political leaders and other residents of Kimilili and Bungoma. This directed our interviews on a particular purpose of our research: to find out the contribution of the Quaker Church in addressing challenges of death and burial rites among the Bukusu without undermining the opinion of other Bukusu Christians.

#### 2.4.3. Criteria for Inclusion

The aim in this study ought to understand and evaluate the effectiveness of traditional Bukusu funeral rites as compared the Christian ones in Bungoma County.

Different parameters and criteria of inclusion were taken into account during the field work.

Bukusu Quakers were the first target of the research. Therefore, the research gathered relevant information from adults as indicated earlier. The people interviewed in different areas of Bungoma County were essentially married only few among our respondent were single. In most of the cases, married people were interviewed alone since it was difficult to find the available at the same time. For instance, a couple we interviewed at Kabula was organized in the sense that while talking to the husband, the wife was busy preparing food for the visitors (the researcher and the field assistant). At the end of the interview, it was very hard to get few interact with the wife. Indeed, weekdays were also difficult to find to the two espouses, but some interviews were conducted during the day with women and men together. Most of women interviewed were found at home doing household, and few of them were at work.

Adults aged twenty five years and above who are civil servants, business people, permanent and casual workers and others was another important inclusion criteria. The research was specifically focusing on the age factor since this determined the validity of a ritual in the Bukusu community as the Bukusu custom stipulates only old people who are of a good moral standard were allowed to perform a ritual. Moreover, old people and young people have different views and understanding of the ritual process. The elderly people were enthusiastic in their sharing of traditional rituals. They were more resourceful and more active to the extent of giving recommendations of what the church should do to address adequately issues of funeral rites while youth found it useless and backward. For some of them, what matters today is to have a good life standard and to get a job. Issues of death and burial rites belong to the past.

Being in an area (Bungoma County) of diverse religion and beliefs, mainstream churches and other evangelical were equally distributed the self-administrated questionnaires provided they were Bukusu in order to get different views since the

research was mainly focusing on the traditional and Christian understanding of funeral rites which included also other Christians apart from the Quakers.

The gender variable was also an important criteria of inclusion which did have opportunities to be applied to everybody. All respondents had a chance to participate in the discussion, sharing their views though some women could not talk in the presence of some men. This was due to the culture perception on women among Bukusu. For Bukusu, women are not supposed to deal with men affairs unless they are given permission. This was confirmed by the result findings. Out of one hundred and sixty hundred self-administrated questionnaires which returned distributed to both men and women, thirty percent (30%) came from women.

Nevertheless, education was a variable which did not impact too much on the way people were expected to behave while engaging in the ritual process as this study involved both literate and illiterate, but it only help the study to get different views based on the cultural perception of death and burial rites among the Bukusu.

Indeed, the languages used during the research were essentially Kiswahili, Lubukusu and time to time English. They were spoken mostly in the Bungoma County and Kimilili. The researcher's knowledge of these languages namely Kiswahili of Kenya, Kiswahili Sanifu, a bit of Lubukusu and English facilitated the study despite the fact that the field assistant could help to translation some expression from Lubukusu into Kiswahili when the researcher which were unknown to him.

#### 2.4.4. Description of Variables

The study was based on a sample of two hundred people through oral interview, questionnaires, and depth interviews including streams of consciousness and group interviews. The variable in the research included gender, age, marital status and religion.

Gender: Men and women were interviewed during the field work in order to get different views and a clear understanding of death and burial rites. Gender is taken into account in this study because of the cultures perception of women in the Bukusu society.

It was found out that the way men were responding to issues of traditional burial rites was different from those from the women. Surprisingly, these women who, in most of the cases, supported the idea that people who deserve to be buried in traditional ways can be given that chance if these rituals are compatible to Christianity whereas some of them, especially the widows wanted to get rid of anything related to traditional funeral rituals.

Age: People of twenty five years and above were targeted in this study to be more resourceful than respondents below this age range. The informants of this age were to share their experience of funeral rites with a lot of enthusiasms and passion. They could give adequate suggestions and opinions on death and burial rites as compared to the Christian ones and how the church addresses it.

Indeed, age is an important variable among others in this work. Bukusu traditional society might have considered people of twenty five years very old to get married. People as in any other traditional African society had to get married once they have gone through initiation and this did not rely on the age factor, but on one's ability to take care of his family. Whereas girls were engaged into adulthood through marriage earlier than boys, already at the age of eleven or ten for some were married before they leave parental home. Nowadays, the economic factors have influenced and change marriageable age. Thus, people are considered adults when they can get married. By doing so, they qualify to attend or to perform rituals.

For those aged fifty and above, it is interesting to listen to them because they are nostalgic for their life experience in the traditional setup; they remember, cherish and appreciate traditional values related to funeral rites among the Bukusu. For instance, one of our respondents referred to the word "siyembekho" as a shrine where the skulls of their ancestors have been in between two branches since they used not to bury their people (cfr. Chapter three: Research question Two). While young people today identify the same word as an old uncircumcised person among the Bukusu. These elderly people also face the challenges of modernism with moderation and wisdom. They still have the

passion for some of the funeral practices to be perpetuated from one generation to another in respect to their love ones. They have a different vision on how the church should address some of the funeral practices in order to establish a dialogue between Bukusu tradition and Christianity.

Marital status: both married and single people are in this category within a given group or society. This has been an important aspect in this study by the fact that it guided the research towards a clear understanding of the ritual process in the contemporary Bukusu society. Married people had a chance to go through many rites of passage. Since marriage is one of the most important rites, it was easy for the research to get insightful remarks and very important details that these people had the privilege to witness during funeral rites. For example, only married people were allowed to dispose the body, prepare it and bury it. The singles were restrictively associated to some practices less important and less risky in bringing bad omen on the community. So, married people appeared to be more resourceful than single ones. Eventually, the large majority of the respondents interviewed in the course of this research were married, both men and women.

In this variable, it was noted that those who had their love ones namely a husband or a wife curiously enough, they identified themselves as married, “but my wife or my husband has passed away”, they said. Some said that their late spouses are still next to them, they feel much connected to them and so, they identify themselves as still married to the deceased.

Religion: This variable refers to Bukusu of a Christian background. The target in this study was Bukusu Christian from the Friend church (Quakers) in a more specific way from the field results, it came out clearly that funeral rites were affecting not only Bukusu Quakers, but also other Bukusu non-Quakers. Without undermining the specification of the study on one category of Christians, this research ought to be more interesting to get also the point of views of other Bukusu Christians since they are

members of the same clans, but different churches. Actually, there was not a significant difference between a Bukusu Quaker and a Bukusu non-Quaker as they speak of culture. They could only differ from another if they bring in issues of Christianity. To some extent, they are united by their culture than their new religion. For example, Irene, a Quaker church follower and a primary school teacher reported that she could not let her father to be buried without performing rituals she is supposed to go through to give a last respect to him and appease his spirit even if she is a committed member of friends church likewise Mr. Vincent confirmed this as he narrated his personal experience with the tragic death of his daughter, and yet he is among elder of Quakers at Mukholo village/Sangalo area (cf. App.C. nos. 30, 32).

Since the topic is on Death and Burial Rites among Bukusu Quakers in Bungoma County of Western Kenya, the research, actually, was very much focused on Bukusu with a special attention on Quakers. It looked at how church leaders address issues of funeral rites as Bukusu Christian in general ritual process in regard to the Christian faith and the influence of modern lifestyle among process in regard to the Christian faith and the influence of modern lifestyle among the Bukusu. This enables the data analysis in showing the positive and negative influence of Christianity in the ritual process in Bungoma County and Kimilili. By doing so, all the respondents were subjected to a close evaluation of their respective practice in terms of funeral rites in different churches. Eventually, it helped the researcher to understand the point of view of respondents with regards to Bukusu culture as they claimed to be Christians.

### 2.5. Analysis of Data

As mentioned before, this study is mainly qualitative, therefore, data was collected through interviews and participant observations as described by Spradley(1980), which included group interviews, steam of consciousness and in-depth interviews. Moreover, quantitative data was gathered through questionnaires. Thus, all

these research instruments were used with the help of the field assistant in order to get relevant data and analyse it in relation to the topic of the study.

Data analysis is, indeed, a process of examining and scrutinizing the collected data during the field work, and then making some deductions and inferences. To put it in Blumer's (1956) words quoted by Mason (1996), "the role of the researcher is to understand every day or lay interpretations, as well as supplying social science interpretations, and to move from these towards and an explanation" (p. 141). This concurs with Kombo and Tromp (2006, p. 117) who think that data analysis is all about uncovering underlying assumptions throughout the research.

Prior to the analysis itself, data was arranged in such a way to helping proceed on the data collected which was systematically and critically analysed using descriptive, domains, taxonomic, componential and theme analysis.

It is worthwhile to note that the attitude of the researcher have been going along with recursive process analysis which requires an "in-the-field" analysis as LeCompte & Schensul (2013, pp. 27-28) observed it. To say it other words, the researcher has been continually reordering his sense of what is happening, based on the feedback from the field. Thus, it was a reminder for the researcher of what a considerable variation in the way people mind their business, conduct daily activities in a community, and how they interpret what they mean. Part of the larger pattern of difference or divisions not noticed up to that point in the field work may be the disconfirmation instance. The disconfirmation instance is an act of refuting or suggesting that a hypothesis is wrong or ill-formulated. For instance, church leaders looking at Bukusu who go for traditional funeral rites as wrong people, sinful, and headed to hell. This, however, helped to easily eliminate errors and irrelevant data.

In descriptive analysis, the social realities of the residents Bungoma County were looked at in order to understand how they continue to perform traditional death

and burial rites vis-a-vis the Christian Bukusu with a modern lifestyle and Christianity in Western Kenya in general and particularly in Bungoma and Kimilili.

On one hand, a description of different traditional rituals during the mourning period is displayed in order to show their impact on attitude and behavior of the mourners. This analysis, actually, described the effects of these traditional rituals on the community as being confronted to Christianity.

On the other hand, it also stressed on the strength and weaknesses of the pastoral ministry for families who mourn their love one. Situations such as burial rites conducted by a Pentecostal Pastor will be always questionable and very much of disconfirming instances. For example, the burial of Mrs. Wafula at Kitinda/ Sangalo area was conducted by a Pastor from a revival church. Before burial itself, he declared that everything was done and no traditional ritual had to take place afterwards, including the traditional family counsel called, Lufu. Some people members of Mrs. Wafula's family reacted and said, "How is the widower going to settle afterward if people do not come and discuss matters on how to continue family business?" (cf. App.C. no, 2). In fact, among the Bukusu a gathering of close relatives of the deceased for evaluation and distribution of responsibility and properties is called "Lufu". To prevent people from carrying on with such a gathering is harmful to the bereaved because there will be no responsibility given to somebody, to fully take charge of the family business. Another example was the case of the sub-chief's burial in Samoya. At one point the burial instances turned to be a political campaign as some leaders who were given opportunities to address mourners instead of talking about the situation of the orphans' future (cf. App.C. no, 10). Such kinds of situations cry out to be evaluated and portray the reality of the group for the understanding of the custom.

Domains analysis on the data collected helped us to establish the patterns of culture with regard to contemporary challenges among the Bukusu in discarding traditional practices which might have been the primary goal of evangelisation in

Bukusuland. For instance, the burial of the people who commit suicide or those who die through accident is now part of the challenges in traditional death and burial rites among Bukusu. To illustrate, a catechist at St. Peter parish lost his mother who committed suicide. According to the Bukusu custom, such a person was supposed to be buried at night by outsiders. But surprisingly, the mass was celebrated for the deceased except that many people did not attend the burial because of people's beliefs on the effects of such a death on the community. Therefore, these contemporary challenges have to be the primary goal to be targeted in the church's ministry to the bereaved families.

Domains analysis led us to the taxonomic analysis which involved a search for the way in which cultural domains are organised. Death and burial rites seemed to have captured the challenges of the modern lifestyle when Bukusu give the last respect to their loved one of different sex and age. Appropriate funeral rites are supposed to be performed according to the rank, the sex and the age of the deceased. When they come to issues of appeasing the dead spirit, then conflicts arise between tradition and Christianity especially among the Baliche and Balunda clans. Baliche have very complex burial rites and very conservative one whereas Balunda have strict observation on the position (seated) in which they have to bury their people.

In the componential analysis, the attributes of terms in each domain were determined. In this study, each burial rite has its role and meaning among Bukusu people. By giving their attributions, the researcher is required to see them as potential elements that Christianity can utilise and give them a Christian explanation in the sense of baptizing them.

Under theme analysis, the data was analyzed in order to determine the relationships between the parts: the traditional and Christian death and burial rites which can be expressed by the Church for integral evangelization. In this study, the data collected was thematically analyzed to show the relationship between traditional funeral and Christian ones. For example, how the left side position of the body in the

coffin affects the Christian faith if not a symbol that has nothing to do with witchcraft, but one that means the deceased person has stop giving birth because of death. The understanding of burial rites in the modern Bukusu society, the economic impact of traditional rituals today, the characteristic of modern life in relation to burial rites, the challenges and changes of family life as they are confronted to death, the role of church leaders in the bereaved family; all these have been scrutinized so as to find out compatibility and incapability with the Christian faith as the study was looking forward ways of baptizing traditional death and burial rites among the Bukusu.

Finally, a computer program was used to analyse both qualitative and quantitative data for this research. For quantative data, some tables and charts were used for the statistical analysis thanks to KPSS software (Obure, Date Analysis using S.P.S.S., 2002). They helped to show the number of the respondents and their views on the effectiveness of traditional death and burial rites as opposed to the Christian ones among the Bukusu and the various deduction and inferences after testing the research assumptions and hypothesis. For the qualitative data, being a simple computer user, the researcher relied on LeCompte & Schensul's (201, p. 175) suggestions on managing data with computers. However this study used computer to carry out analysis of text data in email messages, blogs, and free text archives on funeral rites, to index and describe publications, conference paper, abstracts and other collections of written materials on Bukusu and Baluhya community. It also facilitated to analyse elicitation data collated for cultural consensus analysis while dealing with inculturation process in this study. Despite a good performance of a computer, "using computers is not entirely simple matter. Researchers must decide whether it is worthwhile to utilize a computer program for the management of text data and determine which kind they will find useful" as LeCompte & Shensul (2013, p. 176) put it.

All along the line, the research and the analysis process has helped to check out the validity of data referring back to the field as "in-the-field" analysis, as mentioned

earlier, in order to reorder the sense of what is happening, based on the feedback from the field. This was important for the study as the research hypothesis and assumptions were to be tested so as to conform and clarify the story of traditional death and burial rites among Bukusu Quakers of Bungoma County in Western Kenya.

## Chapter Three

### Findings

#### 3.0. Introduction

This chapter analyses the data gathered from the field work which is related to the topic, problem statement, hypothesis, significance of the thesis, research questions and assumptions. This research was carried out within Bungoma County. However, this chapter analyses the field results on the understanding of death and burial rites among the Bukusu of Western Kenya in general and particularly among the Bukusu Quakers since the topic of the research is “Death and Burial Rites among the Bukusu Quakers of Western Kenya.”

The research hypothesis was tested in the field through seven research questions which were stated as follows: 1) The Bukusu Quakers understand the death of a community member as complete devastation and powerlessness which results in insecurity and loss of vital force. 2) The Bukusu perform traditional death and burial rituals in order to stop the spirit of death and other misfortunes from destroying life among them. 3) Purification rituals among the Bukusu are usually performed by elders early in the morning when spirits are not yet awake. 4) The death of an individual in the Bukusu community causes fear among close relatives because it pollutes life. 5) Christian death and burial rites are considered ineffective among the Bukusu because they fear a resultant insecurity, i.e. loss of vital force. 6) Bukusu Quakers prefer traditional death and burial rites to the Christian ones because they feel content, safe and secure after performing the traditional rites. 7) Bukusu Quakers can deal successfully with issues of death and burial rites if they facilitate penetration of the Gospel in every aspect of traditional funerals.

Having carried this research and analysed the qualitative data manually, this chapter also exploits the quantitative data from the field work and the questionnaires

through statistical analysis. For a better and comprehensive presentation and analysis of the research findings, tables and charts were used to describe this data quantitatively.

### 3.1. Conceptual Framework derived from the data

The conceptual framework derived from the research data in this chapter is presented as follows,

1. This research showed that the Bukusu Quakers of Western Kenya continue to perform traditional death and burial rites of purification because they believe these rites are effective in stopping the spirit of death from further harming them, something that Christian death and burial rites do not attempt to achieve. Further it was found that the Bukusu Christians find ways to include some of their traditional burial rites because they feel that the Christian rites were missing important aspects. Eventually, it was testified that death and burial rites result from a combination of fears: of misfortunes from ancestors and fear of the rejection by the Christian community. People tend to make sure they have given a satisfactory answer to both tradition and Christianity (cf. App.C. nos. 11, 12).

2. This research points out the necessity of an inculturation process between traditional and Christian death and burial rites among Bukusu of Western Kenya. Based on this study, it must always be asked about what is missing in the Christian practice of death and burial that is an important part of the tradition of newly converted people, and ask whether it is possible to bridge the gap between traditional funeral rites and Christian ones.

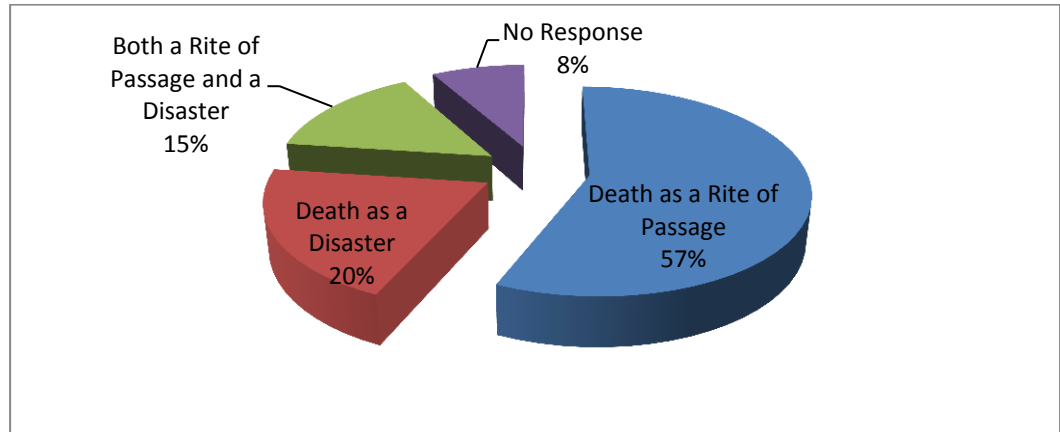
Such an attitude was not the way that Christian missionaries acted in the past. A Bukusu proverb saying, "Nonula Omwana kumubano omuhelesia engeso" –“When you take a knife from a child, give a stick or something that makes him/her happy,” referring to the way that some religious leaders acted when they encountered Bukusu culture. In the past, they often told the people to suppress even what belongs to the cultural heritage of the Bukusu people. However, the findings of this study will lead us to ask

whether there is a way that traditional practices can be introduced into the Christian practices that would meet the expectations of the Africans.

### 3.2. Findings related to the Topic

This research captured the respondents' understanding of death and burial rites in the Bukusu worldview, their definition of death and its relevance in the Bukusu community today. In response to the question: "How would you describe death with regard to the Bukusu worldview?", Chart 01 shows that there was not a significant difference on the understanding of death across three variables namely, gender, marital status and religion. But table 01 reveals a significant difference between the older and the younger respondents (age variable) on this question. The compiled result findings as from the three variables as indicated in Chart 01 are as follows,

Chart 01: Understanding of death in the Bukusu worldview (There was no significance of the variable of gender, religion and marital status)



First, the majority of men and women described death as a process of onward passing of the living to the other world known as "Emakombe" where life is endless (Ebuyindifu). Mr. Wekese, Mr. Weswa and Naraja (cf. App.C. no. 2) said that in normal circumstances, death is considered an interaction of the people with the dead person called "simakombe" who goes to heaven, "Emakombe". In other words, death is a rite of passage from one state to another; the beginning of a new life in another world. Moreover, few men and women respondents argued that death is a disaster, an

unacceptable occurrence, an evil tragedy, a loss of life caused by something evil such as misfortune, curse. It is also believed that the ancestral spirits have whipped or punished the family. More than 10% of men and 16% of women understood death as both natural and caused by somebody while ten men and six women did not answer the question.

Second, in terms of marital status, there was no significant difference between the married and single on this question. The majority of both married and single argued that marital status is of great importance due to the characteristics of the death and burial ritual process among the Bukusu because marriage gives the right and legitimacy to the member of the community to perform the ritual. On one hand, ninety-three married respondents said they understood death as a transition from the physical to the spiritual dimension of human existence according to the Bukusu worldview. But 45 of them viewed death as having external forces and not naturally occurring. They said that there is always someone being blamed for a death. Twenty-seven of married people subscribed on the idea that death is both a rite of passage and a disaster; but only fourteen did not answer the question. On the other hand, the majority of the singles (eight) also understood death as a rite of passage which every individual has to go through; it is the last stage in one's lifespan. But four said that death is brought about by evil forces, is seen as a bad omen that comes after one has offended the ancestors, e.g. disobedient women and men who failed to observe taboos and were punished resulting to death; but two of them said that death is both a rite of passage and a disaster.

Third, regardless of their age, gender, and marital status; 47 Quakers and 68 non-Quakers also said that death is a process of onward passing of the living to the other world known as heaven or a change of destination from one side of life to another. Whereas ten Quakers respondents and twenty non-Quakers said that death is caused by some evil spirits due to failure to honour cultural and ancestral norms; in other words, it is a calamity associated with a certain cause, either natural or supernatural. Seventeen Quakers and seventeen non-Quakers concurred with the idea that death is both a rite of

passage and a disaster at the same time. However, the understanding of death in the Bukusu worldview was different according to the age variable (cf. table 01 below) as mentioned before. Seventy-four young people understood death as a bad omen caused by evil forces, a disaster, bad luck, a painful moment, a tragedy, a misfortune, a loss of life, an outcome of curses due to irresponsibility of women who fail to observe taboos. While thirty-six of these young people said that death is a passing on, a transition, a change of status, a rest, a journey to the ancestral land, a transfer from the living to the living dead; in short, the acceptable occurrence to all in the family which is a state of going to another world. This indicates that the youth are less accepting of death as a normal occurrence than the old ones.

However, most adults between fifty and eighty years old (60.6 % of them) understood death as a passing on, a transition, a change of status, a rest, a journey to the ancestral land. Ten of the older respondents said that they see death as a disaster and a misfortune from the ancestors when people do not respect life and disobey their ancestral rules. Ten other young people admitted that death is both a rite of passage and a disaster, so did nine of the older respondents. Conversely, Mr. Mukongo, 88 years old, confirmed that many older people among the Bukusu understand death as “a normal occurrence to every human being” as he put it in Kiswahili, “jambo la kawaida kwa binadamu wote”. According to him, when death happens, he will accept it as the will of God because he is a Christian and he wants to be buried as a Christian. He thinks that, if one believes in something, this becomes reality (cf. App.C. no. 8).

Table 01: Understanding death in the Bukusu worldview by age (N=195)

VARIABLES		Death as a rite of passage	Death as a disaster	Both a rite of passage and a disaster	No response	Total
25-49 yrs old	N	36	74	10	9	129
	N%	27.9%	57.4%	7.8%	7.0%	100.0%
50 yrs old and above	N	40	10	9	7	66
	N%	60.6%	15.2%	13.6%	10.6%	100.0%

### 3.3. Findings related to the Problem Statement

This study stated that Bukusu Quakers still cling to their traditional practices with regard to death and burial despite embracing and professing Christianity. What is the explanation for this “duality”?

First, respondents were asked if early missionaries considered African cultures in the process of evangelisation to help people understand their culture with a Christian outlook. Thus, they would be able to choose the appropriate death and burial rites in case one of them passed away. The majority of respondents, both men and women, aged from twenty five to eighty years old, married and single, non-Quakers and Quakers, said early European missionaries gave no regard to African Traditional Religion values; they considered it backward, primitive, uncivilised custom, unchristian and demonic. Their aim was to prepare the way for the colonisers and they demeaned African cultural practices. Mr. Wanyonye reported that, “when first missionaries and explorers came, Africans considered them like gods. They used to slaughter cows under the trees where these Europeans were hiding, so that when Africans finished their sacrificial rites, they left the meat there, convinced that the Europeans would descend as gods to eat the meat!” Unfortunately, missionaries made five big mistakes when they first came to Africa, according to him. These mistakes made Africans, especially the Bukusu, to reject Jesus. One, people did not really believe in Christianity because of the missionaries’ (negative) attitude towards African culture. Two, Christianity was considered a product of European culture; a culture alien to African tradition. Three, missionaries forced people to adopt Christianity through beatings and other abuses. Thus, Africans did not see the ‘love’ of God in missionary activities. Four, missionaries accompanied colonial governments which were brutal and worse, which forced people to pay taxes, undermined family survival by looting and taking their lands by force. Finally, European governments looted local resources. Due to this experience, the new religion (Christianity) which was proclaiming love for one another was not welcome.

The Bukusu had a song to describe this situation: “Wele papa khulila, Basungu bakhupya sibi!” (God our Father, we cry, the Europeans molested us!). That is why most Africans did not consider Christianity to be more effective in their lives (cf. App.C. no. 13).

Indeed, table 02 shows that few of our respondents (29 people) agreed that the first missionaries did consider African cultures. Among these few, a good number of young women including some old women represent 25.4% of the total number of women (59). As compared to the rest of the respondents who answered yes, women are the ones who scored a high number of respondents who subscribed to the idea that, when Europeans came to Africa, they never stopped locals from performing their rites. They argued that in the process of evangelisation, missionaries used the native language and names; some even blessed traditional beer and accepted traditional marriages, among others.

Table 02: Missionaries’ consideration of African cultures in the process of evangelization. By gender(N=195)

VARIABLES		YES	NO	NO RESPONSE	Total
Men	N	14	112	10	136
	N%	10.3%	82.4%	7.4%	100.0%
Women	N	15	38	6	59
	N%	25.4%	64.4%	10.2%	100.0%

Then, respondent were asked, “If someone very close to you dies, would you perform traditional death and burial rites despite your Christian faith? And “What would you do if one of your relatives refuses to fulfil traditional death and burial rites because the person is a Christian?” Different views came from four main variables namely, gender, age, marital status and religion regarding these questions.

Among male respondents, sixty said they would perform traditional death and burial rites if one of them dies despite their Christian faith because some of the

traditional rites have to be done regardless of the Christian faith. They not only identify them as Bukusu, but also bind them to both the living and the living dead. They also bring a sense of beginning of family members and thereafter have a way of a new start. It is also a way of showing respect for the dead person, to avoid the spirit of the deceased disturbing the living and to create a good relationship with ancestors. Death is sacred and the dead must be respected. Traditionally, Bukusu believe in being haunted by spirits of the dead person if they do not follow traditional ritual processes. They also said that if one of their relatives refuses to perform traditional rituals because he/or she is a Christian, they will support and educate the person on the importance of the rites and the consequences. They will let that person make the best choice, instruction on inculturation and explain the traditional virtues that are compatible to Christianity. This could both lead to good relations and look forward for a good life after death. But two respondents were extremely strict on this question. One said, "By words from my speech I will strongly invite the spirit of the late person to haunt the remaining family members claiming for the right of the traditional death and burial rites." The other said, "He/she will be sent away and even cursed when burial is being conducted. This is testified and confirmed by the case of Mama Vero's nephew. Mama Vero is from the Teso community and one of her nephews was married to a Bukusu lady. It is said that he married a Bukusu woman but he did not pay bride wealth to his family in-law. When his wife passed away after giving birth, the family requested him to pay bride wealth so that he could be allowed to bury his wife at his home. He managed to pay half of it; but they refused him to allow him to take the body for burial. He was told not to attend the burial otherwise they would curse him by his mother-in-law so that he would not get married again. The curse itself is that the mother steps ahead of the coffin and joins her legs together while it is being carried out of the house for burial as the widower is following it behind (cf. App.C. no. 36).

However, fifty-six male respondents pointed out that they would not perform traditional death and burial rites if one of them dies. They said that traditional rites are a relic of an era long gone; they are now converted to Christianity and observe God's universal culture which is far superior to African religion; they are now enlightened by Christ, and their Christian faith does allow them to perform traditional rituals. They also said that they will support and encourage one of their relatives who refuses to perform traditional rites because he/or she is a Christian. They believe that by doing so they would have realised that when Christ died on the Cross, He overcame all the evil. The majority of women (48) that we interviewed and asked to answer the questionnaire did not choose to perform traditional rites because they believe that the best option is to involve the church in all aspects of the rituals. They said Christian rituals have overcome traditional ones at the moment and most of the rituals are now westernised. They also pointed out that they would not force him/or her since there is always freedom of worship and would congratulate the relative for being faithful to his/her Christian faith. They held that Christ completed all the sacrifices on the Cross by shedding his blood. Only fifteen women supported the idea of performing traditional rites. They reported in the answers to the questionnaire that, "Traditional death and burial rites make part of the culture and it will be necessary that people also practice their culture." They added, "If one refuses to perform traditional rites, I will do nothing because the faith of that person may be strong in Christianity and merging Christianity with traditional rites may become dangerous".

The respondents supported their views with different arguments to the questions, "If someone very close to you dies, would you perform traditional death and burial rites despite your Christian faith?" and "What would you do if one of your relatives refuses to fulfil traditional death and burial rites because he/or she is a Christian?" Among the three age groups, majority of the younger respondents (97) and the older ones (49) had the same opinion. They answered 'no', i.e. that if someone close to them dies, they

would not perform traditional death and burial rites because of their Christian background. They will also support the one who refuses to perform traditional rituals. The rest of the respondents, especially the younger ones (23) and few elders (10) supported the idea of performing traditional rituals. For example, Mr/chairman of Kibabi parish argued that, “It is for the sake of close family members’ beliefs with regard to guidelines of African synod; to choose good African practices.” But he said that those who refuse to perform them should be respected (cf. App.C. no. 37).

From the findings, the majority of married respondents and few singles rejected the possibility of performing traditional rituals when one of them passes on. But they hold that those who refuse to take part in the rituals should be allowed to choose the right thing to do.

As opposed to those who rejected going for traditional death and burial rites, thirty-seven of married and six of single respondents supported the idea of performing traditional rituals. But they too said that freedom of choice should be granted those who refuse to take part in rituals. It is worthwhile to note that two (2) of these married Quaker respondents were extremely strict on this issue as said before. For them, they would wish misfortunes upon whoever refuses traditional rituals.

However, the findings related to non-Quaker respondents show that majority of them (84) in Bungoma and Kimilili are not in favour of performing the traditional rituals. They support the idea of encouraging those who refuse to go for it. Only few of them (21) are in favour of traditional rituals. On their part, Quakers (52) answered ‘no’, same as the majority non-Quakers who said ‘no’. On the contrary, some Quakers (22) said they would go for traditional rituals in this case. Though, sixteen of our respondents out of the total number of the four variables namely ten men, six women, nine young respondents, seven old men, fourteen married people, two singles, four Quakers and twelve non-Quakers did not answer the question.

Thus, across all our four variables, the figures show a non-significant difference on the support of the practices of traditional rites. Therefore, the findings show that 2/3 of respondents rejected traditional death and burial rituals as opposed to 1/3 of those who accepted and supported it. It is, actually, an indication of a significant negative attitude towards traditional funerals due to the influence of modern life and the early missionary approach on African culture. But when it comes to reality, some respondents (cf. App.C. nos. 20, 21, 26, 30, 35) observed that the fear for the spirit of the dead makes many people to consider traditional funeral rites as the last option. This confirms the “duality” that of a similar pattern of “Christian by day; Africans at night”. Eventually, the result findings on this question show how strongly rooted traditional rituals still are among some Bukusu Christians.

#### 3.4. Findings related to the Hypothesis

The research's hypothesis stated: “The Bukusu Quakers of Western Kenya continue to perform traditional death and burial rites of purification because they believe these rites are effective in stopping the spirit of death from further harming them, something that Christian death and burial rites does not achieve.”

The data show that there is no significant difference on how informants responded to this question. What is clear from the data on this question is that approximately 66.67% of all the respondents from the four variables namely age, gender, religion and marital status agreed that Bukusu Christian in general and Bukusu Quakers in particular still go for traditional funeral rites whereas thirty-three did not agree. However, this seems to indicate how Bukusu are culturally resilient whether they are Quakers or not.

For instance, the majority of respondents from different age groups gave similar answers to the question. The majority of younger respondents and the older people said that Bukusu Quakers of Western Kenya continue to perform traditional death and burial rites of purification especially in Bungoma County where the research was conducted.

Among the younger respondents (64.3%) and fifty percent (50%) of the older ones aged sixty years and above answered ‘yes’ to the question. Many of them said that Bukusu Quakers opted for traditional rituals when one of them dies. Among the sixty five men respondents interviewed, the majority (65%) answered ‘yes’ while 26.9% of these men said ‘no’. The majority of women (33) said ‘no’ and 43.5% stated that Bukusu do traditional burial rites. Only six of women did not give any answer.

Research among respondents of different marital status showed similar findings. The majority of married people agreed that Bukusu Quakers go for traditional rituals when one of them dies. Francis, Gabriel, and Anoratus are among respondents who argued that even if people are Christians, it is a must that to perform traditional rituals for fear of bad omen (cf. App.C. nos. 11, 12, 33).

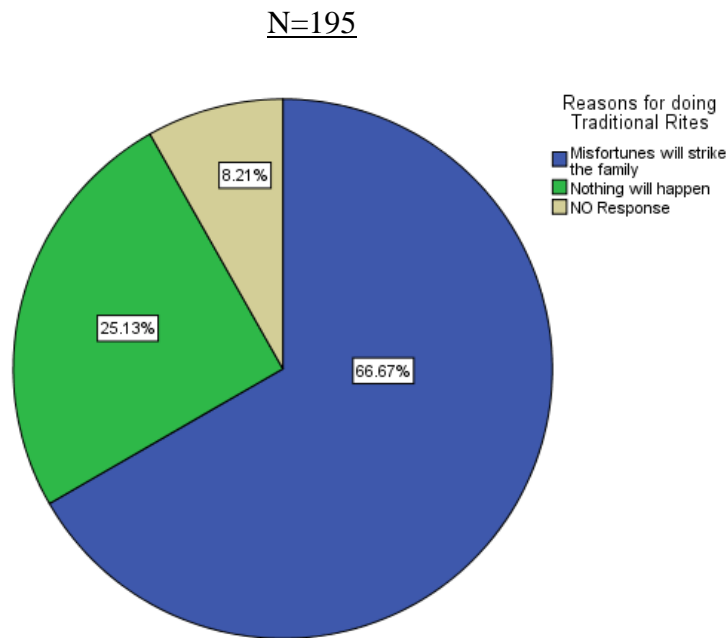
Moreover, many families of these respondents have experiences regarding the practice of rituals. Some have encountered problems, misunderstandings in terms of death and burial rites. Mr. Ulula, 66 years old and married from Kimilili, is one of those who struggled to convince church members about the importance of some of the traditional rituals that are necessary during burials. He said that when he buried his father, they performed rituals to respect his last will so that they would not face some difficulties. They did “kumusola” (defense from evil spirits). He said this was a must whether people are Christians or not (cf. App.C. no. 18).

Besides, a good number of non-Quaker respondents had a clear point of view on the question. For example, more than sixty percent (68.8%) of Quakers and non-Quakers (69.2%) argued that the Bukusu Quakers practice traditional rituals even before church members are involved. In most cases, they do it at night to avoid being branded pagan and to avoid “sisieno” (bad spirits). Only 20.5 % of non-Quakers and 32% of Quakers answered ‘no’; a small number of respondents, approximately 24. 1% had the same opinion. Over two percent of both non-Quakers and Quakers, some out of ignorance and lacking proper answers, simply skipped the question on the questionnaire. But those

interviewed confirmed that Bukusu in general and Bukusu Quakers in particular go for traditional rituals when death occurs. The respondents were also asked to point out why they would prefer traditional rituals to Christians ones. Regardless of their age, gender, marital status, and religious background, the respondents gave similar reasons. Some of the reasons are fear of the spirit of the dead and of bad omen, of misfortunes from ancestors and fear of the rejection by the Christian community. Many of the respondents, especially the older (33), married couples (82) and the singles (38) pointed out that culture is important to the Bukusu. They will always go by traditional rites just to prevent the spirit of the dead from disturbing them. Some respondents like Ulula, Simiyu and. Makhese mentioned that pastoral agents themselves are heavily influenced by the modern and western concept of funeral rites that is seen clearly in their preaching. They do not have much time to reflect and make people reason on issues of death and burial rites (cf. App.C. nos. 18, 21, 22). Respondents also mentioned that “due to poor evangelization by missionaries, they prefer traditional rituals to Christian ones; it is from this, that things go against Christ.”

From the data, it is clear that the majority of the respondents confirmed the hypothesis that, “The Bukusu Quakers of Western Kenya continue to perform traditional death and burial rites of purification because they believe these rites are effective in stopping the spirit of death from further harming them, something that Christian death and burial rites does not achieve”. However, some respondents, mainly non-Quakers (41) and women (30) disapproved the hypothesis. They pointed out that Quakers are definitely and absolutely absorbed in their faith; they believe that traditional rites are unnecessary and unholy. Once prayers are done, nothing more should be added or be performed.

Chart 02: The percentage of response regarding the reasons for doing traditional rites



Hence, findings on this question show that there is no significant difference in responses from all our variables. It came out clearly that 2/3 of all the respondents (195 people) confirmed that Bukusu in general and Quakers in particular perform traditional rituals. Simiyu told us that “Pure Bukusu always have one foot (80%) in traditional beliefs and the other one (20%) in Christianity. In most cases, if they don’t slaughter a cow, they believe something bad will happen to them” (cf. App.C. no. 21). Likewise, many respondents admittedly held that a pure Bukusu cannot call a mango tree, banana tree; in other words, they will always have one foot in traditional beliefs and the other one in Christianity.

### 3.5. Finding related to the Significance of the Thesis

This research addresses contemporary challenges facing Bukusu Christians in general and Quakers in particular on funeral rites (Kamasika). In some cultures in Africa and especially the Bukusu of Western Kenya, the Gospel has rarely penetrated all aspects of the funeral. Indeed, in most cultures and especially in an African context, death and burial rites are special moments where a person moves to another stage of life (the spiritual world) through rituals. With the influence of modernity, namely western

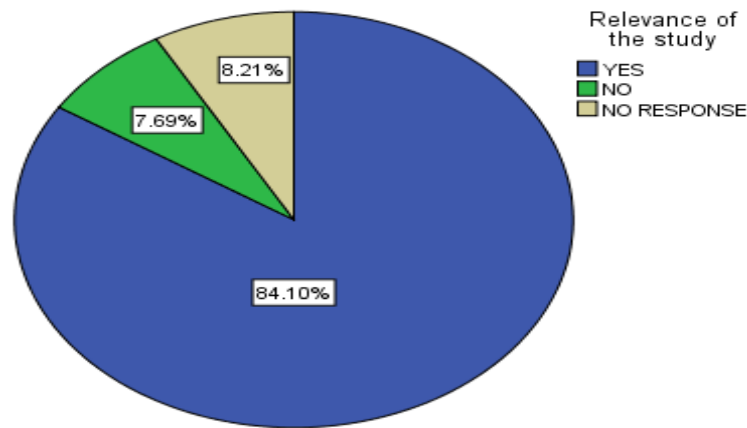
civilization and Christianity, this rite of passage in the African context is undergoing continuous changes. As pointed out by the respondents, death and burial rites especially among the Bukusu in Bungoma and Kimilili is slowly losing its original identity and its primary role as the source of moral, socio-cultural and spiritual values (cf. App.C. nos. 18, 21). In fact, there was no significant difference among respondents, regardless of their age, gender and marital status, when we asked them to give their opinion on whether this research is relevant today or not. As shown in the chart 01 below, the majority of respondents (164 or 84.10%) out of hundred and sixty, said the study is relevant. Only ten respondents (7.7%) said 'no'; another sixteen (8.20%) did not give any answer. For the majority of respondents who answered 'yes', the topic is relevant today because there is an urgent need for Church leaders to open up and address the issues affecting Christian faith during burials in Bungoma and Kimilili. The leaders need to enhance the reasoning capacity of people so that they can start assessing these rituals as they affect their spiritual life and Christian commitment. Mr. Ulula, for example, said that "Education has a big role in addressing the change rather than using faith. As at now, there is very little which is done to address these issues; church leaders are not very concerned about why people perform some rituals which are incompatible with Christian faith" (cf. App.C. no. 18). Mr. Patrick said, "A study of this kind is quite relevant today since death and burial rites are regarded as normal parts of our everyday life. It will help the concerned people see whatever is relevant to today's Christian teachings and beliefs then compare and make a choice. The concerned people will come together and discuss the burial expenses. They will also inform other relatives during mourning. They will always curse whoever may have caused the death forgetting that death is natural" (cf. App.C. nos. 12, 31).

To find out the significance of the thesis, we asked more questions as follows: a) Will this study help Bukusu Quakers church leaders to address contemporary challenges in regard to death and burial rites in Kimilili and Bungoma? b) What can be done to

make people feel content, safe and secure when they perform Christian death and burial rites? c) How would you use traditional death and burial rites of passage as communicators of the Gospel message within Kimilili and Bungoma?

Chart 02 below shows that the thesis is relevant. The respondents supported their views with different arguments to show the relevance of the study in helping Church leaders to address the issues. Many respondents pointed out that there are memorial junctions in both Christianity and Bukusu traditional rituals which are evident in many cases. For example, Catholics remember their Saints just as the Bukusu make sacrifices to their loved ones. Therefore, this study should radically impact Bukusu Christian leaders. It should teach them what Christianity demands of them. If the Church leaders address the contemporary challenges of death and burial rites, they will be able to open up to their people and expose them to proper burial rites, define clearly both positive and negative effects of such rituals. After such exposure, people will feel content with today's evangelization which has to be based on enculturation according to the African Synod where positive aspects of culture are acceptable. In this way, traditional death and burial rites of passage will create opportunities of preaching and be used as a communicator of the Gospel message to Bukusu by openly comparing tradition and Christianity so that people's faith can be strengthened. Others said that people must be told that traditional rites are not bad if they are performed in the right way. Further, people ought to be educated on the expensive costs of buying animals for slaughter and the consequences of beer brewing.

Chart 03: The percentage of responses regarding the relevance of the study N=195



Among the three age groups, the majority (104) of the younger respondents and elders (59) had a similar opinion. They argued that there would be more harmony and understanding in families and people's faith would be strengthened if the Church gave adequate attention to the contemporary challenges of death and burial rites by giving people a chance to do it according to their way as long as it does not affect the Christian faith (cf. App.C. nos. 12, 21). But only over twelve percent of young respondents (12.4%) did not agree. Some of these respondents said that people are believers, some still practice cultural rites, the practice of these rituals has reduced/very few still practice them, that Christianity has overpowered traditions, that everyone has embraced a Christian lifestyle and no one will go back to traditional life, that many people are civilized, to mention but a few. It came out clearly that most respondents who said this study is not relevant today seemed not to have understood the question well. They had agreed that this study could help Bukusu Church leaders to address contemporary challenges of death and burial rites. This by itself is an admission that the study is relevant. Eventually, only seven of the older respondents did not answer the question.

The result findings by gender show that majority of males (114 or 83.8%) and females (50 or 84.7%) respondents said this study is relevant today because it puts people on track to know what is good and bad as far as the church is concerned. It also brings scattered people of the same family together and enables them to learn from a

bad past and embrace the present and future (cf. App.C. nos. 30, 18). Few respondents, both male and female, answered “no”. Of these respondents, males (8.8%) and females (5.1%) fall in the category of those who did not understand the question well as we said before. But only seven (10) men (7.4%) and six (6) women (10.2%) respondents did not answer the question or they just skipped it. From the results, it was easy to notice that most married respondents had life stories to tell of how death and burial rites have affected their lives in one way or another. The majority of the single respondents were young and they sometimes had to rely on those who are married to answer questions. We noticed that they returned the questionnaires late since they had to refer to elders for answers. However, the majority of both married (150) and single (14) respondents agreed that this study is relevant today among the Bukusu. During interviews, it emerged clearly that all respondents of the two age groups agreed that this study should be conducted and later published as a book to help people know about their culture since culture is dynamic and death will always occur under different circumstances (cf. App.C. no. 33).

Only fifteen (15) married respondents (8.4%) and no singles (0.0%) said ‘no’; fourteen married respondents (7.8%) and two singles (12.5%) did not answer the question. We had to increase the number of questionnaires due to the demand of some respondents who wanted to retain copies for further discussion in their respective groups and churches. Talking about churches, the majority of respondents regardless of their religious backgrounds said this study is relevant today in Bungoma and Kimilili since some of the revival churches are confused and biased as far as the relationship between culture and tradition is concerned. Most of Quakers (92.3%) and Non-Quakers (78.6%) suggested that the study can help people address issues of expenditure during funerals. They added that the research will help the church in decision making on inculturation in order to avoid underground practices among Christians. It is also a way to assist the Bukusu understand the fact of death and how to go about it and who is to be involved.

On the same token, Mr. James noted that, “People are modifying traditional rituals so that it can look more Christian, but most of the time, there is no Christianity which is going on at the burial place.” He appreciated the study and encouraged us to continue looking for more information and talk to people so that there is more reasonable action in what they are supposed to do as Bukusu Christians (cf. App.C. no. 20).

On the religion variable, few respondents argued that the study is not relevant because people have chosen their ways either as traditionalists or Christians. Few respondents did not answer the question. They brought back the questionnaire without filling it. It has been revealed to us that some of these respondents returned blank questionnaires because their level of education is very low. Therefore, it was difficult for them to deal with such an intellectual instrument. Others were very much involved in politics during the election campaigns and could not find time to fill the questionnaire. And some filled it half way, skipping some questions simply because they were expecting some payment for their participation in the study.

### 3.6.1. Finding related to Research Question One

The first research question asked how Bukusu Quakers understand death and its causes. The question aimed at understanding how Bukusu Quakers in particular and Bukusu in general consider death when it occurs among them, and what they do when one of them dies.

The research revealed the extent of the understandings of the ritual process regarding death. At the same time, the data reveal the ignorance of some respondents regarding the rituals due to changes affecting Bukusu culture. To illustrate, twelve of younger respondents (9.3%) could not go into detail. They gave answers such as “they mourn and give sacrifices”, “they inform other relatives that death has occurred by crying”, “they mourn as they offer sacrifices to the ancestors”, and “they mourn”. Fourteen just skipped the question, presumably not giving any answer simply because of ignorance. One hundred and seventeen of the men interviewed, and fifty women

argued that Bukusu are very serious about death and burial rites, that they come together and make arrangements for the burial, and that they make sure a cow is slaughtered for the event. Twelve men and four women could not answer with specificity. Both Quakers (87.2%) and non-Quakers (84.6%), thus the majority of the respondents had the similar responses. They also affirmed that Bukusu are respectful of the culture and they take it seriously when death occurs. However, only eleven of non-Quakers and five Quakers did not answer the question. For Mrs. Masinde and many others, death is just a move to another world where people live, but in the form of spirit. She asserted that people continue to perform rituals in order to appease the dead spirits. She once experienced her late husband, who was a medicine man coming back home and requesting that she go and tell a man he had treated while he was alive to pay his debt so that the husband could get clothes, because, he complained he was naked. But she did not take it seriously. A week later her late husband came with a stick asking for the same thing, as if he wanted to beat her. All of a sudden, she woke up and told her family what she had dreamt. She was told to buy new clothes and put them on his grave. Since that day, he has never come back again. She believes that people who die live in another way (cf. App.C. nos. 5, 17, 18, 20, 23).

In brief, the findings on this question display the capacity of respondents to acquire knowledge of the rituals and describe them in time and space. For example, the age variable had a significant number of respondents (64 or 97%) who knew the procedure of the rituals. They explained that “when death occurs, people light the fire outside the house in the evening; they mourn and send information to their relatives, afterwards they start making preparations for the burial. They can only start weeping in the evening if the person has died out of the required time to die (2 p m and 5 a m). Then the body can be moved from the bedroom to the sitting room. They perform the Khufua rite, where a cow or bull is slaughtered at the grave site. The animal has to come from one of the man’s daughters. Animals are slaughtered for the dead, to wish them

well and welcome them to the spirit world. Eventually, other rituals are performed after burial such as the Khulotia rite, which aims at bringing the spirit of the dead home if the deceased died a normal death far from the homeland; the Kamasanyagila rite, which also aims at bringing the spirit of the dead home from a place of accidental death. The Khumala Silindwa rite consists of arranging the grave and sometimes, cementing it and other rites, as described in the next point.

However easy the question seemed to be, other variables, marital status excepted, namely, age, gender and religion indicated that approximately 86% of respondents knew the rituals, 6% did not know, while 8% did not answer the question. The variable of marital was significant in that a large majority of married people (91.1%) responded with detail on how Bukusu organize themselves to bury the death, but single respondents (25.0%), instead did not come up with a good explanation about the whole ritual process.

Table 03: Knowledge of death and burial rites among Bukusu. By age and marital status

(N=195).

VARIABLES		Know the ritual process	Don't know the ritual process	No response	Total
25-49yrs	N	103	12	14	129
	N%	79.8%	9.3%	10.9%	100.0%
50 years old and above	N	64	0	2	66
	N%	97.0%	0.0%	3.0%	100.0%
Married	N	163	4	12	179
	N%	91.1%	2.2%	6.7%	100.0%
Singles	N	4	8	4	16
	N%	25.0%	50.0%	25.0%	100.0%

### 3.6.2. Findings related to Research Question Two

The second research question asked what are the traditional rituals of purification after death and why are they performed by Bukusu Quakers.

The data show that many Bukusu are aware of the ritual process and can easily

describe it. As indicated in Table 04 above (cf. 3.6.1. Findings related to Research Question One), age was of significant in the responses to the question. Ninety seven per cent (97%) of elders were able to give accurate explanations of the ritual process whereas the younger ones did not give many details on the process. They gave but few elements on what they have experienced recently.

Informants reported that when death occurs, if people are to perform traditional death and burial rites, first, they will mourn to alert people; second, relatives and other family members will gather to plan for the burial. Sacrifices are made depending on age, sex, and rank of the person in the community. After burial they come for a family council meeting called Lufu, to discuss, to list the wealth of the deceased, and the inheritance. This meeting ends the burial ceremony, and so relatives go away. After two or three years, they come for farewell, grazing, razing the old house and construction of a new house for the family. Many informants, especially older ones recognized that death and burial rites among the Bukusu of Western Kenya have evolved in many respects. Before colonisation, people used to abandon the sick person or the dead in the bush. To be eaten by wild animals, especially hyenas, was a sign that the person was a good member of the community. To survive was a bad sign to members of the community. After a time, the community would pick up the skull and put it in a tree in between two branches. Thus, the place became sacred and it was used as a shrine called Siyembekho.

Later on, around the end of 19<sup>th</sup> Century (cf. Chapter 1.0.2), people realised that they were losing land since they had to move each time somebody died. The land they left behind was occupied by others. To stop this, they started to bury their dead. Eventually, people learned to bury their beloved ones in different ways, rather than leave them in the bush. This had been the practice when colonisation and Christianity came to Africa. A rich and important person would be buried in the skin of a cow or bull called Lisielo. But a poor person is buried uncovered and placed lying on the left

side to symbolise, that the person has stopped producing children. The right ear and the waist will be covered with tree leaves, called Lisiopo. To cover the waist with Lisiopo means the deceased has not gone to the ancestral land naked and to cover the right ear means that the person will continue to communicate with relatives while in the ancestral land. A man's penis must not get stuck in between his thighs, so that he does not prevent his children from giving birth. A woman, whether young or old, should not be buried without a traditional underskirt called Sitweya. It is also called frock, a woman's under dress. This must come from her sisters and female cousins. The Bukusu believe that burying her with a panty is like burying her naked. This prevents her husband from getting married again and other relatives from continuing to give birth.

The Bukusu also make sure the dead person is not covered with soil. They dig a sort of cave in the grave so that when the soil covers the grave, it does not touch the body. The dead person is buried facing the direction the ancestors had come from. If the ancestors came to Kenya through Uganda, the body will be buried facing the Uganda side.

In Bukusu culture, it is very important to respect the will of the deceased, who was blessed with a normal death. It is believed that if people violate the will of the deceased, misfortune will come upon them. Therefore, the traditional death and burial ritual process has two phases: before death and after death. In the case of an old person about to die, whose demise is delayed due to, perhaps iniquities, people perform what is called "the folding the bone", the Khufumba Kamakumba in other words bending the bones of the dying person by giving him flesh to eat so as to send the person off in peace. They slaughter a young cow or bull, then feed meat to the dying elder, a sign of accepting the imminent passing on. Once the meat is eaten, the person may pass on in peace. After death, for a natural death, people will perform the Kamasika mourning rites, funeral rites depending on age and sex. Before burial, they will perform the Kumukilokho rite to find out who killed the deceased. The elders sit in a circle, a cock

is brought in and they break its neck and throw it in the middle of the circle. If the cock dies in between someone's legs, that means that person is involved in causing death. The person has to leave immediately; otherwise, he might be killed. If the cock dies outside the circle, it means the death is normal and natural. This rite is always performed when a married man has passed away. Traditional burial will be conducted in respect to the position of the body in the grave and the direction of the grave on the compound. When the widow is about to be reintegrated in the society, she will wear her husband's clothes and take his stick in her left hand and a gourd of a traditional liquid called Kamanyasi. It is used for purification rite, traditional medicine smeared or used for bathing or washing the infected or affected persons. She will go to the places her husband frequented and smear the liquid around the places where the husband used to visit. Wherever she passes, people there will give something as a gift; she will not talk until she has finished the ritual. When she finishes, she can now come back to normal life. The ritual is called Kamasanyagila; it precedes Lufu which ends burial ceremony, and people go away.

People sit for Lufu after three days for a man who passed away and two days for a woman. In case of a man's death, the wife or a close relative will be asked to remove a part of the central plank that supports the roof of the house called Lusuli. In fact, Lusuli is also an indication of the power of procreation. It has the same meaning as the grass put on the head of the circumcised boy when coming from the river after circumcision. At this moment, the wife must be naked. She will also remove the main cornerstone of the traditional fireplace and hide it at night so that the children cannot see or find it. This means that the man of the home is no longer alive. It is a taboo for children to see the stone, for if they do, it would be as if they have seen the nakedness of their father, since the cornerstone is meant to be the father's stepping stone as he engages in sexual intercourse with his wife. Early in the morning, relatives of the deceased will go to bathe and return from the river singing and praising the dead person a rite, the Nalulingo

Kobole. It has to take place after 2 or 3 days. Early in the morning relatives of the deceased go to bathe and return from the river singing and praising the deceased. Then they will shave, khubekwa. It is a sign of sorrow and letting go of the deceased, physical separation and choose the first chairman, who must be a brother or cousin to the dead person.

At the first meeting, it is a taboo for anyone to talk or say something but the one who is conducting the meeting. This gathering is called Khuswala Kumuse. A specialist in the clan is informed if only the person was elderly that means he was a teacher and custodian of the traditions and customs (80 year and above). He talks about the clan, their origin, migrations and the cause. What they are good at and which kind of the person the deceased was. He is given a cow and he talks while walking among the seated people. No walking, talking or even folding the hand or legs or scratching or coughing if any is done then he goes way. Or else, whoever dares to talk or make any noise must leave immediately. It is believed that people should not interfere during the process which separates them from the spirit of the deceased person. After the first meeting, the first chairman leaves the place immediately. At the second meeting, a second chairman is chosen to resolve family issues until the fortieth day. This chairman, however, is not the one who has to inherit the deceased man's wife, unless she agrees. It is at this meeting that people are allowed to talk and discuss. This rite is more of a family meeting of purification and evaluation for the family to start a new life and discuss the distribution of the wealth and the debts of the deceased person. For a woman, there will only be removal of one of the stones which she steps on during her intimate relationship with her husband. This is followed by Lufu, the post burial gathering.

On the fortieth day, people come for the death anniversary, Kamakumba or Lung'anyolo memorial ceremony in honour of the deceased by going back to her or his birth place or ancestral place, where a cow or bull is slaughtered in memory of the

deceased. People celebrate. In the Khufua rite, a cow or bull is slaughtered at the grave site. The animal has to come from the man's daughters. People come for the Khumala Silindwa rite, in which they cement the grave and make sure that the distribution of the wealth of the deceased person is well prepared. The Khukwisia Likubili rite is the breaking down of the house of the deceased and construction of a new house at another place, symbolising a new start. For someone who may have died a long time ago but was not buried at home, when people are sure of the death, the Khulotia rite is performed. It aims to return the spirit of the elderly dead person home if normal death happened outside the homestead. Khulotia mostly involves the slaughtering of a cow or bull at the place where the deceased person was last seen alive or last stepped.

In case of a sudden or abnormal death, death and burial rites have long been special. In the case of suicide, people believe that the person is cursed for having stopped the course of life. Therefore, burial takes place at night, with some rituals inverted. The body is buried facing the opposite direction from the arrival of the ancestors. It is a taboo to name a child after a suicide. In some cases, the family calls upon outsiders to bury the person. In case of the death of a twin Mukhwana or Mulongo, people will say, "Omwana mulala aulukha" one child is resting, to mean that the one who is alive should not see how the twin buried, at risk of death. Therefore, neither crying nor other rituals take place. If both twins die, their parents are not supposed to attend the burial; otherwise they also may pass away. In case of accidental death, people perform the Khukobosia or Khumwenda rite, it aims at going back to the place of accident and normally a chicken is left at the place of the accident. They will prepare tea or food there and then throw some coins. Finally they will carry home a stone or soil from that place as a sign of bringing the spirit of the deceased person home before burial. It is believed that anyone who picks up the coins, takes up the 'curse of dying in an accident' out of the deceased's family. A woman, wife to a late Bukusu Professor of Kenyatta University, said that when her husband died in a road accident, his mother and

members of his family went after his burial to the place of the accident. They prepared tea, drank it and then carried soil from the place. When they started the journey back home, they did not talk to anyone until they reached home, and they put the soil on the favourite place of the late Professor. That was a sign of bringing him home, she said (cf. App.C. no.15).

Following the death of a barren woman, an Omukumba or a barren man, an Umusumba Napeli, according to Bukusu custom, the person must not be carried out of the house to the gravesite through the main door. Another door, Kuandiako, a back door created for a barren person or a hole if in rental houses a small hole is made even on the widow through which the body will be taken to the gravesite. Close relatives have to turn back while burying the person, after whom no child may be named.

Gabriel, 48 years old, and Anoratus, 72 years old observed that many Bukusu, whether they are Christians or not, perform these rituals for fear of misfortunes. Gabriel added that he had a problem dealing with his own children who were twins. He had to perform traditional burial rites when they passed away despite his being a catechist in the Roman Catholic Church. He also said that he, himself, witnessed people who were burying a barren woman. As mentioned before, Bukusu custom forbids carrying such a person to the gravesite out of the house through the main door to the gravesite. They have to create another door and take out the body through it. However, because of the family Christian background, they just dug a small hole in the wall and symbolically passed the body through it, but eventually moved out with the coffin by the main door. Death and burial rites are taking other forms. Sometimes, because of fear of misfortune sent by ancestors and rejection by the Christian community, people try to satisfy both tradition and Christianity (cf. App.C. nos.11, 12).

Mr. Nangendo stated that in the Bukusu custom, people are buried in a certain position. Hands joined together means that for all sins the person committed on earth, God alone will judge where the person goes. Moreover, Mr. Stoma confirmed that even

today, when a man dies, especially the older ones, people make sure that his penis does stay in between his thighs. It has to stay out like at the time he used to have sexual intercourse; otherwise he will prevent his children from giving birth. Likewise, it is a must for a woman to be buried with the traditional underskirt, the Sideway (cf. App.C. no.14).

A practice that exposes an adulteress was witnessed during the burial in Samoa, Bingham County, of a Roman Catholic woman. The person had died of acute malaria. At the gravesite, some of her relatives and friends could not shovel soil onto the grave. The explanation was that those people might have committed adultery. People use Lubukusu idiomatic expression, khulia chimbeba, 'to eat the rats' to refer to members of the family who are not faithful to their partners. So, they avoided approaching the gravesite or helping to close in the grave; otherwise they could be cursed and could die. Later it was made clear that her body had been positioned according to Bukusu tradition, lying with the left hand on the head. The religious faith of the deceased notwithstanding, such practices as these could be observed.

Moreover, the person was buried facing the direction her ancestors came from. It has been indicated that the deceased was buried in a position different from that of her late husband; she faced the back of the house, while the grave of the husband faces the main entry of the compound (cf. Apr. no.10). The same thing was observed during the burial of an 89- year-old woman. The position of the grave and the way it was dug did not reflect anything Christian. The coffin was carried out of the house, legs end first and once out, it was turned around head first and to approach the grave. Here again, the grave faced the direction the Bukusu ancestors had come from where the creator God appears from the east. People are tied up in their ancestral beliefs and their consequences, but Church leaders tell them to get rid of anything related to tradition. Nonetheless, sometimes, what they are told to avoid does not negatively affect their Christian faith, since the practices are simply symbols and memories of their beloved

departed ones. They live in a modern society with many challenges that sometimes require them to be committed to different ways of life. Christianity is just one of them. As explained in Chapter One (cf. 1.4.), the respondents said that death and burial rites performed with traditional aspects have been equated to “demonic practices and sinful behavior” while in reality, they only help people to remember their ancestors and pay last respects to their beloved departed brothers and sisters.

Most of the male and female respondents, non-Quakers, Quakers, the younger, the older, the married and single respondents, reported that they do attend traditional death and burial rites. Some said that it is a must to attend traditional death and burial rites because they are relatives to the one who has passed away. They belong to their community. Some others asked that who would bury this body if I did not attend. Some attend to learn more about what their ancestors used to do. The burial process is collective some say, and requires participation from all members to pay the last respects by shovelling soil on the grave (cf. App.C. nos. 1, 2, 31).

In contrast, some respondents mentioned having grown up in an urban environment and, therefore had no experience of traditional death and burial rites. Some of them said that, because of economic class and religious class, they belong to, they have not had a chance to experience traditional rite. For example, Dorcas stated that people go for traditional rituals just to be sure that misfortune and other curses do not harm them. She said that in 2010 she found a dead person on her way to supply milk. She had to perform a ritual to cleanse her so that she could reintegrate into her family. She said that according to the Bukusu culture, people believe that whoever finds a dead person in the bush or in the river carries the spirit of that dead person.

Once the finder goes home, the spirit might start disturbing threatening the finder and the family. Therefore, the person has to remain at the mourning place until the burial is complete, unless the Kamanyasi rite is performed. It is a ritual that is performed to allow a return to normal life using a gourd of a traditional liquid called

*Kamanyasi* that is smeared on the person. This ritual has to happen before Lufu after burial. As a married woman, Dorcas was allowed to go home after having performed the Kamanyasi ritual, then the third day, the day of Lufu, she went back and, a sheep, likhese was slaughtered. Then she washed her hands in the entrails of the animal while telling the dead person that she had nothing to do with his death that she was just passing by that that is how she found him. When she finished saying that, she asked for a reward, but only 200 shillings was given because the family was poor, ordinarily, she could have a sheep or a goat. They gave her the 200 shillings which she spent on the spot because it was a taboo to bring the money home. Asked why though a Christian, she went through the traditional ritual process of purification, she said that she did so to avoid getting into conflict with her husband who is not really involved in church affairs (cf. App.C. no. 19).

A compilation of 35 oral interviews and the answers to the questionnaire show that  $\frac{3}{4}$  of respondents across all four variables agreed that a good number of these rituals are still in practice to date, while  $\frac{1}{4}$  did not agree. They also affirmed that a few are seldom practiced such as the Kumukilokho rite, to find out who killed the deceased and the Khufumba Kamakumba rite, bending the bones of the dying person by giving him flesh to eat so as to send the person off in peace, because they tend toward witchcraft. People do not perform them because they do not want to be considered pagan. Most other rituals are still in practice (see table 05 above) though have taken on new forms. For example, if a man dies and he built a permanent house and there is no way to break down of the house of the deceased and construction of a new house at another place; symbolically they will break a part of the wall inside the house to complete the Khukwisia Likubili rite. Nowadays, to bury a barren woman or man, people do not create a new door through which the coffin should pass. They rather open a small hole in the wall and symbolically make the spirit of the deceased pass through it and eventually pass with the coffin through the main door. In other occasions, instead of

smearing the grave in a traditional way, some people will simply cement it in a similar process.

Table 04: Table showing a list of main death and burial rites among Bukusu

Bukusu death and burial rites (Funeral rites = Kawasaki rites)	In Practice
Khufumba Kamakumba = bending the bones of the dying person by giving him flesh to eat so as to send the person off in peace.	Very rare
Kumukilokho = to find out who killed the deceased. The elders sit in a circle, a cock is brought in and they break its neck and throw it in the middle of the circle. If the cock dies in between someone's legs, that means that person is involved in causing death.	Very rare
Kamanyasi = Purification rite using traditional liquid to smear on the person	Very often
Kamasanyagila, Khukobosia or Khumwenda = To bring the spirit of the dead home in case accidental death happened outside the homestead	Very often
Khulotia = To bring the spirit of the dead home in case normal death happened outside the homestead, it performed mostly for elder people	Very often
Lung'anyolo = Memorial ceremony in honor of the deceased	Very often
Khufua = Slaughtering of an animal at the graveside	Very often
Khuswala Kumuse (P) = The gathering where it is a taboo for anyone to talk or say something but the one who is conducting the meeting.	often
Nalulingo Kobole (P) = Early in the morning, relatives of the deceased go to bathe and return from the river singing and praising the dead person	often
Khumala Silindwa = cementing of the grave with soil	Very often
<b>Practices and Artefacts of the ritual (P/A)</b>	
	In Use
Lufu (P) = Family council meeting	Very often
Khubekwa (P) = To shave	Very often
Kuandiango (P) = A second door created for a barren woman or man	rare
Khukwisia Likubili = The breaking down of the house of the deceased and construction of a new house at another place	sometimes
Lusuli (A) = He central plank that supports the roof of the house	Very often
Sitweya (A) = Traditional underskirt with which a woman should be buried, whether young or old.	Very often
Lisiopo (A) = Tree leaves used for burial	Not at all

### 3.6.3. Findings related to Research Question Three

The third research question asked what are the conditions and circumstances surrounding the performance of purification rituals among the Bukusu Quakers and why. The research sought to spell out and check if rituals performed by young men and women could result into a legitimate purification in the case of a normal death. It was also meant to find out why rituals are performed on a specific time during the day.

The large majority (85%), among our four variables did agree that young men and women cannot perform rituals in any circumstance. They said that the rituals will be illegitimate in case young men and women perform them.

However, it is worthwhile to note that many respondents who said “no” to this question are young people themselves (cf, table 06). i.e., some said no because young people have lost touch with their ancestral beliefs. Western education and modernity have made them to be ignorant of traditional rituals. Some others said that many young people are influenced by technology; therefore, to give them a chance to perform rituals is to put the life of the community at risk. In contrast, table 06 indicates that among the few respondents who said “yes”, the majority are women and older people. These women and some older respondents argued that if young men and women have knowledge over the rituals, or once one is dedicated to the duty and has knowledge, it will be accepted. The younger and the male respondents also said that a young person can be elected and made an elder since he is a member of the community. Despite the fact that the number of these respondents is not significant as shown in table 06 below, nevertheless it reveals a rejection of the status-quo in traditional rituals concerning the role of women and young people.

Table 05: Legitimacy of rituals performed by young men and women. By age, and gender (N=195)

VARIABLES		YES	NO	NO RESPONSE	Total
Men	N	4	122	10	136
	N%	2.9%	84.6%	7.4%	100.0%
Women	N%	10	43	6	59
	N	16.9%	84.7%	10.2%	100.0%
25-49yrs	N	4	116	9	129
	N%	3.1%	89.9%	7.0%	100.0%
50 years old and above	N%	10	49	7	66
	N	15.2%	74.2%	10.6%	100.0%

What is clear from the large majority of respondents on this question is that one of the challenges of traditional rituals is to allow a young man and women to perform traditional rituals. In fact, Bukusu custom does not allow women to dig graves and carry dead bodies and youth with pregnant wives never dig graves. Many respondents observed that according to Bukusu custom, women and young men are not qualified to perform Bukusu purification rites because as for women, they are regarded as unclean and young men inexperienced. Young men must attain a certain age and have good morals in the society before qualifying to perform such rituals and must necessarily be married and have children. Moreover, they also reported that rituals are performed at a specific time because Bukusu believe that spirits are walking and are attentive during quiet moments, especially early in the morning or late at night and they will be willing to take the sacrifice (cf. App.C. no. 5, 18, 21, 35).

In short, the research showed that the cultural perception of rituals is still very strong as far as the role playing in the performance of the rituals whether people have embrace Christianity or not, they still respect the fact that young men and women cannot perform rituals in the Bukusu community. Henceforth, if one were to give such a big role

to a woman or a young man will be a great offense to the whole community and consider that kind of rituals to be illegitimate; this may have further negative effects on the family.

#### 3.6.4. Findings related to the Research Question Four

The fourth research question asked, does the death of a community member among the Bukusu Quakers affect the way of living of close relatives and why?

The question revealed out how people are affected positively or negatively when one of them passes away especially if he was the bread winner of the home. The data show that three of four variables, namely gender, religion and marital status have the same responses on this question. Approximately 76.41% of respondents across the three variables said that death affects negatively many families in Bungoma and Kimilili. However over five per cent (5.13%) said that death affects people positively and 10.26% said it affects both positively and negatively.

On the contrary, the age variable (cf. table 07) shows a significant difference in response to this question. The large majority of older respondents (90.9%) said that death affects negatively the family, while only, sixty-nine per cent(69%) of younger respondents considered death to affect the family negatively; over seven per cent (7.8%) of them said they consider death to have positive effect on the family, 15,5% said that, it has both negative and positive effects.

Table 06: Effects of death on the way of living of close relatives, by age (N=195)

VARIABLES		Positive effects	Negative effects	Both Positive & Negative effects	No Response	Total
25-49yrs	N	10	89	20	10	129
	N%	7.8%	69.0%	15.5%	7.8%	100.0%
50 years old and above	N	0	60	0	6	66
	N%	0.0%	90.9%	0.0%	9.1%	100.0%

However, respondents who said that death has negative effects on the family argued that the family obviously feels the gap especially when it comes abruptly. Family members become orphans, grieves and it always takes time to forget if especially the one that passed away is the bread winner of the family. Sometimes, there is loss of direction among the bereaved; orphans fail to pursue with their education, they are forced into adulthood. Lucy, for example, lost Evans, her elder brother drowned down the river close to their homestead. Evans was sick but a hard working boy in their home. He could do anything and was very social in the neighborhood. That particular day Evans was not feeling well, he fell down and his young brother helped him to go and rest in his room. Unfortunately he decided to go to the river to take bath; from that moment he went missing in the house and his relatives thought he was in the neighborhood, just to find out the next day in the evening that he had drowned in the river. Lucy said that because Evens drowned in the river, it is a sort of curse. Such a person is not supposed to be buried properly according to Bukusu culture; so people in the neighborhood did not come to console even some of their close relatives. The family was very shocked and it took time for them to recover from that and they asked themselves if some of their fellow Christian still believe that death is a curse for anybody who has died that way which according to them should be look at it as a normal death. Finally, it can affect people if the one who dies is a bread winner, it will bring disorientation in the family and loss of direction, people might end up by making wrong choices as far as management is concerned (cf. App.C. no. 17).

For the few respondents (5.13%) death can be a relief if for instance it is a thief who has passed away. It ends the shame and distress that person was causing to them. But for those who die peacefully, children are named after them and behave in the same way as the person they are named after. Such a death is a blessing to the family members. For instance, Wamalwa argued that death can have positive effects especially if it is an old person who passes away peacefully. He shared with us that the death of his

grandfather was a blessing to him and it had positive effects in his life. The day before his grandfather's death, the old man of 105 years old came to him and told him, "tomorrow, you are not going to school", Wamalwa wondered why the old man told him that. Then he went asked him why, the old man said, "Because I will tell you a story". That morning his grandfather came and called him, and they went to sit at his house. The first thing he told him was, "I have six thousand shillings, you will use it as bride wealth for your future wife" then he gave him a stool and the stick. They ate lunch together after that he told him' "bring me out" and he said, "I think I'm going", "where are you going?", asked Wamalwa, but no reply. Instead he looked at the sun and when finished, ordered Wamalwa to bring him in the house and to cover him. The old man told him, "Go and call your father". When Wamalwa went and came back with his father, they found the old man dead. So, Wamalwa was very grateful to his grandfather and he considered his death as a blessing on him because this old man prepared him to his future life (cf. App.C. no. 27).

Eventually, many of the respondents pointed out that in some cases, widows are likely to abandon their homes and children and look for other better pastures at the risk of pushing her children onto the street. Since Bukusu associate death with witchcraft, there could be hatred between families and relatives. These would be direct consequences of death which can contribute in destroying family life.

#### 3.6.5. Findings related to the Research Question Five

The fifth research question asked, are there Christian rituals that the Bukusu Quakers perform to purify the family members of the deceased and how they are similar or different from the traditional ones. This research question uncovered the Christian rituals are most effective among the Bukusu and discovered similarities and differences between Christian rituals and Bukusu traditional ones.

Regardless of age groups, marital status and religion (the gender variable excepted) the data show that 73.8% of respondents had a negative view of traditional

rituals whereas 14,4% supported the idea of going for traditional rituals. Inasmuch as the comparison between traditional and Christian rituals is concerned; respondents pointed out that there are more differences than there are similarities because traditional rituals are very much opposed to Christianity, their new religious background.

The gender variable, however, shows a significant difference in response to this question. Almost all the female respondents (84.7%) were more negative on the issue of doing for traditional rituals. They did not find any advantage in traditional rituals as opposed to the male respondents (69.1%). The women argued that if they go for traditional rituals they shall be blocking the deceased person ways to God in heaven since the dead led a Christian life while on earth, they said. Beyond all, some women revealed that they are always victims of injustice in most of the cases when death occurs. They are left without anything; they are mistreated during the mourning period and sometimes find themselves in the hands of somebody they do not want. In reference to the negative effects of death on the family, women feel that Bukusu custom does not guarantee peace and justice. That is why Christian rites would seem to give them security and peace. But male respondents had some reservations on the question.

Male respondents, on the contrary, had some reservations on the question. They said that Bukusu culture existed before Christianity came to Africa. This has been practiced by their forefathers up to this moment. They wondered why they should all of a sudden abandon their culture in the name of Christianity. This explains why some of them (28) opted for traditional rituals despite their being Christian.

Table 07: The superiority of Christian rites over the traditional rites, by gender (N=195)

VARIABLES		YES	NO	Perform both rituals	NO RESPONSE	Total
Men	N	28	94	4	10	136
	N%	20.6%	69.1%	2.9%	7.4%	100.0%
Women	N	3	50	0	6	59
	N%	5.1%	84.7%	0.0%	10.2%	100.0%

From the research findings, most of the respondents were not able to describe any Christian ritual that they know is better which they go through during burial rites. This resonates with the few respondents (15.9%) who support the idea of doing traditional rituals. They wonder whether Christian rituals are effective enough in replacement of the traditional ones. Hence, “it is too easy to relate with Christian rituals but very challenging to mess up with traditional ones, especially when people are disturbed by the spirit of the dead”, as one of the respondents observed (cf. App.C. no. 21). To illustrate, Mr. Khaemba shared that a woman died and she belonged to the Bukusu clan called Balunda. According to the custom of the Balunda clan, a dead person is supposed to be buried seated as their ancestors died seated. For these people, whether you are a Christian or not, one should be buried seated. So, it reached at point that people from this clan move from other Christian churches to another which can accommodate them. Eventually, it happened that this woman was not to be buried by her church members. They left when they realized that she was to be buried as a Mulunda. As a consequence, her family members left the church and moved to another (cf. App.C. no. 14).

Actually, most of the respondents who answered yes, are very much involved in church affairs. They argued that many people in Bungoma and Kimilili go for traditional rituals because there is still fear for the spirit of the dead to come and harm them. For Mr. Ulula, Mrs. Masika, David and many others, it is mandatory to perform traditional rituals; that is what happens and still happening; the fear for spirits to affect them. It is also a sign of cleansing the home and to show respect to the living dead. Burial rites would be deemed incomplete if the rituals are not done. The pastor is not a member of the family. He is just an advocate of God. So, what he does is to behave according to his new perception of life which excludes ancestral beliefs and practices. Therefore, if need be, traditional rites can be done secretly before the pastor comes in to finalize the burial ceremony with a Christian outlook (cf. App.C. nos.16, 18, 19).

Being a Quaker church leader, Mr. Vincent, an 84-year-old man at Mikhail village Sangallo area, reported that his nephew who was a pastor almost beat his father because the father insisted that his first born son was to be circumcised in a traditional way according to the Bukusu custom. Unfortunately the father died without the two having time to reconcile. After some times, the pastor bought two cows. These cows started to behave strangely and finally one of them died. The remaining one became very sick but it did not die. One day, the wife of the pastor dreamt about her father-in-law; she saw him coming to her home with two other visitors. He said, “My daughter, I have come to your home, I want you to prepare meat for us because I have never eaten at your place here. You have to slaughter a cow for us”. She replied, “But father, where will I find a cow for you?” “What about that cow over there?” he said. “Take that cow and slaughter it there!” He pointed at a place next to his grave. Then he said, “I don’t see the son of my mother” meaning Mr. Vincent his young brother; “I want him to come here and slaughter the cow for us”. From that morning they found that the sick cow recovered and it became well. Pastor called Mr. Vincent to perform the ritual; they slaughtered the cow and celebrated in memory of the late father to the pastor. From that time all their animals were well and healthy, the wife did not see her father-in-law coming and again claiming for a cow (cf. App.C. no.31).

From the majority of the respondents, all of them stated that even those who claim to be committed Christians end up by performing traditional death and burial rites.

#### 3.6.6. Findings related to the Research Question Six

The sixth research question asked; why do the Bukusu Quakers continue to perform traditional rites of purification despite their being Christian.

The general views from the research found that the hundred and ninety-five people, 3/4 of them across all variables have a similar opinion about this question namely the presence of ancestral spirit of death.

The  $\frac{3}{4}$  of respondents said that when Bukusu experience some problems, they believe their ancestral spirits caused it. So, to overcome those problems, they have to offer sacrifices so as to provide security against the spirits. They believe traditional rituals are satisfactory and so the dead person still remains important to them because it is only physical departure but they are spiritually united. They also believe that the dead communicate to them in various ways. Therefore, to avoid social disintegration, traditional rituals are signs of identification among Bukusu communities. Others said that the family is likely to suffer from the curses of ancestral spirits because of their weak faith in Christianity. There would be fear if the bereaved are not firm in their Christian allegiance. Therefore people fear for further disasters, that they will be haunted by the spirits despite their being Christians; fear of the unknown, fear of further deaths or else the dead will appear to them in dreams threatening them, so to appease the ancestors, they slaughter an animal at the graveside. An 64-year-old man at Namamuka village urged that when burial takes place, Bukusu make sure that the deceased's hands are joined together so that curses cannot come up on them; and eyes are supposed to be closed so that the deceased cannot see what is going in his family. To refuse to do some important rituals can be harmful to family members. Such events happened in Bokoli, he said. An old man died and his son who was a church leader and a pastor, refused to sacrifice a bull in honor of his late father. After some times, the spirits of his late father came to disturb him and he almost became mad. A man came and told his family that the pastor was suffering because he did not perform that ritual in honor of his late father. When the ritual was performed, the pastor recovered and became well and everything came back to normal. This informant concluded that there are some of the rituals in the Bukusu culture that people perform despite their being Christians (cf. App.C. no.22).

Hence, the data show that many respondents agreed to the fact that there are special reasons that push Bukusu to do traditional rituals despite their being Christians.

Curiously enough, many of the same respondents who said they will not perform traditional rituals because they are Christians; do so after the pastor has gone (cf. Research Question Five). Only few of the respondents answered “no” without a clear and deep explanation as compared to the one given by the majority. There have been contrasting findings on this research question. Both the majority who agreed and those who disagreed seem to have said the same thing differently as follows: From the findings, the “fear of further deaths” is the main reason why Bukusu do traditional rituals despite their being Christians. Therefore, traditional rituals are considered to bring security and safety in the community as oppose to Christian rituals.

#### 3.6.7. Findings related to the Research Question Seven

The seven research question asked: how can dialogue be initiated between Bukusu traditional rites and Christian rituals of purification.

The seventh research question found that church leaders and Bukusu elders could carry out their spiritual duties in accompanying people in their crucial moments such as death and burial rites in order to address adequately issues concerning traditional rituals as opposed to the Christian ones in Bungoma County. We reformulated the question and asked the question to our respondents as followed: Should Bukusu church leaders consider traditional rituals as part of the rites of passage to communicate the Gospel message?

There was a significance similarity in the answers of the respondents according to their various age, gender, marital status and religion. The 3/4 of the respondents said that Bukusu church leaders should consider traditional rituals as a part of the rites of passage to communicate the Gospel message. They argued that the Bukusu church leaders should consider some traditional rituals as part of the rites of passage to communicate the gospel message on resurrection day. In other words, they should incorporate traditional rituals which are compatible with Christianity, take them as a basis of evangelization, then diverge to strict Christianity customs and practices to make

people avoid performing secretly traditional rituals. By doing so, and because traditional rituals are part and parcel of the Bukusu, they can use them to make the Gospel message more meaningful. For example, Our Lord Jesus died, was buried, the third day He rose from the dead and after 40 days He went to the Kingdom of Heaven.

This applies exactly to Bukusu people. People die, after the third day, they gather together and do shaving, after 40 days they meet and have a memorial ceremony; this means to start a new life which gives hope to the remaining family members as they cleanse themselves; memorials impart hope as they remember the good things the dead person did, so to speak. Mr. Kakayi, a church leader also pointed out that missionaries did not scrutinize and ask themselves questions as to know why Africans in general and Bukusu in particular were performing those rituals; as a consequence, they simply rejected it and preached the gospel from a western cultural background. Bukusu culture had values that are similar to Christianity. For example, they used to say, a person is buffalo meat that is only offered on a plate, Omundu kabele enyama ye emboko okinyolela khusibumba. In other words, dare not to go and hunt it otherwise it will kill you. The meaning is that the life of a person is more important than the way it looks like, one should never take the life of somebody; it is only God who can do that. This Bukusu saying is directly related to the fifth commandment which states “You shall not kill” (cf. Ex. 20:13). God is the Lord and giver of all life and no one can take this function from him by directly taking away an innocent human life. Murder is one of the worst sins, an out curse in the Bukusu culture as Christians read in the Bible, when Cain slays Abel and he is cursed for it (Gn4:1-16). The other one is the “Esale” rite. Bukusu used to perform this rite in order to mark faithfulness between the two spouses. It consisted of sharing blood with one another by cutting one’s hand with a knife and once there is bleeding of blood, they will each take a piece of meat and spread blood over it. The two pieces of meat will be dried and after some times, the two spouses will eat that meat as a sign that they will never betray each other and be faithful until death. In case

of one of happens to be unfaithful, people will know it if one of the spouses dies as a sign of unfaithfulness as expressed in Lubukusu, khulia chimbeba, 'to eat the rats' during burial (see Research question Two). This was a sort of commandment that was to prevent people from committing adultery which directly related the sixth commandment in the bible, "You shall not commit adultery" (cf. Ex 20: 14), also stipulates that men and women are called to love and be chaste. Chastity requires a degree of maturity and self-control, in other words people have to rule their passions, but passions do not rule them. It requires time and patience so that peace may be established in people's homes and society and one should reject everything opposed to this (cf. App.C. no.21).

On the contrary, only a few people, 1/4 from across all four variables did not agree. In the line with the early missionary prejudices that African traditional rites of passage are evil and demonic, they argued that church leaders should strictly preach according to Christianity rites. They strongly recommended that traditional rituals disappear to give room to Christian faith; that the trust in Jesus Christ, who died and was elected by God, will allow the Christian believers to resurrect on the last day. Therefore, church leaders should decide either to perform traditional rituals or church rituals. This is very important as teachers to act as role models of Christian spreading of the gospel to people.

The findings on the question show that there is a very big concern that impacts on the church's pastoral ministry in families among Bukusu when death occurs. In other words, there is a great need to establish family ministry with qualified personnel can help to address this challenge. As Simiyu pointed out, "the church is now trying to show people that it was God's plan that all those things which happened through the spirit of the dead so that you could be saved. If there was a way church leaders could come to the burial place and let the people listen to them in the evening and try to explain to them the importance of traditional rituals in relation to Christianity; this could be helpful to people.

However, there is also a change in people's attitude which has to be followed up and encouraged. For example, next to Kabula parish, a barren woman died in an accident, her people wanted to create another door through which the coffin was supposed to pass according to the Bukusu culture, but her church members opposed to that, so her relatives created a small hole in the wall and called the spirit of the deceased to come out through it; and eventually they moved the coffin out of the house through the main door. Now foreign education and values are over stressed in order to look more successful, and we think that European way of life is the best. To refer to African culture in general, Bukusu culture in particular, is to look backward, primitive and this has been confusing the Bukusu and their descendants of today" (cf. App.C. no.22).

#### 3.7.1. Finding related to Assumption One

The first research assumption was that the Bukusu Quakers understand the death of a community member as complete devastation and powerlessness which results in insecurity and loss of vital force.

The study assumed that Bukusu Quakers understand death as an evil spirit which has the power of destruction. That is why a Bukusu would always find out the cause of death through traditional means such as consultation with a diviner or a witchdoctor or performs a ritual to appease the spirit of the dead assuming that misfortune or curse might harm them. The data show that this assumption was proven right by the majority (71.8%) of the respondents as opposed to twenty per cent (20%) of those who disagreed.

However, women and single respondents (see table 08) are among the majority of respondents who did not approve this assumption. They gave a sort of theological explanation of death. They argued that death is just a state of passage from physical to spiritual dimension of existence. Death is also a natural calamity that has its roots from God. God has called his child, the deceased person is resting and he shall resurrect on the last day.

Table 08 : Death, a condition of complete devastation and powerlessness, by gender and marital status (N=195)

VARAIBLES		YES	NO	NO RESPONSE	Total
Men	N	120	2	14	136
	N%	88.2%	1.5%	10.3%	100.0%
Women	N	27	30	2	59
	N%	45.8%	50.8%	3.4%	100.0%
Married	N	142	23	14	179
	N%	79.3%	12.8%	7.8%	100.0%
Singles	N	5	9	2	16
	N%	81.3%	6.3%	12.5%	100.0%

In contrast, respondents who approved this hypothesis argued that death is a condition of powerlessness especially when it is caused by killing, accidents, diseases, poisoning, witchcraft, drowning and at child birth. For those reasons, death is considered as the most common enemy in Christian life. People believe that when a person dies, it is a great loss to the family; it causes grief, sorrow which reduces strength and creates a devastation situation because of the brutal change that occurs in people's life. Most of the respondents like Mrs. Dorcas, Mrs. Theresa and others shared that when death occurs in any circumstance people have to show sign of grief because it is a loss despite the age of the deceased person. It is also a duty for the family members to check and find out the cause of death so that they may perform the appropriate ritual to appease the spirit of the dead (cf. App.C. nos. 20, 25).

Indeed, it came out from all the people we interviewed that death is always a moment of total loss of control for some and for some others, it changes the course of their lives; they neatly find themselves in a new situation which they consider as disaster. Many people in Bungoma County talk "Kamasika" referring to a mourning of a parent or one of the relatives in the village or in the neighborhood.

### 3.7.2. Findings related to Assumption Two

The second assumption of the research was that The Bukusu perform traditional death and burial rituals in order to stop the spirit of death and other misfortunes destroying life among them.

The research was carried out to test this assumption by asking the question as follows: Would you say that the main purpose of performing traditional rituals is to chase away the spirit of death and other misfortunes from destroying life among people? Across all our four variables, namely gender, age, religion and marital status; the data show that  $\frac{3}{4}$  of respondents answered “yes” as opposed to  $\frac{1}{4}$  of them who answered no. Those who said “yes” argued that the only way to help people accept the loss and continue life with another outlook is to perform their traditional rituals. It is, indeed, a method of chasing away evils of the death called Bisieno. Mr. Simiyu shared his experience with his grandfather. His grandfather was arrested a long time ago at his home and he was sent to the battle during the Second World War. Unfortunately, he died there by a snake bite. His family was informed about his death and it was known that Simiyu’s grand-father passed away in a foreign country. Since then the spirit of his late grand-father used to disturb them. Some people also died by snake bite and it became frequent, plus other diseases. His father then had to perform Khulotia rite to bring his grand-father’s spirit back at home. They went at the place where the grand-father was arrested and said words to show love and to apologize. Simiyu’s father said, “We are here to request you to accept to come home, we know you died by accident killed by that wild animal, please accept to come home”. They slaughtered a cow and celebrated in honor of his late grand-father. Since they performed that ritual, life came back to the normal. Being himself Bukusu, a retired teacher, a Christian and a scholar, Mr. Simiyu confirmed that people still continue to perform traditional rituals up to date to appease and chase away the spirit of the dead in order to avoid bad hormones and curse(cf. App.C. no. 22).

Many respondents told us their story to approve and support the reasons why Bukusu perform traditional rituals. Unlike the main reasons mentioned above, they also underlined the challenges that Bukusu encounter when they perform traditional rituals. Some of them argued that they are now facing two major problems: first, most of the elders who know the ritual process have died, as a consequence, there is nobody to direct them; and many Christians are against the Bukusu rituals; educated Bukusu disregard such rituals; the youth pay no attention to such rituals; urbanization has destroyed family bonds and today traditional shrines are no longer traceable and Christianity considers them demonic and evil. Second, that traditional rituals impact too much on the economy of the family and it becomes very expensive to cope with life if one engages him/herself into practice of traditional rituals. Some people do not have money to perform rituals due to the fact that they struggle to pay school fees for their children and to see themselves spending a lot of money just to entertain people has become a big challenge for a Bukusu. Other fear to lose respect among Christians and at the same time they are not sure of what will happen to them. There is a conflict of ideas among relatives and members of family (cf. App.C. nos. 21, 22). Despite these challenges, Bukusu people still find alternatives so that they can perform rituals, they can even adapt some of the rituals to the level of their economical income provided that there is shedding of blood (slaughtering an animal) otherwise they believe something bad will happen to them.

From the research findings as mentioned earlier, it has come out clearly that the assumption two was proven right by the majority of respondents who agreed that the Bukusu perform traditional death and burial rituals in order to stop the spirit of death and other misfortunes destroying life among them.

### 3.7.3. Findings related to Assumption Three

The third research assumption was that Purification rituals among the Bukusu are usually performed by elders early in the morning when spirits are not awake.

The research assumed that Bukusu prefer to perform rituals at particular moments of the day when bad people and others spirits cannot interfere with the ceremony. It also assumed that the best times were early in the morning and late in the evening and that; young men and women cannot perform rituals since they are regarded as inexperienced and unclean people. Considering the importance of the ritual process, Bukusu would not want to expose themselves to such a danger which might compromise the peace and harmony in the community due to irresponsible behaviors of a compromising person likely to bring more pain and misfortunes in the entire community by a deliberate provocation of the spirits of ancestors. In order to test this assumption, respondents were asked the following questions: What is the right moment for rituals to be performed and why?

Many of our respondents (76.4%) from the four variables namely gender, religion, marital status, and age, agreed with this assumption that purification rituals among the Bukusu are usually performed by elders early in the morning when spirits are not awake. But only a few number of respondents (15.4%) from across all variables, disapproved this assumption.

Moreover, table 09 shows that the age variable has significantly confirmed this assumption. All the older respondents gave accurate responses as opposed to the younger ones. The older respondents argued that if a young man or a woman or an old man performs traditional rituals and it results into a disaster, that it might have caused death and the death of many people because sometimes it involves witchcraft. That is why the whole rituals process must be respected especially the time to perform it. Our respondents made it clear to us that most of the traditional rituals take place early in the morning, late in the evening and some others at night because the ancestral spirits are expected also to take part in the rituals since they are believed to move around and roam at that time. The large majority of the respondents (76.41%), therefore, proved the assumption right. They agreed that the timing to perform rituals must be early in the

morning, late in the evening and at night. Most of them like Isaac and Vincent said that Bukusu believe that somebody who is above 30 years old is supposed to die in the evening at around 2 p.m. to 5 a.m. in the morning because the spirits of the ancestors are available to keep the deceased person company at time otherwise he/or she will feel lonely because they are not available during the day. Dying out of the required time it may also be an indicator of more death to come in a short while and an out curse on the remaining family members (cf. App.C. nos.30, 33).

In contrast, a few number of respondents especially the younger ones simply said that during crisis and disasters; tradition is time consuming/unpopular; that Christianity is time saving/stress free. Bukusu should go for Christian rituals instead of wasting time and money with traditional rituals. This actually has shown the inexperience among youth. They were not able to give the timing of the ritual process. The rest of the respondents (8.2%) did not answer the question.

Table 09: The right moment for rituals to be performed, by age (N=195)

VARIABLES		Know the time	Don't know the time	NO RESPONSE	Total
25-49yrs	N	87	28	14	129
	N%	67.4%	21.7%	10.8%	100.0%
50 years old and above	N	64	0	2	66
	N%	97%	0.0%	3%	100.0%

#### 3.7.4. Findings related to Assumption Four

The fourth assumption stated that the death of an individual in the Bukusu community causes fear among close relatives because it pollutes life. The research assumed that when a person dies in the Bukusu community, relatives fear to get into contact with the deceased's belongings and other items. They also believe the spirit of the dead person might harm them if they do not behave correctly. Therefore, Bukusu fear to get in touch with anything the dead person has been using or place he/she used to go until the rituals are performed after burial.

The data show that the large majority of the respondents (162 or 83%) from our four variables confirmed the assumption as opposed to a few number of respondents (17 or 8.7%) who disapproved it. Thus, many respondents reported that families are likely to face problems such as curse or bad hormones. They reported that they will be haunted by the evil spirits; that sickness will start to disturbing people in the family; that the dead will come back and call them to join them in the spiritual world. At time family members will disagree without knowing the cause of the disagreement. If the will of the deceased is not respected, the problems will posed in the family; that the family members may stay under curse and some may lose life; they will be haunted by the spirit of the dead.

But a few respondents who disapproved this assumption argued that once people become Christians and have strong faith, nothing will happen; nothing will happen to them if the deceased trusted the earthly and the family believes in the Holy Spirit by God; such some of the rare cases of the Bukusu who converted to Christianity and moved away from Bukusu tradition. For example, Mukwana, a 75-year-old woman who belong the clan of Baliche among the Bukusu reported that they usually have very tuff and strong beliefs in the spirits of the dead. Every year in December, they go for traditional dance which requires every member of the clan to dance naked anytime the dance is organized during the period of circumcision. Men and women, fathers-in-law, daughters-in laws mothers, fathers and their children, dance naked in public. Whoever is from “Baliche”, believes in the spirits, therefore the dance will be performed naked at any time or place special songs are heard and sung. This will force the person to take off clothes and start dancing naked. Eventually, it happened to Mukwana once when she was away from her parental home, she heard the song and all of sudden she took her clothes and started working naked for some times, then she put on her clothes and continued her journey. She said that since she joined Christianity, she never experienced that again. She also said that “once you believe in it (the spirits), it haunts you and you

become like a slave, but if you don't, nothing will happen to you" (cf. App.C. no. 28). From these opinions flowing from the three first assumptions, do Bukusu still consider Christian death and burial rites non effective in their community? This makes us to move to assumption number five.

#### 3.7.5. Findings related to Assumption Five

The fifth assumption stated that Christian death and burial rites are considered ineffective among the Bukusu because they fear a resultant insecurity. The study assumed that Christian death and burial rites are deemed inappropriate due to the western outlook. They appear foreign to the African culture in general and to Bukusu in particular. It was assumed that Christian burial rites are invalid rituals which can result in insecurity and danger for the community. This assumption explored personal views of the respondents on the effectiveness of Christian in their lives and their take and if they would wish to go for Christian rituals as opposed to the traditional ones.

Contrary to the second assumption which states that "the main purpose of performing traditional rituals is to chase away the spirit of death and other misfortunes from destroying life among people", three quarters of the respondents rejected the idea of considering Christian death and burial rites to be ineffective, while  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the respondents subscribed to the idea. They reported that Christian death and burial rites are effective since they outline the truth of the gospel; that they are effective because it saves time and less expensive to the family and comfortable. There has been an unfolding change in the community; people nowadays have discovered the usefulness of Christian rituals. Therefore, they prefer Christian rituals to the traditional ones because they help people understand the meaning of death and relationship entailed between the dead and the living; that Christian rituals make the bereaved people feel comfort and cope with life easily, some said. But a few respondents (12.8%) approved this assumption from our different variables especially the elders, the women, and the Quakers. They argued that some Bukusu go far as demonizing traditional rituals. This is

an indication that people are torn between Christianity and tradition. Therefore, they tend to do none correctly. Some of them we interviewed, like Mr. Vincent and Simiyu observed that some Bukusu think that if one goes for traditional rituals will look primitive and backward, so to go for Christian death and burial rites is just to pretend while one fears the outcomes from the spirits of the dead person (cf. App.C. no. 22, 31).

The data indicated clearly that this assumption was disapproved by the large majority of respondents (79%). Actually, the responses on this assumption raise up the perpetual and old conflict between African Traditional Religion and Christianity as the majority of respondents pointed it out in their comments on the second assumption concerning the challenges that Bukusu encounter when they perform traditional rituals.

All the respondents from the four variables have participated personally to give their point of view on the effectiveness of Christian rituals as compared to the traditional ones. They observed that Bukusu are now facing two major problems: one, most Christians are against the Bukusu rituals, educated Bukusu disregard such rituals, that there is less attention to such rituals because urbanization has destroyed family bonds; that Christianity considers them demonic and evil. Two, is that traditional rituals impact too much on the economy of the family and it becomes very expensive to cope with life. Others fear to lose respect among Christians and at the same time they are not sure of what will happen to them. Thus, Bukusu strive giving a satisfactory answer to both tradition and Christianity. As mentioned before, death and burial rites result from a combination of fears: of misfortunes from ancestors and fear of the rejection by the Christian community. This reflects again the “Christians by day; Africans at night” reality principle. From this remark, one should imagine the way people embrace Christianity despite being African in general and Bukusu in particular. Why are Bukusu jammed between Christianity and tradition at the same time? Who and what can set them free and bring safety and security to their souls while they are waiting for the last rite of passage (death)? This leads us to the sixth assumption.

### 3.7.6. Findings related to Assumption Six

The sixth research assumption stated that Bukusu Quakers prefer traditional death and burial rites to the Christian ones because they feel content, safe and secure after performing the traditional rites.

The problem statement and the research hypothesis states that Bukusu Quakers of Western Kenya continue to perform traditional death and burial rites of purification because they believe these rites are effective in stopping the spirit of the death from harming them, something that Christian death and burial rites does not achieve. The research, therefore, assumed that traditional death and burial rites provide security to those who perform them. In other words people consider traditional rituals a means to chase away bad spirits and misfortunes. Rituals are also considered a language of the soul which is spoken by their ancestors. Therefore, nobody can defeat or doubt about the person who has existed and who is directly related to the deceased by kinship alliance. But Christian rituals have sometimes been tested helplessness whenever people are challenged in their lives by supernatural powers, which harm them and make them weak. In order to test this assumption, we formulated the question into two as follows: a) Does the church sufficiently address the challenges around death and burial rites in Kimilili and Bungoma today?, b) What can the Quaker church and your leaders in particular do concretely to strengthen the sense of safety and security if they choose to do Christian rituals?

Many respondents (79.5%) have proven right the assumption that Bukusu Quakers prefer traditional death and burial rites to the Christian ones because they feel content, safe and secure after performing the traditional rites. But only few (12.3%) did not approve it. They said that Bukusu prefer traditional rituals to Christian ones because church leaders are not addressing issues of death and burial rites adequately. From their experiences, they confirmed that the church has not completely convinced the community to practice only Christian rituals. They cannot fully address this in local

Christian communities; that sometimes church leaders condemn traditional rites without explanations; that some church leaders secretly perform the traditional rituals and therefore, they fear to address the issue and they need more time. Some other times, church leaders just do little and go away leaving the people behind doing their own things, they said.

Indeed, few respondents who did not approve this assumption argued that Church leaders use wisdom to enlighten members, that the church has often addressed these challenges in both areas; that they address by helping the orphans, widows or widowers; that they encourage by teachings from the Bible and also lead by example to show the rest that it is possible. These respondents' statements reveal some incompatibilities with the reality on the ground concerning pastoral care for the bereaved families as many respondents indicated. This, actually, does not join pending issues of addressing challenges on traditional rituals among Bukusu. Whereas the majority of respondents are confident as they made their observation. For example, Mr. Kakayi is a Seventh Day Adventists church leader. He observed that some church leaders are more concerned with collection of money; it has become as business rather than ministries, as a consequence, most of them today do not have time for their fellow Christians. They only come at the burial time and then go away, leave people doing what they are supposed to do. Another example is the one given by Mr. Vincent, talking about his nephew who is a pastor. And yet that pastor had to undergo traditional rituals to chase away the spirit of his late father from killing his animal; another pastor who almost became mad simply because he refused to perform traditional rituals after the death of this father; they had to perform a traditional ritual so that he could be well (cf. App.C. nos. 9, 11, 12, 20, 21, 22, 31).

From the research on this assumption is proven true namely that the majority feel content, safe and secure after performing traditional rites.

### 3.7.7. Findings related to Assumption Seven

The seventh research assumption stated that Bukusu Quakers can deal successfully with issues of death and burial rites if they facilitate penetration of the Gospel in every aspect of traditional funerals.

This assumption spelled out the insufficiency of Christian death and burial rites and at the same time be a step ahead on the inculturation outlook on issues of funerals among the Bukusu of Western Kenya. It was assumed that the Gospel message even today is predominantly Western and is based on a partial understanding and misconception of African rite of passage. It lacks pastoral ministry capable of addressing adequately the reasons why Bukusu in general and Quakers in particular still go for traditional rituals. The study also assumed that there was a possibility of integrating African rites of passage in the evangelization work so as to bring up a possibility of African Traditional Religion and Christianity to accommodate each other.

Indeed, the research assumed that although Christianity is effective by essence; it can be more effective in the traditional ritual process among the Bukusu if it is opened to inculturation process that requires it to utilize some rites of passage compatible to Christianity as the key element to communicate the gospel as almost African societies and Bukusu are exposed to a global transformation. Eventually, the study assumed that suggestions like the 'welcome process' of a visitor might be for a great help in this study as people expect to change or to move to culture over stressed way of life and values while demonizing all good traditional rituals and values in the name of Jesus.

However, to test this assumption, the research reformulated the assumption into three questions to help our respondents understand our target. 1) Would the Christian faith of Bukusu Quakers be strengthened if church leaders addressed the contemporary challenges of traditional beliefs in Kimilili and Bungoma today? 2) How can the traditional funerals be compatible with Christian faith among Bukusu Quakers? 3) Which

of the following two options would enable dialogue between tradition and Christianity in terms of death and burial rites among the Bukusu?

Many respondents (91.3%) across all variables had a similar answer. They agreed that if church leaders addressed the contemporary challenges of traditional beliefs in Kimilili and Bungoma today, it will strengthen people's Christian faith. But only one per cent (1.0%) did not agree with this idea. Thus, the majority of respondents pointed out that if church leaders address adequately the contemporary challenges of traditional belief, people will not have doubts concerning their faith and negative beliefs and practices will be rendered. Instead, it will grow day by day. It will also create confidence in the Christians and they can take as serious truth and will believe more. They also said that to make traditional funerals compatible with Christian faith among Bukusu, is just to fairly integrate the procedures of death and burial rituals by emphasizing that they are just the same as the end result and they have the same funeral aspects to be encouraged.

Indeed, many respondents agreed that dialogue between Christianity and African Traditional Religion is necessary and has to be established so that it may create a sense of appreciation of each other. But slowly, one can be assimilated and consequently incorporated into the other; also by invoking the name of Jesus as the savior Lubukusu for "Wele Murumwa".

Many of Bukusu moral teaching is found in traditional oral literature and practice. Therefore, through proverbs and wise saying of Babukusu of Bungoma County, there is a chance to enable dialogue if people are also given options to perform both traditional and Christian rituals, one after another. By doing so, both tradition and Christianity will reveal the presence of God in Holy trinity but in a different version. The two cultures should only be shared so that they get to understand each other. Mr. Ulula and Mr. David and many others shared that people should be given a space in the ritual process to choose what is appropriate to them which does not go against the

Christian faith so longer that is a sign of respect to each other and let not Christians upset the traditionalists, and traditionalists offend the Christian rituals (cf. App.C. nos. 17, 19).

Thus, from the result findings related the two questions above, as presented in the chart 03; it is shown that this assumption was partially true. As said previously, most of the respondents wished this dialogue to be possible with the help of Bukusu people and the rest of their neighbors since everybody in a stage of transition both culturally and spiritually. The church should engage itself to open up and bring reason and let people ask themselves questions on whether some traditional rituals are compatible with the Christian faith (cf. App.C. nos. 17, 19, 21, 22).

Chart 04: Interaction of Christian and Traditional funeral rites among Bukusu, by gender, religion, age and marital status (N=195).

	Quakers	Non-Quakers	Men	Women	25-49yrs	50 years old and above	Married	Singles
■ To invoke Jesus' name during traditional rituals	91%	77.80%	77.90%	94.90%	79.10%	90.90%	83.80%	75%
■ Perform both traditional and Cristian rituals, one after another.	6.40%	10.30%	11.80%	1.70%	10.10%	6.10%	8.40%	12.50%
■ No Response	2.60%	12%	10.30%	3.40%	10.90%	3%	7.80%	12.50%

### 3.8. Findings related to Limitations and Scope

This research on death and burial rites was carried out mainly in Bungoma County. Western Kenya is among the biggest province in Kenya and the Bukusu land expands up to Kimilili and Bungoma where most of the Quakers are found. As mentioned before in chapter (cf. 2.4.1), we wanted to make the research a learning process reaching people in different place of Bungoma County so that we could be able to get the right information from especially elder people. Some resource persons and church leaders concerned about the Bukusu culture were approached. Most of them live in Bungoma County. We had to go for long distance on a motorbike seated two on one

to reach those people. Many respondents from Bungoma were ordinary people. Some were retired teachers, farmers, others working with the government of Kenya and other business men. Most of the trips we made to different places were very enriching to the study. It enabled the research to explore the different socio-economic, cultural, moral and spiritual challenges that many people are facing in their families according to their age, gender, marital status, religious backgrounds and how the Church addresses traditional death and burial rites. The research was conducted in a very peaceful and friendly atmosphere despite the electoral campaigns which were going on. Sometimes, people thought, the researcher and the field assistant were doing electoral campaigns; but fortunately when the researcher talked about Bukusu culture, they were excited to tell us the story of the Bukusu origin which impacts during death and burial rites. But the researcher had a language barrier which very quickly, he was able to learn some essential Lubukusu words like saying, greetings and some verb patterns which was necessary for the study thanks to the field assistant who was a Bukusu.

Actually, the research was conducted within a period of two months. But during the data analysis, some occasional contacts in the field were made later in order to confirm and to clarify some points either by phone or through short meetings. Most of the respondents were welcoming and collaborative. They were showing great hospitality and whenever, we got into a house we never left the place without eating some food, especially chickens with Ugali in Luhya style (a hard Ugali). Being a religious, it was also an advantage, get familiar with people and especially try to learn their language and to eat their food. Although, food was a big challenge; it took us a week for the stomach to adapt. Many people did not know that the researcher was not a native of Kenya. They saw him as an Akamba and sometimes as a kikuyu, but when we mentioned our home country (Democratic Republic of Congo), it gave them another outlook and they were very much happy to see a foreigner called murende to learn about their culture (cf. App.C. nos. 3, 4, 5, 21). The number of people contacted for the individual oral, focus

and group interviews were around two hundred. The main languages used throughout the research were Kiswahili and English. Lubukusu was translated into Kiswahili and English. All the people contacted either personally or by phone call for the interviews responded positively except that we did not have many opportunities in Kimilili with oral interviews, we generally distributed questionnaires due to the distance and troubles around elections. Two hundred questionnaires were distributed with the help of the field assistant and we were able to collect back one hundred and sixty questionnaires making seventy-two percent (72%) were returned with satisfying answers. However, the researcher and the field assistant could easily reach out to the families either on foot or by public or private means. Moreover, Bungoma County has an interesting Bukusu cultural heritage which we got an opportunity of learning from. We also shared worries about the new generation which coming with a lot of western influence and outlook; which in one way or another is a threat to the Bukusu cultural values. Eventually, the story became at one point the same and unique when different people from the Bukusu were talking about death and burial rites (cf.3.1). As the researcher was finishing to collect the data, many of these respondents encouraged him come back again pay them visit for more sharing and to learn from one another.

### 3.9. Conclusion

This chapter aimed at understanding and evaluating Death and Burial rites among Bukusu Quakers of Western Kenya in Bungoma and Kimilili. It described the results from the field-research data. It explored and presented through quantitative and qualitative analysis the data related to the thesis topic, the problem statement, the hypothesis, the significance of the thesis, the seven research questions, the seven assumptions of the thesis and the limitation and scope.

Many respondents expressed their worries about the social impact on individual and the pressure of the community to perform rituals which in some cases become a burden to families which cannot afford. Those outstanding and common challenges

were expressed by most of the respondents from our different variables. More and more want to get rid of traditional rituals and replace them by the Christian ones. Some said that traditional rituals are becoming expensive and very demanding. They want to find alternatives to reduce the cost and at the same they believe if they do not sacrifice an animal, something bad will happen to them. The question is: Should people go for traditional rituals simply because their lives are threatened by the spirits of the dead or they should perform Christian rituals and be sure nothing will happen to them. How the local church help people to deal with the unknown when church leaders are not there for them?

According to the respondents, these new African churches including the Quakers have come to bring more problems to their challenges. They lack appropriate training concerning pastoral ministry to deal with issues of death and burial rituals. They reject even what is necessary for the life and the future of the community. If Christianity is to be rooted in Africa, some consensus need to be done so as to help people come up with discernment and make choice by their own in order to bury their people with respect and honor whether go for traditional rituals or Christian ones despite their being Christian.

For a Bukusu, who still believes in tradition, he should start asking himself if Christianity is a threat or if it is a blessing. On the same token, Kakaji argued that people are modifying traditional rituals so that it looks more Christian, but in the real sense, it is traditional death and burial rites (cf. App.C. no. 21).

Like many others, Simiyu added saying, “now foreign education and values are over stressed in order to look more successful, and we think that European way of life is the best. In case one refers to his culture, he looks backward, primitive and this has been confusing the Bukusu and their descendants of today” (cf. App.C. no. 22).

## Chapter Four

### Literature Review

#### 4.0. Introduction

This chapter presents and describes the literature related to death and burial rites among the Bukusu of Western Kenya. Academic materials were at our disposal for the researcher to carry on with the work. Thus, reports, published articles, books, and documents were used in this chapter to analyse the findings of the field research, presented in the previous chapter. This chapter, therefore, describes the literature related to the thesis topic, the problem statement, the significance of the thesis, the seven research questions, the seven assumptions and the limitations and scope.

#### 4.1. Literature related to the topic

In relation to the thesis topic, “Death and Burial Rites among the Bukusu of Western Kenya”, there are not many literary works produced on death and burial rites on the Bukusu community. Many of the writings were based on genres of oral literature literary such as proverbs, riddles and popular sayings to mention but a few. Some scholars have written on death and burial rites in general without focusing on Bukusu death and burial rites. For example, Mbiti (1975) talks about former methods of disposal of the body which were used in some places like throwing the body in the bush to be eaten by wild animals and birds, or throwing it into a running stream or river or to keep it in a small house near the house so that it could decompose completely until the skeleton was left; then they could bury or keep it. He also said that people performed rituals concerning the preparation of the corpse for disposal putting different objects in the openings of the body. For all these preparations, some leaders and elders of the village were responsible for. Therefore, some individuals such as children, pregnant women, or suspected witches were not allowed to touch or to come near to the corpse in case misfortune should come upon them or the family (119-130). Many of our respondents confirmed that Bukusu are also very concerned about disposing the body at the right time. They said that it is very

important to respect the position of the corpse in the coffin and the position of the grave. They also make sure that the deceased person is buried according to his will (cf. Chapter 3: 3.6.2. Findings related to the Research Question Two). From the field findings, we also found out that there had been dialogues initiated by the Catholic Church some years back to discuss death and burial rites among the Bukusu in Bungoma County. The meeting was held by some Bukusu elders and church leaders in a form of synod. The researcher got a chance to access the unpublished minutes of that meeting which stresses the necessity of the Church and the Bukusu culture to come together in order to find a consensus. The minutes was written in Lubukusu and in English as follows,

Meeting of Synod-2/3/1997: Buluale, Lifua ne Lisikha (Sickness, Death and Burial)

Death: What happens when a man dies?

Response: a) Khufumba Kamakumba-Ekhafu yino bera ekoloba. The English for, “a cow will be slaughtered and blood is given to the sick. In the Catholic Church is like the sacrament of the sick; b) Somebody who is above 30 years, is expected to die in the evening or around 2.a.m. to 5.a.m in the morning; c) “Solola mworisisi ta”, the English for, when dying at the warl; d) “Kamakhono mumarango ta”, the English for your hands should not be between your legs; e) “Mayi owalia chimbeba sekola simbi ta”, the English for the wife who has not been faithful to her partner should not be close; f) samina chimoni ta, the English for ; g) “Omelekwa kebakhanga liloba nacha khulanga ewabwe”, the English for the wife of the dead person smears herself with soil while going to inform her relatives. Burial: a) “Omulekhua bamutisa, balisia bamubowa chinyinja”, the English for must cry, her relatives have to prepare food for her to mean that the husband have accepted her; b) “Enyama khunchu yekesia Erika yo omundu” the English for meat on the roof of the house depends on the age of the person; c) “Enagani elimune khukhono kumusecha” the grave should be of the right hand side; d) “Orara abe omundu omukhulu we kholo” the English for the person who start to dig the grave should be the elder person of the family of the clan; e) “khusikha omundu yesiyesi barusiria bikele” the English for

while going to bury from the house, the legs of the deceased should be in front then while out of the house, the head is turned to the front; f) “Sibikho sili khubewana”, an animal, it’s something to be given to nice or nephews; g) “khukhuira engokho etayeaga khukhoane mwenju yewe namwe khosoko” the English for the slaughter a cock from his house or they buy it from the market; h) “Lufu” takes 3 days before, omwana it takes 2 days; people discuss the cause of the death and the month of remembrance, and other matters; i) “Kamakumba: remembrance: women are the ones who normally go just like Christians; j) “Khumala silindwa: that is, to cement the grave after one year. It should not be the year for circumcision, the person who sent the grave must be a woman who is growing up during that time the family of this person brings food from their home for celebration. In short, the above literature confirmed our research findings on related to the topic.

#### 4.1.1. Understanding of death and burial rites.

Many African societies describe death as disobedience to God’s commandments, a type of punishment; something that dehumanizes people. For some people, death gets into life to pollute the environment due to the iniquity of human beings. As a matter of fact, people use oral literature (such as riddles, proverbs, sayings, songs) to explain the origin of death. For example, the Yao of Tanzania, Malawi and Mozambique attribute the origin of death to the chameleon and lizard. It is said that when God finished the work of creation, he wanted to deliver an important message to the people. He called chameleon and said to him, “Tell people that when they die they will return to life.” Lizard misunderstood God’s message and ran quickly to tell people that when they die, they will not return to life. Chameleon who had the message of immortality, delayed and arrived after lizard had delivered the wrong message. When people heard chameleon’s message; they did not take it seriously and mocked him. Since then, when they die, they never come back to life. That is how death came into people’s life (Healy and Sybertz 1996, p. 207).

The Hangaza of northwestern Tanzania attribute the origin of death to an old woman who hid death under her bed in the form of a dog. When God passed by and asked her if she had seen death around, she replied and said she was blind and could not see. But since God sees, hears and knows everything, he told the old woman: “You have hidden death. So from now on you will die, just like death.” Thus for the Hangaza, death is a punishment.

For the Massai, death is considered a mistake committed by their hero, Leeyio who received an instruction regarding what to say during the ritual when a person dies. He was supposed to say: “Person, die and come back again; moon, die and remain away.” When his neighbor’s child died, instead of saying it right, he said the opposite as follows, “Moon, die and come back again; person, die and stay away.” Later, when his own son died, Leeyio said: “Person, die and come back again; moon die and remain away.” But Naiteru-kiop, literally the “beginner of the Earth” told Leeyio that he was too late because of his own mistake and reminded him that death was born the day his neighbour’s child died. From that day onwards, nobody survived death (Healy and Sybertz 1996, 207).

The Igbo view death as a natural rhythm of life, says Onyewuchi Onukwugha (2011). In a popular tale, people tell the story of the genesis of death. At one time there was no death. People were fascinated by the idea of living forever. Therefore, they appealed to the gods to guarantee eternal life. They were told that the final decision was that eternal life would be granted depending on the outcome of a marathon race between the frog and the dog. If the frog won, death would come into the world; if the dog won man would gain eternal life. People were excited about their opportunity, believing the dog would easily win the race. Once the race started, the frog ran at a slow pace, non-stop. The dog ran fast, but stopped often to eat garbage from cans. The frog’s approach of a slow and steady race won the day. The dog’s loss was the genesis of death.

Similarly, Bukusu attribute the origin of death chameleon. It is said that one day chameleon visited Maina's son who was sitting in the yard having his meal. Chameleon

was hungry and begged him for some food but he refused. Chameleon insisted, but no satisfactory response. Maina's son was annoyed by that persistence of chameleon, he got angry and chased chameleon. Chameleon felt so humiliated and seething with anger, he pronounced a curse (esilamo) to Maina's son: "I am leaving you now, but from now on, you shall die." The chameleon then went to visit the snake (injokha) and begged for food. The snake had to share its meal with the fellow reptile. To show his generosity to the snake, chameleon decided to reward the snake with eternal life. That is why the Bukusu believe that snakes do not die; sloughing their skin. When they are killed, that is the only time they die ( Abeingo Community Network, 2006-07)

Mbiti (1975) observes that death is one of the most universal and mysterious experiences that people try to explain. This explains the multiplicity of myths around death. The three gifts of immortality, resurrection and the ability to become young again were given to the first men who wanted to live forever. However, they lost them due to the delay of one of the messenger animals, the chameleon and the transmission of a wrong message from God by a faster animal, namely the bird, lizard or hare. From that mistake death came about. Despite the fact that death came into the world in the early history of a man, people still believe that death is caused in different ways such as sorcery, curse, witchcraft and evil magic. But natural death is supposed to be a call of God to old people to leave life and live another form of life (p. 117-119).

Mbiti asserts: "For the Africans, death is a separation and not annihilation; the dead person is suddenly cut off from the human society and yet the corporate group clings to him. This is shown through the elaborate funeral rites as well as other methods of keeping in contact with the departed" (African Religion and Philosophy, 1970, p. 46). Malusu (1978) being a Muluhyia captures this fact when he affirms: "Even nowadays it is very rare that a written will has been made. This is because no one wants to die. Death is something evil and negative, something never spoken about in ordinary life. Only in his last moment may the dying man divide his remaining shamba and leave instruction as to

who is to inherit his wives. Failure to fulfill his requests endangers the living, as the spirit of the dead man might visit them to see to it that his wishes have been fulfilled. And why delay the dead man's 'journey' or even provoke his unwanted visit?" (p.7). In other words, the Luhya people believe that to mourn is to show their grief. They wail, talk to and touch the deceased. During that period, they deny themselves the normal comforts of daily living. Actually, they perform special death and burials rituals. For instance, they shave hair, slaughter animals to express their grief at the loss. It is also a sign of innocence, to mean that one has nothing to do with the death. By doing this, they believe that appropriate mourning give the deceased a decent leaving of the world to enter the spirit world (Kirwen, 2010, p. 151).

On this note we can figure out how destructive death is. This is because there are still elements of traditional belief of death being seen as evil and a carrier of misfortunes and impurity, in the contemporary African way of life, whether people live in the village or in the city. Eventually, people would want to carry on a dying process (death and burial rituals) for them and especially for the repose of soul of their loved ones. Likewise, the majority of our respondents shared with us that death is a separation, a passing onto the spiritual world. They said that when one dies, it is a must for the family members to perform rituals that accompany the deceased to the ancestral world such as slaughtering of cows at the gravesite so that his or her spirit can be appeased (cf. App.C. nos. 20, 21).

#### 4.1.2. Death and Burial Rituals Among The Bukusu

Death is seen in general as a physical separation which somewhat pollutes life. Death, therefore, separates one from the profane world. Burial is the second phase of the process; it denotes both transition and transformation. People stay in seclusion before coming out to renew and incorporate themselves in normal social relations. Actually, the community needs to perform a ritual to mark that permanent separation of the individual from other human beings. They think that the right ceremony in a funeral is to perform traditional rituals. According to the Christian or religious perspective, death has no end, it

is just the beginning of another form of life, in other words a transformation. According to Paul in his letter to the Thessalonians (4:13), death is a kind of sleep: “We want you to be quite certain, brothers, about those who have fallen asleep. To make sure that you do not grieve for them, as others do who have no hope.” According to some Africans, the Christian way of worshiping God, as Paul expresses it above, is neither appropriate nor sufficient to please ancestral spirits and God. This is expressed vividly in the Mbidi Kiluwe sect, an ancestral movement that celebrates the mythical charter and values of Luba royalty in the Katanga Province of the Democratic Republic of Congo (Leach, 1975, p.45; Musanzi-Mavula, 2001, p. 24).

Turner (1969, p.95) and Ray (1976, p. 78) assert that the transition period is very important in the sense that these rituals transmit collective messages in order to communicate with the spirits and change human situations. Therefore, transitional people are threshold people who are in most cases outsiders who slip through the network of classifications that locate states and positions in cultural space. They are assigned by routine standards, custom and ceremony since their intermediate status is frequently described by a variety of symbols (death is the womb, death is invisible, death is darkness, death is bisexuality or wilderness). The challenging part of most of these rituals is the fact that some of them are connected to witchcraft or magic power. Turner (1967) captured this phenomenon while studying the Isoma (the English for to remove from) ritual among the Ndembu people thus: “It is said at the Isoma cult they behead a red cock to get rid of the “Chisaku”/misfortune through which people die. This “Chisaku” is death which must not happen to the woman patient, it is sickness which must not come to her, it is suffering and this suffering is from the grudge of a witch...there is in all this a strong overtone of witchcraft” (p.18).

The Bukusu also perform rituals to give tribute to ancestors and at the same time to chase away the spirit of death and thus prevent the community from being harmed further. From the result findings, the majority of our respondents said that they respect

these rituals because it is a way of giving last respect to their beloved ones. They do so because they believe that people live another form of life after death.

The same attitude towards death is seen among the Luo. Kirwen (2005) attests that the Luo people of Kenya and Tanzania employ a custom called 'tero buru' whereby young men and adults dressed in traditional warrior garb drive their livestock as a way of chasing death from the homestead of the deceased to a deserted place where it (death) is cursed and rendered harmless (p. 240). Bukusu, however, esteem the ceremony a lot and always ensure that everything goes on well to prevent people from being harmed by the spirit of the deceased (if the burial rituals are not performed well). An important observation is that these rituals are done within the family which is the "domestic sanctuary", called to pass on the faith of the ancestors, to cultivate religious traditions, to offer common prayers to God and to translate into daily life its religious convictions (Peschke 1978, p. 245).

In the light of funeral rites among Bukusu, Khaemba (2009) gives more detailed information on how Luhya people deal with the death their loved one. As soon as the dying passes away, the wife bursts out with wailing joined by the sons, daughters and other men and women. Usually men cry "ye, ye, ye," while for women it is, "Woi, woi, woi". Women cry with their hands on back of the head while men beat grasses and bushes with sticks and clubs. Under this circumstance, a widow will go to her maternal home to inform about her husband's death. Then she will come back accompanied by her parents or any other elder members of her family if the parent are not alive. The night before burial, young and strong clan men dig the grave in front of the dead man's main house, major wife's house.

No woman or uncircumcised person digs the grave. However, a father cannot dig a grave of his child or husband for his wife. If he was never circumcised, he will be circumcised in that last night before being buried. That is why it is rare to find uncircumcised man among the Luhya and especially Bukusu sub-tribe. Afterwards, the

actual burial takes place usually in the afternoon and the body is buried facing west. It is believed that people are all heading to the west just as the sun rises and set in the west, which means that their destiny is in the west, locally called “mumbo”.

A day after burial, the ceremony of “cattle drive” is performed. During this ceremony, cattle are gathered and decorated with grass, people paint their faces with white clay and wear war dresses of cow skin or leopard skin and bring spears, clubs, shields and sticks. They go in a river and come back with cattle in the homestead singing and dancing. The songs include war songs, marriage songs, dirges, praises to the deceased man and appreciation of the contribution he made to his community. This ceremony is intended to drive away the spirit of the dead man, so that he does not disturb his family members and cause misfortune.

The day after the cattle drive ceremony, the hair shaving ceremony is performed. Thus, all those who came into contact with the deceased man, either in his death bed or during burial are shaved. It is believed that his breath causes impurity and makes disease stick to the head of the one in contact with the dead body. It is also believed that if one does not shave, he/or she could have some chronic headaches. Shaving always starts with the widow, then sons and daughters and other people. A fowl or goat is killed and those taking part in the ceremony share in eating the meat and then people may leave the homestead. On the final day, the family and close relatives share the clothes of the deceased man and this symbolizes that he is not completely gone but still with us leave the homestead. Eventually, the family and close relatives share the clothes of the deceased man and this symbolizes that he is not completely gone but still with us.

Building on this, one then wonders why the Bukusu who have embraced Christianity continue to perform traditional death and burial rituals. The Bukusu are known to resist modern influence. This is due to many factors as expressed in the Dini ya Musambwa movement. One of the most important factors is the family. Among the Abaluhya in general and the Bukusu in particular, family relationships are very important.

People consider themselves as part and parcel of the family, including the living dead. The living dead, however, are part and parcel of the family. They also believe that relatives are supposed to be responsible in the event of any function in the family including death and burial rites (Kirwen, 2010; Magesa, 1997; Mbiti, 1969; Wagner, 1949). They continue to be guardians, pastors, mediators and intermediaries of the living. They may become a source of punishment and misfortune if the livings forget them; if they trespass the norms and taboos of the family and community. Van Gennep (1960) adds that during mourning, the mourners and the dead person constitute a special group located between the worlds of the living and that of the dead, and the way the living will leave that group will depend on the closeness of their relationship with the dead person (p. 147). Bujo (1990) notes that when Africans respect the commands and prohibitions inherited from the ancestors, they observe the rites, words and gestures taught by the tradition of their forefathers. When they do so, it means people face the choice of life or death, the decision for good or evil, which may either strengthen or diminish the life of the community (p.97). Indeed, people must do ceremonies correctly to allow the deceased person to join the ancestral world. They must do sacrifices in order to remember ancestors and they must never forget them. Colson quoted by Zuesse (1979) asserts that the Tango of Zambia believe that when people stop remembering ancestral spirits (Mizimu) and no longer call upon them, those spirits become nameless and are subsequently considered evil spirits. They become like ghosts which cannot be controlled by people due to the fact that they have been forgotten (p.193).

This attitude of people in general and in particular the Bukusu may be a life motif as to why some African Christians, including the Bukusu Quakers, still perform traditional rituals in their respective communities.

#### 4.2. Literature related to the Problem Statement

While death may come from accidents or events beyond one's control, sin is an intentional act. Some people might consider traditional death and burial rites practices of

the past; but it is important to ask ourselves if the Gospel has fully penetrated all aspects of traditional rituals of death and burial. If we were to focus on the needs of contemporary African Christians, one must acknowledge that death and burial rites are not a thing of the past. Yet, there would be no problem for a Bukusu Quaker to fulfill the rituals after the death of a member of the community. But what about a Christian Bukusu girl who gets pregnant and dies in labour? Her family is not Christian but her aunt, with whom she lived, is. How is her aunt to prevent her father from performing rituals to prevent other girls in his family from dying before they give birth? What about a widow who is a Christian? How is she to prevent her in-laws from insisting that she fulfils death and burial rituals according to the traditional prescriptions in order to chase away the spirit of the deceased? If she refuses to comply, how is she to respond to the family's accusations that her non-compliance was the cause of subsequent deaths in the family? What can we do to facilitate dialogue between the Bukusu traditions on death and burial and Christianity?

This study stated that Bukusu Quakers still cling to their traditional practices with regard to death and burial despite embracing and professing Christianity. What is the explanation for this “duality”?

From our research findings, our respondents shared with that first missionaries did not consider African cultures in the process of evangelisation in helping people understand their culture with a Christian outlook and address adequately issues of death and burial rites in case one of them has passed away. In fact, the majority (cf. Table 05) of our respondents (150), both men and women, the younger and the older, married and singles, Non-Quakers and Quakers said early European missionaries gave no regard to African Traditional Religion values; they considered it backward, primitive oriented, uncivilized custom, unchristian and demoniac. First missionaries and explorers, as said before, came and Africans considered them like gods. People used to slaughter cows under the trees where these Europeans were hiding, so that when Africans will finish their

sacrificial rites, they will leave the meat there and Europeans will come down as gods to eat the meat. Unfortunately, people did reject Christianity because of the missionary's outlook on the African culture which was negative and considered demoniac. A few of respondents (14.87%) agreed that first missionaries did consider African cultures. Some said that when Europeans came to Africa, they never stopped them from performing their rites. In the process of evangelisation, missionaries used the native language and names as chief accepted cultures, some even blessed traditional beer and accepted traditional marriages among others. So, missionaries considered African culture by accepting to be one of them before pulling them to evangelization. Many of our respondents said that they would perform traditional death and burial rites if one of them dies despite their Christian faith this because some of the traditional rites have to be done regardless of the Christian faith. These rituals only identify them as Bukusu and bind them to both the living and the living dead. They also bring a sense of beginning of family members and thereafter have a way of a new start. It is also a way of showing respect of the dead person, to avoid the spirit of the deceased disturbing the living and to create good relationship with ancestors. Traditionally, Bukusu believe in being haunted by spirits of the dead person if they do not follow traditional ritual processes. These research findings are confirmed by Kirwen (2008) who stipulated that through mourning rites, the living are assisted to come to terms with the death of a relative or friend and at the same time are helped to re-integrate themselves with the community in the absence of the deceased member...the living relatives take a ritual bath after the burial for cleansing purposes and in order to be re-integrated into the community. The Baluhya for example, they cry and wail during the loss of a loved one, and fire is always set during the night if it was an adult (144-149). If one refuses to perform traditional rituals because he/or she is a Christian, misfortune might come upon that person. As one of our respondents said, "by the words from my speech will strongly invite the spirit of the late person to hound the remaining family members claiming for the right of the traditional death and burial rites" and another one

also said, “he/she will be sent away and even cursed when burial is being conducted (cf. App.C. nos. 32, 35). Seemingly, Mbiti (1975) asserts that death marks a physical separation of the individual from other human beings. This is a radical change, and the funeral rites and ceremonies are intended to draw attention to that permanent separation. Meticulous care is taken to fulfil the funeral rites and to avoid causing any offence to the departed (119), as pointed out by one of our female respondents, “some traditional death and burial rites make part of the culture and it will be necessary that people also practice their culture and to prevent the spirit of the dead to harm the family especially if one of the spouses is not a Christian” (cf. App.C. no. 19). From Bukusu oral literature, people who refuse to perform traditional rituals because of their being Christians may encounter warnings such as “Eng’ani ya fwesi” death is for all of us or “Okhakelanga esimbo mung’ani ta” never gesture a walking stick in the grave” in other words, pointing one’s stick in the grave is considered provocative to the dead (Sifuna. Andrea, *Our Rich Heritage*, p.123-141). Thus, some people may find themselves in a position of performing death and burial rites whether they are Christians or not.

Considering the findings related to the statement problem, from the majority of respondents in Bungoma County and Kimilili, we found out that most of the literature related to our findings explained how traditional death and burial rituals as compared to the Christian ones still have a great influence on the part of some Bukusu Christians.

#### 4.3. Literature related to the Hypothesis

The research's hypothesis stated: “The Bukusu Quakers of Western Kenya continue to perform traditional death and burial rites of purification because they believe these rites are effective in stopping the spirit of death from further harming them, something that Christian death and burial rites does not achieve”.

In this research, as found out in Chapter 3 that the majority of our respondents from different age groups gave similar answers to the question. The majority of our respondents reported that Bukusu Quakers of Western Kenya continue to perform

traditional death and burial rites of purification. Many families of the respondents we interviewed had experiences of having the spirit of the dead disturbs them and they take precautions when death occurs. Mr. Ulula, for example, a 66 years old man and married from Kimilili, had his own experience of his late son who came to him and complained that he was not buried properly. From that experience, he is now one of those who struggled to convince Church members about the importance of some of the traditional rituals that are necessary during burials (cf. App.C. no. 18).

Result findings on the hypothesis have indicated clearly that a good number of respondents argued that the Bukusu Quakers do go for traditional rituals even before church members are involved in. they would rather do it at night just to avoid to be looked at as pagan and avoid “shisheno” (bad spirits) to harm them. Regardless of their age, gender, marital status, religious backgrounds, the respondents gave similar reasons. Here are some of the reasons: fear of the spirit of the dead, of bad hormones, lack of integrative family ministry on death and burial rites. Most of the respondents especially the elders and the married couples; pointed out that culture is something important to the Bukusu; insufficient and ineffectiveness of some pastoral agents who are themselves much influenced by the modern and Western concept of in their preaching and they do not have much time to reflect and make people reason on issues of death and burial rites. Due to all these, people will always go by traditional rites just to prevent the spirit of the dead to disturb them (cf. App.C. nos . 18, 21, 22). As to say, “pure Bukusu always have one foot (80%) in traditional beliefs and the other one in Christianity (20%).

In most of the cases, if they don't slaughter a cow, they believe something bad will happen to them”, according to Simiyu (cf. App.C. no. 21). As rituals are important for Bukusu, they are also important for other people. I concur with Shorter (1998) when he considers ritual a bridge between ideas and life. He sees it as a stereotyped form of self-incapsulation. Rituals express values which cannot be put into words. They celebrate events as they happen, henceforth memory of the past events and expectation of future

events. Claude Levi-Strauss quoted by Shorter consider rituals a ‘favoured game’ where all the players ‘win’ while Victor Turner sees it as a ‘gestalt’ or ‘configuration’ of symbols which act as a catharsis of “safety-valve” (p.61).

On the same token Van Gennep (1960) narrates the funeral ceremonies among the Lushae tribes of Assam which are quite similar to the Bukusu ones. He said that when one dies among the Lushae, people dress the deceased in his best clothes and tied in a sitting position on a scaffold of bamboo and place the tools and weapons of his sex. Animals such as a pig, a goat and a dog are killed, meat is shared among his relatives and friends; and food and drink are given to the deceased. At nightfall they bury him in a grave dug next to his house. His close relative says goodbye and ask him to prepare everything for those who will come and join him. The animals are sacrificed in order to accompany the soul of the deceased person to the ancestral land where life is hard and painful. But if the deceased was successful and victorious, he will go to the other side of the river where he feats continuously. After another lapse of time, the spirit of the deceased is transformed into water and evaporates in the form of dew; if a dewdrop falls on man, than man will beget a child who will be a reincarnation of the deceased. When the child is born, two chickens are killed and he mother washes herself and the child. (162).

Moreover Kirwen (2005) asserts that among the Abuluya in general and Bukusu in particular, death is a rite of passage which is inevitable. It does not just occur; it is caused by some evil spirit. There is always a need to cleanse a community and chase the evil spirit away (p. 251). Building on this, the hypothesis was proven right by literature since many scholars support the idea that people go for traditional rituals for security purpose whether they are Christians or not.

#### 4.4. Literature related to the Significance of the Thesis

As said in Chapter 3, this study addresses contemporary challenges facing Bukusu Christians in general and Quakers in particular on funeral rites (Kamasika). In some

cultures in Africa and especially, among the Bukusu of Western Kenya, the Gospel has rarely penetrated all aspects of the funeral.

Indeed, in most cultures and especially in an African context, death and burial rites are special moment where a person moves to another stage of life (the spiritual world) through rituals. With the influence of modernity, namely Western civilization, and Christianity, this rite of passage in the African context is undergoing continuous changes. As it was pointed out by the respondents, death and burial rites especially among the Bukusu in Bungoma County is slowly losing its original identity and its primary role as the source of the moral, socio-cultural and spiritual values of the society (cf. App.C. nos. 18, 21). In fact, there was no significant difference among respondents, regardless of their age, gender, and marital status, when we asked them to give their opinion on whether this research is relevant today or not. As presented in Table 8 in Chapter 3, the majority of respondents, one hundred and sixty-four (84.10%) out of hundred and ninety-five, said the study is relevant today. Only fifteen respondents (7.7%) said no and also sixteen (8.2%) did not give any answer. For the majority of respondents who answered yes, the topic is relevant today because there is an urgent need for the Church leaders to open up and address the issues affecting Christian faith during burials today in Bungoma County and bring up the reasoning capacity so that people can start assessing these rituals as they affect their spiritual life and Christian commitment.

Likewise, Tempels (1953) vividly criticizes the way white missionaries and administrators used the Gospel message without taking into account African culture. They only focused on trying to shape up “Black Whites” regardless their soul and their cultural heritage. He said, “All of us, missionaries, magistrates, administrators, all in directive posts or posts which ought to be directive, have failed to reach their “souls”, or at any rate to reach them to the profound degree that should have been attained. Even specialists have left the question aside. Whether we state this merely by way of a frank admission, or avow it with contrition, the fact remains. By having failed to explore the ontology of the

Bantu, we lack the power to offer them either a spiritual body of teaching that they are capable of assimilating, or an intellectual synthesis that they can understand. By having failed to understand the soul of the Bantu people, we have neglected to make any systematic effort to secure for it a purer and a more dynamic life” (p.28).

Building on this, this study offers opportunities to examine the effectiveness of Christianity in relation to the Bukusu worldview. It is also a way to bring up the inculturation aspect of traditional death and burial rites. The relevance of this study requires us also to ask ourselves as did Father Azevedo, if the current Church as a whole has really agreed to enter into a comprehensive and consistent dialogue with human cultures. There are understanding reasons for the Church’s reluctance to bring practice into line with theory. One of the crucial reasons is the acknowledgement that there are cultures which are impervious to the values of the Gospel and which may extinguish them (Towards African Christian Maturity, 1987, p. 23).

As for Evan M. Zuesse, “ritual not only provides for classifications of bodily, social and especially cosmic space, it also seeks to interrelate these spheres in a harmonious and fruitful manner, so as to transform and renew the universe. We must therefore seek the method a given religion uses to regenerate the world. As we shall find, these transformations are often modelled on symbolisms derived from direct social and above all bodily experience, with integration, for example, often symbolized by sexual motifs” (Zuesse 1979: 9). While in the words of John Mbiti, “The whole psychic atmosphere of African village life is filled with belief in this mystical power. Africans know that the universe has a power, or a force or whatever else one may call it, in addition ... to the living-dead, spirits and the Supreme Being (Mbiti 1969: 197). Wanger quoted by Gehman has demonstrated that magic and religion are combined among the Abaluyia (Gehman 1989: 68); an argument that Kenyatta supports when he states that “magical practices and religious rites go hand in hand, and sometimes it is not easy to separate the two, especially in dealing with beneficial magical practices” (Kenyatta n.d.:

270). Eventually, this literature has proven right the relevance of this study due to the fact that even up to date, Bukusu still believe in their ancestral spirits to be effective in their life, especially when they deal with funeral rites something Christianity does not address effectively.

#### 4.5.1. Literature related to Research Question One

The first research question aimed at pointing out the understanding of death and its causes among Bukusu Quakers in particular and Bukusu in general.

The results from the different variables are presented in different ways but all giving the same message about burial arrangement. The majority of our respondents said that “when death occurs, people light the fire outside the house in the evening; they mourn and send information to their relatives, afterward they start making preparation for the burial. They slaughter animals for the dead as they wish him/or her well and a welcome to the world of spirits. They will only start weeping in the evening if the person has died out of the required time to die (2.p.m. and 5.a.m.). Then the body can be moved from the bedroom to the sitting room. For Mrs Rispa Masinde and many others, death is just a move to another world where people live, but in the form of spirit (cf. App.C.no. 23).

However, Van Gennep(1960) quoted by Parker (1985:59-60) postulates that humanity has a tendency to create rituals to accompany all the important transitional periods of life and that death, as the final, irreversible process of transition to a future associated with the gods, was so ritualized that bystanders were viewed as temporarily distanced from the gods (“polluted”). For Van Gennep (1960: 153) and Mbiti (1969) death is a sort of journey to the other world and the entrance to it comprise a series of passage whose details depend on the distance topography of that world. Death is also a process which moves a person gradually from the present period to the past one, to mean that after the physical death, the individual continues to live in another form and does not disappear immediately from it. Thus, Bukusu also believe that death is a rite of passage

which allows people to join the ancestral world. For example, when we attended a funeral service of Mrs. Magrette at Kitinda area in Bungoma, we were told that a small house was built for the circumstance so as the deceased cannot feel lonely and people continue to socialize with him/or her. Bukusu also believe that in normal circumstances, death of an old person is considered an interaction of people with the dead person called “simakombe” (a good person) who goes to “Emakombe” (heaven).

The funeral of a person is of a great importance as far as the position of the body in the coffin and the position of the grave (cf. App.C. nos. 1, 2). Despite the fact that there were divergent views on the immortality of the soul and related issues, particularly during the Classical era among the Greeks (Kurtz & Boardman 1971:330-3), the prevailing view on the existence of the hereafter may be stated as follows: Greeks believed that during the moment of death, the soul (psuche) leaves the body through the mouth or more accurately through an open war wound. Thus, Homer considered other elements, such as the thumos (from the heart) and the vital spirit in the case of young people, also to escape from the body but without any effect. Therefore, the corpse that remains simply decomposes and becomes useless. People said that Hades was a dark, subterranean place. All human beings were believed to be mortal except King Menelaos who was believed to have been transported directly to Elysium without dying. There were various routes to Hades, for instance by travelling through dark subterranean passages, or by sailing far to the west and over the edge of Okeanos (the Western Sea), which surrounded the world. Hades was bordered by water, which was at times described as a sea (Okeanos), at times as rivers. Once the soul arrives at Hades, it would be prevented from crossing the water before its body had been buried; therefore the other souls within would instruct it to wait in the neutral territory across the water. To enter Hades, the soul would eventually go through a gate where the many-headed canine monster Cerberus kept watching, looking forward to devouring any beings which attempted to leave. Actually, being in Hades, the soul lived a neutral, undifferentiated shadow-existence, without

personal characteristics or understanding. There was no reward or punishment for earthly action, and no contact with the living (Department of Greek and Roman Art, 2013).

From the result findings, this literature confirmed the understanding of death among Bukusu as a new form of life that people that most of the time affects the lives of those who are very close to the relatives and friends of the deceased as the Bukusu proverb saying: Bafwa Basamba baambi, the dying ones kick the nearest people in other words the closest people around cannot afford to remain indifferent in the face of trouble because death does not discriminate between different social classes, it rather equalizes everybody as to say in Lubukusu, Lifwa selimanyile omuyinda no mutambi ta (Sifuna, 2003, 134, 141).

#### 4.5.2. Literature related to Research Question Two

The second research question aimed at exploring the traditional rituals of purification after death and to find out why they are performed by Bukusu Quakers. From the research findings, it was confirmed to us by many respondents that when death occurs people perform traditional death and burial rites. They will first mourn to alert people then relatives and other family members will gather to plan for the burial. Sacrifices are done depending on age, sex and rank of the person in the community. After burial they come for 'Lufu', the family counsel to discuss, list the wealth of the deceased, inheritance and then after two or three years they come for fare well-grazing and resettlement of a new house. (Cf. Chapter 3). We found out that majority of the male (94.1%) and female (89.40%) respondents from the various Christian churches (Quakers and Non-Quakers) and the two aged groups including married (92.2%) and single (87.5%) respondents, shared that they do attend traditional death and burial rites. Some said that they attend traditional death and burial rites because they are relatives to the one who has passed away, so it is a must. They make part of their community. Some other said that they should bury the body and it is a must to attend the burial. This also helps them to learn more about what their ancestral fathers used to do initially. This process is collective and

requires participation from all members to pay the last respects by putting soil in the grave, as many mentioned (cf. App.C. nos. 1, 2, 31).

As said before, the story of Mrs. Dorcas being herself a Christian who is forced to go for traditional rituals just to avoid that misfortunes and other curses do not harm her family is a strong testimony of the presence of traditional beliefs about death and burial rites among Bukusu. She found a dead person on her way to supply milk. She had to perform a ritual to cleanse herself so that she could reintegrated her family because according to Bukusu customs she automatically became contaminated and polluted the environment by the spirit of the dead person. People believe that when one finds a dead person in the bush or in the river, he or she automatically carries the spirit of that dead person. Once the person goes to his/or her home, the spirit might start disturbing them and finish them; therefore, the person has to stay at the mourning place until the burial is complete unless they perform a “kamanyashi” ritual, she or he will be allowed to get back to normal life before ‘Lufu’. So, being a married woman, Mrs. Dorcas was allowed to get back home after having performed a ritual called ‘kamanyashi’, then the third day, the day of “Lufu” she went back again, they slaughtered a sheep, likhese, then she washed her hands in the instincts of the animal while talking to the dead person that she had nothing to do with his death, she was just passing by that is how she found him. When she finished saying that, she asked only 200sh because the family was poor instead of a sheep or a goat. They gave her 200 sh.; which she spent on the spot because it was a taboo to bring that money home. We then asked her why she went through the traditional ritual process of purification being a Christian, she said that she was to do that so that she could not get into conflict with her husband who is not really involved into church affairs (cf. App.C. no. 19).

Death in many cultures is not seen as an end, but a beginning of a new life in the other world. Elaborate rituals and special burial ceremonies are conducted to bid goodbye to the deceased. As Socrates remarked, “Look death in the face with joyful hope, and

consider this a lasting truth: the customs. The dead body was washed, anointed with oil, and dressed for the rituals. Relatives, primarily women, conducted the burial ceremonies. For example, the Greek burial ceremonies were divided into three main parts; the prothesis, the ekphora and the interment. The prothesis referred to the laying out and display of the body, so relatives, friends, and acquaintances could come and pay their respects to the deceased. The ekphora was the funeral procession, where the deceased was brought to the cemetery for burial. Ekphora usually took place just before dawn, and it involved building the funeral pyre (if the dead body was to be burned) or filling up the grave with objects of daily use. More elaborate objects such as monumental earth mounds, specially built tombs, and marble statues were erected around the grave, to ensure that the deceased would not be forgotten. And the interment consisted of placing the remains of the body, or ashes, if cremated, inside the tomb specially built for the deceased. The tomb could be a family plot (peribolos), a communal grave (polyandreion), or a monumental tomb for the elite. Immortality lay in the continued remembrance of the deceased person by his family members. They also believed that death as well as birth involved a form of cultural/religious contamination for the close relatives. Although its precise scope varied from area to area and from time to time. This contamination was not based primarily on considerations of hygiene, but on the view that the act was repulsive to the gods. Births and deaths were not permitted in holy places such as temples, or on the island of Delos. Precisely how such contamination affected individuals is not always clear, but it was believed to prevent their contact with the gods until the appropriate purification had been undergone. Pollution was also believed to apply to a period of mourning. The correct procedure for dealing with it was, in part, a matter of law (Parker 1985:32-4). The house (or equivalent area) affected by a death was regarded as polluted. Water in the house was automatically contaminated, as was the fireplace in certain regions. When a death occurred on the street, that whole zone of the city had to be purified.

Thus, everyone touching a corpse or entering a house in which there had been a death was contaminated, as were all those who touched them. Certain close family members (as stipulated in the law) were automatically affected (Parker 1983:38-40). At one time, when a king of Sparta died, each household was expected to identify a man and a woman as contaminated by the death (Her. Hist. 6.58.1). Deceased strangers, slaves and children caused less pollution, and a dead baby could only contaminate if it were fully formed (Parker 1983: 41-2; Marshall 2000:9,10,15). Heroes, founders of communities and soldiers who died on the battlefield caused little or no pollution. This was also the case, surprisingly enough, with executed criminals (Marshall 2000:12, 13; Parker 1983:42, 46). Graves (other than those of heroes) caused little pollution, but the bones and relics of the dead could contaminate. Feasts for the dead, such as the Anthesteria (which the deceased were traditionally believed to attend) could be a source of minor pollution (Marshall 2000:12; Parker 1983:38-9).

The burial ceremonies in the ancient Greek culture were a representation of the social and financial status of the deceased, as the tombs of wealthy men were built in an extravagant manner. Jewels and extravagant objects were considered essential grave offerings. The Greeks believed those who were not buried or cremated in the appropriate manner would be destined to suffer between the two worlds and would not be given an entry into the underworld, the land of the dead, until these rites were completed.

As for the Romans; however, they believed the soul of a deceased person could only find peace when the physical body was buried in a proper manner and all ceremonies were conducted appropriately. If this was not done, the soul would haunt its home and other family members. It was the solemn religious duty of the living to perform solemn religious rituals for the dead. They could either bury or burn their dead, and depending upon the personal customs, people would choose one ritual over the other. Roman treatment of the deceased in terms of the cremation rituals perpetuated their life status. For those who preferred cremation over burial, there were strict religious rites to be

performed. Also, the interment of the body, either the bones or ashes, had to be duly buried in the earth in order to bring happiness and peace to the soul of the deceased person. However, children less than forty days old and slaves were to be buried. One way that human beings have come to terms with the tragedy of death is by their belief in the afterlife. In Greece, it was believed that all souls, whether good or bad, go to the underworld realm of Hades, the land of the dead. Tartaros was an area below Hades, where disobedient and evil spirits were punished. Elysium was a beautiful and tranquil place, inhabited by good spirits. When the concept of reward and punishment was introduced in the postclassical period, Tartaros became hell and Elysium became heaven (Department of Greek and Roman Art, 2013). Denis M'Passou in Cox's(1998)'s book states that the last ritual in one's life is the funeral rite. Among the Magagula clan, when a person dies, the corpse is kept in the house and it is embalmed with salts and other medicines to prevent decomposition. Messages are sent to relatives wherever they are. If one of them does not attend the funeral, evil things will happen to him. Close relatives are not expected to work at the mourning; neighbours and distant cousins are the one to do that. The grave site is chosen according to the status of the deceased; therefore, women of all ages, children and unmarried men have no special status as far as burial is concerned. They are all buried in a grave dug six feet or so underground and in these days they are put in a coffin. As the body is taken out of the house to the burial place, the 'mkhulu' will inform the ancestral spirits to let them know that they are now leaving the village with the body for burial (p. 25).

However, Quakers bury their dead in a very simple way. The area meeting is responsible of funeral arrangements of its deceased member. People are selected for funeral arrangement on its behalf. They may be the area meeting elders as a group, or a subcommittee of elders, or a funeral arrangements committee constituted in some other way. These elders will also determine a later date for a memorial meeting at the convenience of relatives and local Quakers. Quakers appointed should consult with the

relatives of the deceased and with local elders, who take particular responsibility for the right holding of the meeting for worship on such occasions. Thus, arrangements should be made in advance for some Quakers to sit at the front of the meeting and for one of them, usually an elder, to take definite responsibility for conducting the funeral (Quaker faith & practice, 5<sup>th</sup> ed. 2013).

Quakers bury their dead in a singularly plain manner. The corpse is deposited in a plain coffin with ordinary dress whether the deceased person was rich or not. The corpse is then carried at the meeting-house or the grave side. The congregation sits then in silence as at a meeting-house for worship. If any one feels himself induced to speak, he delivers himself accordingly; if not, no other rite takes place at that time. In the process of time, the coffin is taken out of the meeting-house, and carried to the grave. Relatives, Quakers and others follow it. It is placed at the grave side. A solemn, silent pause, immediately takes place. Another shorter pause then generally follows. These pauses are made, that people may be deeply touched with a sense of their oncoming death, and their future state. If a minister or another person, during these pauses, has any observation or exhortation to make, which is frequently the case, he makes it. If not people depart; and the dead person is then buried. The act of seeing the body is the last public act of respect which Quakers show to their dead.

Quakers believe that their funeral should not be extravagant like the Greeks and the Romans who were often very extravagant in their funerals. As mentioned earlier, Greeks ornamented with wreath of flowers, while others were singing and dancing before it. As for the Romans, if a great person dies, couches were carried containing the jewelry or other images of the family of the deceased. In fact, many people had to join in the procession. Although there have been the changes in funerals in the recent time; but Quakers still say that it is inconsistent to accompany the deceased person with all outward signs of honor on his last earthy journey. According to Quakers, the appearance

of the deceased before the tribunal of the Almighty to be judged for the deeds committed on earth, is more important than any outward sign (Clarkson, 1806).

In contrast to the Quakers' view on funeral rites, the majority of our respondents confirmed that Bukusu Quakers and other Bukusu non-Quakers do go for traditional rituals to mark an important milestone in the life of their people. They celebrate each stage of the life with special rituals as Mbiti (1988:116) says that if one passes on, people celebrate each stage in a unique way to mark the recognized milestones in a person's journey in life with special rituals. Thus, the literature used in this research stage has proven right this research question.

#### 4.5.3. Literature related to Research Question Three

The third research question was asked in order to find out the conditions and circumstances surrounding the performance of purification rituals among the Bukusu Quakers and why. We tackled issues on the kind of death of a community member and the right ritual to be performed. The research, however, sought to spell out and check if rituals performed by young men and women could result into a legitimate purification and the right time of performing rituals. The result findings as presented in table 03(cfr. Chapter 3) that most of the respondents gave the same answer. They said that in the Bukusu culture, a young man and women cannot perform traditional rituals due to the fact that women never dig graves and carry dead bodies and youth with pregnant wives never dig graves because they are not qualified to perform Bukusu purification rites due to the fact that women are regarded as unclean and young men inexperienced. Many respondents also said that rituals are performed at a specific time because Bukusu believe that spirits are walking and are attentive during quiet moments, especially early in the morning or late at night and they will be willing to take the sacrifice. For those who commit suicide, they are buried away from homestead and that should be at night and the person is never named after. They slaughter a sheep (Likhese) and remove the waste (Buse) and sprinkle it to the area where the accident happened and the first person who

saw the deceased is purified by the same sheep using the “Buse” to talk to the dead spirit and claim hi/or her non-involvement in the death of that person and then he/or she will be paid an animal. They also uproot the tree on which the deceased hanged himself and burn it.

Seemingly, John Mbiti (1975: 119) in his words, “Death marks a physical separation of the individual from other human beings. This is a radical change, and the funeral rites and ceremonies are intended to draw attention to that permanent separation. Meticulous care is taken to fulfil the funeral rites, and to avoid causing any offence to the departed. For all these preparations, there are ritual leaders and elders in every village. Some individuals are not allowed to touch or come near to the corpse in case misfortune should befall them or the family. These are usually the children, pregnant women, or suspected witches”.

Many scholars have written on rituals and its significance in the life of the humankind. For example, already in the 4<sup>th</sup> century, legislation on funerals as Plato (Le. 958d-960c) refers to it among other things determines that any uncertainty about sacred rites had to be referred to a designated official judgement. However, the graves could not be situated on agricultural land so as structures on graves could not be larger than five workers could erect in five days. Therefore, the gravestones could include only four “heroic lines of inscription” and the ekphora had to be orderly. This had to have progressed outside the city walls by daybreak. Hence special regulations and state funerals would apply to the burials of suicides, murderers and other violent criminals. For Plato, after execution criminals were not supposed to be buried, but they were to be casted into the sea, into gravel pits or into wells. Once somebody commits suicide, it was said that the right hand was to be chopped off before burial or if a person had hanged him/or herself, the rope and branch, or whatever structure the rope had been attached to, it had to be destroyed. Whereas, slaves were entitled to a full burial and they were often buried like members of the family. Due to the popular conception was that slaves did not have an

afterlife, however their graves were simple, no gifts were offered and there was no separate cemetery for them. Soldiers, instead, were normally buried with the same honours as their comrades. If a soldier belonged to the slave class and died after the battles of Marathon and Plataea, he was to be buried separately (Kurtz & Boardman 1971:198-9). Seemingly, when an unknown corpse was found at the roadside, he would be buried by a civic official with the help of slaves.

In ancient Greece, purification and subsequent rites were performed by a free person to purify the house of death and the people contaminated by the death. Everybody identified as contaminated by the death would wash with unpolluted water from a source other than the house and if possible the house would be sprinkled with sea water or with other unpolluted water, and strewn with soil. In Argos for example, “new fire” had to be brought from elsewhere before offerings could be made in the fireplace (Retief, F. P. and L. Cilliers, 2006).

Zuesse (1979: 127-128) on his part, stipulates that ritual sacrifice is of great significance since it is the chief method of coming into contact with ancestors. These ancestors, however, often make their desire to communicate known sickness, sterility, or even death. They are ever present and above all they come back and dwell among the living during funerals and during great festivals. Sometimes, people may unwillingly engage into mock battles, obscene songs and sexually exaggerated behavior, ritual sacrifices and other forms of madness to express the basic sacrifice transformation to take place. Bukusu, however, may assimilate this to “khulotia” ritual (cf. Chapter 3, pp. 83-93). It is during this ritual that people, in the Bukusu community, are allowed to exaggerate in their behaviour while going around as to bring back the spirit of the deceased home. One of our respondent testified that most of the Bukusu who go through “khulotia” have been engaging themselves into exaggerated sexual behavior. She had that people dance and go around supposing that go wherever the deceased used to go so that

they can bring him home and make him alive for the second time (cf. App.C. nos. 2, 20, 21).

However, the research showed that the cultural perception of rituals is still very strong as far as the role playing in the performance of the rituals is concerned; whether people have embraced Christianity or not, they still respect the fact that young men and women cannot perform rituals in the Bukusu community. Nevertheless, the literature used on this research question has confirmed what many of our respondents said around death and burial rituals performed in special time and by specific people among Bukusu. Henceforth, to give such a big role to a woman or a young man will be about a great offense to the whole community and a source of misfortune about to face the people.

#### 4.5.4. Literature related to Research Question Four

The fourth research question focused on different challenges Bukusu people get when one of them passes away especially if he was the bread winner of the home. It helped also to find out how people are affected positively or negatively by death. The main effects as mentioned by three quarters of respondents are negative (cf. Chapter 3). They said that death affects negatively many families in general in Bungoma and Kimilili. They also pointed out that the family obviously feels the gap especially when it comes abruptly. Family members become orphans, grieves and it always takes time to forget if especially the one that passed away was the bread winner. Sometimes, there is loss of direction among the bereaved; orphans fail to pursue with their education, they are forced into adulthood, mistreatment of the widows and orphans from the forced inheritors.

In still another manner the negative effects of death on members have been observed and experienced, as the following sayings, fully believed by the Bukusu (Sifuna, 2003, 31-33), will show. Orphanage stinks nastily, Bufubi bunya eng'olia”, in other words orphaned children grow up in terrible hardships. Another goes saying, a woman who is not your mother will have a bite at the piece of meat before she gives you, Mao wowasio akusulakho niyo kakuwa walia, meaning that your own mother will fully

provide a hearted care than your step mother. One way of saying when your mother dies, you cannot be given the same mother back, Lubukusu for Mao nafwa sebakhuwa omwene ta. Negative effects of death on family members in many ways partake of accusing close relatives. Very often, the widow and orphans are accused to have bewitched the deceased. When the wail or cry is interspersed with terms which express the relationship between the deceased and the person grieving, something is truly awful in the sound when men and women together lift up their voices in the wail of grief. The terms of relationship which are mingled with this cry over the dead are some of them peculiar to grief. This is true of the terms used by a husband toward his wife, or a wife to her husband, also of parents toward their child, or an older brother toward a younger brother.

Tlaba (2000, p.15) states that witchcraft is a mystical power that creates a climate of fear, ill will, envy hate and greed, it can easily make one to lose the balanced relationship with his/or her ancestors, environment and the people; some family members usually take advantage to accuse the widow and the orphans to have caused the death of the head of the family so that they can inherit properties and wealth of the deceased. This affects all parties involved the man and woman loses direction, the children are affected leading to poor performance in school. It could also result into deep depression to the man or woman.

Mbiti (1975) argues that death is believed to have been caused by sorcery, witchcraft and evil magic. If someone is blamed for it or suspected to have caused it, he or she may be beaten to death, fined or thrown out of the district (117-118). Evidence for his argument is seen in all the complexity, expensive and complicated death and burial rites among the Bukusu. For example, we attended burial in Musikoma of a lady whose husband left the home. When she was sick, the husband did not support her until her demise. Her relatives did not want the husband to attend the burial rite. It came out that it is the husband who was the cause of his wife 'sickness. He was sent away and all his kinship members. In fact, few of our respondents said that death can have positive effects

depending on how one relates to people and the deceased like the case of Keita Wamalwa who had a positive experience when the death of his grand-father occurred (cf. App.C. no. 17). Positive effects especially if it is an old who passes away peacefully are likely to happen as a sign of blessings.

#### 4.5.5. Literature related to Research Question Five

The fifth research question explored the possibility for Christian rituals in being more effective among the Bukusu in order to find out similarities and differences between Christian Bukusu traditional rituals. In order to find out how Christian rituals are similar and different; we asked our respondents if they could perform traditional rites after the pastor or the priest has gone in case their close relative who is a Christian dies. Eventually, many respondents shared that they will not go for traditional rituals because of their new religious background and their responses are shown clearly in Chapter 3 above. Furthermore, some respondents have made clear to us that performing traditional rituals is an act one will do without questioning the outcome. From the experience on the ground, such a spontaneous response to this question seems to be too easy and it is an indication of the facet. Likewise, G.M. Tlaba(2000) argues that “Daily stories among the people and in newspapers attest to the fact that belief in and fear of witchcraft is strong all over Africa. In spite of official prohibition of witchcraft practices by governments, primarily health care development programmes, the spread of formal educational benefits and the condemnation by the churches of the witchcraft beliefs system, witchcraft beliefs and practices are alive and well. They are even frequently practiced under the umbrella of Christianity, while at other times they are practiced under Satanism (p.15-16).

In fact, Placide Temples (1969) foresaw this behavior as he talked about Bantu ontology. He asked: “Why does not the African change? How is it that the pagan, the civilized, is stable, while the “évolué”, the Christian, is not? Because the pagan founds his life upon the traditional groundwork of his theodicy and his ontology, which include his whole mental life in their purview and supply him with a complete solution to the

problem of living. On the other hand the “évolué”, and the often the Christian, has never effected a reconciliation between his way of life and his former native philosophy, which remains intact just below the surface...”. This confirmed what Simiyu told us that Bukusu have not yet changed very much to believe in spirits of the dead. A Bukusu has always one foot (80%) in traditional beliefs and the other one in Christianity (20%). Among the Bukusu, there have been stories of people who left the church because of their traditional beliefs about death and burial such Balunda clan, Baliche clan, to mention but a few (cf. App.C. nos . 14, 16, 18).

Few respondents, however, supported the idea that they will perform traditional rituals in case one of them dies. As said previously, this point of view can appear to be meaningless as the data shows it, but it indicates whether Christianity rituals are effective enough in replacement of the traditional ones. From the literature findings, most of the scholars have discussed issues of rites of passage to the afterlife, but they were not able to describe any Christian ritual that they could bring security during burial rites among the Bukusu.

Seemingly, people are sometimes forced to perform traditional rituals, if they are disturbed by the deceased. The beliefs on death and burial rites have got a strong impact on people as they prepare the journey of their beloved ones to the other world. Van Gennep (1960) mentions here the Isles of the Dead found in the beliefs of ancient Egypt, Assyro-Babylonia, the Greeks in various times and regions as referred to Hades of Books XI of the odyssey, the Celts, Polynesians, Australians to mention but a few. Van Gennep stipulates that “these beliefs undoubtedly are the reason for the practice of giving the deceased a real or miniature boat and oars. Some people see the other world as a citadel surrounded by walls... as a region with compartments. What is important to us in these cases is that, since the deceased must make a voyage, his survivors are careful to equip him with all the necessary material objects... which will assure him of a safe journey or crossing and a favorable reception” (p.155-156).

Building on this, it is very risky and disrespectful to people of not burying their beloved ones properly in accordance to the customs simply because they are Christians. From the majority of the respondents we interviewed, all of them stated that even those who claim to be committed Christians end up by performing traditional death and burial rites. (cf. App.C. nos . 16, 18, 20, 21, 30).

#### 4.5.6. Literature related to Research Question Six

The general views got from the research findings indicate that the large majority of our respondents (85%) answered “yes” to the reformulated question: “Are there special reasons which push Bukusu to go for traditional rituals despite their being Christians?” This sixth research question was asked in order to find out why the Bukusu Quakers continued to perform traditional rites of purification despite their being Christian (cf. Chapter 3).

Most of them had a similar opinion about this question. Some said that “there are some problems that Bukusu experience and they believe that the problems are caused by their ancestral spirits. So, to overcome those problems, they decide to offer sacrifices so as to provide security against the spirits; they perceive that traditional rituals are satisfactory and also believe that the dead person still remains important to them because it is only physical departure but spiritually united and they also believe that the dead communicate to them in various ways. Therefore, to avoid social disintegration, traditional rituals also are signs of identification among Bukusu communities. Others said that “the family is likely to suffer from the curses of ancestral spirits due to their weak faith in Christianity. There would be fear if the bereaved are not firm in their Christian allegiance. People fear for further disasters, that they will be haunted by the spirits despite their being Christians; fear of the unknown, fear of further deaths or else the dead will appear to them in dreams threatening them. So to appease the ancestors, they slaughter an animal at the graveside”. Likewise, fear of death is so common that it has stimulated several research projects and provoked interests in everyone from different categories of

people such as scholars, psychologists, religious leaders around the world as stated by Angela Morrow (2009). According to Morrow, some interesting findings have emerged from studying the fear of death and it has been proven that women have generally shown more fear of death than men, owing to the fact that women are more likely to admit to and discuss their fears. For example, Morrow (2014) argues that one study done with dying people in Taiwan and published in the "Journal of Pain and Symptom Management" showed that the fear of death actually did not lessen with increased age. Surprisingly enough, the same study showed that fear of death decreased after patients were admitted to hospice care. Thus, people try to face the fear and overcome it. Equally for the Bukusu, it has obviously been indicated to us that they fear the spirits of the dead from harming them if they do not fulfil what the customs require them to do when one of them passes away. To illustrate, Mr. Cleoface, one of our respondents from Namamuka village said that people do go for traditional rituals to avoid that misfortunes come up on them. When they bury a person, people make sure that his/her hands are jointed together so that curses cannot come up on them and his/her eyes are supposed to be closed so that he/she cannot see what is going in his family. To refuse to do some important rituals can be harmful to family members (cf. App.C. no. 22).

Moreover, St. Paul, in his exhortation about death, is also spurring Christians to take courage and to hope for the coming of the Lord at the end of time to set them free from fear of death. Some of these recommendations are presented as follows:

When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: "Death has been swallowed up in victory." "Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?" (1 Corinthians 15:54-55). Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil—and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death (Hebrews 2:14-15). So will it be with

the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body (1 Corinthians 15:42-44). After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever (1 Thessalonians 4:17). Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints (Psalm 116:15).

These biblical scriptures confirm what Jong, J., Bluemke M., & Halberstadt, J. (2013) say that fear of death features in both historical and contemporary theories of religion, but the relationship between death anxiety and religious belief is still ambiguous, largely due to inappropriate or imprecise measures of belief. Unlike St Paul's exhortations, the experience of death in the Bukusu community relies on traditional beliefs of the spirits of the dead being harmful in case proper funeral ceremonies are not performed. These Christian exhortations seem, therefore to be inappropriate recommendations so as to bringing security and safeness among Bukusu people.

Many people, however, believe that they will meet death with excruciating pain. Although, the human nature in people will always want to understand and make sense of the world around, but death can never be fully understood as long as people are still alive; it is the ultimate unknown and no one has come from the dead to tell people what happens afterward. In a like manner, the human nature seeks control over situations; unfortunately death is something that is out of human realm of control which is very scary for many people. Some people will attempt to hold some control over death with extremely careful behaviour and rigorous health checks, but it is always a failure after they have done what they could---and the Bukusu to say 'death is something that is personally experienced and there is no human arbitrator', (Sifuna, 2003). In short, the literature findings on this research question are evidence that some people believe that death is connected to the

spirits and it can be a source of conflicts and misfortunes in the community, and so as the Bukusu do if proper rituals are not performed.

#### 4.5.7. Literature related to Research Question Seven

The seven research question was asked to find out in which manner dialogue could be initiated between Bukusu traditional rites and Christian rituals of purification. Indeed, there was a significance similarity in the answers of the respondents according to their various age, gender marital status and religion. It meant to seek for means and possibilities with which church leaders and Bukusu elders could carry out their spiritual duties in accompanying people in their crucial moments such as death and burial rites. Elders and church leaders ought to address adequately issues concerning traditional rituals as oppose to the Christian ones in Bungoma County. From the result findings, it obviously came out that most of our respondents argued that the Bukusu church leaders should consider some traditional rituals as part of the rites of passage to communicate the gospel message. In other words they should incorporate traditional rituals which are compatible with Christianity such as slaughtering of an animal at the grave side (Khufua) or bringing the spirit of the dead home in case of accidental death (Kamasanyagila), take them as a basis of evangelization, then diverge to strict Christianity customs and practices to make people avoid performing underground traditional rituals. By doing so, and because traditional rituals are part and parcel of the Bukusu, they can use them to make the Gospel message more meaningful. For example, one of our respondents (cf. App.C. no. 20) shared out that missionaries did not take time to examine and ask themselves questions why Africans in general and Bukusu in particular were performing those rituals. They simply rejected it and brought the gospel in a western culture.

Bukusu culture had also and still has values that are similar to Christian values related to the Ten Commandments especially the ones that deal with killing and adultery to mention but a few (cf. Ex 20:13; Gn4:1-16, Ex 20: 14). When we reformulated the

question and asked the main question to our respondents as followed: Should Bukusu church leaders consider traditional rituals as part of the rites of passage to communicate the Gospel message? And when we also asked them two more questions to support the first one as follows: “What should missionaries do to address the issue of death and burial rites?” And “if elders of your community were asked to consider Jesus as ancestor to be invoked during rituals, what would their response be?”; few of our respondents who said no, shared that “church leaders should strictly preach according to Christianity rites and traditional rituals should disappear as pertaining Christian faith acquired because once you trust in Jesus Christ who died and rose from the dead, know that every believer will resurrect on the last day. Indeed, the findings on the question indicated a very big concern of people as patterns to the impact of the church’s pastoral ministry in families among Bukusu as they deal with death (cf. Chapter 3: Research Question seven). For instance, Simiyu shared with us that “the church is now trying to show people that it was God’s plan that all those things which happened through the spirit of the dead so that you could be saved. If there was a way church leaders could come to the burial place and let the people listen to them in the evening and try to explain to them the importance of traditional rituals in relation to Christianity.

In fact, the church’s actions on issues of death and burial rites among Bukusu seem to be a very much minimum service with poor outcomes. Apparently, the church believes that things are done, while they are not in reality. In addition to this, foreign education and values are now being over stressed so that people look more successful and consider European way of life as the best. If one refers to his/or her culture, he/or she looks backward, primitive and this has been confusing the Bukusu and their descendents of today” (cf. App.C. no. 21). Placide Tempels (1959) vividly captured this fact, he said: “... among our Bantu we see the evolutes, the ‘civilized’, even the Christians, return to their former ways of behaviour whenever they are overtaken by moral lassitude, danger or suffering. They do so because their ancestors left them their

practical solution of the great problem of humanity, the problem of life and death, of salvation or destruction” (p. 18).

In one way or another Christianity has to be flexible, open and enriched by African Traditional Religion’s positive values, including awareness of community, the union between the living and the dead, respect for nature, the sense of celebration and instinctively the sense of God (Gehman, 1989, p. 246-247; Paul De Meester, 1992, p. 7; Ryan, 2000, p. 6). Despite the religious hope, the unpredictability and inevitability of death fascinate and frighten everybody. This fear and fascination is quite evident in natural disasters and in acts of war and terrorism. Eventually, in normal situation, Brown (2012) suggests that we have to live with the complexities and consequences of a plausible dialogue between the two religions in terms of death rituals and to courageously explore new options. Death rituals should be re-examined with elders of the Bukusu community and functional substitutes proposed so that African Christians, particularly the Bukusu Quakers, feel content and secure while performing Christian rituals. Finally, we must also listen carefully to each other in our understanding of the rites of passage as a powerful means of bringing non-believers to Christ and facilitate the Gospel to cope with aspects of traditional death and burial rites.

#### 4.6.1. Finding related to Assumption One

The first research assumption assumed that Bukusu Quakers understand death as an evil spirit which has the power of destruction. The data show that Bukusu would always find out the cause of death through traditional means. In other words, consultation with a diviner or a witchdoctor or they would simply perform a ritual to appease the spirit of the dead assuming that misfortune or curse might harm them. According to the majority of respondents, “death is a condition of powerlessness especially when it is caused by killing, accidents, diseases, poisoning, witchcraft, drowning and at child birth. John Mbiti(1975) captures this as he says: “... people try to visualize death in personal terms. Some think of it as a monster, others as an

animal, and many regard it as a kind of spirit. It is said in Uganda, for example, that the spirit of death never laughs. And who can blame it, since its work is to kill, destroy, take away, and terrorize people everywhere.”

In like manner John Gunther (1959, p.78) in his book Meet the Congo and Its Neighbors asserts that “...few Africans out in the bush think that anyone ever dies a ‘natural’ death. A spell must have been put on the dead man, or he would not have died. If a man is sick, it merely means that he is bewitched. Hence Africans hire witch doctors to put spells on their enemies, in order to make them sick, or to avert spells put on themselves by others. I met one African who was a university graduate but who nevertheless told me, discussing these matters, ‘Yes, I know that a European doctor may be able to cure us better than a native medicine man, but he would not be able to tell us who gave us the disease!’”

Thereupon, death is considered as the most common enemy in Christian life. People believe that when a person dies, it is a great loss to the family; it causes grief, sorrow which reduces strength and creates a devastation situation because of the brutal change that occurs in people’s life. The most compelling evidence is that our respondents’ life experience. As said before, Mrs. Masika, Mr. Cleaface and others shared that when death occurs in any circumstance people have to show sign of grief because it is a loss whether whichever age is the deceased person. It is also a duty for the family members to check and find out the cause of death so that they may perform the appropriate ritual to appease the spirit of the dead (cf. App.C. nos. 19, 22). Obviously some respondents argued that death is just a state of passage from physical to spiritual dimension of existence. To put it another way, death is a journey to the other world in a series of rites; which help structure the mourning process of survivors through funeral ceremonies. It is, indeed, a transition rather than a separation which is expressed through the mourning process, affecting both the living and the dead as it is sometimes seen like a potential danger for people while ritual changes in identity occur (Van

Genep, 1960). As shown above, this assumption was proven right by literature.

#### 4.6.2. Literature related to Assumption Two

The second assumption stated that Bukusu perform traditional death and burial rituals in order to stop the spirit of death and other misfortunes destroying life among them. In our research from this assumption, the goal was to find out the importance and the necessity of performing traditional death and burial rituals among the Bukusu and if it aimed at stopping the spirit from harming people. Indeed, many respondents argued that for most of the Bukusu; that is the only way to help people accept the loss and continue life with another outlook which used to their own traditional discovery before the coming of missionary. It is, indeed, a method of chasing away evils of the death (Bisieno).

In the light of this explanation, we recall the story of Mr. Simuyu's grandfather. His grandfather was arrested a long time ago at his home, sent to the battle during the Second World War; unfortunately, died by a snake bite. His family was informed about his death and it was known that Simiyu's grand-father passed away in a foreign country. Since then the spirit of his late father used to disturb them. Some people also died by snake bite and it became frequent, plus other diseases. His father then had to perform "khulotia" rite to bring his grand-father's spirit back at home. They went at the place where the grand-father was arrested and said words to show love and to apologize. Simiyu's father said, "We are here to request you to accept to come home, we know you died by accident killed by that wild animal, please accept to come home". They slaughtered a cow and celebrate in honor of his late grand-father. Since they performed that ritual, life came back to the normal (cf. App.C. no. 21).

Mr. Simuyu reported that people still continue to perform traditional rituals up to date to appease and chase away the spirit of the dead in order to avoid bad hormones and curse. Likewise, when something bad happens such as a person dies, a man loses his job---witchcraft is often suspected among the Shona people of Zimbabwe. It is also believed that witches are usually women who are possessed by the evil spirits. Having the same

characteristics as other witches in other societies, some Shona believe that a witch will enter one's hut at night, remove one part of the body such as the head and play soccer with it and replace it at the end of the game without the victim knowing about it. They also believe that witches are fond of eating human flesh. For this reason, the Shona rely heavily on modern western medicine, but many see it merely relieving the symptoms of an illness rather than curing it. They prefer to go for traditional medicine especially when the disease is seen as spiritual because they believe that traditional healers have the help of the healing spirit (Cheney, 1990, p. 175).

Fear of supernatural forces may lead people to engage themselves into religious practices for security purpose. They may follow a certain prescription in order to avoid misfortune to come upon them. For example they can avoid to get into contact a dangerous and polluted dead person if they believe that his dead spirit may come back and harm them or disturb them during the night. Such is the case of the late President Nguema Marcias of Equatorial Guinea. He was believed to be endowed with supernatural powers. People said that his father was a much feared sorcerer, as a result Mr. Nguema was said to use his knowledge of traditional witchcraft both to extend his legitimacy and to maintain people in constant terrified submission. When he was sentenced to death, local soldiers were not willing to participate in the firing squad; the authorities had to hire a group of Moroccan soldiers to fire him. Later on after his death, his ghost was believed to be a potent force in all over the country (Martin Meredth, 2005, p.242-243).

From the literature findings, it has come out clearly that the assumption two was proven right by literature equally important to many of our respondents who agreed that the Bukusu perform traditional death and burial rituals in order to stop the spirit of death and other misfortunes destroying life among them.

#### 4.6.3. Literature related to Assumption Three

The third research assumption stated that purification rituals among the Bukusu are usually performed by elders early in the morning when spirits are not awake. The

study assumed that Bukusu prefer to perform rituals at particular moments of the day when bad people and others spirits cannot interfere with the ceremony. It also assumed that the best times were early in the morning and late in the evening and that; young men and women cannot perform rituals since they are regarded as inexperienced and unclean people. Considering the importance of the ritual process, Bukusu would not want to expose themselves to such a danger which might compromise the peace and harmony in the community due to irresponsible behaviors of a compromising person likely to bring more pain and misfortunes in the entire community by a deliberate provocation of the spirits of ancestors. Most of our respondents from the four variables gave similar answers (cf. Chapter 3). Only a few number of respondents (15.38%), from other variables, disapproved this assumption.

Building on what the majority of our respondents who approved this assumption said the evening times, elders of the community were the most frequent elements which came from majority of respondents. They argued that if a young man or a woman or an old man performs traditional rituals and it results into a disaster, that it might have caused death and caused the death of many people because sometimes it involves witchcraft. That is why the whole rituals process must be respected especially the time to perform it. In addition to this, our respondents reported that most of the traditional rituals take place early in the morning, late in the evening and some others at night because the ancestral spirits are expected also to take part in the rituals since they are believed to move around and roam at that time.

As Mbiti (1975) asserts that some individuals are not allowed to touch the body or come near it so that misfortune may not come upon the family. Children and women especially those who are pregnant should not be close to the corpse. Rituals, however, are led by leaders or elders of the community. Kirwen (2008, p. 149) confirms Mbiti's statements above when he describes mourning rites in their different aspects namely significance of mourning rites, period of mourning rites, mourning taboos, to mention but

a few. Kirwen (2008, pp. 208-209) said, for example that period of mourning depends on the community. Some communities take three to four days or more than four days until the burial day. As an illustration, at the death of Dr. John Garang of Sudan, the wife was supposed to observe some taboos according to her customs not to bath until the four days after burial of the husband, to pull grass from the four corners of the house and burn them to show that she had no ill feelings for her husband, to slaughter a cow to show forgiveness and wrap a belt around the waist to express pain and sorrow over the death of the husband. After a person has gone through this complex and complicated rituals; one should consider the possibility of young men and women to conduct rituals of this kind very difficult and probably impossible.

Although the literature findings have proven right this assumption, many scholars, however, have not mentioned the precise time when these rituals are supposed to be performed. But the minutes from the Bungoma Diocesan Synod stipulates that somebody who is above 30 years old is expected to die in the evening at around 2 p.m. to 5 a.m in the morning because the spirits of the ancestors are available to keep the deceased person company at time otherwise he/or she will feel lonely because they are not available during the day. When death occurs out the expected time, it may also be an indicator of more death to come in a short while and an out curse on the remaining family members (cf. App. D. Synod /Diocese of Bungoma, 20. 03.1997).

#### 4.6.4. Literature related to Assumption Four

The fourth assumption stated that the death of an individual in the Bukusu community causes fear among close relatives because it pollutes life.

The research assumed that when a person dies in the Bukusu community, relatives fear to get into contact with belongings and other items of the deceased person. They also believe the spirit of the deceased might harm them if they do not behave correctly according to his/her will. Therefore, Bukusu fear to get in touch with anything the dead person has been using or place he used to go until the rituals are performed after

burial. When we asked the informants what would happen to family members if they did not respect the will of the deceased and how could it change the way of living of people in the family or community; almost all the respondents from various variables confirmed this assumption. They reported that families are likely to face problems if they do not respect certain rituals. Some families may be haunted by the evil spirits; some may start disturbing people in the family; the dead will come back and call them to join him wherever he is; disaster will befall on them; at time what is done is not well fulfilled then there will be disagreements among family members; misfortunes or disasters may strike them.

Eventually, findings showed that this fourth assumption was, indeed, proven right by the majority of respondents both in face to face interviews and in questionnaires as shown (cf. Chapter 3). On the same token, generally in the ancient world, the idea of contamination of death involved a form of cultural/religious activity depending on time and location. The contamination was mainly based on the fact that it represented a repulsive act to gods. That is why birth and death were not allowed to happen or to be organized in holy places like temples, and other sacred places. Affected individuals were concealed to prevent their contact with the gods until the appropriate purification took place. In the same way Bukusu avoid being in touch with the dead before appropriate rituals are performed, Greeks were very keen in respecting prescriptions about pollution of death. For instance, they believed that pollution to a period of mourning whereby from the house to the street affected by death, the whole house or the whole zone of the city had to be purified including the people in it (Parker 1985:32-4; 35-8).

While Wallace (1966, p. 236) considers ritual a religion in action which involves sacred and secular symbols in a form of stereotyped communication that serves to reduce anxiety, to prepare the organism to act, and to coordinate the preparation for action among several organisms, Lessa (1971) on her part, sees ritual a set of ritualistic behaviors that are habitual, socially sanctioned, symbolic and without any practical consideration.

Moreover, when people conform themselves to the performance of prescribed actions in order to express and amend social relationships and help to secure blessing, purification, protection and prosperity, they give a meaning to the social attributes of rituals and the importance of supernatural sanction in enforcing conformity (Gluckman, 1966, p. 24). To illustrate, we attended the funeral of the sub-chief of Samoya, a sub-location in Bungoma County. Later on we were told that Mrs. Wasike was a twin. According to Bukusu culture, a twin is not supposed to attend a funeral of the parents or close relatives, something bad might happen. People believed that she passed away because she attended the funeral of her step-mother a day before her demise (cf. App.C. no . 10).

Thus, Bonnano & Kaltman (1999) quoted by Setsiba (2012) say that dealing with loss of human life is a universal human hardship for the ones who remain behind. In other words, the powerful effects of death usually become visible in those who are still alive. In any given culture, society or community, death seems to be the one that transcends all forms of experiences that occur in the personal experiences of the deceased (Kastenbaum, 2004; Hockey, Katz & Small, 2001; Rosenblatt, Wash & Jackson, 1976; Littlewood, 1992; Parkes, Laungani & Young, 1997).

In the African context, however, a dead person is considered an ancestor and he or she is treated with great respect as people believe to have a special relationship with the dead. Therefore, proper rites and ceremonies are supposed to be performed after the death of a loved one. In case of any deviation, this could be perceived as a sign of disrespect for the ancestors; consequently, bad luck could befall anyone who does not adhere to the stipulated practices (Setsiba, 2012). As shown above, this assumption was confirmed right by literature flowing from the previous assumptions.

#### 4.6.5. Literature related to Assumption Five

The fifth assumption stated that Christian death and burial rites are considered ineffective among the Bukusu because they fear a resultant insecurity. The study assumed that Christian death and burial rites are deemed inappropriate due to the western outlook.

They appear foreign to the African culture in general and to Bukusu in particular. It was assumed that Christian burial rites are invalid rituals which can result in insecurity and danger for the community. Of course many respondents rejected the idea of considering Christian death and burial rites be ineffective especially the younger ones. But only few of our respondents (25) who answered, “yes” from our different variables. As mentioned before, their argument assume very many positive events and even go far as demonizing people who refuse to go for traditional rituals. They said that people are torn between Christianity and tradition; they tend to do none correctly. However, a deceased person who is a Christian has to be buried with specific Christian rites. Until recent times, Christians generally objected to other sorts of burial such as cremation. For example, Greeks and Romans could practice both cremation and burial whereas the Jews buried their dead according the way they buried Moses (Deuteronomy 34:6).

Early Christians used to bury their dead in accordance with the dogma of the resurrection of the body. In other words, burial was always preferred as the method of disposition inherited from Judaism and the example of Jesus' burial in the tomb. The burial of a Christian has always been regarded as an act of religious import that are always surrounded with some measure of religious ceremony. But during times of persecution, pagan authorities deliberately thought they could destroy the martyrs' hope of resurrection by cremating their remains while the church always taught that the destruction of the earthly remains had no threat to the bodily resurrection. Actually, many Christians risked their lives to prevent this desecration of the relics of the saints.

Moreover, the bodies of Christians were to be treated with dignity and respect, as befits a Temple of the Holy Spirit so longer they have been sanctified by baptism and the reception of the sacraments(I Corinthians, 6:19). For example, various Catholic religious observances surrounding the full funeral rites are celebrated, including the Funeral (Requiem) Mass, which, eventually must be celebrated by a priest. If a Catholic deacon officiates, the Funeral Mass does not occur, therefore; a Memorial Mass may be said later

for the deceased. The deacon leads the prayer services at the home and the funeral home, blesses the remains at the church during another prayer service, and then leads the prayers of final commendation at the gravesite. In case there are not enough priests and deacons due to lack of vocations together with an increased number of funerals and other necessary duties or there are none in an area- usually rural and isolated- with no or very few ordained ministers and/or where getting to a church is very prohibitive, Canon law allows (with the Bishop's specific authorization) some non-clergy to lead a non-liturgical prayer service for the dead at the church and to lead prayers at the gravesite.

These individuals may or may not be relatives of the deceased, and they are usually religious sisters or brothers or certain laypersons- especially if they exercise other ministries in the Church, and provided they have some degree of formation (Thurston, H., 1908). Coplan (2011) says, however, that in all societies, when people die, family, friends, and neighbours respond in structured, patterned ways to the death. Cultural guidelines will definitely determine the treatment and disposal of the body and prescribe a period of mourning for close relatives.

In like manner of much of human behaviour, death ritual is an expression of a cultural blueprint, of attitudes, values and ideals passed down by parents, and their parents, which an individual learns as a member of society. From this point of view, missionary works initiated in Africa were likely to be spread in Africa with a western outlook spurred sometimes by colonial policy of governance. In The Reaper's Garden: Death and Power in the World of Atlantic Slavery, for example, Vincent Brown (2010) presents a dynamic portrait of how Blacks in Jamaica used death, the fear of death, and the rituals of death to their advantage. He shows that slaves' responses to death were themselves a form of resistance. He also combines his knowledge of the history and the anthropology of slavery, the slave trade, African and European religions, the cultures of the Africans and the English, and their respective mortality rates to show that the fear of death was one of life's constants for both the oppressor and the oppressed. Eventually, he

documents the effects of the slave trade on African peoples and the suffering and death that it brought in the horrific “middle passage.” Surveying various funeral processions of Africans from powerful states such as Asante to the Kingdom of Dahomey, he shows how some of the rituals had been passed down to the enslaved in Jamaica.

From the cultural, political and economic approach today, some contemporary Africans in general and Bukusu in particular would obviously consider traditional rituals backward and primitive even if some of them are compatible to Christianity. To illustrate, Mrs. Vincent and Simiyu shared that people to think that if one goes for traditional rituals will look primitive and backward, so he or she will go for Christian death and burial rites just to pretend while he/she fears the outcomes from the spirits of the dead person (cf. App.C. nos. 21, 30). There are, indeed, factors that make Bukusu to be trapped between Christianity and tradition at the same time. On one hand, the Bukusu elders, specialists in the ritual process have died; there is nobody to show direction. On the other hand, educated Bukusu and the youth disregard traditional rituals because of new challenges on African families in urban areas plus traditional shrines are no longer traceable. Traditional rituals impact too much on the economy of the family and it becomes very difficult to cope with life if families engage into practice of traditional rituals (Dr. Michael Katolo, Class notes, 2005).

From literature findings, it appears clearly that this assumption was disapproved since the research findings on this assumption rose up the perpetual and old conflict between African Traditional Religion and Christianity as the majority of our respondents pointed it out in their different comments concerning the challenges Bukusu encounter when they perform traditional rituals.

#### 4.6.6. Literature related to Assumption Six

Bukusu Quakers prefer traditional death and burial rites to the Christian ones because they feel content, safe and secure after performing the traditional rites. This statement is the sixth assumption of this study which is related to the problem statement

and the research hypothesis. In the light of In light of the "rites of passage" as labeled by Van Gennep (1960), Sir Hans Sloane (2010), in his book A Voyage to the Islands Madera, Barbados, Nieves, S. Christophers and Jamaica, says that "West Africans believed that their ancestors would protect them from the other world; hence it was essential to honor the dead in the best way possible". Death ritual, however, displays elements of separation, transition and incorporation. While the deposit of the corpse in the grave, coffin or cemetery; burning the dead person's tools, jewels, house and other possessions; killing wives, slaves, and favorite animals of the deceased is the symbol of separation in death. Under difficult circumstances, people may adapt death rituals into new practices as an act of liberation.

On the same token, Setsiba (2012) in her study on "Mourning Rituals and Practices in Contemporary South African Townships" makes an observation that "while the 'after tears' party is perceived as a celebration, the important functions of this party were indicated as comforting and supporting the bereaved and helping them to cope with the impact of loss of a loved one. In fact, others condemned the practice as totally disrespectful and that it is insensitive of the people to hold a party while other people are still in mourning. It hurts the bereaved and delays the chances of recovery from grief. The 'after tears' party can be an effective coping strategy if it was conducted in a more respectful manner". This was confirmed what Mr. Kakayi. He reported that he once attended a burial of a Christian fellow. The burial was generally done in a Christian way, but later on to perform modified traditional rituals so that they could look Christian (cf. App.C. no. 20).

Likewise, Mr. Vincent also shared his experience about his nephew who is a pastor. That pastor had to undergo traditional rituals to chase away the spirit of his late father whose spirit was killing his animals, and the story of another pastor who almost became mad because he refused to perform traditional rituals after the death of this father; they and to perform a traditional ritual so that he could be well (cf. App.C. no. 31).

Seemingly, Hertz (1960) predicts that the mourners are in a precarious state as well as like the body and soul. They no longer can live as others do since their status has ritually charged and is obviously in danger. As a result they do not dress, adorn themselves, or eat the same foods as their neighbors. Being in that situation, mourners are shunned, not only by men, but also by the spirits; they are forsaken, not only by man, but also by protective spirits: as long as their impurity lasts, they may not leave the village and they cannot hope for any help from the powers above.

Similar studies to Hertz (1960), conducted from different contexts are Dlukulu (2010) and Kilonzo & Hogan (1999). Dlukulu (2010) in his recent study has focused on the rituals performed in the Black urban townships. He particularly explored how widows in transitional societies experience bereavement and the bereavement rituals of loss and change. Whereas Kilonzo & Hogan (1999) examined the psychological significance of traditional African mourning practices in the context of HIV and AIDS pandemic and implications for mental health. Hence, the findings of the study highlighted that the increase in psychiatric and psychological problems are associated with incomplete mourning and unresolved grief.

In short, this assumption was proven right by the available literature which outlined the rituals and practices of various ethnic groups in Africa and particularly the Bukusu traditional rituals performed in the event of the death of a loved one such as the slaughtering of the beast, the mourning dress, mourning period and the cleansing ceremonies in relation to the deceased. Khaemba (2009), indeed, confirms this. He eventually asserts that death and funeral rites among the Luhyia are a paradox because even if the dying person is being cut off from human beings, continuing ties will still remain between the living and the departed.

#### 4.6.7. Literature related to Assumption seven

The seventh research assumption stated that Bukusu Quakers can deal successfully with issues of death and burial rites if they facilitate penetration of the Gospel in every

aspect of traditional funerals. This study is an exploratory investigation of the insufficiency of Christian death and burial rites and eventually a step ahead on the inculturation outlook on issues of funerals among the Bukusu of Western Kenya. However, a partial understanding and misconception of African rite of passage is based on the prejudices since the Gospel message, even today, is predominantly Western. It is accused of lacking adequate pastoral ministry capable of addressing death and burial rituals among the Bukusu. The study also assumed that African rites of passage could be integrated in the evangelization work so as to bring up a possibility of African Traditional Religion and Christianity to accommodate each other. Although Christianity is effective by essence as mentioned earlier; it can be more effective in the traditional ritual process among the Bukusu if it is opened to inculturation process that requires it to utilize some rites of passage compatible to Christianity as the key element to communicate the gospel as almost African societies and Bukusu are exposed to a global transformation.

However, many of our respondents from different variables had a similar answer. The large majority (91.28%) subscribed to the idea that the Christian faith of Bukusu Quakers would be strengthened if church leaders addressed the contemporary challenges of traditional beliefs in Kimilili and Bungoma today (cf. Chapter 3). Eventually, many respondents pointed out that “if church leaders address adequately the contemporary challenges of traditional belief, people will not have doubts concerning their faith and negative beliefs and practices will be rendered. Instead, it will grow day by day. It will also create confidence in the Christians and they can take as serious truth and will believe more”. They also argued that “to make traditional funerals compatible with Christian faith among Bukusu, is just to fairly integrate the procedures of death and burial rituals by emphasizing that they are just the same as the end result and they have the same funeral aspects to be encouraged”.

Traditionally, Africans believed that God was the giver and provider of all good things. However, he was also a bad God when they were faced with a calamity and they

would say that God brings both good and evil. This said, Africans always offered prayers to their God for thanksgiving and to request Him for forgiveness. They also recognised the ancestors whom they believed were closer to the realm of spirits and asked them to communicate their needs to God. Most African communities showed their appreciation of the ancestors through offerings of sacrifices and pouring blood on the ground during rituals to show connectedness to the spirit world; they also poured libation (Prof. Waruta, class discussion, 2005). This also happens in Christianity where in the Roman Catholic Church for example, the Eucharist is the sacrifice that Christians offer to show connection with God, saints and founders of the religion.

Vatican II, in its Constitution on the Liturgy, reminds the clergy of an important attitude in the celebration of the Liturgy. *Sacrosanctum Concilium* states that pastors must indeed ensure that something more is required than a simple observation of the laws governing valid and lawful celebration. It is also their duty to ensure that the faithful take part fully aware of what they are doing; that they are actively engaged in the rite and at the same time enriched by its effects (Ronzani, 2004, p.7).

In other words, all religions convey beliefs and explanations on why things are the way they are, description of sacredness and any ultimate state of being the adherent achieves, boundaries on behavior and membership. All religions expect their members to conform or to perform certain rituals and practices as prayers, fasting, rituals for transition in the life cycle (birth, initiation, marriage, death, and so on). People perform seasonal rituals (planting and harvest festivals in some societies that practice agriculture). Other practices include annual religious festivals. They perform sacrifices which often have specific rituals associated with them. Victor Turner quoted by Shorter (1998) sees ritual as a gestalt or a configuration of symbols which creates a tensed unity among conflicting interests and which acts as a catharsis or a safety-valve. But according to Shorter, a ritual is like a bridge between ideas and life; it is also, at the same time, an expression of ideal and a high point of activity. In other words, in traditional religious practices, a ritual

celebrates events the way they happen from the memory of the past to the expectation of future events. They also help people to deepen their experience of events, cope with them and humanize them (p. 61).

All religions have followers or members who make up a religious community. The communities relate and behave in different manners towards the outside world. This can be attributed to issues of conversion to and away from a particular religious community. In most cases, contemporary followers seem to express their religious beliefs with fanaticism. Therefore, they tend to express their religious differences towards other people (those who do not belong to the same religion) as a challenge to their spirituality. Sometimes, this attitude stirs cause conflicts among people of the same country or even the same family. Examples are conflicts between Muslims and Christians, Hindus and Buddhists, adherents of African Traditional Religion and African Christians, to mention but a few (Gehman, 1989, p. 32).

As for African Traditional Religion, its stability began to decline to Christianity through the brutality of colonization. Iteyo (2009) argues that the concept of culture changed due to the categorization of people by colonists as “cultured” and “uncultured.” This was a technique of luring Africans to abandon their culture. A cultured African was expected to show a certain detachment from his/her traditional culture and pretend to embrace the Western lifestyle. The uncultured – who resisted western influence - were simply seen as “backward”. Despite this disruption by colonization, African traditional religion did not die; its culture became Afro-European instead.

In this context, some people might argue that traditional rituals are more effective than Christian ones while Christian believers may also claim to have taken the better side of spirituality in terms of death and burial rites. Whether people belong to the Bukusu community or other, they should come find a resolution in form of a cross cultural communication (Prof Waruta, class discussion, 2005).

In recent years, there has been great interest in interpreting African Traditional Religion (ATR) and its relationship to the Christian faith. Although there are differences between Christianity and African Traditional Religion, every religion says basically the same thing. In its early years, Christianity experienced already cultural conflicts which could not help the gospel message to be well spread to everybody. Already the coexistence of Christianity and other cultures started during the apostolic age. Jesus instructed his disciples before his Ascension, to spread his teachings to the ends of the earth (Mk28,28; Mk16,15) without a clear indication to whom or to which particular places they had to go. In this context, the first inculturation attempt was Saint Paul's speech to the Greeks at the Aeropagus of Athens (Acts 17:22-33) and the second happened around the year 50 when the apostles convened the first Church council, the Council of Jerusalem, in order to make decisions on whether they should include Gentiles and inculturate Gentile culture. As a result, the Council confirmed that Gentiles could be accepted as Christians without first converting to Judaism. The adventure continued up to the period of Protestantism which generated a division in the Western church. Meanwhile the discoveries of Americas, Asia and Africa expanded the Christianity contact with other cultures and civilization. In the case of Africa, Christianity came with a great influence of western culture since a lot of missionaries came from Europe.

As far as the Roman Catholic Church is concerned, papal teachings have been of a great contribution to the inculturation process. In fact, the introduction of the Gospel means inculturation and not the destruction of local cultures. Pope Pius XII emphasized this because not all seemed to understand this point. He wrote in *Summi Pontificatus* that a deeper appreciation of various civilizations and their good qualities is necessary to the preaching of the Gospel of Christ. In his 1944 speech to the directors of the Pontifical Missionary Society, he said:

The herald of the Gospel and messenger of Christ is an apostle. His office does not demand that he transplant European civilization and culture, and no

other, to foreign soil, there to take root and propagate itself. His task in dealing with these peoples, who sometimes boast of a very old and highly developed culture of their own, is to teach and form them so that they are ready to accept willingly and in a practical manner the principles of Christian life and morality; principles, I might add, that fit into any culture, provided it be good and sound, and which give that culture greater force in safeguarding human dignity and in gaining human happiness.

In his encyclicals Evangelii Praecones and Fidei Donum, issued on June 2, 1951 and April 21, 1957, Inculturation was addressed respectively. He increased the local decision-making of Catholic missions, many of which became independent dioceses. Pius XII demanded recognition of local cultures as fully equal to European culture. Furthermore Pius XII supported the establishment of local administration in Church affairs and from 1950 up to date, the hierarchy of Western Africa became independent followed by Southern Africa in 1951; and British Eastern Africa in 1953. Finland, Burma and French Africa became independent dioceses in 1955. Following the paths of his predecessor, in 1990 John Paul II addressed also the issue in several encyclicals (Redemptoris Missio) and public appearances. The term was used again by the encyclical of John Paul II as follows, "The incarnation of the Gospel in native cultures and also the introduction of these cultures into the life of the Church."; "The intimate transformation of authentic cultural values through their integration in Christianity and the insertion of Christianity in the various human cultures."; "It is now acknowledged that inculturation is a theological term which has been defined in Redemptoris Missio 52 as the on-going dialogue between faith and culture." Recently Pope Benedict XVI highly focused on the dialogue between cultures and religions. Nevertheless he at one point attempted to move from the notion of "inculturation" to "inter-culturality," which he later stated that the inculturation of the faith is necessary, as long as the specificity and the integrity of the "culture of faith" are not compromised. He constantly insisted on the use of the

reason as the key of the culture of faith (Magesa 2014, pp. 123-4, Schineller, Peter 1990; Shorter, Aylward 1988).

In summary, the literature above confirms what most of our respondents said. They agreed that dialogue between Christianity and African Traditional Religion is necessary and has to be established so that it may create a sense of appreciation of each other. But slowly, one can be assimilate and consequently incorporated into the other. They also agreed to the suggestion that people should be given chance to invoking the name of Jesus as the savior Lubukusu for “Wele Murumwa” during the Bukusu traditional ritual process. As Mr. Ulula and Mr. David Wamalwa and many others observed that people should be given a space in the traditional ritual process to choose what is compatible with the Christian faith (cf. App.C. nos. 16, 18). Given the fact that the African Church should engage itself to open up and bring reason and let people ask themselves questions on whether some traditional rituals are compatible with the Christian faith (cf. App.C. nos. 16, 18, 20, 21). Insights generated from the literature findings of the current study highlighted the significant perceptions, meanings and feelings about traditional death and burial rites in relation to Christian faith. literature findings have, therefore, proven right this assumption since death and burial rites are perceived as a process that allows the person to "maintain integrity of self" while taking on a new social identity as the individual acts in new ways without crippling anxiety"... (Diamond: 198) and more importantly function as comforting and supporting the bereaved and helping them to cope with the impact of loss of a loved one.

#### 4.7. Findings related to Limitations and Scope

The process of mourning and the rituals accompanying this process in the African context have been studied by various authors (John Mbiti, 1966, 1975; Van Gennep, 1960; Victor Turner, 1969; Ray, Benjamin, 1976; Tempels, P. 1969; Wagnar, Gunter., 1949; Malusu. Joseph 1978; James. L. Cox, 1998; Bon Brown, 2012; Onyewuchi. Onukwugha,. Gerald, 2011).

Recently more studies have been carried out on the traditional burial practices of the Baluhya in general and Bukusu people in particular. For instance, Kirwen (2008) explored funeral rites in Africa in general and on bereavement rituals among the Luhya community and other ethnic groups in Kenya while Magesa (2004) in his Anatomy of Inculturation, focused on the current experience of inculturation in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda with a particular attention on traditional healing rituals in relation to Christian faith.

Moreover, the findings of this study highlighted that bereavement in transitional societies is complicated by factors such as the inability to perform all the prescribed traditional rituals, some of them being adapted. There could be other recent studies conducted on death and burial rites in the Luhya community in particular and in African urban and rural area contexts in general, however, given the rapid transitional nature of urban population. With attention to this phenomenon, research is imperative in order to explore the needs of the people living in urban environments and rural areas among Bukusu in dealing with the death of a loved one. The above literature highlights the vast work that has been done on death and burial rites within the Bukusu context. It covered the major points of the study namely the research topic, the statement of the problem, the hypothesis, the significance of the study, the seven research questions and the seven assumptions. The researcher relied on little old documentations on funeral rites in French, but he instead relied much on CUEA, Marist University College, Miasmu libraries and Internet resources which he exploited in this work. Besides, the current study undertook to gather information at its disposal namely the literature on death and burial rites, witchcraft, African religion, the rites of passage, African culture knowledge, Ritual Cosmos, Bukusu proverbs, Faith and Culture, Inculturation, to mention but a few. The date framework of the references, however, ranged between 1950 and 2013 has enabled the study to see the dynamic changes which occurred both in the Bukusu community in the urban area and the rural one. To illustrate, despite the fact that death has become a

common occurrence in Bungoma and kimilili, most of the studies focused on the cause and effect of death such as HIV and Aids pandemic, cholera, widow inheritance, street children phenomenon, polygamy, rape cases, criminality in urban and rural areas in Kenya and few studies have so far focused on the changing nature of the mourning rituals both in the cities and rural areas. Research on the changing nature of the mourning rituals and the changing people's living environments seems to have received limited attention.

In short, African cultures have their practices, traditional beliefs and customs surrounding death and performance of death rituals. In light of the nature of how Africans treat death and mourning and the way some churches deal with funeral rites seems to be strange to African people. The observation of the researcher has been that the practice of the funeral ritual and the mourning practices accompanying the death of a loved one have been redefined in Bungoma County when compared to the way funerals were conducted in the past; which at one point requires a dialogue between African Traditional Religion and Christianity has shown through the literature utilized in this study.

#### 4.8. Conclusion

This chapter analyzed and described various authors' literature on the mourning rituals practiced in traditional African societies in general with a particular interest on the Bukusu community of Western Kenya and the functions of the rituals when death has occurred. Unlike the predominance of Western cultures in African societies, more especially in the Kenyan society, death and burial rites in African cultures do not end with a funeral. There are rituals and ceremonies observed and performed by the deceased's family members even after the deceased has been buried. It was clearly indicated in this chapter that Christianity and modernism versus Bukusu culture seem to have affected the lives of Bukusu people who live both in towns and in rural areas.

According to many scholars, traditional rituals are not dying as some people might pretend, but they just take another form, an inculturation aspect of rituals. Likewise Rando (1988) defines a ritual as a specific behaviour/actions or activity which gives a

symbolic expression to certain feelings and thoughts of the actors individually or as a group. It may be a habitually repetitive behaviour or a one-time occurrence and may be performed publicly or privately. The same applies to mourning rituals among Bukusu because they feel part and parcel of the living dead by performing the rituals.

In this perspective, to reject totally these rituals and replace them by the Christian ones without explanation seems to have interfered with the traditional lives of the community and obviously it might become a source of misfortunes and bad omen. Besides, some of their traditional practices diminish and some Bukusu feel that they should combine both traditional and Christian rituals secretly. Partly due to the fear of the spirit of the dead of harming them and at the same, they need to avoid to be looked at as backward when they openly go for traditional rituals.

However most of the scholars both African and non-African supported the idea of the necessity of a dialogue between African Traditional Religion and Christianity in order to create an environment which could have allowed people the freedom to continue with their cultural practices in as much as there are compatible to Christianity, i.e. Magesa (2004, p. 23) reports that “Archbishop Wambugu and Pastor Muriu of the AIPCA, however, held the middle road on this issue. They said they accept the use of modern science as well as traditional medicine for their followers as long as they are not contrary to the Gospel”. This was the study’s interest. The next chapter gives the researcher’s interpretations and synthesis of the results in this study so as to give the reader a new perspective on traditional death and burial rites in relation to the Christian ones among the Bukusu Quakers of Western Kenya.

## Chapter Five

### Discussion

#### 5.0. Introduction

The study was to explore the process of mourning during the death of the loved ones among Bukusu people. The two previous chapters of the thesis, namely the third and the fourth, were based on field work and the literature review. However, insights were generated from the experiences, perceptions, the meaning attached and the feelings about the emergence of traditional death and burial rites among Bukusu Quakers of Western Kenya today. This chapter outlines the researcher's interpretations and analysis on the research topic, on the statement of the problem, on the hypothesis, on the seven research questions, and on the seven research assumptions and the limitation and scope. Thus, the chapter ends with conclusions, summary and some recommendations for the reader and for further study.

#### 5.1. Discussion on the Thesis Topic

The results from the field work revealed slight differences of the respondents' views depending on their gender, age, educational and occupational backgrounds in response to the question "how would you describe death with regard to the Bukusu worldview"; however, their definition of death if it is associated with disaster and its relevance in the Bukusu community today.

The majority of our respondents described death as a process by onward passing of the living to the other world known as Emakombe where life is endless, Ebuyindifu. Likewise, Mr. Wekesa (cf. App.C.no. 2) shared that in normal circumstances, death is considered an interaction of the people with the dead person called simakombe who goes to heaven, Emakombe. In other words, death is a rite of passage from one state to another; the beginning of a new life in another world. But only a few of our respondents considered death a disaster, an unacceptable occurrence, an evil tragedy, a loss of life caused by something evil such as misfortune, curse, and some also believed that the

ancestral spirits have whipped or punished the family. A valuable insight generated from some of the respondents and the literature is that the understanding of death in the Bukusu worldview is related to a bad omen caused by evil forces, a disaster, bad luck, a painful moment, a tragedy, a misfortune, a loss of life, an outcome of curses due to irresponsibility of women who fail to observe the taboos.

I, therefore, concur with the expression of this cultural delicacy by some respondents which seems to resonate with Mbiti(1975, 117-119) who observed that “people try to visualize death in personal terms. Some think of it as a monster, others as an animal, and many regard it as a kind of spirit”...i.e. “the spirit of death never laughs. And who can blame it, since its work is to kill, destroy, take away, and terrorize people everywhere.” He further observed that death is one of the most universal and mysterious experiences that people try to explain. Although death came into the world in the early history of a man, people still believe that death is caused in different ways such as sorcery, curse, witchcraft and evil magic, while natural death is considered to be a call of God to old people to leave life and live another form of life.

The findings in this study also seem to concur with Mbiti’s (1975) findings on death among African communities which indicate that there are still elements of traditional belief of death being seen as evil and as a carrier of misfortunes and impurity, in the contemporary African way of life, whether people live in the village or in the city. These findings, however, highlighted that in the rural areas people still have a lot of respect for funerals as compared to urban areas. Thus, their funerals are characterized by traditional strictness and order; as a result there are only a few elements of Christian burial rites in the real sense. From the review of literature, Turner (1969, p.95) and Ray (1976, p. 78) highlighted that the transition period during the mourning time is very important in the sense that these rituals transmit collective messages in order to communicate with the spirits and change human situations. This is also consistent with Ngubane (2004) and Magudu (2004) quoted by T. H. S. SETSIBA(2013) who asserted

that practice of 'ukuzila' which was defined to showing respect for the deceased by avoiding certain behaviors and places until the end of the mourning period.

I agree with the majority of our respondents who observed that death is a separation, a passing onto the spiritual world. This attitude has been reported to have resulted in the changing attitudes towards death. Despite their being Christians, Bukusu would want to perform rituals that accompany the deceased to the ancestral world, such as slaughtering cows at the gravesite so that his or her spirit can be appeased (cf. App.C.nos. 20, 21). It has also been observed that Bukusu perform rituals to give tribute to ancestors while at the same time to chase away the spirit of death and thus prevent the community from being harmed further. Nevertheless, from the findings, there seem to be contrasting findings on the relevance of this study, as the researcher asked if young men and women could perform death and burial rituals. From the findings, it has been indicated that the majority of the respondents who said that this study is relevant felt that unmarried people, especially the younger ones, are considered immature and inexperienced to qualify to perform rituals or to assist in some of the delicate sacrifices; only very few respondents were in favour of allowing young men and women to perform death and burial rites. To permit young men and women to perform rituals in the Bukusu community is a cultural deviation (Gelles and Levine, 1999); however, sociology tends to explain this phenomenon as socio-cultural diffusion (Bandura, 1986) because societies are continuously faced with pressures to change some of their traditional practices in efforts to improve the quality of life. This concurs with Bujo's (1990, 97) argument on the respect of the commands and prohibitions by Africans, inherited from the ancestors. The observance of the rites, words and gestures taught by the tradition of their forefathers means that people face the choice of life or death, the decision for good or evil, which may either strengthen or diminish the life of the community. People must perform ceremonies correctly to allow the deceased person to join the ancestral world, including sacrifices in order to remember ancestors whom they must never forget

(Zuesse, 1979). Otherwise these spirits will subsequently become evil spirits---ghosts which cannot be controlled by people due to the fact that they have been forgotten.

From the literature reviewed, I support the argument on the understanding of mourning in African culture including “Bukusu culture” as expressed by Mbiti (1969), Ngubane (1977), Gumede (1990), and Mkhize (2008). They observed that mourning does not end with the funeral, that there are traditional customs and rituals that need to be performed even after the burial and there is a stipulated mourning period. This period of strict mourning begins immediately after the burial with cultural prescribed behaviors of the bereaved. For instance, when a death has occurred, everything has to be done in moderation such as reducing volume when speaking and prohibiting overeating, laughing or even getting angry. Eventually, the respondents displayed significant insights into what death and burial rites mean to them ever since economic and political change have transformed the face of death rituals in modern industrialized societies (Radzilani, 2010) in like manner to prove the relevance of this study.

### 5.2. Discussion on the Problem Statement

Significant insights generated from the literature review and from the respondents’ interpretations of death and burial rites confirmed the problem statement that “Bukusu Quakers still cling to their traditional practices with regard to death and burial despite embracing and professing Christianity. What is the explanation for this “duality”?”

On one hand, one perceives that traditional death and burial rites from the traditional Bukusu culture are still attached to the Christian perceptions which have influenced the new way of burying people. On the other hand, regarding the purposes of death and burial rites, they not only seem to appease the spirit of the dead but also to facilitate the passage from the world of the living to the ancestral world. This explains why even in modern Africa and particularly among the Bukusu, these rituals are still very much alive and mandatory for the survival of the community. A traditional funeral

(with its rituals) is, however, to be considered the greatest service to render to the deceased and to his or her community, because “the personal destiny of the dead, the cohesion and the socio-political future of the community and the cosmic order are at stake and linked with them”(Beller 2001). If rituals were not performed appropriately, there could be grievous consequences. From the findings, it has been indicated that the majority of our male respondents said that they would perform traditional death and burial rites because some of the traditional rites have to be done regardless of the Christian faith. Their Bukusu culture binds them to both the living and the living dead. More importantly, they said that it is a way of showing respect for the dead person, to avoid the spirit of the deceased disturbing the living, and to create good relationship with ancestors. If they do not follow traditional ritual processes, they believe that they will be haunted by spirits of the dead person (cf. App.C.nos. 20, 21, 36).

Only few of our respondents from the four variables namely, marital status, religion gender and age pointed out that they will not perform traditional rituals since their conversion to Christianity. In my opinion, this is in line with the social diffusion and innovation model described by Bandura (1986) in explaining how new ideas and practices are introduced by example or modeling through observational learning. In the case of traditional death and burial rites among the Bukusu, new ideas on how people should be buried go along with the social development of the community influence. New innovations imbued with Christian ideas have an impact on the Bukusu culture today. Some people do not want to appear primitive and backward; therefore, they adopt some new practices so that they cannot be disrespected by those who are majority in embracing the Christian faith. They prefer not to seem backward, despite their real fear of the spirits of death. People find ways to escape from both the social prejudices and the misfortunes that might come upon them when they are out of public view. Thus, the concept of innovation as any new idea is brought into the society. As a result, two categories of people can be identified: those who adopt a new innovation as “early

adopters,” those members in the society who would like to try out new things and the “late developers,” those who will wait to observe the behaviors modeled by “early adopters” first and then they can adopt a new innovation. This confirms what Simiyu observed that people select traditional rituals before or after the pastor or the priest has performed the Christian ones. Hence, this kind of behavior has been adopted by elderly people and followed by the younger ones on a new way of burying their people. They do not want to be seen as “pagans” and be rejected by the church leaders; at the same time, they do not want misfortunes to come upon them. I have observed that elderly people among the Bukusu will always be the first to engage in some new ways of dealing with death and burial rites because they are the ones that have the right to change regulations in the community. Then they will be followed by the younger ones who will develop practices into new innovations, in this case death and burial rites (cf. App.C.no. 21).

The findings also seem to be consistent with Ayisi’s (2000) and Knox’s (2008) assertions about the logic of ritual practices and the ancestor cult. Thus, the ritual practice may seem simple and obviously regarded as sociologically dysfunctional and psychologically disoriented in the modern Africa, but in most primitive societies and the world of the living and that of the dead are so closely related to one another that the dead members of the lineage direct and guide the lives of the living. They constitute the ancestral spirits and provide an important mechanism for social control. The contact with the living dead can only be possible if certain prescriptive rules are followed. This rich spiritual resource was appreciated before the beginning of Christian missionary work in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century. It was then actively suppressed in favour of the Western Christian religious ideas. Indeed, although repressive, this action ultimately worked in favour of African Christian life, even though these ancestral cults were understandable and well-intended.

I agree with Knox (2008) talking about ancestral cult, that “for a non-participant it is inevitably problematic to understand an unfamiliar religious experience. This is all

more difficult in the present instance because there are so few first-hand “user accounts” of the ancestor cult; outsiders are for the most part restricted to anecdotal material recorded by anthropologists and missionaries. Missionaries were almost universally disparaging in their attitude, while anthropologists examine the cult according to an external, Western hermeneutic”. In like manner, Bukusu traditional death and burial rites have been conducted more recently in an atmosphere of misunderstanding and misconception of the whole ritual process due to some irrelevant considerations of traditional funeral rites. Nevertheless, traditional death and burial rites have been shown to be of great relevance even to modern Africans in general and Bukusu in particular.

### 5.3. Discussion on the Hypothesis

The respondents highlighted significant insights into what death and burial rites mean to them. From the problem statement, the research’s hypothesis becomes: “The Bukusu Quakers of Western Kenya continue to perform traditional death and burial rites of purification because they believe these rites are effective in stopping the spirit of death from further harming them, something that Christian death and burial rites do not achieve.” Insights generated from the findings highlighted the way by which a deceased person becomes invested, through funeral rites, with the whole vital force that makes him or her source for his or her descendants.

This rite of passage is, indeed, the criterion of admission to the ancestral world. In this research, the hypothesis was mainly confirmed by the field research more than the literature because specific literature on the thesis hypothesis could not be found. The majority of our respondents from different age groups gave similar answers to the question at hand. For example, over sixty percent (63.3 %) of younger respondents, and fifty percent (50%) of the older ones said that Bukusu Quakers of Western Kenya continue to perform traditional death and burial rites of purification especially in Bungoma County where the research was conducted. However, the data also revealed that this was not only a concern of Bukusu Quakers, but also Bukusu Christians alike.

The findings concur with the study of Shorter (1998), Ayisi(1972) and Knox (2008) on rituals and their impact on the society. Shorter (1998) quoted Victor Tuner (1964) who observed that ritual is a gestalt,( or “configuration” of symbols) that creates a tensed unity which is considered a catharsis or a safety-valve. They also express values that cannot be verbalized. According to Ayisi (1972), rituals purposely serve like intermediaries or scarifying agents, the only means through which the profane world is brought into contact with the sacred. That is why many African people in South Sahara who are not members of the mainline Churches practice traditional rituals or ancestral cult openly (Knox 2008). This confirms Parrinder’s (1954) observation quoted by Magesa(1997) that it is impossible to grasp the meaning of the religious foundations of Africa without going through the “thought-area” occupied by the ancestors. These are the protectors of the society as well as its most feared direct critic and source of punishment, the watchdogs of the moral behavior of the individual, the family, the clan, and the entire society with which they are associated.

In short, ancestors are authority figures who maintain the norms of social action and who cause trouble when they are not obeyed, because they are aware of anything wrong occurring in the community. One of the respondents remarked by saying, “People still continue to perform traditional rituals up to date to appease and chase away the spirit of the dead in order to avoid bad hormones and curse.” He shared his experience is based the “Khulotia” rite had to be performed in order to bring his grand-father’s spirit back at home (cf. App.C.no. 21).

However, there seems to be contrasting findings on the hypothesis. There were some responses; mainly non-Quakers (41) and women (30) who disapproved of the hypothesis. As mentioned before, they pointed out that Quakers are definitely and absolutely absorbed in their faith, they believe that traditional rites are unnecessary and unholy. Once prayers are done, nothing more should be added or be performed. This concurs with O’Brien’s (2002) faith sharing when she talks about “Companions on the

Journey”. She explains the importance of the sense of community in the African context in relation with Christian spiritual life. According to her, there is a deep awareness in Africa of the need to be part of the group. Exclusion from the clan was like death. To illustrate she narrated: “A little girl who feared being alone in the dark wandered each night into her parents’ bedroom and snuggle up close to them in bed. The parents let it continue for some time, but eventually got tired of this cold little person waking them up at night. One night the mother took her back to her own room and her own bed. ‘You are not alone,’ she said. ‘Jesus is with you’. ‘I know,’ said the little girl, ‘but I want somebody with skin on’.”

For O’Brien, the main idea of the story of the little girl is that people should reject traditional rituals and rely on “Jesus” alone, as the respondents said above. This is not the opinion of everybody because it gives the impression that the process must completely destroy earlier tradition of original sources upon which new perspectives must find anchor. In my opinion, this approach does not give room for dialogue between Christianity and African Traditional Religion, but in essence the story does depict attitudes and behavior that people in the Bukusu community might adopt vis a vis death and burial rites through cultural mutation as they grow old. The issue is the relationship between Bukusu culture and Christianity. Should Bukusu continue to fear the spirit of death when they feel lonely (because of the evidence in the experience of those who have proven right this hypothesis) or they should just say: “Jesus is with us” and that will bring them security without evidence of its effectiveness. What guarantee do they have by doing so? The Church should do more to teach people that they will be safe when they choose Christian rituals. From the literature reviewed, I would say with Mbiti (1969), Ngubane (1977), Gumede (1990), and Mkhize (2008) that the understanding of mourning in African culture does not end with the funeral, there are traditional customs and rituals that need to be performed even after the burial and there is a stipulated mourning period. Social Learning views that the environment shapes, maintains and

constrains behaviors, and that people are not passive in the process; they can create and change their environments. How far could it go? In my opinion this should be the topic of religious leaders and Bukusu Quaker elders as they consider pastoral approach and accompaniment during mourning periods.

#### 5.4. Discussion on the Significance of the thesis

From the findings (cfr. Chapter 3), the large majority of respondents (84.10%) have made it clear to us that the study is relevant today. They have proven this topic relevant today due to characteristics of death and burial rite among the Bukusu. However Christian they may be, they always find themselves in confusion as they face their Church leaders when death occurs among them. In my opinion, mainstream churches seem not to facilitate that dialogue since they still vividly suppress traditional practices in favour of the Western Christian religious ideas. There is a necessity to open up and address the issues affecting Christian faith during burials today in Bungoma and Kimilili and prepare materials and opportunities for people to start assessing these rituals as they affect their spiritual life and Christian commitment. The research addresses contemporary challenges facing Bukusu Christians in general and Quakers in particular on funeral rites. In like manner, Joseph O. Okpaku(1968) observes: “Let’s dare to be African, the West has always had a pejorative attitude towards Africa, and this is self-evident.” In the Bukusu of Western Kenya, the Gospel seems to have not fully penetrated all aspects of the funeral. This confirms observations by Boros (1973). In his introduction to The Mystery of Death, he remarks that,“... if human death has no meaning, then the whole of life is nothing but emptiness... There are few happenings to which we have grown so blind as we are to death. But to be forgetful of death is to be forgetful of life, whereas thinking of one’s death is an act in which life begins once more to appear as a source of light. A man who knows death, also knows life. The converse is true, too: the man who is forgetful of death, is forgetful of life also”(vii-viii).

In like manner, one of the significant themes extracted was how the respondents described their experiences during funeral rites. They explained that immediately after a death people come together to organize for the funeral rites. In the Bukusu community, the burial of a loved one is done in accordance with tradition, however complex it may be. They also explained that different rituals have to take place in order to give last respects and to appease the spirit of the dead. For those reasons; 80% of people make sure that some traditional practices of funeral rites are performed, despite their being Christian (cf. App.C.no. 21). For some of our respondents burying their loved one in the Christian way coincides with what Boros (1973) describes as “to be forgetful of death is to be forgetful of life also.” The introduction of Christianity has provoked a change in the way people used to bury their love ones. With the influence of modernity, namely Western civilization and Christianity, this rite of passage in the African context has been undergoing continuous changes among the Bukusu in Bungoma County and it is slowly losing its original identity and its primary role as the source of the moral, socio-cultural and spiritual values of the society, as pointed out by the majority of our respondents. (cf. App.C.nos. 18, 20, 21).

In line with Temples (1953) who vividly criticizes the way white missionaries and administrators have used the Gospel message without taking into account African culture, and in accordance with the majority of our respondents who claimed that mainstream churches should find ways to accommodate some traditional rituals in order to strengthen their Christian faith, one observation was made: People practice the traditional rituals while church leaders are unaware, celebrating both tradition and Christian rituals, but at different times. The question is: Could the Bukusu be given a chance to practice both traditional and Christian rituals openly as long as their traditional rituals are compatible with Christian faith? In support to the relevance of this study, Mr. Ulala and Mr. Patrick argued that education should play a big role in addressing the change since there seems to be very little which is done today in addressing issues of

death and burial rites by church leaders. Moreover they said that a study of this kind is quite relevant today since death and burial rites are regarded as normal parts of our everyday life. It will be helpful to people in their spiritual life as they face death. Therefore, people modify traditional rituals to make it look more Christian, while the Christian aspect of the ritual seems to be superficial during the mourning period (cf. App.C.nos. 12, 18, 20, 31).

There have been contrasting insights on the relevance of this study, however. Few of our respondents (7.7 %) did not agree, and the same percentage of people did not say anything for reasons related to their education background and due to their lack of experience in the ritual process. Those who disagreed observed that the number of people who are still practicing cultural rites has reduced since Christian life and civilization have overpowered traditions.

This study is, however, a response to the question of the effectiveness of Christianity in the Bukusu worldview. In the framework of this study, the inculturation aspect of traditional death and burial rites is a focus for the bringing up of African study, holding that all issues on death and burial rites should invite the Church to review its pastoral ministry toward families who have been affected by death.

#### 5.5.1. Discussion on the Research Question One

The first research question asked: How do Bukusu Quakers understand death and its causes? Both the field research and literature showed that in the early years of the missionary work, some important matters concerning death and burial rites were not seriously examined. When the respondents described how they consider death and its causes, most of them responded this way: “In some cases, death is considered an interaction of the people with the dead person called ‘simakombe’ who goes to heaven, ‘Emakombe’. In other words, death is a passing on, a transition, a change of status, a rest, the last stage in one’s lifespan, or a journey to the ancestral land. Every individual has to go through a process of onward passing of the living to the other world known as

heaven or a change of destination from one side of life to another through traditional rituals. It is the beginning of a new life in another world.

In other cases, death is understood as a disaster, an unacceptable occurrence, an evil tragedy, a loss of life. It is caused by something evil such as misfortune, or a curse. It is also believed that the ancestral spirits have whipped or punished the family; it is brought about by evil forces seen as a bad omen that comes after one has offended the ancestors, e.g. disobedient women who failed to observe taboos and were punished, resulting to death” ( cf. App.C.nos. 1, 5, 12, 18, 20, 31).

The general views given by the respondents are that Bukusu consider death as a transition from the living world to ancestral world through traditional rituals, whether it is seen as a rest for good people or a bad omen that comes after one has offended the ancestors. This seems to concur with Bahemuka’s (1983) assertions that these traditional practices are to be done correctly; otherwise the spirits of the ancestors may cause infertility in order to block the link between the living and the dead through the bearing of children. A significant highlight was the respect for the mourning period, for death and for the dead. The lack of respect was expressed as resulting in many forms of social misfortunes. Likewise the majority indicated that Bukusu are very serious about death and burial rites, they come together and make arrangements for the burial and they make sure a cow is slaughtered for the event.

However, a few of our respondents could not answer the question due to lack of experience and other issues related to political situation of the country. Nevertheless, most of the responses concur with Clifford Geertz (1973), as cited by Huntington and Metcalf (1979), who observed that positions concerning death have always been related to the anthropology of social life. In other words, anthropology has never been able to study humans in a serious manner without considering how people died and how they were buried because death and its rituals reflects not only social values but also represents an important force in shaping them. This was expressed by some of the

respondents like Mrs Rispa and many others by saying that death is just a move to another world where people live, but in the form of spirit. Moreover, Mrs Rispa said people that continue to perform rituals in order to appease the dead spirit. She described the experience she had had about her late husband who used to come through dreams to claim for his debt until the family performs a ritual so that he could not disturb them. (cf. App.C.no. 23).

The understanding of death in the Bukusu world view resonates in the same way other people might consider death as a transition but without neglecting the fact that death can be also seen as a disruption of the social order. In this sense, I agree with Boros (1973) who observes that, “no man has direct experience of death. What we go through as we watch at someone’s death-bed is assuredly not death in its inner reality; it is only the outward aspect of death, or have been given up for dead by those about them...Death cannot be gone through from outside, reproduced, as it were, in vitro. Each one of us must accept it absolutely alone, must and can meet death only once.”(p.1). Similar findings were recorded in Durkheim’s theory as he pointed out that funeral rituals and the expression of fear and anguish in confrontation with death are part of the question of the origins and nature of religion(Huntington and Metcalf 1979).

I can therefore say that the Bukusu understanding of death and its causes is based first and foremost on the traditional point of view rather than the Christian since they feel the need to confront death with an emphasis on promoting life. Death, in this case, is put at the center of their social and moral system. Traditional funeral rites might be relevant for Bukusu and also for other ethnic communities, but the challenge is that when the body begins to decompose, life as a whole becomes impossible even people tend to preserve some particular items from the deceased such relics and artifacts, or go for seasonal reburial like in Malagasy funerals (Huntington and Metcalf 1979), obviously the person has been declared dead. But does it mean that the person is dead in the sense of being completely forgotten? The question here points to the reasons as to

why Bukusu still perform traditional rituals for the dying and for the deceased, more especially when death generates despair like the accident at Ntulele on the Narok-Nairobi highway as reported by Olajide (Daily nation, August 30, 2013, Senseless slaughter, pp. 2-5 ) is of fundamental importance to our study.

#### 5.5.2. Discussion on the Research Question Two

The second research question asked: What are the traditional rituals of purification after death and why are they performed by Bukusu Quakers? Both the insights from respondents and the literature reviewed indicate that the death-related events in Bungoma County areas are also affected by the campaign to modernize Africa, as many Africans tend to live modern life in a Western style as opposed to values that the tradition holds dear. This seems to be confirmed by Magesa (2010), highlighting that in Africa today, the campaign of modernization takes place in all aspects of the community life and it is conducted in a manner which is not familiar with an African way of life.

Magesa (2010) asserted that, “even in those rare cases where the vision, initiative, and the planning are local, that is, originating from within Africa itself, the crucial element of implementation is inevitably somehow compromised due to the fact that it is dependent on external human and financial resources” (p.112).

Moreover, issues of HIV and AIDS being one of the calamitous fates of Africa, there have been high death rates among African communities and in the Bukusu community in particular. This is confirmed by Michel S. Kamanzi sj’ (2004) statement in his article, HIV and AIDS in African, a challenge for international solidarity (‘Le SIDA en Afrique, un défi à la solidarité internationale’, la revue Laennec) as cited by Bujo&Czernt (2007). Kamanzi reported, for example, that the demographic impact of deaths caused by HIV and AIDS carriers have disastrous consequences on the economies of most countries affected and of the continent as a whole. This might have

contributed to the changing attitudes and practices towards death, and somehow respect seems to have diminished in modern funerals.

In like manner, Kilonzo and Hogan (1999) pointed out that because of the escalating death rate, some African communities are forced to abstain from traditional mourning rituals. However, there has been disparity in the respondents' opinion on this issue as one of our respondents remarked by saying, "I belong to the economic class and religious class, which made me not to have a chance, and I have never experienced one" meaning a traditional burial (cf. App.C.no. 19). This statement shows the way Bukusu have been influenced by modern life and how attitudes have changed on the traditional point of view. On the contrary, Magesa (2010) clarifies the reason as to why people still continue to go for traditional rituals. He asserted that many Africans, especially the youth, are not sure of what they stand for: tradition or modernity. This ambiguity is itself a sign which indicates that the specific African perspective about and the orientation to go with life in the African worldview, are still present in their consciousness. In the same line, most of Bukusu are aware of the reported consequences if appropriate funeral rituals are not performed, despite the fact that they live in a modern world and they are now committed to Christianity, as was reported to us by the majority of our respondents (cf. App.C.nos. 1, 2, 4, 5, 20, 21, 30). As a result, they simply modify some of the rituals in giving them a Christian aspect. The majority of our respondents (91.79%) confirmed this. They responded that they eventually do attend traditional death and burial rites. Some observed by saying that, "We attend traditional death and burial rites because we are relatives to the one who has passed away, so it is a must. We make part of their community when death occurs if people are to perform traditional death and burial rites. We first mourn to alert people, and then relatives and other family members will gather to plan for the burial. We do sacrifices depending on age, sex and rank of the person in the community. This process is collective and requires participation from all members to pay the last respects by putting soil in the grave. After burial we come for 'Lufu' to

discuss, list the wealth of the deceased, inheritance and then after two or three years we then come for a fare well-grazing and resettlement of a new house”. (cf. App.C.nos. 1, 2, 4, 5, 20, 21, 30).

In support of the majority of our respondents, I concur with G.W. Irvin (1998) cited by Magessa (2010) who disagrees with the “detraditionalization thesis”. He argues that despite the fact that the processes of detraditionalization have themselves become traditions in their own right, they have simply succeeded to modify and transform traditions into “consumer products” in the modern world. From the review of literature, Edwin Smith quoted by Bediako (1995) in his Forward to Parrinder’s book recommended to Dr Parrinder and other competent people to follow up the study of the pagan religion (African Traditional Religion) with a study of the actual religious practices of those Africans who, according to him, in various degrees of reality have become Christians. He raised questions related to Christianity in relation with African Traditional Religion unequivocally: “It is not to be expected that they have made, or can make, a complete break with the past, however much they profess to do so. What in Christianity most attracted these polytheists and how precisely did they react to it? Do preachers and teachers deliberately set themselves to relate the new religion to the old?...”(pp. 210-11).

From the few literature findings, this research question has been proven right. I am a little surprised that most of the mainstream Church leaders are scandalized and troubled about this duality (to mix traditional and Christian rituals) during funeral rites among Bukusu. But some Church leaders tend to forget that slavery, colonialism and initial missionary work had seriously damaged the dignity and pride of African inheritance and its identity to the extent of disowning cultural dimensions that Africans held dear, such as the respect of ancestral spirits, the sense of the community and other rites of passage. From Edwin’s questions, one can foresee how these traditional rituals among Bukusu could take place in circumstances surrounding death including which

categories of people are allowed to perform rituals and what is the right time to perform them, despite their being Christians.

### 5.5.3. Discussion on the Research Question Three

The third research question asked: What are the conditions and circumstances surrounding the performance of purification rituals among the Bukusu Quakers and why? In the findings as presented in table 12 (cf. Chapter 3), most of the respondents supported the statement that traditional rituals are definitely performed by Bukusu in an informal way. They also made it clear to us that there are restrictions as to who is permitted to perform rituals. Categories of people are selected by the community to direct such important events in the community.

Different responses were received to the issue of whether young men and women could possibly be given a chance to perform rituals. The majority of our respondents said that in the Bukusu culture, young men and women cannot perform traditional rituals due to the fact that women never dig graves and carry dead bodies, nor do youth with pregnant wives dig graves because none is qualified to perform Bukusu purification rites due to the belief that women are regarded as unclean and young men inexperienced.

Some few respondents, however, felt that young men and women could have been given a chance to perform rituals so that it would be more open to those who actually merit doing so. According to these respondents, some elders in the community are also compromising people who may also lead the community to a disaster as easily as young men and women may do. This contradicts what John Mbiti (1979, 119) says that the fulfillment of the funeral rites are always done meticulously in order to avoid causing any offence to the departed. For that reason, individuals (usually the children, pregnant women, or suspected witches) are not allowed to touch or come near to the corpse in case misfortune should befall them or the family. Therefore, the community takes charge of all these preparations and selects ritual leaders and elders to serve in such events. I imagine that it is very difficult for Bukusu people to allow young men and

women to perform rituals. On the moral point of view, this could sound very much awkward and disrespectful to elders in the community regardless issues of misfortunes to befall on the community.

Moreover, on the sociological point of view, Émile Durkheim( “Le suicide”,1897) as quoted by Huntington and Metcalf (1979, pp. 6-7), recognized that a community’s attitudes about death are closely connected to that society’s entire system of beliefs and ideas. Since beliefs and concepts(ideas) hold to the collective representations that unite individuals while they have simultaneously specific identities, there is a dynamic tension between the autonomy of the individual and the individual’s identification with society, to mention but a few. Therefore, the event of death is an important and challenging issue which brings up ambiguities and contradictions of human social existence and definitions.

Many respondents also reported that rituals are performed at specific times because they believe that spirits are walking and are attentive during quiet moments, especially early in the morning or late at night when they will be willing to take the sacrifice. Specific burial rites are performed according to the kind of death one has died. If it is suicide, the individual will be buried away from the homestead at night and the person is never named afterwards. Family members of the deceased will slaughter a sheep (Likhese), remove the waste (Buse) and sprinkle it in the area where the death happened. Similarly, the first person who saw the deceased is purified by the same sheep using the “Buse” to talk to the dead spirit and claim his or her non-involvement in the death of that person, and then he/or she will be paid an animal. In the case of a hanging by suicide, they also uproot that tree and burn it.

Bukusu death and burial rites seem to have some similarities with the Ancient Greek burial rites. This is confirmed by Plato (see Retief, F. P. and L. Cilliers, 2006) in the 4<sup>th</sup> century. At this time, there were legislations on funerals according to the different categories of people and to the way people died. Any uncertainty about sacred rites had

to be referred to a designated official for judgment. Special regulations and state funerals would apply to the burials of suicides, murderers and other violent criminals. For instance, executed criminals were not supposed to be buried, but they were to be casted into the sea, into gravel pits or into wells. In the case of a suicide, it was said that the right hand was to be chopped off before burial; if a person had hanged him/or herself, the rope and branch, or whatever structure the rope had been attached to had to be destroyed. In addition, their graves could not be situated on agricultural land nor could structures on graves be larger than five workers could erect in five days. Therefore, the gravestones could include only four “heroic lines of inscription” and the ekphora had to be orderly, completed outside the city walls by daybreak.

Zuesse (1979: 127-128) has likewise pointed out that a ritual sacrifice was of a great significance since it is the chief method of coming into contact with ancestors. These ancestors, however, could often communicate known sickness, sterility, or even death sometimes leading people into antisocial behaviors that are considered as acceptable in the ritual process. This is similar to the behavior of the Bukusu who go through “Khulotia,” engaging themselves in exaggerated sexual behavior. Reportedly, people dance and go around places where the deceased used to go so that they can bring him home and make him alive for the second time. Insights from some respondents indicated that they found the performance of the mourning rituals therapeutic, whereas others performed them because they feared that misfortune would befall them (cf. App.C.nos. 2, 20, 21). It appeared that some funerals are nowadays being turned into a political campaign and an advertisement of the deceased’s social identity and status. Doubtless, a funeral is the opportunity for an important statement about the deceased’s social achievement and his/or her family, while also a moment of a social support for the bereaved, but its significance is being challenged on a daily basis by modernity. This confirms what Ray (2000) says: “death becomes an occasion to define and to advertise

publicly the deceased's social identity and status, together with that of his or her family."(p. 97)

It seems evident that the community's perception of rituals is still very strong as far as the performance of the rituals is concerned today; whether people have embraced Christianity or not, they still respect the fact that young men and women cannot perform rituals in the Bukusu community. To put it simply, to allow a big role to a woman or a young man will be a great offense to the whole community and a source of possible misfortune for the people.

#### 5.5.4. Discussion on the Research Question Four

The fourth research question asked: How does the death of a community member among the Bukusu Quakers affect the way of living of close relatives and why? Flowing from the third research question, this question focused on different challenges Bukusu go through when death occurs, especially if he was the bread winner of the homestead.

Significant insights were generated from many respondents and scholars. The majority of the respondents mentioned that the main effects of death are negative, as presented in Table 04(cf. Chapter 3).This was confirmed by such scholars as Sifuna (2000), Tlba (2003), and John Mbiti (1975), to mention but a few. It would be worthwhile to note that death does not only have negative effects, but also positive ones. These consist of those attitudes and behaviors that help the community to dispatch the deceased in a peaceful way. Death always reconciles people and brings the community together as they bring their moral support and contributions to the ritual process. This seems to be more expressive among the Asante people of Ghana who consider death a celebration of life. They believe that death is the event by which one solidifies one's image of immortality as an ancestor, the manner in which one's descendants remember the deceased (Ray, 2000, p. 98).

However, the respondents from all the variables enlightened us on the negative effects of death such as children becoming orphans and family members grieving the

loss of a beloved. Sometimes, women get isolated and experience discrimination during the distribution of wealth even to the extent of losing one's life direction. As a result, many orphans are mistreated; they are forced into adulthood and fail to pursue their education. Much the same, Bukusu fully believe that the negative effects of death on family members always relate to witchcraft and misfortunes to the extent that people who are directly suspected are considered outcasts.

I agree with Tlaba (2000), respondents and many other scholars who affirmed that death being a mysterious occurrence, it is often associated with witchcraft, creating a climate of fear, ill will, and all sorts of distress in the community. For that reason, people will find ways to understand the cause of a death and the people who are responsible for it. This was confirmed by one of our respondents who commented, "When my brother went missing, before we discovered that he has passed on, drowned in the river, a day before, I was disturbed and I even talked about my brother's death. Sometimes I could just talk to myself. The same feelings happened to my young brother who was also disturbed at his place of work until we found out that our brother passed away". Today, most people think that mainstream Church leaders do not pay adequate attention to bad effects of death on the family while attending to their pastoral ministry. It is said that they fear to involve themselves into financial assistance and miss opportunities of appropriately addressing other challenges such as widow care and equal distribution of wealth during mourning periods.

I agree with many respondents and scholars such as Mbiti (1975) and Ray (2000) who noted that the way rituals are performed often give the impression to the community that something (sorcery) or somebody (witch/wizard) has caused death. In such a case, a person is blamed or accused of killing another by using magic power or all sort of witchcraft and he/or she will be forced to pay the damages, expelled or beaten to death, and a special ritual will be performed to chase away the spirit of death (pp. 17, 117-118).

Without undermining the positive effects of death, I feel that the negative effects of death on the family need serious attention. Evidence for this argument may be seen in all the expenses and complicated death and burial rites among the Bukusu. In fact, few of our respondents said that death can have positive effects depending on how the deceased relates to people. If it is an old person who passes away peacefully, this is likely to be understood as a sign of blessings. It is also important to find out if there are Christian rituals that may support Bukusu as they perform death and burial rites.

#### 5.5.5. Discussion on the Research Question Five

The fifth research question asked: Are there any Christian rituals that the Bukusu Quakers perform to purify the family members of the deceased? How are they similar or different from traditional rituals? In connection with the previous research question, this question explored the possibility for Christian rituals to be more effective among the Bukusu exploring the similarities and differences between Christian and Bukusu traditional rituals.

Many respondents reported that the practice of traditional rituals is not an option because of their Christian commitment, as it is described in Chapter 3. Besides; some respondents affirmed that performing traditional rituals is an unconscious act that one performs without questioning the outcome. However, it would be worthwhile to say something about their historical background from the early stage of Christianity up to the present time so that we can find out differences and similarities with the traditional ones.

A study of theology and spiritual anthropology reveals that early Christians took time to come up with specifically Christian responses on death rituals, managing to come up with a way of handling the bodies of the dead without fear of pollution. According to them, the purification of baptism was a permanent transformation of the body as one waits for the day of resurrection at the end of time. In fact, they could only do less to appease their dead, because they thought that the dead would less likely return as unhappy ghosts.

The proper response to death at that was supposed to be fear of both human sinfulness and God's inscrutable judgment. Non-Christians, however, did observe joyful attitudes at Christian funerals and the simplicity of the participation during the funerals in which everybody benefited equally from the Christian community, including the poorest of the poor. A non-Christian Roman would simply dump the bodies of such people in large pits far away from well preserved family tombs along the roads outside the city walls.

Another way for Christians to keep in touch with the dead was by veneration of the remains of the dead as new ways to facilitate the passage of souls and maintain communion with the dead. Those individuals in this category were people who suffered martyrdom under Roman persecution. This resulted in the cult of the Saints and changed the relationship between the living and the dead in late antiquity and the early medieval West. Therefore, the saints became a special group presented as friends, patrons, advocates, and mediators between and among people, both the living and the dead. For over five centuries, the emergence of a fully developed ritual process around death, burial, and the incorporation of souls into the otherworld became a standard for Christian Europeans until the Reformation and for Catholics until the very near present. For example, Pope Gregory the Great (590–604) was the first to introduce the practice of offering the mass as intercessory prayers to help the souls of the deceased in the afterlife. This practice was followed by that of anointing the sick in a rite of preparation for death, laying the groundwork for the sacrament of extreme unction as a ritual (Giles. J. A., 1903).

Actually, Christian death rituals changed in the transition to modernity. While Protestants got rid of many characteristic features of Christian death rituals, Catholics kept them essentially the same, at least until the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965). The fathers of Vatican II moved to restrict ritual anointing to the sick (which may not work successful today) as the symbolic power of anointing to be a rite of preparation for

death. Funeral rites seem hard to resist. On one hand, since the influence of the secularization of society in the seventeenth century on Christian death rites in Western culture, nothing has quite changed in the process. On the other hand, modern science and medicine have taught humankind how to delicately deal with death, and how to treat the sick and the dying; on the contrary, they are not able to give death the kind of meaning as it meant for medieval Christians. At that Christian rites of preparation for death offered the dying the comfort of ritual and the community at the most difficult moment in their lives. Death today is a more of a wall against which one is confronted, while for medieval Christians it was a membrane linking two communities and two worlds. Paxton, F.S. (2003) highlighted the differences in Christian death rites in the past and the modern world. He observed that death rites meant to give comfort to the dying and to his or her community are in contrast with today's rituals. Christian death rituals are performed with a simplicity that reflects the influence of a secular society. One can imagine how insecure and inadequate these rituals might look like in a Bukusu community of strong traditional beliefs of the return as unhappy ghosts (spirits of death).

From the literature reviewed and from the insights generated on the ground, I personally got the impression that most of our respondents regardless their age, gender, marital status and religion gave quick, easy and spontaneous responses to this question. It appeared to me as a sort of denial of practicing traditional rituals while they are subject to it in one way or another. This was an indication that the unrevealed answer was to come later due to the fact that the research question was challenging Christian commitment as compared to traditional death rites. This is confirmed by G.M. Tlaba(2000) who said:

“Daily stories among the people and in newspapers attest to the fact that belief in and fear of witchcraft is strong all over Africa. In spite of official prohibition of witchcraft practices by governments, primarily health care development programmes, the spread of formal educational benefits and the

condemnation by the churches of the witchcraft beliefs system, witchcraft beliefs and practices are alive and well. They are even frequently practiced under the umbrella of Christianity, while at other times they are practiced under Satanism” (p.15-16).

Equally, Placide Temples (1969) having observed this behavior during his study on Buntu philosophy, also wondered why the so-called African Christian will always go back to his/or her traditional customs when death occurs. This is, again consistent with what Simiyu told us that Bukusu have not yet changed very much in their belief in spirits of the dead. A Bukusu has always one foot (80%) in traditional beliefs and the other one in Christianity (20%). Among the Bukusu, there have been stories of people who left the church because of their traditional beliefs about death and burial such as Balunda and Baliche, to mention but two (cf. App.C.nos. 14, 16, 18). Seemingly, many scholars such as Magesa (2010, p. 113); John Mbiti (1975, p 117); Ray (2000, p. 97); Beller (2001, p. 22); are trying to echo in the sense that early traditional values and practices must not be completely wiped out in favor of Christian faith and modernity. They will always be original sources upon which new practices and social perspective should rely in a cultural mutation process.

With regard to traditional rituals as a possible process during funerals, few respondents were in favor of the idea of performing traditional rituals in case one of them dies. As said previously, this point of view can appear to be meaningless as the data shows it (cf. Chapter 3), but it is a challenge for us to find out if Christian rituals are effective enough in replacement of the traditional ones. Many scholars have written about the rites of passage to the afterlife, but they were not able to describe any Christian ritual that could bring a sense of security during burial rites among the Bukusu. Christian rituals seem too easy to perform in competition to traditional ones which seem to threaten participants if they are not performed appropriately. People are sometimes forced to perform traditional rituals, if they are disturbed by the deceased. The beliefs on death and

burial rites have got a strong impact on them as they prepare the journey of their beloved ones to the other world. I, therefore, agree with Magesa's (2010, p. 113) who says: "The issue is society and culture... The challenge facing Africa is to reconstruct culture. It means to view and review it critically in the context of changed situations"... as we are looking forward to understanding the reason as to why Bukusu Quakers still continue to refer to their traditional practices when death occurs among them in the next analysis.

#### 5.5.6. Discussion on the Research Question Six

This sixth research question asked: Why have the Bukusu Quakers continued to perform traditional rites of purification despite their being Christian? The general views got from the research findings stipulated that the majority of our respondents confirmed that there are special reasons which push Bukusu to go for traditional rituals despite their being Christians. Most of the respondents from the four variables had a similar opinion about this question. One of their unequivocal comments was delivered to us by saying: "There are some problems that Bukusu experience and they believe that the problems are caused by their ancestral spirits. So, to overcome those problems, they decide to offer sacrifices so as to provide security against the spirits; they perceive that traditional rituals are satisfactory and also believe that the dead person still remains important to them because it is only physical departure but spiritually united and they also believe that the dead communicate to them in various ways. Therefore, to avoid social disintegration, traditional rituals also are signs of identification among Bukusu communities" (cf. App.C. nos. 18, 19, 20, 21, 30, 31, 35).

In the same line, the Manianga people of Manianga District in the Bas-Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo understand death as a great misfortune that can disturb the community harmony. They either consider it as natural when it occurs in one's aging life or as the result of invisible evil powers, witchcraft called Kindonki in manianga language. They believe that God created the first man called Mahunga who was a complete being. He was living with God; God trusted in him and gave him the privilege

to manage the whole creation and God. God wanted to make “another himself”. Later on the man took the initiative of revealing secrets to other creatures; and so God was furious and withdrew from intervening directly in human affairs. Thus, man became very desperate and God realized that His departure was very painful for the man. So, he resolved to save from misery by creating death so that through it, the man can become again close to Him since death is usually a peaceful gateway (Bockie, 1993, p. 36). Moreover, Angela Morrow (2009) stated that fear of death is so common that it has stimulated several research projects and provoked interests in everyone from different categories of people such as scholars, psychologists, and religious leaders around the world. According to Morrow, some interesting findings have emerged from studying the fear of death. For example, it has been proven that women have generally shown more fear of death than men, owing to the fact that women are more likely to admit to and discuss their fears. Equally for the Bukusu, they try to face the fear and overcome it. Studies highlighted that they fear the spirits of the dead from harming them if they do not fulfill what the customs require them to do when one of them passes away. This confirmed what one of our respondents said previously that people do go for traditional rituals to avoid that misfortunes come up on them. To refuse to do some important rituals can turn into disaster on family members (cf. App.C.no. 22).

From insights highlighted by most of our respondents and from the literature review, I see that it is difficult to make people believe that choosing Christian rituals as they face death can make their life easy if Christian rituals in reality do not entrust people in controlling the effects of the spirits on them. From the historical background of Christian death rites, there are some elements in the ritual process that can be similar to what Africans do in terms of death rites as far early Christians are concerned.

Besides Mitchell (1977) in his study on African Primal Religions responded to the main question concerning the future for the primal religions as follows,

“The primal religions are dying but are still very much alive. Although they are

rapidly being supplanted as institutional religions by Islam and Christianity, the primal world view continues to be a very important part of the world view of many Africans who today recognize Allah or the Christian God as the object of their belief and religious allegiance. In this way African primal religions continue to be a living force which must be appreciated if contemporary African culture is to be understood” (p.73).

Unlike holistic biblical exhortations on fear of death (cf. Chapter Four: Literature to Research question Six), “Africans must continue to reaffirm and base their future development on their own traditional world view. And if the West is willing to listen instead of trying to impose its own values, it can learn much”, said Bockie (1993). To this end, both insights from the respondents and the literature reviewed have enlightened us and shown evidence as to why Bukusu resist in continuing their traditional practices during funerals despite their being Christians. This gives room for discussion and possibility for an inculturational solution to this matter which will be discussed in the next point.

#### 5.5.7. Discussion on the Research Question Seven

The seventh research question asked: How can dialogue be initiated between Bukusu traditional rites and Christian rituals of purification? Flowing from the previous research question, significant similarity in the answers of the respondents according to their various age, gender, marital status and religion emerged. Most of our respondents strongly recommended that both church leaders and Bukusu elders focus on their spiritual duties in accompanying people in their crucial moments, namely here mourning periods. They also said that elders and church leaders have to seriously address issues concerning traditional rituals in Bungoma County.

Without having the intention of repeating ourselves but to emphasis more on this, it obviously came out that most of our respondents argued that the Bukusu church leaders should consider some traditional rituals as part of the rites of passage to communicate the

gospel message. In other words they should incorporate traditional rituals which are compatible with Christianity, take them as a basis of evangelization, then diverge to strict Christianity customs and practices to make people avoid performing underground traditional rituals. Due to the fact that traditional rituals are part and parcel of the Bukusu, they can use traditional rituals to make the Gospel message more meaningful. Indeed, there have been some analogies between Bukusu culture and Christianity as far as moral formation is concerned to the extent that they come together if we consider the Ten Commandments.

Both Bukusu culture and Christianity condemn the act of killing a human being, a creature of God (cf. Ex 20:13; Gn4:1-16), for example. However, few of our respondents supported the idea of bringing the two together (African Traditional Religion and Christianity). They think that church leaders should simply preach the gospel without paying attention to African culture, Bukusu culture in particular. Personally, I disagree with this because our experiences during burials in Bungoma County make people think that there are always cultural elements that accompany these rituals. For example, when we attended a burial in Samoya sub location of Bungoma County, we observed that the body of the lady faced Uganda though it was a Christian burial rite which took place. This is a belief among the Bukusu that one should be buried facing the direction from which his/or her ancestors came to Kenya (Cf. Chapter 3, pp. 83-93). This practice, however, is not Christian at all, rather a traditional Bukusu burial rite.

I rather concur with the majority who suggested that there should be a sincere and mutual dialogue between the two so that Bukusu faith can be strengthen and avoid that people perform traditional rituals while church leaders are not aware of. Likewise, many scholars such as Mitchell (1977), Gehman (1989), Paul de Meester (1992), and Ryan(2000)confirmed this as they talk about the need of Christianity to integrate more and more traditional values with the work of evangelization. This reflects what one of the respondents said previously, that the church is now trying to come up with a special

pastoral care in making people believe that through the spirit of the dead God acts so that they can be saved. He remarked that the action of the church on issues of death and burial rites among Bukusu seems to be a very minimal service with poor outcomes. He wished that church leaders could be very close to the bereaved during the mourning period. He also mentioned that foreign education and values are now being over stressed so that people look more successful and consider European way of life as the best. If one makes reference to his/or her culture, he/or she looks backward and primitive, thus confusing the Bukusu of today” (cf. App.C.no. 21).

Traditional death and burial rites among Bukusu seem also to have been influenced by western-styles above all Christian rites. Likewise Bockie (1993) thinks that death is the most critical event in the community. It puts everyone in a direct confrontation with the invisible spiritual world. Curiously enough, it is also the most critical contact between Christianity and African traditional belief. In such an event, one can evaluate the role of a church leader or a pastor. Similar to insights generated from the majority of the respondents, he wrote:

“Even when a family accepts a Christian burial, the amount of time spent at the church and the ceremony (about two hours) is insignificant. It takes three days in villages and two days in cities for the traditional burial. The reason a Christian funeral is still meaningless among BaManianga as well as other African groups is that Christianity is regarded as a white man’s religion. Until Christianity changes its image in Manianga, as well as in Africa generally, the Christian pastor’s role at a death will remain insignificant”(p. 128).

Both respondents and the literature on this research question treasured the possibility of establishing dialogue between Christianity and traditional belief in the way Pope John Paul II expressed it in his exhortation that, “the adherents of African traditional religion should...be treated with great respect and esteem, and all inaccurate and disrespectful language should be avoided. For this purpose, suitable courses in African traditional

religion should be given in houses of formation for priests and religious” (p. 35), quoted by Magesa (2010). Without being too optimistic, I agree with Brown (2012) who suggests that we have to live with the complexities and consequences of a plausible dialogue between the two religions in terms of death rituals and to courageously explore new options, in this case among Bukusu of Western Kenya. And I also support the idea that we must also listen carefully to each other in our understanding of the rites of passage as a powerful means of bringing non-believers to Christ and facilitate the Gospel to cope with aspects of traditional death and burial rites.

#### 5.6.1. Discussion on Assumption One

The first assumption of the research was that Bukusu Quakers understand death as an evil spirit which has the power of destruction.

This assumption was proven right by the majority of the respondents and the literature. Although most of Bukusu consider death a condition of powerlessness especially when it is caused by killing, accidents, diseases, poisoning, witchcraft, drowning and at child birth, some others think that death is just a normal occurrence one has to go through. As mentioned earlier, for those who think death is a disaster, they said that people would always find out the cause of death through traditional means. For instance, they will consult a diviner or a witchdoctor, or they would simply perform a ritual to appease the spirit of the dead, assuming that misfortune or curse might harm them. In my opinion and from the experience on the ground, I can affirm that most Bukusu are very much attentive to the way they bury their loved ones under circumstances in which death occurs. This justifies John Mbiti’s (1975) observation that people view death in personal terms. Some see it as a monster, an animal, or a kind of spirit that never laughs. It kills, destroys, takes away and brings terror in the community, as it is said in Uganda. This is what Genesis 3,10-21 in the Bible shows that sometimes death can be the result of one’s arrogance and envy. Some people act in way that brings chaos in the community because they have somehow taken

the place of God; they mess up with everybody, they become arrogant and full of power, perhaps opening doors to false accusations, to conflict, violence and death. For instance, when Mrs. Dorcas reported about her son's death, she said, she could not understand the way her son died. He was a lonely and very hard working boy in the homestead, but to find him dead, drowned in a small river could not have been an easy occurrence for the family. Therefore, she simply connected the death of her son to family conflicts on the side of her husband; according to her these could be possibly looked at as the cause of the death of her son (cf. App.C.no. 19). This concurs with John Gunther (1959, p.78) who asserted that few Africans in their traditional setup always think that anyone ever dies a 'natural' death. They think that the deceased has been bewitched. Africans hire witch doctors to put spells on their enemies, in order to make them sick, or to avert spells put on themselves by others. Even if an African is a university graduate, he or she will always refer to a native medicine man or woman to get help both during sickness and when death occurs. In my opinion, both Mrs. Dorcas' testimony and Gunther's (1959) assertion have to be taken with a critical eye since death in the traditional setup and in the modern world have different perceptions. The way Africans used to deal with death might be different today due to several factors such as experiences in urban areas in Africa, issues of HIV and AIDS, and wars, to mention but a few. For instance, because of death caused by war and other misfortunes in today life, people can question the kind of birth they would prefer depending on the place where they are in the African continent. This justifies the question of Peter Wanyoni who is asking, "if being born in Africa is unlucky, how about being born in the DRC?" (The Standard, September 9, 2013, p.7). Like he said in his introduction,

“When one is born is a bit of a lottery, an accident of genetics, time and place.

But it is generally true that to be born in Africa is, on average, to draw a very bad hand. Africa has the shortest life expectancy in the world, the highest

number of running conflicts of any continent, the most backward social systems, the worst infrastructure and the most chaotic administrations anywhere on earth. But if being born in Africa is to be unlucky, then being born in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is to be cursed by the gods themselves”.

In one way or another Wanyoni (2003) is right to make this claim, according to a source of information which seems to say that the DRC is a place of death due to ongoing war and other social conflicts in some parts of the DRC. But this is one aspect among others of the life in Congo. It is true that the historical background of the DRC is not a pleasant one as far as politics and social life are concerned. But from the colonial period to the present moment, many things have changed, including the perception of death among people depending on the place and circumstances around death. The contrasting facts to what Wanyoni describes in his article are not to be compared to life such as in Soweto Township in South Africa or in Kibera slum in Nairobi, due to the fact that they are totally different places with different social-economic realities. But, similarly, if one could question the quality of life in Kibera slum for instance where there is no “war”, the definition of death could be the same as well as the one in the DRC. If he could have been given a chance to visit and live for a while in other parts of Congo such as Kinshasa, Lubumbashi, Likasi, Kolwezi, Mwadingusha, Kasenga, Mbuji-Mayi, to mention but a few, I am sure Wanyoni could have changed his cultural perception on the DRC and develop a different sort of reflection, giving other meanings to “death” such as rite of passage, a transition or a journey. From these insights, one can consider death as the most common enemy (in Christian life). Indeed, it is a great loss for the family when a person dies regardless of the age; they always find out the cause of death in order to perform the appropriate ritual to appease the spirit of the dead. Some respondents, especially the older ones, both Non-Quakers and Quakers argued that death is just a state of passage from a

physical to a spiritual dimension of existence. This is consistent with what Byaruhnga-Akiiki (1982) who asserted that for the Baganda dying [okufa] is a natural life transitional stage among others which is not an end in itself. But at the same time, death is considered an intruder in somebody's life. People accept it and even prepare for it the way women prepare for the birth of children (p. 61).

Despite different opinions on the understanding of death among Bukusu, death still represents a potential danger in the minds of people (Bukusu) which requires rituals in order to restore social order in an African way. Thus, it is worthwhile to look at the way Bukusu Quakers deal with death during funeral rites, choosing between traditional rituals and Christian ones.

#### 5.6.2. Discussion on Assumption Two

The second assumption of the research was that Bukusu perform traditional death and burial rituals in order to stop the spirit of death and other misfortunes destroying life among them.

Research findings and the literature findings have proven this assumption right. Most of our respondents argued that for most of the Bukusu think that the traditional rituals are a way of helping accept people deal with death and restore life in with a new start. For most of them, they always perform rituals as the tradition requires (cf. App.C.no. 26). Views that generated from most of the respondents and the literature reviewed is that despite the introduction of modernity and Christianity, African beliefs on funeral rites have not really changed due to daily negative experiences of some of the repercussions when appropriate rituals are not done. This was confirmed by Mr. Ulula that he was very much disturbed as a church leader when he experienced through a dream that his late son was complaining of being naked, and yet Mr. Ulula recalled that he did not perform a ritual in honor of his son. So, he performed the ritual and, since then, his son stopped disturbing him (cf. App. C.no. 18).

One may observe from such insights, that practices of traditional rituals during

funerals are much connected to witchcraft. People often believe that when something bad happens such as a person dies or a man loses his job that witchcraft is one of the unquestionable causes. This is similar to the Shona people of Zimbabwe, the BaManianga people, the Akamba people, the Kisii people and many others. Even though most of Bukusu live an urban lifestyle, modern life seems to have weakened traditional practices as stated by the assumption, but did not suppress them. For example, the Shona prefer western medicine to the traditional which simply relieves the symptoms of an illness rather than curing it. But they prefer to go for traditional medicine especially when the origin of the disease is unsure. Fear of supernatural forces such as witchcraft or sorcery may lead people to perform rituals for security purposes. They may follow a certain prescribed rite in order to avoid misfortune to come upon them (Cheney, P, 1990, p. 175). Bockie (1993) rightly put it that, “the belief in other causes of death does not lessen the belief Kindoki[witchcraft]. Even among highly educated BaManianga, belief in the possibility of such influences continues to exist...Belief in Kindoki is simply the art of exercising unusual powers ---that provides for the expression of fear, peace, security, anxiety, insecurity, failure and success”(41).

In the light of this explanation, death is considered a potential danger for people. The performance of rituals becomes a paradigmatic way to transform the participant into a new mode of being (James. L. Cox, 1998, p. viii). In brief, for me, the issue today is to look at the effectiveness of rituals as they are performed among the Bukusu so as to allow people to cope with life without fear and anxiety.

### 5.6.3. Discussion on Assumption Three

The third research assumption was that Purification rituals among the Bukusu are usually performed by elders early in the morning when spirits are not awake.

This assumption relates the time of day and the choice of persons to perform rituals with the effectiveness of the rituals in the Bukusu community where such rituals are done in a very serious manner. Generally, young men and women are not allowed to

performed rituals because it is a curse, an abomination for them to do it in place of elders of the community. This concurs with what the majority of our respondents said that if a young man or a woman or an old man performs traditional rituals and it results into a disaster, it might have caused death and caused the death of many people because sometimes it involves witchcraft. Moreover, the timing of the ritual confirmed that particular moments of the day such as early in the morning and late in the evening are preferred when bad people and other spirits cannot interfere with the ceremony, as it was stated by this assumption. In most of the cases, rituals are performed early in the morning, late in the evening and at night because the ancestral spirits are expected also to take part in the rituals and they are believed to roam at those times (cf. App.C.nos. 16, 18, 20, 21, 30).

However, many scholars such as Mbiti (1975), Kirwen (2008, p. 149) and others have pointed out the importance of mourning rites, the significance to the survivors, the time for of mourning rites, and mourning taboos. Ray (1976, p. 91) unequivocally put it that, "this remaking [ritual process] of man and time involves the symbolic destruction of the old and the creation of the new. It is a dual process of death and rebirth involving symbols of reversal, bisexuality, disguise, nakedness, death, humility, dirt, intoxication, and infantilism. These symbols of ritual liminality have both negative and positive connotations representing thee paradoxical situation of the womb/tomb, the betwixt and between period when people and time are both abolished and renewed". In the light of this explanation, I therefore concur with the majority of respondents who said that once people have gone through complex and complicated rituals, it becomes very difficult and even impossible to see young men and women given a chance to conduct rituals. Although this assumption was proven right by both literature and the majority of our respondents, it is worthwhile to say that many scholars, however, have not mentioned the precise time when these rituals are supposed to be performed. This may be explained in the line with limitations some have encountered in their research findings on funeral rites,

except that in this study, the minutes (cf. App. D. Synod /Diocese of Bungoma, 20.03.1997) on death and burial rites stipulates the timing based on the Bukusu culture. Some respondents mentioned in a spontaneous manner that, “during crisis and disasters; traditional rites are time consuming/unpopular, Christianity is time saving/stress free”; to my opinion, this kind of comment is an indication of the lack of attention on the part of church leaders and pastoral ministers during funeral rites. This resonates the same way with Kietin’g (2012) who said that, “unfortunately the Church in Africa and in Nairobi in particular does not ‘exploit’ this traditional communal value of family life in her pastoral approach to the contemporary challenges of family life”(p.238), in this case funeral rites among the Bukusu of Western Kenya/Bungoma County and Kimilili. Let us now see in the next analysis how death causes fear and distress among the people in the Bukusu community.

#### 5.6.4. Discussion on Assumption Four

The fourth assumption was that the death of an individual in the Bukusu community causes fear among close relatives because it pollutes life.

Many scholars and the large majority of the respondents confirmed that when a person dies in the community people sometimes revert to attitudes shaped by fear and so observe some taboos to prevent misfortunes. For instance, people fear to get close to the deceased or to take his/her belongings and other items before a cleansing ritual has been performed. As already mentioned, it is being re-emphasized now that Bukusu fear to get in touch with anything the dead person has been using or place he used to go until the rituals are performed after burial. On this take, almost all the respondents from various variables confirmed this assumption. Comments from many respondents on this issue came out saying: “families are likely to face problems if they do not respect certain rituals. Some families may be haunted by the evil spirits; some may start disturbing people in the family; the dead will come back and call them to join him wherever he is; disaster will befall on them; at time what is done is not well fulfilled then there will be

disagreements among family members; misfortunes or disasters may strike them” (cf. App.C.nos. 16, 18, 20, 21, 31).

Throughout the ancient world, including the African continent, people have looked for ways to deal with death. Each culture has chosen forms of cultural/religious activity depending on time and location. Death being considered a contamination, the only way to get rid of it was to plead for the gods’ intervention. It was mainly based on the fact that it represented a repulsive act to gods (Retief, F. P. and L. Cilliers, 2006). This is consistent with Wallace (1966, p. 236), and Lessa (1971) for whom death is always followed by rituals, religious acts that involve the sacred and secular symbols that reduce people’s anxiety to the extent that they have followed them in the prescribed way so that social relationships may be restored. For example, Bukusu usually avoid being in touch with the deceased before any ritual is performed. Many respondents said that Bukusu have a fear of death that they have inherited from their ancestors. For instance, it is believed that if one comes across a dead body before anyone else, he or she automatically carries the dead spirit and he or she is not supposed to get into contact with the rest of the people in the community until appropriate rituals are performed. This includes cases of dead people who are found dead drawn in the river or those who have committed suicide (cf. App.C.no. 5, 19, 34, 35) and relates to my own experience.

In my community (Bayeke of Katanga Province/DRC), people fear to sleep next to a dead body in the house unless there is a group of mourners around it. That is why it is very rare in the DRC and particularly in the Katanga to find people buried on their own properties unless the deceased is a foreigner. In that case, either it was really impossible to bury him at the cemetery because of the condition of the body to be carried out or it is the case of a white person. Regardless of the influence of modern lifestyle on the Bukusu, we can say that some traditional funeral rites have not been totally suppressed, especially in cases in which there is evidence that witchcraft is the cause of death; they will make sure in one way or another that prescribed rituals are performed. This concurs with

Andersson (1968) quoted by Bockie(1993) who wrote,

“If Kundu[witchcraft-substance] could be destroyed, all disease would come to an end and death itself would be put to flight. By radically and definitively forswearing all Kindoki the blacks who were now threatened with total extinction, would be able to increase and survive. Salvation had come with the Munkukusa rites. For this reason all, from infants to old people on the brink of the grave, must enter Munkukusa, in which was seen the only way to salvation from death...”(p. 59).

Any deviation from the prescribed ritual could be perceived as a sign of disrespect for the ancestors; consequently, bad luck could befall anyone who did not adhere to the stipulated practices, as Setsiba (2012) put it. The challenge seems to appear on the side of Christian rituals whereby people sometimes think they are ineffective, as opposed to traditional ones.

#### 5.6.5. Discussion on Assumption Five

The fifth assumption was that Christian death and burial rites are considered ineffective among the Bukusu because they fear a resultant insecurity.

The idea that Christian death and burial rites are ineffective has been shown to be rejected by many respondents (154), especially the younger ones, the elders, the men, the married, the Quakers and the Non-Quakers. The few of our respondents (25) who answered, “yes” from our different variables included the elders, the women, and the Quakers. Actually, there have been findings in this study that make us think that the majority who disapproved this assumption are the same who affirmed previously that people choose traditional death and burial rites in order to chase away the spirit of death. This reminds us what one of the respondents observed by saying, “A Bukusu has always one foot (80%) in tradition and the other one in Christianity (20%)”. In the light of this observation, I agree with Mr. Simuyu and Mr. Vincent who think that people pretend to be Christian while in reality they remain “Bukusu” (cf. App.C.nos. 21, 31). Christianity

has fallen again here in its own trap whereby people do not interiorize its values fully, but use it as a sign post, a façade. This, actually, is an indication that the pastoral approach to funeral is questionable to the extent that the pastoral agents seem to have portrayed themselves to their fellow Christians as “God’s grace providers” instead of being God’s servants. They, of course rejected the idea of considering Christian death and burial rites to be ineffective because their Christian perfection excludes any spiritual value in traditions considered to be demonic and sinful. Once more, this kind of attitude is due to the fact Christian perception is deemed with a western outlook. Indeed, from the literature reviewed, it came out clearly that many scholars such as Mbiti (1979), Bockie (1993), Ray (1976), Kirwen (2005), Magesa (2010) and others, were unable to confirm that Christian rituals are ineffective among the Bukusu during funeral rites, maybe because of some barriers such as time limitations in their researches or personal reasons as they carried on their research.

In my opinion, the few respondents who agreed with this assumption were very much aware of the fact that Christian rituals appear foreign to the African culture in general and to Bukusu in particular. This was confirmed by Mrs. Masinde and Mr. Makhese as they gave their points of view. First Mrs. Masinde said that people bury their dead traditionally just for the respect, as their ancestors used to do it. But with the introduction of Christianity, traditional rituals have been disappearing. On one hand, people consider others to be backward once they notice there is traditional burial going on. On the other hand, if someone ignores the tradition, he or she may end up with omen and trouble in his/or her life. Mr. Makhese also said that Bukusu who lack strong Christian faith still go for traditional rituals because it’s something they are used to and they feel that they have to do it, to avoid misfortunes coming up on them (cf. App.C.nos. 22, 24). Their arguments are that people are torn between Christianity and tradition; they tend to perform neither correctly. According to a Christian burial, a deceased person has to be buried with specific Christian rites (I Corinthians 3:16-17,

6:19).

This was stressed by the large majority of respondents (79%) who disapproved this assumption. The responses on this assumption raise up the perpetual and old conflict between African Traditional Religion and Christianity as mentioned before. To illustrate, Bukusu will certainly hesitate to bury the dead in silence with ordinary dress and only consider the view of the body as the last public act of respect to the dead just like Quakers bury their dead. (cf. Chap. 4.5.2. Literature related to Research Question Two). They will definitely find alternatives to do a proper burial according to the Bukusu custom so as to avoid misfortunes to befall on them. On the same token, all the respondents from the four variables who observed that Bukusu strive giving a satisfactory answer to both tradition and Christianity with a combination of fears: of misfortunes from ancestors and fear of the rejection by the Christian community; which reflects the “Christians by day; Africans at night” reality principle.

Until recent times, Christians generally objected to other sorts of burial such as the Bulunda clan among the Bukusu. They bury their love ones seated, a custom to which church leaders object and so refuse to carry on the funeral. This has been a cultural conflict as Christians of this clan face death. I, therefore, agree with the respondents who approved this assumption because it is obviously demonstrated that Christianity is being used to exclude other people due to their traditional practices during mourning time. I personally find it difficult to be a religion that brings salvation in the community especially when the cause of death is believed to be related to witchcraft. Without being a prophet of doom and without being too judgmental, I regret to say that it is hard to find a staunch Christian today among Bukusu with the current state of pastoral approach in family pastoral ministry as far as funeral rites are concerned.

#### 5.6.6. Discussion on Assumption Six

The fifth assumption was that Bukusu Quakers prefer traditional death and burial rites to the Christian ones because they feel content, safe and secure after performing the traditional rites.

Indeed, traditional death and burial rites have been assumed to provide security to those who perform them. This assumption of this study, however, derived from the problem statement and the research hypothesis. As confirmed by literature, many respondents, pointed out that Bukusu go for traditional rituals because they fear for the spirit of the dead to harm them if appropriate rituals are not performed. Rituals are in this sense considered as a networking system between the living and the dead while Christian rituals seem to be helpless in case of danger encountered from death. This confirmed what we mentioned earlier about the experience of some of our respondents who performed traditional rituals despite their Christian faith and commitment such as Mrs. Masika whose story is very interesting for this case, having been the first to find the body of the neighbor. As the custom requires, she had to undergo a ritual that enabled her to reintegrate with her family because it is believed that she carried the spirit of the dead. If she had refused to do that, she feared that she could have caused harm to her family, her husband being a non-Christian. A similar story came from Mr. Vincent who was also forced to perform rituals to bring back the spirit of his late daughter home despite the fact he was a Friends church leader. Many similar stories have been told by many respondents like Mr. James Kakayi and others (cf. App.C.nos. 19, 20, 30, 31, 32, 33). Indeed, most of the respondents that we met, regardless of their religion, age, marital status and education background affirmed that traditional death rituals are performed just to give the last respect to their loved ones. What sometimes misleads people is the kind of teaching they get from their pastors or church leaders. Like Mzee Otisa who remarked by saying,

“To bury an old man in the skin of a cow was a sign of wealth. This [one way of burying people] was not bad, it was just a way of paying the last respect to the

deceased to show that he was with us, he had wealth and he can still enjoy his wealth as he goes to the ancestral land. Nowadays, people do not bury the way because the 'church' is forbidding it and says that it is demonic to do so while it has nothing to do with Christian faith. It is just the way people used to do things. To me (Mzee Otisa) the 'church' has caused harm but at the same time it has helped to correct things which were not good" (cf. App.C.no. 5).

I agree with Mzee Otisi whose statement is somehow concurring with Khaemba (2009). Being himself a Muluyia, Khaemba (2009) confirms that death funeral rites are a paradox among the Luhya because they believe that even if the dying person is being cut off from human beings, but he still continues to relate with his people, kinship relations still remaining between the living and the departed, as mentioned earlier. This assumption was proven right by the available literature which outlined the rituals and practices of various ethnic groups in Africa, including the Bukusu traditional rituals performed in the event of the death of a loved one such as the slaughtering of the beast, the mourning dress, mourning period and the cleansing ceremonies in relation to the deceased. In my opinion, there is a need for the church to open up with a program that can help people evaluate their practices in the light of the Gospel message. The challenge is to begin the discussion so that Christian followers and more especially church leaders and community elders of different clans among the Bukusu may determine the most appropriate approach pastoral ministry on funeral rites. Let us finally see how dialogue can be established in different angles as to process the inculturation growth for both African Traditional Religion and Christianity in the Bukusu community.

#### 5.6.7. Discussion on Assumption Seven

The seventh research assumption was that Bukusu Quakers can deal successfully with issues of death and burial rites if they facilitate penetration of the Gospel in every aspect of traditional funerals.

This study explored the insufficiency of Christian death and burial rites and

related cultural issues of funerals among the Bukusu of Western Kenya. As said earlier, a partial understanding and misconception of African rites of passage is based on prejudices since the Gospel message, even today, is predominantly Western. Christianity was eventually accused of lacking adequate pastoral ministry capable of addressing such contemporary issues as challenges of family life in Nairobi (Kietin'g, 2012), and it is now unable to address issues of death and burial rituals among the Bukusu.

Majority of our respondents have proven the assumption that African rites of passage could possibly be integrated in the evangelization work as a way of accommodating African Traditional Religion and Christianity with each other. They were asked to choose the best alternative from the two options (a) to invoke the name of Jesus within the ritual process; (b) To perform both traditional and Christian rituals, one after another in order to achieve this inculturational goal. The majority opted for the first option, especially the men (106), married people (154), the singles (8), the women (56), the elders (60), the youngers (102) the Non-Quakers (91) and the Quakers (71), but only seventeen people (17) chose the second, with another sixteen who did not answer the question (16), as indicated in Chart 03 (cf. Chapter 3, p. 78). They actually pointed out that "if church leaders address adequately the contemporary challenges of traditional belief, people will not have doubts concerning their faith and negative beliefs and practices will be rendered. Instead, it will grow day by day. It will also create confidence in the Christians and they can take as serious truth and will believe more." Simiyu, Vincent, Otisa, David, Kakayi and many others noted, "to make traditional funerals compatible with Christian faith among Bukusu, is just to fairly integrate the procedures of death and burial rituals by emphasizing that they are just the same as the end result and they have the same funeral aspects to be encouraged" (cf. App.C.nos. 5, 16, 20, 21, 26, 27, 30) to put it in a simple way. This goes hand in hand with Waruta's answer to the question "Who do Africans say that Jesus Christ Is?" He replies that "the African response to the above question must reflect African consciousness. The efforts of the

forces of colonialism to exterminate and suppress the African religious consciousness have not succeeded, and today African people are asserting their own experience of God and their own reflection of how that God relates to them. In African religious tradition, God relates to people in concrete, experiential, and practical terms rather than in a mystical and spiritualistic manner... No ritual observance would make any sense without them.”

In my opinion, what Waruta (2005) is trying to say is that Christianity can be more effective in the traditional ritual process in Africa and among the Bukusu if it is opened to an inculturation process that requires it to utilize some rites of passage compatible to Christianity as the key element to communicate the gospel, as almost African societies and Bukusu are exposed to a global transformation. With this in mind, the study assumed that suggestions like the ‘welcome process’ of a visitor might be a great help in this study as people often expect to change their former way of life and values while demonizing all good traditional rituals and values in the name of Jesus.

However, to the second option which says: “To perform both traditional and Christian rituals, one after another”, only few respondents were in favour of this option. They said that it could help the two religions to work together and this could help people to strengthen their faith. I personally find this option not being more effective in terms of allowing dialogue, but it only giving space each religion to do its own things, provided that one does not disturb the other one. This may be the reason why people chose the first option instead of the second one which I would choose if I was asked to select one of the two options.

Indeed, insights generated from the literature review have also proven right this assumption as many scholars such as Schineller, Peter1990; Shorter, Aylward 1988; Ronzani, 2004, p.7; Gehman, 1989, p. 32; Mk28, 28; Mk16,15; Magesa (2004; 2014, pp. 123-4) and others have tried their best in their writings to follow Jesus Christ’s instruction of spreading his teachings to the ends of the earth (Mk28, 28; Mk16, 15) as Saint Paul did

for the Greeks at the Aeropagus of Athens (Acts 17:22-33). These scholars have contributed to the inculturation outlook in the African context. Their concern was mainly to address the instability of African Traditional Religion which began to decline to Christianity through the brutality of colonization. This even changed the concept of culture due to the categorization of people by colonists as “cultured” and “uncultured,” as Iteyo (2009) describes it in his philosophical interpretation on belief in the spirits of the dead in Africa. But to this end, most of the available literature findings in this study have not yet addressed issues of death and burial rites with a special attention to the extent of suggesting a way out to resolving the conflicts which people encounter during funeral rites.

In this context, I agree with what came out from the class discussion that some people might argue that traditional rituals are more effective than Christian ones, while believers who are Christian may also claim to have taken the better side in terms of death and burial rites. Whether people belong to the Bukusu community or other, they should come find a resolution in form of a cross cultural communication (Prof Waruta, class discussion, 2005). There has been great interest in interpreting African Traditional Religion (A.T.R.) in recent years, in order to establish its relationship to the Christian faith. Most of our respondents admitted that dialogue between Christianity and African Traditional Religion is necessary and has to be established so that it may create a sense of mutual appreciation of each other. This falls under the on-going process of inculturation and acknowledges that, for a particular Church, the process of inculturation is a permanent call for a change which can hardly be said to have been completely achieved. The changes that occur in the local churches are closely related to the local culture (Bukusu for instance), customs and different values are meant to be the new choices people have made for their church (Waliggo, J. M. et al (1986), *Inculturation: MEANING AND URGENCY*, p. 38). Our respondents also agreed to the suggestion that people should be given chance to invoke the name of Jesus as the savior Lubukusu for “Wele

Murumwa” during the Bukusu traditional ritual process. As Mr. Ulula and Mr. David and many others shared, people should be given a space in the traditional ritual process to choose what is compatible with the Christian faith (cf. App.C.nos. 16, 18, 29, 30, 31).

The conclusion and recommendations on death and burial rites among Bukusu Quakers of Western Kenya, relates to Shorter (1995) says that, “(for) the mystery of Christ to become credible in contemporary Africa, it must appeal to the African religious imagination and must avoid the cultural-religious ambiguity in which the continent today finds itself.” This, I believe can help people to perceive death and burial rites as parts of a process that enables the person to "maintain integrity of self" as he or she gets into a new stage of life without fear. As has been stated, in a more special way, funeral rites in the African context may function as comfort and support of the bereaved and help for them to cope with the impact of the loss of a loved one.

#### 5.7. Discussion on the Limitations and Scope

We conducted the research among Bukusu of Western Kenya especially within Bungoma County. However, these two locations have an important representation of Bukusu cultural inheritance as well as the presence of mainstream churches including revival churches. Most of the Quaker Church followers found in these two locations are basically identified according to two quarter meetings in Bungoma County. Bungoma, however, has eight strong areas of Quakers namely Bukembe, Kimukuyu, Marobo, Bungoma town, Namuyasha, Lyanda, Bumola and Nageni quarterly meetings; whereas Kimilili has only one called the Kamusinga quarterly meeting. We distributed the questionnaires and carried oral interviews in the following places: in Bungoma County we went to Kitinda, Musikoma, Samoya, Kibabi, Nashiyanda, Mamasha, Marobo, Mayandja, Kabula, Kimwanga, Shiyanda, Sangalo, Siaka village, Kanduyi, Mateka, Namamuka, Kimatuni, and Bungoma town. We finally went to Temba temba and Mukholi village, plus Kimilili town.

The research focused on mainly on death and burial rites among the Bukusu in

general with a special attention on Quakers of Western Kenya. The research was mainly conducted through individual and group oral interviews among respondents of different ages, marital status, religion and gender. Two hundred questionnaires were distributed, but only one hundred and sixty (160) came back with sufficient responses with various opinions on various questions. With regard to the topic of study, namely Death and Burial Rites among Bukusu Quakers of Bungoma County in Western Kenya; the research noted that most of the respondents who live in Bungoma County did participate more actively but some did not, such as in Kimilili region. This was due to the distance and the means of transportation used in this research, which were sometimes very challenging in reaching the people and also in terms of education background.

Among many blessings received on the field while meeting the people, the researcher got an opportunity to learn and practice basic knowledge of “Lubukusu” language in order to facilitate communication with such greetings and some proverbs in Lubukusu. This was a technique which worked very well and helped to get good information from the people we met. However, the main languages used throughout the research were Kiswahili and English. As mentioned before, all the people contacted either personally or by phone call for the interviews responded positively.

There were also many opportunities in Kimilili with oral interviews, where we generally distributed questionnaires due to the distance and troubles around elections. Eventually, there have been additional spontaneous contacts throughout the writing of the thesis so as to confirm and to clarify some information. In short, we did not have many difficulties during the field work except that general elections did affect the collection of the data at the end of our field work; especially collecting back the questionnaires was very challenging.

As mentioned before, “Bungoma County has an interesting Bukusu cultural heritage about which we got an opportunity of learning from it. I had a wonderful time to share with some elders of the Bukusu community worries about the new generation

which faced with a lot of Western influence and outlook, which in one way or another are threats to the Bukusu cultural values. Eventually, the story became at one point the same and so unique when different people from the Bukusu were talking about death and burial rites (cf.3.1).” This was a formative experience for both the researcher and the field assistant, which we wish it could to be a little bit longer than it was.

### 5.8. Summary and Conclusions

This study explored, presented, discussed and analyzed the literature and the field findings related to Bukusu traditional funeral rites in this 21st Century.

Insights generated from the field research and from the literature reviewed as presented respectively in the third and the fourth chapter, the conclusion leads to the conclusion that Christianity in its early missionary work had worked in order to suppress African traditional beliefs and values in favor of the Christian ones. Thus, the pastoral concern was mainly to convert “the Black” to the new religion. The whole missionary work, however, despite the wonderful beatitudes it carried within its doctrine was very much influenced by Western culture. To the surprise of some scholars and other theologians of that time, Christianity was not fully interiorized by the neophytes (Schreiter, Faces of Jesus in Africa1991, p. 56).

The respondents’ understanding of death and burial rites in the African context has somehow been misunderstood by most of those African church leaders today who have embraced Christianity with a Western cultural perception. Families are being told that they should get rid of ‘those ancestral practices’ and rely only on the Christian ones. This was the case of one of the pastor who shared with us that he was dealing with the burial of the parent of one of his church members who belonged to the Balunda clan among the Bukusu. The pastor was very delighted and happy to say that he succeeded in convincing the family to bury their love one in another position rather than seated because Bulunda have the custom of burying their dead people seated whether the person is a Christian or not (cf. App.C.no. 25).

Indeed, some churches have tried to deal with issues of death and burial rites among the Bukusu in general and Bukusu Quakers in particular. Unfortunately, it is just a small element as much as pastoral ministry is on the agenda. At the end of this study, the research concludes that traditional rituals are not disappearing completely as many might think of it; it is just taking another form in an inculturation process as had been demonstrated courageously by some church leaders such as Archbishop Wambugu and Pastor Muriu of the AIPCA in order to promote the life of people. A ritual, being a specific action or activity, has also a psychotherapy role which consists in providing for moral support and spiritual guidance as one renews his social relationships with people and the ancestral spirits. To some extent, they affirm and strengthen social support and comfort to the bereaved and at the same time allow the bereaved to let them go. Some African indigenous churches have learned to do this and have highlighted the supportive role of the community in the event of death of a family member, from a religious perspective (Selepe and Edwards, 2008). Many respondents expressed that they always feel part and parcel of the living dead by performing the rituals. Thus, the attempt of some church leaders to totally suppress them has caused many conflicts in some churches. To them, it looks disrespectful vis a vis their ancestral spirits. In other circumstances, people will wait until the pastor finishes his Christian rituals before proceeding with the traditional ones. The other challenge that these rituals encounter is that they are diminishing due to the current socio-economic demands to the point that some Bukusu today feel like combining them with the Christian ones. It is obviously becoming an ambiguous situation in terms of adequate pastoral ministry partly because of a fear of the spirit of the dead harming them and partly because people need to avoid being regarded as backward when they openly go for traditional rituals.

Admittedly most of the scholars, both African and non-African, and most of the respondents supported the idea of the necessity of a dialogue between African Traditional Religion and Christianity in order to create an environment to allow people

the freedom to continue with their cultural practices in as much as they are compatible to Christianity, such as invoking the name of Jesus in the ritual process as many wished. In doing so, the Christian faith of the Bukusu will be strengthened. Maybe they will later assess and put aside the unnecessary rituals depending on the times and their needs.

#### 5.9. Recommendations for the Reader

Rites of passage are diverse, and are found throughout many cultures around the world. However, in the whole African continent, from Bamako to Botswana, from Cairo to Cape Town, from Dakar to Dar es Salaam and from Morocco to Mombasa, the rites of passage denote rituals that mark the transitional phase between childhood and full inclusion into a tribe or social group.

Many western societal rituals may look like rites of passage but miss some of the important structural and functional components such as initiation in the African context. But in many Native and African-American communities, traditional Rites of Passage programs are conducted by community-based organizations such as Man Up Global (The Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, 2013). Death and burial rituals being one of them, they have been conducted mainly in the family context. As everyone knows, family in Africa and among the Bukusu is the key of the individual's social development. Interesting enough rituals play the role of fostering and modeling one's identity within the family.

However, funeral rites seem to be one of the parts of rites of passage that have not yet been penetrated by the gospel message. It is at this particular moment that Africans are said to be Africans because, even if they are Christians, they will always behave as "pagans", to use the word of some Western theologians as they identified Africans. Conflicts have arisen in the community as people are confronted by the modern lifestyle and to the Western Christian perception of the family. The problem of individualistic pastoral approach to family focusing solely on nuclear family fails to address adequately contemporary challenges and changes (Kanyadago, 1991, p. 167).

This problem also relates to a concern for death and burial rites among Bukusu Quakers of Bungoma County in Western Kenya. With regard to this issue, many respondents confirmed that there have been some weakness and misunderstanding of Bukusu funeral rites on the part of church leaders both Africans and non-Africans. Without undermining efforts to eradicate evil spirits (witchcraft) in the process and to improve life in the community, we also notice that some church ministers, for the lack of appropriate training, bring confusion and mislead people.

In order to improve the Church's pastoral care and to strengthen people's faith, the study suggests the following recommendations: 1) Pastoral Ministry in Funeral Rituals (PMFR): The hypothesis of this study was confirmed by many respondents as to say that Bukusu Quakers continue to perform traditional death and burial rites because they believe these rites are effective in stopping the spirit of death from further harming them, something Christian death and burial rites does not achieve.

The research showed that, regardless of people's expressed commitment to Christianity, they continue to go for traditional rites when death occurs among them. Things that they used to practice openly are now being done in secret, as was the case of the death of one "omukumba"(a barren woman) who died recently in Kabula parish. According to the custom, her coffin was supposed to be taken through another door than the main one. So, because of fear of the spirit of the dead, her relatives had to dig a small symbolic hole so that the spirit could pass through it. At the same time, the bereaved were afraid of being suspended by the parish priest if they performed the act publically (cf. App.C.no. 21). In that sense, church leaders could have played a significant role in the ritual process by assisting people to meaningfully inculturate the ritual by inserting the name of Jesus in place of anything that involves evil practice in the ritual. As some scholars such as Waruta (Schreiter, Faces of Jesus in Africa, 1991, p. 56) and Magesa (2004, p. 25) noted that, "A religion without a creed, definite structure, or definite organizational forms finds its expression and impact on its visible symbols such as its

rituals and religious personages... It was generally clear from the responses that most educated Christians were convinced that it was only through dialogue that the church officials could determine how the life of faith could be improved and inculturated”.

Pastoral Ministry in funeral rituals would eventually mean inculturated funeral ministry among Quakers to help people move to another stage of their lives. Traditional rites of passage especially funeral rites with all their cultural rich backgrounds should be utilized by the Church to ensure support for the bereaved, both from ancestors and the spirits of God, namely Jesus, when people suffer from the loss of a loved one. Pastoral ministry for people during times of mourning is not a new invention of inculturation around the world. For example, the “kukusa” rite as Bockie (1993, p. 57-61) explains it, is founded from a personal Christian experience of death associated to witchcraft as an attempt to Christianize traditional belief and practice. The “kukusa” rite was started in the Democratic Republic of Congo through the mi-1950s by an unidentified individual believed to be a Christian. It consists of smearing oneself with mud from the crossed hole as a sign of guilt and then confessing one’s evil deeds. To go through this rite means somebody has confessed and purified himself, cleansed, in order to be born again. This stands for what the verb “kukusa” in Kikongo means.

However, the best way of inculturating funeral rituals is the presence of church officials in the rituals because this is a moment where people want to perform their most crucial duties as the last respects to the departed. This was confirmed by one of our respondents who observed by saying, “ (people would benefit)...if there were church leaders to come to a burial place and let the people listen to them in the evening and try to explain to them the importance of traditional rituals in relation to Christianity. Unfortunately the church believes that things are (being) done, but while they are not in reality.” Many others claimed church leaders are always absent when their Christians go through difficulties during mourning periods (cf. App.C.nos. 21, 26, 20, 30). Without neglecting the fact that people are now facing other sorts of social transformation as such

modernity and all its western outlook, some people might find this outdated; this is however quite understandable because of the missionary attitudes towards traditional rituals. In this case, the church is called to revise its pastoral ministry in order to consider the Christian concern as the core of the Gospel, in this case funeral rites issues among the Bukusu Quakers of Bungoma County in Western Kenya. This finally concurs with the conceptualization of inculturation which goes hand to hand with the redefinition and reformation of “the structure of ministry in order to promote collective and communion responsibility for the evangelizing mission of the Church”(Orobator, 2008, p. 88). In Magesa’s (2004, p.37) words, “the implication of this [inculturation is incarnation and incarnation is inculturation] is that up to now African culture has been like something that has had no flesh in the church.” At long last, the aim of church leaders in this perspective is to create ways to make Christianity an indigenous faith in order to facilitate that “the Word of God enters the people’s lives so that they practice it in their everyday life,” as Magesa (2004) reports quoting Bishop Methodius Kilaini.

2) Church Inheritance Pastoral Ministry: One on one interviews showed that the church’s action is limited to the funeral rites with no follow up with the bereaved, especially the widows/widowers and the orphans. The study recommends that Quaker church leaders and all Christians alike care for those who have lost loved ones to death. This concurs with the responses which came from respondents as Magesa (2004) reports, “The responses indicated a view of Jesus tending toward this perception, that Jesus held a holistic view of life for all of humanity. Accordingly, Christians should follow the example of Christ, who cared for the physical, psychological and spiritual needs of his followers: the needy, the sick, the poor and the sinners” (p. 29-30). The apostle James (1:27) made it all seem so simple: “Religion that is pure and undefiled before our God and Father is this: care for orphans and widows in their affliction and to keep oneself unstained from the world.” However, when St. James instructed the Christian faithful to care for orphans and widows, he was not just addressing church leaders. He was

addressing all Christians in all ages, meaning it is every Christian's responsibility to care for those grieving the death of a loved one. But what St. James could not know was how new compound old needs in 21st-century Bungoma County as needs would part of the African continent. Christians, especially church leaders they would tell that honoring that command is not so easy and simple as it may sound. In fact, this happens to be one of the Church's more difficult pastoral challenges. That is why the study recommends a social welfare with common fund box in order to honor some of the needs of today that the bereaved may encounter. This is a concrete way to be more effective as a church in decision making as the family face challenges during the inheritance.

3) Formation of Pastoral church ministers: Apart from the mainstream churches' formation programs on theology and philosophy, there are many other churches which do not provide a specific program to form their pastoral agents. Very few of them are formed and most of these formation programs have a western outlook, including those of the mainstream churches in general and the Quakers in particular. Many respondents confirmed this fact, like Mr. Nangendo who observed, "Bukusu respect very much the last will of the deceased whether he/or she is a Christian or not. But nowadays some pastors have gone too far. They have started to tell people to suppress even what belongs to the tradition and customs of the Bukusu which are good for the family," as Khaemba (2009) noted (cf. App.C.nos. 9, 14). This study recommends that churches organize plenaries, conferences and workshops in the major and senior seminaries, for example and in other protestant churches on the traditional African beliefs and practice. This education can help pastoral agents to get a new approach to the reality and the need today. Inviting scholars and other thinkers in African studies from different Universities and colleges into the local churches can teach the pastoral ministers methodologies and different approaches to a dialogue between African Traditional Religion and Christianity, using simple words to make pastoral ministers understand traditional funeral rites in relation to Christianity.

### 5.10. Recommendations for further Study

Inasmuch as people access to new ways of thinking, of worshiping, of living, and of behaving; death and burial rites among Bukusu Quakers in Bungoma County need further study when challenges and changes occur in traditional their funeral rites.

The study further recommends that studies should be carried out to understand the meaning in the funeral rituals in the modern Africa society. Research is also needed on the social impact of loss. Formerly, the widowed had time and rituals for grieving and mourning; the modern life style increases the need for a grieving spouse to socialize as soon as possible after the death. As we mentioned before, one of the challenges on funeral rituals is that western education and values are over stressed in order for the bereaved to look more successful because many people think that the European way of life is the best. This results in the banishment of important exterior traditional signs of mourning, thus depriving people of the small routines that once helped the bereaved to navigate their grief. It seems that they tend to forget about the departed.

A follow-up study is recommended on the effectiveness of the Christian participation in the funeral rites as a coping mechanism to strengthen family relationships and the faith in this modern Africa among the Bukusu of Western Kenya. This will help the church to evaluate its pastoral ministry to those who have lost a loved one and to adequately address changes and challenges facing the Bukusu through the effects of globalization. There is also a need to follow-up a study on the Bukusu's experiences in townships of the traditional mourning rituals and their meanings in the rural areas and towns in Kenya. In other words, a comparative study should be undertaken on the perceptions of funeral rituals and adherence to traditional bereavement practices between Bukusu of Western Kenya who live in towns far away from their village and those who still live in these rural villages. Based on the findings of this study regarding their fear of the spirit of death, a follow up study could explore the relationship between HIV and AIDS and witchcraft due to possible accusations in dealing with the

bereaved by the other party. A study of this kind would highlight the relationship between funeral rituals and increased psychological problems or unfinished grief caused by stressful mourning practices as did the study of mourning practices by Kilonzo & Hogan (1999).

A positive response to these recommendations can be a stepping stone in the work of bringing the Gospel to resonate God's graces among His people as they move from one stage to another of their life. In short, as Kakayi affirmed (cf. App.C.no. 20), "the Church should open up to address these issues, bring the reason and let people by themselves start questioning these rituals and say which are incompatible with the Christian faith."

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Appendix A

Questionnaire A: Self-administered Questions

Greetings to you! I am Zacharie Kyungu Kolala, a student of Maryknoll Institute of African Studies at Tangaza College, Nairobi. I am carrying out a research on Death and Burial rites especially in Kimilili and Bungoma. This research is a partial fulfilment of the requirement for a degree of Master of Arts in African Studies. I will be very grateful if you answer the following questions. The information you provide will be analyzed and used anonymously and only for the purpose of this thesis. Please tick and/or give your view as appropriate.

Code for the 7 types of Questions

D: Descriptive      F: Functional      S: Structural    H: Hypothetical,

C: Contrast      I: Incident      P: Personal

Questions related to Limitations and Scope

1. Parish: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Religion: \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_
3. Religious status: Lay: \_\_\_\_\_      Church leader \_\_\_\_\_
4. Gender: Male \_\_\_\_\_      Female \_\_\_\_\_
5. Age: \_\_\_\_\_
6. Marital status: Married \_\_\_\_\_ Marriage yet to regularized \_\_\_\_\_, Single \_\_\_\_\_
7. Academic qualification: Primary \_\_\_\_\_, Secondary \_\_\_\_\_, Undergraduate \_\_\_\_\_, Graduate \_\_\_\_\_, Post graduate \_\_\_\_\_
8. Employment status: Employed: \_\_\_\_\_, Self Employed \_\_\_\_\_ Unemployed \_\_\_\_\_

Questions related to Thesis Topic

9. How would you describe death with regard to the Bukusu worldview?

(D) \_\_\_\_\_  
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10. If death is associated with disaster, how would you define death and burial rites in your ethnic community?(H).

(D)\_\_\_\_\_

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11. Do you consider death and burial rites relevant in your ethnic community?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ (P)

Kindly explain:

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12. If traditional death and burial rites could not be relevant today, which challenges would these rites face in Kimilili and Bungoma?(H)

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Questions related to Problem Statement

13. Did the first missionaries consider African cultures in the process of evangelization?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ (P)

Kindly explain:

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14. If someone very close to you dies, would you perform traditional death and burial rites despite your Christian faith? (H)? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Kindly explain:

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15. What would you do if one of your relatives refuses to fulfil death and burial traditional rites because he is a Christian? (H)

Kindly explain:

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Questions related to Hypothesis

16. Do Bukusu Quakers continue to perform traditional death and burial rites of purification and why?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ (S)

If yes kindly explain:

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If no, why?

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17. Why would you rather prefer traditional rituals to the Christian ones?(H).Kindly explain:

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18. Is there a way of having Christian rituals which may have the same effects as the traditional rituals among the Bukusu? Yes\_\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_\_ (F)

Kindly explain:

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Questions related to Significance of the Thesis

19. Will this study help Bukusu Quakers Church leaders address contemporary challenges in regard to death and burial rites in Kimilili and Bungoma today? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_(H)

a). If yes, please explain how:

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b). If no, kindly explain:

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20. How would you use traditional death and burial rites of passage as communicators of the Gospel message within Kimilili and Bungoma?(H)

Kindly explain:

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21. Is this study on death and burial rites among the Bukusu relevant today?

Yes\_\_\_\_No\_\_\_\_ (P)

Kindly explain:

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Questions related to Research Question One

22. What do Bukusu do the day of the death of one of them occurs?(F)

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Questions related to Research Question Two

23. Do you personally attend traditional death and burial rites in your ethnic community?

(P)

a). If Yes, please explain why

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b). If No, please explain

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c) Briefly describe the ritual process before and after death!(D)

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1. Do you personally prefer traditional death and burial rites to Christian ones?

Yes\_\_\_\_\_, No\_\_\_\_\_(P)

Kindly explain why

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2. As a Bukusu and a Christian, which kind of rituals would you wish people to perform upon your demise?

(P)\_\_\_\_\_

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Questions related to Research Question Three

3. What if young men and women are given a chance to perform rituals; would the purification rite be legitimate?(H) Kindly

explain\_\_\_\_\_

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4. What rituals do the Bukusu perform when somebody commits suicide?

(D)\_\_\_\_\_

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Questions related to Research Question Four

24. What are the effects of death on family life? Positive\_\_\_\_ Negative\_\_\_\_(P)

a). If there are positive effects kindly list them:

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b). If there are any negative effects, kindly list them:

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25. Can death contribute to destroying family life?If yes, kindly explain how (P)

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If no, kindly explain

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Questions related to Research Question Five

26. If your close relative who is a Christian dies, the pastor would come and perform the Christian rites. Would you perform the traditional rites after he has gone? (S)

a). If Yes, kindly explain

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b). If No, kindly explain

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27. Do Church leaders especially in your area assist families which lose a member of the family? Yes\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_ (F)

a). If Yes, kindly explain how

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b) If No, please explain why?

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Questions related to Research Question Six

28. If Bukusu Quakers believed there are satisfactory results in performing Christian rituals, would people go for the traditional ones? If yes, kindly explain:

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If no, kindly explain

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29. Are there special reasons which push Bukusu to go for traditional rituals despite their being Christians? Yes \_\_\_\_\_, No \_\_\_\_\_(F)

If Yes, kindly list some:

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Questions related to Research Question Seven

30. What should missionaries have done to address the issue of death and burial rites?  
(H)

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31. Should Bukusu Church leaders consider traditional rituals as part of the rites of passage to communicate the Gospel message? (D)Yes\_\_\_\_No\_\_\_\_

If yes, kindly explain:

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If no, kindly explain

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Questions related to Assumption One

32. Do you agree that death is a condition of complete devastation and powerlessness among the Bukusu? (P).

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33. How do Bukusu Christians consider death and its causes? (H)

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Questions related to Assumption Two

34. Would you say that the main purpose of performing traditional rituals is to chase away the spirit of death and other misfortunes from destroying life among people?(H).

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35. What are the challenges facing Bukusu today when they do traditional rituals?

(D)

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Questions related to Assumption Three

36. How are the rituals performed in the traditional way different from the Christian way? (F)

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37. What is the right moment for rituals to be performed and why? Kindly explain. (H)

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Questions related to Assumption Four

38. What would happen to family members if they did not respect the will of the deceased? (D)

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39. How could the death of a community member change the way of living of people in the family or community? (H) Yes\_\_\_\_\_No\_\_\_\_\_

Kindly explain

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Questions related to Assumption Five

40. Do you consider Christian death and burial rites ineffective in your ethnic community? Yes\_\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_\_ (P)

Kindly explain

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41. Do people wish that Christian death and burial rites were effective in your ethnic community or do they simply go for the traditional way? (H)

Please explain:

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Questions related to Assumption Six

42. Does the Church sufficiently address the challenges around death and burial rites in Kimilili and Bungoma today? Yes\_\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_\_

Please explain:

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Questions related to Assumption Seven

43. Would the Christian faith of Bukusu Quakers be strengthened if church leaders addressed the contemporary challenges of traditional beliefs in Kimilili and Bungoma today? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_(H)

a). If yes, please explain how:

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b). If F kindly explain:

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44. How can the traditional funerals be compatible with Christian faith among Bukusu Quakers?(H)\_\_\_\_\_

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45. Which of the following two options would enable dialogue between tradition and Christianity in terms of death and burial rites among the Bukusu? (H)

- a) To invoke the name of Jesus in the ritual process
- b) To perform both traditional and Christian rituals, one after another.

Please explain

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Appendix B

Questionnaires B: Oral Interviews

The same questions as those on the self-administrated questionnaire will be used during oral interviews. These questions are as follows:

Questions related to Limitations and Scope

1. Church: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Religion: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Age: \_\_\_\_\_
4. Marital status: \_\_\_\_\_
5. Academic qualification: \_\_\_\_\_
6. Employment Status: \_\_\_\_\_

Questions related to Thesis Topic

7. What is the importance of traditional death and burial rituals with regard to the Bukusu worldview? (D)
8. Do we still have people among the Bukusu who continue to perform traditional death and burial rites? (D)

Questions related to Problem Statement

9. What are the contemporary challenges facing death and burial rites today in Kimilili and Bungoma? (S)
10. Would it be a problem to bury a Bukusu Quaker in a Christian way?(H)

Questions related to Hypothesis

11. Do Bukusu Quakers continue to perform traditional death and burial rites of purification after the pastor has gone away? (P)
12. Do Bukusu feel contented, secure, and safe after performing traditional death and burial rites? (S)

Questions related to Significance of the Thesis

13. Can traditional service during death and burial rites contribute to using rites of passage as communicators of the Gospel message in Kimilili and Bungoma? (S)

14. Is this study on death and burial rites among the Bukusu relevant today?

Questions related to Research Question One

15. What would burial rites look like if the first missionaries addressed them in their evangelisation process? (H)

16. Are there bad effects of death if people do not perform appropriate ceremonies among the Bukusu? (S) If yes, give examples.

Questions related to Research Question Two

17. Are traditional death and burial rites still relevant today? (D)

18. Can you give examples of different kinds of rituals you have attended? (P)

Questions related to Research Question Three

19. What would people say if young men and women were allowed to perform traditional rituals?(H)

Questions related to Research Question Four

20. What would effects of death be on family life if the bereaved refuse to fulfil the traditional rituals? (P)

Questions related to Research Question Five

21. What would church leaders recommend to their followers in terms of death and burials?(H)

Questions related to Research Question Six

22. Do you think the Bukusu continue to perform traditional rituals out of fear or is it because they are not mature in the Christian faith?(H)

23. Are there special reasons which push Bukusu to go for traditional rituals despite their being Christians?(F)

Questions related to Research Question Seven

24. Is it possible for Christian death and burial rites to be performed in the traditional way without being biased to one another? (P)

25. If traditionalists were open to including some Christian rituals in the traditional ones, would this make people secure and content?(H)

Questions related to Assumption One

26. Is death a condition of complete devastation and powerlessness among the Bukusu? (P).

Questions related to Assumption Two

27. Do the Bukusu perform traditional death and burial rituals and sacrifices in order to stop the spirit of death and other misfortunes from destroying life among them? (P).

Questions related to Assumption Three

28. Why is it forbidden for a young man or woman to perform traditional rituals? (H)

29. Do you see a relationship between the timing of the rituals and the spirits?(C)

Questions related to Assumption Four

30. Does the death of a community member affect positively or negatively the way of living of people in the family or community? (H)

31. What would happen to somebody who refuses to fulfil traditional rituals?(H)

Questions related to Assumption Five

32. How can Christian death and burial rites be made effective in your ethnic community? (H).

Questions related to Assumption Six

33. As a Bukusu Christian, do you prefer traditional death and burial rites to the Christian ones? (P)

Questions related to Assumption Seven

34. How can aspects of traditional funerals be penetrated by the Gospel among the Bukusu? (H)

35. Can the name of Jesus be introduced in the traditional ritual process, with Jesus being mentioned as part of the ancestral spirits among the Bukusu?(S)
36. Which of the following two options would enable dialogue between tradition and Christianity in terms of death and burial rites among the Bukusu? (H)
- a) To invoke the name of Jesus in the ritual process
  - b) To do both traditional rituals and Christian ritual, one after another, please explain!

## Appendix C

### Field Research Interviews

1. 18/02/2013, in Bungoma, at Kitinda area. To attend a burial of Magrette Wafula in order to understand burial rites among Bukusu.
2. 19/02/2013, at Musikoma, in Bungoma County. To interview Mzee Wekesa, Naraja and Wamalwa on their understanding of death and burial rite among Bukusu, particularly Bukusu Quakers.
3. 19/02/2013, at Samoya, In Bungoma County. To interview Mzee David on the understanding of death and burial rites among the Bukusu.
4. 21/02/2013, at Mayanja, Bungoma County. To attend a burial in order to understand burial rites among Bukusu.
5. 23/02/2013, at Kitinda area, Bungoma County. To interview Mzee Otisa a 85 years old man on different traditional death and burial rites among the Bukusu.
6. 23/02/2013, at Sangalo, Bungoma County. To interview Mr. Anzeli on different traditional death and burial rites among the Bukusu.
7. 23/02/2013, at Musikoma area, Bungoma County. To interview Mama Alice on different traditional death and burial rites among the Bukusu.
8. 24/02/2013, at Kimwanga, Bungoma County. To interview Mzee Mulongo a 72 years and Mzee Mukongo a 89 years old man, on whether Bukusu Quakers still go for traditional death and burial rites.
9. 26/02/2013, at Siyanda area, Bungoma. To interview Mzee Nangendo on different traditional death and burial rites among the Bukusu and on whether Bukusu Quakers still go for traditional death and burial rites.
10. 28/02/2013, at Samoya, Bungoma County. To attend a burial of a sub-chief in order to understand burial rites among Bukusu especially the position of the grave.

11. 2/03/2013, at St. Peter Parish, Sangalo area; Bungoma County. To interview Mzee Onoratus and Gabriel on different traditional death and burial rites among the Bukusu and on whether Bukusu Quakers still go for traditional death and burial rites.
12. 2/03/2013, at Kibachege, Kimilili location. To interview Mrs. Florence on the relevance of the study and on whether Bukusu Quakers still go for traditional death and burial rites.
13. 6/03/2013, at kanduyi, Bungoma County. To interview Mzee Patrick a 67 years old man on different traditional death and burial rites among the Bukusu and on whether Bukusu Quakers still go for traditional death and burial rites.
14. 8/03/2013, at kanduyi, Bungoma County. To interview Mzee Leonard a 73 years old man on different traditional death and burial rites among the Bukusu and on whether Bukusu Quakers still go for traditional death and burial rites.
15. 13/03/2013, at Siaka village, Sangalo area, Bungoma County. To interview Mzee Wanami on whether church leaders address adequately issues of traditional death and burial rites among the Bukusu and on whether Bukusu Quakers still go for traditional death and burial rites.
16. 14/03/2013, at Siaka village, Sangalo area, Bungoma County. To interview Mrs. Namaswa on traditional death and burial rites among the Bukusu and on whether Bukusu Quakers still go for traditional death and burial rites.
17. 14/03/2013, at Siaka village, Sangalo area, Bungoma County. To interview Mzee. David on how people used to bury their dead and on whether Bukusu Quakers still go for traditional death and burial rites.
18. 16/03/2013, at Musikoma, Bungoma County. To interview Lucy on how death and burial rites are performed currently and whether Bukusu still go for traditional death and burial rites. To attend a burial of Mrs. Maloba at Samoya, Bungoma County in order to understand burial rites among Bukusu especially the position of the grave.

19. 19/03/2013, at Kimilili town. To interview Mr. Ulula a 66 years old man on how death and burial rites are performed currently and whether Bukusu still go for traditional death and burial rites.
20. 20/03/2013, at Musikoma, Bungoma County. To interview Mrs. Dorcas on whether Bukusu traditional death and burial rites are still effective and harmful when they are not performed well.
21. 21/03/ 2013, at Lwanka village, Kimwanga area. To interview Mr. Kakayi a 67 years old man on whether Bukusu still go for traditional funeral rites despite their being Christian.
22. 21/03/2013, at Kabula, Bungoma County. To interview Mr. Simiyu a 73 years old man on whether Bukusu still go for traditional funeral rites despite their being Christian.
23. 22/03/2013, at Namamuka, Bungoma County. To interview Mr. Cleoface on whether Bukusu still go for traditional funeral rites despite their being Christian.
24. 22/03/2013, at Namamuka, Bungoma County. To interview Mrs. Masinde on whether Bukusu still go for traditional funeral rites despite their being Christian.
25. 22/03/2013, at Namamuka, Bungoma County. To interview Mrs. Theresa on whether Bukusu still go for traditional funeral rites despite their being Christian.
26. 23/03/2013, at Sangalo, Bungoma County. To interview a group of pastors on how the Church deals with traditional funeral rites and whether Bukusu still go for traditional rites despite their being Christian.
27. 23/03/2013, at Namamuka, Bungoma County. To interview Mr. Keita, a 36 years old man on the effectiveness of Christian funeral rites and whether Bukusu still go for traditional rites despite their being Christian.
28. 23/03/2013, at Namamuka, Bungoma County. To interview Mrs. Joana, a 75 years old woman on the effectiveness of Christian funeral rites and whether Bukusu still go for traditional rites despite their being Christian.
29. 24/03/2013, at Kimatui, Bungoma County. To interview Mr. Godfrey on why do

Bukusu still go for traditional death and burial rites.

30. 24/03/2013, at Musikoma, Bungoma County. To interview Mama Vero on the effectiveness of traditional funeral rites and on why do Bukusu still go for traditional death and burial rites.

31. 25/03/2013, at Mukholi Village. To interview Mzee Vincent, a 83 years old man on why Bukusu go for traditional funeral rites despite their being Christian and on how traditional funeral rites are performed.

32. 27/03/2013, at Sangalo, Bungoma County. To interview Mzee Josephat, a 63 years old man on why Bukusu go for traditional funeral rites despite their being Christian and on how traditional funeral rites are performed.

33. 28/03/2013, at Kimatui, Bungoma County. To interview Madam Rose, on why Bukusu go for traditional funeral rites despite their being Christian and on how traditional funeral rites are performed.

34. 29/03/2013, at Nashianda, Bungoma County. To interview Mzee Masitia a 72 years old man on why Bukusu go for traditional funeral rites despite their being Christian and on how the Church deal with traditional funeral rites today.

35. 30/03/2013, at Kitinda, Bungoma County. To interview Mr. Isac, a 46 years old man on why Bukusu go for traditional funeral rites despite their being Christian and on how traditional funeral rites are performed.

36. 30/02/2013, at Kanduyi, Bungoma County. To interview Mama Vero on different traditional death and burial rites among the Bukusu, especially women and on whether Bukusu Quakers still go for traditional death and burial rites.

37. 30/02/2013, at Kibabi, Bungoma County. Personal communication with Chairman of Kibabi on different traditional death and burial rites among the Bukusu, and on whether Bukusu Quakers still go for traditional death and burial rites.





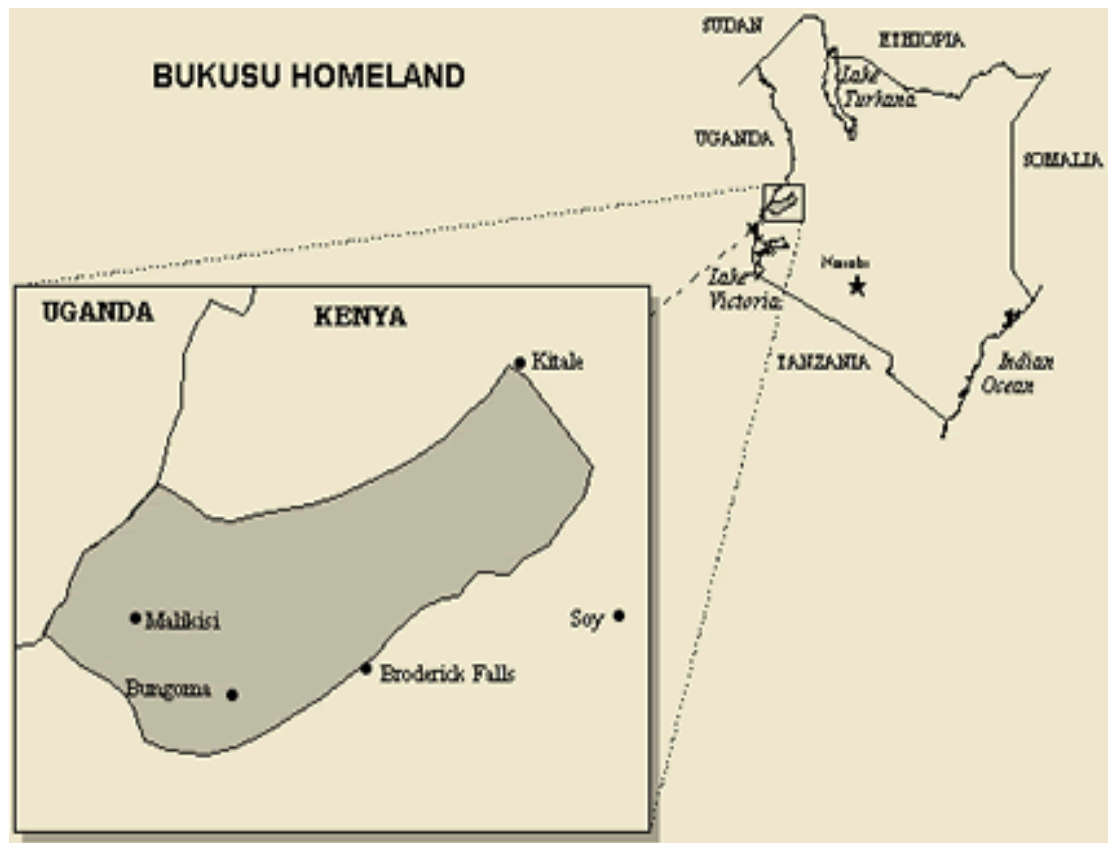
II

eye mungo, bakabana kamahimata  
eye mungo, bakabana kamahimata

~~Omula kufua aduh...  
Wamulamun...  
Kamakumba - Balaha belanga eza nebera ekhafu  
Kamakumba - Balaha belanga eza nebera ekhafu  
Kamakumba - Balaha belanga eza nebera ekhafu~~

- Kamakumba silindwa; enyuma watumwaka  
mulala mala kumwaka kwe sikumengwa.

- Omula Okhulile asera litoto Aito...  
# Bamala, Khukhwamala mucifuta Kamwotola,  
Khukhala Kimikoye; Bakoko nende Bekhala  
bakoyanga Kamafu. Beranga ekhafu nyo  
kama kapa dita nebamala silindwa  
eye chinyanyi. Lundi Napanga ekhafu  
esi nditi litosi. Naye ekhafu yimo bakubwa  
nebalotia omufu omufu yimo.

Appendix E: Map 1

[http://www.josuaproject.net/profiles/maps/m10996\\_ke.pdf](http://www.josuaproject.net/profiles/maps/m10996_ke.pdf)

Appendix F

MARYKNOLL INSTITUTE OF AFRICAN STUDIES  
OF SAINT MARY'S UNIVERSITY, MN

Thesis Proposal Approval

Direction: Complete this form, attach to the Thesis proposal, and submit to the MIASMU Program Director.

Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone#’s (mobile)\_\_\_\_\_ (w)\_\_\_\_\_ FAX\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Student’s signature

Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Thesis Advisor’s signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\*\*\*\*\*

Thesis proposal approved\_\_\_\_\_ Thesis proposal not approved\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Program Director’s signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Recommendation:

\*\*\*\*\*

Resubmitted (date)\_\_\_\_\_ Approved\_\_\_\_\_ Not approved\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Program Director’s signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Appendix GMARYKNOLL INSTITUTE OF AFRICAN STUDIES  
OF SAINT MARY'S UNIVERSITY, MNResearch Methods Approval

Student: Zacharie Kyungu Kolala. Program: Masters in African Studies

Address: Xaverian Brothers, Karen Lang'ata, Box: 1143, Nairobi Kenya, 00502

Phone(mobile): +254 716 888 930

Title of Research: Death and Burial Rites among the Bukusu Quakers of Western Kenya

Purpose of Research: To explore, understand, analyse and present the contemporary challenges affecting death and burial rites among the Bukusu and how these challenges are addressed by Church leaders particularly the Quakers.

Population and sample: the population of the study is Bukusu living in Bungoma and Kimilili. The sample will be groups of elders, religious and political leaders and other residents.

How are the sources or subjects chosen? Bukusu in general and Bukusu Quakers in particular will be interviewed in their respective areas. Respondents in general will be chosen randomly for the interviews and for the administration of hundred and sixty questionnaires.

What consent and confidentiality information is to be given to the sources or subjects? The respondents will be assured before each interview of the confidentiality of their information if they wish so. They will also be asked whether they wish to be anonymous or not.

How will the result be used? The results will be used for the MA thesis in African Studies

\_\_\_\_\_  
Researcher's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Thesis Advisor's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Program Director's signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\*\*\*\*\*  
Decision Approved \_\_\_\_\_ Not approved \_\_\_\_\_

Remarks:

Appendix HMARYKNOLL INSTITUTE OF AFRICAN STUDIES  
OF SAINT MARY'S UNIVERSITY, MNPermission to Schedule Colloquium

Student: Zacharie Kyungu Kolala

Address: Address: Xaverian Brothers, Karen Lang'ata, Box: 1143, Nairobi Kenya,  
00502

Phone (mobile): +254 716 888 930

Title of Thesis: Death and Burial Rites Among the Bukusu Quakers of Bungoma County  
in Western Kenya

We have reviewed this Thesis and agree it is ready for colloquium

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Prof. Douglass Waruta

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Date

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Prof. Mary Getui

---

Date

---

Prof. Michael Kirwen

---

Date

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