

TANGAZA COLLEGE

**THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF EASTERN
AFRICA**

DEPARTMENT OF PASTORAL STUDIES

***RURACIO* (BRIDE-WEALTH) PAYMENT AMONG
THE AGIKUYU:
A CASE STUDY IN MAKUYU PARISH**

**A LONG ESSAY SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF
PASTORALSTUDIES IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
REQUIREMENTS FOR A BACHELOR OF ARTS
DEGREE IN RELIGIOUS STUDIES**

BY

SAMUEL MWANGI, SDB

SUPERVISOR. REV. RAPHAEL WANJOHI

FEBRUARY

NAIROBI - KENYA

STUDENT'S DECLARATION

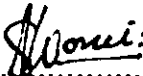
RURACIO (BRIDE-WEALTH) PAYMENT AMONG THE AGIKUYU:

A CASE STUDY IN MAKUYU PARISH

BY

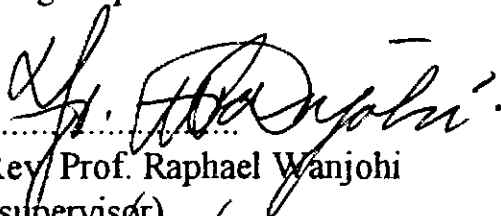
SAMUEL MWANGI, SDB

I declare that this long essay is my original work
and has not been submitted to any other University for academic credit

Signed: 
.....
Samuel Mwangi, SDB

Date: *16/02/98*...

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

Signed: 
.....
Rev. Prof. Raphael Wanjohi
(supervisor)

Date: *13/2/98*

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated with heartfelt gratitude to my parents: Warui Francis and Veronica Nyawira; my grand-parents: Ndabi Ngobu and Elizabeth Wanjiru (RIP) and all sons and daughters of Gikuyu and Mumbi, though caught up in a wave of change, that in searching they might find, and in discovering they may be fulfilled.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Above all I am grateful to God for my parents, my father, Francis Warui, my mother, Veronica Nyawira, my grand parents, Ndabi Ngobu and Elizabeth Wangiru(RIP), who, as Agikuyu enriched me with the Agikuyu traditional values.

Special thanks go to Rev. Prof. Raphael Wanjohi, who was my main supervisor , for his insightful criticism, scholarly comments, constant understanding, support and encouragement. All these contributed much to the realisation and compilation of this work.

I deeply appreciate wholeheartedly the kindness and tirelessness of Fr. Roy Fosker as well as his intellectual depth and wisdom which inspired me in my work. He not only read the work but made very useful suggestions and gave great encouragement.

I also express my indebtedness and special gratitude to Fr. Molino Felice, the parish priest of Makuyu parish, for he allowed me to carry out my research in the parish. My gratitude also goes to the catechist, small Christian communities and sub-station prayer leaders. Thanks for their sincerity, openness and co-operation while answering the questionnaire and being interviewed.

Particular thanks go also to Prof. Kariuki of Nairobi University, who also read the work, her patience and support are appreciated and to Lydia Kahindi of Kenyatta University for helping me in translating the questionnaire into the Gikuyu language. I thank also Eunice Kamau and Angeline Thyaka of Vice-chancellor's office, Nairobi University who helped in typing and binding the work. I must not forget Muthoni Njiraini, who assisted me in getting the required material from the University library.

Finally I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to all Utume Fathers and Brothers, for their support and encouragement during my stay in Utume and while working on this long essay. **May God bless you all abundantly.**

ABSTRACT

This work, *ruracio* (bride-wealth) payment among the Agikuyu, is a study based upon their understanding on the *ruracio* payment in their marriage rite. Marriage is a human reality. So far as is known, it has been customary in all societies and part of human being from the beginning.

As we have seen among the Agikuyu, marriage stands as the very centre of the society. But it has taken many different forms in different times and places. These forms, naturally are closely related to the religious practices and other social customs of the Agikuyu wherever they are in the Gikuyu land. Some of these differences found among them include: a) the way in which people arrange a marriage. b) the ceremonies by which they verify it. c) the obligation which marriage brings with it.

Many have been writing against the *ruracio* (bride-wealth) payment but, it is good to know if their ideas have any impact to the people especially the young people who have been caught in between the tradition culture and the western culture. We focused our attention on Makuyu parish in Murang'a, which is one of the area occupied by the Agikuyu.

According to what we got from our research findings, most of the people showed that *ruracio* still occupies a and plays a great role in the Agikuyu marriage. They showed that more than *ruracio* bringing the two couples and two families together, it also act as a condition for the validity and stability of their marriage. Majority were in favour of its continuation.

What we saw as an issue to be addressed is the amount to be offered. There is a habit of commercialisation of *ruracio* by some individuals. Their suggestion which was also ours was to see how this practise is going to be controlled so as to give the young people enough place for their marriage. By controlling *ruracio* we shall avoid the exploitation and manipulation of the young people especially those who are of low income.

What we should keep in mind is that having the *ruracio* continuation is not enough, but we should also see how we can sensitise the people and not only the parents but as well as the young people. We should make use of the mass media, seminars, workshops and counselling.

CONTENTS

STUDENT DECLARATION.....	ii
DEDICATION.....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	iv
ABSTRACT.....	vi
TABLES.....	vii

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.2 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY	2
1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM	4
1.4 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY	5
1.5 RESEARCH HYPOTHESES	5
1.6 SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY	6
1.7 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY	7
1.8 LITERATURE REVIEW	7
1.9 CONCLUSION	11

CHAPTER TWO

2.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.1 INTRODUCTION	13
2.2 RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS	14
2.3 ADMINISTRATION OF QUESTIONNAIRES	14
2.4 CONCLUSION	17

CHAPTER THREE

3.0 DATA ANALYSIS

3.1 INTRODUCTION	18
3.2 PERSONAL INFORMATION	18
3.3 AN ANALYSES OF SELECTED QUESTIONS	20
3.4 ANALYSES OF SELECTED STATEMENTS	23
3.5 CONCLUSION	33

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 INTRODUCTION.....	34
4.2 SUMMARY.....	34
4.3 RECOMMENDATIONS.....	36
4.3.1 PASTORAL RECOMMENDATIONS.....	36
4.3.1.1 THE ROLE OF THE FAMILY	36
4.3.1.2 THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH	37
4.3.1.3 THE SCRIPTURE AND RURACIO	38
4.4 SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH	38
4.5 CONCLUSION	39

4.6 GENERAL CONCLUSION.....	40
BIBLIOGRAPHY	42
APPENDIX I	44
APPENDIX II	47

TABLES

Table 1. Distribution of respondents by age.

Table 2. Distribution of respondents by gender.

Table 3. Distribution of respondents by marital status.

Table 4. Distribution of respondents by occupation.

Table 5. Who decide the amount of *ruracio*?

Table 6. Who normally takes the *ruracio*?

Table 7. What happens to the *ruracio* if separation occurs?

Table 8. Is *ruracio* paid all at once?

Table 9. Traditionally, there is a fixed amount of *ruracio*.

Table 10. *Ruracio* depends on the status and condition of the groom and his family.

Table 11. *Ruracio* must be paid in full before an unmarried couple lives together.

Table 12. If a woman married someone of a different ethnic group, *ruracio* should be paid all the same.

Table 13. If you have a daughter, you would ask your son-in-law to pay the *ruracio*.

Table 14. *Ruracio* should continue.

Table 15. It is true that without *ruracio* a woman is legally not married.

Table 16. *Ruracio* prompts cohabitation outside marriage.

Table 17. It is true that *ruracio* gives a woman status and distinguishes her marriage from elopement.

Table 18. It is true that *ruracio* is a sign of appreciation and brings the two families together.

Table 19. It is true that *ruracio* reduces a woman to an object, a man's property.

Table 20. If *ruracio* were controled in Kenya today, there would be fewer
a) Divorces. b) Single mothers. c) Street children.

Table 21. Trial marriages are a rebellion against *ruracio*.

CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This study is based upon the Agikuyu understanding of *ruracio* (Bride-wealth). The aim of the studies to investigate from oral, written and experiential material the Agikuyu traditional understanding of *ruracio* in marriage rite.

Various reasons have motivated this study. Marriage among the Agikuyu was considered normal, natural and was fully expected. It could not take place without certain payments of animals, food or other material goods to the parents and family of the bride. Today we speak of this as “dowry”.

The work will be organized in Four Chapters. Chapter One exposes and elaborates the background of the study, the problems taking place in marriage rite, the objectives, the hypotheses, scope and limitation and the significance of the research study. The review of literature will also be presented in this chapter..

Chapter Two visualises the methodology and the procedure to be used in collecting the data. Questionnaires and interview methods will be used. Chapter Three, in a certain sense, the most important part of our work hopes to analysis and interpret the research findings in the view of our objectives. The chapter also verifies if there is still an element necessary for the validity and stability for Agikuyu traditional marriage rite.

Chapter Four focuses on the summary of the whole research study, pastoral recommendations (to show traditional understanding and purposes of *ruracio* among the Agikuyu) and suggestions for future studies. The Chapter ends with a general conclusion.

1.2 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

In the past, a *Mugikuyu* man became a member of the first grade of the council of elders when he married. This meant that marriage opened doors to important things. That is why we come across this proverb among the Agikuyu "*Wega umaga na mucii*" (The family is the origin of good things). The reason for this is that marriage gives one the right to start one's family and become an elder. But today, one wonders whether this is appreciated, seeing what is happening to many families now. Due to lack of proper preparation before marriage, many of these families are divided such that husband, wife and children are living apart.

Compared to what was there in the past, we see that today the traditional tribal system has weakened among the young generation, but the elders do still remember the past. The values, attitudes and norms of behaviour of society remain fresh in their minds. Among the Agikuyu who are found in the central part of Kenya, the elders tell how traditional rites and practices were transmitted from one generation to the next. This was to make sure that each and every person, young and old, as well as those who had joined the society from outside, were well informed about their customs.

Among the traditional rites practised was marriage, which was performed after a long journey in the person's life. This journey consisted of birth, teething, circumcision and engagement. As it was in the old days, marriage was supposed to be marked by ritual and well prepared ceremonies. Before marriage an individual had duties and observances which he or she had to fulfil, because not doing so meant a curse. This shows that each and every step in the life of an unmarried person was part and parcel of his

or her marriage preparation.

The love that unites a man and a woman is found in the natural law and in the law of all civilized societies. The Agikuyu, whose marriage practices is the subject of our study, were not exempt from this rule, for they held definite initiation rites. Our concern today are how we can help people who are making up their mind to marry. Preparation for marriage is very important and needs a lot of attention, not only for the individuals, but even for society at large. Normally people will get more help from the members of their society when the latter see them grasping the idea of the new state of life they are wishing to enter.

As people prepare for marriage, it is important for them to know that marriage among African communities has always been seen as an obligation that occupies a position of great significance. The one outstanding desire of every member of the tribe is to build up his own family group. By this, we mean to extend and prolong his family clan, which helps to strengthen the tribe as a whole.

As in other African communities, marriage among the Agikuyu is the focus of existence. It is the point at which all the members of the community meet; the departed, the living and those already in the womb. Marriage, therefore, is a duty or a requirement of the corporate society and a rhythm of life in which every one must participate. This is why those who fail to participate in it were seen as a loss to the community, because failure to get married under normal circumstances meant that the person concerned had rejected the society and the society would reject him in return. It was also maintained that if it happened that a marriage was a childless one, it was for all purposes a failure, for children were seen to bring joy not only to their parents but also to the whole community.

A few months ago we happened to attend the wedding of one of our schoolmates. Strictly speaking everything was well arranged. One could see that they had tried their level best to make the whole thing look traditional. As things went on, what kept ringing in my mind was whether their coming

together was really a genuine one and not motivated by money, religion, parents, friends and so on. The reason for my doubt was that a few years ago another couple got married but after two years of marriage they separated. It was discovered later that the bride's parents needed more money for the bride wealth, but the man was not in a position to give it.

1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Nature shows that a person who has reached a certain age has to make up his/her mind to marry or not to. In earlier days, there was no alternative but to marry. But today one may get married, live single or be consecrated to God. That is to say one is left free to follow his or her vocation.

Marriage is a complex affair with economic, social and religious aspects, which overlap so firmly that they cannot be separated at all. At the present time we have cultural influence from the west, the impact of new religions (Islam and Christianity), the process of social change within countries, and many other pressures for change. All these contribute to a new understanding of marriage among many societies today.

For a man to get a wife he is expected to donate something in the form of livestock, money, foodstuffs and other items to the girl's family. This custom of presenting gifts to the bride's people is practised almost by everyone among the Agikuyu people and whether one is rich or poor something is still expected by the bride's family.

What is getting out of hand is the commercialization of the whole thing. Nobody today knows what is expected from the parents-in-law, for they ask anything they might think of. The wedding party of a friend of mine is fixed for the first week of next month. He intends to have a moderately simple wedding, yet he has already spent KSh.150, 000/-. The money he has spent as part of the bride-wealth,

some to prepare teaparties, some to renovate the house and yet more to print invitation cards. Although he has spent all this, he hasn't yet bought his wedding suit or paid for the reception hall, the wedding cake, transport for the bride's party and food and drink for about five hundred people. What is worrying is that he is just a journalist with a local newspaper. It is thus surprising to see how much the pattern and values of modern life in society are changing. Therefore the question that comes to my mind is whether the custom of *ruracio* (bride-wealth), which today has been commercialized, is still of any great value.

1.4 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objective of the study is to investigate whether the matter of bride-wealth among the Agikuyu people is still of value, given the current circumstances. By doing so, we shall examine if it is still a necessary condition for the Agikuyu marriage rite as it was in the past. In this process the study will attempt to:

- a) Clarify the popular conception of *ruracio* bride-wealth, since most people confuse its symbolic value with its material or exchange value.
- b) Find out if it is possible for this cultural practice to be controlled.
- c) Investigate whether it is possible for a man to marry without giving bride-wealth.

1.5 RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

The Agikuyu elders oppose the commercialization of *ruracio* (bride-wealth). They agree that it was part and parcel form of marriage among them. It was always meant to cement the relationship between the two families involved over a long period of life. So in this view the following hypotheses will be examined:

- a) Bride-wealth is still important as a condition for validity and stability of marriage among the Agikuyu.
- b) “*Ugurani*” (bride-wealth ritual) according to the Agikuyu does not imply buying or purchasing a wife.
- c) Bride-wealth is a token of gratitude on the part of the bridegroom’s people to those of the bride for bringing her up and allowing her to become the wife of their son.

1.6 SCOPE AND LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

Marriage is the centre of human life and in itself is a very broad concept. As it is not possible to explore this concept of marriage in its entirety in this study, we shall confine ourselves to the understanding and the importance of presenting “*ruracio*” (bride-wealth) to the bride’s people as practised by the Agikuyu people of Central Province in Kenya.

As the Agikuyu are mainly found in five areas: Nyeri, Murang’a, Kiambu, Nyandarua and Kirinyaga, we shall confine ourselves to those living around Maragwa district, and more particularly in Makuyu division. We choose Murang’a, and more particularly Makuyu, because we have worked there as a Salesian for several years and we know the situation there. Another fact that made us choose this place is because Maragwa is near to the historical origin of the *Agikuyu*.

It is said that *Ngai* or *Mugai* (the God of the Agikuyu) met the first parents *Gikuyu* and *Mumbi* and gave them this land at *Mukurwe wa Gathanga* which is now in Murang’a district but bordering Maragwa.

1.7 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

There are many reasons why this study is significant. Firstly, there is a need to study the historical background that led to the introduction of bride-wealth among the Agikuyu people. By doing this, we shall understand why today, whenever our women leaders gather to talk about employment, equality, oppression and the inferior status of the girl-child, none dares to question the bride-wealth that their fathers and clan-elders collect from their prospective husbands. Every time this question is neatly sidestepped at those empowerment seminars and workshops.

Secondly, the study will enlighten us on how we can update the custom of bride-wealth and maintain its symbolic value. Thirdly, this study will provide information on ways how to modify traditional marriage rites so that instead of bride-wealth being one-sided it may become a two-sided contribution.

1.8 LITERATURE REVIEW

This section looks at the Agikuyu marriage, particularly in their presentation of "*ruracio*" (dowry). The categories used by most writers which can be found in the ethnographic atlas give the following terms for the material or goods presented during marriage by the groom to the bride's family: bride-wealth, bride-price, bride-service, gift-exchange, token payment, sister-exchange, absence of gifts and dowry¹. The Agikuyu normally refer to it as *ruracio* (dowry). The way some people use the term dowry is quite misleading, for dowry should be seen as a type of pre-mortem inheritance to the bride². In this case we shall confine our discussion to the bride-wealth which is the transaction of material or goods between the kin of the groom and the kin of the bride.

¹ Jack G. and S. J. Tambiah, Bride-wealth and Dowry (London: Cambridge University Press, 1973), 1.

² *Ibid.*, 1.

Authors like C. Cagnolo 1933, S.K. Gathigira 1934, Kenyatta 1938, M. N. Kabetu 1947, G. Muriuki 1978, S. Boltignole 1984, P. N. Wachege, and G. J. Wanjohi 1997 explain the first parents of the Agikuyu as *Gikuyu* and his wife *Mumbi*. They indicate how "*Ngai*" the God of the Agikuyu who lived on "*Kirinyaga*", Mt. Kenya, took *Gikuyu* to the top of it and from there showed him the beautiful country that He had given to him; a land full of ravines, rivers, forests and all kinds of game. *Mumbi* was blessed with nine daughters. According to the Agikuyu myth, nine men, were sent by *Ngai* and married the nine full (meaning ten) daughters of *Gikuyu* and *Mumbi*. From them we got the nine clans of the Agikuyu.

The above writers, except Kabetu, agreed that in the Agikuyu marriage a "*mwanake*" (young man) and "*muiritu*" (young girl) were left free to choose their mate without any interference on the part of the parents on either side. They confirm that there always existed close social intercourse between the sexes, an opportunity of becoming acquainted with one another for a considerable time before courtship began.

When a time comes for choosing a soul mate, Kabetu and A. Phillip (1953) confirm that sometimes a young man would ask his parents to select a wife for him but the two parties could not see each other till a formal betrothal had taken place. Kenyatta confirms that when a young man fell in love with a certain girl, he could not tell her directly that he loved her or display his devotion in public, because it was seen as impolite and uncultured.³ Kenyatta says, if desired, the young man could discuss the matter with two or more friends of his age group, who would take him to the girl's homestead. While there, it was the task of one of his friends to tell the girl the motive of their visit. Kenyatta says the visit was usually done at night. Cagnolo and Wachege say the man would sometimes go to the object of his love and express his interest personally, but he was to be very courteous while expressing his

³ Jomo Kenyatta, *Facing Mount Kenya* (Nairobi: Kenway Publishers, 1978), 163.

intention. For example, he could say to her, "*muiritu wa ng'ania niukuhe ucuru*" (Daughter of so-and-so, will you give me porridge?),⁴ (In other words, will you marry me?) If she agreed she could respond "Yes! I will provide porridge for you". If it was during the planting, weeding or harvesting time, the man might ask her to come and help him to cultivate in their land and be given food.

If, after the proposal, nothing prevented the two from going ahead with their relationship, Kenyatta, Kabetu, Gathigira, Muriithi and Wanjohi (1989) agreed that beer taking by the two families followed. The first, they said was "*Njohi ya njurio*", (the beer of proposal). Cagnolo explains it more by confirming that this beer, as well as bringing the two families together, also gave an opportunity for the two families to agree how much livestock the bride's people wanted. According to him, the amount was just stated plainly and a wide-awake young man could grasp it and make his calculations. There was also another beer drinking, just like the one mentioned previously. Kenyatta and Cagnolo says was known as "*Njohi ya gukanyira mburi*" (beer for housing the goats).

Kenyatta, Cagnolo, Kabetu and Gathigira agree that the beer that followed next was known as "*Njohi ya guthugumithiria mburi*" (invoking blessing upon the marriage surety). During this beer taking, women were supposed to dance "*gitiro*", as a sign of appreciation for receiving such presents. The beer that came almost immediately after this, according to Kenyatta, Cagnolo said was commonly known as "*Njohi ya uriithi*" (the beer for grazing.)

According to traditional customs of the Agikuyu, even if a man was rich it was considered ill-bred to bring all the *ruracio* at once. Kenyatta, Cagnolo, Gathigira and Kabetu confirm that after the amount required for sealing the engagement had been sent, a day was fixed for the actual engagement ceremony called "*Ngoima ya Ngurario*". (The sealing of the marriage union). Kenyatta and Cagnolo concretely confirmed that, as at the first beer taking, the relatives of the two families were called to the

⁴ Peter N. Wachege, Jesus Christ our Muthamaki (Ideal Elder) (Nairobi: Phoenix Publishers, 1992), 23.

girl's homestead, where a sumptuous feast was provided, which included the slaughtering of a fat sheep which had been kept purposely for this ceremony.

Kenyatta, Cagnolo and Wanjohi, apart from extensively discussing *ngurario*, also gave the reasons why this ceremony was performed. First, the ceremony announced publicly that the *muiritu* was now fully engaged; secondly, it gave the relatives on both sides an opportunity for meeting and getting to know one another; and thirdly, it provided a time to decide how much, when and how the *ruracio* would be paid⁵.

Most writers agree that every time when *ruracio* was being handed over, the representatives of the two families gathered, or relatives were called there, so as to insure that there were plenty of witnesses, in case there should be a future dispute. During these ceremonies, not just any kinds of goats or sheep were slaughtered. They accepted only healthy, fat animals that were not lame or old, and were without blemish. "*Njiru*" (black), "*Njeru*" (white) or "*Njoto*" (brown)⁶.

The beer taking that came last was called "*Njohi ya gwetia muiritu*" (beer for asking the girl). Kenyatta, Cagnolo, Kabetu and Gathigira confirm that more than any other beer drinking, this one was supposed to be taken with the greatest festivity. The *mwanake*'s family prepared it. During this ceremony, the *mwanake* was required to replace any articles which the girl might have broken or lost during her childhood. The age-mates of the *mwanake* had to line up in procession, carrying special presents for the *muiritu*'s parents and for the members of her clan. Such things were brought forward as: an axe, baskets, pot, woven basket, large leather strap baskets, tilling sticks, bodkins, and many other articles. Kenyatta, in his concluding words says that, apart from the beer drinking occasions we have mentioned, there were other types, which had no special name but were necessary, because like the

⁵ Kenyatta, 168.

⁶ Cagnolo, *The Agikuyu* (Nyeri: The Mission Printing School, 1933), 112.

others they helped to deepen the relationship between the two families.⁷

Although *ruracio* was a traditional custom of the Agikuyu, Boltognole (1984) says that many Europeans as well as other people looked on it as inhuman because the woman seemed to be purchased. This however was not the case, for she says the most important thing was to try first to understand the way of thinking of the Agikuyu toward *ruracio*.⁸

According to her research, she shows that around the middle of the nineteen-forties, the amount of money or livestock requested by the parents for their bride was already too high. At this time, she says, irregular marriages, contrary to the Agikuyu traditional rite, emerged. These changes, she says, finally led to some people, among them journalists, coming together to discuss *ruracio*. Although some of these journalists concluded that *ruracio* was evil, Boltognole confirms through her research that a good percentage of the people she interviewed stated that *ruracio* MUST NOT be abolished.⁹

1.9 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, we have reviewed the literature on *ruracio* (bride-wealth) among the Agikuyu. It has been established through this literature review that *ruracio* in the Agikuyu people, as in many other African societies, involves transaction of livestock or any other materials. We have seen that *ruracio* passes from the kin of the groom to those of the bride. It is a circulating pool of resources, a movement which corresponds to the movement of rights over the spouses, especially the woman.

This chapter also helped to show that “*Kuma Ndemi na Mathathi*” (from long, long time ago) *ruracio* has been part and parcel of the Agikuyu traditional marriage rites. We have also seen that *ruracio* cements the relationship between the two families.

⁷ Kenyatta, 169.

⁸ *Silvana Bottignole, Kikuyu traditional culture and Christianity* (Nairobi: Heinemann education books 1984), 124.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 124.

The next chapter endeavors to show the methodology used in the field research, which was done to find out how the Agikyu in the past looked at *ruracio*. We shall also see the attitude of young people as well as old towards this gift presentation, in particular their attitude towards its validity in today's marriage, which has been too highly westernized.

CHAPTER TWO

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Makuyu Catholic Parish in Murang'a diocese has been selected as the study area. The parish, which is run by the Salesian Fathers, was transferred to them seven years ago from the Consolata Missionary Fathers. The parish was formerly a sub-centre of Saba Saba parish before its division to form Saba Saba and Makuyu parishes.

The study was not only conducted amongst those living in Makuyu parish, but also amongst those who had moved from Makuyu to other parts of the country, especially those living in Nairobi. The reason we included those staying in Nairobi is because during the time we carried out our interviews, it was not possible for them to be with the rest. Some of them go home (Makuyu) only on weekends, while others do so on monthly bases or whenever possible. Thus because of their situation we found it necessary to meet them at their working places here in Nairobi. All those who were interviewed in Makuyu were Catholic: Catechists, leaders of Sub-stations and Small Christian Communities, youth and other Christians. In Nairobi, those interviewed were either Catholics or Protestants, and most of them were social workers in different parts of Nairobi. About 150 people were expected for the interviews but only 90 were reached. Neither random selection nor the sampling method was used because most of the time the groups we received were not very big and we always had enough questionnaires. Catechists, leaders of both Sub-stations and Small Christian Communities were given questionnaires during their monthly meeting in the parish hall, while the youth and other Christians were given questionnaires to fill at home and some were

interviewed shortly after the Sunday Mass.

2.2 RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

The questionnaires were in English, but a translation in Gikuyu was provided for those who felt more comfortable with the Gikuyu language.

The questionnaires were divided into three parts; part one was introduction, which gave the person information on the importance of the study. It gave also the assurance of confidentiality in the treatment of the responses, the need for honest cooperation and lack of obligation to write one's name. Part two was for personal information, in which we asked the age of the person, sex, marital status, religion, occupation and place of residence. We could not ask their birthplace because we noticed that eighty per cent of the population were born somewhere else. So they had come to stay in Makuyu because either they bought land or they came to work there.

And finally part three, which had two sections. In section one respondents filled in empty spaces provided, while in section two they were to tick each question in accordance with one's attitude to the issue in question.

Apart from gathering required information through the questionnaire, individual interviews were conducted with some people, especially the elderly. Those interviewed individually were both men and women of more than sixty-five years old.

2.3 ADMINISTRATION OF QUESTIONNAIRES

Before giving out the questionnaire or carrying out any individual interview, we first explained the reason why we were carrying out the study, why we chose the Agikuyu, its importance and effects. After our explanation, most of them confessed that it was their first time to see young people coming forward with an interest to know more about the traditions of their

people. They accepted and promised complete openness and cooperation in getting the necessary information on *ruracio* among the Agikuyu.

Catechist and leaders of the Sub-stations and small Christians communities were each given a questionnaire, but because not all could read and write fluently, we had to read the questions for them one by one as they continued answering them according to each one understanding of the subject.

Everything was conducted in Gikuyu language, as everybody was fluent in it. But for the youth, everything was conducted in English as many of them were either still in school or had finished standard eight, or university. What surprised us was that many youth could speak Gikuyu well but reading it was a problem. Many said it was a long time since they last read in Gikuyu. In Nairobi, everything was done in English language as most of them preferred it to Gikuyu. The questionnaires were distributed to different people, who took them home, and to returned them after completion. Out of 30 people who were given questionnaires in Nairobi, 20 brought them back. This was about 66.6% of the questionnaires given out in Nairobi. In Makuyu, out of 80 questionnaires, only 68 (85.5%) were brought back. In Maukuyu also we gave out 5 questionnaires to some people who promised to bring them back but none did so. Some said they misplaced them while others said they were busy.

When going through the questionnaires that were received, those from Nairobi were filled as we had expected. But in Makuyu seven were left completely blank, five filled in on personal details only, while the rest (three) had only dashes and ticks. This shows that fifteen questionnaires were spoiled. We were left with 53 from Makuyu and 20 from Nairobi, which added up to 73. To those 73 we added 5 who were interviewed using the same format. Therefore, in our data we shall have 78 questionnaires representing (67.8%) of the total number of questionnaires administered.

The questionnaires given out in Makuyu and Nairobi were identical.

The format used required the respondents to answer in any one of the following ways:

- i) Strongly agree
- ii) Agree
- iii) Disagree
- iv) Don't know

In their response, they were expected to tick the correct answer out of those provided, and only one tick was required for every question.

Apart from giving out questionnaires, it was found necessary to conduct some interviews in order to supplement the information from the questionnaire. We interviewed some elderly people, men and women whom we noticed were well informed and experienced on the issue of *ruraci*. Those we interviewed were selected from the elderly group and on an appropriate time of the day we visited them at home for the interview. We met them in the evenings around 5 p.m. as it seemed to be a favorable time for them.

As we carried out our interview we noticed that those whom we had selected, especially men, were once "*Athuri a kiama*" (Men belonging to the Elder's circle). We tried to follow the questionnaire format as we carried out the interview but when necessary we asked for more explanation or clarification.

Both the questionnaires and the interviews were seen as positive since most of the people showed a lot of interest, seriousness, cooperation and appreciation while answering the questions. Another thing that we observed was that most of the people, apart from the youth and the younger couples, expressed their availability and cooperation if more information was needed not only on *ruracio* but also on any other subject.

2.4 CONCLUSION

In Chapter Two, we provided a thorough discussion of the research design, methods and procedures used in conducting the study which we carried out in Makuyu parish and in Nairobi. The next chapter, a very important one will presents a combination of the findings or results of the field research and discussion of the issue. It will also help us to test our hypotheses.

The next Chapter consists of the research findings. We shall thoroughly analyze and explain all the findings or the data relevant to our questions and the hypotheses of the study. We will thus show in our work the frequency and percentage distribution of the responses. The interpretation of the data will also be presented in this chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

DATA ANALYSIS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In this Chapter, we present an analysis and interpretation of the data. The questionnaires collected from both Makuyu and Nairobi were combined. As we mentioned earlier, we only considered those which were of real use, those that were properly and completely filled in. The responses to the questionnaires are presented in the tables below.

Although these tables and figures are self-explanatory, we shall examine their frequency and percentages, in the light of the hypotheses that relate to them. We shall also try to interpret these data in accordance with the responses gathered from the questionnaires. There will also be an assessment as to whether or not a particular hypothesis has been supported.

3.2 PERSONAL INFORMATION

Table 1. Distribution of respondents by age.

AGES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
15 – 20	12	15
21 – 30	17	22
31 – 40	16	21
41 – 50	20	26
51 – 60	5	6
61 – 70	4	5
71 – 85	4	5
TOTAL	78	100

As the table reveals, the distribution spread between 15 to 85 years. Those between ages 41 and 50 were the majority having 20 respondents, which was equivalent to 26% of the total surveyed. Those aged between 21 and 30, about 18, followed. Others were from between 31 and 40, 16 respondents, 21%; from 15 and 20 came fourth with 6 (6%). Those from 61 to 70, 71 to 85 got 5% with 4 respondents each.

The table shows that during the time of our study, most of those who participated were the middle-aged people (between 41 and 50 years). This could be attributed to the fact that it was during school time, and secondly most of those between 18 and 35 were either at school or were out looking for jobs.

Table 2. Distribution of respondents by gender.

GENDER	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
MALES	31	39.7
FEMALES	47	60.3
TOTAL	78	100

In our research, as the table shows, females were the majority with 47 (60.3%) respondents against 31 (39.7%) males. We may infer that females are the ones who participated more in various church activities than males although this is quite tentative.

Table 3. Distribution of respondents by marital status.

MARITAL STATUS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
MARRIED	37	47.4
NOT MARRIED	36	46.2
WIDOWERS	2	2.6
WIDOWS	3	3.8
TOTAL	78	100

The table reveals that the highest percentage, 47.4%, was from the married people (37

respondents). About 36 respondents (46.2%) were not married. Widowers and widows numbered 2 (2.6%) and 3 (3.8%) respondents respectively.

Those who were not married were probably more because they included those still studying in secondary schools, polytechnics and other institutions of learning. Having this variation of marital distribution will enable us to get more views on *ruracio* among the Agikuyu.

Table 4. Distribution of respondents by occupation.

OCCUPATION	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
STUDENTS	21	26.9
EMPLOYED	28	35.9
UNEMPLOYED	25	32.1
UNKNOWN	4	5.1
TOTAL	78	100

From the table we see that the employed respondents numbered 28 (35.9%). Unemployed came second with 25 (32.1%). The 21 (26.9%) were students and 4 (5.1%) did not indicate their occupation. The unemployed included the housewives who remain at home taking care of their families.

The above personal information which has been presented in tables (tables 1, 2, 3, and 4) will assist in answering the questions that follow helping us get the truth about *ruracio* among the Agikuyu.

3.3 AN ANALYSIS OF SELECTED QUESTIONS

a). What is the duration of betrothal?

By asking this question we may not expect to receive a definite period because in the past people never used to count as we do today. Respondents older than 51 years said that it used to be two to three seasons, equivalent to a year or a year and a half. This reveals that there was never a fixed time of betrothal.

b). Have you paid *ruracio* and if so, how did you do it? If money, how much? Livestock, how many? Other things, what?

In this question, we wanted to know how different people paid *ruracio*. Surprisingly, nobody answered it. When some were asked why they didn't answer it, they said they could not remember because they are still paying their *ruracio*.

This reveals that *ruracio* is never paid in full at once. It is not just a family affair but involves the whole community. Above all, it is an ongoing contribution.

Table 5. Who decide the amount of *ruracio*?

OPINION	GIRL'S PARENTS		DON'T KNOW		OVERALL TOTAL	
RESPONDENTS	70	90%	8	10%	78	100%

We became more interested, before going deeply into our discussion, in knowing who decides the *ruracio*. In this table, out of the 78 respondents, 70 (90%) strongly indicated that it was the work of the girl's parents assisted by their family elders. Lastly, 8 (10%) showed they don't know who was concerned.

The answer to this question shows that, unlike today, nobody could decide alone to marry without the consent of the parents. To decide on *ruracio* first meant that a period of time was needed for the two families, as well as the two lovers, knowing each other.

Table 6. Who normally takes the *ruracio*?

OPINION	GIRL'S PARENTS		BOY'S/GIRL'S PARENTS		ELDERS		OVERALL TOAL	
RESPO-NDENTS	50	64%	14	18%	14	18%	78	100%

In this question, a space had been left for them to fill in the name. When the results were put in the table, it showed that 64% of the respondents 20 (26%) males and 30 (38%) females said the girl's

family took *ruracio*. About 14 (18%) said it was shared between the boy's and girl's families. And another, 14 (18%), said it was taken by the family elders who then could give it to the girl's father.

The responses as shown by the table indicate that *ruracio* was mainly given out by the boy's family to the girl's family.

Table 7. What happens to the *ruracio* if separation occurs?

	RETURNED		NO RETURNING		NO IDEA		OVERALL TOTAL	
	FQ	%	FQ	%	FQ	%	FQ	%
RESPONDENTS	56	72	0	0	22	28	78	100

This was another question in which we left enough space for more information. Out of the total number of people who responded, 56 (72%) respondents agreed that *ruracio* was taken back to the man's family. If it was the husband causing problems, he was supposed to give a number of goats or sheep to the bride's parents as a fine. About 22 (28%) had no idea about it.

Generally, among the Agikuyu separation occurs as the last solution after a long consultation between the concerned parties. But where there is no healing then *ruracio* is returned as per the clan's traditional rules, but it must be emphasized that this is extremely rare.

Table 8. Is *ruracio* paid all at once?

	STRONGLY AGREE		AGREE		DISAGREE		DON'T KNOW		OVERALL TOTAL	
	FQ	%	FQ	%	FQ	%	FQ	%	FQ	%
MALES	0	0	6	7.7	22	28.2	3	3.9	31	39.7
FEMALES	0	0	4	5.1	38	48.7	5	6.4	47	60.3
TOTAL	0	0	10	12.8	60	76.9	8	10.3	78	100

The table shows that, from the answers received from the respondents, 76.9% disagreed that *ruracio* is paid all at once. (Represented by 60 respondents, 22 (28.2%) males and 38 (48.7%) females). 10 (12.8%) said “yes” (agreed) while 8 respondents showed not to know more about it (didn’t know).

What we can deduce from this table is that delaying to pay the rest of the *ruracio* was not so much doubted, as long as the two families maintained a good in-laws relationship. The gradual contribution would encourage the two families to visit each other often.

3. 4 ANALYSES OF SELECTED STATEMENTS

Table 9. Traditionally, there is a fixed amount of *ruracio*.

	STRONGLY AGREE		AGREE		DISAGREE		DON'T KNOW		OVERALL TOTAL	
	FQ	%	FQ	%	FQ	%	FQ	%	FQ	%
MALES	4	5.1	10	12.8	12	15.4	5	6.4	31	39.7
FEMALES	8	10.3	12	15.4	20	25.6	7	9.0	47	60.3
TOTAL	12	15.4	22	28.2	32	41.0	12	15.4	78	100

From the table, 41.0% of the total disagreed with the statement. (Represented by 20 (25.6%) female and 12 (15.4%) male respondents). About 22 (28.2%); 12 (15.4%) female and 10 (12.8%) male, agreed with the statement. Those who strongly agreed and those who didn’t know about it had 12 (12.4%) each but with different distribution of respondents.

This showed that *ruracio* was always first discussed by the two families before the final decision was made to the boy’s parents. We need also to know that among the Agikuyu not all had the same

amount of wealth as we have today. Discussing *ruracio* meant that justice was done and seen to the end.

The following table will explain more why there were no fixed *ruracio* payments.

Table 10. *Ruracio* depends on the status and condition of the groom and his family.

	STRONGLY AGREE		AGREE		DISAGREE		DON'T KNOW		OVERALL TOTAL	
	FQ	%	FQ	%	FQ	%	FQ	%	FQ	%
MALES	6	8	17	22	4	5	4	5	31	40
FEMALES	6	8	25	32	8	10	8	10	47	60
TOTAL	12	16	42	54	12	15	12	15	78	100

The table shows that the highest number of respondents recorded was 42 (54%) who agreed with the statement, of whom 22 (22%) were males and 25 (32%) females. About 16% strongly agreed, with male and female recording 6 (8%) respondents each. Those who disagreed and those who didn't know had 12 respondents, each with 4 (5%) males and 8 (10%) females.

This statement helped us to support statement No. 6, which asked whether *ruracio* has a fixed payment. The more the family has, the more it will give. In this way it helped the boy to know the condition of the family he wanted to marry from. Knowing also whom to marry first helped to avoid future disgrace.

Table 11. *Ruracio* must be paid in full before an unmarried couple lives together.

	STRONGLY AGREE		AGREE		DISAGREE		DON'T KNOW		OVERALL TOTAL	
	FQ	%	FQ	%	FQ	%	FQ	%	FQ	%
MALES	3	3.85	3	3.85	25	32.05	0	0	31	39.75
FEMALES	3	3.85	2	2.56	40	51.28	2	2.56	47	60.25
TOTAL	6	7.70	5	6.41	65	83.33	2	2.56	78	100

The 65 respondents (83.33%) of the total questioned, as the table shows, disagreed with the statement. In response to this, 25 (32.05%) were males while 40 (51.28%) were females. About 3 (3.85%) male and 2 (2.56%) female respondents agreed, while, on the other hand, males and females with 3 (3.85%) responses each strongly agreed with the statement. We also see from the table that 2 (2.56%) females didn't know, while no males responded.

Therefore, in one way or another, not paying the *ruracio* in full helped to promote frequent visits and sharing between the concerned families day by day. Nobody, even if rich, was supposed to pay it in full, for to do so was a taboo.

Table 12. If a woman married someone of a different ethnic group, *ruracio* should be paid all the same.

	STRONGLY AGREE		AGREE		DISAGREE		DON'T KNOW		OVERALL TOTAL	
	FQ	%	FQ	%	FQ	%	FQ	%	FQ	%
MALES	4	5.1	15	19.2	4	5.1	8	10.3	31	39.7
FEMALES	3	3.9	27	34.6	5	6.4	12	15.4	47	60.3
TOTAL	7	9.0	42	53.8	9	11.5	20	25.7	78	100

As the table reveals, 49 out of the total responses were positive to the statement. Those who answered positively were 15 (19.2%) males and 27 (34.6%) females. 4 (5.1%) males and 3 (3.9%) females strongly agreed. Those who disagreed totalled 9 (11.5%), with 4 (5.1%) males and 5 (6.4%) females. The rest, as the table shows, 20 (25.7%) respondents didn't know much about the statement.

The table thus reveals that the communities accepted intermarriages. *Ruracio* not only was asked by the Agikuyu alone but also by other neighboring communities. Another thing is that a person could marry or get married to any group of his/her choice provided there was a good relationship not only at the time of the marriage but also in the near future.

Table 13. If you have a daughter, you would ask your son-in-law to pay the *ruracio*.

	STRONGLY AGREE		AGREE		DISAGREE		DON'T KNOW		OVERALL TOTAL	
	FQ	%	FQ	%	FQ	%	FQ	%	FQ	%
MALES	4	5.1	15	19.2	8	10.3	4	5.1	31	39.7
FEMALES	2	2.6	26	33.3	11	14.1	8	10.3	47	60.3
TOTAL	6	7.7	41	52.5	19	24.4	12	15.4	78	100

The result of this statement, from those who responded to it, as the table reveals, showed that 41 (52.5%) of the total of respondents agreed to it. 6 (7.7%) strongly agreed, 19 (24.4%) disagreed while 12 (15.4%) didn't know.

Although there are changes among the Agikuyu marriage customs due to modernization, they seem to have affected *ruracio* very little. More and more people still do encourage, support or retain the *ruracio* payment.

Table 14. *Ruracio* should continue.

	STRONGLY AGREE		AGREE		DISAGREE		DON'T KNOW		OVERALL TOTAL	
	FQ	%	FQ	%	FQ	%	FQ	%	FQ	%
MALES	9	11.5	15	19.2	7	9.0	0	0	31	39.7
FEMALES	5	6.4	29	37.2	13	16.7	0	0	47	60.3
TOTAL	14	17.9	44	56.4	20	25.7	0	0	78	100

In view of the cry of many people today of being economically handicapped, the table gave us an expected response. 56.4% of the total questioned agreed that *ruracio* should continue (responses indicated 29 (37.2%) females and 15 (19.2%) males). 14 (17.9%), of whom 9 (11.5%) were males and

5 (6.4%) females, strongly agreed, thus adding more weight to those who agreed. The other 7 (9.0%) males and 13 (16.7%) females disagreed.

Agikuyu see *ruracio* not as a payment for the girl but a way of bringing together the two people in marriage, a new beginning from the old, an emerging of a new life in which the two families express a wholeness whose limits are out of sight.

Table 15. It is true that without *ruracio* a woman is legally not married.

	STRONGLY AGREE		AGREE		DISAGREE		DON'T KNOW		OVERALL TOTAL	
	FQ	%	FQ	%	FQ	%	FQ	%	FQ	%
MALES	7	9.0	10	12.8	10	12.8	4	5.1	31	39.7
FEMALES	5	6.4	19	24.4	16	20.5	7	9.0	47	60.3
TOTAL	12	15.4	29	37.2	26	33.3	11	14.1	78	100

Comparing the responses we received from table no. 12, we may say that this table confirms the validity of *ruracio* in the Agikuyu marriage rite. Those who strongly agreed and those who agreed when added together give us 52.6% of the total respondents, while those who disagreed and those who didn't know come to 47.4%, responses being 41 and 37 respectively.

According to the information we got while carrying out the interviews, a woman whose husband paid the *ruracio* will find it difficult to separate.

Table 16. *Ruracio* prompts cohabitation outside marriage.

	STRONGLY AGREE		AGREE		DISAGREE		DON'T KNOW		OVERALL TOTAL	
	FQ	%	FQ	%	FQ	%	FQ	%	FQ	%
MALES	2	3	5	6	16	21	8	10	31	40
FEMALES	3	4	15	19	15	19	14	18	47	60
TOTAL	5	6	20	26	31	40	22	28	78	100

As the table reveals, the highest number of respondents disagreed with the statement, namely 31 (40%). 20 (26%) agreed, 5 (6%) strongly agreed and 22 (28%) didn't know. Some young people today avoid formal marriage in order to escape serious commitment, but not because of *ruracio*.

Table 17. It is true that *ruracio* gives a woman status and distinguishes her marriage from elopement.

	STRONGLY AGREE		AGREE		DISAGREE		DON'T KNOW		OVERALL TOTAL	
	FQ	%	FQ	%	FQ	%	FQ	%	FQ	%
MALES	9	11.5	13	16.7	6	7.7	3	3.8	31	39.7
FEMALES	7	9.0	29	37.2	5	6.4	6	7.7	47	60.3
TOTAL	16	20.5	42	53.9	11	14.1	9	11.5	78	100

The statement was more directed to the women to see how they feel about it. The effectiveness of this statement depended on how mostly the women were to respond. From the data received and as shown by the table, most of the women responded positively to it. In all 42 (53.9%) agreed, of those 29 (37.2%) were females and 13 (16.7%) males. 16 strongly agreed, of whom 7 (9%) were females and 9 (11.5%) males. And, finally, as the table shows, 11 (14.1%) disagreed while 9 (11.5%) didn't know.

The value of the man paying the *ruracio* to the girl's family apart from deepening the sense of commitment and mutual respect between the two parties involved, together with the whole society critically adds to her security as well to her social status.

Table 18. It is true that *ruracio* is a sign of appreciation and brings the two families together.

	STRONGLY AGREE		AGREE		DISAGREE		DON'T KNOW		OVERALL TOTAL	
	FQ	%	FQ	%	FQ	%	FQ	%	FQ	%
MALES	17	21.8	14	18.0	0	0	0	0	31	39.7
FEMALES	24	30.8	17	21.7	6	7.7	0	0	47	60.3
TOTAL	41	52.6	31	39.7	6	7.7	0	0	78	100

The table reveals that 52.6% of the total participants strongly agreed with the statement. Responses were 41: 17 (21.8%) males and 24 (30.8%) females. Those who agreed, were 31 (39.7%), 14 (18.0%) males and 17 (21.7%) females. 6 (7.7%) females disagreed while no males did.

Marriage among the Agikuyu meant a beginning of a new life and such a beginning can be the beginning of a quest, not just for married happiness between the two lovers, but for life for the whole community.

Table 19. It is true that *ruracio* reduces a woman to an object, a man's property.

	STRONGLY AGREE		AGREE		DISAGREE		DON'T KNOW		OVERALL TOTAL	
	FQ	%	FQ	%	FQ	%	FQ	%	FQ	%
MALES	2	2.56	2	2.56	24	30.77	3	3.85	31	39.74
FEMALES	4	5.13	7	8.97	28	35.90	8	10.26	47	60.26
TOTAL	6	7.69	9	11.53	52	66.67	11	14.11	78	100.0

From the table 52 (66.67%) responses disagreed with the statement. In these categories females dominated with 28 (35.90%) against 24 (30.77%) males. 9 (11.53%) agreed and another 6 (7.69%) strongly agreed. 11 (14.11%) didn't know about it.

Through marriage a woman became more recognised by the society than before. The *ruracio* the man pays show that she “belong” to somebody. In no way can a man could use his wife as an object to do whatever he wished, for to do so would be to go against the traditional rules. The two united together with their children form one family.

Table 20. If *ruracio* were controlled in Kenya today, there would be fewer divorces, single mothers and street children.

a) Divorces.

	STRONGLY AGREE		AGREE		DISAGREE		DON'T KNOW		OVERALL TOTAL	
	FQ	%	FQ	%	FQ	%	FQ	%	FQ	%
MALES	5	6.4	6	7.7	10	11.8	10	12.8	31	39.7
FEMALES	4	5.1	9	11.5	20	25.7	14	18.0	47	60.3
TOTAL	9	11.5	15	19.2	30	38.5	24	30.8	78	100

From the table 38.5% of the total disagreed with the above statement. The 30.8% didn't know, 19.2% agreed and 11.5% strongly agreed. From the number of responses received 30 disagreed, 24 didn't know, 15 agreed and 9 strongly agreed.

Unlike in the past, where people were given enough time to be familiar and understand each other, today people lack this important period such that marriage has less meaning. Today divorce comes or happen due to lack of adequate commitment, rather than due to *ruracio*.

b) Single mothers

	STRONGLY AGREE		AGREE		DISAGREE		DON'T KNOW		OVERALL TOTAL	
	FQ	%	FQ	%	FQ	%	FQ	%	FQ	%
MALES	6	7.7	7	9.0	13	16.6	5	6.6	31	39.7
FEMALES	6	7.7	10	12.8	18	23.1	13	16.7	47	60.3
TOTAL	12	15.4	17	21.8	31	39.7	18	23.1	78	100

The issue of the single mother being as a result of *ruracio* was not accepted. Looking at the table, we see that the majority disagreed with 31 responses (39.7%) while 18 (23.1%) didn't know. The other 17 (21.8%) agreed and 12 (15.4%) strongly agreed. We have many factors that lead to the single mother phenomenon. Most of these carries nothing to do with the *ruracio*.

c) Street children.

	STRONGLY AGREE		AGREE		DISAGREE		DON'T KNOW		OVERALL TOTAL	
	FQ	%	FQ	%	FQ	%	FQ	%	FQ	%
MALES	2	2.6	7	9.0	15	19.2	7	9.0	31	39.7
FEMALES	3	3.8	8	10.2	18	23.1	18	23.1	47	60.3
TOTAL	5	6.4	15	19.2	33	42.3	25	32.1	78	100

Just like the other two, which we have already discussed, the table shows that many maintained street children are not a result of *ruracio*. 42.3% of the total respondents disagreed with the statement. 32.1% didn't know; 19.2% agreed with the statement, while only 6.4% strongly agreed.

A family could take care of its sons and daughters and sometimes the orphans left behind by a dead relative. The whole family regarded its young people as common responsibility, needing to be helped to grow up to their expectation. A child, regardless of its situation, was everyone's concern.

Table 21. Trial marriages are a rebellion against *ruracio*.

	STRONGLY AGREE		AGREE		DISAGREE		DON'T KNOW		OVERALL TOTAL	
	FQ	%	FQ	%	FQ	%	FQ	%	FQ	%
MALES	0	0	17	21,8	14	18.0	0	0	31	39.7
FEMALES	3	3.9	25	32.0	9	11,5	10	12.8	47	60.3
TOTAL	3	3.9	42	53.8	23	29.5	10	12.8	78	100

The table reveals that 53.8% of the total questioned agreed (responses were 42, 17 males and 25 females). 29.5% disagreed (18.0% males and 11.5% females). There were no males who strongly agreed or didn't know, but 3 (3.9%) females and 10 (12.8%) others who didn't know were recorded. Although some trial marriages may be as a result of *ruracio*, the majority happen because the two partners concerned may decide to live together for a short period to see whether they are suited to each other. If they wish, they may renew their contract for another short time,

3.5 CONCLUSION

This brings us to the end of Chapter Three in which we presented the result of the field Research. What we did in this chapter was analyze and interpret the data received. We dealt first with personal information and thereafter some questions and statements in which the two focused on the *ruracio* among the Agikuyu. The responses to each of the items were then presented in tabular form, which was followed by an interpretation and discussion. Each table contained the opinion, frequency and percentage distribution. Although we reached only half of the expected people, those who participated were open and cooperative.

The following and final chapter of the research report will contain the summary of the study purpose, the methods and the research findings. It will also focus our attention on the presentation of the conclusion so as to justify the data generated in the research and presented in the previous chapters.

Finally the chapter will carry practical suggestions on applications of the study and also for future research which will be based on the findings and conclusions generated by the report.

CHAPTER FOUR

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter we shall begin with the summary of the study's purpose, methods and findings. We shall then present the discussion and the conclusion proceeding from the research study. Thereafter we shall present some recommendations and suggestions for future research. Finally we shall close our work with a general conclusion.

4.2 SUMMARY

In the last three Chapters, we to discussed more about *ruracio* among the Agikuyu living in the central part of Kenya. We also examined the development of *ruracio* and the changes which have taken place. This we did through a research study with the aim of finding out whether *ruracio* is still a necessary condition for validity and stability in their traditional marriage rite.

In Chapter One, we gave a general introduction of the research study. First we looked at the background of the study and mentioned some of the problems which have taken place in the marriage rite. Apart from these, we showed three objectives and proposed three hypotheses for the study. We showed also the scope and limitation, plus the significance of the research study. Finally, in that Chapter we examined the literature so as to get the existing material on *ruracio*.

In Chapter Two, we presented the methodology and procedure used in collecting the data. The data were collected through questionnaires and interviews. Our attention was focused on the young and old, working and non-working respondents.

After this came Chapter Three, in which we analysed and interpreted the research findings. It helped us to know what is expected when *ruracio* is given out during marriage. Looking at table

No 14, we note that 74.3% accepted its continuation. Those who participated were positive and co-operative in their responses.

From the fore going discussion on *ruracio*, we may say that it occupied a very important place in the Agikuyu traditional marriage rite. Some of the purposes the *ruracio* served include:

- a). *Ruracio* showed that the girl was valued by both sides, a way of denoting her respectability, worth and appreciation.
- b). *Ruracio* was a seal on the marriage relationship. If the girl went back to her parents, it was to be refunded.
- c). *Ruracio* was never offered at once but was to be a continuous process. This nurtured the relationship between the two families. Sometimes it was donated until the bride died.
- d). Because of *ruracio*, the husband and wife could not easily separate or divorce. If it were to happen there was always discussion with the family members before marital separation.
- e). *Ruracio* made the marriage legal. If nothing was offered, the marriage was not recognised. It was like the marriage certificate of today.
- f). It was a public acknowledgment that this was a genuine marriage. No one could thus play with a man's wife when *ruracio* had been paid nor could the man play around with unmarried girls.
- g). It was an expression of honour to the parents on the undertaking of responsibility for the spouse.
- h). As well as making the young man feel he is the head of the house, it showed that he was serious about marrying the woman. It was also the "opening of the door", and of showing of the seriousness of marriage.

4.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

We find it worthwhile to put forward some recommendations to assist young men and women, who are preparing themselves for marriage to know what is involved in *ruracio*. While there is no serious problem as such, some people are getting confused between its symbolic value and its material or exchange value. To attend to this section, we shall give some pastoral recommendations and propose some suggestions for future research.

4.3.1 PASTORAL RECOMMENDATIONS

As we have seen, *ruracio* has been part and parcel of the Agikuyu way of life in sealing the marriage relationship among the two concerned families. It was a form of economic compensation to the bride's parents for the loss of their daughter. Above all, it was a legal exchange, which validated a marriage and confirmed the consent of both the parents of the bride and those of the groom, for without *ruracio* payment no marriage was recognised as valid (cf. Table No 15).

4.3.1.1 THE ROLE OF THE FAMILY

From the beginning, the family was the basic unit on which the traditional social system hinged¹³ and received the first priority in everything. That is why the Church Fathers, while speaking of the family said:

The family is, in a sense, a school for human enrichment, but if it is to achieve the full flowering of its life and mission, the married couple must practise an affectionate sharing of thought and common deliberation as well as eager cooperation as parents in the children's upbringing.¹⁴

¹³ Silvana, 31.

¹⁴ Gaudium et Spes, n. 52.

This shows that the family is the social institution that is regarded as the most important. It is only in the family that we can expect to be fully accepted, guided and encouraged as a human person. As Agikuyu have been universally practising *ruracio*, parents need to evaluate the reason why they demand it. They need to place greater value on the quality of the young man than on what he is paying. They should value their children more than material things.

As a concern they should let it be paid according to one's ability and be a life long payment. Deciding, rather than requesting, should be promoted, otherwise they will continue creating great hardship for the young men.

4.3.1.2 THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH

Although the Church has contributed largely to the progress of culture, it is the lesson of experience that there have been difficulties in the way of harmonising culture with Christian thought.¹⁵

The Church has the responsibility to educate its members in general on how to negotiate *ruracio* through the Christian parents. Before sending them, it should counsel and advise them on the importance of their daughter marrying well. They need to know how to stop it from degenerating into a commercial transaction, something different from its traditional concept.

Pastors on the other hand should not only teach from the pulpit but also need to conduct seminars, and workshops in the homes of parents so as to help them understand the purpose of *ruracio*.

¹⁵ Gaudium es Spes, n. 62.

4.3.1.3 THE SCRIPTURE AND *RURACIO*

The scripture nowhere condemns payment of *ruracio* but instead contains examples of God's people exchanging bride-wealth for marriage. But looking more deeply at the way things were done, we can conclude that it implicitly supported its legitimacy.

Examples like Isaac (Genesis 24:50-54), Jacob (Genesis 29:10-20) and David (1Samuel 10:12-27) seemed to show that bride-wealth was paid according to one's ability. Abraham, a wealthy man, gave of his wealth, while Jacob in his material poverty gave his labour.

We should thus not hold strictly to these passages, because cultures reflect different ways of handling different situations. The way the Hebrews treated their bride-wealth will not match ours for these are two different cultures.

4.4 SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

From what we had been shown by the data in this study on the issue of *ruracio* payment among the Agikuyu, it is imperative that there is need for more research. The Agikuyu have absorbed to a high degree, the pattern of western culture. As a consequence their traditional ethnic system has noticeably weakened. This decline of culture gives us an impetus to make some suggestions for future research.

1. Inculturating *ruracio*: The Liturgical rite of marriage can be studied to see how it can be helpfully adapted in different places so as to make use of the familiar symbols, language and traditional ceremonies.
2. Commercialisation of *ruracio*: Being a condition for validity and stability of marriage among the Agikuyu. The *ruracio* asked needs to be studied in order to find ways to control it.

4.5 CONCLUSION

In this Chapter Four, we had a close look at the pastoral recommendations and suggestions for future research study. We discussed more about problems faced by many who are preparing for marriage, due to a wrong interpretation of *ruracio* payment. Our recommendations were meant to enlighten and show how we can retain the original purpose of this meaningful Agikuyu rite of marriage, without commercialising it due to the pressure of a changing culture.

4.6 GENERAL CONCLUSION

In this study, we have attempted to show that *ruracio* is still a condition for validity and stability in the Agikuyu marriage rite. The literature review showed that it was almost seventy years ago when the first decision was made to have *ruracio* stopped. However, through the data received, it has been shown that *ruracio* has remained entrenched in most Agikuyu people. Even though culture is being affected by modernisation, *ruracio* still remains part and parcel of the Agikuyu people in their marriage rite.

After data interpretation (Chapter Three), we came to understand fully that there was nothing like wife purchase, but rather *ruracio* was an exchange of gifts. It was a token of gratitude on the part of the bridegroom's people to those of the bride for bringing her up and allowing her to become the wife of their son.

Finally all these recommendations have been set out briefly. They cover important, complicated and difficult matters on *ruracio*. We hope that the Church will courageously face up to this important task of strengthening Christian as well as traditional marriage. It is true that everything cannot be done at once, as all of our recommendations are equally important. The future

will depend on all people of all sorts of life uniting so that they can decide what can and should be done in this particular issue of *ruracio*.

This research study is a tool to help our people in their understanding of *ruracio*, so that the great truth hidden in human marriage may shine out to the glory of “*Ngai*” (God) and the benefit of men and women everywhere.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BOOKS

- Arthur P. Survey of African Marriage and Family Life. London, Great Britain: Oxford University Press, 1953.
- Bahemuka J. M. Our Religious Heritage. Lagos, Nigeria: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1982.
- Barra G. Kikuyu Proverbs. Nairobi, Kenya: Literature Bureau, 1939.
- Bottignole S. "African conjoint Family Therapy" African Christian Studies 5, n. 1. 1989.
- Bottignole S. Kikuyu Traditional Culture and Christianity. Nairobi, Kenya: Heinemann Educational Books, 1984.
- Cagnolo C. E. The Agikuyu. Nyeri, Kenya: The Mission Printing School, 1933.
- Gathigira S. K. Miikire ya Agikuyu. Karatina, Kenya: Scholars publishers, 1933.
- Goody and Tambiah S. J. Bride-wealth and Dowry. London, Great Britain: Cambridge University Press, 1973.
- Jomo Kenyatta. Facing Mount Kenya. London, Heinemann Educational Books, 1979.
- Kabetu M. N. Kirira kia Agikuyu. Nairobi, Kenya: Literature Bureau, 1947.
- Kisembo, Magesa and A. Shorter. African Christian Marriage. London, Great Britain: Camelot Press, 1977.
- Mbiti J. S. African Religions and Philosophy. Nairobi, Kenya: Heinemann Educational Books, 1969.
- Middleton and George K. The Agikuyu and Akamba of Kenya. London, Great Britain: Lower and Rydone, 1953.
- Muriuki G. People Around Mount Kenya. Nairobi, Kenya: Evans Brothers, 1978.

- Shorter Aylward. East African Societies. London and Boston, Great Britain: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974.
- Wachege P. N. Jesus Christ the Muthamaki(Ideal Elder). Nairobi, Kenya: Phoenix Publishers, 1992.
- Wanjiku and Karega wa Mutahi. Gikuyu our Literature. Nairobi, Kenya: Heinemann Educational Books, 1988.
- Wanjohi G. J. The Wisdom and Philosophy of the Agikuyu Proverbs. Nairobi, Kenya: Paulines Publishers, 1997.

CHURCH MAGISTERIUM DOCUMENTS

Vatican II, *Gaudium et Spes* (December 1965)

ARTICLES

Sunday Nation (Nairobi), 26 May 1996.

Sunday Standard (Nairobi), 18 February 1996.

The New Vision, (Kampala), 4 July 1997.

UNPUBLISHED WORKS

Wanjohi R. Evolution of Morals in Kenya. Leuven (Louvain) University, 1974.

APPENDIX I

RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

I am carrying out intensive research to investigate the *RURACIO* (bride-wealth) in the Agikuyu marriage. Your co-operation in this research will be of great value to me. I promise great confidentiality and consideration in all your responses. Thanks for your sincere co-operation.

PERSONAL INFORMATION

- i. Your name (optional).....
- ii. In which area do you live?.....
- iii. How old are you?.....
- iv. Occupation: student..... unemployed..... employed..... housewife.....
- v. Sex: Male Female.....
- vi. Marital status: Married..... Single DivorcedWidower
Widow.....
- vii. If employed in which sector are you working.....
- viii. Which religion/denomination do you belong to?.....

SELECTED QUESTIONS

1. What is the duration of betrothal?.....
2. Who decides the amount of *ruracio*?.....
3. Who normally takes the *ruracio*?.....
4. Have you paid the *ruracio* and, if so, how did you pay it?
 - Money: How much?.....
 - Livestock: How much?.....
 - Other things: What?.....
5. What happens to the *ruracio* when separation occurs?.....

SELECTED STATEMENTS

<i>Tick in any one of your choice</i>	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Don't know
6. <i>Ruracio</i> is paid all at once.				
7. Traditionally, there is a fixed Amount of <i>ruracio</i> .				
8. <i>Ruracio</i> depends on the status and condition of the man's family.				
9. <i>Ruracio</i> must be paid in full before unmarried couples lives together.				

10. If a woman married someone of a different ethnic group, <i>ruracio</i> should be paid all the same.				
11. If you have a daughter, you would ask your in-laws to pay the <i>ruracio</i> .				
12. <i>Ruracio</i> should continue.				
13. It is true that without <i>ruracio</i> , a woman is legally not married.				
14. <i>Ruracio</i> prompts cohabitation outside marriage				
15. It is true that <i>ruracio</i> gives a woman status and distinguishes her from elopement.				
16. It is true that <i>ruracio</i> is a sign of appreciation and brings the two families together.				
17. It is true that <i>ruracio</i> reduces a woman to an object, a man's property.				
18. If <i>ruracio</i> were protected in Kenya today, there would be:				
(a). Fewer divorces.				
(b). Fewer Single Mothers				
(c). Fewer Street Children				
19. Trial marriage is a rebellion against <i>ruracio</i> .				

APPENDIX II

CIURIA CIA UTUIRIA

Ni undu wa mathomo makwa ningukuria ciuria ciakundeithia kumenya nama uma wa *ruracio* thiini wa uhikania wa Agikuyu. Unyitaniri waku ni uteithio munene hari nii na ni ndakwirithiriria ati ni nguiga iri ta thiri maundu maria ukwandika. Ni wega na Ngai akurathime.

- i. Rite Rick (engender kwandika).....
- ii. Uikaraga itura ririku.....
- iii. Wina ukuru wa miaka iigana.....
- iv. Wikaga atia: Guthoma..... Ndiwira..... Ndiri wira.....
- v. Umundu: Mundu murume..... Mundu wa nja.....
- vi. Kimucii: Nihikanitie..... Ndimuhiku..... Mutumia ndari ho.....
Mutumia wa ndigwa..... Ndiri muhiku.....
Ndihikanitie.....
- vii. Urutaga wira uriku.....
- viii. Uri wa ndini iriku.....

CIURIA

1. Mwanake auhaga muiritu ihinda riigana atia?.....
2. Nu utuaga mburi cia *ruracio* kana una wa miti?.....
3. Kuringana na unduire nu wamukagira *ruracio*?.....
4. Wee niutwarite *ruracio* kana urimuracirie?.....
 Waracirie kana waraciirio kii?
 Mbeca cigana?.....
 Mahiu maigana atia?.....
 Indo ingi ta kii?.....
5. Muthuri na mutumia mangihitania na matiganeri, *ruracio* ruthiaga atia.....
6. *Ruracio* rutwaragwo oro rimwe kana okahora okahora.....
7. Kuri muigana uria utwitwo wa *ruracio*?.....
8. Mundu aracagia kuringa na na uhoti wake na wa aciari ake?.....
9. No muhaka *ruracio* rutwarwo ruothe mbere ya uhiki?.....
10. Muiritu angihika ruriri-ini rungi-ri *ruracio* ni rutwaragwo?.....
11. We nowitie *ruracio* mwariguo akihika?.....
12. Kuringa na uma waku-ri, niwega *ruracio* ruthii na mbere kurutuo?.....
13. Niwitikitie ati mutumia ataraciirio ti mugure kana mundu utaracitie uhikania
 wake ti mwikire

14. Ugwiciria andu ethi maikaranagia matekite uhiki kana matamenyithitie aciari
 ao ni gwigigira kuruta *ruracio*?.. ..
15. Ni ugwiciria *ruracio* ni rutugagiria mutumia akaheo gitio na agatigithukanio
 na aria maikaranagia oro uguo?.....
16. Ni ugoro wa ma ati *ruracio* rwonanagia wendani na rugatuma nyumba icio
 cieri itume ndugu?.....
17. Ni ugwikania ati *ruracio* rutuaga mutumia ota mburi, ng'ombe kana kindu o-
 giothe muthuri angigira?.....
18. *Ruracio* ringininwo umuthi bururi-ini (kenya), ni ukuona ta maundu
 maya manginyiha?
 Gutigana kwa muthuri na mutumia.....
 Airitu kugiagira ciana mari o kwanyina.....
 Ciana iria ciururaga matauni-ini.....
19. Andu ethi guikarania ta muthuri na mutumia gutaracitio ni takuga ni mareganite,
 na makahotomia unduire wa Agikuyu wa gutwara *ruracio* ?.....

*****==*****