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TOPIC:

KAMBA CONCEPT OF GOD  
AND CHRISTIANITY

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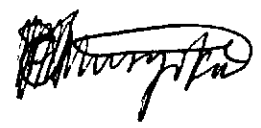
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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1. 1 Purpose

In my life as a student, I have done several courses on African studies. The first time I dealt with this course in school was when I was in secondary school. The course at this time was treated under the title 'African heritage'. In my training as a priest, I did this course in philosophy and again in my first year in theology. I have also done an elective course under the title "African theology". During these periods I have come to realise that many books, articles, and papers have been written on the issues related to african heritage. The key theme on this course has always been "African Traditional religion". Whatever the topic being treated about african these three words have always dominated the discussions. A wide research on african traditional religions has been done by scholars both africans and foreigners alike. From this wide complex field they have come out with different titles on their works. Such titles are like African Theology, Black Theology, African Christian Theology etc. Whatever names they entitle their works, they have a common and central theme namely, to try to dig deep into the african culture. The way of thinking, the way of doing things, religious practices and the perception of God by the africans.

The aim of these works is to find a way of evangelizing the African people so that christianity can be received well in the minds and hearts of the people. The reason why such efforts have been made is that many people have come to realize that something must have gone wrong somewhere when christianity was preached to africans in the beginning. The missionaries and other European writers on african traditional religions bladed it as animism,

ancestral worship, full of superstition which was incompatible with christianity. It had therefore to be done away with. This was a big mistake which dealt a terrible blow to christianity for although the Africans embraced christian faith they remained deeply Africans in their. These people who write on this topic try to correct the mistake by trying to understand the African mind and to construct a systematic kind of an idea which makes the african mind understandable and to find a right and effective method which can be used in evangelization.

My aim in writing this paper is not to try to do something different from what they have done. It is the same thing but done on specific people of a particular area where I have experienced the same problem. My aim is therefore to try and penetrate deep into the religious beliefs of the Kamba people especially their notion of God with the purpose of discovering some positive values in their beliefs with a purpose of making christian faith more rooted and planted in the minds of this people. The ultimate purpose therefore is pastoral hence the paper is pastorally oriented. It aims at showing the possibility of intermarrying the African traditional religions with christianity.

## 1. 2 Rationale

One may ask, "why study Traditional African Religions in order to strengthen christianity ?" Why should we study the concept of God in the Kamba traditional religion when this people have been evangelized for almost one hundred years and seem to have embraced christianity fully?" Such questions will seem very relevant especially this time when the African traditional values seem to be fading away very fast under the influence of christianity and Western mentality. A superficial look will show that Africans have embraced christianity and therefore no need of going to their

traditional beliefs. Yet a deep and critical survey will show otherwise. Experience shows that many africans, even the most christianized ones will turn to their traditional ways and beliefs in times of crises which they cannot understand.

I always believed that the Chagga people of Moshi in Tanzania are the most christianized, but I was surprised two years ago when I visited the place. A certain christian man in his early forties was explaining to me how one time he was seriously sick and was admitted in the hospital for almost two months. He was telling me how he was shocked when he was discharged from the Hospital and went home only to find his wealth gone because his christian relatives had spent it going to traditional witch-doctors to find cure for him. Another experience I got from Kenya. The KiKuyus are thought to be fairly modernized and therefore have little or no link to their traditional religious beliefs yet I have across some of them going to distant areas to look for traditional cure to their problems.

Why should these african christians who confess their faith in God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and who was revealed by Christ as the Father, turned to their traditional beliefs in times of crises? Has the christian God ceased to be all-powerful? This is the experience which is making me re-examine why such things happen especially among the Kamba people who seem to be very christians. Could there be some areas where christian faith or those who brought it failed to notice and address? Is there any possibility of discovering the loopholes and filling them? Is there any possibility of making a bridge between the Kamba concept of God and the God of christians, uniting them into one God and one faith rather than the seeming two gods and two faiths? Is it not a mere lack of understanding and openness which has brought these differences? Are there two gods anyway or just one but expressed in different ways and languages? Is it not a matter of one faith which

has received full revelation through Christ and another one which is in its primitive stages and needs to be penetrated, transformed and elevated into fuller understanding of knowledge of God as revealed by Christ? Is it possible for a Kamba to address God as a Father just as Christians do? This is our main objective.

### 1. 3 Method

The paper is not a social-anthropological analysis of the Kamba people. It is a theological reflection on the Kamba traditional religion with a purpose of inter-marring it with christian faith in our times. The sources of my information is my experience with the Kamba people as one born and brought up among them and therefore part of them, with a special attention to the christianized ones. Some information from pastors and priests who are working among them. Then books on Kamba traditional religion and christianity, the Bible and documents of the Church and of course the works of theologians.

### 1. 4 Content and Division of the Paper

The paper is divided into four chapters. Chapter one is introduction; it deals with the aim and purpose of the paper, the nature and rationale behind this work. It tries to ask and answer some questions as why this paper and study should be done.

Chapter two is about the notion of God among the Kamba people. As an introduction to this it explains who are the Kamba people, where they live and some of their general characteristics. It tries to establish whether there was any notion of a Supreme Being among them. The names they gave to him and his characteristics, that is his attributes.

Chapter three deals with the idea of God in christianity. It starts by reflecting on the universality of the christian faith as a revealed religion, its gradual revelation to its climax in Christ. It tries also to see the attributes of God in both Old and the New Testaments, and also the teachings of the Church.

Chapter four is divided into three sections. Section one tries to see how christian faith can be married with the Kamba traditional concept of God. It starts by establishing the common elements of the two faiths. Then it appeals christian faith to come in and purify, and elevate some concepts which are not as clear in the Kamba traditional beliefs.

Section two is the pastoral application. In this chapter we try to have the general view of the present situation giving some points that contributed to the lack of complete assimilation of christian faith in the Kamba people. Then try to give the possible solutions to the problems by giving some suggestions on how to improve our method of evangelization.

Section three is the general conclusion. It sums up all the ideas discussed in the previous chapters to make one coherent idea which can merge the two faiths into one belief. We conclude that this merger is possible basing ourselves on the idea that all the people of the world are the same in their desire for God. The initiator of this desire is God himself.

## CHAPTER TWO

### THE NOTION OF GOD AMONG THE KAMBA

#### 2. 1 The Kamba People

The people whose religion is discussed here are known as the Akamba. One person is a Mkamba, their language is Kikamba and the land is called Ukambani or simply Kambaland. The term Kamba, which I am mainly going to use throughout this paper is sometimes used to cover all these terms. The Kamba people are the fourth ethnic group in Kenya in terms of population. They belong to the large family of Bantu speaking people of Eastern Africa. Some early European writers on the Kamba people, i. e., J. C. Krapf, C. W. Hobley thought that the Kamba are the purest Bantu in the whole of Eastern Africa. Though this claim may hold some water it has never been backed by a well researched scientific facts.

The Kamba people live in four districts in south central Kenya. These are Machakos, Kitui, Makueni and Mwingi districts. A good number of them is also found in the coast especially Mombassa and Mariakani where they have lived for a long period of time, and in the Shimba hills in the south coast where they migrated in 1960's and 70's. Both tradition and modern scientific history trace the Kamba origin back in the interior of Tanzania where they came from, to mount Kilimanjaro going to the coast of Kenya for sometimes before coming to the interior of Kenya, to Mbooni hills from where they dispersed to their present areas. Traditionally the Kamba are both pastorists and farmers. They tended to balance these two economic activities though sometimes livestock keeping used to take a upper hand especially when it came to counting individual wealth.

The Kamba people are naturally and generally extroverted people with natural inclination to singing, dancing and story

telling, hence a Mkamba will keep you busy with stories to keep you from boredom. They are also very strong in their traditional beliefs both cultural and religious. Some beliefs and practices such as those of spirits and polygamy have died away in the face of modern civilization. The presence of christianity which has been present there since last century has influenced the death of these beliefs and cultural practices. Nevertheless the present day Kamba remains basically strong in his traditional beliefs. It is in the light of this strong traditional belief that we are going to enter into the discussion of the Kamba traditional religion.

## 2. 2 Religion

One of the leading writers on African religions, John Mbiti writes:

*Africans are notoriously religious, and each people have their own religious systems with a set of beliefs and practices* <sup>1</sup>

The Kamba people being part of Africans have their own way of religious worship and practices. To speak of Kamba religion is almost misleading because religious beliefs and practices are interwoven in the whole life and do not constitute a department of their own. Religion permeates all spheres of life. One is born in a religious community and incorporates the truths about Gods existence as he/she grows and understands the world. A mkamba is homo religious in that, in traditional order to be a non-religious was inconceivable. The family provided training for religious practices hence one was attached to it as part of his existence

Since religion does not form a department of its own in the traditional society, the term Kamba religion can be applied to mean that whole set of belief in God as the supreme being and the

practices directed or related to him . Its for this reason that we try to see if there was a belief in supreme being in the kamba society and if there was what sort of Being was he.

### 2. 3 Belief in the Supreme Being.

Many writers on African religions have generally characterised it as primitive fetishism, animism, *juju*, *shamanism* ancestor worship, paganism, etc. All these traits indicate the complex nature of the religion rather than give its true definition.<sup>2</sup> Some writers on kamba religion have considered the ancestor worship as the essence of the religion. This means the kamba people are ancestor worshippers which implies some form of anthropomorphism and therefore a low type of religion. This will be inadequate interpretation of a very complex phenomena. To come out this misguided and inadequate explanation of the kamba religion , we have to look into the notion of God of a supreme being in their traditional beliefs and what sort of being was. Was this supreme being one, therefore making them monotheist, or was there several beings therefore making them polytheists?

### 2. 4 There is Only One Supreme Being-*Mulungu*

The question about belief in one supreme being in traditional kamba religion has been one of great discussion among the scholars. Some have claimed that the kamba are strict monotheists while others have claimed that the religions practices of people reveal belief in several beings. The belief in some supreme being seems to be widely accepted by scholars today. John Mbiti writes that the kamba recognised *Mulungu* as God, creator and preserver of all things. He gives the people children, rain and food, but no body knows where and how He lives, or what he looks like.<sup>3</sup> Another

scholar who advanced similar view of supreme being among the kamba is Muthiani who writes:

*To some degree the Akamba are monotheists in that they have the concept of one supreme Being they call Mulungu: on the other hand their religions practices reveal a belief in three gods—the creator, the splinter, and Mulungu. They rationalize that the job of creator was to create man and every thing else, the splinter will come along and splint the fingers, limbs, branches and leaves of the plants and everything that gives form to anything that exists. But creator and splinter are stewards of Mulungu.\**

These statements give more complexity to the nature of religious beliefs of the kamba people. The insistence that *Mulungu* is the only Supreme Being makes the kamba religion a monotheist one. Yet a close examination to the other seeming two gods will show that these are attributes to the activities of *Mulungu* other than his co-gods. A further speculation will lead us the mystical nature of God in which no human is capable of apprehension without the help of revelation. For one to understand better the kamba notion of the supreme being one has to go further and examine the names given to God in the kamba society. A study of these names confirms that the kamba traditional religion did believe in God, the supreme being, the creator of everything who was highly exalted.

## 2. 5 Names for the Supreme Being

The most common traditional name for God is *Mulungu*, which with various derivations is also common in many other languages in East and central Africa. *Mulungu* has the same root with *Mungu* the supreme being in kiswahili. *Mulungu* refers to one supreme being who has power over everything that is. This name seems to denote the

fear and awe given to supreme being and the consequent honour that is His. This supreme being lives in heaven. The kamba notion of heaven, it must be noted, does not imply the sky as some missionaries and some early writers indicated. Heaven for the kamba means up and beyond without locality. The kamba believed that Mulungu keeps an eye on every creature from the peaks of Mt. Kilimanjaro and Mt. Kenya. These two mountains can be viewed from Ukambani. The belief that God watched people from certain locality or localities does not mean that God can be located somewhere. As we will see later God in the kamba people is everywhere and cannot be located. The statement that he watches people from certain places implies that an occasional extraordinary activity.

Another name for God is *Mumbi*; which means the creator. It has its roots from a verb which means to create or to bring into existence. The kamba notion shows a belief that Mulungu is a creator of all things, hence call Him *Mumbi* (the one who fashions). *Mwatuangi* (which means cleverer) is another name for God which implies that God is not only all powerful and creator of everything. He also shapes man in various parts. The traditional Kamba notion of creation holds that man was created from clay and fashioned into different parts. Other names for God *Mukuna-uku* which signifies God's ability and mighty power when doing things which men cannot do. *Mwiyumbi* which means self existing affirms that God is self-caused and does not rely on anything for His existence. The common name for God in modern times is *Ngai*. It has become so popular that it has surpassed the others. This is mainly because the biblical translation for God in kikamba uses *Ngai*. This name in spite of its popularity is not of Kamba origin. It has its own origin in Maasai who are the neighbours of the kamba and kikuyu.

It must be noted that these are not different names for different gods. They are qualities and attributes of *Mulungu* the one supreme being. Modern kamba language may speak of *Mulungu* as *Ngai Mumbi*, *Mwatuangi*, *Mwiyumbi* all signifying the qualities of *Mulungu*. The kamba therefore are strictly monotheists, hence the question of other gods existing together with *Mulungu* does not arise. At times one will find the term *Ngai* used analogically to refer to the spirits and ancestral spirits. It must be understood analogously for the spirits cannot be equalled to *Mulungu* for they are of lower nature, depending on *Mulungu* for their existence.

## 2. 6 Characteristics of the Supreme Being

### 2. 6. 1 God is Transcendent and Mysterious

After establishing the existence of the supreme being in the kamba traditional belief, the next thing is to look into his nature and how he related with the people. The question is did he relate, interact with people frequently or rarely? Many writers on African religion claimed that the African God rarely interacted with his people. The statement will be proved right or correct as we move on. One of the most pronounced characteristics of God in Kamba belief is that He is transcendence (extra-ordinary) and mysterious. *Mulungu*, is the one who stays alone and has no other companion. God is basically unknowable for his mysterious and distant from the people. The fact that God is very transcendent in the traditional belief means that God rarely interacted with the people. Traditionally the Kamba people didn't conceive any personal relationship with *Mulungu*. God is not conceived as a person some one with whom you can talk and have personal relationship. Since God could not relate with people individually he could only relate with them as a community hence his relationship with the people was

communal other than individual. One of the scholars who advanced this theory of impersonal God in the kamba, Ndeti Kivuto, belief asserts that:

*The notion of a personal God is extremely naive and does not make sense in the akamba belief.<sup>5</sup>*

This claim is supported by the fact that *Mulungu* or *Ngai* (God) is referred to as *Ngai waitu* (our God), but very rarely is he referred to as *Ngai wakwa* (my God) except in special cases where christian missionaries had some influence. Although we have said God related with people as a community, he usually did so through the mediation of the spirits or *Mundu mue* (wise man) Direct dealing with God was very unpopular with exception of the wise man who divined in the time of crisis, prescribed the desires of God and asked the intercessions of the spirits. The fact that God remains far from the people and makes rare and indirect relationships with them makes Him transcendent and mysterious hence his very nature remains unknowable to the people.

## 2. 6. 2 God is Immanent

As I have already mentioned, many early writers on African religions characterised the African Supreme Being as the only transcendent to the exclusion of his immanence. A superficial look in the religious practices of many African people seems to justify that. Mbiti on the hand sees this explanation as inadequate. He says that

*The attribute of God's transcendence must be balanced with that of his immanence, since they are paradoxically complementary.<sup>6</sup>*

The Kamba perception of God will appear to suggest that God is only transcendental, but this transcendence should not be mistaken with that of deists. The kamba don't consider God to be totally uninvolved in the affairs of men. The fact that God is actively involved in the running of the universe and that He comes close to the people especially in times of troubles and catastrophes makes him immanent. Another point that makes God immanent is the belief that there is no space where or time when God cannot be found. This awareness in the minds of the people is the strong point in support of God's immanence.

### 2. 6. 3 God Knows All Things

Various authors object to any suggestion that the God of African traditional religion was omniscient. They claim that omniscient is a greek thought not African. While it may be true with regards to the term and its abstract nature there is no evidence that the African did believe that God was (is) limited in His knowledge. The kamba people believe that *Mulungu* sees and knows everything. The spirits who are the intermediaries between God and His people can be tricked and deceived but no one can deceive *Mulungu*. A certain mzee in the village asked what he thinks of God's knowledge readily answered that "God knows every thing, we cannot hide anything from Him". It is therefore an accepted belief that God is all knowing

### 2. 6. 4 God can do all things

*Mulungu* is also believed to have great power. Nothing is too hard to for him. He is the one who gave wisdom to men, acknowledge of *Uoi* (evil powers used by the witches) and the knowledge of *Uwe* (good powers used to counteract witchcraft). The spirits can do

nothing without the permission of the supreme being. All the powers are given by *Mulungu* and nothing can defeat Him. He is therefore the master of the universe and everything in it.

#### 2. 6. 5 God is Present Everywhere

*Mulungu* is also present wherever people are. A mukamba cannot travel any place where he is unable to call upon *Mulungu* in times of dire distress. This can be proved by some remark which the Kamba people make about a person who has escaped from a danger "He is a man of God" or "God was with him" The person himself proudly tells his experience, emphasizing that "If it were not for God's presence, I'd be dead now". The implication here is that God is present shielding his people from danger. But God's presence is also experienced in blessings especially after success in anything. This awareness of God's presence everywhere is a proof that in the Kamba God is not only transcendent but also present in the lives of the people.

#### 2. 6. 6 God is Morally Good, Kind, and Loving

Goodness, kindness, love and mercy are moral characters of God as attributed to him by the kamba people. But we must be very careful not to think that these attributes of *Mulungu* as given to him by the Kamba people are of the same level with the rich theological attributes given to God in the bible. The concept of these attributes in the kamba are very limited and sometimes are there just by implication.

When an African and therefore a Kamba speaks of the goodness of God, he does so by looking in the blessings and providence of God on his people. A mukamba therefore speaks of God as good because he provides rain, food, wealth and life. The kamba also believe God

is good because as one elder remarked " God does no evil"<sup>7</sup> and therefore goodness must be his attribute. As we can see the attribute of God's goodness is not as clear as in the bible mainly because of the seeming distant God.

The same must be said of God's kindness and love. The fact is clear that the Kamba never believed *Mulungu* to be hateful being who maliciously and unpredictably harmed people. This may be the case with the spirits but never with *Mulungu*. Being not hateful, God therefore remains kind and loving, otherwise he would not give his people anything if He were hateful. A good harvest, the sending of rains, the protection from dangers are all signs that God sustains and provides for them and by implication that God loves them.

## CHAPTER THREE

### GOD IN CHRISTIANITY

#### 3. 1 Christianity as Revealed Religion

Christianity is one of the major religions of the world. It has existed for almost two thousand years and has spread nearly to all corners of the world. Though relatively recent compared to other major religions of the world, i. e., Hinduism, Buddhism etc. It has its roots in Judaism which existed many years before the coming of Christ the founder of Christianity. The God of Christianity revealed himself to the people of Israel in a gradual way in preparation for full revelation in Christ. Revelation is as the act of God seen in a progressive unfolding of his eternal plan of salvation in Christ by which he manifests and communicates himself to the world. Christianity therefore is a revealed religion which has Christ as the climax of God's revelation. The Christian faith is therefore the faith about Jesus Christ and his message of salvation. Its faith is in the living Christ who manifests God's power to men. Since God revealed himself first to the people of Israel and hence as an intrinsic connection between the Israelites' faith and Christianity, the Christian God can be understood well from the basis laid by the Old Testament which was the preparation for the new.

#### 3. 2 Revelation in Old Testament

God's revelation to the world began among the Israelites where God started a personal relation with the people. The primitive revelation recorded in the first twelve chapters of Genesis is called cosmic revelation.<sup>8</sup> The historical revelation begins with Abraham, Moses and the Prophets. The opening chapters of Genesis

reveals God as a creator of heaven and earth and their contents, exercising full authority over the man. With the call of Abraham God began to reveal himself in a more dignified way. By this call (Gen.12:17) God entered human history, his word became intelligible and he started addressing himself to man making him a partner of his plan. Revelation becomes a mystery of a personal meeting between God and man.

It is to Moses that God revealed himself as a Supreme being and revealed his name as Yahweh WHO IS (Ex 3:13) God said to Moses "I am who is". The God of his ancestors "The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob" (Exodus 3:6). Through Moses God entered into a covenant with the Israelites and made them a chosen people. Through dialogue, he revealed himself as the one only God besides whom there is no other God, "I am Yahweh your God who brought you out of Egypt..... you shall have no other God to rival me (Exodus 21)" With this God through Moses launched a strict monotheist religion. The full significance of Yahweh however was not immediately understood by the people of Israel and the ordinary people continued to see Yahweh as a powerful God among many gods. Till the time of exile there was struggle between Monotheism and syncretism. Monotheism later triumphed.

The monotheism professed by Moses and his followers implied that God is one unique, holy, pleased with uprightness and deeply interested in Israel. In other words the God of Old Testament till the prophetic times revealed himself as personal God as he who is (efficacious) in opposition to dumb and dead idols, as all powerful God, Master of the Cosmos and the Lord of nations, Who demanded obedience to his laws. Little by little, the prophets raise Israel to a more and more profound understanding of the attributes of God. Elijah in 9th century proved God to be superior to baal (1 Kings 18:20 - 40), Hosea in 8:2 see Yahweh as the faithful and loving spouse (Hosea 1:1 - 2:15), Amos in 8th chapter stresses on

Gods justice (Amos 5:21 - 26), Isaiah stress on Gods holiness (Isaiah 6:3) Jeremiah in 7th emphasised on interior religion. Ezekiel stressed on God holiness and individual responsibility (Ezk.14:12 - 23)<sup>9</sup>. This theme on Gods attributes will be treated more broadly in the next chapter.

### 3. 3 Revelation in the New Testament

#### 3. 3. 1 The God of Jesus Christ

The old testament gives an account of God's self-revelation to man, but this revelation though rich is very limited compared to the revelation in the new testament. The notion of revelation to man in the new testament is presents a complexity and richness of the same far superior than the old testament.

The coming of christ marks the highest (climax) act of God's self-revelation to man. Christ of the fullness of revelation that has been prepared by the old testament. The letter to the hebrews speaks very clearly on Gods fulfilled plan in Christ.

*At many moments in the past and by many means, God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets, but in our times the final days he has spoken to us in the person of Jesus christ his son who made all things.* <sup>10</sup>

The old testament monotheism is affirmed by the new testament and therefore the God taught by christ is the God of the patriarchs, the God of israel and also the God of christian community. What makes the God of the new testament unique is that he is taught more profoundly and more expressively. In new the testament the old testament attributes of God are more clear and new and profound ones given. The most peculiar and unique in the new testament is that God becomes the father of Jesus Christ and of the christians.

The christian God therefore becomes God the father of our lord Jesus christ. This theme on God's attributes will be treated in the following chapter.

### 3. 4 Attributes of God in the Bible

The bible is about God's self revelation to man. Through the word of God in the bible man comes to know God more clearly and therefore comes to know some qualities or characteristics which can be attributed to Him. As I have already stated in the past pages of this paper there is intimate relationship between Judaism and christianity and therefore a strong unity represented by the two testaments. The attributes of the God of christianity therefore has to be studied from both testaments since the old testament is the preparation for the new one. The beginning then is always from the old testament to the new. The existence God in the old testament was taken for granted as a basic truth in the thought of Israel and required no proof. Nowhere in the old testament is any description of God's beginning is given for he always was. The many references to the of God in the old testament (eg. Job 38-39, Jer 10:11-16) are not arguments to prove God's existence but opportunities to sing His praises. Man's purpose in life is not to recognise God's existence but to acknowledge his power and goodness and to be obedient to Him.<sup>11</sup> The revelation of God in Israel is therefore not about that He is but not what he is. Man comes to know God as a result of divine initiative or revelation but not by human reasoning.<sup>12</sup> The revelation in Old Testament as i have already said is an evolving one which finds its full revelation and clarity in new testament. In describing the attributes of God in this chapter I will take one attribute found in both testaments and describe it as it is found in both.

### 3. 5 God is one

#### 3. 5. 1 The Old Testament

The belief that there is one God only who transcends the world, a belief that grew up in the midst of a general polytheism is a basic achievement of the old testament.<sup>13</sup> This achievement didn't come instantly however, even after God revealed himself to Abraham, it probably took him and his descendants a long time to understand just how unique this God was.

The first clear affirmation of God's oneness is made through Moses- "I, the lord your God--you shall not have other gods besides me" (Ex 20:2-22). Even after this ordinary Hebrew didn't understand completely. They knew that this was an absolute prohibition against worshipping of any other god but believe in existent of other gods for other nations still persisted. It was only later through the prophets that the full truth was disclosed in all its clarity that no other in fact existed. The prophets preached God as the lord , creator of all the whole world and of all history as well as the chosen people.

#### 3. 5. 2 The New Testament

Israel's greatest contribution to the man kind, that monotheism is also basic to christianity. The jealous and loving God of the old testament (Ex 20:5,34:5-9) shepherd (ps 22:1)and spouse to his people (Hos 2:18-35) intolerant of the idols (Deut 5:7-14) demands also in the new testament to be the centre of man's life. Idolatry is therefore condemned in the new testament. This is as evidenced in (Acts 14:10-17, 15:29, 1Thes 1:9, 1cor 8:4-6) Christ himself affirmed this when he prayed for his disciples

*now this is everlasting life, that they may know you, the only true God, and him whom you have sent, Jesus christ.<sup>14</sup>*

Monotheism is therefore a basic truth of faith which is common in the two testaments.

### 3. 6 God is Holy

#### 3. 6.1 The Old Testament

Holiness is an attribute that is repeatedly asserted of God . Its the favourite theme of Isaiah "the holy one " (Isa:24), and is one of the most characteristic note of God in the people of the old testament. The holiness of God however does not imply effort or struggle against evil. Its more than a moral perfection. It signifies a mystery of absolute perfection and inaccessibility.

#### 3. 6. 2 The New Testament

The idea of the holiness of God as a divine attribute is less emphasised in the new testament than the old testament, although its everywhere presupposed and appears at decisive points in the revealing and saving work of Christ.<sup>15</sup> The revealing and saving work of Christ is gathered around the name which he addresses God "Holy father, keep them in thy name which thou hast given me" (Jn 17:11). This attribute is also signified in the christian prayer of our father where it calls for the name to be hollowed. Holiness of God which is emphasised in both testaments is not a moral or ethical attribute but its the nature that distinguishes him from everything else hence he is holiness itself. This brings us to his transcendence nature which we are going to discuss in the following pages.

### 3. 7 God is Eternal

#### 3. 7. 1 The Old Testament

While there was in other religions, a theogamy (genealogy of gods) there is no trace or speculation among the Israelites about the origin of God. Yahweh has no history, no family, He is just there from the very start. His pre-existence and endless continuance is taken for granted. The world has beginning God has no beginning hence psalms declares

*Before the mountains were brought forth and the earth and the world were born, from eternity to eternity thou art or God! for a thousand years in your sight are yesterday which has passed. 18*

From this we can conclude that the people old testament perceived God as one who is eternal, immutable hence no beginning or end.

#### 3.7. 2 The New Testament

The idea of God's eternity and his unchangeableness which we have seen above means that he has been exalted above time. The fact that God is above time means that time has been created by God hence its creature of God thus st. paul speaks of God's eternal plans which existed before the beginning of ages, i.e., time (1 cor 2:7), and the letter to the Hebrews speaks of God creating the ages through his son Jesus Christ. The old testament concept about God's eternity is therefore confirmed by the new with much more clarity.

### 3. 8 God is All powerful

#### 3. 8. 1 The Old Testament .

Immeasurable power is attributed to the God of Israel. Israel realization of God's personality uniqueness and greatness comes in larger measure through the overwhelming experience of his power. Yahweh who is and brings to existence all what exists is ever present to the world not as a blind force, but as a person who acts with full deliberation and control. With mere words he brings he brings to existence (Gen.1:3, ps 32, 33). by his power the Hebrews came to know him first as vastly superior to any other god then as the only possible God. He tells Abraham from the very first "I am the almighty God (Gn17) but his actions more than the words convince the people. Israel the small and feeble nation is able to do impossible. He frees them from Egypt and establishes them in the promised land and repeatedly helps them overcome their enemies. 17. At first people tended to think of him as only supreme within Israel itself but slowly they realised that his power extends to ends of the earth. The later part of the old testament presents God as the as creator and absolute lord of the whole universe, and without him everything falls back to nothing (wisdom, 11:26)that God permits his people to be led to exile is recognized as a punishment for infidelity, but its not due to lack of any power.

#### 3. 8. 2 The New Testament

While the old testament recognizes the might of God through historical experience whose understanding grows gradually, the new testament asserts that God's power over creation. Creation .in spite of its independence remains entirely at God's disposal that at any moment he can annihilate it. Thus st. matthew writes that

"heavens and earth will pass but God's words will not pass away" (Mt24:35). Although the new testament rarely uses the term almighty God it uses other terms that mean the same as the almighty. Such terms use are found in the following passages . He is the only Lord (1 tim 6:15) "with God nothing is impossible (Lk,1:37),"All that is. has been created by Him,"Nothing happens and nothing exists apart from his will" (Jn 1:1) "Not even the least thing happens apart from his will". The God of the new testament is above all, a God who works miracles, as manifested by the great wonders and miracles done by Jesus during His earthly ministry. The power to do the miracles is freely at His disposal ,hence he can do what he will without limitations.

### 3. 9 God is Present Everywhere & Near

#### 3. 9. 1 The Old Testament

The people of Israel were very much aware of God's immanence. The knowledge of a personal God in deepest sense meant proximity, love and communion. The authors and the prophets of old testament continued to impress upon the people that God is not far and remote from them, but is a God who is ever near. God is seen as He who is with the people, he mixes with them, mingling in their lives and speaking and visiting them. Israel is called son and Hosea portrays God as a loving father who cares for his children. Israel greatest awareness of Yahweh's presence with the people is shown in the psalm "Where can you go from your spirit (ps 39)

### 3. 9. 2 New Testament

The presence of God, his coming to men is a central article in both old and new testaments. Revelation comes to climax in the new testament with the coming of Christ as the messiah, the immanuel (God with us) of whom, in whom, and through whom God is with us and in whom, through his coming the indwelling of the spirit has been made both possible and actual<sup>18</sup>. The gospel speaks of God coming to his people and giving divine son ship to those who received him. But those who received him he gave power to become the children of God (Jn 2:12) in the letter of James the christians are encouraged to call upon God who is willing to come to them "the nearer you go to God, the nearer He will come to you" (James 4:8)

### 3. 10 God is Transcendence

#### 3. 10. 1 The Old Testament

That God is near to his people and comes to them is a well founded assertion in the scripture. But we cannot look only to God's immanence and overlook his transcendent nature. This can lead us quite easily to pantheism hence the necessity to look into his transcendence. The old testament people though very aware of God's presence among them were even more aware of the fundamental distinction between God and Man, God and the universe. The distance is in fact an infinite one.

#### 3. 10. 2 The New Testament

In the new testament God is not only wholly other, the lord of history, creator of all things, king of ages (1Tim 1:17) as he is in the testament. He is also the father The son and the hol

spirit. The gospel use the language that indicate exalted nature of God, "He is the blessed one" (Mk 14:61), "He is surrounded by angels"(Lk 12:8) and "resides in heaven" (Mt 6:9) second Peter speaks of his majestic glory (2 pt 1:17) and the apocalypse call him "Alfa and Omega" (Ap 1:8). All these languages shows that although God is very immanent among the christians believers, He is also very distinct in his nature.

### 3. 11. God is Love

#### 3. 11. 1 The Old Testament

In the old testament God's relation with people is centred around the election, covenant and fidelity to it. The covenant of God with Israel is an outflow of his eternal love " You must love your God with all your heart" (Dt.6:5) The promise of final redemption and the fulfilment of the covenant with God is based upon the divine love alone and not upon Israel,s fidelity and repentance. The love of God is not based on the quality of Israel but solely on election which is rooted in the will of God which is the expression of his eternal love.

#### 3. 11. 2 The New Testament

The statement "God is love" (Jn 4:7) points to the very heart of the message of the new testament and therefore christian gospel. In the old testament everything tends to turn on the holiness of God but in the new testament everything turns on the love of God. It's for the love of God that Jesus came to the world.

*For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whoever believes in him may not perish, but may have life everlasting. 19*

This love of God is testified in Jesus ministry where he shows love to the sinners . It is Christ who came to seek and to save that which was lost (Lk 19:10) who signifies the love of God to the people. The most inspiring thing in the new testament is that God is the initiator of this love "He in love, not that we loved god, but that he loved us (1 Jn 4:10) the greatest act of love by God is that christ offered to die on the cross for mankind ;and through his death and resurrection the world was redeemed.

### 3.12. God is a Living Person

#### 3. 12. 1 The Old Testament

The beauty of the scriptural presentation of God is that he appears as a living person. To call Yahweh a living person was a basic concept of Israel. He is a personal being because of his activeness and his powerful deeds in the history of Israel. His self possession and his freedom<sup>20</sup>. To call Yahweh a living person by the people of Israel therefore was an immediate reaction in the face of all he did for them and to them. They are convinced of his life through the power he exercises so strikingly on their behalf. Life is what distinguishes Yahweh from other gods around Israel. He is a living person and a giver of life by the mere fact that He is God (Hos 2:1). (Jer 10:10) and he is the source of all life.

### 3. 12. 2 The New Testament

For the men of the new testament God's personal being is living reality. The countless example of living prayer in the new testament are so many testimonies to the personal God in whom primitive christianity believed, and they indicate at the same time in what sense the concept of God's personality must be understood. The God of the new testament is a God whom men may address as thou<sup>21</sup>. The principle reality about Gods living personality is that he is a God who acts and moves everything. Everything has life in Him.

### 3. 13 God as Father

#### 3. 13. 1 Old Testament

Many religions in the world invoke God as the father . In polytheistic societies the deity is often considered the father of gods and men<sup>22</sup>. The notion of God as a father in the old testaments very recent. The people of the old testament called God "father" in as much as he was the creator of the universe, "Is this not your father who gave you being, who made you and by whom you subsist?" (Dt 32:6), "Is there not one father for us all? Did not one God create us ?" (Mal 2:10) They further called God father because of the gift of the covenant and the law "Israel is my first son (Ex 4:22). They also called God father of the kings of Israel and finally they saw him as father especially of the poor, the orphaned and the widowed who are under his loving protection.

#### 3. 13. 2 The New Testament

The idea of God as the father which is revealed to us by Christ is completely unique in its sense. God is not the father

because of being the creator as in the old testament but because he is the father by His relationship with His only son who is son only in relation to his Father<sup>23</sup>. The gospel has Jesus saying "No one knows the son except the father, and no one knows the father except the son and anyone to whom the son chooses to reveal him (Mt 11:27). Again the gospel quotes Jesus saying "no one has ever seen God. it is the only son who is close to the fathers bosom who has made him known" (Jn 1:1). The idea of God as the father of Jesus is very dominant in the new testament and hence the relationship between God and Jesus Christ is very basic in the whole message of the testament. Jesus christ is the only true, natural and the only begotten son of the father. The christian believers are therefore sons and daughters of God not by natural means but by adoption in Jesus Christ. "But to those whom did accept him he gave powers to become children of God "(Jn 1:2), ".....to redeem the subjects of law so that we could receive adoption as sons" (Gal 4:6-7). The christian therefore can legitimately address God as a father. St. paul in many of his letters addresses God as God and father of our lord Jesus Christ" (Rm 1:7), (1cor 1:3), (ep 1:3). The christian faith is about God who is specified as the God the father of Jesus Christ.

### 3. 14 The official teachings of the church

The official teaching of the church affirms all the attributes of God in both the New Testament and the old testament. It professes one true and living God who revealed himself to Abraham, Moses and the prophets. He is the same God who revealed himself more broadly through his son Jesus Christ and who became the father of all christians through Jesus.

One unique element of church teaching is the elaboration of the doctrine of the Holy Trinity. This doctrine is very basic of

the churches, teachings. From the beginning, the revealed truth of the Holy Trinity has been at the very root of the churches living faith. The doctrine is elaborated in the creed of the church in which God is professed as only one but in Him there are three divine Persons ,the Father the Son and the Holy Spirit.<sup>24</sup> This doctrine though very basic of the christian faith is not easily to be described and in fact its impossible to understand hence no matter how much efforts we make it will remain a mystery at the end.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### TOWARDS THE KAMBA CHRISTIAN UNDERSTANDING OF GOD

The preceding two chapters dealt with the notion of God among the Kamba people and the idea of God in christianity. This chapter tries to compare the two concepts to see if there is anything common between the two and if there is how can they be married together to make one strong faith in God. The marriage sought is through dialogue and mutual respect to both. The ultimate purpose is nevertheless christian evangelization with the aim of making it more rooted in the minds and the hearts of the kamba people who seems to be thoroughly evangelized but are still strongly rooted in their traditional ways. In order that these may be a genuine and meaningful dialogue, I will start by establishing the positive elements in the traditional kamba religion then bring the christian ideas where I find them lacking in kamba. I will also try to see how the christian faith can purify those ideas which are already found in the Kamba religion and are not well explained.

#### 4. 1 Positive elements in Kamba Religion

For many centuries christianity had a hostile attitude towards the other religions of the world. The church had claimed almost an exclusive possession of truths about God. Expression such as "outside the church there is a salvation" are some of the proofs of the church's attitude towards the other religions. The church also had a sceptical relation with Judaism with whom they share a common heritage. If the church had such a sceptical relation with Judaism and also with Islam, religions very rich in theology, what about the African traditions? The traditional African religion was looked not only with scepticism but with condemnation. With the coming of

the Vatican Council II the churches attitude towards the other religions was changed .It started to recognise some positive elements and religious truths in the other religions .In fact it encourages dialogue with them. This was a major break through.

#### 4. 2 The Idea of One God

The second vatican council in its declaration in the relation of the church to non-christian religions(*Nostra Aetate*) says that throughout the history even to the present day,there is found among different peoples a certain awareness of a hidden power, which lies behind the course of nature and the events human life. At time there is present even a recognition of the supreme being or still more a father<sup>35</sup>

This recognition is very true with regards to the Kamba traditional religion for as we have seen ,the Kamba did recognise and worship one Supreme Being whom they called *Mulungu*. When the missionaries came to ukambani, they brushed out this notion and dubbed the whole Kamba form of worship as superstition and satanic. As a result we have now among many kamba christians a form of religions syncretism in which there is no pure christian faith or pure African faith. It is true there was and still there is a lot of superstition in the traditional religion ,but we should not ignore this positive element of recognizing one supreme being, the *Mulungu*. The christian preachers today must start by recognizing *Mulungu*, then from this point transform him to Yahweh the God of Abraham Isaac and Jacob ,then to God the Father of Jesus Christ . They should make people know that the *Mulungu* whom they worshipped and revealed so much is the one who spoke to Abraham Isaac and revealed himself in a special way to the people of Israel and revealed himself in a more profound way in the person of Jesus Christ. In this way christianity will purify the Kamba notion of God and rise people to

more profound faith well rooted in the hearts of the people for it will have been worked from within.

#### 4. 3 God as the Creator

The declaration on the relationship of the church to non-christian religion declares that,

*All men form but one community .This is so because all men stem from the one stock which God created to the people the entire earth.<sup>26</sup>*

The declaration basing itself in Act 17:26 acknowledges that all men have a common origin and a common destiny, that is God.

Many religions in the world recognise God as the creator of the universe. These religions however don't have clear explanation about creation. They create a lot of myths with different gods creating different parts of the universe and nature. These theories are not compatible with christianity. As a matter of fact both ancient and modern philosophies cannot explain creation adequately without the help of revelation. As a result creation can only be understood well through revelation.

The idea of God as a creator is not alien in the Kamba thought. They did attribute the work of creation to *Mulungu* their Supreme Being. But in spite of this there no clarity on how *Mulungu* created the world. The Kamba notion of creation falls into temptation of platonic explanation of creation in which God creates the world through other beings somewhere between the earth and God. This last point is very debated today whether the Kamba concept of creation is similar to platonic or its God who creates directly.<sup>27</sup> Which ever the case there is a lot of confusion hence a recourse to christianity is necessary for purification. The christian religion is very clear about creation, that God created the world out of nothing and without the help of anybody. Creation out of nothing

means God didn't create anything using something which he himself didn't make.

The christian concept about creation is very clear and by far superior to that of the Kamba. It should come in amidst this confusion in the Kamba concept and clarify the issue. The Kamba *Mulungu* should become more powerful and able to create the world without the assistant of anyone.

#### 4. 4 God as all Powerful

Both Kamba religion and christianity recognise God as all powerful. The Kamba people in their practice of religion believes that *Mulungu* who watches the people from mount Kenya and Kilimanjaro knows everything and is capable of doing anything. In practice however they show great fear in the evil spirits and witchcraft more than *Mulungu* himself. This maybe because of seeming transcended nature of *Mulungu* in which God rarely mixes with peoples affairs. Although many Kamba are christians today, they will not hesitate going to their traditional witch-doctors for consultation in the face of unexplained problem. This shows that the christian God has not proved to be as powerful as the traditional doctors and diviners. The christian message is challenged by the above practise. I should come in and explain the might and power of God which he exercises through Christ. It should make the Kamba people do away with all the powers that are not in line with Christian faith. The God's power seen in Christ through his physical healing and his power to conquer evil and forgive sins must prevail.

#### 4. 5 Transcendence and Immanence of God

The Kamba traditional religion presents God as a very transcendental being who rarely interacts with the people. He stays up there and leaves the people to do their business without interference. If he has to deal with the people he has to do so through the spirits. As a result there is no personal conduct between an individual and God. There is only community relationship hence religion is a community affair without any personal relation with God.

The Christian God is however both transcendent and immanent. He is both communal and personal. The christian faith therefore must encourage the Kamba to keep their communal aspect of religion but instill in them a personal relationship with God. God must come to his people through Christ. Christ should be the true mediator between God and man through whom an individual comes into contact with God.

#### 4. 6 God's Moral Goodness, Kindness & Love

About the moral character of *Mulungu*, we are assured that the Christian concepts of the love, mercy and kindness of God are not opposed to the traditional concept of *Mulungu*<sup>28</sup>. These concepts are not alien to the kamba people. Nevertheless these concepts cannot be equalled with biblical riches of christian theology. Since the traditional Kamba concepts lack clarity and richness found in christianity a more profound effort is needed to purify these concepts by insisting on God's providence to his people. While the christian faith is doing this it must be very careful not to give the impression that the moral characters of *Mulungu* are different from those of christian God. They should be retained and strengthened to the level of the riches found in the bible.

## 4. 7. Pastoral Response

### 4.7.1 A general view of the present situation

The Kamba people have traditionally been divided into two areas, based on slightly different dialects and also geographical differences. These areas are the former Kitui and Machakos districts. These two have each been divided into two. These two areas comprise the present two catholic dioceses in Ukambani. Christianity especially in catholic dioceses of Machakos has been generally an accepted religion. It is also an accepted religion in Kitui though due to geographical situation, the area has not been well evangelized hence many people have remained traditionalists. I will base my observations in Machakos diocese, since it is the area I,m conversant with. Although the situations can be generally applied to the other parts of Ukambani since they are the same people.

A general and superficial survey will show that many Kamba people of Machakos have fully accepted Christianity as their only faith. But a detailed, critical survey may proof otherwise. It is true Kamba are a very active church goers and participate very actively in small christian communities. Because of their emotional and religious nature, they are very good in animating the liturgy. There are also many vocations for the priesthood, for religious life, for both male and female. In spite of all this seeming total embrace of Christianity, there is a confusion in accepting fully the God brought by christians and the God worshipped by their ancestors. There are some overlapping issues which need to be clarified and analyzed for the betterment of christianity. This is because the Kamba people like many other African peoples, tend to have recourse in their traditional believes in the face of the problems and calamities, which they cannot understand and therefore

cannot solve. There is a case I personally witnessed, when I was in secondary school, more than ten years ago. There was a very dangerous spot in a river where children used to go for swimming. The danger was not there before. It has been occasioned by unusual heavy rains that year. Then it happened three children were drowned in a space of one and a half years. Then people in the whole village started to press for a sacrifice of a goat to be offered on the spot. Their belief was that God was not happy with the behaviour of the people. The most surprising thing was that the champions of this act were from a very strong protestant family, people from African Inland Church. My question was this: why these christians were pressing to go back to their traditional religions. This experience made me to ask myself why this double embrace of faith. In my opinion there are several factors that contributed to this.

First, the missionaries who brought christian faith to Kambaland and other african areas had a total disregard to the traditional faith and its values. They regarded african religions as devilish, hence it had to be thrown away completely and be replaced by christianity. In throwing the traditional beliefs away, without due considerations, they also threw out the values attached to it and by so doing they threw away the dirty water with the baby.

Second, the christian faith spoke of God who is both transcendent and immanent as opposed to traditional *Mulungu* who is mainly transcendental.

Third, the christian faith emphasized on personal God who relates with the people individually as opposed to *Mulungu* who is communal and relates with people as a community. This type of approach brought about religious individualism which is difficult to assimilate.

Fourth, the christian religious individualism brought a kind of morality where each individual is responsible for his personal sins, while the Kamba morality like its religion is communal in general. Whereby an individual sin affected the whole community.

Fifth, the traditional wise-man (*Mundu Mue*) seems to be more powerful than the christian pastor or priest.

#### 4.7.2 Possible Ways of Solving the Problems

First, a call for re-evangelization with new emphasis. Christian faith should look at the positive aspects of the traditional beliefs and assimilate the positive values.

Second, the christian transcendental God should mean the same as *Mulungu*, but christianity should bring God close to the people in the person of Christ. Christ should become the chief *Mundu Mue* (wise-man) who is more powerful and transcends all the others.

Third, the church should become a new community, where people will feel at home with religion. The communal aspect of religion should be emphasised in the re-evangelization. This community should however transcend all tribal boundaries so that when a christian believer from Ukambani goes to the other parts of the country, he/she, should feel at home as well. The emphasis therefore should be a universal one. The Kamba people should be told of the universal nature of the christian faith.

## 4.8 General Conclusion

God who is infinitely perfect and blessed in himself, out of his goodness freely created man to share in his blessed life. For this reason, God in all the ages and in all places the calls people close to himself. He invites people to seek him, know him and love him with all their strength:

*Listen Israel: Yahweh our God is one, the only Yahweh. You must love Yahweh your God with all your heart, with all your soul with all your strength. ”*

This law is confirmed by Jesus in Matthew,

*You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your mind.<sup>30</sup>*

The deuter-onomical law though addressed to Israel applies to all mankind for as is exemplified in other parts of the scripture, God is known and glorified by all the people of the world,

*All nations will come and adore you; God and give glory to your name .<sup>31</sup>*

*Who does not revere and glorify your name o Lord? For you alone are holy, and all nations will come and adore you.<sup>32</sup>*

This invitation of man by God to share his goodness and sing his praises is explained by St. Augustine one of the leading christian scholars in the early centuries of christianity. He wrote in his book, the confession:

*And man desires to praise the . . . . . Thou doest so excite him that to praise thee is his joy. For thou has made us for thyself and our hearts are restless till they rest in thee <sup>33</sup>*

The above points shows clearly that God is known by all the people for he is their creator. He knows them and draws them close to him. God therefore cannot be limited to a particular religion or place. It is because of this conviction of Gods universal love that I set out to examine the kamba traditional religion.

In the second chapter of my paper we saw that God is not alien in the kamba traditional religion. He is very much known not only as an hidden force but is perceived as the only Supreme Being called *Mulungu*. This Supreme Being was feared, respected and given the highest honour. The people were very much aware of his moral demands and hence they were very careful not to break them.

In the third chapter we saw how the God of christianity revealed himself in a gradual way from the time of Abraham to the time of Jesus the founder of christianity. In this chapter we saw the attributes of God as found in both the old and the new testament. We saw the riches found in christian faith especially in the new testament where God becomes the Father of Jesus Christ and of all the christian believers by adoption through christ. This concept of God as the father of Christ is unique and proper to christianity. It is not found anywhere else either in Judaism or any other religion of the world. The official position of the Church affirms the biblical truths and elaborates further the doctrine of the Holy Trinity.

The fourth chapter, section one tried to see the similarities between the Kamba traditional religion and christianity. In this chapter we recognized that there is no difference between the God worshipped by the Kamba traditional people and the God of christianity. The God worshipped by the two religions is basically

the same they differ in their degrees of perception of the nature of God. This must be expected because of the two modes of revelation, the natural revelation and the revelation given through written works. As expected revelation through written works is richer and therefore superior in its theology. The other one though not so rich is useful because it can serve as a base for the evangelisation of christian faith.

Section two had a general view of the present situations generally. We saw the weak points which contributed to the lack of firm root of christianity among the Kamba. We proposed some points which can be used as a new method for evangelisation, with the hope that christianity can bear more fruits among the people.

From all these arguments we can conclude that all the people of the world are basically the same in their religions practices and their perception of God. In spite of all this we cannot ignore our christian vocation to bring the good news of christ to all the people of the world. The church while recognising the positive aspects of other religions of the world still calls for the evangelization since this is its duty as commanded by christ. In its document on the church (lumen Gentium), the church speaks of the people who have not yet received the good news, yet seeks God with a sincere heart and conscience. It says that these people have the possibility of attaining salvation<sup>34</sup>. In fact it goes on to say that whichever truth is found in these religions it must be taken as a preparation of the gospel. As I have already said, the church is nevertheless aware of its duty to proclaim the good news to the world as commanded by Christ (Mt. 28:18 - 20). Gods plan of salvation through Christ must be realised through the evangelization of the people of all cultures. The stand of the church on other religious of the world is that

*Whatever good is found sown in the minds and hearts of men or in the rites and customs of peoples, these not only are to be preserved from destruction but are to be purified, raised up and perfected for the glory of God, the confusion of the devil and the happiness of man<sup>35</sup>.*

With this view of the church the purpose of our paper becomes very clear. We demonstrated the positive elements in the Kamba traditional religious practices. A good percentage of truth about God is already sown in the minds of the people. The question about the existence of God does not arise among the Kamba people for he is already there and has always been. We need to enrich this concept about God through the evangelization. Our main question however is not about God as such but how to bring Christ in this traditional religion and make him accepted among them. We shall propose some points in our pastoral application and see the approaches which can be used so that there can be an effective evangelization.

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