

**THE SOCIO-CULTURAL AND THEOLOGICAL CONTEXT OF THE DOUBLE
RITE OF PASSAGE IN NOMIYA CHURCH IN RARIEDA SUB-COUNTY, SIAYA
COUNTY**

BY

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DECLARATION

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DEDICATION

For your love, support and encouragement I dedicate this thesis to you: My wife Nelly, our children: Eugene, Hazel, Beryl and Timothy and to my grandchildren Rowan and Samuela, the Double Blessing in 2014.

ABSTRACT

Rites of passage are a universal phenomenon marked by transitions during major life changes. In the Nomiya Church (NC), circumcision and baptism as religious rites of initiation are simultaneously performed on the male infant on the eighth day after birth whereas the female infant gets baptism on the fourteenth day, thus presenting the double rite of passage. The NC as the first African Initiated Church (AIC) in Kenya started among the Luo people, a community that traditionally did not practice circumcision. The NC stands unique in its practice of the double rite of passage which is evidently a reversal of the decision of the first Church Council of AD 49 at Jerusalem, which settled for baptism rather than circumcision as the Christian initiation rite. This study questions the continued relevance of circumcision to the theology of the NC if baptism is the sign of the new covenant. The overall objective of this study was to investigate the socio-cultural and theological context of the double rite of passage in the NC. The specific objectives were: to examine the socio-cultural basis for the double rite of passage in the NC, to evaluate the theological context of the double rite of passage in the NC, and to examine socio-theological issues in the double rite of passage as a basis for gender disparity in the NC. The conceptual framework adopted called 'appropriation dialogue' is the biblical concept of covenant. Covenant entails mutual reciprocity whereby God moves to establish a relationship with human beings, who in return respond in obedience as they appropriate the gifts from God. The research design was explanatory. Rarieda Sub-County was purposively sampled. The study population was the NC leaders and members from Rarieda Sub-County in Siaya County, Kenya. The accessible population was NC membership in eight dioceses sampled out of the fourteen in Rarieda Sub-County. Simple random sampling was used to get the eight dioceses. A sample of 345 NC leaders and baptized members formed the respondents. Purposive sampling was used to sample 113 church leaders who included: the Archbishop, bishops, clergy, lay readers, senior lay members, and women representatives. Snowball sampling was used to sample 232 baptized adherents. The baptized members were male and female, aged eighteen years and above. Methods of data collection for this study were Key Informant Interviews (KII), self-administered questionnaires, observation and focus group discussions. The research instruments were interview schedule, questionnaire, observation schedule and discussion schedule. Qualitative data was thematically summarized for specific patterns. Quantitative data was given by the numerical socio-demographic statistics. This study has shown that the practice of the double rite of passage is at the core of the NC theology as revealed in the socio-cultural and theological aspects of the NC worship. The double rite of passage in a patriarchal society prescribes a system of social structures that promote gender disparity. The double rite of passage is unique to the NC in the manner it represents the total religious life of the NC adherents. The double rite of passage as a hybrid of elements from several religious faiths provides the community with a channel to transmit its core values to the initiates. This study recommends that the double rite of passage that defines what it means to be a member of NC should be strengthened through healing in the leadership and body of adherents to ensure the church remains relevant. This study is of academic significance as it highlights new findings on the role of the double rite of passage in strengthening the NC faith in the Old Testament biblical teachings.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| TITLE PAGE..... | i |
| DECLARATION | ii |
| ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS | iii |
| DEDICATION | iv |
| ABSTRACT..... | Error! Bookmark not defined. |
| TABLE OF CONTENTS..... | vi |
| LIST OF ABBREVIATION AND ACRONYMS..... | xii |
| OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS | xiii |
| LIST OF TABLES | xv |
| LIST OF FIGURES | xvi |
| CHAPTER ONE:INTRODUCTION | 1 |
| 1.1 Background to the Study..... | 1 |
| 1.1.1 Marking a New-Born Child | 1 |
| 1.1.2 Circumcision in Africa..... | 1 |
| 1.1.3 Circumcision as a Covenant..... | 2 |
| 1.1.4 Baptism as a Covenant..... | 2 |
| 1.1.5 The Double Rite of Passage | 4 |
| 1.1.6 The Socio-Cultural Basis of the Double Rite of Passage in the NC..... | 6 |
| 1.1.7 The Theological Context of the Double Rite of Passage | 7 |
| 1.1.8 Socio Theological Issues and Gender disparity in the NC..... | 8 |
| 1.2 Statement of the Problem..... | 10 |
| 1.3 Research Questions | 10 |
| 1.4 Research Objectives | 10 |
| 1.5 Scope and Limitation of the Study..... | 11 |
| 1.6 Justification of the Study..... | 12 |
| 1.7 Conceptual Framework | 13 |

| | |
|---|-----------|
| CHAPTER TWO:LITERATURE REVIEW | 18 |
| 2.1 Introduction..... | 18 |
| 2.2 The Socio-Cultural Basis for the Double Rite of Passage in the NC..... | 18 |
| 2.3 Baptism | 28 |
| 2.4 Baptism and Circumcision | 32 |
| 2.5 The Socio-Theological Issues in the Double Rite of Passage as a Basis of Gender Disparity in the NC | 34 |
| CHAPTER THREE:RESEARCH METHODOLOGY | 37 |
| 3.1 Introduction..... | 37 |
| 3.2 Research Design..... | 37 |
| 3.3 Study Area..... | 37 |
| 3.3.1The Size and Distribution of Administrative Units | 38 |
| 3.4 Study Population | 42 |
| 3.5 Sampling Procedure and Sample Size | 42 |
| 3.6 Sources of Data | 43 |
| 3.7 Data Collection Methods | 44 |
| 3.8 Validity and Reliability | 46 |
| 3.9 Data Storage..... | 47 |
| 3.10 Data Analysis | 47 |
| 3.11 Ethical Consideration..... | 48 |
| 3.12 Research constraints..... | 48 |
| CHAPTER FOUR:THE SOCIO-CULTURAL BASIS OF THE DOUBLE RITE OF PASSAGE IN THE NC | 50 |
| 4.1 Introduction..... | 50 |
| 4.1.1 Socio-demographic data..... | 50 |
| 4.1.1.1 Age of Respondents | 50 |
| 4.1.1.2 Gender of Respondents | 50 |
| 4.2 The Socio-Cultural Basis of the Double Rite of Passage..... | 51 |

| | |
|---|------------|
| 4.2.1 The Founding of the NC | 51 |
| 4.3 Celebrations of the Double Rite of Passage..... | 72 |
| 4.4 The Plague of Wrangles | 73 |
| 4.5 Discussion of the Socio-cultural Context of the Double Rite of Passage | 93 |
| 4.6 Conclusion | 103 |
| CHAPTER FIVE:THE THEOLOGICAL CONTEXT OF THE DOUBLE RITE OF PASSAGE IN THE NC | 106 |
| 5.1 Introduction..... | 106 |
| 5.2 Discourse of the Heavenly Vision | 106 |
| 5.2.1 God Alone to Be Worshipped..... | 107 |
| 5.2.2 Owalo is God’s Instrument | 108 |
| 5.2.3 Owalo’s Ladder, the Only Means to Access God..... | 110 |
| 5.2.4 Worship is the Only Acceptable Sacrifice/ the Long Rope | 111 |
| 5.2.5 Human Destiny | 111 |
| 5.3. God in the Routine Worship of the NC..... | 112 |
| 5.3.1 God is one | 113 |
| 5.3.2 Nyasaye Duong’- <i>God is Great</i> | 113 |
| 5.4.2 Jehovah the Universal God | 113 |
| 5.5. <i>Keno</i> - The Baptism/Circumcision Service for Male Infants..... | 114 |
| 5.5.2 The Making of Vows and the Creed | 116 |
| 5.5.3 The Creed/Confession and Exhortation | 117 |
| 5.5.4 Commitment and Pledges of Parents and God Parents..... | 118 |
| 5.5.5 Baptism | 120 |
| 5.5.6 Forgiveness | 121 |
| 5.5.7 Gloria | 121 |
| 5.6. <i>Keno</i> -The Baptism Service for Female Infants..... | 121 |
| 5.7. The Service of Circumcision..... | 121 |
| 5.7.1 Readings..... | 122 |

| | |
|---|-----|
| 5.7.2 The Circumcision | 122 |
| 5.8. <i>Golo, Yepo</i> -The Service of Cleansing for the Mother on the 33/66 day..... | 123 |
| 5.8.1 The Purification Service..... | 124 |
| 5.8.2 Purification Meal..... | 124 |
| 5.8.3 Holy Procession | 125 |
| 5.9 Discussion of the theology of the Double Rite of Passage | 127 |
| 5.9.1 Access to God is Direct..... | 128 |
| 5.9.2 Preach the Pure Word of God. Do Not Be Quiet | 130 |
| 5.9.3 Naziritism..... | 133 |
| 5.9.4 The Priestly Benediction | 137 |
| 5.9.5 Discussion of the Double Rite of Passage | 137 |
| 5.9.5.1 The NC and Christology | 140 |
| 5.9.6 The NC as an African Independent Church | 147 |
| 5.9.7 Affinity between NC Practices and Judaism..... | 150 |
| 5.9.8 The NC and the Two World Missionary Religions | 151 |
| 5.9.10 Influence of Islam on Johana Owalo..... | 152 |
| 5.9.10.2 Mode of Dressing..... | 153 |
| 5.10 Influence of CMS on Johana Owalo | 160 |
| 5.10.1 Liturgy..... | 160 |
| 5.11 Influence of Catholic Church on Johana Owalo | 163 |
| 5.11.1 The NC and Icons | 164 |
| 5.12 Influence of the Unitarian faith on Johana Owalo | 164 |
| 5.13 Influence of the Luo Culture | 165 |
| 5.14 A Biblical Analysis of the Double Rite of Passage in the NC..... | 166 |
| 5.15 Metaphorical use of circumcision (Circumcision as a Spiritual Component) | 174 |
| 5.16 Origin of Christian Baptism..... | 175 |
| 5.16.1 Baptism in the Early Church..... | 177 |
| 5.16.2 Infant Baptism..... | 178 |

| | |
|--|------------|
| 5.16.3 The NC and Baptism..... | 180 |
| 5.17 Circumcision and Baptism on the Eighth Day..... | 182 |
| 5.18 Points of Contact between Jewish Circumcision and NC Circumcision | 183 |
| 5.19 The Theology of Golo or Yepo (Service of Cleansing of the Mother after 33/66 days) | 185 |
| 5.19.1 Expectation of the NC for a Mother in Seclusion..... | 187 |
| 5.18.1An analysis of Lev. 12 | 191 |
| 5.20 The Theology of Double Period of Ritual Impurity | 192 |
| 5.21 Symbolism of Numbers | 196 |
| 5.22 Discussion of the Relevance of the Double Rite of Passage..... | 198 |
| 5.23 Conclusion | 208 |
| CHAPTER SIX: THE SOCIO-THEOLOGICAL ISSUES IN THE DOUBLE RITE OF PASSAGE AS A BASIS FOR GENDER DISPARITY IN THE NC | 212 |
| 6.1 Introduction..... | 212 |
| 6.2 Ceremonial Uncleanness a Basis for Gender Disparity in the NC..... | 212 |
| 6.2.1 Ritually Impurity and Leadership..... | 214 |
| 6.2.2 The Double Rite and Sitting Arrangement in the NC..... | 217 |
| 6.2.3 Death as a pollutant..... | 217 |
| 6.2.4 Marriage and Gender disparity | 218 |
| 6.3 Discussions of the Socio-Theological Grounds for Gender Disparity in the NC | 220 |
| 6.3.1Patriarchy | 222 |
| 6.3.2 Gender and Property Ownership..... | 223 |
| 6.3.3 Baptism of the Female Infants | 226 |
| 6.3.4 Leadership in the NC | 231 |
| 6.4 Conclusion | 234 |
| CHAPTER SEVEN: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS..... | 237 |
| 7.1 Summary | 237 |
| 7.1.1 The Socio-cultural Basis for the Double Rite of Passage in the NC..... | 238 |

| | |
|--|------------|
| 7.1.2 The Theological Context of the Double Rite of Passage | 240 |
| 7.1.3 The Socio-theological issues in the double rite of passage as a basis of Gender Disparity in the NC | 244 |
| 7.2 Conclusions | 246 |
| 7.2.1 The Socio-cultural Basis for the Double Rite of Passage in the NC..... | 246 |
| 7.2.2 The Theological Context of the Double Rite of Passage in the NC | 247 |
| 7.2.3 The socio-theological issues in the double rite of passage as a basis for gender disparity in the NC | 249 |
| 7.3 Recommendations | 250 |
| 7.3.1 The Socio-cultural Basis for the Double Rite of Passage in the NC..... | 251 |
| 7.3.2 The Theological Context of the Double Rite of Passage in the NC | 251 |
| 7.3.3 The Socio-theological issues in the double rite of passage as a basis for gender disparity in the NC | 252 |
| 7.4. Areas for Further Research | 253 |
| REFERENCES..... | 254 |
| APPENDICES | 261 |

LIST OF ABBREVIATION AND ACRONYMS

| | | |
|---------------|---|---|
| ADS | : | Anglican Development Services |
| AIC | : | African Initiated Churches |
| AIDS | : | Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome |
| BORA | : | Bondo- Rarieda Region of the NC |
| CCA | : | Church of Christ in Africa |
| CDC | : | Child Development Centre |
| CHW | : | Community Health Worker |
| CMS | : | Church Missionary Society |
| CSM | : | Church of Scotland Mission |
| DC | : | District Commissioner |
| DEB | : | District Education Board |
| HIV | : | Human Immune Deficiency Virus |
| KISE | : | Kisumu-Seme Region of the NC |
| KNA | : | Kenya National Archives |
| NANATH | : | Nairobi-Nakuru-Thika Region of the NC |
| NACC | : | National AIDS Control Council |
| NC | : | Nomiya Church |
| NGO | : | Non-Governmental Organization |
| NLC | : | Nomiya Luo Church |
| NLM | : | Nomiya Luo Mission |
| NLS | : | Nomiya Luo Sabato |
| NT | : | New Testament |
| OAIC | : | Organization of African Instituted Churches |
| OT | : | Old Testament |
| PC | : | Provincial Commissioner |
| PCEA | : | Presbyterian Church of East Africa |
| SIAYA | : | Siaya Region of the NC |
| SDA | : | Seventh Day Adventist Church |
| VMMC | : | Voluntary Male Medical Circumcision |

OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

Appropriation Dialogue: The conceptual framework in this study is represented by the Biblical concept of covenant which entails mutual reciprocity where every move by God towards man anticipates human response in obedience. It is thus understood also as mutual relationship or covenant love.

Baptism: The rite that admits an infant or an adult to the NC. The ritual of baptism requires that the candidate is immersed in or sprinkled with water and then marked with symbol of the cross. This rite is performed on the eighth day after birth for male infants and on the fourteenth day after birth for female infants. Adult members are baptised on their admission.

Blood Purification. The period of blood purification is that period of 33 days or 66 days after the time of ritual impurity. At the end of this period the woman will be deemed to be purified. She will then present before the priest her purification offering. In the NC in a ceremony to mark the reincorporation of the mother and her child they will be shaven clean on the eve of the purification service.

Covenant: In this study conveys the initiative by God to reach out to man for fellowship. Covenant represents the relationship between God and the NC adherent whereby the adherent in baptism and circumcision is obedient to God's command. This is also known as Covenant partnership.

Circumcision: A religious rite in the NC that involves the surgical removal of the foreskin of the male sexual organ of male infants on the eighth day after birth. On adult males it is performed on their admission

Double Rite of passage: In this study the term implies the double marking on an initiate with the cross as a sign of the New Covenant and Circumcision as the sign of the Old Covenant.

Sacrament: An outward (visible) sign of an inward grace. Baptism is that sacramental rite that admits an individual to the NC. The visible symbol is that water which is sprinkled or in which a candidate is immersed accompanied by the pronouncement by the priest of the

baptismal formula as a witness of the grace working in the individual affecting forgives, reconciliation and sanctification.

Seclusion: Is the period of forty days or eight days that a mother and her infant spent in isolation following the birth of a male or female infant respectively. This is a religious act that involves the parturient (woman who has given birth) and the church in seeking the face of God (soul searching).

Rites of Passage: Refers to those initiation rites of baptism and circumcision in the NC performed in the context of a communal celebration through which the initiate is marked and prepared to take his /her role as a full communicant member.

Ritual impurity: Due to the women biology two periods of impurity are recognized i.e menstrual impurity and that following the birth of an infant. The period of ritual impurity is longer in the birth of a female infant i.e fourteen days compared to seven on the birth of a male infant.

LIST OF TABLES

| | |
|---|----|
| Table 1.1: The size and distribution of administrative units..... | 38 |
| Table 1.2: Rarieda District Population Distribution and Density..... | 39 |
| Table 1.3: Population of NC Dioceses in Rarieda Sub County..... | 42 |

LIST OF FIGURES

| | |
|--|----|
| Figure 1.1 Conceptual Framework..... | 17 |
| Figure 3.1 Location of Siaya County in Kenya..... | 40 |
| Figure 3.2 Rarieda District Administrative Units..... | 41 |
| Figure 4.1 Prophet Owalo’s Mausoleum at Oboch Headquarter in Asembo..... | 71 |
| Figure 4.2 Elizabeth Alila Owalo’s grave at Gango in Archbishop Owalo’s home..... | 71 |
| Figure 4.3 The 95 th Celebrations of the founder’s death at Sagam pri. Sch. gem on 10 th -11 th January 2015..... | 73 |

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Rites of passage are a universal phenomenon. People throughout the world experience emotionally charged transitions during times of major life changes. Arnold Van Gennep the Belgian anthropologist observed that all cultures have rituals that he called rites of passage. These he said prescribed ways for dealing with the emotion charged situations. Most rites of passage are religious ceremonies and include baptisms, circumcision, confirmations, marriages and funerals (Gennep, 1960). Mugambi (2009) concurs arguing that rites of passage were the communal ceremonies that were performed as an individual passed from one stage to another from birth to death. He argues further that they were the community's expressions of the understanding and expectations regarding the role of the individual in the society.

1.1.1 Marking a New-Born Child

Every community had rituals of thanksgiving to welcome and mark a new-born child. Hinduism rites of passage are referred to as *Samskara* (which means making perfect). The Hinduism rites of passage for birth, *Nama Karnahis* are the celebration where a Hindu child receives their name. Traditionally, the name would be decided around the 11th day after birth. In Islam, according to Ruqaiyyah, 1995, the baby naming ceremony, *Tasmiyah*, is done on the seventh day. To thank Allah, the child is shaved and the hair weighed. The family must give to charity at least the same weight of gold and at least two livestock have to be sacrificed. After this ceremony, the community has a meal where relatives and friends are invited. Circumcision in Islam happens any time before puberty preferably in the first seven days.

1.1.2 Circumcision in Africa

In many African communities, circumcision as the rite of passage introduced the candidate to adult life (Mbiti, 1969; Mugambi, 2002). Mugambi (2002) defines the term 'rite of passage' as referring to those rituals which a community arranges to mark the transition of individual members from one stage to the next. Furthermore, Mbiti notes that the rites of passage were understood as the means through which an individual is made aware and

continually reminded of his responsibility as a member of his community. The candidates consequently share in the full privileges and duties of the community (Anderson 1984).

1.1.3 Circumcision as a Covenant

Among the Jews, circumcision on the eighth day is the mark of a new born baby boy. Although circumcision was widely practiced in the ancient Near East, from its inception, the covenant of circumcision stood out as distinct and different from the cultural practices of the neighboring Semitic tribes (Dosick, 1995). The covenant of circumcision in the Old Testament (OT) is taken to be at the center of the spiritual union of Israel and Yahweh (Gen. 17:10). The narrative in Gen. 17 can be said to be the sole Biblical account of the origin of the rite of circumcision in Israel. Abraham, together with all the males in his household, were circumcised as a sign of God's covenant with him and subsequently all male infants were to be circumcised on the eighth day after birth. Marshall, Millard, Packer and Wiseman (1996) argue that from that origin, circumcision was integrated into the Mosaic system in connection with the Passover (Ex. 12:44) and thereafter, was continued throughout the OT (Jer. 9:25-26). Every succeeding Jewish generation for about 4000 years has circumcised their male children on the eighth day after birth.

Although circumcision had long been in use as a religious rite among the Jews, it was abandoned at an early date by nearly the whole of the Christian Church [Cross & Livingstone, (Eds.), 1997]. This decision was arrived at the very first council of the Christian church that resolved that physical circumcision be abolished as a necessary sign of belonging to God's covenant people (Acts 15:1-6; O'Donovan, 1995). Consequently, O'Donovan concludes that in the New Testament, the ritual of physical circumcision has been replaced with the ritual of water baptism as the sign that one has become a member of God's covenant people. Vanhoozer, Bartholomew, Treier and Wright (2005) concurs noting that baptism effects a once-for-all recapitulation of the believers own life and thus replaces circumcision as the effectual sign of membership into the covenant community. Baptism is regarded as the sacramental rite which admits a candidate to the Christian Church, irrespective of gender, age or colour (1Cor. 12:13).

1.1.4 Baptism as a Covenant

Baptism symbolizes the washing away of old life and Jesus in his teaching insisted that one must be born again: 'No one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and

the Spirit (John 3:4-5). Jesus himself was baptized by John the Baptist in the river Jordan (Matt.4: 13-17). Baptism in the Early Church followed a three-year period of study and participation in the life of the community, prayer and fasting, after which often in the dark early Easter morning the candidates would strip naked and be baptized by total immersion (Placher, 2001). Unlike Jewish circumcision which is male-specific and was performed on the eighth day after birth, baptism is universal and is not tied to a specific time; it could be done during Easter, Pentecost, Epiphany, and at Christmas or any other time. Baptism could also be administered by any Christian in case of imminent danger of death (Cross *et al.*, 1997).

Baptism in the church today seems to take on a new spiritual meaning as circumcision of the heart. In the epistle to the Romans, Paul argues that "...real circumcision is a matter of the heart –it is spiritual and not literal" (Rom.2:29). It is therefore regarded as a new covenant. The idea of the new covenant comes from Jesus' reference to his blood in the formula of consecration as "the blood of the new covenant" (Matt. 26:28; Mk. 14:24). The crucifixion of Christ is taken to be the most important element of the new covenant. Entering the new covenant means being baptized into Christ's death and being raised with him into new life (Rom. 6:11 c.f. Col. 2:12). Accordingly, Migliore (2004) defines Christian baptism as the sacrament of initiation into life in Christ.

In the "Great Commission" of Jesus (the divine imperative "Go" at the end of Jesus' ministry forms the basis for the missiological aspect of the church) the disciples are expected to participate by making disciples of all nations through baptizing and teaching them (Matt. 28:18-20; cf Mk. 16:15-18; Acts 1:8; 2 Cor. 5:18-20). The initiates, according to Paul in his epistle to the Colossians, have received spiritual circumcision, for example, that done by Christ and not human hands (Col 2:11). Consequently, faith in Christ is understood to be of greater significance than circumcision or uncircumcision (Gal. 5:6). Migliore (2004) notes that the church has often been seen as God's people of the new covenant that has superseded the election of Israel under the old covenant (Vanhoozer *et al.*, 2005).

Further, Paul while writing to the Galatians notes that the cross is the way of entering the covenant and there is no distinction between Jew or Greek, slave or free, male or female – all are one in Christ (Gal. 3:28). In this regard, baptism is seen as giving Christianity its universal and missionary outlook. Both circumcision and baptism are understood to be

initiation practices in the faiths in which they are observed: Judaism and Christianity uphold these two practices as rites of passage that entail the admission into the covenant community. As McGrath (2001) says, “In Christian theology baptism is seen as the Christian equivalent of circumcision.”

Magesa (2004), on the other hand, notes that there is a clear connection between the sacraments of initiation (Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist) and the traditional African practice of initiation as a rite of passage. The connection, he says, lies in the elaborate instruction of the African initiate in the ways of the community followed by physical marking as in circumcision and integration into the community as a full member. Mugambi (2002) concurs but points out a distinction that whereas initiation was an inevitable stage in African cultural heritage, in Christianity it would be undergone only by those who were doctrinally prepared.

From the foregoing, baptism is seen the central rite of passage in Christianity because it entails initiation into the body of Christ. However, right from the New Testament times the possibility of both (baptism and circumcision) was cited in the conversion of the Gentiles. The Jews, the first converts to Christianity had imposed circumcision on the Gentile converts as a pre-requisite to their admission to the Christian faith (Acts 15:1-7). This scenario gave rise to the Jerusalem Council of AD 49. Anderson (1983) notes that those Gentiles who chose to follow the religion of the Jews were required to be circumcised and baptized and also to keep the whole Law of Moses.

1.1.5 The Double Rite of Passage

The practice of simultaneous baptism and circumcision is in this study referred to as a double rite of passage (The notion of double rite in this study derives from the portrait of circumcision and baptism on the eighth day on the male infant). The practice witnessed in the early Church is an early example of the double rite of passage. In the early church by virtue of their belonging to the Jewish community that circumcised on the eighth day after birth taking on baptism was simply a sign of belonging to the new covenant community.

The connection between baptism and circumcision is that they mark one for God as they signal the admission of an initiate into the family of God, the covenant family. Circumcision seemingly is replaced by baptism as McGrath (2001) argues that in Christian theology baptism is taken as the Christian equivalent of circumcision. Further, McGrath (2001)

argues because all the male infants born in Israel were to have an outward sign of their membership of the people of God then infant baptism as a sign of belonging to the covenant community makes it analogous to circumcision.

When the NC goes back to circumcision and then simultaneously performs it with baptism on initiates they seem to be going against the Christian theological development. The Anglican Church recognizes two sacraments (Baptism and Eucharist) while the Roman Catholic tradition recognizes seven sacraments namely: Baptism, Eucharist Confirmation or Chrismation, Holy Orders, Matrimony, Penance and Unction. All are connected to the work of grace performed by Christ and nowhere is circumcision mentioned although Christ himself carried the mark of circumcision on his body. Magesa (2004), observes that the elaborate instruction of the African initiate in the ways of the community followed by physical marking as in circumcision and integration into the community as a full member are clear connection between the sacraments of initiation (Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist) and the traditional African practice of initiation as a rite of passage. This study follows Magesa (2004) in arguing that in both circumcision and baptism the full measure of instructions followed by physical marking and integration into the community of the initiate give the rites their validity. Therefore this study opts for the term double rite of passage rather than additional rite of passage because of the double marking that admits the initiate into the covenant community and finally that in both the full measure of the requirements for the rites are given. Additional rite of passage brings in the element of a new thing or a top up or supplementary. This is not the case in the circumcision and baptism in the NC where according to Owalo the application effects reconciliation, forgiveness and sanctification.

Other instances of the double rite of passage in the church include the practice by the Ethiopian Orthodox Church (<http://www.ethiopianorthodox.org/english/history.html>). Mbiti (1969) mentions two cases of the double rite of passage in Africa. Among the Falasha Jews of Ethiopia a combination of the Old Testament traditions and Christian elements have been observed for centuries. The Falasha circumcise boys and perform clitoridectomy (Currently understood as Female Genital Mutilation-FGM) on girls. Mbiti also mentions the case of a group called Bayudaya (Jews of Judah) that arose in Uganda in 1919 following the activities of one Semei Kakungulu. Kakungulu's reading of the Bible drew him towards Judaism and he and his first son were circumcised in 1919. His later sons were all circumcised on the eighth day. He kept other Christian traditions like baptism and Eucharist until about 1926

when he received instructions on Jewish practice from a Jew visiting Uganda (Oded, Arye (1974), “The Bayudaya of Uganda: A portrait of an African Jewish Community”. <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Judaism/uganda1.html>).

In Kenya the double rite of passage is witnessed in the theology of the Nomiya Church (NC). According to *Kitap Ligangla Mabith Mar Nabi Johana Owalo* (hereafter referred to as *Kitap Ligangla*): *Nyathi mawuoyi konyuol nyaka batise koromo ndalo ABORO kendo tere Nyange* (*Kitap Ligangla*, 59) which is Luo for a male infant must be baptized and circumcised on the eighth day. The NC stands unique as the only Christian body in Kenya that does circumcision and baptism as a religious ritual. It has been observed that NC practices circumcision (the physical surgery on the foreskin) and baptism of male infants on the eighth day while for adult converts on their admission. According to (*Kitap Ligangla*, 59), *Nyathi mawuoyi notiek ndalo abiryo to chieng mar aboro nobatise, to nyathi manyako notieki ndalo 13 to chieng’ mar 14 nobatise* –which are Luo words that translate as “Baptism is on the eighth day for male infants and the fourteenth day for female infants.”

1.1.6 The Socio-Cultural Basis of the Double Rite of Passage in the NC

The NC founded by Johana Owalo in 1912 was the first AIC in Kenya (Mugambi, 2002; Wipper, 1972; Barret, 1968). The Church was founded following a supposedly persistent and continuous revelation of God’s purposes in the life of Johana Owalo as from 1907(*Kitap Ligangla*). According to *Kitap Ligangla*, Johana Owalo, who was worshipping with the Muslims in Mombasa in 1907 saw in a vision the angel Jibirael inviting him to accept God’s call to mission. The foundational instruction supposedly arising out of the said vision to Owalo was: “Go! Take a well-sharpened knife to circumcise all men. He who has an ear let him hear and adhere but leave the disobedient alone” (Ndeda, 2005: 5). Ndeda (2005) further explains that Owalo could have undergone circumcision during a brief spate with Muslims in Kisumu.

Consequently, Ndeda (2005) notes that Owalo moved to form a mission to the Luo from his home base of Asembo in 1912. He named his denomination Nomiya Congress. The missionary zeal and acumen of Owalo and his first converts is evident in the fact that the adherents accepted and embraced in totality the new teachings and practices. These first converts were circumcised and baptized, a practice that they have religiously taught and has been upheld by the NC adherents in all successive generations.

From the elucidation above, it is evident that a religious practice of circumcision that had by law been relegated to the periphery in the church council of Jerusalem in AD 49 is now given prominence. The practice in the NC of baptism and circumcision of male infants on the eighth day and that of baptism female infants on the fourteenth day is a novelty. The NC which has predominantly Luo membership practices circumcision within a community that did not practice the same (Olali, 2015). The mark of circumcision was to distinguish the NC adherents from the rest of the Luo who did not practice circumcision. The traditional rite of passage for the Luo people *nak* (the removal of six lower front teeth) was performed at puberty on both genders. The NC performs baptism only on her female members and not Female Genital mutilation the puberty rite. An examination of this unique socio-cultural and historical background of the practice in the NC is the first objective of the study.

1.1.7 The Theological Context of the Double Rite of Passage

According to Ndeda (2005), during these initial stages Owalo interacted with many Christian denominations. In Nairobi, he worshipped with the PCEA. He at the same time taught Swahili to adult students who included Mzee Jomo Kenyatta who later became the first president of Kenya. In 1909, he moved to Kijabe where he worshipped with the AIM. Shortly thereafter he moved to Nyanza, first joining the Catholic Mission at Ojola and subsequently joining the CMS at Maseno. According to Gale (1959) Owalo stood out as the first native to be baptized and one who was a great help to his priest Father Grimshaw. However after Owalo led a silent revolution encouraging the catechumens not to respond to the 'Hail Mary' he was expelled from the Mission center. He was accused of heresy by the church authorities and was warned to desist from subversive teachings. Owalo's "heretical teaching" was grounded in his belief that Jesus was not of the same substance as God and that monogamy was wholly a European idea (Ndeda, 2005; Owalo (88). The NC allows polygamy and wife inheritance: According to the NC Constitution: "The Church allows polygamy but ministers of the Church would be allowed not more than four wives" and according to *Kitap Lamo Mar Nomiya Church* (79) (hereafter referred to as *Kitap Lamo*) a widow will be inherited after the seventieth day celebration of *Yawo Liel*.

While back at the mission center at Ojola, Owalo again claimed to have received a visitation from the angel Jibrael who challenged him to pick the mantle of preaching the word of God rather than minister to the spiritually blind. Further Gale (1959) observes that after this expulsion Owalo had a religious tour that took him to the CMS Mission, the Quakers and

later to Islam and eventually he founded his religion by the name Nomiya, which was a combination of Catholicism, Protestantism and Islam.

In the practices and doctrine rudimentary elements of Christianity, Judaism, Islam and the Luo tradition are evident in large proportions. A few examples will suffice: wearing of Kanzu (Robe) and cap and removal of shoes in worship space as well as worshipping facing Kiblah definitely point to an Islamic background. Circumcision in the NC has all the trappings of the Jewish rite including the accompanying purification rites that point to a Jewish background. Baptism with its New Testament ramifications is truly a Christian rite of passage. The Luo background is evident in a number of aspects that include the polygamy and leviratic care of widows as well as the burial and cleansing rituals. The NC is indeed an amalgam of various religious faiths.

The NC besides the initiation rites of baptism and circumcision also observes other rites that include rites of birth, marriage and death as significant milestones in an individual's and community's life. Circumcision and baptism are central to this study in that they are religious rites that mark out an individual and signify the covenant relationship with God. They are outward signs of God's grace working in his people revealing the long term plans and purposes of God among his people. They also signify admission into the membership of God's people (God's elect) as they provide an identity and a distinction of God's people. They stand out as uniquely similar save for the fact that circumcision is male specific whereas baptism cuts across the gender divide (Gal.3:27-28). This then is the basis and thrust of this study: trying to address the reasons as to why there is this double rite of passage in the NC.

From the foregoing, it is clear that Owalo's life of faith saw him interact with many faith traditions (Hoehler-Fatton, 1996). The double rite of passage could be a product of this wide and diverse theological exposure as well as the supposedly intricate heavenly excursion. The Nomiya Church stands unique as a Christian church that practices the double rite of passage of circumcision and baptism. The second objective of this study aims to evaluate and fill that gap about the complex theological mix that surrounds the double rite of passage.

1.1.8 Socio Theological Issues and Gender disparity in the NC

After the death of Johana Owalo in 1920, leadership conflicts and wrangles led the church to splinter into Nomiya Luo Church (NLC) and Nomiya Luo Sabato (Sabbath) (NLS). Nomiya

Luo Church was later registered as Nomiya Church in 1979. Since its inception, the NC leadership has remained a male gender affair. Leadership in the NC is purely a male affair and the spiritual leaders, administrators as well as the circumcisers (*Shariff*) are all male. This picture agrees with the Biblical prescription that all clergy were supposed to be from the male gender (Ex. 28:1). The NC position is confirmed by Owalo (53) arguing that the order of seniority of man over woman is from God: "...Christ is the head of the whole human kind, so the man is the head of the two sexes; and the woman should be in subjection and not usurp the man's place" (Owalo 53). The male adherents are the decision makers although they are outnumbered by the female adherents in the pews.

This scenario is further compounded by the belief that women are periodically polluted due to their female sexuality. Based on the woman's biology that is manifested in the monthly blood flow in the menses, and in childbirth women are regarded as *mogak* (polluted) and are therefore excluded from the worship space (Lev.12). According to Olali (2015), "Women are unclean when they are on monthly period and during this period they are not allowed to enter places of worship (Holy places)". Kayonga (cited in Mugambi and Nasimiya, 1992) concurs suggesting that the biblical story is replete with a history of instances of female discrimination: "First, they were not circumcised and hence could not be part of God's covenant. Next they were subject to a series of rigid laws of "purification" by reason of their female biological condition. Finally they had personified Eve, with all the inferiority that implied" (Mugambi & Nasimiya, 1992). The basis for this injunction on women leadership in the NC can be traced from the Biblical teachings as well as from the Luo patriarchal society (Lev. 12:4; Ndeda, 2005; Olali, 2015; Ndisi, 1974; Ocholla-Ayayo, 1976; Achieng, 2001). Further still, Olali (2015) says that women together with the uncircumcised men are not allowed to preach (*Joma ok oter nyangu ok yal ekanisa mar jo Nomiya*).

The third objective of this study aims at examining the double rite of passage in the NC as the reason behind the exclusion of women from main stream leadership of the church and even from full participation in the worship of the church. The Luo background in its emphases of patriarchy and the Jewish patriarchal prescription in the purification of her female members bring out the notion of the double dose of patriarchal emphases. This double dose of patriarchal emphases seemingly is the root of male domination, as well as oppression and exploitation of the women adherents in the NC.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Baptism is considered as the central rite in Christianity, and this is affirmed both from the historical and theological developments. Historically, the church had its origins in the Jewish culture and religion. The first converts were Jews, circumcised in the Jewish tradition and later baptized as Christians, and they expected the same of the Gentile converts. For more than 1800 years, Christianity has upheld water baptism as the central rite of admission of converts. Theologically, the Bible seems to suggest a progression of thought where circumcision gradually gives way to baptism and baptism consequently takes center stage in Christian thought. If baptism seemingly becomes the central rite of passage in the Christian Church, and a sign of the covenant this study seeks first to examine the socio-cultural factors that lead the NC to revert to circumcision and the double rite of passage. Secondly, this study seeks to unravel theological issues related to the double mark and identity of NC members in the baptism and circumcision of male infants on the eighth day and baptism of female infants on the fourteenth day. Thirdly, the study seeks to investigate the socio-theological issues in the double rite of passage that give rise to apparent gender disparity in the NC.

1.3 Research Questions

1. What socio-cultural considerations inspired the NC to accept the double rite passage?
2. How has the double mark of circumcision and baptism in the NC defined the theological context?
3. What socio-theological issues in double rite of passage are grounds for gender disparity in the NC?

1.4 Research Objectives

The overall objective of this study is to investigate the socio-cultural and theological context of the double rite of passage of circumcision and baptism in the Nomiya Church.

The specific objectives are:

1. **To examine the socio-cultural basis for the double rite of passage in the NC.**
2. To evaluate the theological context of the double rite of passage in the NC.
3. To examine the socio-theological issues in the double rite of passage as a basis for gender disparity in the NC.

1.5 Scope and Limitation of the Study

The scope of this study was the NC worship in Rarieda Sub-County, Siaya County. The choice of NC in this study is because of its historic position as the first AIC in Kenya whose foundation was in Oboch in Rarieda Sub-County. Rarieda Sub-County of Siaya County is not only the home of the founder Johana Owalo but also the current headquarters of NC and the seat of the Archbishop. Siaya County was well covered by the first evangelists and visible presence can be witnessed in areas of Gem where NC schools and other amenities are available. The study was limited to Rarieda sub-county because the resources and time available for the study could not cover the wider area. This study was limited to and revolved around the concepts of the socio-theological significance of the double rite of passage in the NC. The study notes that the NC observes other rites of passage like birth, marriage and death but it centered on the circumcision and baptism, which are marks of membership in a community of faith and are also a means of a covenant with God.

This study was carried out among the rural adherents of NC and in this respect the research instruments had to be translated to the respondents with such clarity to avoid watering down or losing the original meaning altogether. Rural adherents were important as they practice an unadulterated faith. During the study, several challenges were encountered and these included: initial skepticism about the nature of the study which resulted in several visits to individual dioceses; lack of clear chronological order of historical events in most of the adherents minds; and strict rules and regulations that surround the actual observance of the double rite of passage. These challenges stretched the period of study beyond the planned data collection and analysis period. For the same reason, two dioceses namely Odiero and Madiany were dropped from the study and were eventually replaced by Ginga and Rarieda.

Observation of the double rite of passage met challenges in two areas: in the actual observation of baptism and circumcision and in accessing the room where the sacrificial meal was partaken. The researcher realized that getting information for an imminent baptism/circumcision of infants was not easy possibly due to the extremely short period after birth for it to be done. Getting information on the celebration of the purification of the woman after birth was relatively easier. However, the sacrificial meal was out of bounds for the uninitiated.

1.6 Justification of the Study

This study is justified on the premise that the prescription of circumcision by Johanna Owalo the founder was strange to the Luo people who were members in the inaugural congregation (Olali, 2015). The Luo puberty rite of passage *nak* (the removal of the six lower front teeth) was performed on both the male and female members of the society.

The NC is an Ethiopic or nationalistic AICs for two reasons: one it is a breakaway group from the missionary-led churches, and two it is a protest group against missionary paternalism and colonial oppressive structures. This study intends to add onto existing knowledge about Ethiopic AICs. In Kenya the NC belongs to the family of AICs called the Organization of African Initiated Churches (OAIC). That the NC stands unique as the only Christian body in Kenya that does circumcision as a religious ritual simultaneously with baptism has not been documented. Although several studies have been undertaken on the NC no study has been concerned with the double rite of passage practiced in the NC.

Circumcision and baptism remains central to this church's theology and living to the extent that it is at the core of the breakaway groups. The current study attempted to understand the origins and significance of the double rite of passage in the NC. It is hoped that the results from this study will be a genuine tool for the assessment of the Nomiya Church in Rarieda Sub-County. They will enable the NC to consolidate herself having understood the uniqueness of her practices against the backdrop of other religious faiths. Consequently, AICs would be empowered to understand themselves vis-à-vis other churches, identify their weaknesses, strengths and priorities (Getui cited in Mugambi and Getui, 2004). This will also encourage ecumenism and interfaith dialogue.

This study also sought to demonstrate that there is continuity within the variety and changes of religious concepts and religious thought forms. The affinity between the circumcision practiced in the NC and that in Judaism is apparent. Mugambi in Mugambi and Getui, 2004 observes that the strong affinity between the Old Testament and African religious heritage is not only surprising but perplexing. This study has looked at the issue of affinity between the Old Testament and the NC to explain the origins and significance of baptism and circumcision in the NC. The obvious differences between the two cultural practices could possibly be explained by Getui's assertion that AICs are justifiably the African response to the Christian faith in their context and manifest the expression of Christianity in an

authentically African manner (Mugambi and Getui, 2004). Consequently, the study has demonstrated that circumcision and baptism on the eighth day for male infants and baptism for females on the fourteenth day is an expression of Christianity as a hybrid of Jewish and Christian practices. The religious practices and beliefs in the NC are a hybrid of the Luo Traditional Religion, Anglican Tradition, Roman Catholic Tradition and Islamic Tradition, thus an expression of Christianity in an authentically African manner.

This study is important as it will enable policy makers especially in this age of HIV/AIDS pandemic to assess the impact of the double rite of passage to the Kenyan vision 2030. Theologians will be asking themselves what the double rite of passage means to the new covenant community – the church of the 21st century.

1.7 Conceptual Framework

This study is based on the biblical concept of covenant. The relationship between members of the community of faith and God is best represented in the concept of covenant (Brueggemann, 2003). According to Conner and Malmin (1983), the specific purpose of the divine covenants is for them to be the vehicles of the expression of God's will and purpose for man. The theme of the covenant in the Bible is an expression of peoplehood; a community as it relates to its God. The conceptual framework of covenant in this study entails mutual reciprocity whereby God moves to establish a relationship with human beings and human beings in return are to respond in obedience. Covenant is best summarized as 'appropriation dialogue' because this study recognizes it as a partnership between God and man. God's election of human beings to be covenant partners corresponds to God's eternal love.

This mutual relationship can be seen in the Luo conception of God. According to Ocholla Ayayo (1976) the Luo believed in the existence of a supreme being *Nyasaye*. Further he says that the Luo culture holds that the entire universe is God's creation and that human persons were given the responsibility of taking care of all resources from God. The relationship between *Nyasaye* and man is mutual and asymmetric. Man must give *Nyasaye* his due respects, honor praise, and keep his constant sacrifices, follow the rules and law of the society, for the law and rules of the society are his law and taboo.

Covenant, therefore, is a promissory relationship established by God with humanity and it is grounded on God's grace and faithfulness; that is to say, God makes and keeps promises (Brueggemann, 2003). The text of Ex. 19:3b-8 best describes this relationship:

This is what you are to say to the house of Jacob and what you are to tell the people of Israel; you yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt and how I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.

Covenant anticipates the reciprocation from human beings in obedience. In this text, it is clear that loyalty to the covenant is connected to a reward. God confers upon Israel the status of royalty (a kingdom of priests and a holy nation), if only they will obey him (Levenson, 1985). The rewarding God provides every community with a definite way and standards that define the expected relationship. Ocholla-Ayayo (1976) concurs noting that the Luo are the custodians of a distinct set of values and beliefs which are believed to be gifts from God to the community.

The turn of the twentieth century brought to the Luo community a new world view in the activities of the European missionary enterprise and the colonial factor. Lonsdale (1964) gives a concise summary of this scenario and the birth of the NC:

John Owalo, who founded the Nomiya Luo Church about 1910, was introduced to the European world in a piecemeal fashion that was perhaps typical of many of his contemporaries. After a short time at MHM Kisumu where he was baptized, he attached himself to CSM Kikuyu, and then became 'houseboy' to a European lawyer in Mombasa. Here he came under Islamic influence and here too he was taken in a vision to heaven, where it was revealed to him that Christ, like Mohamed, was merely one of God's messengers. John returned to earth convinced of his black Messiahship and after a short period of teaching at CMS Maseno returned to his home location of Asembo on the basis of the vision (Nomiya meaning 'he gave me' or 'it was given me'). A.E.Pleydell, then in charge of Maseno, complained of Owalo's activities to the P.C. but after a series of enquiries Ainsworth gave Owalo permission to continue baptizing objecting only to the prophet's avowed encouragement of polygamy (Lonsdale, 1964).

The birth of the NC brings to the Luo community baptism and circumcision as new mode of relationship to God. The bilateral relationship between the adherents and the supernatural is manifested in the rites of passage that are the human response of obedience. Covenant-love,

according to Levenson (1985) is mutual and it is a relationship of reciprocity whereby in obedience the adherent holds God in awe; walk in all his paths, and serves him with all one's heart and all one's soul. Brueggemann (2003) concurs and is emphatic that in covenant making YHWH signs as the God of Israel and Israel submits in obedience to the commands of YHWH. He notes that this relationship of command and obedience is definitional of Israel and is reflected in the covenant formula and promise "I will be your God and you will be my people" (Ex. 6:7; Jer. 11:4; 24:7; 30:22; Ezek. 11:20; 14:11). The Abrahamic covenant is the first instance where the human beings enjoined in the covenant are to carry on their body the sign of the covenant:

I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come, to be your God, and the God of your descendants after you.... Every male among you shall be circumcised. You are to undergo circumcision and it will be sign of the covenant between me and you (Gen 17:7-11).

Circumcision was understood as a seal of God's choice of Abraham and his descendants; consequently it was understood as an outward sign of an invisible choice and spiritual work of God. Dosick (1995) says that circumcision became and endures as the sign of the covenant between God and the Jewish people. The shedding of blood had an eternal significance as a pointer to a personal relationship with God; a symbol of God's chosen people being united to God himself by a blood covenant (O'Donovan, 1995).

The Old Testament seems to point to a new covenant that will be written in people's hearts (Jer. 31:31). In the New Testament circumcision of the heart seems to imply that the ritual of physical circumcision has been replaced with the ritual of water baptism as the sign of membership of God's covenant community (1Cor.7:19; Rom.6:1-4; Col. 2:11-12; Acts 2:38; O'Donovan, 1995; Marshall *et al.*, 1996). Further, Marshall *et al* (1996) notes that the circumcision made without hands also referred to as the circumcision of the heart is what mattered most. This circumcision of the heart, he says, is effected by the gift of the Spirit and it has rendered circumcision unnecessary (Gal. 3:3; 5:3-5); Rom. 2:28-29). Marshall concludes that the evidence of the Spirit in a person's life serves as sign and seal of the new covenant just as circumcision served for the old covenant (2 Cor.3:3-6; Jer. 31:31-34; 2 Cor.1:22).

God's covenant in the New Testament proclaims the realization of the new covenant in Jesus Christ in whom all the promises of God are fulfilled; in Christ Jesus, God entered into unconditional solidarity with sinful and lost humanity (Migliore, 2004). Christ's once-for-all sacrifice is God's covenant that opens human beings to blessings and responsibilities of life in the new community that serves and glorifies God. The Church is called to be a community of love and service in which all participate in an exchange of gifts given by the "gifting God" (Migliore, 2004).

The 'appropriation dialogue' brings God and man into a mutual relationship (a bilateral relationship) or a covenant partnership. Covenant is a divine initiative and God moves graciously to man in every age and time declaring his desire for fellowship. This then is the basis for understanding the religious rites of baptism and circumcision. Human beings are consecrated and purified through baptism and circumcision for a mutual relationship with the holy God: "For I am the Lord your God; sanctify yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am holy" (Lev. 11:44). Faithful partnership yields blessings while violation of the covenant leads to God's wrath (curses) (Deut. 30:15-19).

The schema below represents the variables in the study. The independent variables of the socio-cultural, theological and the sociotheological issues are predictor variables that answer the research problem why the double rite of baptism and circumcision in the NC. Three variables have been used in this case because religion is a complex phenomenon that describes human actions in their purpose, symbols and meaning. The conceptual framework of covenant helps to understand the NC religious activities as pivoted in the action of God that demands human response.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

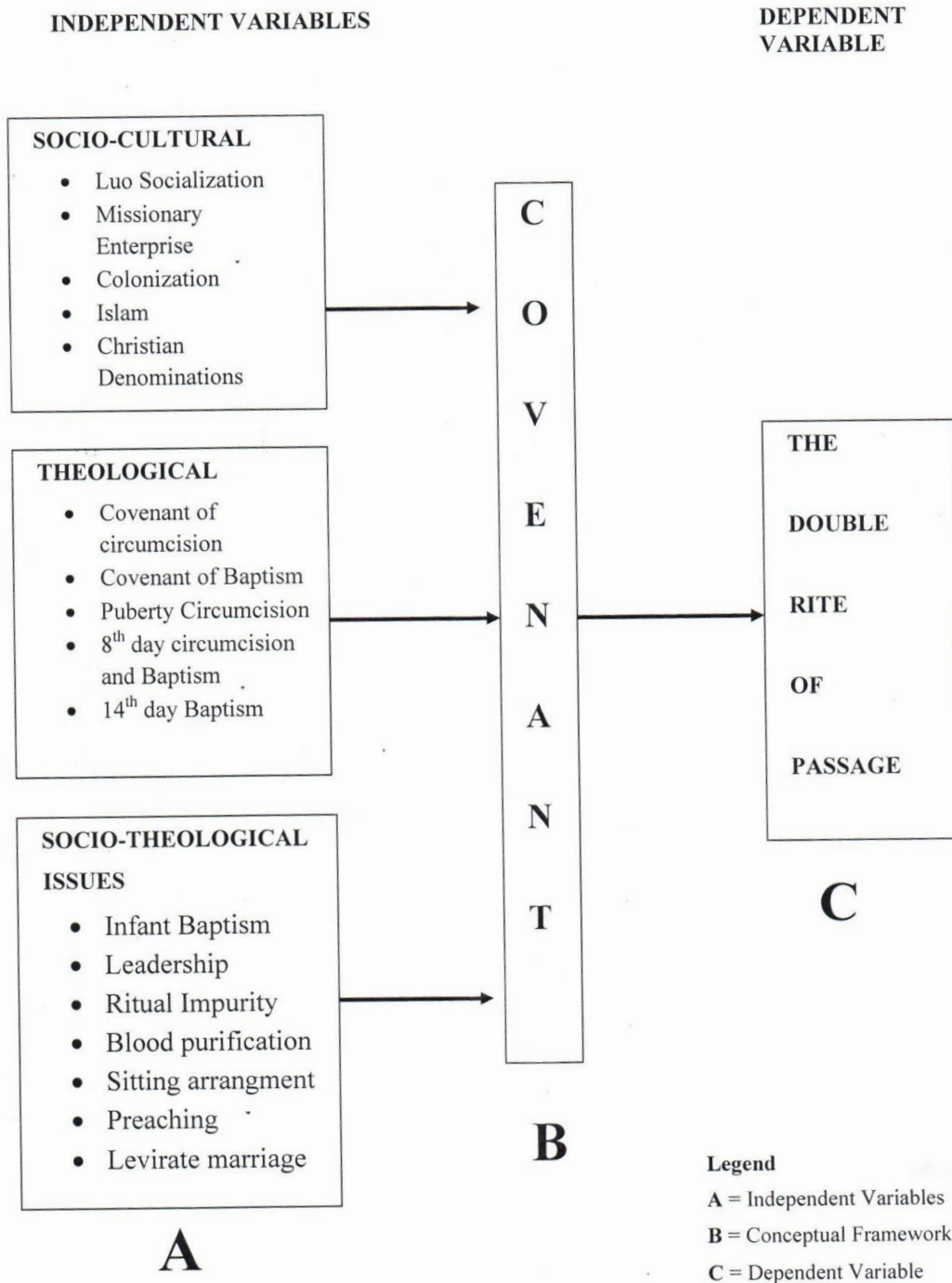


Figure 1.1: Conceptual Framework

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The NC is not only the first of the AICs founded in Kenya but uniquely the only one that practices circumcision and baptism simultaneously on the male infant on the eighth day of its birth and on adult males on their admission; this is the double rite of passage. On the other hand female infants are baptized on the fourteenth day while adult females are baptized on their admission. Literature review in this study was based on examining and analyzing the gaps in the three objectives of the study:

1. To examine the socio-cultural basis for the double rite of passage in the NC.
2. To evaluate the theological context of the double rite of passage in the NC.
3. To examine the socio-theological issues in the double rite of passage as a basis for gender disparity in the NC.

A number of scholars have written about the origins and history of the Nomiya Church as one of the AICs. They have all written from different motivations and persuasions. The study of independent churches in Africa according to Ndeda (2005) is a growing and a crowded field. She further says that the rapid increase in the number of independent churches in Kenya has attracted the attention of many scholars who have extensively documented their rise and spread (Ndeda, 2005). The growth of these churches is considered the most serious phenomenon of Christianity in modern Africa (Mbiti, 1969). Their phenomenal growth can only be given through rough estimates as Ndeda (2005) cautions that the movements are growing faster than scholars are studying them: "Today there are about 9,000 African Independent Churches (AICs) with millions of followers estimated at 15% of Africa's total Christian population"(Ndeda, 2005). This trend has been described in the scholarly world as the shift of the center of gravity of Christianity from the west to the south (Mwaura cited in Mugambi and Getui, 2004).

2.2 The Socio-Cultural Basis for the Double Rite of Passage in the NC

The beginnings and development of circumcision and baptism in the NC was traced in literature that deal with the rise and spread of the AICs, as well as those that present circumcision and baptism as initiation rites.

Religion can be studied both from the sociological and historical perspectives. This study chose the sociocultural and historical aspects to be studied in objective one because the origin and significance of the double rite can fully be understood in the studying the two aspects. The rise and growth of the NC can be understood in the light of the prevailing conflict of the colonial and missionary endeavors against the traditional Luo cultural values and religion. This study has endeavored to fill the gap on the socio-theological context of the double rite of passage in the NC by looking at ecclesiastical secession and the beginnings and development of circumcision of male infants on the eighth day.

2.2.1 The Rise of African Independent Churches (AICs) in Kenya

AICs are churches founded by Africans for Africans in their special African situation and they have all African membership as well as all-African leadership (Saah, 1991). According to Mwaura cited in Mugambi and Getui, 2004 the AICs in Kenya have their origin in the turbulent period of the country's history dominated by missionary activities and British colonization. Several factors were responsible for the emergence, proliferation and continuation of these churches. These according to Nthamburi, 1995 include African traditional culture and religion, missionary paternalism and colonial legacy among others. Mwaura in Mugambi and Getui (2004) observes that scholars of religion, sociology and anthropology agree that the AIC movement arose as a reaction to both ecclesiastical and political colonialism. Wipper (1977) concurs with the suggestion that AICs are products of ecclesiastical and political disaffection.

Some AICs originated by secession from the Christian missions. Others, however, arose from spontaneous initiative of the charismatic African leader (Wipper, 1977; Mwaura in Mugambi and Getui, 2004). However, the foundational issue seems to be an attempt by African people to indigenize the Christian faith, interpret it and apply it in ways that give Christianity an African identity. The indigenous churches arose in those areas where there was intensive contact between African culture on one hand and the colonial/missionary efforts on the other. The missionary efforts had concentrated in two areas of dense settlement now known as Central and Western Provinces (Wipper, 1977; Nthamburi, 1995). The majority of the indigenous churches are located in Western Kenya among the Luo and the Luhya communities (Nthamburi, 1995). Isichei (1995) concurs and notes that Christianity was spread by catechists from Uganda to Kavirondo (Nyanza) Province in western Kenya.

Missions that settled to work in both Nyanza and Kavirondo were the CMS, Catholic Missions, the Seventh Day Adventists, the African Inland Missions, the Friends Mission and Church of God Mission (Nthamburi, 1995). The proliferation of indigenous Churches, according to Nthamburi (1995) took place in an area in which the missions were well-received and where the response of mission teaching was positive (The reason for this good reception among the Luo people (a major group in Western Kenya) could be attributed to the shared belief in a supreme being who is the source of all livelihoods. The Luo believed in the existence of a supreme being *Nyasaye* (Ogutu, 1987; Achieng, 2001). *Nyasaye* is the center that holds everything together; the beginning of all things and in Him all living things owe their being. The Luo culture holds that the entire universe is God's creation and that human persons were given the responsibility of taking care of all resources from God. The Luo are also the custodians of a distinct set of values, beliefs and norms which are believed to be gifts from God to the community. This understanding of God's sovereignty and the stipulations for human beings that emanate from him as he relates to them makes it possible to appreciate the covenant relationship in circumcision and baptism.

The Luo religion was the total way of life; it defined who the Luo people are (Ongong'a, 1990). The religious life defined the relationship between members of a family, members of the same clan and members of different clans. The Luo religion manifested itself in a series of ceremonies that encompassed both the corporate rites and individual rites. These elaborate rites were meant for the welfare and good of everyone, and their enduring aim was to hold the fabric of the community together. The young of the community went through a rigorous process of socialization that involved a step-by-step preparation of the boys and girls to acquire the responsibilities, privileges and expectations of the community as they journeyed towards adulthood, marriage, and parenthood (Ocholla-Ayayo, 1976; Achieng, 2001). The process of socialization among the Luo was a continuous and life-long process that is best captured in the Luo saying '*ngato ipuonjo nyaka ti*' (one is taught until s/he is old). Similarly, for the NC adherents, one is born into this community and matures to adulthood being guided by the tenets, hopes and aspirations of the church. Being a member of the NC is a long walk with God to God.

The first AIC in Kenya was founded among the Luo. The Nomiya Church (NC), which was the first AIC in Kenya was founded by Johana Owalo in 1912 (Mwaura in Mugambi and Getui, 103; Wipper, 1977; Nthamburi, 1995; Ndeda, 2005). Being the very first AIC in

Kenya, the question this study sought to answer was what aspects of this complex social, theological and political background influenced Owalo to initiate a church with the unique practice of the double rite of passage. The crucial question was to establish whether circumcision and baptism were in any way contributory factors to the secession of NC. This is the gap in knowledge this study has endeavored to fill.

2.2.1.2 The Rise of the NC

Johana Owalo, the founder of NC, hailed from the Luo people of Western Kenya. The Luo are a Nilotic speaking people. They form a block around the shores of Lake Victoria. The term 'Nilotic' stands for the language that is spoken by groups that are found in Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Sudan, Congo and Ethiopia. The Luo settlement in their present home continued in the 17th and 18th centuries and by the turn of the 20th century they were well settled with their systems running (Ndeda, 2005; Ochieng, 1979; Ogot 1973). The Luo have always had their settlements close to the rivers and to the lake and this has led to their being referred to as *Jonam* (the river-lake people).

Available literature on Johana Owalo seems to support political causes as the reason behind the formation of the NC (Odinga, 1968; Ogot, 1973; Lonsdale, 1964; Wipper, 1977). According to Ndeda (2005), Owalo must have been involved with the colonial government possibly as a porter when the construction of the railway was approaching Kisumu sometime before 1900. He then proceeded to Mombasa where he worked for Judge Morrison, a judge in the Law Court. It is here that he supposedly encountered God through many visions and revelations that convinced him of his call. On March 1, 1907, Owalo claimed to have been taken to the first, second and third heaven by the spirit (*Kitap Ligangla*, Ndeda, 2005).

Owalo's heavenly excursion claim is full of graphic details of his interaction with the deity and the instructions there from. In the first heaven, which is the abode of men he saw that the Arabs, the Jews and the Luo were the only people allowed in for they had prophetic representatives (*Kitap Ligangla*; Ndeda, 2005). The Europeans (the Pope inclusive), the Goans and the Indian Bunyans were locked out because they failed to meet the conditions. In the second heaven he met angels while in the third heaven he met the Godhead. God the father instructed Owalo to acknowledge that he was the one and only one worthy of worship. Owalo was then instructed to take a well-sharpened knife to circumcise all men for creation had deviated into the worship of images. Those who gave heed were to be accepted

whereas those who were disobedient were to be left alone. He was also instructed to shun all human efforts (for instance the Holy mass) to reach God (Ndeda, 2005). Judge Morrison deterred Owalo from starting his movement until he had acquired adequate education (Ogot, 2009). Owalo later moved to CMS School in Nairobi, Church of Scotland in Kikuyu and then to Ojola joining the Catholic mission where his teachings were seen to be inimical to the Catholic faith and he was sent away. Finally, he ended up at Maseno as a teacher, where he was expelled for his beliefs (Ogot, 2009). Owalo believed strongly that Jesus was not of the same substance as God (but God's messenger) and at the same time he rejected monogamy as a European idea (Ndeda, 2005). He also refuted the reliability of the Catholic doctrine of purgatory and the belief in the supremacy and infallibility of the Pope and the intercession of the saints and particularly that of Mary. Owalo declared the Catholic sacrament of Holy Mass to be unacceptable as the only acceptable sacrifice was a broken and contrite heart (Ndeda, 2005).

Owalo left Maseno to start his mission to the Luo that he named Nomiya Luo Mission (NLM). Consequently, Ndeda (2005) argues that the two most immediate reasons for the founding of NLM (later renamed NC) were the fact that Owalo was called by God in March 1907 and the fact that he was expelled from Maseno prematurely. When two cultures meet there is bound to be conflict. According to *Kitap Ligangla*, the initial reception of the NC teaching met some resistance that saw the church built by Owalo at Gangu being razed to the ground. Owalo was also turned away from a piece of land at Kalandin and directed to move to Oboch. The NC survived these initial teething problems. This study examined the elements of the Luo socialization that could have impacted the NC double rite of passage.

Prior to this, as Ndeda argues, Owalo must have been circumcised during his time with the Muslims in Kisumu or Mombasa (Ndeda, 2005). Owalo's circumcision was novel as the Luo rite of initiation entailed the removal of six lower teeth of both boys and girls at puberty. Boys and girls were required to visit *Janak* (the initiator) who using a special skill removed six of the lower teeth in a painful and bloody operation. The basis of circumcision may be traced in the details of the heavenly excursion claim by Owalo and in the instruction given to him by God: "Go! Take a well-sharpened knife to circumcise all men. He who has an ear let him hear and adhere but leave the disobedient alone" (*Kitap Ligangla; Kitap Lamo*; Ndeda, 2005). The idea of circumcision on the eighth day may also be connected with the fact that in this heavenly vision Owalo saw the Arabs, the Jews and the Luos as the only

people allowed in for they had prophetic representatives. Baptism may also be traced to Owalo's denominational tour in this early period of Christianity in Nyanza. Unlike circumcision that is to be performed on a specific date after birth, Christian denominations that practice baptism are not strict as to a specific day in which it has to be performed. As such, the current study strived to bridge the gap in knowledge by addressing the reasons for the simultaneous initiation rites of circumcision and baptism on the male infant on the eighth day after birth and the reason for female infant baptism on the fourteenth day.

Owalo's death in 1920, created a leadership vacuum that resulted in conflicts and wrangles. According to *Kitap Ligangla*, many people felt the unity could only be regained by having a leader from Owalo's line. Gideon Owalo, a son to Johana Owalo, with others consolidated the Nomiya Luo Mission (NLM) as the splinter group Nomiya Luo Sabbath (Sabato) (NLS) moved out. Nomiya Luo Mission was then registered as Nomiya Luo Church (NLC), and later registered as Nomiya Church (NC) in 1979 in keeping with the political climate at this time.

2.2.2 Beginnings and Development of Circumcision

According to the book of Genesis, circumcision was first practiced by the patriarchs and it involved all males of the household (Gen.17). The Genesis narrative has two important foundations: that all male within the household were to be circumcised and secondly that from that time hence forth male infant circumcision was to take place on the eighth day after birth. Circumcision became the most critical distinguishing mark that separated the Israelites from the surrounding peoples. It was the great boundary marker that distinguished the Jews from the Gentile and those within the covenant and those outside. It was a requirement of God's covenant along with Sabbath observance and food laws.

The discussion of circumcision in the NT finds its focus in the Pauline letters. Paul in the epistle to the Galatians notes that circumcision is not required of Gentile believers. Okot p'Bitek (1970) concurs and in comparing Paul's stand against that of the other apostles says: "But St. Paul was determined to admit the so called Gentiles without even demanding circumcision or submission to Mosaic Law." Paul argues that the Gentiles belong to the people of God by virtue of their faith in Christ. He says that the cross is the way of entering the covenant (Marshall et al, 1996; O'Donovan, 1995). If the cross is the way into the

covenant and circumcision is no longer required, this study is justified in asking why the practice is central to the NC.

2.2.2.1 Circumcision in the Old Testament

The OT understands circumcision as a religious rite performed on male children of Jews on the eighth day after birth (Gen. 17:12, Lev.12:3). This rite was enjoined upon Abraham and his descendants as a “token of the covenant” between him and all the generations thereafter. This covenant covered slaves born in the household or not (O’Donovan, 1995). The concept of circumcision was deeply rooted in the minds of the Hebrew people as a means to national consecration and purification (Gen. 17:10-17, Gen. 21:4, Lev. 12:3). The text of Gen. 17 remains the sole biblical account of the origin of Israelite circumcision.

This is my covenant with you and your descendants after you, the covenant you are to keep: Every male among you shall be circumcised. You are to undergo circumcision and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and you. For the generations to come every male among you who is eight days old must be circumcised, including those born in your household or bought with money from a foreigner—those who are not your offspring.... My covenant in your flesh is to be an everlasting covenant. Any uncircumcised male who has not been circumcised in the flesh, will be cut off from his people: he has broken my covenant (Gen. 17:7-11).

Circumcision was later integrated into Mosaic system in connection with the Passover (Ex. 12:44). Aliens were expected to undergo circumcision before they could be allowed to partake the covenant feast of the Passover (Ex. 12: 48) or even to marry into the Jewish community (Gen. 34:14-16). Non-Israelites, especially the Philistines, were often described as uncircumcised (1 Sam. 14:6; 21:4). Uncircumcision was viewed as a blemish which could only be removed through circumcision. The Book of Jeremiah, among others, testify that circumcision was continued throughout the OT (Jer. 9:25-26). McGrath (2001) quoting Zwingli observes that in the OT infant males were circumcised within days of their birth as a sign of their membership of the people of Israel. McGrath (2001) also notes that circumcision was the rite laid down by the Old Testament covenant community. The child was born into a community and circumcision was a sign of belonging to this community (Marshall et al, 1996).

Circumcision shows the gracious movement of God to man. The movement is portrayed in a series of promises that are evident in the OT as either personal or national and spiritual. The covenant expressed in the sign of circumcision defines the totality of divine promises which

are applied to divinely nominated recipients (*ibid*). Circumcision in the Old Testament as prescribed in Gen. 17 has an affinity with that practiced in the NC. As such the current study was designed to establish whether the OT circumcision, is the source of that practice in the NC and if so establish the origin of baptism on the eighth day.

2.2.2.2 Circumcision in the New Testament

Circumcision is a foundation feature of NT Judaism. It occasioned the Judaistic controversies of the apostolic period. Circumcision of proselytes was the occasion of controversies between Hellenistic Jews and Palestinian Jews. These Judaizing teachers (a section of Jewish Christians in the early Church) insisted that except the Gentiles who turned to Christianity were circumcised they could not be saved (Anderson, 1983). The Jerusalem Council of AD 49 discussing this controversy decreed that circumcision should not be imposed upon the Gentiles because salvation is by grace (Acts 15: 1-29). The weight of this controversy continued in the NT times: At one point Paul circumcised Timothy (Acts 16: 25); at another point Paul did not circumcise Titus (Gal. 2:3) although both were of Greek descent.

The Jews in the NT by associating circumcision with Moses had forgotten its more fundamental association with Abraham. Jesus had to remind them that it antedated Moses (Jn. 7:22). Paul in Gal. 5:2-3 says that the Mosaic connection was obnoxious to Christianity; their submitting to circumcision was a contradiction of their faith in Christ (Marshall *et al.*, 1996).

This is clear in verse 6: “For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything; the only thing that counts is faith working through love (Gal. 5:6). Faith in Christ sealed in the rite of baptism seems to supersede any other marking and as such, the current study wanted to establish why the NC fall back to circumcision as a rite of passage.

Paul in radical shift from the traditional conception of circumcision gives it a new and significant understanding; Obedience to the law gives circumcision its true value. Paul talks of an inward circumcision, the circumcision of the heart, which is of benefit only when one truly observes the Law. When the Law is broken then circumcision becomes uncircumcision. True circumcision, he says is that of the heart, it is spiritual and not that required in written Law; it is not outward and physical. Further he notes that an

uncircumcised person who is righteous is to be regarded as if circumcised. A man is not a Jew by outward appearance; the true Jew is a Jew inwardly (Rom. 2:1-2, cf 1 Cor. 7:18-19). Adewuya (2009) notes that Paul's declaration that circumcision or lack of it is not what commends one to God but the important thing is to keep God's commands right where you are, in the situation you find yourself in.

In the epistle to the Galatians Paul stresses the fact that neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value apart from faith expressing itself in love (Gal.5:2-5). Paul in Colossians connects the removal of the sinful nature in baptism to circumcision in Christ. Baptism like circumcision is a sign that one stood in a covenant relationship with God: "In him you were also circumcised ...not with a circumcision done by the hands of men but with circumcision done by Christ" (Col. 2:11-13).

Marshall et al (1996) says that Paul's argument against necessity of circumcision was that the circumcision made without hands also referred to as the circumcision of the heart is what mattered most (Col. 2:11; Rom 2:28-29). This circumcision of the heart he says is effected by the gift of the Spirit and it has rendered circumcision unnecessary (Phi. 3:3; Gal. 3:3; 5:3-5); Rom. 2:28-29). It is this gift of the Spirit that defined the Christian. Marshall concludes that for Paul the Spirit had replaced circumcision as the hallmark of the covenant people: the evidence of the Spirit in a person's life serving as sign and a seal of the new covenant just as circumcision served for the old covenant(2Cor.3:3-6; Jer. 31:31-34; 2 Cor.1:22). The New Testaments conclusion that relationship with Christ sealed by baptism outweighs all other mediums of connecting with God raises the question of the continued stress and relevance of circumcision in the NC.

2.2.2.3 Circumcision in Africa: Traditional and Contemporary Aspects

Circumcision in Africa is basically a puberty rite of initiation. Communities that did practice circumcision had other elaborate initiation rites (Mbiti, 1969). Circumcision in Africa retains its basic tenets as a significant community marker of transition. It has and it remains an initiation rite that gives one an opportunity to be integrated deeply into the community as he/she assumes adult responsibilities (Karanja, 1999). Circumcision therefore emphasized the corporateness of the whole group and those who were circumcised together formed a lifelong-age group (Mbiti, 1969).

Male and female circumcision is common in many African societies: “Boys undergo circumcision, and girls undergo clitoridectomy. Specialist men circumcise the boys, and specialist women perform the operation on the girls” (Mbiti, 1969). Mbiti notes that the initiation rites close the childhood phase of life and opens up adulthood phase. Kenyatta (Rev.ed 1991) concurs, noting that among the Gikuyu of Kenya it was the most important custom and the deciding factor in giving a boy or a girl the status of manhood or womanhood. In initiation the candidate receives a new name (Ela, 2001).

Contemporary changes have given the initiation rites a new world view. Right from its initial stages Christianity was at loggerheads with a number of African cultural practices. Although the missionaries had no problem with the surgical aspect of male circumcision they had misgivings about the rituals that accompanied the practice (Karanja, 1999). A case in point was the female circumcision controversy in Central Kenya that reached its height in 1929 when the Kikuyu Central Association raised a strong challenge to the missionary attitude to circumcision. The controversy arose because of imprudent missionary policies, and the African reaction to those policies (Karanja, 1999; Nthamburi, 1991). Missionaries objected to female circumcision on both medical and religious grounds. The alleged brutality that is many a time associated to this practice has yielded continued controversy over female circumcision. The rallying call has been taken by many women right movements who now for want of a better term call female circumcision (clitoridectomy), Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). Some of these efforts have manifested themselves in alternative rite of passage for women that entail elaborate instructions and a graduation ceremony minus the physical surgery.

Despite the changes brought about by modernization, education, medicine and Christianity, the significance of circumcision remains the same albeit the many accepted changes. It is now possible for one to be circumcised in the hospital and thereby miss-out on the series of instructions and ordeals that matured an initiate into a responsible elder in that society (Mbiti, 1969). Circumcision in Kenya and the controversy realized in the early church are pointers to the fact that for the church, baptism was the mark of admission and on admission one had to renounce cultural practices that were of the western view of Christianity and obnoxious to their faith. Circumcision in the Kenyan communities is mainly the puberty initiation rites performed from the African traditional religions focal point. It differs significantly from that observed in the NC and may have had no influence on the practice

adopted by NC. Though the Luo community was surrounded by several communities that practiced circumcision as a puberty rite of initiation, it seems their influence on Owalo and the NC was minimal or nonexistent.

2.3 Baptism

Baptism according to McGrath (2001) is a major sacrament in Christianity (a sacrament is an outward sign of a special inward grace on the person who participates). Baptism may be understood as the rite of washing with water as a sign of religious purification and consecration (Placher, 2001). When Nicodemus the Pharisee visits Jesus in John's Gospel Jesus tells him he must be born again; "No one can enter the reign of God without being born again (John 3:4-5). According to Placher (2001) Jesus himself was baptized by John the Baptist an event that is described in the first three Gospels while the fourth alludes to it. The crucifixion of Christ is the most important element of the new covenant. Entering the new covenant means being baptized into Christ's death and being raised with him into new life (Rom. 6:11 cf Col. 2:12).

Christian baptism is the sacrament of initiation into life in Christ. It marks the beginning of the journey of faith and discipleship that lasts throughout one's life. In baptism a person is immersed in water, or water is poured or sprinkled upon him or her, in the Triune name of God. Authorization of baptism is often found in the command of Jesus: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you..." (Matt.28:19-20).

Baptism is not only based on this command by Jesus but on his freewill submission to be baptized by John. In the act of baptism, Jesus enters into solidarity with the lost humanity. Baptism is a sure sign of fellowship and union with Christ and all the saints. Baptism as a sacrament serves that very special function of enhancing cohesion and integration (Migliore, 2004). The NC baptism like that in most Christian churches is by immersion or affusion and is in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Both believers (adult) and infant baptism are practiced in the NC.

2.3.1 Origin of Baptism

Baptism rite was practiced frequently in the OT. It signified purity or cleansing from sin and devotion to God. Since baptism was first instituted in the OT many have practiced it as a tradition yet have not fully understood its significance and meaning. Bathing in the Old Testament corresponds to this rite. Yet baptism became the way a Gentile convert entered the Jewish community. The beginning of Jewish baptism is shrouded in obscurity. Baths for ritual purity is a possible source (Placher, 2001).

Placher (2001) notes that in the Old Testament we have several examples that are connected to baptism: In Gen. 1:2 the spirit of God swept over the face of the waters; in the story of Noah all living things were destroyed except Noah and those saved in the ark; When the Israelites escaped from Egypt the Lord sent a great wind that divided the waters turning the sea into a dry land thus the Israelites were delivered; Forty years later the same miracle happened and the Israelite procession crossed the dry Jordan bed.

2.3.2 Baptism in the New Testament and in the Early Church

In the NT Jesus uses the image of baptism to relate the life of the adherents to his mission. Baptism (going down into water and coming up out of it) in the Christian thought was related to several key events in the Old Testament that include for example: Salvation of Noah, his family and living creatures and the deliverance of Israelites across the dry bed of the dry sea (Placher, (2001). This is what Paul writing to the Corinthians implies when he says “that our ancestors were all under the cloud and all passed through the sea, and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea...” (1 Cor.10.1).

Migliore (2004) says that baptism marks the beginning of the Christians participation in the life, death, and resurrection of Christ. This truth is clearly symbolized when the candidate goes down into the water (a picture of going down the grave) and coming up out of the water (a picture of being raised with Christ) and beginning a new walk in Christ (Grudem, 2003). This participation in the life, death and resurrection of Christ according to Migliore (2004) presents several sides to baptism in the NT. Two of these key elements that bring out the relationship between Christ and his Church are:

-Baptism as washing of a sin-stained life: God’s forgiveness washes away the sins of those who are truly repentant (1Cor.6:11). Those who are pardoned begin a new life in Christ.

-Baptism as incorporation: By this act humanity is united with Christ and with each other and with all the people of God in every time and place. In the new fellowship of the members they lose their individuality as they become members of a new family/ citizens of a new society.

The earliest Christians according to Gonzalez did not consider themselves followers of a new religion (Gonzalez 1984; P'Bitek, 1970). This affirms that at its beginning Christianity was preached by Jews to Jews as reformed Judaism. The first converts to Christianity had imposed circumcision on the Gentile converts as a pre-requisite to their admission to the Christian faith (Acts 15:1-7). Anderson (1983) notes that those Gentiles who chose to be admitted into Judaism were required to be circumcised and baptized and also to keep the whole Law of Moses. This scenario gave rise to the Jerusalem Church Council of AD 49 that decided to abandon circumcision (Cross *et al.*, 1997). O'Donovan concurs and notes physical circumcision and ablution rites were then abolished and replaced with the ritual of water baptism as a necessary sign of belonging to God's covenant people (Acts 15:1-6).

The rules of baptism were developed in the early church. Right from the 1st century baptism has been by triple immersion or effusion on the head. The act of baptism has been in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The Didache which is an extant document from the first century outlines the duties of a baptism candidate as well as the method of administering baptism. In the 2nd century, Tertullian notes that baptism was by triple immersion, preceded by a preparatory fast and vigil. Anointing using oil and imposition of the hand by the minister were expected. The candidate was also expected to confess his/her sins renounce the devil. Baptism in the Early Church was understood as the washing away of sin. In baptism the old person has to die so that the new one can be born. In baptism Christians share in Christ's resurrection. According to Placher (2001) baptism also involves joining a community: through baptism we become part of the church, united not only to Christ but to all those who are also united to Christ. The candidates were to be dressed in white after the baptism and then participate in a symbolic meal of milk and honey (Eucharist) (Cross *et al.*, 1997; Placher, 2001). As from the 2nd century, baptism was to be done during Easter and Pentecost but later Christmas and Epiphany were also accepted.

The practice of baptism in the NC seems to be based on the gains made as from the times of the early Church. However, its departure from the early church is based on the choice of two

specific times for male and female infant baptism. On the eighth day, male infants on top of baptism are circumcised; while female infants are baptized on the fourteenth day. The question remains why and when this departure was chosen as the path to God in NC.

2.3.3. Infant Baptism and Believer's Baptism

Infant baptism has continued to attract criticism over the centuries (Migliore, 2004; Placher, 2001). These arguments include for example: Infant baptism has no solid biblical foundation; It only became normal in the post-apostolic period and not the New Testament period; Baptism is a witness to the grace of God and is a mark of the response by human to this grace; Because infants cannot make a meaningful response to this grace the theological meaning of baptism becomes obscured. Such opposition has been seen in the Baptist tradition and in the writings of Tertullian and those of Karl Barth (McGrath, 2001; Migliore, 2004).

These arguments have been countered by reference to several covenantal promises of God given to believers and to their children (Acts 2:39) and the fact that scriptural evidence shows instances where entire households were baptized (Acts 16:15, 33; 1 Cor.1:16). Scholars have debated whether these families included infants. By second century Christians were baptizing infants (Placher, 2001). Infant baptism has been viewed as a sign of the covenant between God and his people. Baptism of infants inside the church is seen as a direct counterpart to the Jewish rite of circumcision.

The church based on scriptures has practiced believer's baptism (for those who have given reasonable evidence of believing in Christ) and infant baptism (administered to all infant children of believing parents) (Grudem, 2003). Infant baptism is one area that Christians continue to differ (Placher, 2001). There seems to be no specific reference in the NT for the baptism of infants and according to McGrath (2001) the NT does not explicitly forbid it. There are a number of passages that can be interpreted as condoning it. It is possible that the parallel with the Jewish rite of circumcision led Christians to devise an equivalent rite of passage for Christian infants. It must be stressed that there is genuine uncertainty concerning both the historical origins and the social or theological causes of the practice. By second century the practice had become normal (McGrath, 2001). Following McGrath (2001) on the uncertainty of the origins of infant baptism then the prescription of the eighth day and

fourteenth day baptism for male and female infants respectively in the NC is a novelty. Both infant and believers baptism are practiced in the NC. The desire to get to the origins of this new practice and its significance in this study is thus critical.

2.4 Baptism and Circumcision

McGrath (2001) argues that it has been a long standing tradition within Christian theology to see baptism as the Christian equivalent of circumcision. McGrath (2001) further notes that according to the OT the male infants born within the bounds of Israel should have an outward sign of their membership of the people of God. Infant baptism was thus analogous to circumcision- a sign of belonging to the covenant community. Placher (2001) observes that circumcision among the Jews was recognized as so important a ritual that it could be performed even on the Sabbath. He further notes that associating with Christ restores people to full membership in the community of Israel (Placher, 2001).

McGrath (2001) quoting Zwingli (a leading theologian in Switzerland and the founder of the Reformed traditions in the Post-Reformation Christianity) argued that the more inclusive and gentle character of Christianity was publicly affirmed by infant baptism- of both male and female infants. This contrasted sharply with Judaism that recognized only the marking of male infants. The gentle character of the gospel was publicly demonstrated by the absence of pain or the shedding of blood. Accordingly, baptism was seen as being gentler than circumcision, in that it involves no pain or shedding of blood. Baptism was not only a sign of belonging to a community-(the church) but also the public demonstration of this membership (McGrath, 2004). Placher notes that in this new community what matters most is not Hebrew descent but community with Jesus (Placher, 2001). The NC has chosen the gentler and the painful seals of belonging to a community. This is the double rite of passage that this study sought to understand its origins and significance.

2.4.1 Circumcision and Baptism on the Eighth Day

The text of Gen. 17 remains the sole biblical account of the origin of Israelite circumcision.

For the generations to come every male among you who is eight days old must be circumcised, including those born in your household or bought with money from a foreigner-those who are not your offspring.... My covenant in your flesh is to be an everlasting covenant. Any uncircumcised male who has not been circumcised in the flesh, will be cut off from his people: he has broken my covenant (Gen. 17:7-11).

Circumcision on the eighth day has remained a central practice in Judaism for over 4000 years based on the prescription of Gen 17. Circumcision for male infants can be seen also in a few cases across Africa for instances in Islam, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, the Abayudaya, the Lemba, the Coptic Orthodox Church of Egypt, and the Falasha of Ethiopia among others. Some of these practices resemble that in the NC in one way or another.

a) Unlike the prescription of the eighth day in Judaism Circumcision in Islam does not have a specific time; the timing depends on country, family, culture and region. Infant circumcision on the seventh day after birth is seen in some regions. This study will endeavor to answer what influence the brief spate that Owalo spent with Muslims inform or influence the theology of his Church <http://www.missionislam.com/health/circumcisionislam.html>.

b) The Ethiopian Orthodox Church just like the Coptic orthodox and Eritrean Orthodox Church follow closely the precepts of the OT including circumcision, dietary rules and observing Saturday as the Sabbath (<http://www.ethiopianorthodox.org/english/history.html>). As churches they are similar to the NC in their practice of circumcision and baptism. According to Cross *et al* (1997) circumcision has been in use in the Ethiopian Church where it is performed between the third and eighth day after birth and that is before baptism. The question that remained was whether or not the NC circumcision wholly has an OT origin or it has to do with the heavenly visions that Owalo supposedly experienced.

c) The Abayudaya (The Jews) of Uganda is a local community that observes Jewish rituals. Their male infants are circumcised on the eighth day after birth. The Abayudaya had its origins in the Christian church and initially it practiced Christian sacraments as well as circumcision. However with time they discarded the Christian elements in their practice. The goal of the Abayudaya seemingly was marred and distorted as they interacted with Jews workmen posted to Uganda and this led them to discard the Christian practices. This study sought to understand whether the NC has retained the initial teaching on the double rite of passage and whether or not these have remained unaffected by the pressures and exigencies of life. Oded, Arye (1974). "The Bayudaya of Uganda: A portrait of an African Jewish Community." *Journal of Religion in Africa*

(<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Judaism/uganda1.html>).

d) The Lemba is a South Africa tribe that claims Jewish ancestry. They observe strict Jewish traditions that include male circumcision. Mathivha (2000), *The story of the Lemba People* (<http://www.haruth.com/jw/JewishLemba.html>). Although claiming Jewish origins and even observing strictly the Jewish traditions some of them are practicing Christians and Muslims.

e) The Falasha of Ethiopia are a Jewish sect. They practice circumcision of both sexes. The Falasha are known to circumcise even on the seventh day after birth. Philtar (University of Cumbria) (1999) *Falashas* (<http://www.philtar.ac.uk/encyclopedia/judaism/falash.html>). This is a departure from Judaism that recognized that circumcision is for male infants only and on the eighth day. Jewish origins for circumcision on the eighth day could be a possibility, however the place and influence of Owalo's visions is to be determined. Baptism on the other hand and especially infant baptism seemingly has no documented evidence of being done on the eighth day or even on the fourteenth day. The examples above support the uniqueness of the practice by the NC. Circumcision and baptism on the eighth day for male infants and baptism on the fourteenth day for female infants seems peculiar to NC.

2.5 The Socio-Theological Issues in the Double Rite of Passage as a Basis of Gender Disparity in the NC

While the scriptures prescribed circumcision for male infants on the eighth day there seems to be no direct scriptural evidence for a specified time for the baptism of the male and female infants. Circumcision is done on the eighth day after the woman has been ceremonially unclean for the first seven days. The OT understanding of the need for purification is that some bodily discharges make people unclean. According to Milgrom (1991) mothers are polluted by the puerperal discharge for forty days after giving birth to a son and for eighty days after bearing a daughter. Circumcision is also connected to a period purification after which the child and the mother present a sacrifice of a burnt offering as well as a sin offering:

If a woman conceives and bears a male child she shall be ceremonially unclean for seven days; as at the time of her menstruation, she shall be unclean. On the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised. Her time of blood purification shall be thirty three days: she shall not touch any holy thing, or come into the sanctuary, until the days of her purification are completed... When the days of her purification are completed whether for a son or a daughter, she shall bring to the priest at the entrance of the tent of meeting a lamb in its first year for a burnt offering and a pigeon or a turtle dove for a sin offering. (Lev. 12: 1-8).

The NT concurs and brings out the element of circumcision and naming on the eighth day (Lk.1:59; 2:21; Phil. 3:5). The NT also agrees with the notion of purification being done before a priest:

After eight days had passed, it was time to circumcise the child; and he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb. When the time came for the purification according to the Law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord (Luke 2: 21-22).

The Hebrew names given to children according to Dosick (1995) are an affirmation of the Jewish identity as covenant partners.

The choice of the eighth day seems to have no Scriptural basis or significance (Migliore, 2004). Dosick (1995) however proposes that it could be linked to the practice of pagan tribes: “the pagan chose the eighth day for sacrificial offering to appease gods because they reasoned that if the gods permitted the child to live for a full week it was most likely they would protect the child from harm or death. The choice of the eighth day he argues could be for medical reasons: “In a newborn, there is a factor in the blood that gives the blood the ability to coagulate and clot, and which does not mature until approximately the eighth day”. There seems to be no evidence in the scriptures of female infant baptism on the fourteenth day.

Paul in Galatians brings out the universality of baptism when he says that all who have been baptized in Christ have no distinction: “...there is no longer male and female for all of you are one Christ Jesus” (Gal. 3:28). However, the evidence for the fourteenth day may be gleaned from the purification rites after birth as stated in Leviticus 12:5-6:

If a woman conceives and bears a female child “she shall be unclean two weeks as in her menstruation; her time of blood purification shall be sixty six days. When the days of her purification are completed whether for a son or a daughter, she shall bring to the priest at the entrance of the tent of meeting a lamb in its first year for a burnt offering and a pigeon or a turtle dove for a sin offering.

In the Jewish tradition, naming for girls seems to take a special ceremony because they do not undergo the circumcision rite. According to Dosick (1995): “Since there is no circumcision ceremony for girls, traditionally girls are given their Hebrew names at a synagogue service on a day that the Torah is read (Monday, Thursday, or Shabbat morning,

Shabbat afternoon or a festival morning. Many liberal Jews are now having “at home” naming ceremony for girls.

Because the prescription for circumcision for male infants on the eighth day is given under the same breath as that for the ceremonial uncleanness of and purification of a woman on the birth of a girl, then the choice of the fourteenth day for baptism of girls by the NC may find its grounding. Many African ethnic groups that practice the puberty rite of circumcision circumcise their female members, and the implication in both instances is a mature, responsible, and fully integrated member of the community.

The socio-theological implications of the double rite of passage on the male members of NC, apparently excludes the female members and is a clear indication of gender disparity. Ndeda (2005) on one hand argues and attributes the exclusion of women from active religious participation to that system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women while on the other hand to the belief that female sexuality contaminates and pollutes. For the reason of pollution (e.g. menstruation) a woman would not lead a worship service. Ndeda (2005) argues further that women sexuality needed periodic purification and the case in point is after childbirth where a woman was confined for a period of either thirty three days or sixty six days depending on the sex of the child. While this coincides with the Jewish tradition of purification the choice and practice of the fourteenth day of baptism in the NC can be argued to be an innovation that calls for further investigation to bring out its real significance in this church.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This section describes the research methodology that will be followed in this study. The section will comprise the following subtitles: research design, study location, study population, sampling procedures, sources of data, data collection methods, and data analysis.

3.2 Research Design

This is an explanatory study and it will employ the explanatory research design. Explanatory design serves the purpose of connecting ideas in order to understand the cause and effect. It is an attempt to explain a phenomenon (Kothari, 2004; Peter, 2010).

3.3 Study Area

The study was undertaken in Rarieda Sub-County of Siaya County (Total Area: 798 Km² Land: 403.4 Km²; Water 394.6: Km²). Rarieda Sub-County is one of the new Sub-Counties in Siaya County of Kenya. Rarieda Sub-County was carved out of Bondo Sub-County in 2007.

Rarieda Sub-County borders Bondo and Gem Sub-Counties to the North West, Kisumu West Sub-County to the East, Lake Victoria to the south/south west and North Rachuonyo, HomaBay, Mbita and Suba Sub-Counties across the lake. To the West lies the Republic of Uganda. Rarieda Sub-County lies between 0⁰ 26' to 0⁰ 90' and longitude 34⁰ 10' E and 34⁰ 35' E. (Population and Housing Census, 2009). Rarieda was chosen for this study because it is the home of origin of the late prophet Johana Owalo the founder of NC, the foundation of the first ever congregation of NC. It is also the headquarters of NC in Kenya and home of the immediate former Archbishop the late Gideon Charles Owalo. Rarieda Sub-County has hosted the annual pilgrimage to Oboch to commemorate two important calendar dates enshrined in the NC Constitution that is covenant day on 1st of March and Prophet Owalo's day on the 11th of January. The former marks and commemorates the day that God supposedly made a covenant with prophet Owalo in 1907 while the latter the death of the prophet on 11th January 1920.

Administratively, Rarieda Sub-County has two divisions namely Rarieda Division (178.4km²) and Madiany Division (221.2Km²). Rarieda and Madiany Divisions each have 4 locations with 23 sub locations among them. Politically Rarieda Sub-County also covers Rarieda Constituency.

3.3.1 The Size and Distribution of Administrative Units

The size and distribution of the administrative units in Rarieda Sub-County is as below:

Table 1.1: Rarieda Sub-County size and distribution of administrative units

| Division | Area(Km²) | No. of Locations | No. of SubLocations |
|--------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| Madiany | 221.2 | 4 | 13 |
| Rarieda | 178.4 | 4 | 10 |
| Total land surface | 399.6 | 8 | 23 |

Source: Rarieda District Development Plan 2008-2012

3.3.2 Rarieda Sub-County Population

The population figures from the national census of 2009 indicate that the Sub-County has a total population of 134558:- Males 64473; Females 70085- (2009, Population and Housing Census).

The district has an average population density of 334 persons per square kilometer. Rarieda Division has a higher population density of 368 persons per square kilometer.

Table 1.2: Rarieda Sub-County population distribution and density

| DIVISION | Area(Km²) | Males | Females | Total | Density |
|-----------------|-----------------------------|--------------|----------------|--------------|----------------|
| Madiany | 221.2 | 33184 | 35416 | 68600 | 306 |
| Rarieda | 178.4 | 31289 | 34669 | 65958 | 368 |
| Total | 399.6 | 64473 | 70085 | 134558 | 334 |

Source: 2009, Kenya Population and Housing Census

Rarieda Sub-County like the whole of Kenya has churches that grew out of mission and several African initiated churches. The predominant churches that grew out of the European mission include the Anglican Church of Kenya, The Roman Catholic Church, The Seventh Day Adventist (SDA) and the African Inland Church. The African Independent Churches are numerous and include: Nomiya Church (NC) and her breakaway groups, Church of Christ in Africa (CCA) and her splinter groups, the African Israel Church, and the Roho Churches.

Map of the 47 Counties in Kenya

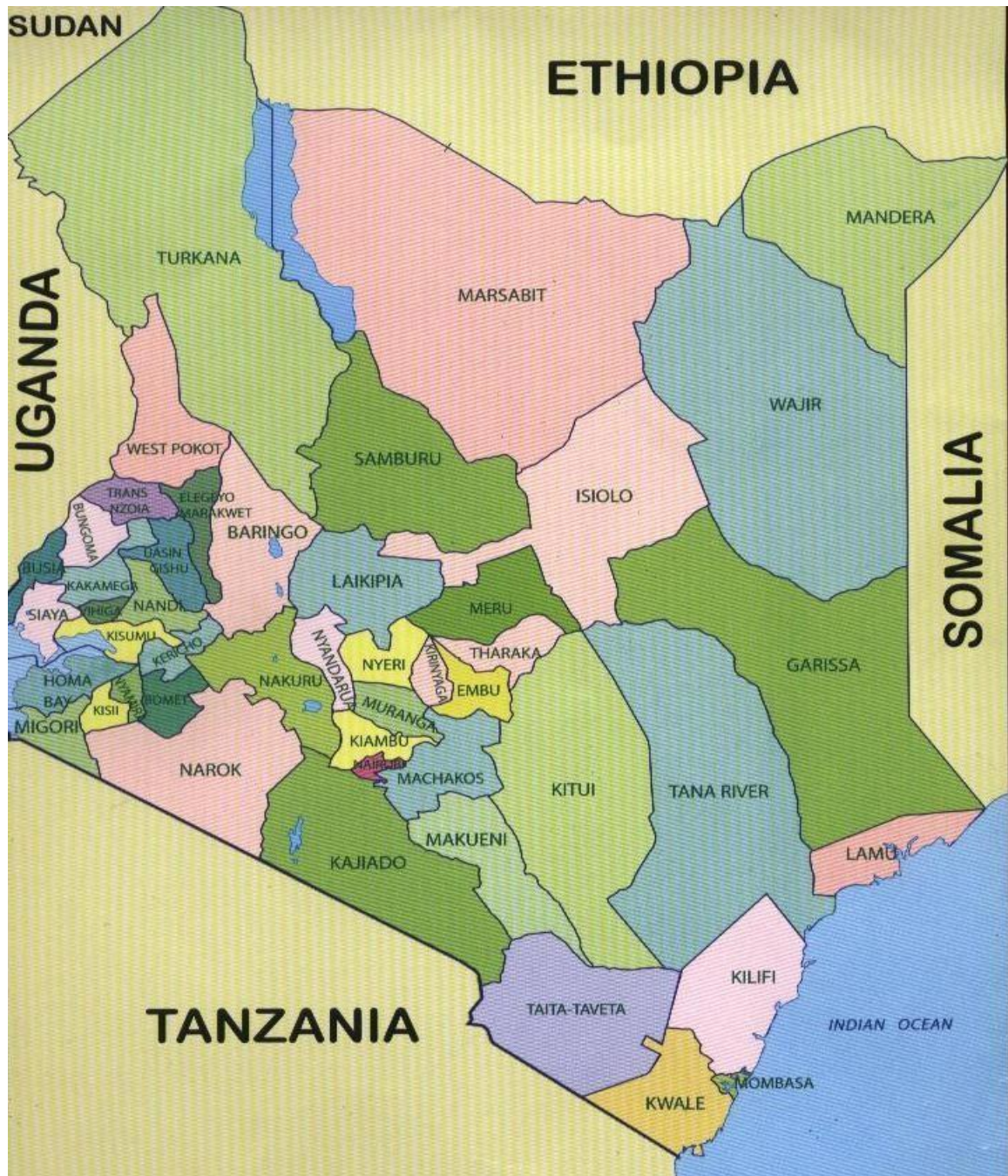


Fig. 3.1 Location of Siaya County in Kenya. 36

Source: <http://softkenya.com/county/wp-content/uploads/sites/107/2015/05/Counties-inKenya.jpg>

Map of Rarieda Sub-County Administrative Units

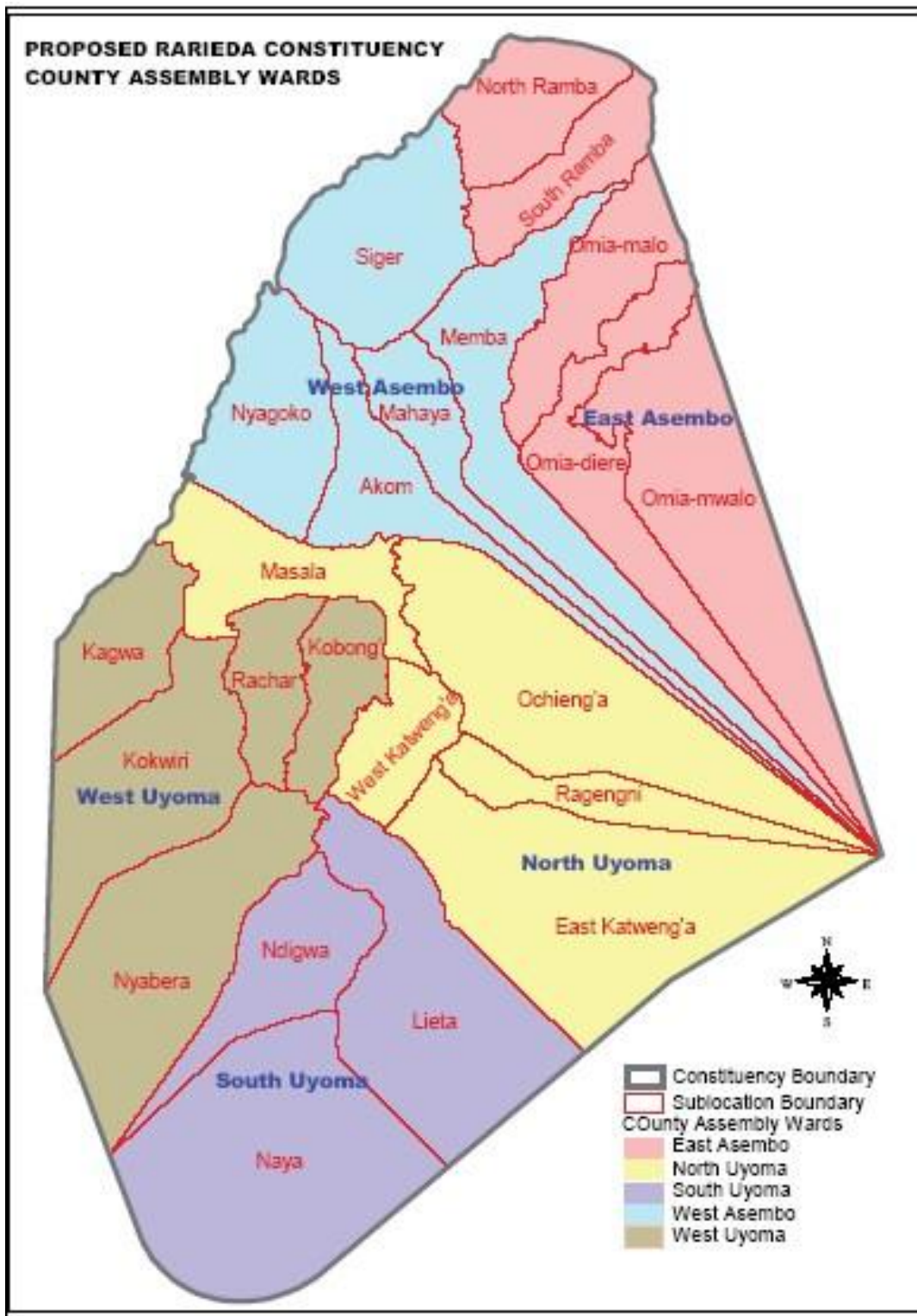


Fig. 3.2 Rarieda Sub-County Administrative Units

Source: <http://softkenya.com/constituency/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2011/06/Rarieda-Constituency-Map.png>

3.4 Study Population

The NC in Kenya is established and has a structure that has developed over the last centenary. The study population is the Nomiya Church leaders and members in Rarieda Sub County of Siaya County. Rarieda Sub-County has 14 dioceses (8 in Asembo and 6 in Uyoma). The table below (Table 1.3) represents the adult and children members as at December 2017.

Table 1.3: Population of NC Diocese in Rarieda Sub-County. Source Archbishop Abaki and Bishop Nyarath

| | DIOCESE | ADULTS | CHILREN | TOTAL |
|----|-------------------|---------------|----------------|--------------|
| 1 | Ujwanga | 850 | 940 | 1790 |
| 2 | Got Bar | 266 | 300 | 566 |
| 3 | Rahongo | 250 | 282 | 532 |
| 4 | Got Anyango | 200 | 251 | 451 |
| 5 | Oboch Original | 160 | 225 | 385 |
| 6 | Ogwedhi | 138 | 200 | 338 |
| 7 | Atoyo | 123 | 168 | 391 |
| 8 | Oboch Headquarter | 120 | 156 | 276 |
| 9 | Madiany | 110 | 160 | 270 |
| 10 | Ndati | 88 | 120 | 208 |
| 11 | Odiero | 70 | 85 | 155 |
| 12 | Othoche | 36 | 46 | 82 |
| 13 | Ginga | 32 | 48 | 80 |
| 14 | Ndwara | 22 | 38 | 60 |
| 15 | Rarieda | 38 | 141 | 179 |
| | TOTAL | 2563 | 3150 | 5713 |

3.5 Sampling Procedure and Sample Size

Simple Random Sampling was used to obtain the eight dioceses from the fourteen dioceses in Rarieda District. The fourteen dioceses in Rarieda Sub-County are as follows: Oboch Headquarter, Atoyo, Got Anyango, Ogwedhi, Ndwara, Rarieda, Ujwanga, Madiany, Othoche, Ginga, Rahongo, Ndati, Odiero, and Oboch Original. Eight Dioceses from Rarieda Sub-County were selected: six from Rarieda and two from Madiany Divisions. Rarieda division was chosen for this study because of the following reasons: first it is the home of Prophet Johana Owalo and the foundation of the NC in 1912, secondly it has a visible presence of the NC population and thirdly it is the headquarters of the NC and seat of the Archbishop.

The total of 345 respondents was considered to be the optimum sample that fulfills the requirement of efficiency, representativeness, reliability and flexibility (Kothari, 2004; Mugenda, 2003). Leaders for this study were both clergy and laity. Clergy are the ordained leaders who include the following levels in the hierarchy and structure of the church: Archbishop, Bishops, Archdeacons, Rural Deans and priests. The laity included the nonordained lay members of the synod, such as secretaries, treasurers and women wing leaders and the lay readers in the churches. Non-leaders are basically the adherents (These are members by virtue of their baptism, circumcision and obedience to the rules of the NC). According to Peters (2010) purposive sample is a non-probability sample that is selected based on characteristics of a population and the objective of the study. Kothari (2004) notes that purposive sampling is most effective when within the population are a domain with knowledgeable experts. It is suitable for qualitative studies

Purposive sampling was appropriate for this study due to the fact that the selected category of the population was believed to be fully knowledgeable in the subject matter of the double rite of passage. Purposive sampling was employed to get the 113 Church Leaders as follows: 1 Archbishop, 11 Bishops, 47 Priests, 18 Lay Readers, 7 Senior Members and 29 Women Wing Representatives. Lay Readers were sampled on the basis of seniority and the years of service that was ten years of service and above.

Snowball sampling also called chain sampling is a non-probability sampling technique where existing study subjects recruit future subjects from among their acquaintances snowball sampling was used to get the 232 baptized members of the NC. These members were selected on the criterion that they are eighteen years and above. The baptized members had a basic education level that enabled them to interact effectively with the research questions.

3.6 Sources of Data

Both secondary and primary sources of data were used in the collection of data. Primary data was obtained from the field using the research instruments of interview schedule, observation schedule, questionnaires and focus group discussions. Secondary data was obtained from international refereed journals, published and unpublished books and manuscripts, NC Hymnals and Prayer Books; written reports from the church as well as from Kenya National Archives (KNA) Secondary data supplemented and augmented the primary data.

3.7 Data Collection Methods

The methods of data collection in this study were Key Informant Interviews (KII), self-administered questionnaires, observation and focus group discussions. The research instruments were interview schedule, questionnaire, observation schedule and discussion schedule.

3.7.1 Key Informant Interviews (KII)

Oral interviews have the advantage of allowing for in-depth interaction (Mugenda, 2003). Key Informant Interviews (KII) method was significant to this study because the top echelon by virtue of the responsibility bestowed upon them, and their training had the special information and knowledge required (Kombo, 2009). Key Informant interviews (KII) were carried out on the Key informants who are the top leadership of the Church (Archbishop-1, Bishops-11, Senior Lay Members-7 and Women Wing Representatives-6 Archdeacons-2). The Senior Lay Respondents and Women Wing Representatives were members of the Synod and also opinion leaders of good standing and education in the NC Rarieda District. A total of twenty Seven key leaders were interviewed. The (KII) method employed the interview schedule tool as shown in the Appendix answered questions related to the socio-cultural and theological basis for the double rite of passage in the NC.

3.7.2 Self – Administered Questionnaires

The use of self-administered questionnaires in this study is justified because of the large number of respondents. According to Kothari (2004) questionnaires are useful for big enquiries, and particularly for the several attendant merits for example the low cost even when the universe is large and spread over a wide geographical area; it is free from the bias of the interviewer; the answers are in respondents own words; respondents who are not easily approachable can be reached and they have adequate time to give well thought out answers. Each item in the questionnaire is developed to address a specific objective, research question or hypothesis of the study (Mugenda, 2003). There are two broad categories of questions used in a questionnaire: structured or closed ended and unstructured or open-ended.

3.7.2.1 Self-Administered Questionnaires for Church Leaders

Given the large number of Church leaders as respondents questionnaires were used. Questionnaires have the advantage of reaching several respondents at the same time

(Kombo, 2009). Self-administered interviews were carried out using the questionnaires as a research tool. The Eight six (86) Church leaders purposively sampled (10 Senior Clergy, 35 Clergy 25 Women Representatives and 16 Lay Readers) all received a questionnaire. A questionnaire for Church leaders as in the Appendix 1 was used.

3.7.2.2 Self-Administered Questionnaires for Baptized Members

Given the importance of objectives 2 and 3, the baptized members were basically required to respond to questions on the theological context of the double rite of passage in the NC and the socio-theological issues in the double rite of passage that are grounds for gender disparity in the NC. A total of 179 baptized members each received a questionnaire. The study strived to get an approximately equal representation of male and female baptized members in order to reproduce the salient characteristics of the accessible population to an acceptable degree (Mugenda, 2003). A questionnaire for baptized members as in the Appendix was used.

3.7.3 Focus Group Discussions

Focus Groups Discussions were used in this study based on their given advantage of generating a lot of information quickly as one explores beliefs and opinions within a community (Kombo, 2009). This method was employed for the baptized members. The instrument used was the discussion schedule as shown in the appendix. Focus Group discussions reached in total 53 baptized members of the NC in three Dioceses. Two groups (male and female) each composed of 5-8 individuals, eighteen years and above were reached. This age bracket the researcher believed had the exposure and experience to warrant their inclusion in the study. These groups were of either gender and were moderated by a trained moderator (Kombo, 2009). The moderators were the researcher and research assistants who were fully conversant and had a clear picture of the contents and expectation of the contents of the discussion schedule. The members so selected had a minimum of primary level education and were able to read and write. FGD was used to verify and cross check the information gathered from the other methods.

3.7.4 Observation

The practice of circumcision and baptism simultaneously is unique to the NC. The observation method added great value to the data obtained from the above methods; it allowed the researcher to put behavior in context and thereby understand it much better

(Kombo, 2009). Non-participation observation method was employed. Observation of the baptism and circumcision rites of passage rituals generated a lot of vital information. The target groups in this case were the priest, the *Jashariff* (circumciser), the parents and the male and female infants. One Circumcision/Baptism services and one female baptism services were observed in the NC. Each was attended by about thirty people. Four services of blood purification of the women after birth were observed. Each observation was attended by about 80 baptized members and several invited nonmembers. The observation schedule in the appendix guided an objective observation (Mugenda, 2003).

Observation was in the natural setting thus uncontrolled observation. Observation method validated the verbal information and provided detailed description of the activities of NC in the services of baptism and circumcision as well as in the *Mony* (the all-night vigil on the eve of the service marking the end of the period of seclusion). The observation of baptism and circumcision recorded several challenges. Getting information for an imminent baptism/circumcision of infants was not easy possibly due to the extremely short period after birth for it to be done. While it was easy to access the celebration marking the end of the period of seclusion of the mother and infant, accessing the ceremony of purification through the sacrificial meal was not easy because it is attended by the initiated.

3.8 Validity and Reliability

Validity according to Kombo and Tromp (2006) is a measure of how well a test measures what it is supposed to measure. Mugenda (2003) concurs noting that validity is the degree to which results obtained from the analysis of the data actually represent the phenomenon under study.

Validity in research is understood from two view points that is external validity and internal validity. External validity is a measure of how the results can be generalized and it touches on population validity and ecological validity. Internal validity on the other hand is a measure of how the research design closely reflects the cause and effect. To measure the internal validity the following are some of the methods that would be used: Face validity, Test validity, Criterion validity and Content validity (Mugenda, 2003; Peter, 2010).

The test method used in this study is the content validity which is the estimate of how much a measure represents every element in the context. The instruments used in this study gave

data that accurately represent the study topic the socio-theological context of the double rite of passage in Nomiya Church in Kenya. Data for this study was collected from the primary respondents through Key Informant Interviews, self-administered questionnaires, Focus Group Discussions and observation. According to Kombo and Tromp (2006), reliability is a measure of how consistent the results from a test are. This study yielded consistent results from all the respondents interviewed in concert with those from secondary sources.

The Key Informant Interviews generated data mainly related to the socio-cultural, historical and theological basis for the double rite of passage in the NC. The self-administered questionnaires gave data related to both the theological context of the double rite of passage and the socio-theological grounds for gender disparity in the NC. The Focus Group Discussions was used to cross check the information generated from the above two methods. Observation provided a window through which the information gathered from the other methods could be grounded and verified. Follow-ups enabled the validity of collected data to be tested. Triangulation through the use of the above methods of data collection assured the validity of the information from the primary respondents.

3.9 Data Storage

Data for this study was collected over a period of twenty one months. Kombo and Tromp (2006) recognize two major storage forms: the electronic form and non-electronic form (paper). The data was coded and stored first on paper and later transferred to a personal computer. The computer storage allowed for the ease of access and use of the data.

3.10 Data Analysis

The qualitative data collected from interviews, focus group discussions and the observation schedules were first edited for accuracy and completeness. This study was to a large extent qualitative and it yielded non-numerical data.

The data generated were given serial numbers and codes to identify them and consequently the data was organized and grouped according to the patterns and themes related to the objectives of the study. The themes were then organized into categories that enabled the research objectives to be fully analyzed. The themes, categories and patterns were then evaluated and analyzed in relation to the research questions. Direct quotations from respondents were also analyzed in relationship to the research questions. The frequency of

occurrence of certain ideas, and responses were taken to represent and indicate their significance to the study. The data was then interpreted within the parameters of the objectives. The data so generated was analyzed through content analysis and descriptive analysis.

The research instruments had socio-demographic issues like age and gender which led to quantitative data. The quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. Content analysis was used to analyze secondary data from secondary sources (Books, reports and Prayer Books from the NC, Hymnals and published and unpublished manuscripts).

3.11 Ethical Consideration

Researchers whose respondents are people must give attention to the ethical issues associated with carrying out their research (Kombo and Tromp, 2006). This study was fully concerned that the rights and privileges of the participants should not be affected by the study. The study sought permission to conduct the research from the Archbishop and later from the chairman of Bondo Rarieda Region (BORA- this is the group of NC dioceses in Bondo and Rarieda Sub-Counties). Every individual diocese also gave her consent. The study made the effort to explain the contents of the research instruments to the respondents. The fears of the respondents were allayed and eventually they opened-up to give data that was proven to be valid and reliable. The participants on filling the consent forms indicated their willingness to participate. They also accepted and gave consent that their names and their contributions be used in the presentation of the data. The informed consent form is attached in the Appendix section. The leaders were debriefed concerning the findings of the research. A letter of approval was also received from the Assistant Archbishop David Abaki. This letter of approval is hereby attached in the Appendix.

3.12 Research constraints

The findings from this research were expected despite of the many challenges during the period of research. These challenges included the following: The first was that this study did not have a sponsor who provided research funds. However, funds from a few well-wishers enabled the study though through several logistical handicaps. The second challenge was transport and the research assistants and the researcher reached the respondents using the public transportation of Matatu and Boda-Boda. This was a major handicap especially in the bad terrains of the remote Dioceses. The third was suspicion and fear from the respondents

in the initial stages as they failed to grasp the import of the study. The question they were asking is the interest of a researcher from a different denominational background in the Socio-cultural issues surrounding the double rite of passage. However, the approach through the bishops and the archbishop increased the participant's confidence. A number of bishops were receptive but blocked access to their members. The fourth challenge was the inconsistency of some historical facts from the respondents. Much of the historical facts have been handed down orally and as such there are various versions as there are sources.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE SOCIO-CULTURAL BASIS OF THE DOUBLE RITE OF PASSAGE IN THE NC

4.1 Introduction

This chapter will first present an analysis of socio-demographic data and secondly data under the first objective of the study: the socio-cultural basis of the double rite of passage in the NC. This section describes the research findings from the primary respondents and the library.

4.1.1 Socio-demographic data

This study is mainly qualitative and was not to yield numerical data. The socio-demographic data herein analyzed show the age and gender of the respondents. The demographic information that is briefly analyzed yields quantitative data.

4.1.1.1 Age of Respondents

A total of 345 respondents were interviewed. Out of this sample 48% were between ages 45-54, 32% were between ages 55-92, and 20% were between the age of 35-44. The age set of 45-54 forms almost half of the NC population. The age set 55-92 is where the majority of NC leadership, the Bishops and other clergy belong. The women wing leaders also fall in this age bracket because they are leaders by virtue of being married to the NC leaders. Age is important as it gives credence to the data (older and well-grounded leaders/members are expected to be more familiar and conversant with the subject matter under enquiry).

4.1.1.2 Gender of Respondents

Out of the sampled population of 345 leaders and baptized members of the NC Rarieda Sub-County, 181 that is 52.7% were the female gender whereas 164 that is 47.3% were the male gender. Purposive sampling was used to get the leadership of the Church and because the leadership of the NC is purely male a lot of the male gender was brought on board. 67 out of 164 (40.85% were leaders-Archbishop, Bishops, and other clergy). The number of the female gender can be seen as overwhelmingly outnumbering the male.

4.2 The Socio-Cultural Basis of the Double Rite of Passage

The primary respondents concur that the NC was founded by Prophet Johana Owalo after a series of heavenly visions. According to Archbishop Charles Gideon Owalo (Owalo, 2013), Prophet Owalo emboldened by these visions recognized the flaws and ills in the Colonial and Missionary enterprise, and consequently he had a bruising and scathing encounter with the colonialists and missionaries that eventually led to the founding of the NC in 1912. The NC takes on a life of its own to become a fully-fledged denomination that has survived the challenges and the ravages on its path for over a century. The Church that Prophet Owalo founded is known as *Nomiya* that means ‘I was given’ and the adherents of this church have gone by the name *Jo-Nomiya*: the adherents of Nomiya Church or *Jo-Kowalo* (the group that belongs to Owalo). In the NC understanding, Johana Owalo is held as *Jaote* (an apostle of God) and *Nabii* (a prophet). The title Prophet Owalo is used in this study following the honor the NC accords to her founder.

4.2.1 The Founding of the NC

The founding of the NC is analogous to the Ministry of Johana Owalo. His ministry like that of Jesus Christ and that of Mohammed was for a short time; however its impact has long survived him. Johana Owalo came from a humble background. Johana hailed from K’Ochieng clan of Asembo location which according to Archdeacon Willis was near headman Ayoro’s home at Mahaya. According to Archdeacon Joshua Opere (Opere, 2013) this locality was next to Orengo. Johana’s parents moved here from the area around Masala in Uyoma (see Owalo, 2001).

The double rite of passage of circumcision and baptism in the NC is unique in Christianity and also in Judaism. Circumcision in Judaism shares a lot with that practiced in the NC but is not done in the context of baptism. On the other hand baptism is the only rite in most Christian denominations that consider the circumcision rite in the Jewish context as obsolete having been replaced by baptism.

He was born in the Luo community that was socially organized and well settled after a long struggle with her neighbors. However, this serene and tranquil environment was shattered by the arrival of the European missionaries, followed immediately by the settlers and the colonial administration. Johana is believed to have been born in 1871 (Opwapo, 1981). His date of birth can only be estimated because according to Opwapo (1981), he was born

towards the end of the nineteenth century. He is said to have been the age mate of Chief Daniel Odindo and Shadrack Adem who were about 40 years old by 1912. Ogot (2009) agrees with the foregoing but gives a more definite date: “Owalo was born in August 1871 at Orengo village, Asembo location close to the shores of Lake Victoria.”

Archbishop Owalo (Owalo, 2013) gave the family life of prophet Owalo as follows. Johana Owalo’s father Abor had two wives, the first was Apinde the daughter of Sirengo from Uyoma and the second was Odimo the daughter of Kisoro also from Uyoma. Apinde, the first wife gave birth to three children, a daughter and two sons. The daughter was called Otonde and the two sons were Tado Odiero and Philip Obado. Odimo the second wife, on the other hand had a daughter and three sons. The daughter was called Jagero and the three sons were Methuselah Nyunja, Samson Okech and Johana Owalo.

The birth of Owalo, the last born who grows to found the Nomiya Church, is surrounded by several legends. One such legend explained by Rev. Andrew Nyanya (Nyanya, 2014) of Atoyo Diocese and confirmed by Bishop Nikolao Anyona (Anyona, 2014) of Oboch Original Diocese and many other informants states:

On the day of his birth it is said that one of the bulls belonging to his father’s herd while on the grazing field and as it was sharpening its horns on an anthill it encountered a snake that twined itself on the bull’s horns and remained there. Nobody attempted to remove the snake. Puzzled by this amazing spectacle Owalo’s father took some grains in an *ondong* (a small basket) and went to consult a medicine man close by. The medicine man assured him that the incident was a harbinger of the imminent birth to take place in his home of a child with special qualities. Later in the day after the herd returned home Owalo was born and at that very moment the snake disentangled itself from the bull’s horns and left the compound without harming anybody or being harmed by the members of the homestead.

Owalo was born a Luo and grew up being socialized in the Luo culture and way of life. While it is not possible to account for this early period of his life, informants agree that like all Luo boys of his time he grew up performing the routine manly duties expected of boys and men in the Luo society. At the appointed time he had six of his lower teeth removed in the Luo puberty rite of initiation. Owalo married two wives, Elizabeth Alila and Madara daughter of Ajulu (Owalo 24). Elizabeth is the mother of the late Archbishop Gideon Charles Owalo, the immediate former head and spiritual leader of the Church. His background in polygamy will later define the practice as a key pillar in the NC.

The significance of Owalo's experience and education in the European education system and the missionary religion provides the foundation from which the larger picture of the double rite of passage will be understood. Information on Prophet Owalo's education and work is rather divergent but it takes a two-pronged picture. Most of the informants connected Prophet Owalo's early education life with Maseno School. According Bishop Enock Agedi (Agedi, OI), Owalo was among the first students sent to Maseno at the request of Willis, the missionary who had just started Maseno School. Chief Adhola of Asembo sent his son Odindo, Adem and Owalo. Bishop Agedi further notes that Owalo was an accomplished sportsman who excelled in swimming among other sports. Bishop Nyarath (Nyarath, 2014) concurs that it is at Maseno that Prophet Owalo eventually decided to branch out on his own.

The other picture is that given in Archbishop Owalo's unpublished work with the title *My Father is Greater than I am* (All citations from this manuscript will hereafter be identified as Owalo followed by a page number). Owalo (25) quoting from Archdeacon Willis' notes:

Owalo son of Abor near Ayoro's, Asembo: Wife Elizabeth Alila. First impressed by Kwata in Kisumu, when working as a mission's boy at R.C. Ojola. After four months in a day school in Kisumu: 4 months Bapt. June 1906. Then 1 yr in Mombasa: back to Ojola (1907). Left owing to outbreak of B.V.2 (1908); went to Morrison again; 3 months with Burns (1908): 1 yr in Scotia Mission Kikuyu. Joined Maseno March 1910. Circumcised by R.C. Luo boy (Owalo, 25).

That Owalo was in Kisumu for four months gets support from Opwapo (1981) who suggests that he was a student at the Roman Catholic center at Kibuye in 1905. While it was not possible during the period of research to establish the exact time Owalo was ever a student at Maseno CMS, his time as a worker at Maseno between 1910 and 1912 is well-documented. It is most likely that his time at Maseno was spent wearing two hats; one as a teacher and another as a student. On the first level, confirmation comes from Archdeacon Willis's letter of 16th November 1912 to the Church Missionary Society and whose contents were divulged to Archbishop Owalo by Audrey Wiper: "...The cleverest boy among all the boys who are learning here at this school, that who had translated St. John's Gospel to the Luo language has left this way" (Owalo 26). On the second level, it is gleaned from Archdeacon Willis's notes on Owalo: "Apprentice AP/u Typewriter; Not satisfactory as teacher." At Maseno, Owalo was a student and a teacher as Ogot (2009) confirms: "that in the same period Owalo taught reading, writing and Kiswahili."

Yet another angle is that provided by the government records of a meeting with the leaders of the Nomiya Luo Mission (NLM) following the death of Prophet Owalo. According to this report; “He was first trained at Roman Catholic Mission of Aluor then Scottish Mission at Kikuyu and then later at CMS Maseno” (DC/CN/1/5/2KNA 1919-1923). To say that he ever schooled at Roman Catholic Aluor is in doubt for the station was not started until 1913 when Owalo had already inaugurated his church. According to Burgman (1990) “It was felt wise to move the Mission Station further inland to Aluor, where a new station was opened by Father Bouma in June 1913” (Gale, 1959).

The double rite of passage of baptism and circumcision, according to Bishop Osumo of Atoyo Diocese (Osumo, 2014) is definitely a product of Prophet Owalo’s contacts with both Muslims and Europeans during the closing years of the 19th century and the initial years of the 20th century. There is evidence that a group of porters carrying supplies for the railway construction works at Kisumu moved from Asembo led by Adhola who later was to be the chief of Asembo (Ndeda, 2005; Opwapo, 1981). Given these circumstances, Owalo must have been a frequent visitor to the town of Kisumu where he not only had a first-hand experience of this foreign culture but also an early opportunity to engage the culture as a student. Archbishop Owalo (Owalo, 2013) and Bishop Nyarath (Nyarath, 2014) agree that prophet Owalo’s religious life had a Christian pillar at Maseno School and at Ojola, an Islam pillar in Mombasa as well as a pillar in the heavenly visions.

During these engagements, according to Archdeacon Joseph Ooro (Ooro, 2014), Prophet Owalo must have picked elements of the faiths he interacted with. These varied and sometimes created conflicting influences according to Ooro (2014). This must have been the reason behind the many tag of wars between Prophet Owalo and the various European Missions and colonial administrators. Bishop Osumo (2014) concurs arguing that Prophet Owalo also interacted with fellow Africans who had appropriated and imbibed the European education. He similarly interacted with the Arab traders, Muslims as well as the traders and workers of Asian origin. Burgman (1990) concurs saying that “because of his free-ranging theology, Owalo could not be retained as a Catholic catechist and he had to leave following his interactions with and assimilation of something from the Quakers in Maragoli and from the Muslims and from the Anglicans”.

Archbishop Owalo (Owalo, 2014) argues that many Africans and particularly the Maseno trained students had an impact on Prophet Owalo's life and ministry. He further says that of the first Africans who were to have great impact in prophet Owalo's life was one Daudi Kwata who trained at Kaimosi and who later played a significant role as the match-maker connecting him with his wife Elizabeth Alila. When the Rev. Willis cited in (Owalo, 26) writes that Owalo was, "First impressed by Kwata in Kisumu" he must be acknowledging the influence Kwata had on Owalo. It is probable that this influence could have been Kwata's own experience at Kaimosi with the Quakers (Gale, 1954).

Archbishop Owalo (Owalo, 2014) argues that Ojola the Roman Catholic Missionary Centre was the primary experience of Prophet Owalo with the foreign faiths. He says that it is at Ojola where Prophet Owalo was baptized and for four months he received formal education. It is here at Ojola that he got baptized as Johana in June 1906. Burgman (1990) concurs but brings a new angle to the baptism when he suggests that Owalo was not only an early convert to Christianity but actually the first Luo to be baptized at Ojola on June 13th 1906:

The first catechumen from among the Luo presented themselves. There was Otieno, Father Grimshaw's helper at Ojolla. He was impatient to get baptized but on June 13th 1906 he got his way at Kisumu and was baptized, getting the new name of Joanno Robert. Judge Robert Noble was his God-Father. A month later three Luo Catechumens began to come regularly, and John Otieno acted as Father Grimshaw's interpreter (Burgmann, 1990).

This evidence brings out the three names of Owalo of which two of them Robert and Otieno are not quoted in any other literatures reviewed. Most of the adherents interviewed had never heard of the name Robert and some were even surprised about the name Otieno. However many confirmed that Owalo was actually born at night thus the name Otieno. They connected the birth time to the myth of the serpent that was twined on the head of Abor's bull until the cattle returned to the kraal at dusk. Archbishop Owalo and many informants confirmed that the prophet has always been called Otieno Owalo. Prophet Owalo's baptism marks the first instance of his admission to the Christian body of believers and his first experience of what will later form the basis of the double rite of passage.

Bishop Nyarath (Nyarath, 2014) argues that at Ojola Prophet Owalo played the role of "*Mtoto Misa*" altar boy. According to Rev. Willis, Owalo had a distinct role in the Roman Catholic Church as a helper to the priest as well as an interpreter (Owalo 25; Burgman 1990).

Archbishop Owalo (Owalo, 2014) notes that in the same year of his baptism, Owalo moved to Mombasa and stayed for one year working for Judge Alexander Morrison as a “boy” (house help). Judge Morrison with whom Prophet Owalo had very cordial relationship had been a judge at the Kisumu Law Courts and had now been transferred to Mombasa.

It was in Mombasa, according to Bishop Jotham Ochieng (Ochieng, 2014) that three events that seem so much unrelated are alleged to have occurred and were experienced by Owalo eventually changing the course of his life. The first event, He says, was in his experience with the Muslims. Given the predominant presence of Muslims in Mombasa, Owalo was attracted to Islam. According to Archbishop Owalo’s unpublished work this occurred after receiving God’s calling in 1907: “After receiving this message Owalo left Catholic and joined Islam where he was baptized Omari” (Owalo 26). Another significant development in the Prophets life was his submission for circumcision. This is the second instance in which the prophet takes on himself a foreign prescription that will eventually define the tenet of the NC understood as the double rite of passage.

The second event reported by Bishop William Achola (Achola, 2014) was Owalo’s call in 1907. In a series of heavenly visitations, Prophet Owalo is guided by angel *Jibraeli* and *Rafaeli*. This experience according to Bishop Achola ushered Prophet Owalo into the first, second and third heaven. Here, he not only met the angels and saints but he came face to face with God and therefrom came out with a new lesson that God alone is worthy of worship. Accordingly, Bishop Achola argues Jesus was then but a messenger and should not be worshipped. He also learnt that the Jews, the Arabs and the Luos were distinctly able to access heaven whereas the Bunyans and Goans were denied entry. These revelations according to Bishop Achola (Achola, 2014) are carried and written in the Nomiya Church Scriptures. Bishop Nyarath (Nyarath, 2014) concurs and stresses that the said scriptures also show several practices upheld in the missionary churches being rejected. These include the fact that Jesus is a messenger and the Latin mass and the Pope, who is not recognized. The theological identity of the NC as the home for the double rite of passage is shaped by the pertinent doctrinal issues that are spelt out in the six chapters of the NC scriptures. The NC scriptures, Bishop Osumo (Osumo, 2014) says are God’s instructions for a relationship with his people.

The third event, though not clear, according to Archbishop Owalo (Owalo, 2014) is the impact of Judge Morrison's Unitarian faith on Prophet Owalo's later religious life. Archbishop Owalo (Owalo, 2014) argues that the notion behind the Trinitarian faith which he calls "Utatu" is not scriptural. He notes further that the prescriptions in the NC scriptures forms the foundation for prophet Owalo's departure from the Trinitarian faith and belief of both the Roman Catholic Missions and the Protestant Missions. Archbishop Owalo (Owalo, 2014) argues that this must be the reason which led the Rev. Willis to suggest that Owalo 'is practically a Unitarian.' Further, Owalo (Owalo, 2014) suggests that the source of this radical departure may be connected on the one hand to the faith of Owalo's employer and on the other to Owalo's visions of the heavenly excursion.

Ogot notes that "Morrison who was a Unitarian was the son of an Anglican pastor in England" (Ogot, (1973; 2009). Opwapo (1981) and Ndeda (2005) concur that the Unitarian Judge Alexander Morrison impacted on Owalo following the serious theological discussions they held over and above their study of the Luo grammar. Ogot (2009) argues that in these visions, Owalo came to realize that there is only one God who requires all creatures to worship him including Jesus and on this note the Trinitarian formula of God the Father and God the Son and God the Holy Spirit collapses:

...He was shown into the presence of God who wore a white robe and sat on a throne. From his mouth came the Holy Spirit like a cloud of smoke. On his right side sat Jesus. Johana knelt before Jesus but Jesus rebuked him and said that God alone was worthy to be worshipped. Jesus told him that they were equal as both were messengers of God, and that Johana should return to preach the gospel of all Luo people....

Bishop Tobias Nyarath of Got Anyango Diocese (Nyarath, 2014) says that the heavenly experience on the 1st of March 1907 was the basis of Prophet Owalo commissioning. He narrated that on that day Prophet Owalo was facilitated by the angel *Jibraeli* into the presence of God where he heard a voice saying "If you accept God's commission then you will be God's follower forever." Astounded Owalo had asked 'who?', and he immediately received a response 'You.' Bishop Nyarath (Nyarath, 2014) notes that this visitation was a life changing experience and thereafter Prophet Owalo exhibited peculiar behaviors. After this visitation, it is said that Judge Morrison noted an odd behavior in Owalo; he could sometimes speak to unseen persons. Owalo took time to explain his experiences and more particularly his commissioning to preach to the Luo people.

Ndeda (2005) argues that the heavenly visits proved to prophet Owalo that God wanted to admit the Luo, like he had done to the Arabs and Jews and further that the mission to the Luos was significant in that Owalo expected an institution on an equal footing with Islam and Christianity but more superior in quality to the Christianity introduced by Europeans. According to Bishop Nyarath (Nyarath, 2014) the mission to the Luo is significant and can be seen in the initial name of the NC which was Nomiya Luo Mission. He says that it is captured in many of the NC hymns and one of the most important hymns in the NC says in part:

Nyasaye Noluongo Luo (God called the Luo people)
Oluongo Luo ni Luo duto malamo En (He called Luos, that all who worship Him)
Biuruka wagone chongwa (Come let us kneel before Him)
Kawang'wa omenyo yor kibila (As we face Kiblah)

This hymn in four verses according (Nyarath, 2014) brings out the personal and relational nature of God which is manifested in his greatness and his invitation to the Luo people to him; he gives them the Ten Commandments and calls for their obedient response in worship as they face Kiblah [Qibla according to Kateregga and Shenks (1993) is the direction of prayer that was later moved from Jerusalem to Makkah].

Another hymn with reference to the Luo says in part:

Jehova Ruodh Jo-Luo, koda Jo-Israel, kite onge ng'ama oneno
Enobiro terowa e polo, kumo odakie
 (Jehovah the king of the Luo people and the Israelites, His face nobody has seen.
 He will take us to his home in heaven).

In this hymn, God is recognized as the king of both the Luo and the Israelites; a God whose face no human being has ever beheld and whose abode is in heaven where he will receive human beings. Right from the onset the God of the Luo people is presented as having similar attributes in all respects to Allah the God of Islam and Jehovah the God of Israelites.

Although his commissioning is to the Luo, Morrison felt that for Owalo to be effective he needed a sound educational background and he therefore advised that he goes back to Ojola for further education (Owalo, 2014). Archbishop Owalo further argues that the prophet thus returned to Ojola in Kisumu by 1907 and while here he received more visitations from the angel *Jibraeli* who challenged his seriousness in undertaking the commission by God.

Owalo (2014) argued that it was while here at Ojola, that the Prophet Owalo eventually broke ranks with the Roman Catholic mission. Owalo declared to the catholic priest that he did not agree with Catholic beliefs on the Trinity, the Latin holy mass and the intercession of the saints. He also declared that the Pope as head of the church and the bread and wine as body and blood of Christ were not recognized. Gale (1959) notes that although Owalo stood out as the first native to be baptized and one who was a great help to his priest Father Grimshaw he led a silent revolution where the catechumens refused to respond to the 'Hail Mary.' This led to his expulsion from the Mission center.

Gale (1959) says that after this expulsion Owalo had a religious tour that took him to the CMS Mission, the Quakers and later to Islam and eventually he founded his religion by the name Nomiya which was a combination of Catholicism, Protestantism and Islam. Father Grimshaw was surprised to discover that Owalo who threw aside the core of the faith that is Our lady and the intercession of the Saints was a baptized protestant (Gale, 1959). It was not possible to determine where this baptism could have taken place but it is highly probable that it was with the Quakers whose presence in Maragoli was already pronounced by 1903. In agreement Burgman (1990) says: "Otieno first joined the American Quakers who had established themselves at Maragoli, and then the Anglican CMS mission at Maseno."

Owalo's baptism at Ojola was in June 1906, and if Owalo had been baptized in a protestant denomination it could only be earlier before 1906 or possibly during his brief period of absence in Mombasa. Burgman (1990) supports the later view of protestant ideas picked in Mombasa when he states that "within a short time he began to improve on the Catholic doctrine in a Protestant way which he had picked up in Mombasa; when he refused to toe the line doctrinally Father Grimshaw sent him away." It is curious that Owalo with his level of education could actually come up with the fundamental issues of the Protestant Reformation in the 16th century against Rome, the Pope, and the Roman Catholic Church.

According to Owalo (2014) the prophet must have left Ojola in 1906 sometimes after his baptism. The Archbishop bases his argument from a document whose origin is the The Rev. J.J. Willis. The prophet was in Mombasa for about one year working for Judge Morrison. This period in Mombasa is significant as it marks the transformational experience that the Prophet went through. He came back to Ojola in June 1907 but left in the New Year 1908 owing to the outbreak of bubonic plague.

In 1908, according to Owalo, 2014 he joined Morrison in Nairobi. In Nairobi he again moved to the newly established CMS School where he worked as a teacher under Canon George Burns (Ogot, 2009; Judicial 1/297; KNA1/474). The following year he moved to Church of Scotland Mission CSM at Kikuyu where Morrison had introduced him to Dr. Scott. At Kikuyu, Owalo, says he served both as a teacher and a student. Ogot says that Industrial training was offered at Kikuyu and it was while here that Owalo learned carpentry and typewriting which he was later to teach at CMS Maseno (Ogot, 2009).

Owalo, OI 2014 says that as a teacher at CSM Kikuyu Prophet Owalo had the privilege of teaching Mzee Kenyatta who was later to become the first president of Kenya. Mzee Kenyatta was indeed a student here during this period as can be confirmed by Macpherson (1970). Macpherson (1970) quoting from President Kenyatta's address to the 70th anniversary of the founding of Kikuyu Mission, notes that Kenyatta was attracted to Thogoto shortly after Watonga's (Clement Scott) death in 1907. Kenyatta was surprised that a message written on a piece of paper could speak:

I used to see tribal policemen coming to visit my father who was some kind of a chief... They would bring a letter pinned on a stick and after the letter had been read, I would see young people arrested from their homes... and sent to work for European settlers... I thought, 'Well, this is strange. How is it that these people bring the paper and then say that the European said so and so from Kiambu? After they had gone, I would look at the letter and listen to it and I would not hear it talking Then I would ask the letter, 'What did they say at Kiambu?' And the letter would not answer me. And this created in me a desire for knowledge, and I said to myself 'I must go to Thogoto to discover this miracle, how it is that a paper can talk from one who wrote it someone else' (Macpherson 1970).

Mzee Kenyatta moved to Thogoto in order to quench this thirst for education. Seemingly his time at Thogoto coincided with Owalo's time at the same place (Odinga, 1967 and Ogot, 2009). Owalo was introduced to Kikuyu through a letter from Judge Morrison which said in part: "Here is John whose other name is Omari. He has got his wife and child, but would like to have a house, to have a small shamba to keep himself some food while at mission" (PCEA Archives: microfilm letter dated February, 1909).

The fact that Morrison refers to Owalo by his Muslim name is an indication of how close they were after several years in the employer/employee relationship. The fact that he wrote such a letter of introduction and recommendation demonstrates the level of trust he had upon

the character and the person of Johana Owalo. Around May 1909 Owalo seemingly had problems with the authorities that led to a search being carried out in his house at the mission. The mission reacting to this disturbance wrote a letter confirming Owalo's impeccable track record both at Kikuyu and earlier with Judge Morrison:

I have received your letter regarding the Kavirondo boy, called Yohanna here. I dare say you are aware that the Somalis raided the boy's house last night and looked through his things and carried him off to Dagoretti without a warrant from the government. Further let me say the boy was in the employ of Mr. Morrison, late town Magistrate of Nairobi who gave him a most excellent character for the time he was with him, which was some years. Since coming here, the boy has been exemplary in every way... (PCEA Archives: microfilm letter dated May, 5 1909).

For most of the year 1909 Owalo remained at Thogoto as confirmed by Judge Morrison's letter requesting the services of Owalo for a month while on a trip to Kisumu.

I have got a transfer to Kisumu during December for language study and should like very much if you could send me Omari for the month. If so he could join me at the Nairobi Station for that matter on second of December (PCEA Archives microfilm letters 1909).

Owalo's return to Nyanza and to CMS Maseno from Thogoto will be initiated by the Rev. Willis. The Rev. Willis called a conference for the Missions at Maseno in January 1908 in order to consult over the spheres of influence for each Missionary group. The problems were seen to be applicable country wide and this called for a more representative conference which was held at Maseno in January the following year. The conference which was attended by Henry Scott and Dr. Arthur agreed that the focus of missionary work must be "the establishment of a united, self-governing, self-supporting and self-extending African Church" (MacPherson, 1970). The next meeting held in Nairobi in June 1909 set up a Missionary Education board that had the mandate to come up with common education code. Another meeting was later held in 1910. It is likely that Owalo and the Rev. J.J. Willis met during the Nairobi conferences for when he later wrote to Scott he was referring to their discussions:

I hinted to him that however much he may gain by being at Kikuyu in the methods of level: I took the same line that you took when here, as to the valuable work he might do (and I trust will yet do) if only he can be willing to be guided by what he reads in the Bible apart from pre-conceived ideas (a hard task for any of us). (PCEA Archives microfilm J.J. Willis letter to Scott 13.9.1910).

The Rev. Willis apparently was already aware that Owalo's preaching and teaching go contrary to the teachings of the Protestant and Roman Catholic Churches. It is instructive that the Rev. Willis believes that Owalo's teachings are preconceived and therefore have no scriptural basis. Despite this the Rev. Willis saw the potential inherent in Owalo for the development of the church in Nyanza. In October 1910 Owalo moved to Maseno School as a member of staff having been persuaded by Archdeacon Willis. As a member of the teaching staff he taught his students Reading, Writing and Kiswahili. While in Maseno the Missionaries observed that Owalo at one point in time changed and even refused to worship together with the members of the community (Ogot, 2009). This rebellious action seems to have led the Rev. Willis to deny him confirmation.

Owalo, 2014 says the Prophet left Maseno CMS in 1912 to formally launch the Nomiya Luo Mission (NLM). He observes that Owalo disagreed with the missionary teachings on the Trinity, worship of Mary, Clerical marriage, polygamy among other significant doctrinal issues. Owalo, 2014 concludes that "He found the missionary teaching fallacious ideas and with no biblical basis." Owalo, 2014 argues further that due to these outstanding differences the Rev. Willis summoned Owalo to appear before the first Maseno Council to explain his stand. Present in the council of 1912 were Archdeacon Willis, Canon Pleydell, Rev. Savile, Rev. Wright and his Maseno School mates from all over Nyanza province (Opwapo, 76; Owalo, 22-23). The meeting questioned Owalo on several issues including: issues of baptism, what to teach, and how his ministry carry on even after his death. To this Owalo replied that he would practice baptism by immersion and that he would teach only what he had been instructed by God. The meeting reached a resolution that Owalo be left alone and if his teachings were from God then they would prosper and continue (Owalo 23). Consequently Owalo (2014) argues that CMS Maseno was disturbed by Owalo's defiant stance and his teachings that embraced polygamy while rejecting the doctrine of Trinity and the divinity of Jesus Christ. Canon Pleydell infuriated by Owalo's activities complained to Ainsworth the Provincial Commissioner who gave Owalo the permission to continue baptizing only objecting to the prophet's encouragement of polygamy among Christians. Ainsworth agreed with Owalo though that it was a travesty of Christianity to put away the wives of polygamous converts (Lonsdale, 1964).

CMS Maseno according to Owalo (2014) tried to control the rebellious spirit by offering Owalo a piece of land at kibos where he was to build a station to train catechists and then

invite European priests to baptize converts. Prophet Owalo stood his ground reiterating that Jesus was not God but man. He also rejected monogamy as wholly a European idea and insisted that his adherents are allowed polygamy with a maximum of four wives.

The time Owalo spent at Maseno and Ojola is marked and remembered by the adherents in song, an indication that the NC recognizes her roots in Maseno and Ojola. The hymn *Janabi Luongowa e Got Malo Ojola* -The prophet is inviting us to the mountain top at Ojola, elucidates the prophets life and challenges that he met at Ojola and Maseno that lays th foundation of his calling and commissioning:

1. Janabi luongowa e got malo Ojola
Wadhi wawinjie weche polo modhiero ngeyo x2 (The prophet
is inviting us at the mountain top at Ojola to listen to the
heavenly words that surpass all understanding x2)

Chorus: Wach Nabi, Nabi Johana
Wach Nabi mochopo chutho mopongo pinje x2

(The Word of the prophet, prophet Johana
The word of the prophet that are perfect have reached every nation x2)

2. Janabi lemo e got malo koneno ler,
Kamalaika oseweye modok kar loch x2
(The prophet is praying on the Mountain top where he beholds the light
As the angels leave him for the throne x2)

3. Willis nyise ni dhi Maseno idhi itelie,
Janabi duoke ni weche Polo osegenga x2
[Willis asks him to go and take leadership at Maseno
The Prophet replies that he is obstructed by heavenly assignments x2 (from Esther
Oiro, Ogwedhi Diocese)]

From this song it is evident that the message proclaimed by Johana Owalo has taken root and many diverse regions have already been evangelized. Having beheld the glory of heaven Owalo rejects the call by the Rev. Willis for a leadership calling at Maseno saying he is already committed with heavenly assignments. He is then mandated to carry and proclaim about the sharp sword, because those who refuse to believe are already condemned. The NC members who have not been so persuaded are also condemned. The theology of the NC, its grounding in the call of God and its deviation from the Protestant and Roman Catholic theology is attested in Prophet Owalo's rejection of the assignment by the Rev. Willis. This hymn attests to the historical aspects of the milestones of development in the NC beginning

with the call and commission of Prophet Owalo by God and to the mandate of the NC to proclaim only the word of God (the sharp sword).

According to Nyarath (2014) Prophet Owalo moved back to his home area where as from 1912 he gathered around him a group of followers. The first group of adherents received the double rite of passage of baptism and circumcision. Their acceptance of the double rite of passage to be performed on their persons is an affirmation of prophet Owalo's great prowess as an evangelist. Their missionary zeal to win converts for the NC has ensured that the double rite of passage is entrenched in the NC.

The movement according to Bishop Olali (Olali, 2015) was not registered until 1914 when the Provincial Commissioner then Mr. John Ainsworth demanded from Owalo the name of this new group. Owalo asked for one day of prayer and he came back the following day with the name of Nomiya Luo Mission which literally means the Luo Mission that was given to me. Because of the trust that Ainsworth bestowed upon him, Owalo was allowed to act as a sub-headman for the Kochieng clan.

4.2.2 Growth of the NC

The first NC worship space was constructed in the home of Owalo at Orengo in Asembo. This first church was constructed amidst a deep cultural controversy. According to Bishop Agedi (Agedi, 2014), Owalo happened to have been married before his elder brothers and his presence with his wife Elizabeth was a source of serious customary conflict. The Luo custom decreed that Owalo for the reason of his marriage could not eat with his brothers and neither could his wife prepare food for the brothers-in-law or her parents in law. Owalo and his wife could not stay in the huts of his elder brothers and he was forced to look for alternative accommodation at Midai's home. Agedi (2014) says that Midai was a polygamous man who had seven wives. Owalo and his wife were accommodated in Luke Siwalo's hut. Siwalo was the son of Nyakech Nyokiri the second wife. Agedi (2014) further argues that it is in this home where Owalo had some of his earliest followers who included Luke Siwalo, Ibrahim Odiyo, Thomas Kudni and Gideon Ondoro.

Owalo, 2014 argues that it was here because of conflict of culture that Owalo's movement suffered its primary setback. Owalo's first setback was much more than an internal rivalry, a family feud fuelled by jealous but a fully-fledged war based on the clash of two cultures: the

Luo cultural beliefs and the mission based beliefs. Owalo (2014) argues that Midai's first wife Ramba Akumu Nyowesi practiced divination and for this reason, fearing that Owalo's religion would turn away her would-be-clients, she plotted to get rid of it. Together with her son Ondiala, Ramba Akumu Nyowesi did everything within her power to see that the new religion did not take root.

According to Owalo (2014) Prophet Owalo was equally unwelcome at his parental home at Orengo. Here Tado Odiero his step brother also practiced divination and he was possessed by the same fear that Ramba Akumu Nyowesi had. To demonstrate his displeasure with the Owalo's faith and belief he razed down Owalo's first Nomiya Luo Mission church at Orengo. The tension was heavy and Owalo was forced to move on. His early followers who included Luke Siwalo, Thomas Kudni, Ibrahim Odiyo and Gideon Ondoro also left the home to found new homes at Ralingo in Ndori. According to Owalo (2014), Tado was cursed by Prophet Owalo because of his cruelty in burning down the first church at Orengo.

According to Bishop Ayaga, 2014 resistance against the NC characterized the initial phase of her development. The second NC church at Katweng'a in Uyoma was also razed down. According to Opwapo (1981) the church in Uyoma was a concerted evangelization effort by one Henry Alemba who got converted to the NC during a visit he made to Asembo. For this effort Alemba was beaten up. When Owalo learnt of this misfortune he decided to visit Uyoma in person. Owalo (2014) says that Owalo's former colleagues at Maseno, Matthew Opiyo, Jonathan Ojunga and Luke Nyobung'a carried forward the disagreement they had at Maseno. They decided to report Owalo to the chief and since the chief failed to deal with the matter to their satisfaction they went to the District Commissioner. Owalo was then invited to Maseno to appear before the DC, the Rev J.J. Willis, Ezekiel Apindi, Simeon Nyende and John Mingala among others. Opwapo (1981) further argues that Owalo was accused of two things: One that he was a liar claiming that he had a message revealed by God and secondly that he was snatching converts from the Anglican Church in Uyoma. These former colleagues had sworn that they would not allow Owalo to continue perpetuating lies. Owalo won the case and thereafter the two year probation slapped on him by the Provincial Administration was lifted and his movement consequently registered. The Uyoma church was razed down in 1915 and Owalo cursed the perpetrators of this act of arson. He also said that because of this act it would be a long time before the NC is established in Uyoma.

Ayaga (2014) and other members of the Uyoma Dioceses interviewed confirmed that the NC in Uyoma took off on a sluggish footing and has not experienced the growth in bounds and leaps experienced in other places.

According to Archdeacon Opere (Opere, 2014) the hostile reception especially in his own home resulted in Prophet Owalo decision to move to Gem in order to start on a clean slate with his friend Kwata. Opere notes that, on his way he had a stop at Oboch where the elders', men of the Kochieng clan persuaded him against settling in Gem. According to Osumo (Osumo, 2014) the elders rightly argued that Gem was the home of his in-laws and it would be inappropriate to settle among his in-laws when at home there was still welcome. Consequently, Odero and Osure sons of Arika, Sinde son of Ogula and Matara the father of Angira all donated pieces of their land to Owalo. Rev. Nyanya (Nyanya, 2014) notes that according to certain reports the K'Ochieng clan at Oboch reported this incident to Chief Odindo who immediately prevailed on his friend to settle among his own rather than among his in-laws.

Nyarath (2014) says that the station at Oboch was established in order to encourage fellowship and time together for the study of the word by the followers. The coming together was also a strong strategy for missions, while at the same time it was equally a strategy to avoid conscription into the army that fought in the First World War. Staying together they also had an opportunity to jointly plan and execute food production that would assure the group of food security (Opwapo, 1981). Nyarath (2014) further argues that Oboch became the center of NC from where its ministry was based on the five pillars laid by Prophet Owalo. These pillars were: Bible, Evangelism, teaching catechists, secular education and leadership by example.

The Bible is for the NC the king post. Owalo (2) notes that the strength of the Nomiya Church is in its strong belief in the content of the Bible. This goes back to the founder's esteem of the Bible. Consequently Owalo observes that: "Owalo and the Bible were inseparable friends...Owalo could not touch the Holy Bible without him having first washed his hands" (Owalo 2). Archbishop Owalo notes that for his attachment and belief in the contents of the Bible, Johana Owalo was expelled from CMS Maseno in 1912 (Owalo, 22). Further he argues that this became the reason for the disagreement with the missionaries:

The more Prophet Owalo earnestly presented the teaching of the Bible the more he discerned the errors of the European missionaries. He saw that European missionaries had forsaken the word of God for human traditions and particularly the Western tradition. He fearlessly accused the missionaries of hiding the Scriptures and demanded that the Holy Book be restored to the people and its authority once again be established in the church (Owalo, 26).

At Asembo he was free to practice, to hold fast and propagate the pure and unadulterated word of God. When his efforts to challenge the ills he saw in the church from within did not bear fruit, he was eventually compelled to found a denomination when a dissenting voice could not be accommodated (Owalo, 30).

The NC was then founded on the foundation of the pure teaching of scripture. Owalo on the central place of scripture concludes that: “The law in the Holy Bible then is the Catechism we have to recite and also the sign board which shows us the route to the places we would like to head for” (Owalo 3). Indeed the Bible is the sign board on which the NC reads the double rite of passage of circumcision and baptism. As will be discussed here below the double rite of passage has at its foundation the Biblical prescriptions in the scriptures of the Old Testament and the New Testament.

With the background of the NC in scriptures it follows that the making of disciples is the main objective of the church. According to Agedi (Agedi, 2014) Owalo’s efforts of evangelization began with his immediate family and the Kochieng clan. He soon won over his own brothers Nyunja, Obado, Okech Ojode. According to Archdeacon Joshua Opere, Owalo handpicked his initial disciples. From Asembo he chose Petro Ouma, Musa Wera, Nuhu Bala, Jairo Ondoro, Ibrahim Odiyo and Jacob Oketch. From Seme, he chose Samuel Ogombo, Elijah Ongonga, Yonah Ramogi and Paul Owang. Musa Wera circumcised the first batch that included Petro Ouma, Nuhu Bala, Samuel Ogombo, Jairo Ondoro, among others at Owalo’s home. This first lot was also baptized.

Prophet Owalo was energetic and zealous for the cause for which he was commissioned as apostle to the Luos. His ministry had no boundaries; he sought all in their daily chores and endeavors. He ministered to those who were attending beer drinking parties; he preached at funerals and was not shy to take advantage of any other social gatherings. As a demonstration of the power bestowed upon him by the Holy Spirit the NC repondents

reported several cases of people who Owalo healed of the mental and physical illnesses. Exorcisms were also reported.

These efforts of the NC soon roped in members of the Kanyikela, Kabondo and Kakiya clans. By 1915 the NC message had reached Kandaria in Omia. Thus, most of the Asembo clans had been reached in the first wave of evangelism. Some region and those areas closer to Oboch were the next areas that displayed a positive and encouraging turn up in terms of numbers and enthusiasm. In ever expanding concentric circles the evangelism efforts of the NC went out to Yimbo and Gem, to Kisumu Manyatta and Nyakach and even further south to South Nyanza and Tanzania.

Their basic message according to Bishop Agedi was that: “No one else is to be worshipped but God the Father and that worship is to be on the Sabbath.” Initially worship of the NC was on Saturdays but with the advice from Chief Daniel Odindo prophet Owalo was persuaded to change to Sunday so as not to conflict with the European administration (Opwapo, 90; Owalo, 29). On the same note chief Odindo advised Prophet Owalo to seek registration of his denomination so as not to appear to be running an organization going against the grain (Olali, 2015). Before his death, the Nomiya church was firmly established at Orengo, Oboch, Jimo, Alungo, Ougo, Manyatta, and Mugbel.

To instill these teachings, Prophet Owalo opened catechism classes in order to prepare candidates for baptism. The catechists were basically taught an Anglican Church Catechism that was modified to bring out the mood and theological emphases of the NC. In 1913, he had come up with an NC catechism that he married so well with the Anglican catechism (Opwapo, 1981). The NC catechism brings out clearly the theological leaning of the NC and its detailed analysis as the basis of understanding the double rite of passage will be done here below.

Olali (2014) argues that in order to open the NC membership to the changes brought about by colonization Prophet Owalo’s launched secular education to disseminate that which he had acquired in his long experience as a student and as a teacher and similarly in his interaction with European, Asiatic, Arabic and Swahili cultures. Nyarath (2014) says that the first independent schools in Nyanza and by extension Kenya were opened by the NC in the newly planted churches. Owalo, 2014 says that Johana Owalo himself led by example being

a teacher at Oboch. Here he taught arithmetic, reading, writing and religion. Students came from Asembo as well as Seme. According to Owalo (2014) the classes were generally held in the afternoon. Eventually he says that most of these schools taught pupils up to standard two. His desire to establish strong institutions was however thwarted by the government's consistent efforts to deny these schools recognition and even registration. This will be dealt with at length here below.

The success of Oboch as the springboard of the NC, the double rite of passage and education in Nyanza can be attributed to Prophet Owalo's charisma and leadership acumen. According to Olali (2014) Prophet Owalo understood the Luo teaching that any leader worth his salt must as of necessity be able to adequately provide for his family and must also be able to open his doors widely to all visitors from far and from near. He also understood that such a leader must lead from the front and must be a shining example for his subjects. For this reason he took his appointment as the village sub-headman with zeal and dedication that deserves this kind of administrative calling. Similarly he took farming with such a serious commitment that his efforts stood him in good standing among the adherents and the clan at large. Prophet Owalo's effort in farming according to Osumo (2014) was concentrated along the River Odundu where he realized good yields of Millet, Maize and sugarcane.

Osumo (2014) argues that being the spiritual leader of his denomination while doubling also as a sub-headman did not endear him with the adherents and soon they pleaded with him to forego the later as they take up his farming activities. Essentially, they were reminding Owalo that his calling as the spiritual leader outweighed all the other callings and must as a matter of priority allotted its due prestigious position. Prophet Owalo's spiritual assignment according to Opere, 2014 included an outstanding ministry of healing which encompassed healing of several illnesses both mental and physical as well as exorcism.

The end of an illustrious career came suddenly and sadly. According to Olali (2014), Prophet Owalo, who had visited the adherents in Nyakach around the time of the Christmas festivities of 1919, came back feeling unwell. It is highly probable that he contracted small pox that was prevalent in the region at that time. He died on 11 January, 1920 at Oboch surrounded by his disciples. According to Olali, 2014, he asked the disciples to go into the church for prayers. He also instructed them to sing two of the church hymns: *Nyasaye ne*

oluongo Luo (God called the Luo People) and *Nyasaye nene Ochiko ni en achiel* (God directed that he is one).

According to Bishop Olali (2014) twice they prayed and sang and both times Owalo expressed dissatisfaction. However, when they did the same for third time, Owalo expressed his total satisfaction and appreciation. He then told his disciples that in a vision he had seen two people dressed in white robes and who had come to take him with them. He requested the disciples to remain vigilant because the hour of his departure was at hand. Although the disciples requested to know who it was who would lead them after him, he told them God would choose a leader for them. He passed on as the disciples were praying at 3.00 am. Chief Daniel Odindo a friend and a colleague at Maseno mourned him and he is reported to have taken the entire funeral responsibilities (Olali, 2014). The Prophet was laid to rest in the afternoon of 11/01/1920 at Oboch in Asembo and the burial was conducted by Shadrack Ogola an Anglican Lay reader. Death never occurs among the Luo without a probable cause being cited. In this case Musa Wera was the scapegoat. Claims arose that Wera had bewitched Owalo. Philip Obado Owalo's brother claimed that Owalo told him in a dream to stop Musa Wera from taking over the leadership of the church because Wera was responsible for his death (Opwapo, 1981).

The life of Prophet Johana Owalo touched and changed a number of people from various walks and stations in life. The NC retains a number of legends that brings out the story of this enigmatic servant of God. The double rite of passage of baptism and circumcision was entrenched and survives as the key practice in the NC.



Figure4.1: Prophet Owalo’s Mausoleum at Oboch Headquarter in Asembo (The caption says: In Memory of Prophet Johana Owalo, commissioned By God on 1/03/1907. Died 11/01/1920).



Figure 4.2: Elizabeth Alila Owalo’s grave at Gango in Archbishop Owalo’s home (Source: Researcher).

4.3 Celebrations of the Double Rite of Passage

The NC has enshrined in her constitution important markers of her history that are annual events. These include Covenant day and Prophet Owalo's anniversary.

4.3.1 Covenant Day

Covenants and especially those between God and man are means through which God's will is expressed. According to Conner and Malmin (1983:3) the specific purpose of the Divine covenants is for them to be the vehicles of the expression of God's will and purpose for man.

Covenant Day in the NC according Bishop Agedi is observed and celebrated every 1st of March. Covenant day in the NC commemorates the day that God made a covenant with the Prophet Johana Owalo. The covenant God made with Prophet Johana Owalo in 1907 gave the NC the theological basis for her doctrines. The stipulations are presented in the six chapters of Nomiya Scriptures that were given to Johana Owalo.

These celebrations were decentralized since the wrangles that began in 2010. The celebrations for 2015 were scheduled for Awendo town in Migori County. However, the planned covenant day celebrations were shelved because of the unexpected demise of Archbishop Charles Gideon Owalo on 21st February 2015. The Archbishop was buried on 7th March 2015 witnessed by a large congregation. The NC Chose Assistant Archbishop Moses Okech to replace the late Archbishop Gedion Charles Owalo. Assistant Archbishop Moses Obura was elevated to Deputy Archbishop. Two new assistant Archbishops, Abaki and Godi were elevated to take the positions left vacant by the promotions of the two former Assistant Archbishops. Abaki was the former secretary and his position was taken by Nyamwaya who together with Gondi were from the rival camp of the late Eleazaro Ochieng.

4.3.2 Prophet Owalo's Anniversary

One of the key holidays of celebration in the NC calendar is the commemoration of the day that Prophet Johana Owalo died. The 11th January 1920 is the date of the Prophet's death. The date is recognized by the church constitution as a religious holiday. Death according to Paul is to be away from the body and to be at home with the Lord (2 Cor. 5:8). The necessity of celebration of the death of a believer according to Grudem (1994) is that at the moment of

death the believers soul goes into the presence of God with rejoicing. According to *Kitap Lamo* (91) the congregation assembles at Oboch on the evening of 10th January for a night vigil. The climax is a service on the morning of 11th January led by the Archbishop. This celebration has for a long time been held at Oboch Headquarters. However, because of wrangles in the church, that gave rise to a court case in 2010 the NC decided to decentralize this celebration. Every diocese was mandated to hold celebrations at the Diocesan level, however, in 2014 the celebrations were held in Bondo Diocese while those of the year 2015 were held at Sagam primary school in Gem.



Figure 4.3: The 95th Celebrations of the founder’s death held at Sagam primary School in Gem on 10th-11th January 2015. Source: The researcher in attendance of the celebration at Sagam Primary School.

4.3.3 Centenary Celebration

The NC and all the splinter groups from the original Nomiya Luo Mission that was founded by Prophet Johana Owalo came together in 2007 in a colorful celebration to mark 100 years of the founding of Nomiya Church in Kenya. The celebrations called “Oboch Centenary Celebrations” were held at Oboch Headquarters between 24th and 26th August 2007 (Olali, 2015).

4.4 The Plague of Wrangles

Wrangles, disputes and dissensions have characterized the NC leadership. This has led to splintering and formation of smaller diocese within the NC family and of sister Nomiya

groups. We have for example: Nomiya Sabato, Nomiya Church of Gospellers, Nomiya Roho, Nomiya Roho Sabato among others. It is surprising that a people united by this unique and rich heritage are continuously divided. The Bible, the main source of the NC theology, has the distinction that it can unite and at the same time divide. This is appropriately summarized by VanElderen (1990:9) “If we talk about the Bible then the Bible is divisive. If we let the Bible talk to us, in the discipline of corporate Bible study, it will be uniting. But it will be uniting by affirming and also correcting our diversities.” The NC and her sister churches are held together by the common heritage and all carry out and practice the double rite of passage in all its details as they share a similar liturgy save for a few minor differences. The wrangles then border more on leadership other than doctrinal issues.

During the period of the research the NC had a dispute in the Kenyan courts. The dispute going back to March 2010 involved a splinter group led by the late Bishop Eliazaro Ochieng Agoya, a cousin of Archbishop Gideon Charles Owalo. This group claimed that Bishop Ochieng and his team had won with a landslide in an election that was held at Oboch. In this group was the General Secretary Elisha Anyango Nyamwaya and it retained Oboch Headquarter Diocese.

Towards the end of 2014, two Dioceses that were sampled for the purpose of the research that is Atoyo and Ndwarra had wrangles among the adherents. Eventually, splintering was evident when in Atoyo Diocese a group led by the Archdeacon Midai separately submitted the diocesan allocation to the Synod. Eventually Got Bar Diocese established itself as a diocese breaking away from Atoyo Diocese. The group led by the Bishop also submitted its allocation to the Synod. In Ndwarra, the case was much more interesting as the Bishop declared that he was not ready to work with the rest of the diocese choosing to join another Diocese. Eventually, the remnant membership decided to work minus the Bishop and submitted their Diocesan allocation to the Synod.

The net effect of wrangles is that the time for spiritual and physical development, and the time and finances for consolidation and solidifying the future of the church are spent in court corridors and in other avenues seeking arbitration that may take long in being arrived at. The easier option and the more lucrative one in terms of its immediate rewards is secession as it awards the dissenting groups with an opportunity for leadership and recognition and more to

this, an opportunity to control finances and people. Over time, the original Nomiya Church has on several instances taken the easier option.

4.4.1 The NC and the Leadership Controversy after Owalo

After Owalo's death the initial dynamism gave way to routine as the evangelical impetus began to slacken (Ndeda, 2005). The fact that Prophet Johana Owalo did not leave a leader designate for the church was a source of lengthy and painful wrangles that had to be adjudicated by the provincial administration on several occasions. An extract from Mr. Montgomery's Annual report of 1922 says:

Johanna is dead and the present High Priest is Musa Wera of Asembo. Musa Wera has now been removed owing apparently to *'fitina'*. Two parties are contending for the post of 'Bishop'. Some say that Johana Owalo deputed his relative Petro Auma Ngor to be his successor. Others say he deputed Jacobo Okech Owino the Chief teacher (DC/KSM/1/35/56 KNA).

The battle lines were drawn between the leadership of Jacobo Okech and that of Musa Wera. Initially Jacobo Okech was appointed as the first bishop. His leadership faced a lot of challenges and opposition to the extent that the church thought that replacing him with Musa Wera may dissolve the tension. But, still the church remained unstable and without peace.

Petro Ouma's candidature was proposed by two NC members Samuel Otieno and Jason Bunde. His reign brought order and unity to the church for a short while. Petro according to Olali (2015) "was humble, civil and loyal to the doctrine of the church...Ouma however lacked the aggressiveness and command to handle arrogance and errant colleagues." Many dissenting voices took advantage of this weakness, thus the continued wrangles in the NC.

According to Archdeacon Opere (Opere, 2014) this stability was very temporal for no sooner had Bishop Petro Ouma settled in his seat than he started handling serious opposition and threat to his leadership from no other quarter than from his predecessor, Musa Wera. Wera severally asked Bishop Petro Ouma to leave Oboch for his home in Ujwanga. In this instance again, Chief Daniel Odindo moved in a bid to restore peace and order in the church. Yona Oyungu was made Bishop as a compromise candidate in order to restore peace. Oyungu's reign was cut short when the NC members asked him to allow Bishop Petro Ouma to continue as the Bishop.

Although Musa Wera continued to display animosity on Bishop Ouma's leadership, this did not deter the Bishop whose prowess at evangelization was seen in the number of converts who were accepting to be circumcised. His success at this time is comparable to the success he realized in Gem immediately after the death of Prophet Owalo. He had made the Gem regions of Ahono, Ramula, and Gombe strongholds of Nomiya. The height of the enmity between Bishop Petro Ouma and Musa Wera came when the Bishop and the circumcised who were recuperating were forced to leave Oboch. Wera's tool of oppression and frustration was the fact that the land on which Oboch was constructed apparently belonged to his ancestors.

Bishop Petro was forced to flee to Seme Korango where he stayed until the new converts who had been circumcised were fully healed. He then left for Ujwanga. It is Bishop Petro who selected Meshack Onyango to work with him. Meshack Onyango was appointed as *sheriff* (circumciser) and was later identified as the secretary of the church. His correspondence between the Nomiya church and the colonial administration is very prominent and shows the respectable position he held in the church at that time. In some of this letters he signed for president Nomiya Luo Missionary Congress.

Petro Ouma, true to his calling, concentrated more on evangelization and pastoral work as he comfortably left the administration functions to Meshack Onyango. However, not contented with his position, Meshack Onyango soon elevated himself and referred to himself as 'archbishop.' This matter infuriated the leaders who reported it to the chief. The chief referred this case to the DC Central Kavirondo (DC/CN/1/5/2KNA 1919-1923). The DC requested that the elders meet in order to arrive at a peaceful resolution of the matter. A meeting was held in the home of Samuel Otieno on 18th November 1937. The meeting dismissed Meshack Onyango but voted that Bishop Petro Ouma continues as the Bishop with the mandate of the people. These resolutions were taken to the DC Central Kavirondo. Hereafter, the church went through a period of relative calmness until Bishop Petro Ouma died in 1956 (Olali, 2015). During his reign the two significant days associated with the founder of the church: 1st March and January 11th January were celebrated annually with full force of the church and with colour and pomp.

According to Archdeacon Opere (Opere, 2014), Yona Oyungu took over despite clan politics that prevailed insisting that leadership belongs to the Kochieng clan. The church felt

that the leadership of the church should be reverted to Prophet Owalo's lineage. This slot could be filled by Gideon Charles Owalo, and the church under Yona Oyungu decided to raise funds towards his education. Through this effort Gideon Charles Owalo went through his studies at Maseno, then at Makerere Colleges. On his return Owalo served as the assistant Archbishop while also serving in the District Education Board (DEB). Through Gideon's concerted efforts the church was registered in 1958 as Nomiya Luo Church (NLC). Soon after the church realized its first secession when a splinter group called Nomiya Luo Sabato (NLS) moved holding Saturday as their most important day of worship.

Splintering of dioceses is still a common thing. The end result is that some dioceses have been formed where a bishop's area of jurisdiction is a tiny unit that in most cases is not economically viable. The synod meeting of December 2014 resolved that formation of new Dioceses be halted.

Although wrangles and splintering still plague the NC to date, the outstanding feature in the NC and her sister churches is the upholding of the original tenets of the church as were received from Prophet Johana Owalo. The double rite of passage retains its place as the central practice in the NC and even in the sister churches.

4.5 The Socio-Cultural Background of the Double Rite of Passage

The double rite of passage of circumcision and baptism in the NC is unique in Christianity and also in Judaism. Circumcision in Judaism shares a lot with that practiced in the NC but is not done in the context of baptism. On the other hand baptism is the only rite in most Christian denominations that consider the circumcision rite in the Jewish context as obsolete having been replaced by baptism.

The socio-cultural aspects of the double rite of passage in the NC are fleshed out in the interaction of four cultures: the Luo culture, the European mission culture, the Colonialist culture and the Islamic culture. The last three present a foreign world view and ideologies that are in dialogue with the first. The Luo culture places emphases particularly on the socialization process and Luo Religion. These provided the solid foundation and springboard which propelled prophet Owalo into a dialogue with the other cultures. Dialogue brings out the dynamic aspect of a culture in that as it interacts with another culture it has the capacity to introduce significant changes into that culture and in the

process it is also changed. This process is evident in the NC where several key aspects of the other cultures cited above have been borrowed and internalized. The NC in the process has added to them new values and outlook to come up with practices that have outstanding differences with the original practices.

4.5.1 The Luo Socio-Cultural Background to the Double Rite of Passage

The Luo community according to Archbishop Owalo (Owalo, 2013) is one large tribal unit living along the shores of Lake Victoria. He argues that it is from this community that Prophet Johana Owalo came from and to whom God commissioned him to be a messenger of his word. Owalo (2013) argues further that the Luo people are Nilotic and that they have a distinct set of values, norms and beliefs which they consider to be gifts from God.

The Luo believed in the existence of a supreme being referred to as *Nyasaye*. Nyasaye Owalo (2013) argues is the creator of the universe and He is the source of all life which He also sustains. Nyasaye is the center that holds everything and in him all that he created have their being. According to Owalo (2013) human beings have a responsibility given by God in taking care of all the resources. The relationship between God and man is mutual. Man is expected to give God due honor and praise in all his activities whereas God gives him good health, wealth and prosperity. Man is expected to be obedient to all the prescriptions and rules given by God.

Osumo (2014) says that the relationship between God and man was expected within the family set-up. The family as the basic social unit comprised of the parents and children as well as grandchildren. It is this basic unit that defined the routine life including roles, work, worship and discipline. The same unit defined the levels of social interaction and also prescribed punishment for offences against individuals. The father and the male in general were regarded as the custodians of the societal norms and regulations. It is the male from whom the line of inheritance was drawn. According to Nyarath (2014) the future of the Luo community depended largely on the socialization process that passed to the succeeding generation the correct prescriptions of norms, rules and regulations that ensured the societal balance in all spheres of life.

Nyarath (2014) says that the difference between a male child and a female is clear rite from the day of birth. At the birth of a child the umbilical cord is tied with a banana strip before it

is cut. According to Nyarath (2014) the cord is tied with strips of banana at three equal intervals for a girl and four equal intervals for a boy. On this day *chieng yiego nyathi* the baby was laid out on the threshold at about ten o'clock and the mother was then shaved.

Further, Nyarath (2014) notes that the very young child remains with his mother in her house for three days if it is a female child and four days if it is male. After the specified number of days, the child is brought out into the sun for the first time. This symbolic contact with the sun marks an important reason for seniority of man over woman. Nyarath (2014) observes that the Luo do not think that females have, automatically, a lower reasoning capacity, rather, that a man's main superior position is due to his physical attributes and partly because the male have to be shown to the sun four days after birth and the female three days after birth.

4.5.2 The Missionary Enterprise

The primary function of the missionary enterprise in Africa was to convert the African people from "heathenism" to Christianity and in the process mission centers became centers of westernization (Mugambi, 1989; Mugambi, 2009). Father Burgman (1990) brings out the driving force that urged the missionaries and the European Colonizers on their journeys across Africa:

Along with the British came the Christian Missionaries. But they had a mind of their own, even a world of their own. They shared the general European sympathy for the "poor naked African savages." To this was added the old theological conviction that all unbaptized people were on their way to hell. In their prayers they pointed out to God: "See how day after day Hell is being filled with pagans." (Burgman, 1990).

The missionary enterprise was a three-pronged endeavor that involved: civilization, commercialization and conversion and was meant to bring change in those Africans who were convinced that in accepting Christianity they were accepting a superior culture. Consequently Mugambi (2009) notes that:

Mission was also understood in terms of civilizing those peoples who were considered to be in primitive stages of development. It was taken for granted that the western world represented the highest form of civilization and that this civilization was a Christian one. So missionaries therefore considered it their responsibility to extend this high civilization to the peoples with low cultures or none.

Burgman, a Roman Catholic priest concurs with Mugambi bringing out the European mission mentality that wherever Christ's church had not been established there Satan

reigned supreme and people there were on their way to hell. Further, Burgman (1990) notes that on this ground of the ravages of paganism both the Catholic and Protestants agreed:

All this combined to give the missionaries a strong determination to eject the devil out of Africa: a devil of ignorance and of hunger, of cruelty and of naked immorality... A really serious thing was their conviction there was no worthwhile local culture: they were sure they entered into a cultural vacuum, and anything they brought was blessing (Burgman 1990).

For this reason the claim that the missionary way of life was supposedly superior to the traditional way of life was manifested in the newly introduced institutions like schools, hospitals and buildings for worship. The distinction was also expressed in the new practices of the Christian Church such as Christian Marriage, Christian baptism, Christian burial, Christian Eucharist, weekly Christian worship among others. A clash with the prevailing cultures of the African people around the stations was inevitable (Mugambi, 2009). This clash was based on an obvious contradiction in what was preached and what was actually lived and practiced. The Africans soon unmasked the lie in the mission enterprise and immediately put forward their terms and conditions of compliance. Mugambi (1989) provides an historical and theological elucidation of this controversial situation that eventually gives the African person the courage to stand alone and on truth:

One of the most disturbing ironies of the modern missionary enterprise was that the missionaries were biblical literalist yet they did not take cognizance of the resolution of the first ecumenical council of Jerusalem which declared that it was not necessary for a Gentile to become an 'honorary' Jew in order to become a Christian. Most missionaries insisted that an African must become an 'honorary white', as a precondition for becoming a Christian. This was a great theological error... if all people are the children of God, and if the Christian faith was Good News...on whose authority were the missionaries declaring superiority over Africans. This contradiction of the missionaries led many Africans to reject the missionary interpretation of the Christian faith, and establish their own independent churches in which they could affirm their cultural and religious heritage, their dignity as human beings and children of God, and their divine mandate to struggle for their own liberation against colonial domination.

Ogot (1974) concurs with Mugambi arguing that "But it was not long before some of the new adherents were able to distinguish between Christianity and Westernism. They were willing to accept the new faith but on their own terms, and without accepting the white man's ways or his rule." Similarly, Mugambi (1974) argues that they accepted the Christian faith but rejected Western domination.

Given the relatively short period of the missionary presence in the Western Kenya region it is indeed surprising that a dissenting voice could arise out of the freshly instructed African students and converts (Wipper, 1977; Barrett, 1968). Barret (1968) acknowledges the abruptness of the secession by Owalo and the subsequent movements of the Mumbo cult of Onyango Dundee and Roho (Holy Ghost) movement of Alfayo Odongo. He raises several question related to this movements and many more that were witnessed in the Luo nation:

What maneuvered the Luo, one of the richest, most literate and progressive of the Lake peoples into producing such an unedifying spectacle of divisiveness? Why should this eruption have taken place among the Luo while other Kenya tribes with a far longer CMS presence such as the Giriama and the Digo remain totally unaffected by independency to this day? (Barrett, 1968)

Even more surprising is the depth and intensity of the theological arguments put forward particularly by Johana Owalo. It is in view of these that Ogot rightly refers to Owalo as the first Christian rebel (Ogot, 1974). Here below is an endeavor to unravel the depth and implication of the theological arguments raised by Johana Owalo especially in connection with the double rite of passage that justify the label given by Ogot of a “first Christian rebel.”

4.5.3 Missionary Activities in Western Kenya: The Basis of the Double Rite of Passage

The Western Kenya region was evangelized by missions that originated from Uganda as well as those from the Kenya. The first missionary activities to Nyanza were an extension of the mission enterprise in Buganda which started after a passionate appeal by H.M. Stanley in the *Daily Telegraph* 1875 (Nthamburi 1991; Opwapo1981). This appeal did yield a speedy response and the first CMS Missionaries reached Mutesa’s court on 30th June 1877. This group was immediately followed by the Catholic White Fathers. Both these teams used the Zanzibar route that was pioneered by Swahili traders. From the Kenyan coast on a route opened by Swahili and Arab traders the first white man to travel the route was the explorer Joseph Thompson 1883-1884 (Ogot, 1974).

Way back as early as September 1892 when Bishop Tucker, the third Bishop of the Diocese of Eastern Equatorial Africa made an important tour that took him to the headquarters of

Chief Mumia's kingdom, the urgent need for a mission to the Kavirondo¹ arose. As they exhumed the body of the slain late Bishop Hannington, Bishop Tucker was touched by the sight of the un-evangelized village and he made the following remarks that were to come to fruition some 14 years later: "Can nothing be done for Kavirondo? If only Christians at home could see us surrounded by swarms of these poor ignorant people, and unable even to promise them teachers, they would surely have pity on us and them..." (Elizabeth, 1956).

In July 1904 there were already pangs of a great desire to establish a mission station in the area to the East that was referred to as "the Kavirondo District." Mr. Crabtree cited three reasons that formed the urgent basis for a mission station in this area: First the presence Mohammedan traders; secondly the advent of the railway and thirdly the presence of four distinct languages that embrace the whole area. Consequently in September an amount of 300 Pounds was requested as grant to enable the Rev. J.J. Willis to open a CMS station in Kavirondo. (From Minutes of the Executive: September 6, 1904, (R 201 G3 A7 04). In October the urgency for a mission presence in this region was amplified in a paper read by the Rev. Willis to a conference:

The completing of the railway has revolutionized the condition of things on the other side of the Lake even more than it has here. The sleep of centuries has been suddenly broken by the rude inrush of civilization; and the tribes especially the Kavirondo has awakened in the importance and possibilities of trade. So that we no longer have to deal with a simple and unsophisticated people, with ample leisure to learn, but with a people already preoccupied with other interests and bent on profiting to the utmost by the unexpected opportunity the railway has placed within grasp... Secondly Mohammedanism as I endeavoured to point in a recent article published in the Uganda Notes is making rapid strides towards Uganda—and from no direction more than from the East. Already Mohammedans occupy important posts; they have a great and growing prestige and exercise a steadily growing influence and—the danger is lest we delay, we may find ourselves ultimately face to face with the problem of evangelizing not pagan but Mohammedan tribes in the Eastern Province (*Uganda Notes* R 201 G3 A7 04).

¹ The Western region of Kenya (the counties in the former Western and Nyanza Provinces) was at one time called Bantu Kavirondo and Nilotic Kavirondo. The name Kavirondo originated from the idea of a people who squatted. This study prefers the names the Luo nation or the Luo People or the Luo over the Nilotic Kavirondo. The title Kavirondo in its use in this study is as it is presented by the various scholars whose works are cited herein.

The urgency and motivation of the Kavirondo Mission seems to be the Muslim factor as Elizabeth, 1956 rightly observes: “It was this fact of the rapidly advancing Muslim religion that first wakened the Christian Church to its responsibilities.” The Muslim presence and pressure in the Kavirondo region was already evident in Chief Mumia’s village which happened to be on the caravan route of the early explorers and traders. Bishop Tucker observes that “Mumia was in the grip of the Arab and Swahili traders from the Coast who exploited him for their own benefit.” This influence was so great that Mumia’s court became an island of change in a region that remained unaffected by the incipient transformation. The Rev. Crabtree who was sent from Uganda in 1894 to start mission work on a site that Mumia had given to C.M.S. noted this contrast: “All the Kavirondo chiefs I have known hitherto have been clad in skins, a simple and very scanty garment. Imagine, then, my intense surprise when a tall man greeted us, wearing a long white kanzu and over that along black coat reaching to the feet, embroidered in silver; and on his head a Turkish cap, black velvet embroidered in blue and silver” (Elizabeth, 1956). Crabtree was equally surprised that many in Chief Mumia’s court were able to speak in Swahili.

Immediately hereafter in October 1904 the Uganda Executive committee decided that Archdeacon Walker accompanies Mr. Willis so “that he might be in a better position to form an opinion.” Later the same year in November Bishop Tucker wrote of a report on the Kavirondo expedition and the decision therefrom:

Some while ago I asked the Archdeacon to pay a visit to Kavirondo from Kisumu in company with Mr. Willis. The result of the visit has been that we have decided to open two stations in Kavirondo. One we propose shall be as I originally suggested on the Maragoli Hills for work among the Bantu-speaking Kavirondo, and the other some twelve miles away among the Nilotic –speaking Kavirondo (Bishop Tucker to Mr. Crabtree on Nov. 29 1904 from *Uganda Notes* R 201 G3 A7 /04).

By the time the CMS mission work started at Maseno, Kisumu area was already a hub of activity involving the settlers and their projects, the early missions and the Africans who were recruited as porters as well as the traders. Elizabeth (1956) graphically describes this scenario that culminates in the C.M.S team led by the Rev. J.J. Willis joining the fray:

Already we notice the change that is coming over the face of Kavirondo country-the presence of clothes, for instance, and rupees, of steamers and trains. The cause of course was the tremendous impetus given to trade, and the influx of all sorts and conditions of people as a result of better communications-the electric telegraph, the steamer service and the Uganda Railway...And with it all came tremendous influx of

those of the Muslim faith; traders and merchants, of interpreters and clerks for the new administration, of office boys and tailors for the township and workers for the railway and the port... There came the Roman Catholic fathers first of all to Kisumu township, mostly, if it is true to minister to their people infiltrating from Uganda: and the Quakers or Friends in Maragoli Hills. Finally Bishop Tucker's own deep desire was fulfilled when the Rev. J.J. Willis offered for service in Kavirondo and arrived in 1905 (Elizabeth, 1956).

The Rev. Willis undertook his work of evangelization with such a great zeal and commitment that his presence and engagements soon bore great fruits. Accordingly, Elizabeth (1956) observes that: "Most of the time he was teacher and translator as well as pastor to the people near Maseno...He spent much time mustering the Luragoli language...he translated St. Marks Gospel, the Catechism and about twenty hymns into Luragoli and compiled an outline of grammar and vocabulary." On the education of the young boys beginning with four sons of Luo chiefs in 1906 the number grew such that by 1911 they were one hundred and twenty. The boys received education which though elementary was aimed at molding all round men by training the spirit, mind and body (Elizabeth, 1956).The founders of this great institution laid emphasis on manual and technical training that included carpentry, building, printing, tailoring, and telegraphy (Elizabeth, 1956).

The training geared at winning souls according to the *Uganda Notes* of November 1910 (R 205 A7/08), realized its first landmark and historic event in the first baptism: "In January last, Maseno saw its first baptism from among the Nilotic Kavirondo. Fourteen of the senior scholars who had been in the school for over twelve months took their stand under Christ's banner and received the sacrament of baptism before their heathen relatives and chiefs (R 205 A7/08).

The preparation of the catechumens was an elaborate process that involved making the professors to recognize the "terrible state of heathenism" and at the same time it was meant to help them to appreciate the significance of the Christ event as they embraced Christianity. According to the *Uganda Notes* the official gazette of the Uganda diocese of November 1910 (R 205 G3 A7/08) this questions were meant to help the professors to internalize the basic tenets of Christianity as they began the lifelong journey to God. The questions in their format and emphases must have played a significant role in the questions later formulated by Prophet Owalo for use by the NC as will be seen later. The NC avoids the question that suggests monogamy while introducing her emphases and theology on questions that promote

the care of the poor widows and orphans, on monotheism and on the belief in the Nomiya Church which gives eternal life. These questions are:

1. Do you agree to be taught the Words of Christ and to serve Him?
2. Do you agree to pray to God daily either alone or with others?
3. Will you abandon all customs contrary to God's Word, fornication, evil speaking, offering of heathen sacrifices, quarrelling, stealing and lying?
4. Will you remain with one wife only all the days of your life?
5. Do you agree to bring your wealth as far as you are able toward the spread of the word of God?
6. Do you agree to teach the people in your household words of God? (R 205 G3 A7/08)

To all these questions the enquirers responded in the affirmative: "I agree or I consent." Question 1 and 2 establish the foundation of Christianity as the belief in Christ and in God with whom the adherents connect in prayer. The second set of questions addresses the heathen background from which the adherents are transformed from. The fourth question defines the Christian belief and teaching on monogamous marriage as the standard prescribed by God. The 5th and 6th questions are about Christian responsibility in service. The missions primarily advocated for baptism as rite of admission into the Christian community. African converts were expected to take on European names or Jewish names in the Bible on their baptism as a sign of their membership (Odinga, 1967; p'Bitek, 1970).

The founding of the CMS center at Maseno in 1906 by the Reverend J.J. Willis had such a great impact and success because of two outstanding things. According to Ogot the Rev. Willis was a man of remarkable personality and a firm believer in Venn's policy and he was strongly opposed to the paternalistic attitude of most of the Europeans missionaries. The "three self-policy" formulated by Henry Venn, the CMS Secretary from 1841 to 1872 aimed at making the church in Africa an indigenous institution by setting up as quickly as possible a self-supporting, self-governing and self-propagating church (Ogot, 2009). The success of Willis was further assisted by the fact although the political administration of Western Kenya was transferred from Uganda to British East Africa in 1902, the Nyanza archdeaconry was not transferred from the Diocese of Uganda to that of Mombasa until 1921 (Ogot, 2009 and Nthamburi, 1995). Nyanza therefore continued to be influenced by the policies initiated by Bishop Tucker in Uganda and to enjoy self-government in the Church (Ogot, 2009). Right from the beginning Willis took upon himself to influence the

chiefs to bring their own sons to acquire the secular education as well as religious instructions. In 1906 four small boys- Onduso, Odindo, Owiti and Orao all sons of Luo chiefs were transferred from the Friends Mission Kaimosi to start Maseno School (Ogot, 2009; Elizabeth, 1956).

The strategy adopted by the school was to have boys in school for instructions, release them to the village to practice the skills learnt “Boys from Maseno school were sent out, two and two, for a fortnight at a time, to teach in the villages and to spread the gospel. Besides literary education, the boys were taught crafts and agriculture (Ogot, 2009; Elizabeth 1956). Eventually, according to Ogot (2009) the Rev. J.J. Willis succeeded in establishing a church which Africans could truly regard as theirs. According to Elizabeth (1956), Archdeacon Willis himself in a letter written in 1910 brings out this achievement in the following words: “It affords shelter amid temptations; it makes Christian living a possibility. It is significant that God Himself does not attempt the practically impossible...” The success of the CMS Nyanza is also attested in Barrett’s *Schism and renewal in Africa*: “Despite the settler mentality in the Anglican diocese emanating from the White Highlands, in Nyanza the CMS managed to build up a strong indigenous church (Barrett, 1968).

Despite the negative influence from the settler community a favorable external environment was provided by the Provincial Administration which supported the work of the European Missionaries. This very effective provincial commissioner of Nyanza as from Oct.1907 was John Ainsworth, whose administration for the next nine and a half years brought considerable changes that saw the enlightenment and empowerment of the residents of this region. Maxon (1980) says:

Ainsworth had indeed accomplished a great deal by the beginning of 1911. In several significant areas he had effected far reaching alterations of the situation he had encountered in 1907...He had made Kisumu a more healthy, if not satisfactory, place. He had brought some order and a definite policy to the administration to the province he renamed as Nyanza. He accomplished a very noteworthy transformation in the economy of the province; new crops were introduced and exports began where none had existed before his arrival. Tax collection and trade expanded greatly in his first years in Nyanza. Ainsworth had continued to play the advocate of African education (Maxon, 1980).

The introduction of tax in 1900 forced the monetary economy on the society, which now had two alternatives to raise money to cover the taxes; the first was to seek for off-farm employment to work for wages and secondly to cultivate cash crop. Soon families were

destabilized as the male members went out in search work for wages and many young and energetic members of the same families were tied down in pursuit of education. The net effect according to Ogot is: “And Nyanza soon became a supplier of manual skilled and professional labour to the rest of East Africa (Ogot, 2009).

During this period the same region of Nyanza received and was impacted greatly by a strong presence and well organized mission of the Roman Catholic Church led by the Mill Hill Missionaries. According to Gale, (1959) the first group crossed the country in 1895 under the leadership of Bishop Hanlon, arriving at Kampala in September of the same year. On Dec. 20th 1901 the railway line reached Port Florence (Kisumu) and in Feb.1902 the fourth group of Mill Hill Missionaries was able to travel all the way from Mombasa by train. The Mill Hill station was established at Kisumu in 1903. The general attitude of the Kavirondo people was welcoming. According to Gale, (1959) these people “were of a better disposition than most of the tribes we had met up till now and were extremely friendly and well disposed towards

Europeans” However their receptivity of the gospel was a big hurdle to the missionaries as Burgmann (1990) observes: “The Kavirondo readers are very difficult to be trained. They are of such an independent nature that the priest seems to have scarcely any influence over them. Whether they have faith or not is very difficult to make out. Many have been here for over a year; know their religion and still we do not know what to think of them.”

Despite this display of independence, the Luo people gradually grasped the new faith order. The Kisumu church because of its being the Railway terminus boasted of a mixed congregation of the Europeans, Goans the Baganda and the local people. Of all these groups of people who were reached by the resident priest in Kisumu was one Luo catechumen who stood out; one named Otieno. Burgman (1990) observes that indeed he was the first Luo to be baptized: “There was Otieno Father Grimshaw’s helper at Ojola. He was impatient to get baptized, but on June 13th 1906 he got his way at Kisumu and was baptized getting the name of Joanno Robert. Judge Robert Noble was his God-Father.”

His time at the Catholic mission was very short because seemingly he had a restless spirit that was not easily satisfied. Owalo’s training provided him the courage to choose and define the theological basis for his arguments. Once his mind had been decided it was

difficult to change it. Burgman (1990) argues thus: “From the start his theology was free-ranging. In 1907, it proved impossible to keep him on as a Catholic catechist. John could not back down as he felt that power of the Holy Spirit had been given to him.” Consequently according to Burgman (1990) Owalo assimilated ideas from the Quakers from the Muslims and from the Anglicans.

For those who argue that Owalo could have studied at Kibuye Burgman (1990) says that this station was not founded until March 1913. Kibuye station was to provide space for religious instructions and simple school programme to cater for the “house-boys” who had a thirst for education but were however denied access to St. Joseph’s church at Milimani. Soon enough this school admitted and was training several eager and enthusiastic Africans not only in reading and writing but in the process they imbibed and accommodated the European way of life.

4.5.4 Conversion, Re-Conversion and Dissent

Prophet Owalo’s experience in the mission stations and later in Islam can be summarized as ‘conversion, re-conversion and dissent.’ Johana Owalo after his initial exposure with the mission way of life accepted baptism and consequently became a committed Christian who practiced and lived his faith as per the rules and stipulations of the various denominations he got attached to. He was baptized in the Roman Catholic Church and he taught at CSM Thogoto, CMS Nairobi and at CMS Maseno. However, the life changing experience was the heavenly excursions that began in March 1907. Odinga (1967) agrees with this position arguing that

One night in 1907; God had come to him in a revelation, taken him to heaven wherefrom he returned with a message ‘to preach the real word of God to the Africans.’ Consequently when he realized his commissioning to be an apostle to the Africans and particularly to the Luo nation Owalo was led to found a new denomination.

Further Odinga (1967) says “He called his church NOMIYA (in Luo ‘I was given’ meaning ‘I was given God’s word’ (Odinga 1967). Hereafter according to Odinga (1967), Owalo comes up with a church whose branding will be its uniqueness as seen on the pillars on which it stands: “The new church practiced circumcision, laid emphasis on the Ten Commandments of Mount Sinai, and forbade smoking, beer drinking and dancing”. Ogot

(1974) concurs and brings out the details of this revelation that involved Owalo's transportation aloft by the angel *Jibrail* through a series of heavens

In 1907, he claimed that he had received a direct call from God to start his own religion. Yahweh had told Owalo in the Third Heaven, 'I am now sending you to be my messenger and the bearer of my sharp sword. I shall require you to raise it high. He, who hears your message and understands it, let him hold fast to it. He who refuses shall be left alone.'

Owalo later joined Islam while in Mombasa. He must have been influenced deeply by the Islamic teachings and practice as shown by the many aspects of Islamic religion that are evidenced in the NC worship. The heavenly excursion bears a lot of resemblance to the tour of the heaven by Prophet Muhammad as Hoehler-Fatton (1996) Observes: "His mystical journey through a multilayered heaven is similar to an account given by St. John in the Book of Revelation, but it is also highly reminiscent of the popular Swahili epic *Utenzi wa Miraji* (The Ascent), which details Muhammad's guided tour through the levels of heaven...

noted that both at Ojola and Maseno Owalo had an excellent report as an exemplary worker, a teacher, an interpreter and a translator of the Scriptures. It is also important to recognize in him that stubborn, persistent and tenacious trait that does not yield to be swayed from an established truth. The same spirit is evident when with exceptional courage he tells the European district commissioner to let him be because he has a recognized call and sending to the Africans (Odinga, 1967). The same according to Owalo (23) is seen before the parish council where he retorts to the question of who will carry over his missionary work with "What about you?" The defiant spirit is also witnessed in the Rev. Willis report where he notes that Owalo "refused to join with us at Adhola's, confirmation postponed" (Owalo 25). Having been convinced that the truth was not in the CMS worship Owalo soon stopped to worship with other Christians at the school and started to worship alone and he then declared to Willis that God had called him to start a mission for the Luo (Ogot 2009).

The sharp sword also referred to as *Upanga Mkali* in Kiswahili is outstanding feature of the NC that yields different meanings among the adherents. For some it signifies circumcision while for others it signifies the Gospel (good news) that leads to salvation. The informants argue that the former meaning outweighed the later and this then is the reason behind the double rite of passage.

Following the heavenly excursion two significant things became clear to Owalo: First, that there are several ills and flaws in the missionary teaching and theology and secondly, that he had a mission to bring the Luo nation into the knowledge and appropriation of God's blessings. Like Paul who had an express mission to the Gentiles (Acts 9:15), Owalo also had a message specifically for the Luo people. Prophet Owalo realized that Jesus was not to be worshipped because like Owalo, Jesus was a messenger sent by God:

He was shown into the presence of God who wore a white robe and sat on a throne. From his mouth came the Holy Spirit like a cloud of smoke. On his right side sat Jesus. Johana knelt before Jesus but Jesus rebuked him and said that God alone was worthy to be worshipped. Jesus told him that they were equal as both were messengers of God, and that Johana was to return to preach the gospel of all the Luo people (Ogot, 2009).

Prophet Owalo with the mandate of God and with the direct access to God decided for the double rite of passage of circumcision and baptism in order to maintain the sharp sword of God high. According to Ogot (2009) this experience forced him to leave the Anglican Church because its teaching on worship is based on the wrong premise worship of "three gods." Hoehler-Fatton, (1996) concurs and posits that Owalo might have learned from his Unitarian employer about the nature of God, leading Johana to reject the Catholic and Anglican triune God. Among the many outstanding belief systems entrenched in the Catholic worship that Owalo out rightly rejected included ; 'beliefs in the existence of purgatory, the holy trinity, the sacrifice of the holy-mass, the intercession of the saints, the Pope as the infallible , and the bread and wine as the actual body of and blood of Christ"(Ogot, 2009).

The ills were compounded in Owalo's vision by the fact that the leaders of the main stream churches and particularly the Pope was not recognized in heaven and that the Whites as well as some major ethnic groups were apparently locked out of heaven. Heaven, according to Ogot (1974):

It is a beautiful place; and all Nations of the earth wanted to enter in, but the Angels closed the gate of heaven, the Angels let the Jews in first, and the Jews were followed by the Arabs, After them went in John Owalo, the Angel Gabriel and the Angel Rafael, all three entering together. The white races attempted to enter in after them, but the Angels closed the gate on their face and chased the white men away, kicking them... the Indians and Goans were also chased away (Ogot, 1974).

Archdeacon Willis further observes that Owalo “fights that people should go back to the polygamous marriage in accordance with the Old Testament” (Owalo 26-27). It is evident that Owalo takes the Old Testaments and its teachings as the primary source of his denominations theology. He does not only go back to polygamy but to widow inheritance and also to rules and regulations pertaining to purification of women after child birth, to circumcision of male members and to many other Old Testament prescriptions on the right relationship of God’s people to Him. This is a clear indication of the strong affinity between the Old Testament and NC religious heritage. This study finds that the many facets of the NC practices can only be explained from the informed basis of the Jewish practices as outlined in the pages of the Old Testament. Some of these prominent NC practices appear in the District commissioner’s report (DC/CN/1/5/2KNA 1919-1923) which among other things says:

- i. They practice circumcision: Members children must be circumcised 8 or 9 days after birth;
- ii. No circumcision of women takes place;
- iii. They read the bible and teach Christianity;
- iv. A man is allowed up to four wives.

What the European missionaries and government officials at this time and even much later failed to recognize are the glaring examples of faith practices that cannot be explained either from the Christian perspective or the Jewish perspective. These elements include; the clear and often repeated refrain of God’s greatness and He alone and none other is worthy of praise and worship from all the creatures; That Jesus is to be considered as an apostle who revealed the ways of God to his people and therefore should not be worshipped; That all worship will be in the direction of Kiblah and thus the churches should be built facing that general direction; That all worshippers will be decently adorned before God with the male members wearing a white robe (*kanzu*) and a skull cap and women will be equally dressed in white with the right head gear. That all who attend worship must remove their shoes or sandals at the door as they access the worship space; That the male adherents must be circumcised; That reverence in worship will be demonstrated by the worshippers kneeling in prayer and that women and men adherents will sit separately in the worship space. That the NC male adherents are allowed to practice polygamy and each man can take in a maximum of four women.

A number of these practices can be traced back to those practices of the Islamic faith. Owalo's brief spate with Muslims must have had a remarkable impact on his belief to the extent that he carried and founded his religion with these as the key distinguishing hallmarks of what became the first African Independent Church in Kenya. The NC is going to stand on the pillar of circumcision in a community that hitherto did not practice the same. Ogot (2009) says that Owalo insisted that male followers had to be circumcised- a major challenge to Luo custom." This was indeed a major challenge because the Luo traditionally did not circumcise their male as Amutabi (2002) observes in his analysis of the Abaluhya music: "The Luo have been neighbours of the Abaluhya for a long time and this is a historical fact. The recognized difference that the Luo do not carry out male circumcision is made clear by the song calling those who fear the knife to immigrate to the Luo country." According to Ndeda (2005) Prophet Owalo must have been circumcised during the brief period of worship with Muslims in Kisumu.

In an interview with Archbishop Owalo (Owalo, 2014) one of the central messages of Prophet Owalo was circumcision of all males in accordance with the prescription in Genesis 17:1-14. Further in Owalo (26) he argues that Prophet Owalo joined Islam and was baptized with the name 'Omari'. He also says that Prophet Owalo was circumcised by one Zachariah Ojwang: "Zachariah Ojwang (son of Oracha) from Kolal clan in Asembo location at Lwak became his God-father and circumciser." Opwapo (1981) agrees with Owalo in as far as Zachariah Ojwang of Asembo was actually consulted by Prophet Owalo for the purpose of circumcision.

According to Opwapo (1981) Ojwang felt overwhelmed by this request but directed Prophet Owalo to check with Yakobo Okeyo of Kisumu Karateng (The Karateng clan border the Bunyore clan who practice circumcision). Yakobo advised him to go to the Muslims and according to Opwapo (1981) Prophet Owalo joined the Muslims in Kisumu where he was circumcised. However, according to Owalo (26) it was only after the prophet Owalo received the first visitation from God in 1907 while in Mombasa that he moved from the Catholic faith to join Islam. Montgomery's report of 1922 (DC/CN/1/5/2KNA 1919-1923) confirms this when he records the turning point in prophet Owalo's life in 1907: "Johanna Owalo is said to have had a call (hence Nomiya- He gave me) when working as boy to Mr. Morrison the advocate at Mombasa."

After his experience in Mombasa in 1907 Owalo was clear that he had a mission to the Luo People. According to Ogot (2009) Jesus confirmed that before God he and Owalo had an equal mandate as messengers and that Johana had no business bowing down to him as to God and for that reason he had a mission to the Luo Nation. Owalo was convinced that the missionary churches were in error in acknowledging three gods and further for propagating this fallacy (Ogot 2009). Owalo with this new found vision of God's mission to human kind was eager to not only reject the Catholic and Anglican concept of the Triune God but also many of the other fallacies that his experience and learning of the teachings in these missions and his reading from the scriptures had taught him(Owalo, 25). Owalo's rebellious character was not only noticed in the Anglican Church but in the Catholic Church also.

4.5 Discussion of the Socio-cultural Context of the Double Rite of Passage

The Luo community from which Johanna Owalo came is a people of the Nilotic Origin referred to as the Southern Luo (Ogot, 2009; Ogot, 1976; Ochieng, 1979; Ocholla-Ayayo, 1976). The Luo culture and religion among whom the Nomiya Church found its first adherents did not require the adherents to undergo circumcision. The Luo community had a social organization that was based on kinship rather than territory. The smallest social unit is the family made up of a man, his wife, children and grandchildren (Ocholla-Ayayo, 1976; Ndisi, 1974). Family and social life were quite organically unified-people lived, worked, worshipped and grew old in a network of family, friends and acquaintances that changed only slowly. Each family belonged to a clan *dhoot* (Ndisi, 1974). Many related clans living within a geographical location together formed a sub tribe *oganda*. Each clan was a gathering of sub-clans and had its own chief *ruoth* (Ndisi, 1974). Marriage within the sub tribe was not allowed; members of the tribe had to marry exogamously. The Luo are patrilineal which means that inheritance of property, children, wives, and power among other things comes from the male side, from father to son (Ochieng 10). Originally the Luo people were considered as a pastoral society. Life among the Luo people revolves around the land. Ocholla-Ayayo (1976) says that the Luo value land most if ancestors have fought and died for it. It is for this reason that Odinga says that the Luo regarded land as their mother, and the tribe as a whole was the proprietor of all the land in its area (Odinga, 1967; Ndisi, 1974).

The Luo are the custodians of a distinct set of values, beliefs and norms which are believed to be gifts from God to the community. The Luo believed in the existence of a supreme

being *Nyasaye* (Ocholla-Ayayo, 1976; Ogutu, 1987; Achieng, 2001). The etymology of the word *Nyasaye* could originate from the etymology, *sayo* which means to beseech beg or implore. Consequently *Nyasaye* stands for an entity which people beseech, beg or implore. *Nyasaye* is recognized as the creator, originator, or source of life and of the entire universe which He continues to sustain. This Luo concept of *Nyasaye* according to Ocholla-Ayayo (1976) depicts God variously as the womb or uterus, the herder, the molder, the universal parent, a God who is compassionate and is everywhere present.

Consequently *Nyasaye* is seen as that center that holds everything together; the beginning of all things and in him all living things owe and have their being. *Nyasaye* is behind and wills everything that happens and man is at the center of all creation. Consequently Ocholla-Ayayo (1976) argues that the Luo culture holds that the entire universe is God's creation and that human persons were given the responsibility of taking care of all resources from God. The relationship between *Nyasaye* and man is mutual and asymmetric. Man must give *Nyasaye* his due respects, honor praise, and keep his constant sacrifices, follow the rules and law of the society, for the law and rules of the society are his law and taboo. *Nyasaye* in turn gives man good health, wealth prosperity and extends his mercy upon man, gives his blessing and establishes his good judgment and peace among men (Ocholla-Ayayo, 1976, Achieng, 2001).

This understanding of God's sovereignty and the stipulations for human beings that emanate from him as he relates to them makes it possible to appreciate the covenant relationship in circumcision and baptism. The reason for the fairly good reception of the European missionary enterprise among the Luo people could be attributed to the shared belief in a supreme being who is the source of all livelihoods.

The Luo religion was the total way of life; it defined who the Luo people are (Ongong'a, 1990). The religious life defined the relationship between members of a family, members of the same clan and members of different clans. The Luo religion was not only the instrument of controlling and understanding the natural phenomenon but also the means of explaining the mysteries of life and death. The Luo religion manifested itself in a series of ceremonies that encompassed both the corporate rites and individual rite that were meant for the welfare and good of everyone.

The young of the community went through a rigorous process of socialization that involved a step by step preparation of the boys and girls to acquire the responsibilities, privileges and expectations of the community as they journeyed towards adulthood, marriage, and parenthood (Ocholla-Ayayo, 1976; Achieng, 2001). The process of socialization among the Luo was a continuous and a life-long process that begins at childbirth and continues until death (Ocholla-Ayayo, 1976). This process of education within the Luo community is best captured in the Luo saying “*ngato ipuonjo nyakati*” one is taught until s/he is old. There were several methods through which the value systems, the beliefs, the norms, the customs of the Luo were inculcated in the young and consequently transmitted down the generational divide from one generation to another. These included for example: the songs and riddles; stories and poems, funeral dirge and dances; Proverbs and sayings. These were the property of the Luo community and were the markers that gave the community its distinctive identity and character. Children of both sexes are taught how to look after land and cattle from the early age by actually participating in agricultural or pastoral activities (Ndisi, 1974). The Luo tribal institutions and organizations shaped and molded individuals through role acting and norm internalization. The main institutions that were charged with the gathering, sifting, dissemination and indoctrination of the community membership included the *Siwindhi* institution, the *Duol* institution, the *Simba* institution and the family institution:

a) *Duol* is a special house set aside for the owner of the homestead. It is a place exclusively reserved for men. It is here that the teachings of important matters relating to the community are discussed. Each evening while eating dinner with the head of the village the old man narrated the tribal history as well as tribal customs. Here they learned rules about wars the best way to organize cattle raids. They learnt from elders the art of building, basketry, shield making and house thatching among many of the manly roles (Ndisi, 1974; Ocholla-Ayayo, 1976; Achieng, 2001).

b) *Siwindhi* may be considered as a girl’s dormitory. The house belongs to a *pim* an old lady who has reached menopause stage and who all boys and girls may call *dayo* (grandmother). The *Siwindhi* education stresses the Luo ideologies in the form of stories, tales, songs and riddles. The *pim* taught the girls the customs, traditions, history, family life, the morals, the roles and responsibilities and laws of the Luo. Boys attend the *Siwindhi* between the age of seven to about age thirteen or fourteen. A boy who had reached puberty joined the *Simba*, the boy’s dormitory.

c) *Simba* is generally known as boy's dormitory. Boys who had not had their lower incisors removed were not permitted to live in *Simba*. Luo boys at this stage were expected to have girlfriends. It is in the *Simba* where the boys and girls made their initial attempts at having sex. Girls were expected to yield to sexual play while resisting actual penetration. *Simba* education was a stepping stone to mature roles that included marriage and parenthood.

The Luo rite of passage that marks transition to adulthood is *Nak*, Both boys and girls were compelled to go through *nak*. A girl was not considered grown up until after *nak*. The second stage which is never mentioned in this process of showing adulthood is that of *chodruok*. This is the state for cutting the *ligament frenulum* of the penis, practiced by every Luo male after the age of fourteen and fifteen (Ocholla-Ayayo, 1976).

Luo custom permitted both monogamy and polygamy. Polygamy however seemed to be the preferred mode and the Luo rules provided for the acknowledgement of the order of seniority of the wives; the first wife was called *Mikayi*, the second was called *Reru* and the third was called *Nyachira* and all rest were called *Nyi udi*. The main reason for polygamy rested in the strength in great numbers (Ocholla-Ayayo, 1976). The Luo marriages were not dissolved by death. Even with the death of the husband the wife still remained the legal wife of the deceased and was expected to continue raising children to his name through a leviratic union.

If on the other hand it was the wife that passed on then the wife's kinsmen or parents were to provide a girl to replace their dead daughter (Ocholla-Ayayo, 1976). At the birth of a child the umbilical cord is tied with a banana strip before it is cut. According to Ndisi the cord is tied with strips of banana at three equal intervals for a girl and four equal intervals for a boy (Achieng, 2001). On this day *chieng yiego nyathi* the baby was laid out on the threshold at about ten o'clock and the mother was then shaved (Achieng, 2001).

The very young child remains with his mother in her house for three days if it is a female child and four days if it is male (Ndisi, 1974; Ocholla-Ayayo, 1976; Achieng, 2001). After the specified number of days, the child is brought out into the sun for the first time. This symbolic contact with the sun marks an important reason for seniority of man over woman. The Luo do not think that females have, automatically, a lower reasoning capacity, rather,

that a man's main superior position is due to his physical attributes and partly because the male have to be shown to the sun four days after birth and the female three days after birth (Achieng, 2001).

4.5.2 The Hybridity of the Double Rite of Passage

Circumcision and baptism seem to be the defining moment in the life of the NC members. According to Bishop Nyarath circumcision and baptism mark the individual for God. This is in concert with Dosick (1995) that the circumcised male was distinct and distinguished from other men around him because of the visible permanent identifying mark that this person is a member of the Jewish People, in covenant with God. A new name in the Jewish community was given on circumcision as the infant is welcomed into a 4000 year old tradition (Dosick, 1995). The male infant in the NC gets welcomed into this self-same old tradition after being baptized and circumcised. Owalo (78) argues that: "If children were members of the church under the old dispensation, which they undoubtedly were, then they are members of the church now by the same rite."

In the NC on the eighth day the male infant gets a new name in an elaborate service that brings the parents and God parents together to make vows on behalf of the infant who then gets welcomed into the Christian community as he receives a sign of the cross on his forehead. This service is an-at-home service where the mother and infant are confined for forty days. The new name given at baptism has the significance of indicating a new beginning in a new relationship with Christ. It is the church's expectation that those baptized as infants when they come of age and are able to understand for themselves the church's teachings will undertake a diligent study of the NC doctrines and thereafter be baptized Owalo (82) says:

But infants do not believe. Thus under the Nomiya Church, it will be the responsibility of the parents and god parents to ensure that as soon as the children are sufficiently prepared and ready, they are brought for confirmation. At such time they will take the baptism vows on their own (Owalo 82).

The double rite of passage bridges the two worlds and two covenants that of the Old Testament and that of the New Testament as it confirms that despite the length of time the purpose of God remains the salvation of the human person. It brings the two covenants together. Owalo (62) observes a concurrence in their significance saying that "circumcision as a symbol shadowing forth sanctification by the Holy Spirit is both part and parcel with

the symbol of baptism (Matthew 28:19-20). The truth embodied in both ordinances is ever the same; thus the removal of sin or sanctifying of grace in the heart.” The double rite of passage brings a religious rite of passage that had been relegated to the periphery giving it the very emphasis and trappings of the Abrahamic tradition enshrined in the covenant whose sign was circumcision. Bishop Agedi (Agedi, 2014) in an interview says that the prescription outlined in the book of Genesis chapter 17 is the guideline of the circumcision carried out in the NC, and with it several other biblical texts that attest to the Jewish circumcision on the eighth day (Lk.1:59;2:21).

The NT examples of circumcision particularly that of John the Baptist, Jesus and Apostle Paul lend credence to the practice in the NC (Lk. 1:59; 2:21; Phil.3:5). The other compelling background is that Jesus himself was baptized by John the Baptizer (Lk.3:21), and eventually at the end of his ministry he commissions his followers to go make disciples as they baptize them in the triune formula (Mt.28:19-20). The Jewish practice of male circumcision on the eighth day now gets a new flavor and coloring as a hybrid rite that begins with baptism and ends with circumcision. The other hybrid aspect of the double rite of passage is that the period of isolation prescribed in the Book of Leviticus chapter 12 is now given a special emphasis by bringing in the elements of the *Nazirite* vow in the Book of Numbers chapter six. In this case the double rite of passage affords the mother an opportunity to renew her relationship with God as she plays the role of a *Nazir*.

Baptism is considered the gentle and painless ritual compared to circumcision where pain is inflicted on the infant (Migliore, 2004). It is possible that one may undergo baptism without circumcision. In an interview with Bishop Monye the researcher learnt that the NC has quite a sizeable population of both young and old who have been baptized but not circumcised. A number of respondents confirmed that there are parents who because of fear of pain and loss of blood may choose that their children are not circumcised but are only baptized. In this case according to Archdeacon Opere (Opere, 2014) the child will be baptized not at home but in the church setting after the mother has finished her purification seclusion.

Bishop Ochieng (Ochieng, 2014) of Ogwedhi Diocese says that in the NC set-up one cannot undergo circumcision minus baptism. Further, he notes that the older initiates (*Jajot*) will like the infant of eight days old be baptized and then circumcised. The only difference is that their healing period is not tied to their mother and therefore does not have to last the full

thirty three days (Jos. 5:8). For this very reason of having a mixed congregation, Bishop Nyarath (Nyarath, OI 2014) observes that the NC is extremely strict on who should attend the early morning ceremony of *Yepo* that marks the purification of the mother and the end of the healing period for the initiate. Only those who have been circumcised at infancy or even adult initiates may partake of the *sawo*, and only those women on whose thighs the initiation of an infant was carried out can be party to this ceremony. Outsiders and those who do not meet this criterion will not be allowed into the room where such a ceremony is taking place. The NC then stands out as a denomination where infant baptism is prevalent because it is tied to circumcision on the eighth day and also to the period of seclusion.

The continued significance of the double rite of passage according to the Rev. Ouma Okongo (Ouma, 2014) is that it is tied to the prestige and distinction it accords the initiates: *oter nyangu odiechieng mar aboro, mokaan mochamie sawo*-Circumcised on the eighth day, kept in isolation followed by a celebration. This then is the pride of the NC male adherents. It is indeed what gives them the edge over their female counterparts as it affirms their patriarchal assigned leadership position and domination in all spheres. Archbishop Owalo (Owalo, OI 2014) in his wisdom said though mildly, that as long as the practice of polygamy endures the NC as a church will endure. One can deduce from this that as long as the male position is affirmed through practices like the double rite of passage then the future of the NC is assured.

4.5.3 The Contemporary Challenges in the Double Rite of Passage

The double rite of passage is a possibility due to the role played by two NC officials: the priest who conducts baptism and the *shariff* who does circumcision. Baptism is a painless ritual that marks the initiate with the symbol of the cross while in circumcision not only is blood shed but also a piece of the body is lost. These two offices in their own right have sustained the double rite of passage.

4.5.3.1 The office of the *Shariff* (Circumcizer)

The *shariff* (circumciser) in the NC is indeed a key office. Thousands of the male circumcisions carried in the NC since its inception has been performed by the *Shariff*. According to Bishop William Acholla (Acholla, 2014) the NC holds that those who serve as *shariff* do not do so by appointment but by those called by the Spirit of God to perform circumcision. The *shariff* was required to have knowledge on the correct manner and

procedure to effect and achieve a successful surgery. *Shariff Benjamin* (Benjamin, 2014) with an experience of more than forty years notes that the *shariff* in the traditional set up used crude tools of trade that included the kitchen knife or at best the common pocket knives, fine dust for encouraging clotting of blood and pieces of cloth for dressing of the wound. In the recent past though, some of the *Shariffs* have acquired some basic medical training especially on the use of surgical blades and on drugs that will reduce pain and those that would bring about fast healing of the wound in dressing. The *shariff* does not use anesthesia. Many NC members view the Voluntary Medical Male Circumcision (VMMC) program as a welcome development that confirms that circumcision is approved by God and therefore all male should be circumcised.

The respondents were unanimous that although the *Shariffs* are not necessarily medically trained their strength lies in the fact that they are led by the Spirit of God and are also fully conversant with the NC doctrines, rules and regulations. In interviews with Bishop Nyarath (Nyarath, 2014) and Bishop Achola (Achola, 2014) they confirmed that because the office of the *Shariff* is a calling, this is the reason why for the many years of the existence of the NC they have never witnessed any causality. *Shariff Benjamin* (Benjamin, 2014) in an interview said that from his experience spanning more than forty years he has never experienced any casualties. He says that he has witnessed some poor jobs done by some of his fellow *Shariffs* that have called for his expertise to correct a few.

However, Bishop Olali (Olali, 2015) sharing about his experience in Nairobi Diocese says casualties have been witnessed in the church due to the *Shariffs* lack of medical training and also due to the use of crude instruments like the kitchen knife and the penknife. He cites a case where one of his Archdeacons circumcised a child using this crude instruments and the child eventually bled to death. Archbishop Owalo (Owalo, 2014) in an interview concedes that they have witnessed casualties especially of the victims who have bled to death. It is on this very ground the Archbishop Owalo (Owalo OI 2014) and Bishop Olali (Olali, 2014) concur that the church has plans underway to hold medical training on the best surgical procedure of carrying out circumcision. The church is consulting on the best way forward.

Some of the respondents suggested that circumcision done in the hospital minus the prescribed religious ritual is not acceptable. However some respondents suggest that circumcision through the VMMC program could easily be turned to be a religious one. This

process they say would entail the invitation of the religious leaders who then would say the prayers commensurate with the NC circumcision liturgy, followed by a period of seclusion necessary. Such an initiate would be recognized as a communicant member of the church (one who has been duly baptized, circumcised and confirmed). This then is a new avenue that may be investigated to ensure that the medical expertise is brought into a religious ritual.

4.5.3.2 The Office of Clergy

For the period of its existence the NC has appointed its clergy allowed them to rise up in the ranks of authority without formal training. For this reason depending on the background of the clergy several shades and interpretation of basic doctrinal issues are witnessed. Bishop Ayaga in an interview confirms this when he says that through wide consultation and especially with older members of the NC he has sharpened his ministry to the extent that he is able to do certain things that his contemporaries cannot. The current state of turmoil can best be gleaned from Owalo (31) summary of the status of the church:

Outwardly the Church looks strong and prosperous. The area of coverage has greatly expanded and the number of followers has tremendously increased...Our primary and Secondary schools have also had some remarkable improvements. Despite all this enthusiastic display of devotion and evidence of faith, further supported by endless pilgrimage to Oboch...the Church is still painted with weakness which we really must examine and address with honesty. While the church has many devout and learned clergy who go about their duties as loyal and zealous servants of the almighty God and His Church there are some who do scandalizing the name of the church due to their lack of virtue, greed and unchaste lives. Such clergy do display total indifference to the things of the Spirit...Many a clergy cohabit with widows and even divorcees. Such clergy need to change their morals to fit their role in serving the Lord and His Church (Owalo 31).

Olali (2015) concurs arguing that: "This adulteration which in effect goes against the Nomiya Church constitution includes nomination of women and the lame people to act as clergy and the appointment of the uncircumcised to act as administrators in the church. In some instances Nomiya prayer system and procedures have been mutilated with disrespect.

Two solutions offered by this same NC leadership point to an immediate need to reform and reorganize the NC structural systems. For Owalo the immediate solution lies in the training and equipping of the clergy:

Needless to say there ought to be organized seminars, conferences and even tailor made training to groom the church clergy for improved performance. It should be remembered that there are no such training colleges at the moment. In a matter of reform, great strides ought to be taken to establish an institution basically designed for such a task...Through training we will be able to change the character of our priests, instruct their minds and get their spirituality deeply rooted...Model training colleges need to be founded to give the church a crop of dedicated and holy priests (Owalo 31).

For Olali (2015) the solution is in re-identifying with the original prescription and tenets of NC that were reworked into the constitution. In part these include:

1. Study for at least one year before baptism
2. Preacher must be qualified after two years of training on Nomiya Faith and practices
3. Pastor to be qualified after three year training
4. Pastor and Bishop not to marry more than four wives
5. Pastor or Bishop not to marry a widow or a divorcee and if he does he must resign...
6. All clergy must be circumcised (Olali, 2015).

The two positions coincide in one respect that is in the equipping and empowering of the officers. From the foregoing the two important offices that are the pillars to the continuation of the double rite of passage are wanting and call for the NC leadership to rethink in order to reform and revitalize its moribund structures.

4.5.4 Clergy and Employment

According to Archdeacon Joshua Opere (Opere, 2014) the NC stands distinct because the clerics in NC are not in any way dependent upon the church for their remuneration. The NC priests would be termed as “Tent Makers,” they do their clerical work almost as part time because they have to make ends meet by working for their subsistence and other needs in offchurch employment. What the church has for them generally are allowances. In many instances they are appointed to work in their home parishes or diocese to allow for this convenience. Many priests therefore double up as teachers, farmers, small scale business men, artisans and fishermen. A few of them are employees of the government and government agencies, Non-Governmental Organizations, County Government as well as private and public companies. Quite a number of clergy whose employment takes them outside their home areas have been instrumental in promoting and propagating the NC worship outside Rarieda Sub-County.

The challenge the priests face like that faced by many of their congregations is the fact that the general climatic conditions in Rarieda Sub County does not favor rain-fed agriculture on which the majority depend. The general economic situation in the Sub County is that there is not a single widely grown crop that would be called a cash crop and neither is there an industry to which they can lay claim to as a major source of livelihood. A few enterprising individuals are recognized as poultry farmers, dairy farmers, horticulture farmers, fish farmers and fishermen. However the majority of the Rarieda Sub County population is small scale farmers.

4.6 Conclusion

From the above analysis of the origins and of the faith and belief of the NC, it is apparent that the NC stands out as the first AIC in Kenya. Prophet Johana Owalo was the first catechumen from the Luo nation who was baptized as Joanno Robert Owalo on 13th June 1906 at Roman Catholic Church Ojola. In 1907, at Mombasa, he received a life-changing vision and after a long struggle to consolidate and accommodate the missionary teachings, he left in 1912 to found a mission to the Luo nation.

Prophet Owalo who was born and socialized in the Luo culture believed that the Luo were being admitted before God on an equal footing with the Arabs as well as the Jews. He did not agree with a number of the Roman Catholic beliefs, for example, the doctrine of Trinity and the divinity of Christ as well the teaching on purgatory, indulgence among others. He instead taught that God was one; he does not beget and is not begotten and Jesus is a messenger. He also taught about polygamy and leviratic marriage. Owalo had a defiant spirit that the Roman Catholic Fathers referred to as a “free ranging theology” and which led Ogot (1974) to label him as the “first Christian rebel.” Prophet Owalo departed from the Trinitarian faith and leaned towards the Unitarian. Baptism in the NC is not in the triune formula (that is in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit). In the NC, the name of the Holy Spirit is not mentioned at all and the name of Christ is only called in the marking of the baptism candidate (*Kitap Lamo* 56).

The NC is both a breakaway group from the missionary-led churches and a protest group against missionary paternalism and colonial oppressive structures; thus an Ethiopic or Nationalistic AIC. The NC remains the only Christian body that does circumcision and baptism simultaneously as a religious rite of passage. The double rite of passage, of

circumcision and baptism in the NC is a hybrid of practices which bring together aspects of Judaism, Islam and Christianity in a mix that is unique in the Christian world. Infant circumcision and baptism are done on the eighth day of birth of a male whereas the adult male will be circumcised and baptized on admission. Female infants on the other hand are only baptized on the fourteenth day while the adult female will be baptized on admission.

In taking the vows, the NC tactfully avoids the question “Will you remain with one wife only all the days of your life?” and instead introduces three additional questions: one on the care of the poor, widows and orphans, two on the belief in the Nomiya Church that leads to eternal life and three on monotheism. This pushes forward the NC teaching on polygamy and levirate marriage, unitarianism and the belief and practice of the Nomiya Church that leads one to eternal life. The NC teaches unwavering loyalty to the one and only God; the only one worthy of praise, honor, love and service.

There is a strong affinity between the NC religious practice and the Old Testament practices. Many of the NC practices can only be explained from the informed basis of the Old Testament Jewish practices. The double rite of passage is an elaborate service that goes beyond the Jewish circumcision and naming ceremony bringing in the *Nazirite* vows and the Christian baptism all to be crowned by the ceremony of completion of the blood purification rites. For male infants the service starts with the Christian baptism done by a priest followed by circumcision done by *Sharif*, after which the church confines the woman and the child for thirty three days. At the end of this period the church comes together in a service that begins with the shaving of the hair of both the mother and the child to mark the end of their confinement, an overnight vigil (*Mony*), an early morning sacrifice and meal for the cleansing of the woman that climaxes in a welcome and readmission service in the church led by *Simeon-Ka-Lawi*.

Female infants though excluded from the double rite of passage bring in another novelty of baptism on the fourteenth day. The fourteenth day coincides with the first biblical prescription of the doubles that a woman on the birth of a female will undergo separate and different from those on the birth of a male: the Double Period of Ritual Impurity (she shall be unclean for fourteen days as in her menstruation). The fourteenth day marks the beginning of another of the doubles, the Double Period of Blood Purification or Confinement (her time of blood purification shall be sixty-six days). The parturient in the

NC unlike their Jewish counterparts will be following the *Nazirite* regimen of prescription that is much stricter including total avoidance of funerals even of the closest of relatives, avoidance of intoxicants and keeping of the hair unshaved all in dedication to God.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE THEOLOGICAL CONTEXT OF THE DOUBLE RITE OF PASSAGE IN THE NC

5.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the research findings from the primary respondents and from secondary sources concerning the theological issues that surround the double rite of passage in the NC.

5.2 Discourse of the Heavenly Vision

Bishop Osumo of Atoyo Diocese (Osumo, 2014) argues that Owalo's heavenly visions that led him to the first, second and third heavens yielded a set of distinct instructions that give the NC its grounding, mission and vision. Bishop Anyona of Oboch Diocese (Anyona, 2014) concurs that Johana Owalo several times in a special revelation finds himself transported aloft by Angel *Jibraeli* to the first, second and third heavens. In an interview with Archbishop Owalo (Owalo, 2014), he confirmed that the prophet himself talked of being transported aloft not less than twelve times. These distinct set of instructions are contained in the NC scriptures. They are said to have been written first in a Kiswahili version that was called: *Upanga Mkali*.

Bishop Osumo (2014) further says that in the third heaven Prophet Owalo identifies Jesus sitting on the right hand of God and he moves forward to give him due honor in worship but instead Jesus joins him and they all kneel before God in worship. Bishop Osumo (Osumo, 2014) argues that God alone is to be worshipped. Jesus was an apostle and for this reason he expects an apostle like him not to bow down to him but to God.

These visions according to Bishop Osumo (Osumo, 2014) appeared to Johana Owalo as from the first day of March 1907. Owalo (2014) brings the significance when he says that on this very day God manifested himself to Prophet Owalo. Further he argues that the NC has as her main objectives to preach and teach her followers to know and believe that on this day God selected Prophet Owalo and send him out as an apostle. This special revelation according to Owalo (2014) is the origin of the name of the Nomiya Church (Nomiya is the Luo word for 'I have been given'). This date is marked with pomp in an annual celebration that marks the birth of the Nomiya Church in Kenya.

The visions affirm that theology is taught by God, teaches about God and leads to God.

The theology of the NC can be understood as the purposes of God for man and his destiny are revealed in the NC scriptures.

5.2.1 God Alone to Be Worshipped

Bishop Nikolao Anyona (Anyona, 2014) observes that in the second chapter Nomiya *Sula Ariyo (2)*, God the Father is revealed as the center of worship and adoration. He stands separate and distinct from his creatures who must direct their homage directly to him and not to any other or through any other. Anyona (2014) says that God expresses his displeasure at the behavior of creation that has rejected worshipping him and is now worshipping creation:

To koro chwech oweya gi lamo chwech wadgi. To in koro aori mondo iting'malo Ligangla Mabith, ng'a moyie mako omaki to ng'ama odagi obed abeda. Now, creation has forsaken me and is worshipping fellow creatures. But as for you, I am sending you to carry aloft the sharp sword, whoever believes, is accepted but he who refuses let him be.

According to Bishop Tobias Nyarath (Nyarath, 2014) these scripture portions underscores that, God alone is worthy of worship and is to be worshipped. He observes that in the third heaven Johana Owalo, Jesus and angels *Jibraeli* and *Rafaeli* presented themselves before God and bowed down before God in worship. However, Johana Owalo on various occasions bows in worship to Jesus who tells him not to do that. The angel *Jibrael* warns Johana vehemently saying:

Nitie Jaote manyalo sayo jaote, koso nitie Malaika malamo malaika? To kata in piny kata in kure, Nyasaye kende emilamo.

(Is there an apostle who worships another apostle or is there an angel who worships another angel? Whether you are on earth or wherever you are it is God alone to be worshipped).

These were the words spoken in the third heaven. The messenger will only speak words from the sender and similarly the prophet will speak oracles of God. Jesus is not to be worshipped. He is not God but a messenger (an apostle) and a messenger cannot worship another messenger. It is clear and repeated for clarity and for emphases that God and God alone is to be worshipped and none other, wherever one is. This is the reason that Jesus vehemently objects to Owalo's acts of worship. According to Bishop Nyarath (2014) this

stand of Jesus seemingly concurs with a Luo proverb that says *Jaote ok go lero*. A messenger's message is to be received not with beatings of the messenger.

Anyona (Anyona, 2014) says that there is only one God who desires human worship from a contrite and a broken heart. Similarly the Spirit though recognized as being part of the third heaven is associated with God the Father and not Jesus. According to Nyarath (Nyarath, 2014) the Spirit emanates from God the Father and not Jesus:

Ndalo mangeny ka Johana neno chuny Maler kawuok kuom Nyasaye kairo. Ok wuogi kuom Yesu to mana kuom Nyasaye

(Prophet Johana Owalo on several occasions noticed the Holy Spirit emanating like smoke from God the Father and not from Jesus).

Bishop Anyona (Anyona, 2014) says that in worship human beings come to know where they have come from, their purpose in this life and their destiny in the life after. He notes that God called Johana Owalo to him and worked his purposes in him so that he is transformed to be an instrument of God through which God's purposes would be revealed particularly to the Luo people. According to Bishop Anyona (Anyona, 2014) because Jesus is not to be worshipped creation is getting a new way through which communion with God is restored. Anyona (2014) further says that communion with God necessitated obedience to the prescriptions in the Bible. Jesus was circumcised according to the Jewish tradition stated in Genesis 17:12 "Throughout your generation every male shall be circumcised when he is eight days old."

5.2.2 Owalo is God's Instrument

According to Anyona (2014) the call goes back to that day in Mombasa on the first day of March 1907 when Johana Owalo recognized the angel *Jibraeli* in a vision: *Kiyie ote ma Nyasaye dwaro ori nidoki ng'at Nyasaye nyaka chieng* (If you accept God's commissioning to be his messenger then you will forever remain his possession). Anyona (2014) argues that this message delivered to Owalo suggests that he has been identified as a messenger or a prophet to carry a message to an unspecified destination or person. The acceptance of the commissioning and the content of God's message are tied to the eternal recognition of Owalo as God's perpetual messenger. Prophet Owalo puzzled by this message asks the source whom it was meant for. The angel before leaving Prophet Owalo confirms that it is to him that the message is directed.

Nyarath (2014) argues that God chooses but does not force his will on people. Prophet Owalo had an opportunity to accept this high calling or disregard it altogether. Progressively Owalo was confirmed as the prophet while at the same time the content, the potent and the import of the message are made known to him. Anyona (2014) observes that chapter three and verse 1 of the Nomiya Scriptures reiterates the content and emphases of the primary purpose and reason for God's calling of Johana Owalo. Anyona (2014) further observes that in a visitation like the earlier one but now at the mission center at Ojola the Prophets ministry is now challenged.

In noori nibiro nyiso ji wach Nyasaye to ibiro puonjo mana wach mar ji?...We magoweche muofni, in inyis mana ji wach Nyasaye, an ema nakelone Mariamu weche go; to nanyise mana nobiro nyuolo Yesu, Yesu to nyiso ji wach Nyasaye, neok awacho ni wechego ilamago, pogri kodgi. Nyis ji wach Nyasaye kende.(Kitap Lamo 94)

(You were sent to proclaim the word of God yet you are currently teaching human words...Forget those are blind men's words; but you teach to the people the word of God. I am the one who brought these words to Mary and I only told her that she was to give birth to Jesus who was to tell God's people His words. I never instructed that these words were to be used in his/her worship. Separate yourself from them and teach the word of God only).

According to Nyarath (2014) the angel *Jibraeli* wants Owalo's ministry to project Jesus as the messenger of God only and not as one to be worshipped. Teaching and projecting Jesus as the Son of God who deserves due homage is accordingly a blind teaching that should not be entertained. Mary is also to be seen in the light of the one who received a direct communication of what God was to do through her but the said words are not to be used to elevate her to a position of reverence. Nyarath (2014) argues that although Jesus and Mary were instruments in God's plans for salvation of humankind none of them were to be regarded as objects of worship. This position tallies with the position above that Jesus was a messenger like Owalo and did not deserve to be worshipped.

Nyarath (2014) further argues that for angel *Jibraeli* to come to Owalo at Ojola the new center of the Roman Catholics could be construed as a direct attack on the teachings and practices carried out at this center in worship. The fact that Owalo is regarded highly as the first convert from Luo land and consequently as an interpreter by his superior Father Grimshaw, is an indication that the angel is attacking his current occupation. For what he is teaching as a catechist seemingly is what the angel is attacking and referring to variously as

“human words” which are “blind men’s words.”(*We mago weche muofni*, Leave alone those blind men’s words *Kitap Lamo* 95) This then, is suggestive that what is being taught has deviated from the master teaching. Mary was never to be an object of worship or a channel through which prayers were to be reflected to God.

5.2.3 Owalo’s Ladder, the Only Means to Access God

According to Bishop Nyarath the second aspect of this vision comes out in what would be referred to as “Owalo’s ladder.” Accordingly referring to *Kitap Lamo* 94 people in the world ‘*olumwengo*’ recognize the way above them a bunch of very ripe fruits and each group raises ladders to reach the fruits. Christians even after placing their ladders a top table could not reach the fruits. Then angel *Jibraeli* gave Johana a ladder telling him:

Witi kucha raithe moko go duto mondo otur ng’ama odagi idho gi mani to obed abeda (Throw away all the other ladders so that they break into pieces, whoever refuses to use this one let him be).

According to Bishop Nyarath, Owalo was then instructed to make available only the given ladder. That this was God’s choice as the only means to the ripe bunch of fruits is demonstrated in the fact that all other human contraptions are thrown away and broken into pieces. Consequently, Owalo was able to reach the ripe fruits that hitherto though attractive and desirable were well beyond the reach of all and sundry. Bishop Nyarath argues that God is clearly telling Owalo not to rely on any other means or even creatures as means to reach him. This part of the revelation augments the earlier lament by God that men have discarded the right worship and have taken to worshipping creatures. Nyarath concludes that it is a clear demonstration that God is providing the right way to Owalo.

Progressively these heavenly visions reveal that God is the source of all good and human beings can appropriate these goodies only as they rely on the means and ways that are made available by God himself; for example Owalo’s ladder as demonstrated above. The visions also reveal that God chooses those people who are to act as instruments and vessels to disseminate abroad his eternal purposes for his people. God’s free will is expressed in the opportunity that God offers to all. Each and every person is given the choice to use Owalo’s ladder or seek another alternative. Similarly, when Owalo raises up the sharp sword all are offered the same opportunity to choose to believe or not to.

5.2.4 Worship is the Only Acceptable Sacrifice/ the Long Rope

Bishop Jotham Ochieng of Ogwedhi Diocese (Ochieng) says that given the unique place of God the Father as the one to whom creatures owe their allegiance it is important that human beings approach God with obedience. He says that worship is that sacrifice which emanates from the depths and confines of a contrite and broken heart. Quoting from the NC scriptures, Bishop Ochieng notes that:

Onge misango to ngamoyie malamo Nyasaye gi chunye chutho ema timo ni Nyasaye misango;

(There is no sacrifice other than that offered by a believer who truly worships God with the whole of his heart).

Worship thus is a condition of the worshipper's attitude that signifies his self-giving and surrender of will to that of God. The phrase *ongge misango* (there is no sacrifice) seems to suggest the traditional sacrifices that entailed the offer before God of the animals without blemish was an outdated and obsolete practice. The obsolescence of the traditional sacrifice seems to be the subject matter of the new prescription that entails a direct connection to God. Prophet Owalo seemingly has this direct connection as Bishop Ochieng suggests:

Kendo ndalo mangeny, ka Nyasaye omiyo Johana tol mabor. Johana omako piere ochung' go e pinyka; to Yesu omako wiye ochung' go e polo. To en tol achiel mabor

(On several occasions God gave apostle Owalo a long rope. The apostle held one end of the long rope here on earth while Jesus held the other end in heaven; it is indeed one long rope).

The NC adherents like Owalo will attain this direct connection as long as their spiritual disposition is in tune with God. The duty of every adherent according Bishop Ochieng (Ochieng, 2014) is to follow prophet Owalo in proclaiming the pure word of God: *Yala ayala wach Nyasaye kende, nikech wachni ne Yesu oseyalo chon*. Preach only the word of God because Jesus preached the same.

5.2.5 Human Destiny

According to Bishop Enoka Agedi of Ujwanga Diocese (Agedi, 2014), heaven is such a beautiful place where the world communities would like to enter. He further says that there are two paths leading to heaven, a narrow path and a wider path. The narrow and hard path leads to God while the wide and easy road leads to the devil. Purgatory is not in the

Kingdom of God but only Heaven and Hell. The way to Heaven or Hell is clear to all who have died.

Every NC believer, according Archdeacon Joshua Opere (Opere, 2014) lives in great anticipation of a better world at the end of life here on earth. This expectation is captured in the many facets of the NC worship that is in her prayers and in the Hymns. One such solemn hymn *Adwaro mana in Ruodha*, (I need you only my Lord) recognizes that to proceed from this world to the next people will require the aid of Jehovah (*Kitap Lamo* 62):

1. *Adwaro mana in Ruodha, Kandalona gi Piny koro ogik*

Jehova bi imak bada.

Kane iwacho ni Musa, in eyo kendo adiera,

Jehova bi imak bada

I need you only my Lord, when my days on this earth come to an end

Jehovah come, hold my hand

You told Moses that you are the way and the truth

Jehovah come, hold my hand

Chorus *Telna, telna, Jehova bi mak bada*

Akonya , kitelna wuon taya, Jehova bi imak bada

Hono kaaye pinywa ma yande, Jehova bi mak bada

Hono kadhiye pinywa ma wendo, Jehova bi mak bada

Lead me, Lead me, Jehovah come hold my hand

My rescuer, Lead me the owner of the lamp, Jehovah come hold my hand

Wonder, as I leave the former world, Jehovah come hold my hand

Wonder, as I enter the new world, Jehovah come hold my hand

Kaka ne a biro nono, anadog mana nono

To mano wach man kare

Ringra en lowo kendo en buru nono

Omiyo nyaka odog kare

As I came naked, I will go back naked

And that is a fact

My body is made out of earth and of dust

It has to go back where it belongs

5.3. God in the Routine Worship of the NC

God in the NC according to Bishop Enoka Agedi (Agedi, 2014) is understood as one, great eternal and universal God.

5.3.1 God is one

Agedi (2014) argues that the central emphasis in the NC is that God is one. Human beings respond to God as they appropriate all the good that he graciously bestows to all whose faith looks up to him. Man is expected to respond in obedience:

Nyasaye en achiel kende, oonge kata wuon mare, kata min mare kata jachwechne, to en kende e Ruoth Achiel, molooyo nyiseche duto mantie, manyaka chieng' Ayie saye, here, pake gene tiyone ndalo na duto.

God is one, without a father or a mother or even a creator, but he alone is Lord over all the gods. He alone is to be worshipped, loved and served all the days of one's life. (*Kitap Lamo* 121)

5.3.2 Nyasaye Duong'- God is Great

Agedi (2014) further notes that the most common and most repeated refrain in the NC worship is that which proclaims the greatness of God. This is done antiphonally with the worship leader making the claim that is repeated by all in the congregation:

Jaduong: *Nyasaye Duong'* Minister: God is Great
Ji: *Nyasaye Duong'* People: God is Great
Jaduong: *Nyasaye Duong'* Minister: God is Great
Ji: *Nyasaye Duong'* People: God is Great
Jaduong: *Nyasaye Duong'* Minister: God is Great
Ji: *Nyasaye Duong'* People: God is Great
Jaduong: *Duong' ni Duong'* Minister: Your Greatness is great
Ji: *Duong' ni Duong'* People: Your Greatness is great
Jaduong: *Duong' ni Duong'* Minister: Your Greatness is great
Ji: *Duong' ni Duong'* People: Your Greatness is great
Jaduong: *Duong' ni Duong'* Minister: Your Greatness is great
Ji: *Duong' ni Duong'* People: Your Greatness is great

These refrains are repeated antiphonally three times.

5.4.2 Jehovah the Universal God

Owalo (2014) says the NC worships God who is the creator of the universe, the God who has control over history. He is the same God with whom the important religious leaders in world history are connected. He is the God of Jesus, Moses, Elijah, Mohammed, the Jews, the Arabs and Luos.

1. *Jehova Nyasachwa*
Jehova Nyasaye mar yie
Jehova Nyasach Polo gi piny
Jehova madwaro chuny ji
Jehova Nyasaye madieri makende

Jehova maonge gomin, kata wuon, kata jachwechne, kata min mare.

Jehovah our God
Jehovah the God of faith
Jehovah the God of Heaven and Earth
Jehovah God who seeks the hearts of people
Jehovah the only true God
Jehovah who does not have a brother, or a father, or a creator or a mother

*2. Jehova majamirima kuom lamo chwech
Jehova ma jaket ji ericho kendo jagol ji ericho
Jehova jawasik jomalamo chwech
Jehova wuon ngima mochwere kendo wuon mach mochwere
Jehova ma Janyiego kendo Ong'won
Jehova wasayi kendi, magi duto wasayi kuom duong mar Nyasachwa owuon
mochwere, Amina.*

Jehovah who is angered by the worship of creation (idols)
Jehovah who causes people to sin and who saves people from sin
Jehovah the enemy of those who worship creation
Jehovah of the eternal life and of the eternal fire
Jehovah the jealousy and of steadfast love
Jehovah we worship you alone, we pray this through the everlasting Glory of our
God

*3. Jehova Nyasach Yesu, Kendo Nyasach Musa, Kendo Nyasach Elija, Kendo
Nyasach Muhamadi, Kendo Nyasach Mikael, Kendo Nyasach Jibraeli, Kendo
Nyasach Rafaeli, Jehova Nyasach Mayahudi, Kendo Nyasach Warabu, Kendo
Nyasach Luo
Jehova Nyasach Nyiseche mapinje lamo
Kendo Jakony mar jokony, Jarieko mar jorieko, Kendo Ruoth mar ruodhi,
Jehova maonge ruodhe
Jehova maler, kendo ong'won
Magi duto wasayo nikech duong' mar Wuon Yesu Kristo. Amina*

Jehovah the God of Jesus, and the God of Moses, and the God of Elijah, and the God
of Mohammed, the God of Michael, the God of Gabriel, the God of Raphael
Jehovah the God of Jews, the God of Arabs, and the God of the Luo
Jehovah the God of gods, the one whom nations worship
The Helper of the helpers, the wisdom of the wise and the King of kings
Jehovah without a Lord
Jehovah who is Holy, and generous
We ask all these in the glory of the Father of Jesus Christ. Amen.

5.5. Keno- The Baptism/Circumcision Service for Male Infants

According to Bishop Tobias Nyarath (Nyarath, 2014) Baptism and Circumcision are the human responses to God's invitation. Baptism in the NC is significant in that it lays the foundation on which the new believer is introduced to and made aware of the tenets that

define the belief system of the church. Nyarath (2014) observes that the NC practices both infant and adult baptism. For infant baptism the role of God parents and parents in making and taking vows on behalf of the infant is significant.

According to Nyarath (2014) Baptism and Circumcision service for infants is an at home service:

*Singo koda batiso nyithindo mapodi tindogi notim odichieng achiel ei od wahiago.
Chokruok nobedie kibatisogi.*

Vows and baptism for infants (whose parents are regarded as full members of the NC) will be done in the parents' home before a congregation.

The reason for this he says is that the infant and the mother have to remain in seclusion for thirty three days and sixty six days respectively for male and female infants from the day of baptism. The guiding rule on baptism of infants in the Nomiya liturgy is as follows:

*Nyathi mawuoyi notieki ndalo abiryo to chieng' mar aboro nobatise
Nyathi ma nyako notiek ndalo apar gi adek to chieng' mar apar gi angwen nobatise*

The male infant will finish seven days and on the eighth day he will be baptized and the female infant will finish thirteen days and on the fourteenth day she will be baptized.

Nyarath (2014) says that the circumcision service for male infants takes place on the eighth day immediately after the baptism and is led by the *Shariff*. Baptism for infants whose parents are not full members of the NC (man is not circumcised and the woman has not been admitted as a member of NC) will be done in the church on a Sunday after the mother of the infant is accepted as ritually clean.

5.5.1 Call to worship

Baptism according to Nyarath (2014) begins with a call to worship service followed by making of vows, confessions and the baptism. Worship first establishes the greatness of God and the fact that our sins estrange us from God. The opening hymn is in most cases:

Ruodhwa Jehovah wadwaro ikonywa mondo igol richowa (Our Lord Jehovah we pray that you remove our sins). This is normally followed by a prayer acknowledging human frailty before a great God: *Lamo mar kwayo weyo richo* The prayer for forgiveness of one's sins.

Akwayo wech richo kuom Nyasaye man malo, mangima, mantie, manyaka nene, manyaka chieng' ayie kuome, alokora kuome, ayie hulo richona duto. Amina.

I pray for forgiveness of my sins from God Almighty, the living God, the all present God, the eternal God, I believe in Him, I turn to Him and I am ready to confess all my sins. Amen. The congregation acknowledges God as almighty, eternal and to whom the sinful human beings approach seek for forgiveness.

This is followed by the Lord's and the prayers invoking God's greatness:

Your Greatness is Great

Jaduong: *Duong' ni Duong' Your Greatness is great*

Ji: *Duong' ni Duong' Your Greatness is great*

Jaduong: *Duong' ni Duong' Your Greatness is great*

Ji: *Duong' ni Duong' Your Greatness is great*

Jaduong: *Duong' ni Duong' Your Greatness is great*

Ji: *Duong' ni Duong' Your Greatness is great*

Gloria: Glory to God the Father who spreads out.

*Duong odogne Nyasaye Wuonwa Nyakalaga Glory to God the Father who spreads out
Duong odogne Nyasaye Wuonwa Nyakalaga Glory to God the Father who spreads out
Duong odogne Nyasaye Wuonwa Nyakalaga Glory to God the Father who spreads out
Mana ka manokuongo gi ndalogi odokne As it was in the beginning so is now
Mana kamano manyaka chieng...Amina And forever shall be... Amen*

This is an affirmation of the centrality of the concept of 'one God only' in the worship of the NC and in her chief doctrine. God's empire is not only vast but is from eternity to eternity.

5.5.2 The Making of Vows and the Creed

The vows made here are a summary of the central teaching of the NC. They are word for word with those teachings that were made by the Rev. Willis and his team at Maseno (see *Uganda notes R 205 G3 A7/08*). This is an affirmation of Prophet Owalo's presence and participation in the services at CMS Maseno.

Jaduong: *Iyie puonjori wach Nyasaye kendo tiyone?*

Minister: Do you agree to be taught the Words of God and to serve Him?

Duoko/ Response: *Ee Ayie / I do.*

Jaduong: *Iyie Lamo Nyasaye pile kata in kendi kata in kod jomoko?*

Minister Do you agree to pray to God daily either alone or with others?

Duoko/ Response: *Ee Ayie/ I do.*

Jaduong: *Iyie weyo weche duto mak odhi kare gi wach Nyasaye, katimo liswa, twak maricho, kata yanyruok, kata miriasia?*

Minister: Will you abandon all customs contrary to God's Word, fornication, evil speaking, offering of heathen sacrifices, quarrelling, stealing and lying?

Duoko/ Response: *Ee Ayie/ I do.*

Jaduong: *Iyie kelo gigi kaka inyalo mondo ilandgo wach Nyasaye?*

Minister: Do you agree to bring your wealth as far as you are able toward the spread of the word of God?

Duoko/ Response: *Ee Ayie/ I do.*

Jaduong: *Iyie konyo jomodhier kata mond liete kata nyithind kiye kaka inyalo?*

Minister: Do you agree to help the poor, the widows and the orphans according to your ability?

Duoko/ Response: *Ee Ayie/ I do.*

Jaduong: *Iyie puonjo ji wach Nyasaye kendo nyiso joodu wach Nyasaye?*

Minister: Do you agree to teach the people in your household words of God?

Duoko/ Response: *Ee Ayie/ I do.*

Jaduong: *Iyie kuom Dini mar Nomiya mabiro miyi ngima manyaka chieng?*

Minister: Do you believe in the Nomiya Church that will give you life-everlasting?

Duoko/ Response: *Ee Ayie/ I do.*

Jaduong: *Nyasaye gin adi?*

Minister: How many gods are there?

Duoko/ Response: *Nyasaye en achiel kende oonge kata owadgi, kata wuon mare, kata min mare, kata jachwechne. To en kende e Ruoth achiel moloyo nyiseche duto, mantie, manyaka nene, manyaka chieng'. Ayie saye, here, pake, gene, tiyone ndalo duto. Amina.*

God is one, without a father or a mother or even a creator, but he alone is Lord over all the gods, ever present and eternal. I pledge to worship him love him and serve him all the days of my life Amen. (*Kitap Lamo 52*)

In these vows the NC tactfully avoids the question "Will you remain with one wife only all the days of your life? Instead the NC introduces three additional questions: one on the care of the poor, widows and orphans, two on the belief in the Nomiya Church that leads to eternal life and three on monotheism. This pushes forward the NC teaching on polygamy and Levirate marriage, Unitarianism and the belief and practice of the Nomiya Church that leads one to eternal life. The NC teaches unwavering loyalty to the one and only God; the only one worthy of praise, honor, love and service.

5.5.3 The Creed/Confession and Exhortation

The creed that summarizes the essential belief of this church is recited standing and only by those who are full members of the church. After the creed the congregation goes before their God confessing their unworthiness.

Wuonwa manyalo duto kendo mang'uon ngang! Wabayoy waweyo wang'yori karombe morwenyo, watimo pile gik ma chunywa paro kendo gombo...kendo watimo gik maok owinjore timo, kendo chunywa kethore chutho, to Ruodhwa ikechwa wan

jomodhier kuom richogi. Duok gi ne isingo ne ji duto ni Yesu Ruodhwa...Ji mondo opak nyingi maler Amina (Kitap Lamo 53).

In the confession the congregation accepts God's sovereignty and acknowledges their human frailty in actions akin to having "gone astray like lost sheep, doing wrong and neglecting to do right." The confession ends imploring God to forgive and restore the penitent as was promised to all human beings through Jesus Christ. After the confession all people rise and join in the Hymn: *Nitie dala ber...* Then the leader says an extemporaneous prayer thanking God for his care and protection over the child. The exhortation brings the understanding and the reason for baptism.

Johera nikech ji duto nomak ichgi monyuolgi kuom richo , kendo Jaote Yesu Kristo owachoni onge ng'ato manyalo donjo epiny Ruodh Polo mak mana onyuole diriyo, kendo manyien gi Pi kendo gi Chuny Maler.Asayou mondo ukwa Nyasaye Wuoro mondo omi nyathini(kata nyithindogi) gino kuom kechne maduong' maok ginyal yudo kuom nyuolgi. Mondo obatisgi gi Pi Maler mar Nyasaye Wuoro kendo otingi joge mangima. (Kitap Lamo, 54).

My dear friends, because all human beings were conceived in sin, and the apostle Jesus Christ says that nobody can enter the kingdom of God unless he/she is born again; and born anew of water and the Spirit. I beseech you to pray to God the Father to give this child (children) through his grace that which they cannot receive in their birth. So that they are baptized in the Holy water of God and become his holy people.

From this exhortation we realize that sin alienates human beings from God but in baptism they are reconciled to God and are then raised to a special status as children of God: 'but to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God (Jn. 1:12). Scripture readings from John 3:1-17, Mark 1:1-16 and Mark 10:13-16 are then read.

5.5.4 Commitment and Pledges of Parents and God Parents

The God parents and parents have an important and distinctive duty in infant baptism, that of nurturing the children in a Godly way until they come of age and are able to understand the content of faith and make their own commitments.

Johera Usekelo nyithindogi ka mondo obatisgi, usekwayo Nyasaye Wuonwa mondo oyie ruakogi, ogol richogi, opuodhgi gi Chuny Maler, kendo omigi Piny Ruodh polo, gi ngima mochwere. To usewinjo kaka Ruodhwa Yesu Kristo nosingore e Injili ni Nyasaye nomiwa gigo duto ma wakwayo; to singruokno mubiro singore kare, nyathini owuon nomak kendo notim adier chutho. To ka Kristo nosingore kama, nyithindogi giwégi onego gisingore adier, kuom un josingregi, nyaka gichopi kar

hikni mondo gitim giwegi, mondo gidagi satani gi tichne duto, giyie ndalo duto Wach Maler mar Nyasaye, kendo gimak chutho, chikne (Kitap Lamo 55).

The pledges are made on the basis that God parents and parents have faith that the process of baptism enables the children to be welcomed by God, forgiven their sins, sanctified by the Holy Spirit and allows them access into eternal life. The commitments are also made on behalf of the child because Jesus Christ himself pledged that God will grant all that his people request of him. This then is the certainty on which the pledges made by the parents and Godparents on behalf of the children stand and will surely be fulfilled. The commitments are made on behalf of the children until they come of age when they can make the same pledges on their own. The larger picture is that the pledge touches on three major aspects; The first is to renounce Satan, all his works and all evil powers of this world; the Second is to hold fast on to the Holy Words of God and the third is to keep obediently God's Holy will and commandments. This understanding tallies with that in other Christian denominations.

The God parents and the parents on behalf of the Child make their commitments and pledges as follows:

Emomiyo apenjou wach mag Batiso I therefore ask you on baptism.

Penjo: *In kuom nying nyathini, iwacho kaidagi Jachien gi timne, gi wechene duto?*

Question: On behalf of this child do you renounce Satan all his works and all the evil powers of this world?

Duoko/Response: *Adagi* / I renounce them all.

Penjo: *Iwacho kaidagi wechene duto kamor mag piny mag oyuma?*

Question: Do you renounce the desires of your sinful nature? Duoko/ Response: *Ee Adagi*/ I renounce them all

Penjo: *Iyie Kuom Nyasaye nyaka itho?*

Duoko/ Response: *Ayie*/ I do

Penjo: *Iyie kuom Nyasaye Wuoro manyalo Duto, manochweyo Polo kod Piny gi gik moko duto mineno koda maok nen?*

Question: Do you believe in God the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth and all that is seen and unseen?

Duoko/ Response: *Ayie* / I do.

Penjo: *Kendo kuom Jaote ma Yesu Kristo?*

Question: Do you believe in the apostle Jesus Christ?

Duoko/ Response: *Ayie* / I do.

Penjo: *Iyie kuom dini mar Nomiya mabiro miyi ngima ma nyaka chieng'?*

Duoko/ Response: *Ayie* / I do.

Penjo: *Nyasaye gin adi?*

Question: How many gods are there?

Duoko/Response: *Nyasaye en achiel kende oonge kata owadgi, kata wuon mare, kata min mare, kata jachwechne, to en kende e Ruoth achiel molooyo nyiseche duto mantie, manyaka nene, manyaka chieng' ayie saye, here, gene, tiyone ndalona duto, Amina/* God is one only and He has no brother, or father, or mother, or creator. He is the only Lord above all gods. He is God eternal and I praise him, love him, have hope in him and I accept to serve him always.

Penjo: *Idwaro abatisi kuom yieni?*

Question: Do you want to be baptized in this faith?

Duoko/Response: *Ee Adwaro* Yes, I do (*Kitap Lamo 55-56*).

5.5.5 Baptism

After this the priest shall do baptism. The infant is held by the mother in such a manner that the child is actually facing the priest with the child's head on the bosom of the mother. The God-parents hold the basin of water and are ready to pronounce the names by which the child henceforth will be known when the priests demands of it. He will take water in his palm and pour it on the head of the infant while asking:

Minister: Name this child

Godparents: NN (Child's names)

Minister: *NN Abatisi e nying Wuoro manyalo duto manochueyo polo kod piny gi gik moko duto maneno kod maok nen- Amina*

NN I baptize you in the name of God the Almighty who created the Heavens and the Earth and all that is seen and unseen, Amen

The minister will then pour water on the chest (position of the heart) *dho chuny nyathi*, and on the hands and feet of the child (*lwetene kendo tiendene*). The minister will then hold gently the head of the child with his left and mark the infants head with sign of the cross saying:

Waketo ne kido mar musalaba manyiso wa ka oyie kuom Jaote ma Yesu Kristo mane ogur e musalaba kendo kanolu bang Jehova Nyasaye Manyalo Duto, ndalo duto ma en go e pinyka kendo ka okedo ka Jagero nyaka notho. Amina (Kitap Lamo 56-57).

We mark you with the sign of the cross, that signifies to us that the (child) believes in the apostle Jesus Christ who was crucified on the cross and (the child) will turn to Jehovah God, all her/his days here on earth and again fight bravely until his/her death.

5.5.6 Forgiveness

The minister then calls on the congregation for extemporaneous prayers then the prayer for the forgiveness of sins (*Lamo mar kwayo weche richo*) is said:

Akwayo wech richo kuom Nyasaye man malo, mangima, mantie, manyaka nene, manyaka chieng' ayie kuome, alokora kuome, ayie hulo richona duto Amina.
I pray for forgiveness of my sins from God Almighty, the living God, the all present God, the eternal God, I believe in Him, I turn to Him and I confess all my sins.
Amen. (*Kitap Lamo 52*).

5.5.7 Gloria

The minister leads the congregation to recite the Gloria

*Duong Odogi ni Nyasaye Wuonwa Nyakalaga,
Duong Odogi ni Nyasaye Wuonwa Nyakalaga,
Duong Odogi ni Nyasaye Wuonwa Nyakalaga,
Mana kamane okuongo gi ndalogi odoki mana kamano manyaka chieng. Amina.*
(*Kitap Lamo 53*).
Glory to God the Father, the one who spreads out x3,
as it was in the beginning so is now and ever shall be.

5.6. Keno-The Baptism Service for Female Infants

The above outlined process of Holy baptism will be the same for a female infant but will be performed on the fourteenth day after birth. The NC liturgy is specific about this date:

Nyathi manyako notieki ndalo apar gi adek (13) to chieng mar apar gi angwen (14) nobatise. (Kitap Lamo 51, Kitap Ligangla 59)

Baptism will be in the context of a service in the home of the parents before a congregation on the fourteenth day after birth.

5.7. The Service of Circumcision

For male infants, the eighth day is significant as baptism and circumcision are performed one after the other. The participants in the circumcision service are Parents and God parents, Infant, Priest, Shariff (circumciser) and the congregation in attendance. The setting is the parents' home and the leadership is the priest in charge and the sheriff who are charged with

executing the two part service of baptism and circumcision. The leader of the circumcision service will be one with the express authority of overseeing and organizing the circumcision ceremony (in this case the *sharif*). The service of circumcision begins with the hymn: *Ruodhwa Jehova wadwari ikonywa*. Our Lord Jehovah we need your help. Thereafter the congregation sits for readings relevant and related to circumcision (*Kitap Lamo* 58).

5.7.1 Readings

One such reading is drawn from the NC Scriptures: Nomiya 2:1

Ma bende ewach manowach e Polo mar Adek ka Jehove wacho gi mirima niya “An mane an kenda nyaka nene, mane aonge gi moro koda, kata mana nyima. To koro chwech oweya gi lamo mana chwech wadgi. To in koro aori mondo iting’ malo Ligangla mabith, ng’a mowinjo, moyie mako omaki; to ng’ama odagi obed abeda.

These are the words spoken in third heaven when Jehovah said in anger: I alone am from before. I have none besides me, or even before me. But now creation has forsaken me and is worshipping fellow creatures. But as for you I am now sending you to carry high the sharp sword; he who hears and accepts let him hold fast but whoever refuses let him be. The following scripture portions related to circumcision are then read: Gen. 17:9-14, Gen. 17:21-30, Gen. 21, Acts 15 and Acts 11. Thereafter the minister says a prayer (*Kitap Ligangla* 57-58).

5.7.2 The Circumcision

Then the congregation joins in the hymn *Singruok mar Nyasaye noketo* (The promises God made) and thereafter the congregation prays together. The sheriff prays and then performs the circumcision after which the congregation joins together in the following songs:

Biuru Wawerne uru (Come Let us sing to him)
Got Bor ngang’ ngang’ (The hill is far-off)
Duong odog ni wuoro (Glory to God the Father)

The minister prays and consequently the sharif or the minister gives instruction to the parents or to the initiate if he is a mature person (*Jajot*). A male infant will remain in seclusion for 33 days. A mature initiate (*jajot*) is not compelled to remain in seclusion for 33 days but may go through the *yepo* ceremony at any time he is considered healed and whole again.

The following concluding prayers may be said:

Akwayo wech e richo (Seeking forgiveness)
Wuonwa manie polo (The Lords Prayer)
Duong Odog ni Wuoro (Glory to God the Father) (*Kitap Ligangla* 58).

The service of baptism and circumcision in the NC creates in the membership of the church the category now identified as “Communicant Member of the Church. “A *Communicant Member of the Church* according to the NC constitution “is understood as the male person who has been duly baptized, circumcised and confirmed or the woman person who has been duly baptized and confirmed” (Revised Constitution, 1973).

5.8. Golo, Yepo-The Service of Cleansing for the Mother on the 33/66 day

Purification of the mother after childbirth warrants a special service thirty three days after the baptism of a male infant and sixty six days after the baptism of a female infant. During this service the climax is the presentation of the child in the church. The liturgy rule states that:

Yepo mar nyathi mawuowi nobedie bang ka nyathi osetieko ndalo piero adek ga dek nyaka a chieng batisone, to nyathi manyako to noyaw kosetieko ndalo piero auchiel ga auchiel koa chieng batisone.

The service of admission (*yepo*) of a male infant will be done after the infant has completed thirty three days from the day of baptism, while that a female infant will be done after the infant has completed sixty six days from the date of baptism (*Kitap Lamo* 58).

The rule is clear that the woman and her offspring will remain in seclusion for the period indicated unless under very serious and unavoidable circumstance, for example the sickness of the child that calls for attending the hospital. In this case the church needs to be informed so that a prayer is offered before the family attends to the pressing health need. During the period of seclusion the woman is expected not to touch anything set apart as holy including the Bible and books connected with worship neither is she allowed to touch clerical vestments or even attend the church service. She is also not allowed to meet or greet people or even attend to matters of funeral even of a close relative.

After the 33rd day or 66th day the woman will be visited by the church teacher and a woman assigned to take care of her (*Jadong*). This visit entails preparing the woman and her child to enter back into the community. The woman and her child will be shaved clean on the eve of the service of purification, this being the very first time that the woman and the child are shaved since the time of birth. The church teacher has a duty also to ensure that elements required for the purification service on the following day are ready. These elements for communion include *gwend misango* (A chicken as burnt offering) and *chapat* (flat unleavened bread). (*Kitap Ligangla* 60).

5.8.1 The Purification Service

The service begins in the home where the mother and the child have been confined. The first thing in the morning of the purification ceremony is to ensure that the victims are prepared ready for the ceremony. According to the Book of Leviticus 12:6-7:

When the days of her purification are completed whether for a son or a daughter, she shall bring to the priest at the entrance of the tent of meeting a lamb in its first year for burnt offering or a pigeon or a turtle dove for sin offering. He shall offer it before the Lord, and make atonement on her behalf, and then she shall be clean from her flow of blood. This is the law for her who bears a child male or female (Lev. 12: 6-7).

The birds will be prepared as the rule requires together with the unleavened bread (*chapat*) and a drink offering. The space where the purification is to be carried out is set in order and the selected few who are to attend the ceremony are to be invited. The men invited are those who by law are accepted (Gen 17: 14- “Any uncircumcised male... shall be cut off from his people”) and the women have to be those who have in the past been isolated after child birth. All those attending have to be dressed properly, that is in the white robes and dresses.

The church teacher, lay reader and the woman who performed the shaving ceremony and a woman leader will enter the room where the woman and her child have been isolated and the lay-reader will say a prayer. Then he will lead out the mother and her child and the rest in a procession to the space where the purification ceremony is to take place (*Kitap Ligangla* 60).

5.8.2 Purification Meal

The priest assigned the duty of purification (*Simeon-Ka-Lawi*) and the members of the congregation who have purified themselves will stand at the entrance of the room. *SimeonKa-Lawi* is the priest who takes the role of Simeon in Luke Chapter 2 when he received the infant Jesus and his parents in the Temple during the service of purification. This official must be informed of his role several days before the ceremony (*sawo*) so that he is fully prepared spiritually and physically. It is important that he abstains from sexual intercourse several days before this date and be present on the eve of this important ceremony in the observance of the the Night Vigil (*Mony*). The congregation will join in the Hymn:

Misango mar Nyasaye (The sacrifice of God):
Misango mar Nyasaye, The sacrifice of God
En Chuny moikore ni Ruoth Is a heart prepared for the Lord
Ka watimo pile jo-moyie As we who believe do his will
To wanabed gi Ruodh polo We will be with the Lord of heaven

*Wadwaro sayo Rudhwa, We want to beseech our Lord
Ni mondo omiwa mor maber To provide us with joy
Gi chiembe ma omiyowa And the foods he provides to us
Wacham kwaparo Jehova May we eat as we remember Jehovah*

*Wawinjo wach Jehova Ruoth; We listen to Jehovah's words
To ji madwaro ngimane But those who seek after His Life
Nomiu ka ulamo En He will give to you who seek Him in prayer
To En e Wuonwa ma kende He is our only Father
(Kitap Ligangla 60; Kitap Lamo 59)*

The priest will then lead the grace over the offering presented as follows:

Jaduong: *Lamo mar Chako Chiemo*
Ji: *Gi nying Nyasaye Wuonwa Manyalo duto. Amina*

Minister: Prayer to begin eating
People: In the name of God the Father Almighty. Amen (*Kitap Ligangla 60*).

The people shall then seat and partake of the sacrificial meal offered. The meal is eaten in silence with the woman to be purified and her husband partaking of the offering from the priests hand (*Simeon-Ka-Lawi*). After the meal the priest (*Simeon-Ka-Lawi*) leads the congregation in thanksgiving for the meal that has just been shared:

Jaduong: *Tieko Chiemo*
Ji: *Erokamano Nyasaye Wuonwa Manyalo duto. Amina*
Minister: Completing eating
People: Thank you God our Father Almighty (*Kitap Ligangla 60*).

Serious talks on matters of service to God are shared. Thereafter people may share in a cup of tea. All these are carried in the context of a holy convocation and the participants are to have no shoes. After all these the woman and her child are returned to their room of seclusion until the time to begin the church service (*Kitap Ligangla 60 a*).

5.8.3 Holy Procession

A holy procession will go to the room of isolation in order to get the woman and her child out to the main service. Here, the Hymn *Ruodhwa Jehova wadwari ikonywa mondo igolwa richowa* is sang after this hymn the sharif or any other appointed priest will pray. The rest of the congregation remains in the church. The procession will have women lining on one side with men on the other. The procession moves after a brief prayer by the leading priest *Simeon-Ka -Lawi*. On the lead of the procession will be a church teacher with a flag followed by *Simeon Ka Lawi*, the *Sharif* and other priests followed by the mother and father

of the child. The procession will sing the Hymn *Ruoth wuon polo kodi piny, En emane ochweyo nam* (The Lord of heaven and earth, He is also the creator of the lake). The Congregation already seated in the church will join the singing as the procession approaches (*Kitap Ligangla* 60 a; *Kitap Lamo* 59).

The service that crowns the purification and readmission of the woman to the community is elaborate. The following summary brings out the essence of this service:

Processional hymn *Ruoth wuon polo kodi piny, En emane ochweyo nam* (The Lord of heaven and earth, He is also the creator of the lake).

Prayers: The congregation kneeling down and facing Kiblah the priest prays.

Hymn: *Nyasaye Maduong, Nyasaye Maduong/ Jakwath nokwayo rombege piero ochiko go ochiko* (Great God, Great God or The shepherd took care of his ninety nine sheep).

Prayers: The congregation led by the priests present will kneel in prayer all facing Kiblah.

Hymn: *Nyakalaga En Nyasaye, En Modwaro jitinde/ Winjuru, winjuru wach Jehova kende*

(He who spreads out is God, He seeks his people today or Listen, Listen to Jehovah's words alone). After the prayers the congregation rises to sing.

Scriptural exhortations: Scriptural portions will be read reminding the congregation of the proper relationship with God. The congregation then joins in the confession of sins; seeking forgiveness; reciting the Lord's Prayer; Glory to God who flows everywhere and Gloria. A series of readings depending on whether the initiate is a mature person or an infant male or female follows as below:

Readings for the male infant: Nomiya Sula 2; Luke 2:22-43; Gen. 17:9-15; Lev 12:18; Ex. 4:24-27; Num. 6:22.

Readings for the female infant: Nomiya Sula 2; Lk. 2:22-43; Lev. 12:1; Num. 6:22

Readings for a mature initiate: Nomiya Sula 2; Lk. 2:22-43; Gen. 17:1-15; Jos. 5:210; Ex. 4:24-27; Num. 6:22; Rom. 15:8; Acts 11 and 15.

Hymn: After the readings the hymn *Nyasaye nohero Ji duto, Ji duto* (God loved everybody, Loved everybody) will be sang. The priest then takes the infant and holds it on his right arm.

Prayer: A few people will be requested to say extemporaneous prayers crowned by a prayer from the priest. If this service is on a Sunday then the normal Sunday service will follow. (*Kitap Ligangla* 60 a-b; *Kitap Lamo* 59-61).

At the end of the service the congregation will be called first to give their offertory and thereafter the Priest (*Simeon-Ka-Lawi*) will present the mother and the child to the congregation. The priest will lay emphasis on the importance of keeping the period of seclusion un-defiled. A child whose health status indicates that the parents had fully adhered to the seclusion prescription will be highly honored and praised before the congregation. Thereafter the congregation led by the priest will bring their gifts to the child.

The service of purification is special to the NC as is indicated in the big numbers of adherents in attendance, their status in the church and in the public, the long distances of their travels and even their origins from other denominational backgrounds. One such service was attended by bishops from far and wide and one other was attended by an assistant archbishop, the area Member of Parliament and several Members of the County Assemblies as well as clergy from other denominations. The later function was attended by well over 300 guests. The purification service on the thirty third day or sixty sixth day after baptism for male and female infants, respectively, differs from the Jewish equivalent that entails the giving of gifts on the days in which infants of both sexes receive their Jewish names.

5.9 Discussion of the theology of the Double Rite of Passage

Theology according to Mugambi (1989) may be understood as a systematic discourse about God that concerns itself with the origins, purpose and destiny of being. Theology unlike philosophy Mugambi (1989) argues, presupposes revelation and belief in absolute truth as the basis of all explanations whereas philosophy presupposes reason as the basis of understanding mysteries and paradoxes.

The theology and the worship practice of the NC is grounded in the six chapters of the NC scriptures. The NC Scriptures are so packed with the theological insights that in essence define and describe the theological pillars that hold the NC together.

5.9.1 Access to God is Direct

The fact that Prophet Owalo is regarded as a prophet of God who has a direct access to God through the long rope and to God's benefits through the long ladder is clear indicators that access through other media or means is hereby precluded. The understanding of the Roman Catholic Church that there are other medium through which adherents prayers could reach God is hereby denied through this direct connection to God.

The Roman Catholic doctrine of Mary is a classic example of the gradual development of Mariology. Over the years several strands of the role of Mary in the church have developed. Her early role (in Lk. 1:43) was as *theotokos* (one who gave birth to God). She was pronounced before conception as a woman who had found favor with God (Lk. 1:28). Mary as a human being with the stain of the original sin could not have given birth to one who was sinless and for this reason she is seen as immaculate (without the stain of original sin). Consequently Mary is seen as a reservoir of grace who dispenses the same to all those who seek for it, and also as a *mediatrix*, one through whom all the peoples intercessions and prayers are remitted to God. The argument continues that because she was assumed bodily to heaven she is able to save thus *Co-Redemptrix*. The role of Mary as a *mediatrix* according to Ferguson (1996) is well explained:

She was increasingly venerated with worship above that offered to other saints but below that offered to God. In the middle ages the practice grew of praying to saints. Mary became especially popular. There was a tendency to see Jesus Christ as stern and unapproachable and so the faithful were directed to Mary as a sympathetic figure who could mediate between the believer and Christ. This view of Mary as mediatrix was forcefully stated in 1891 by Pope Leo XIII in an encyclical: 'Nothing is bestowed on us except through Mary, as God himself wills. Therefore as no one can draw near to the supreme Father except through the Son, so also one can scarcely draw near to the Son except through his mother' (Ferguson, 1996).

Mary is also regarded in the Roman Catholic theology as having been conceived without the stain of original sin (Immaculate Conception). Pope Pius in 1854 made this clear in the following declaration: "We declare, pronounce and define that the most blessed Virgin Mary, at the first instant of her conception was preserved immaculate from all stain of original sin, by singular grace and privilege of the omnipotent God, in virtue of the merits of Jesus Christ the savior of mankind, and that this doctrine was revealed by God and therefore must be believed firmly and constantly by all the faithful (Ferguson 1996).

Later the Roman Catholic Church advanced and developed the legend that Mary like Enoch and Elijah was assumed into heaven. Pope Pius XII in 1950 defined this as "...The majestic mother of God... finally achieved, as the supreme crown of her privileges, that she should be preserved immune from the corruption of the tomb, and like her Son before her, having conquered death should be carried up, in body and soul, to the celestial glory of heaven....(Ferguson 1996).

There is a new endeavor to understand the role of Mary, the mother of Jesus in salvation. Roman Catholic scholars argue that Mary was united with Christ in suffering as he died on the cross. Mary is said to have given life to the world in giving birth to the Savior and thereby reversing the effects of death brought upon the earth by Eve. For this reason discussion continues over whether Mary is to be regarded as a figure of redemption in a manner similar to Jesus Christ (*Co-redemptrix*) (McGrath, 2001).

According to McGrath (2001) some of the above theological conceptions could have arisen out of translation errors that were made in the Vulgate and which formed the basis of the church's practices and beliefs: "According to the Vulgate, the angel Gabriel greeted Mary as 'the one who is full of grace' (*gratia plena*) thus suggesting an image of a reservoir full of grace, which could be drawn upon at the time of need...Mary was one who had found God's favor, not necessarily one who could bestow it upon others."

Owalo's instruction is to separate himself from teachings that deviate from God's standard. Like the story of Owalo's ladder the emphases remains that all other ways are mere human attempts to access God. Owalo should teach God's word only; the pure unadulterated word of God. The NC way is the way and this is affirmed in the clause that is added to the creed recited in the Nomiya Church: *Kendo ayie... kendo kuom Nomiya mabiro miya ngima* (And I believe... also on Nomiya through which I will receive eternal life). Being a member of the NC and being bound by all that Prophet Johana received from God opens the way to eternal life. Olali, (2015) on the same statement says: "in reciting this statement we simply recite Matthew 10:41 –whoever welcomes God's messenger because he is God's messenger will share his reward" Simply he seems to suggest that by welcoming Owalo and his message the adherents will receive the very reward that he received.

5.9.2 Preach the Pure Word of God. Do Not Be Quiet

Johana Owalo in Chapter V of the NC Scripture gets the express affirmation that he needs to preach the Gospel whether ‘in season or out of season’ (2Tim.4:2):

Yala ayala wach Nyasaye kende, nitech wachni ne Yesu oseyalo chon. Ondiki ei injili mar Mathayo sula apar Gaboro. (Kitap Lamo 95).

Preach only the word of God because Jesus preached the same. This word is written in the Gospel of Matthew chapter eighteen

Johana Owalo is to preach the pure word of God because Jesus himself had proclaimed the message without fear as recorded in the Gospel of Matthew chapter 18. One would ask: what is this special message in Matthew 18 that demands heavenly notice? Matthew 18 is a dialogue and an answer by Jesus to the disciple’s question of who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. The key teachings here are about the duties and roles of a Christian and a Christian community. The greatest in the kingdom should exhibit four qualities: One he should humble himself like a child; two, he should have a special place for the children; three, he should seek and reconcile with his brother in fellowship and four, he should be ready to forgive the brother from his heart of any wrong doing. These emphases spell out the identity and role of the church:

I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoever welcomes a little child in my name welcomes me...See that you do not look down on one of these little ones. For I tell you that their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father in heaven...If your brother sins against you go and show him his fault just between the two of you. If he listens to you have won your brother over. But if he will not listen take one or two others along...If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church...”I tell you (how many times shall I forgive my brother) not seven times, but seventy times seven times”... “This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart (Mat. 18:1-20).

Matt 18:1-6 teaches on humility; the badge of entry into the kingdom of God demands that one becomes like a child. Whoever becomes humble like a child will be considered as the greatest in the kingdom of God. He who welcomes a child in the name of Jesus actually welcomes Jesus himself. Anyone who puts a stumbling block before one of the young believers should have a millstone tied around his neck and drowned in the depth of the sea. Those whose actions cause the little believers to stumble will themselves suffer heavy consequences. Jesus also cautions that the little ones should not be despised because in

heaven their angels continually see the face of God the Father. He gives a parable of a shepherd with one hundred sheep who on realizing he has lost one leaves the ninety-nine to go searching for the lost one. In the same way, Jesus says that it is not the will of the father that one of the little ones should be lost (verses 10-14).

Speaking on offences by us to ourselves Jesus cautions believers not to put stumbling blocks before others. Jesus also asks them to introspect themselves and should they find anything within them that causes them to stumble then this should be uprooted; “If your hand or your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it away; it is better to enter life maimed or lame than to have two hands or two feet and to be thrown into the eternal fire. In the same vein Jesus puts great emphasis on forgiveness as a key pillar of the church. On those offences where others hurt us, Jesus says they need to be reprovved. If a member of the church recognizes the fault of another he should seek him out to iron out that fault. However, if they fail to agree then a church member should be invited to listen and if they too fail to bring a solution then the whole church should be invited.

If the offender fails to listen to the voice of the church then such a member should be regarded as a Gentile and a tax collector. The Church is empowered to bind or loose for whatever is bound on earth will be bound in heaven. God gives great honor to the Church and He is ready to take cognizance of and confirm the sentences that the church passes on her members offences. Jesus shows God’s willingness of to answer the prayers of the members of the Church: “Again, truly I tell you, if two of you agree on earth about anything you ask, it will be done for you by my Father. For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.” The Church is not only assured of God’s presence in its midst but of the efficacy of her joint prayers. The Church of Christ exists most visibly in the assemblies of believers thus the presence of the NC is for the glorification of God’s name. On forgiveness, Jesus seems to suggest that forgiving has no ceiling it should not be a mere seven times but seventy-seven times. God keeps account; we need not count the number of times we forgive.

The parable of the unforgiving servant (verses 23-35) scores the significance of forgiving from the bottom of our heart as is also emphasized in Jesus teaching on the Lord’s Prayer. Sedgwick (1999) says that the prayer for forgiveness is the call to recognition and relationship that will bless life beyond merit and judgement.

This is the pure message that Owalo should proclaim. The angel *Jibraeli* also tells Prophet Owalo that if any person were to ask where from he draws his authority to preach then he should boldly say that it is from him. This passage brings out the essence of the Church as a community of believers united in one baptism, whose hallmark is humility and forgiveness and whose co-duty is to seek and reconcile God's people to God. This core value in Christian life is what Sedgwick (1999) describes as: "What is distinctive about Christian life, however, is that forgiveness is not a matter of usefulness but goodness. For Christians the embrace of the other is an embrace beyond claim and counterclaim."

5.9.2.1. Consequences of not Preaching the Pure Word

According to *Kitap Lamo* 96: '*To papa odino yor Kristo emomiyo Nyasaye odino yor papa*' (*Kitap Lamo* 96). Prophet Owalo learns that the Pope has blocked the path of Christ through his gods, idols and Mass. Mass is not the acceptable sacrifice but a contrite heart that covers all is what God desires of his people with prayer. In the third heaven God actually removed the bread that Johana Owalo had partaken while a believer in the Roman Catholic Church.

The Latin mass was a thorny issue during Reformation. When Owalo in the twentieth century talks of the Pope being denied access to heaven because of corruption in the church one is reminded of the factors that led to the call for Reformation in the sixteenth century. The church lacked that moral authority as the salt and light of the world because the clergy who were to be the torch bearers were themselves engrossed in corrupt practices that included the following: Simony (the buying and selling of ecclesiastical positions), Plurality (the holding of several church positions by one individual) Absenteeism (habitual absence of clergy), Nepotism (favoritism shown in the appointment of relatives especially the illegitimate sons of clergy and other relatives), and many others) (Gonzalez, 1984).

The Reformation agenda sought to return the Church to the worship of Christ as the head of the Church and to the authority of scripture not that of the Pope. The authority of Scripture was above that of the Pope or the Church. The Pope had no power to forgive sins without prayer or even the power to release souls from purgatory by monetary payments. A man who truly repents does not need a letter of pardon from the pope. The foregoing clearly demonstrate that such a corrupt institution together with its leadership may not be the channel and instrument of God's grace to his people and this could be the reason Prophet Owalo learns that the pope is blocking the path to Christ.

5.9.3 Naziritism

The teaching of the NC about the period of purification of a woman after childbirth is connected to the *naziritism*. *Naziritism* could be understood as a lifelong status, that is divinely designated as was the case of Samson or it could also be described as a time constrained status undertaken by an individual through his/her own initiative (Levine, 1993). The latter, is the version that applies to the NC when it prescribes the forty or eighty day period of seclusion as a time dedicated to the Lord.

A *nazir* was a person who had pledged under terms of a vow (*neder*) to restrict his behavior in several areas so as to attain a greater measure of holiness in his/her life (Levine, 1993). A person would commit fully to these restrictions for a limited period. The *Nazirite* pledged to restrict himself/herself in three areas: abstain from any product of the vine; to avoid contact with the dead even of the closest relatives, and to allow his/her hair to grow loose (Num 6:18). In Num. 6:13-21 there is a clear prescription of the events that would mark the completion of the period of restriction. The *nazir* was required to go through an elaborate process of sacrificial regimen that included a burnt offering, a sin offering which were accompanied by libations and grain offering. The climax of it all was that the *nazir* was to shave his/her head and place the hair on fire. These steps tally with the three stages of rites of passage identified by Van Gennep: separation (Pre-liminal rites), liminality (Threshold rites) and incorporation (Postliminal rites). All the three stages delineated by Van Gennep are clear in the NC birth, circumcision/ baptism and purification rituals.

The baptism and circumcision service is so intertwined and interconnected with the period of seclusion for the mother and child that we can say that it is exclusively done in the context of isolation. At the centre of the period of isolation is the *Nazrite* vow in which the woman separates herself to the Lord; during the total period they will not take any strong or intoxicating drink, no razor will come on their heads they must allow the hair to grow long.

The NC adherents are very clear about the activities that surround the baptism and circumcision services for both the male and female infants. On the eighth day after birth in the morning the male infant is baptized first and then circumcised in a service that is held within the home of the parents. A priest and the *Shariff* are the key officiants. The godparents and parents and a congregation are of necessity present. After this service the mother and her child are to remain in seclusion for thirty three days. On the other hand the

baptism of the female infant is on the fourteenth day and thereafter the mother and her infant daughter remain in seclusion for sixty six days. The female infant does not undergo any other rite other than baptism. The respondents agree that this prescription is as it is stipulated in the Book of Leviticus 12:1-8. While other texts e.g. Num. 6; Gen. 17 and Lk. 2 are also used. In conjunction with the Leviticus text the text in Numbers 6 seems to form the foundation on which the complex subject in its entirety is to be understood.

The blood purification service of the woman after the birth as specified in Leviticus chapter 12 mentions two important prohibitions: that the woman is not to touch anything holy and that she must not come into the sanctuary until she is determined and pronounced clean. The other prohibition that is not clearly stipulated is abstinence. However, from other texts for example Lev. 15:24 “If any man lies with her (woman who has a discharge of blood that is regular), and her impurity falls on him, he shall be unclean seven days; and every bed on which he lies shall be unclean.” For this reason, the NC is emphatic in the requirement that during the total period of seclusion the woman and her husband will have separate sleeping arrangements.

The NC specifications bring in several other prohibitions over and above those stated here. The woman shall keep her hair long until on the eve of her purification when together with her child they will be shaved clean. The woman is not take wine or other intoxicants and neither should she break from her isolation to witness a funeral even that of a close relative. It is interesting to see how the purification rites of a woman after childbirth have been woven intricately with the rites of a *Nazir*. These stipulations have their root in the specifications (Num. 6:1-21) for one who seeks the face of God by avoiding contaminants and pollutants for the total period of separation to the Lord (*Nazirite vows*). Analysis of the *Nazirite* prescription below shows the seriousness the NC places on the period of isolation.

A Man or Woman (v2): The *nazirite* vows could be undertaken by a man or a woman who restricts his/her behavior under a vow in order to attain a measure of holiness. This measure of holiness is attained as one sets him /herself a part. The term *nazir* literally means one restricted. The *nazir* plans to restrict him/herself by taking a vow. The term *nazir* may be understood from the root *nazar* and *nadir*:

Nazar takes a negative nuance to mean restriction, abstinence, self-denial. *Nadar* takes a positive nuance to mean devotion, commitment, pledge. This root brings out the positive aspects inherent in the phenomenon of *naziritism* (Milgrom, 1991).

Wine and other intoxicant (v3): He must restrict himself from imbibing any intoxicant
In which grapes have been steeped and even dried grapes; these products of grapevine are forbidden to the *Nazirite* in any form.

For the entire period of his restriction (v4 and v5 and v6): Taking vows necessitated that the precise number of days denoting the period of *naziritism* should be specified. The entire period here is forty days and eighty days for a male and female infants and their mother, respectively.

Razor (v5): This is an instrument that is used to expose the head through shaving off the hair. No razor shall come upon the head until the period is completed.

Sacred (v5): *Nazirite* is *qados* holy for the duration of his vow. Keeping the hair long is an act of holiness. Allowing the hair of his head to grow loose (v5) connotes dishevelment or disarray.

The second restriction imposed on the *Nazirite* was avoidance of contact with the corpse. The degree of this restriction is more severe in the case of the *Nazirite* than it is with respect to ordinary priest (This were allowed to bury close consanguineous relative. Actually the restrictions were as severe as those imposed on the high priest (Lev 21:11) (Milgrom, 1991).

The body of a dead person (v6): A corpse, and in this case that of a close family member (identified here as that of the father, mother, brother and sister) may call for an immediate breaking of the restraint. Yet even in this situation the nazir was expected not to break his/her vows (Milgrom, 1991). In Lev 21:1-4 a list of other consanguineous relatives are added namely one's son and daughter.

Reserved for God (v7 and 8): Is an emphasis that one whose hair has been dedicated to God ought not to be defiled by contact with the dead. The hair on one's head dedicated to God should not be defiled. In case of an emergency for example a close relative who dies

suddenly may be in the same dwelling shared by the nazir, the nazir was compelled to break the vows and begin his term all over again, after a seven day period of purification. The nazir would be required to make a sacrifice on the eighth day (Milgrom, 1991).

Young pigeons (v10): These birds were regularly employed in sacrificial rites. The priest shall offer one of the birds as a sin offering and the other as a burnt offering in that order. According to Milgrom (1991) the order was very significant as it was important to first to reinstate the *Nazirite* and to expiate his abrogation of the term of restriction. Once this was done a burnt offering was made to test God's response. God's acceptance of the burnt offering indicated acceptance of the Nazirite's expiation.

In front of the Tabernacle (v13-17): Sacrifices were presented in front of the Tabernacle (at the entrance of the tent of meeting). When the period is completed the Nazir shall come before the priest with his/her sacrificial gift: one male lamb a year old without blemish as a burnt offering, one ewe lamb a year old without blemish as a sin offering, one ram without blemish as an offering of well-being and a basket of unleavened bread. The NC mainly for economic reasons advocates that the sacrificial gift be a chicken offered as a burnt offering. In case a family is able and given the guests invited then a ram may be offered. Here they go back to the prescription in Leviticus 12:8 : "If she cannot afford a sheep, she shall take two turtledoves or pigeons, one for burnt offering and the other for a sin offering, and the priest shall make atonement on her behalf, and she shall be clean."

Shave (v18): The Nazirite would then shave his hair on the day of their cleansing in front of the Tent of Meeting. Shaving is not part of the prescriptions in the Book of Leviticus 12 but it comes from the Book of Numbers 6. The hair so shaved is also offered as part of the sacrifice of well-being.

This severity leads us to conclude that *naziritism* called for a high degree of purity. This high degree of purity is demanded of the NC women after birth. They are considered as *qados* (set apart for God) for the period of their vow. This addendum gives the NC expectation of the women during the purification rite a special quality that distinguishes it from the ordinary prescription (Lev. 12: 1-8). For this reason, the priests who do the cleansing ceremony have repeatedly said that in case this vows are not strictly kept there

will be telltale signs on the child which are so obvious and are indications that the couple must have been unfaithful to the vows during this period.

5.9.4 The Priestly Benediction

The NC has integrated the priestly benediction in Numbers 6:24-26 into her service of reincorporation of those who were in seclusion. The height of the integration and welcome back to the main stream of the NC community activities and those of the village of the mother and child who has remained in seclusion for forty days or eighty days for a male infant or female infant respectively is the pronouncement of the great priestly benediction recited from the Book of Numbers (6: 24-26):

May Yahweh bless you and keep you
May Yahweh look favourably upon you and be gracious to you
May Yahweh lift up his countenance toward you and may he grant you well being

The three-fold repetition of the divine name Yahweh gives force to Yahweh's desire that His name be a blessing to his people Israel and by extension to all whom this benediction will be pronounced.

5.9.5 Discussion of the Double Rite of Passage

The double rite of passage is central to the NC as can be witnessed in a few rules and regulations of the Church. The NC as a religious entity developed a set of rules that defined her expectations and morals for her membership. These rules were presented to the District Commissioner in a letter dated 20th September 1944. Olali (72) in his book *My Faith my Religion: History and Basic Doctrine of the Nomiya Church* calls them the bedrock of Nomiya administrative discipline.

1. A candidate for baptism must be taught for a year before being admitted as a Christian on baptism.
2. A lay-reader must first possess the Nomiya qualification, that is baptized and circumcised and should have been trained for two years and obtained passes in religion and related subjects.
3. For one to be a priest or a Bishop in the Nomiya Church he must in the first place be circumcised.

The rules and regulation that govern and guide the practice of the double rite of passage in the NC can be viewed as products of two great pillars in the universal church: the Church

tradition and the Scriptures. The church traditions are evident in the manifestations of the Christological debates in the early Church that gave rise to the doctrine of the divinity of Christ and the doctrine of the Trinity. The corruptions of the Church of the Middle-Ages led the Church to call for Reformation and the Reformation doctrines. The Scriptures will be analyzed especially in their presentation of the covenant practices of baptism and circumcision and the attached practice of purification of mothers after birth. The double rite of passage is basically a manifestation of prescriptions emanating from the Jewish cultural milieu and the subsequent developments therefrom of the Christian culture. The double rite of passage is pegged on the sovereignty of God; God who invites human beings to him in a covenant relationship. The double rite of passage is all about relationships between the adherents and their God.

For the NC, God is only one and Jesus is not co-equal with God but his messenger. This notion of God led Prophet Owalo to reject the whole concept of the Trinity. The concept of God in the NC is understood as that center around which everything is defined and understood. God basically, is the source of everything, transcendent and immanent; he is without a beginning or an end and He was not created and He would not die. God is wisdom of the wise; strength of the strong and king of kings (NC *Lamo Mar Jehova*). In Owalo's unpublished work *The Father is Greater than I am* the whole spectrum of the NC faith and belief is delineated; it is said to be dependent upon the self-revelation of God who as Almighty God stands alone as a separate, external and all powerful being:

Nomiya Church demands worship of God alone who is adored as all powerful and eternal. The church professes belief in the existence of angels, prophets and apostles including Jesus who however, is not held as God. The church holds the Scripture as sacred and looks forward to the Day of Judgment and resurrection. It believes in Heaven and Hell (Owalo 48).

According to Owalo (48) this belief of the NC originates from the covenant day in 1907.

The main aim and objective of the Nomiya Church as a Christian church is to preach and teach the people, new converts and followers to know, believe and follow that on the first day of March in the year, one thousand nine hundred and seven (1907), God manifested Himself to Prophet John Owalo. On this day, God selected him as an Apostle and gave him the following messages to preach and teach the people on earth that:

1. God is ONE and He is Omnipresent (he is everywhere), Immutable (Unchangeable), Omnipotent (All Almighty Powerful), Omniscient (all knowing), invisible (incapable of being seen).
2. He is the creator of all things and one is the true God (1 Cor 8:5-6; Psalms 82:1).
3. The philosophy of Trinity and the worship of idols and images are all false and fallacious in the eyes of God (Exodus 2:3-6).
4. Jesus Christ was the Son of God sent to the earth to show people the kind of life God expects us to live from childhood until the end. He never in any occasion established Jesus as another God, but a **MESSENGER** and the **BELOVED SON** (Owalo 48).

The NC argument for God is scriptural but is further augmented by the Prophet Owalo's vision in which Jesus is clearly shown as God's messenger and not God, and the Spirit shown as emanating from God alone. God desires that all homage due to him from the community of worshippers to be shared with no other god. Jesus is indicated as the only mediator between God and man. Owalo (48) cites two scripture portions to strengthen the NC position:

For there is only one God, and there is only one mediator between God and Mankind, himself, a man, Christ Jesus, sent at the appointed time and I have been named a herald and apostle of it. I am telling the truth and no lie- a teacher of the faith and the truth of the pagans (1Timothy 2:5-7).

Citing from Exodus 20:3-5 Owalo (48) argues that the New Testament writing affirms God's position from eternity that He is one and He is not ready to share his Glory with any other:

You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in earth beneath, or in the water under the earth, you shall not bow down to them or serve them; for I, the Lord your God am a jealous God, visiting iniquity of the fathers upon the children to third and fourth generation of those who hate me (Ex. 20:3-5).

If God is one then Owalo (33) questions the validity behind the proponents of the concept of Trinity who claim that: "Trinity refers to the existence of "One God in three Persons- in the Godhead are three persons; Father, Son and Holy Ghost. The doctrine says that the three are co-equal, almighty and uncreated, having existed eternally in the God-head."

Arguing against the Biblical text that have traditionally been assumed to give outright indication for the doctrine of Trinity for example: Matthew 28:19 that says in part 'Go and make disciples of all nations baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of

the Holy Spirit' (cf 1Cor. 12:4-6; 2Cor. 13:13). Owalo (45) says: "We should keep in mind that the Biblical and historical evidence does not support the Trinity. Any Bible reference offered as proof text must be understood in the context of the consistent teaching of the entire Bible. Very often the true meaning of such a text is clarified by the context of surrounding verses."

Agreeing with a number of scholars who argue against the doctrine of Trinity Archbishop Owalo (46) brings out their sentiments that the whole doctrine of Trinity is not only confusing and perplexing but also very difficult to grasp; "being beyond the grasp of human reason." Arguing that the doctrine of Trinity is false Owalo (48) then concludes that: "Prophet John Owalo was completely right in rejecting a wrong idea, that of Trinity, which was not only mystifying the teaching of God, but also brought confusion in the minds of the adherents."

5.9.5.1 The NC and Christology

From the NC Scripture Sula 1 and 2 (*Kitap Lamo* 93-94), Jesus is presented as a messenger. Following the heavenly excursion Prophet Owalo confirmed that Jesus was a messenger like him. Jesus therefore is not God from God as the Nicene Creed states.

The controversy surrounding the divinity of Christ was not something novel with the advent of the NC but what was surprising is the fact that it arose again in church that had for over one thousand five hundred years believed it to be a foregone conclusion. Arius the presbyter who shocked Christendom in the fourth century by his well-supported argument that Jesus was not co-eternal with the Father, a fact that is attested by his summary statement: "that there was a time he was not" laid the foundation of Arianism and Unitarianism (Foster, 1972).

For Arius, the Son is a creature and only the Father is "unbegotten." The Son like all the other creatures derives from the one source of existence-God. For Arius, the Son still stands distinct from the other creatures. He says that there is a distinction of rank between the Son and other creatures.

Owalo (50) like Arius of the fourth century is convinced that Jesus was a creature but with special distinction of being God's first creation: "Jesus is the head of all creation. He is the

image of the invisible God, the first born of all creation (Colossians 1:15:13-16, Hebrews 1:3; 2 Corinthians 4:4). Further, Owalo (51) citing particularly from the infancy narratives in Matthews and Luke concludes: “that in all the above Jesus is called the son of God, not his equal or part of God himself.” From the titles ‘Wisdom’ and ‘Word’ by which Jesus is referred to Owalo (51) says that the intelligent person they allude to “can be none other than the Son of God himself.’ Jesus is the first among all creatures and for Owalo (51), Prov. 8:22-30 gives the best picture:

The Lord created me at the beginning of his work, the first of his acts of Old Ages ago. I was set up at the first, before the beginning of the earth, when there were no depths; I was brought forth when there were no springs abounding with water. Before the Mountains had been shaped, before the hills, I was brought forth before he made the earth with its fields or the first of the dust of the world. When he established the heavens I was there, when he drew a circle in the face of the deep, when he assigned to the sea its limits, so that the waters might not transgress his command, when he marked out the foundations of the earth, then I was beside Him like a master workman and I was daily His delight rejoicing before him always (Prov. 8:22-30)

He argues further that these words which are echoed in the Gospel of St. John confirm that the ‘Word’ was before the world came into being. To lend further credence to his thesis Owalo also quotes from the book of Revelation 3:14 which says: “And to the church in Laodicea write: The words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of God’s creation.” and from Psalm 89:27 that says “And I will make him the first born, highest of the kings of the earth.” Jesus is not only the beginning of God’s creation but the first born, and this then is the NC position and stand that the Owalo (53) reiterates especially as he delves into the relationship of Jesus to the Father, where the Father is arguably superior over the son.

□ **Jesus not equal with the Father**

Reading for example from John 14:28 “...If you loved me you would be glad that I am going to my Father, for He is greater than I...” Owalo (37) continues to argue that indeed Jesus is not equal to God: “Jesus never claimed to be God. Everything he said about himself indicates that he did not consider himself equal to God in any way; not in power, not in knowledge, not in age....” (37). For Owalo God is always the Superior, while Jesus is the lesser one who was created by God.

□ **Approval from God**

On several instances Jesus is seen as getting express approval of the Father for his ministry. The first such instance is at the baptism of Jesus where at the point when he came out of the baptismal water, God's voice from heaven said, "This is my son the beloved, whom I have approved..." Owalo (37) concludes that God the creator was saying that he as the Superior was approving a lesser one, His Son Jesus, for the work ahead.

□ **Father is Superior**

Accordingly Owalo (37) argues further that Jesus himself severally acknowledged and indicated his Father's superiority when he said "Jehova's Spirit is upon me because He anointed me to declare the good news to the poor (Luke 4:18). Consequently Owalo (37) says that anointing is the giving of authority or a commission by a superior to someone who does not already have authority.

□ **Jesus is inferior**

The ministry of Jesus is replete with indications of his acceptance of his position as inferior to that of God the Father. In Jesus' own prayers we find a powerful example of his inferior position e.g "Father if you wish, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, let not my will, but yours take place "(Luke 22:42). The question that arises out of these words of Jesus is to whom was Jesus praying. Owalo (37) argues that Jesus must have been addressing his prayers to someone entirely separate, his Father; God whose will was superior.

□ **The Son Has no Power of His Own**

Arguing that the Son has no power of his own, Owalo (53) uses the following scriptural verses from the Gospel of John to justify his claim. From John 5:19 "Very truly I tell you, the Son can do nothing on his own, but only what he sees the Father doing, for whatever the Father does the son does likewise."

From John 5:30 "I can do nothing on my own authority; I judge only as God tells me so my judgment is right, because I am not trying to do what I want but only what he who sent me wants."

□ **Jesus Had Limited Knowledge**

Unlike God, who is omniscient Jesus displayed his limitation in his lack of knowledge about the eschatological time frame. Owalo (53) uses the following verse to justify his position: “Heaven and Earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the s^on, but the Father only” (Matt 24:35-36).

From the foregoing the NC position is made much clearer that Jesus is not God Incarnate but an important person in the plan of God for salvation; that God in his plan of salvation for all human beings came into the world taking a human form and being born by the Virgin Mary. The incarnation holds no water because as the NC teaches Jesus was a mere messenger although with a very clear distinction as the first creature of the created order. On this note the doctrine of the Trinity fails in that Jesus is not co-equal with God the Father: “From the above, the one in three gods, and three in one God is not in existence, it is a fabrication: God, son and Holy Ghost are not CO-EQUAL”(Owalo 55).

5.9.5.2 Argument against the Holy Spirit

On the same note Owalo (38) puts forward his argument against the Holy Spirit as God. He says, “The Holy Spirit is not a person and is not a part of the Trinity. The Holy Spirit is God’s Active Force that he uses to accomplish His will, it is not equal to God but it is always at his disposition and subordinate to Him.” Owalo (39) also identifies that God’s Spirit endows his servants with ‘power beyond what is normal’ and this allows them to endure trials (Jud.14:19; Jon. 2:1-10; Acts 2:1-4 (Owalo, 39-40).

5.9.5.3 Trinity: A General Christian Perspective

After recognizing the NC position on the doctrine of the Trinity and that on the Incarnation, it is in order to compare the same with the general understanding of these doctrines in the universal Church. The doctrine of the Trinity basically expresses the notion that there are three persons within the Godhead-Father, Son and Holy Spirit. These three persons are to be regarded as equally divine and of equal status. The doctrine of the Trinity is widely accepted in Christendom yet still a number of Christian denominations deny it. Of these, the Unitarians stand out and for this reason Prophet Owalo and his new found denomination received the label “practically a Unitarian” from the Rev. J. J. Willis. According to McGrath

(2001) the doctrine of the Trinity arose in the Church following the Christological debates in the early centuries of the Church:

The moment the Christological issues were decided and settled in the early church then a moment of reflection and exploration of the implications and impacts of these decisions followed. From these reflections the doctrine of the Trinity emerged. There was a consensus that Jesus was “of the same substance” (*homoousios*) as God rather than just “of similar substance” (*homoiousios*). The doctrine of Trinity is closely related to the development of the doctrine of the divinity of Christ. The more emphatic the church became that Christ was God the more it had to clarify the relationship between God and Christ...The doctrine of Trinity sprung from reflections on the identity of Jesus Christ especially in the doctrine of incarnation. Emphasis on incarnation necessitated further analysis of what it actually meant and these intellectual analyses eventually yielded the doctrine of the Trinity in Unity.

The relationship between God and Christ and especially in their being “of the same substance” is said to be a mystery by many scholars. The Christological debate leading to the Council of Nicaea, established the co-equality of Father and the Son, whereas the divinity of the Spirit was established in the aftermath. God is said to be active in Christ and through the Holy Spirit in renewal of humanity and in the ordering the salvation of humanity in history. This according to McGrath (2001):

God the Father uncreated, who is uncontained, invisible, one God, creator of the universe... And the Word of God, our Lord Jesus Christ... who in the fullness of time in order to gather all things to himself, he became a human being amongst human beings... to destroy death, bring life, and restore fellowship between God and humanity. And the Holy Spirit... who, in the fullness of time poured out in a new way on our human nature in order to renew humanity through-out the entire world in the sight of God (McGrath, 2001).

Scholars are in agreement that the divine action reveals a complex scenario of two things: *unity* and *distinctiveness*. This scenario is what McGrath (2001) describes as: The three persons of the Trinity are distinct, yet not divided (*distincti non divisi*), different yet not separate or independent of each other (*discreti non separati*). Although the doctrine of Trinity talks of the Godhead as undivided its understanding and interpretation has continued to be the cause of division between the Eastern Church and the Western Church. Consequently McGrath (2001) seems to agree with Owalo above that this doctrine is not only perplexing but difficult to grasp:

The doctrine of the Trinity is unquestionably one of the most perplexing aspects of Christian theology. The Greek differed with Latin Church on the issue of the “double procession” of the Holy Spirit. The Greek Fathers insisted that there was only one source of being within the Trinity; the Son and the Spirit both derive from the Father but in different terms thus the Son is begotten while the Spirit proceeds from the Father.

The Complexity of the Trinitarian formula leads scholars to develop several approaches to discuss it: one way of understanding the peculiarity of theological discourse about the doctrine of the Trinity is to be found in the so called negative theology, the *via negativa*. The negative way according to Kaufmann (1968):

‘Begins with the outright acceptance of the fact that all words apply literally only to the finite experience and hence not to God. From this premise the conclusion is drawn that the only way to speak of God is systematically to *deny* various predicates as applicable to him...Here an attempt is made to say something meaningful about God by denying that this or that characteristic of finite being applies to him...The *via negativa*, understood thus as essentially the denial that God is to be identified with anything finite is necessary to any speech which undertakes to refer to God. It points to the intrinsic limitation of all our speech when applied to the divine being.

The next method is referred to as symbolism. This method in reference to God employs the use of terms such as: God as Father, King, Lord, Shepherd. Kaufmann (1968) argues that:

Since God is unique and incomparable our language about him will be symbolical or analogical. No term is adequate; each must be negated and extrapolated to an eminent degree...Our speech about God must begin with the historical and particularly in the definitive person-event Jesus Christ-through which God has made himself known... The Christ-event provides the vehicle for understanding about God. The Christian claim is that God revealed himself to man in Jesus the man. We may refer to God for example as Rock of Ages to emphasize how unchangeable is his steadfast faithfulness. The major symbols for the doctrine of God are Father, Son and Spirit.

5.9.5.3 The NC and the Reformation Agenda

In a similar and related scenario the NC seems to be challenging the Contemporary practices and belief systems in the Church. The corruption and rot in the Roman Catholic Church which Luther and the Reformers in the sixteenth century fought against are the same issues that Prophet Owalo was raising in the early twentieth century. Was this a mere coincidence? Was God challenging the existing ecclesiastical structure? If so what new message if any was being communicated to the worldwide church? The scope of this study does not allow for analysis of these issues but a look at Owalo’s heavenly excursion suggests a concurrence with some key Reformation ideas.

The NC like the Reformers of the sixteenth century found a number of the Roman Catholic Church beliefs and practices totally wanting. Owalo in his unpublished work cites several areas arising from the heavenly visitation of Prophet Owalo:

5.9.5.4 The Papacy and the Law

In Prophet Owalo's vision the Pope was shockingly absent among the saints and when he asked the Popes whereabouts he was told that those who do not go to heaven are unknown in heaven. This was shocking to Owalo whose experience in the Roman Catholic Church as a catechist had taught him that the Pope was not only the spiritual head of the church worldwide but it was a church that strongly believed that outside the Catholic Church there is no salvation (*extra ecclesiam nulla salus*)(Olali, 2015).

Owalo (126) notes that the Law given to Moses as read in Exodus 20:1-17 is different from that taught by the Roman Catholic Church; "As it appears in these catechisms, the law of God has been changed and virtually reenacted by the papacy...When compared with Exodus 20:317, the second commandment, which forbids the making of and bowing down to images is omitted in Catholic Catechisms, and the tenth commandment which forbids coveting is divided into two in order to preserve the number."

5.9.5.5 Purgatory

Another issue clear in Prophet Owalo's vision is that on his way to heaven he happens to identify only two areas Heaven and Hell but not Purgatory. Archbishop Owalo (127) notes that this is yet another form of paganism introduced into the Church:

The way was prepared for the introduction of still another of paganism which Rome named "purgatory" and employed to terrify the credulous and superstitious multitudes. By this heresy is affirmed the existence of a place of torment in which soul of such as have not merited eternal damnation are to suffer punishment for their sins, and from which, when freed from impurity, they are admitted to heaven (Owalo, 127).

5.9.5.6 Indulgence

As outlined above this was the practice of raising funds through the sale of falsehood to Christians. Owalo (127) describes it thus:

The doctrine of indulgence, still another fabrication was needed to enable Rome to profit by the fear and the vices of her adherents. This was supplied by the doctrine of indulgences in which full remission of sins, past, present and future and released

from all pains and penalties incurred, were promised to all who would enlist in the pontiff's wars to extend his temporal dominion, to push enemies or to exterminate who dared defy his spiritual supremacy. The people were also taught that by payment of money to the church they might free themselves from sin and also release the soul of their deceased friends who were confined in the tormenting flames. By such means, did Rome fill her coffers and sustained the magnificence, luxury of Him who had not where to lay his head (Owalo, 127).

Owalo refutes these two heresies: the doctrines of indulgence and purgatory by claiming scriptural support for the sake of Nomiya adherents:

In 2 Kings 5:20-27 the prophet Elisha cursed Gehazi who had taken gifts from Naaman who had leprosy.

In Acts 8:17-21 we find the case of Simon the magician who offered money to the disciples when he saw that the spirit was given through imposition of hands by apostles. Peter rebuked him saying "May your silver be lost forever and you with it for thinking that money could buy what God has given. You have no place or share, for your heart is not right before God."

In Matthew 10:7-8 Jesus said: "And as you do proclaim that the kingdom of heaven is close at hand, cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers cast out devils; you received without charge. Freely you have received freely give" (Owalo, 127).

5.9.6 The NC as an African Independent Church

Several studies have been undertaken on the NC; however no study has been concerned with the double rite of passage practiced in the NC. The NC stands unique on two premises, one as the first African independent church in Kenya; and the first Independent Church in Kenya to start secular education for her members (Ndeda, 2005; Ogot, 1974) and secondly as the only Christian body in Kenya that does circumcision as a religious ritual simultaneously with baptism. The second aspect has not been documented although there is a lot of literature on Johana Owalo and his new movement.

The NC is indeed an Ethiopic or nationalistic AIC due to the fact that it is both a breakaway group from the missionary-led churches, and also a protest group against missionary paternalism and colonial oppressive structures (Muga, 1975; Opwapo, 1981). The secession background of the NC indicates that due to irreconcilable doctrinal difference that were actually fuelled by the missionary paternalism and colonial oppressive structures the NC broke away from a missionary-led church. Prophet Johana Owalo is in this respect referred to as 'the first Christian rebel' (Ogot, 2009). Lonsdale (1964) giving a brief background of

the foundation of the NC shows how Owalo was well integrated in the missions but soon clashed not only with the missions but with the administration also:

John Owalo, who founded the Nomiya Luo Church about 1910, was introduced to the European world in a piecemeal fashion that was perhaps typical of many of his contemporaries. After a short time at MHM Kisumu where he was baptized, he attached himself to CSM Kikuyu, and then became 'houseboy' a European lawyer in Mombasa. Here he came under Islamic influence and here too he was taken in a vision to heaven, where it was revealed to him that Christ, like Mohamed, was merely one of God's messengers. John returned to earth convinced of his black Messiahship and after a short period of teaching at CMS Maseno returned to his home location of Asembo on the basis of the vision; (Nomiya meaning 'he gave me' or 'it was given me'). A.E.Pleydell, then in charge of Maseno, complained of Owalo's activities to the P.C. but after a series of enquiries Ainsworth gave Owalo permission to continue baptizing objecting only to the prophet's avowed encouragement of polygamy (Lonsdale, 1964).

Lonsdale (1964) in his study of the Nyanza religious scenario identified four factors that could be cited as contributory to the disaffection of the Africans with the then European missionary and colonial administration. The first was that according to the African worldview the European Missionaries were an arm of the colonial government and therefore were essentially in partnership. Africans concluded therefrom that they had the same objectives despite having different methods were. The second factor that gave rise to frequent frictions with the foreign rule was for example taxation which forced people to go out far from home to labor. The third factor could be attributed to the multiplicity of missions which brought confusion to the African people. A good example is the pull out of Willis Hotchkiss of the Friends African Industrial Mission to form an independent mission at Lumbwa. The question this raises is: "If the European Missions were not in agreement how then could the Africans trust them? This provided a very suitable background for the independent churches. The fourth factor was the vitality of traditional politics and the indigenous religious heritage. These factors according to Lonsdale (1964) shows that the mission-churches denied the African person the total privilege of being the religious clan head as well as a prophet.

The various instances where Prophet Owalo clashed head-on with the colonial administration to the extent that a ban was slapped on his religious activities lend credence to Lonsdale's first point. Indeed the NC going against the prescribed missionary teaching was immediately labeled by the European administrators as "Nomiya Cult" (DC/KSM/1/10/45; DC/KSM/1/35/51). Arthur Champion the DC Central Kavirondo

observed that the natives were unable to embrace Christian religion as presented to them and instead came up with a form of ‘bastard Christianity’ more suited to their mental and social development (DC/KSM/1/10/45; DC/KSM/1/35/51). When Owalo told the DC off to let him do the needful bidding of God in reaching out to the Luos he was essentially rejecting Westernism and thereby launching Christianity on the terms given to him. The prominent truths arising from Owalo’s heavenly excursion was the many flaws that were connected to the European Missionary enterprise.

The first instance of these flaws was that the leader of one of the largest Christian denomination the Roman Catholic Church was not recognized in heaven. The reason for this was two-fold: the prevalent worship of relics and images in the Catholic Church and the continued practice of mass which according to heavenly vision was found to be unacceptable sacrifice before God. Secondly, and of equal significance was that the Europeans (both colonialist and Missionaries) and the Goans will have no place in heaven. According to Muga (1975) when Owalo went to third heaven God wanted to admit the Luo like he had done to the Arabs and Jews but at this time they had no prophet. Owalo was then given the mission to make God’s message relevant to the Luo needs and consequently usher those who accepted into heaven. Contrary to the teaching by the Roman Catholic Church Owalo recognized on this eye-opening excursion that only heaven and hell were identifiable, whereas the much preached place of temporal torment purgatory did not exist.

The Africans soon realized that their position in relation to the Europeans was that they were subject to the Europeans and whatever their cherished culture taught was deemed to be inferior to the European culture. They were dominated in all fronts. They were economically, socially and ethically deprived. The Western culture and the adoption of Christianity as the new religion of many Africans in a superordinate-subordinate situation produced circumstances that produced frustration emanating from deprivation (Muga, 1975). The reaction of Africans to the pressures of change brought about by the moral demands of Christianity and those of the European colonialism was outright rebellion. According to Muga (1975) this rebellion manifested itself because:

Africans were left with little choice but to resort to other methods as a means of escape from the frustrations and precarious condition... The consequence of this has been on the part of the Africans the emergence of organized, defensive, rational and magical, revivalistic and perpetuative nativistic and secular movements as a social

response to the economic, social, organismic ethical and psyche types of deprivation with a view to overcoming these types of deprivation and eventually establishing their own rights separately in independence. .. A collective social protest was necessary as a corrective against the prevailing circumstances and as a venue through which they could achieve equality with Europeans. This effort necessarily entailed re-evaluation and re-assertion of African values and entity...hence the emergence of and development of African independent and separatist religions (Muga, 1975).

The frustrations of the African came from all the four quarters cited by Lonsdale, and the bare truth is that had the Christianity missionaries introduced only one Christian faith in East Africa then the African Independent Church movements would have been discouraged. The effects of missionary work in East Africa would have been different in that the African Independent Church movements would not have emerged (Muga, 1975). Their biggest undoing was the overemphasized attitude and belief that the Western European culture was superior to the African culture (Okot P'Bitek, 1970).

The above analyzed possible reasons for the rise of the Independent Churches either singly or collectively may not adequately or exhaustively explain the origin of these religious movements. However, the rise of any religious movement can be traced back to the social, economic, political or psychological motivations. There is a clear connection between the missionary paternalism and the colonial government oppression and according to Ndeda (2005) the Africans concluded that, although their methods were different, they had the same objectives. Odinga (1967) concurs, saying that the European education had a double-edged transformation effect on the African society:

The trouble with mission control though was that it was double-edged weapon. On the one hand it created a category of educated men who were easily tamed because they had lost their moorings within African society; on the other hand it stoked up a revolt in the church that led to dramatic breakaways and the foundation of independent African churches that preached a gospel with strong political overtones (Odinga, 1967).

The above confirm in no uncertain terms the reasons that led the European missionaries and colonialist to regard the NC with suspicion and for a long time as a political outfit.

5.9.7 Affinity between NC Practices and Judaism

The affinity between the circumcision practiced in the NC and that in Judaism is apparent and we can conclusively say that the texts of the Old Testament are the primary texts that

have influenced the NC practice of circumcision. Mugambi observes that the strong affinity between the Old Testament and African religious heritage is not only surprising but perplexing (Mugambi and Getui, 2004). This affinity between the Old Testament and the NC practice of circumcision explains the origins and significance of baptism and circumcision in the NC. Here below the study demonstrates that there is continuity within the variety and changes of religious concepts and religious thought forms.

Circumcision and baptism have clear roots in the Jewish religious practices. The obvious differences between the two cultural practices could possibly be explained by Getui's assertion that AICs are justifiably the African response to the Christian faith in their context and manifest the expression of Christianity in an authentically African manner (Mugambi and Getui, 2004). Consequently the study has shown that circumcision and baptism on the eighth day for male infants and baptism for females on the fourteenth is both an expression of Christianity in an African manner and a hybrid of Jewish and Christian practices. The variations of the NC practices when compared to the Old Testament practice can be explained as offshoots of the prescriptions given to the Jews in the Jewish Scriptures.

5.9.8 The NC and the Two World Missionary Religions

The relationship between the NC and Christianity on one hand and Islam on the other is so profound and it begs for analysis. Both Islam and Christianity are missionary religions that had significant impact on the cultures that they came in touch with. Both have impacted the Luo culture in such significant proportion that a new culture has been created in all areas where the adherents practice the same.

That the Luo religion played a major role in this respect welcoming, challenging and eventually accommodating the new religious phenomenon cannot be denied. Mugambi (2002: 2) says that the phenomenal expansion of Christianity in Africa can only be explained by the deep religious heritage of the Africans which facilitated rather than hindered the acceptance of Christianity by the people of Africa south of the Sahara. Further, Mugambi (2002) emphasizes that African religiosity that facilitated such positive response should be appreciated rather than ridiculed. The same can be said about Islam which has also been accepted and welcomed highly across the African continent. Prophet Owalo is said to have gone to a lot of trouble in order to procure his own circumcision from the Muslim adherents. For him later on to advocate the same as a pillar and a sign of membership into

the NC is a significant milestone that demonstrates the influence of one religion over another. Eventually a unique practice has been born so different from Christianity and so different from Islam both which played and had tremendous influence on the hybrid product which is the current practice in the NC.

That the NC has borrowed and internalized several important features from both backgrounds giving them a new value and outlook can be best explained taking C.S. Song's correlation between Gospel and culture (Mugambi, 2002). Song suggests that whenever the Gospel is introduced and established in a new culture it is "transposed" like a sweet melody into a new key; the Gospel when transposed from its biblical world to other cultural worlds undergoes change itself as well as causing these other world cultures to change (Mugambi, 2002). This dramatic change is evidenced in the fact that the Luo people who hitherto did not practice circumcision have now taken in not only circumcision and the practice of seclusion of women after birth but also the practice of baptism. A gospel that only advocated baptism has now been transposed to also proclaim circumcision and the blood purification of women after birth. A culture that practiced seclusion of women after birth of three and four days now observes forty and eighty days of seclusion.

The hybrid practice of circumcision and baptism was witnessed briefly in the apostolic period where Gentile converts were required from some Jewish quarters to accept circumcision as well on conversion. In a sense it must have been a requirement for admission of adult converts. However the fact that the Official position of the Church was made explicit in the Jerusalem council of 49 AD it became unnecessary to enforce the circumcision of all believers. Paul writing to several churches insisted that circumcision of the heart was more advantageous than circumcision of the flesh.

5.9.10 Influence of Islam on Johana Owalo

While in Mombasa Owalo received a vision in which he was instructed to go and preach the word. After receiving this message he joined Islam and he received the name of Omari. In an interview with Archbishop Owalo on 3rd June 2014 he confirmed that there are several things which are now part of the NC worship that could be traced back to the time Owalo spent in Mombasa as a Muslim and these include the following:

5.9.10.1 Circumcision

Although the NC circumcision has all the trappings of the Jewish circumcision, many adherents claim that Prophet Owalo was actually influenced to adopt circumcision through the brief spate with the Muslims. Opwapo (1981) traces Prophet Owalo's circumcision to his time in Kisumu where he requested his friend Zachariah Ojwang to circumcise him. However due to the intricacy involved he was eventually directed to the Muslims who got him circumcised (Owalo 26; Opwapo, 1981).

5.9.10.2 Mode of Dressing

Owalo must have been impressed by the Muslim code of dressing that he adopted for his new found religion. The NC male adherents wear a cap and a white robe (*Kanzu*). While most male adherents will wear the narrow white robe as in Islam, the clergy on the other hand will adopt the vestment of the Anglican Church, including the Mitre for Bishops.

5.9.10.3 Removal of Shoes

The NC worship just like the Islam worship entails the removal of shoes at the entrance of the church. Many adherents associate this with the practice in Islam, whereas others relate it to the experiences of Moses in the burning bush. Olali (2015) on this aspect says: "Removal of shoes when entering a holy place is one of the processes of keeping a clean environment within the holy place...For those walking bare feet ablution must be observed by cleaning both hands and feet.

5.9.10.4 Kneeling Facing Kiblah

Prayers are made with the adherents especially the male adherents kneeling down. It is important that like the Muslims the prayers are made in the direction of Kiblah. Kiblah according to Kateregga and Shenk (1993) "is the direction of prayer and it was changed from Jerusalem to Makkah." On the other hand the NC Constitution says: "At all times when offering supplications or prayers to Jehovah God or when conducting any service, it will, and must be strictly observed that the congregation faces the Holy Land-Middle East-better known to members of the Church as KIBLA."

Churches in the NC are built in a general north easterly direction, a direction that is believed to face Kiblah. In agreement Archbishop Owalo (72) says: "Kibla or Qiblah is an Arabic word which means the direction which is faced towards Jerusalem in prayer" He even uses

the Kiswahili explanation possibly to make himself clearer to an audience he was addressing: “*Upande wanaoelekea waislamu wakati wanaposwali.*” This is yet another affirmation that the NC has its roots in Islam. That the influence is deeply ingrained can be seen in the NC liturgy and song. The following hymn *Wamanyo Kibila kumaler*, (We are facing Kiblah the Holy place) affirms the Islamic root:

Wamanyo kibila kumaler, We are facing Kiblah the Holy place
Kwalame Nyasaye Ruodh ngima As we worship God the Lord of life
Nyinge ler kendo ler weruru His name is Holy and Holy let us sing
Ende wuorwa Nyakalaga Our Father who spreads out
Wanawer gi Alleluya polo-polo We will sing halleluya in heaven
Wanamor gi Jo-malaika gi Nabii We will be happy with the angels and the prophet
Jo-Nomiya wawere waduto Let all the Nomiya members sing

Prayers in the NC are done with all adherents kneeling. According to Olali (2015) prayers while kneeling is biblical and is based on Ex. 34:8; Ps. 95:6 and Mat.26:39.

5.9.10.5 Women and Men Sitting Arrangement

Like in Islam the sitting of men is distinct from that of women: Men and women sitting separately with the men sitting to the left from the main entrance while women sitting on the right. On the altar area (*Sunagogi*) sit the leadership of the church which is all male.

5.9.10.5 Names of Angels

The use of Islamic forms of angel’s names (*Jibraeli and Rafaeli*) and that of (*Mariam*) Mary the mother of Jesus are indications of a strong Islamic influence.

5.9.10.6 Jesus an Apostle

The NC adherents understand Jesus not as a God but as an apostle (*Jaote*). This is closer to the Muslim understanding of Jesus as prophet (*Nabii issa*). This is well documented in the chapters of scripture by Owalo (Sura 1-6). The recognition of Jesus as a prophet and a messenger of God in Islam is attested in Surah 19:16-34 and at Surah 3:35-60. This concept concurs with the NC’s understanding of Jesus as a messenger. According to Cragg (2000) the Quran goes on to deny that the one so born is in any sense the Son of God:

We sent unto her our Spirit and he appeared unto her as a perfect human being..."And he said "Indeed I am a messenger of your Lord unto thee to bestow upon thee a pure child." She said "How shall I have a son when no man has touched me and I have not been a harlot? And he said: So has thy Lord said: It is an easy thing for Me and in order that We may make him a sign unto men, a mercy from us,' It has been so determined. Thus she conceived him and withdrew with him to a remote spot (Cragg, 2000).

Consequently the infant Jesus is recorded addressing the family of Mary acknowledging his role as a prophet:

I am the servant of God. He has brought me the Book and made me a prophet. He has blessed me wherever I be and has enjoined on me prayer and alms giving as long as I live; and [made me] honorable towards her who bare me. He has not made me a miserable lordling...Peace be on the day of my birth, the day of my death, and the day of my resurrection alive... This bare and somewhat enigmatic statement is almost all the Quran knows of the ministry of Jesus in the Gospels and of his parables. It should be noted that the Quran throughout refers to Jesus by the name Isa (Cragg, 2000).

According to Cragg (2000) Islam is firm on its understanding that: "Christ is, then a prophet, a teacher, a healer of the sick, a spirit from or of God. To him is given the Gospel-not the good news about God in Christ, but a book of words which the Quran does not anywhere reproduce, except in very occasional references, such as those to the camel and the eye of the needle and alms given in secret..."

5.9.10.7 Doctrine of God

The study has already noted the close affinity of the Islamic practices to the NC practices. God is at the core of both religious practices. In Islam just like in the NC the rallying call is "There is no God except God." Cragg (2000) argues that the existence of God was not the issue but the denial of other deities as objects of worship equal to Allah:

It is clear from the negative form of Muslim creed that the existence and lordship of *Allah* were known and recognized in pre-Islamic Arabia. The Prophets mission was not to proclaim God's existence but to deny the existence of all other deities... When Muhammad conveyed to them the divine claim to exclusive worship, they discredited the messenger. There can be no doubt, then that the prophet's contemporaries knew of a Supreme Being, but not one who dominated their minds. Rather they thought more directly and frequently the lesser gods, the daughters, perhaps even the sons, of *Allah*, who were more intimately related to their daily lives, their wars and their harvests and their fertility (Cragg 2000).

In an emphasis which is so close to the NC understanding, Muhammad declared that Allah was the only real God:

He is God alone, God the eternal [undivided]
He does not beget, and He is not begotten
There is none co-equal with Him. Surah 112 (Cragg, 2000).

This Islamic position according to Cragg (2000) is “in formal rejection of the doctrine of Christ as the Son of God. To allow such a doctrine is to ‘associate’ a man with God, to deify human the human and so lift it to the status of the worshipful, which belongs only to God. It is to commit the supreme sin against the basic assertion of the Muslim *Shahadah*, or creed, that there is no god except God.” This understanding tally well with Kateregga and Shenk’s (1993) presentation of the Muslim understanding of God:

God is only One without a partner or son. He is the Creator of the universe and everything that is to be found in the universe. He is compassionate and Merciful and His mercy is to all creatures. He is just. He is the Guide and Guardian of everything. He is preexistent and eternal, He is all- knowing and all-wise. He is loving and provident (Kateregga and Shenk, 1993).

The NC understanding of who God is comes out in a striking resemblance to the Islamic presentation above:

God is only one, without a brother, or a father or a mother, or even a creator.
He is one Lord who is above all other gods. He is eternal (Kitap Lamo Mar Nomiya Church 56).

The NC catechism teaches the same:

God is all powerful, begotten not made, He is from eternity; He does not die, he is present everywhere, has no end, has none over him, has none before him, he directs all, he has nobody to direct him (*Kitap Lamo Mar Nomiya Church 111*).

Islam according Cragg (2000) also presents God as supreme, the all-powerful, all-knowing and all-seeing, one who is always aware, one who nothing escapes; God’s knowledge is the final knowledge.

These attributes of God is nowhere more clear apart from the names of God in Islam. According to Cragg (2000), Islam recognizes ninety-nine names also called the Beautiful Names, ‘*Al Asma’ al-husna*, to describe God. The most important of the Divine names in Islam are the twin titles *Al-Rahmin al-rahim* rendered into English “the Compassionate, the Merciful.” He argues further that the other form in which God is described comes in the

contrasted pairs also called the mother of the attributes because through them all else is comprehended for example: The First and the Last, the Outward and the inward. These names suggest God's eternity, omniscience and self-sufficiency. God's attributes are affirmed in the following names: the Living, the Comprehending, the Self-Sufficing, the Abiding, the High, the Mighty, the All-Powerful, the Exalted, the Great, the Praiseworthy, the All-Compelling, the Guardian, the Victorious, and the Always Erect. These names bear resemblance to the NC names seen in *Lamo Mar Jehova (Kitap Lamo 32-35)*.

Cragg (2000) further says that the eternal and all-encompassing God is described as the Creator, the Fashioner, the Life Giver, the Provider, the Opener, and the Bestower. Mention of these dual terms leads into the large and crucial theme of divine-human relationships. Any doctrine of God is meaningful only as an account of such relationships. Islam is through and through a divine-human encounter. Whenever we study or confess doctrines of God we proceed upon parallel affirmations about humanity. So inseparable are the two realms that every theology is inevitably also a view of the human: "There is not a private conference of three, but He is their fourth, nor of five but He is their sixth, nor of a lower or higher number but he is with them wherever they may be. (Surah 58:7) (Cragg, 2000).

The divine and the human must be truly meaningful to one another. The same comes out in the NC adherents understanding of God; God as one (without a father, a brother or even a mother, one without a beginning or an end and one who does not die) and him a lone to be worshipped. That God alone is to be worshipped is the central teaching in the doctrine of the NC as seen in the chapters (*Sura*) of Owalo's teaching and in the liturgy and the Hymns. One such important hymn in the NC is: *Nyasaye nochiko ni En Achiel*

Nyasaye nochiko ni En Achiel God commanded that He is one
Achiel, achiel, nochiko ni En Achiel One, One. He commanded that He is one
Chwech duto malamo En. All creatures that worship Him
Lamuru kugeno En, ka En Achiel Pray believing in Him, that He is one
Nyasaye nowacho numiye duong God requested that He be honored
Oduong', Oduong', nowacho numiye duong He is great, great, He said you honor him
Duong'ne duong' kendo oduong' His greatness is great and it is
Onge moro marom kode En There is none equal to Him
Jowetewa malamo chwech Our brothers who worship creation
Ok ber, ok ber, biuru ka walamo En It is bad, It is bad, Come let us worship Him
En kende, en ema nochweyo gi He alone, He is our creator (*Kitap Lamo 20*)

This overall idea of God as one with no one besides him is very prominent in NC theology. The Call of the *Muezin* that issues from the Minaret is another instance where there is a clear emphasis of God's greatness as the reason man has to worship him. This coincides with the NC position and understanding.

God is most great, God is most great,
I bear witness that there is no god except God:
I bear witness that Muhammad is the apostle of God
Come ye unto prayer,
Come ye unto good,
Prayer is a better thing than sleep
Come ye to the best deed
God is most great. God is most great,
There is no god except God (Cragg,
2000).

This call that blares through the PA's of the Mosque is close to the refrain repeated in the NC on several occasions at each worship service. The similarity here is glaring:

Jaduong: *Nyasaye Duong* x3 Minister: God is Great x3
Ji: *Nyasaye Duong* x3 People: God is Great x3
Jaduong: *Duong ni Duong* x3 Minister: His Greatness is great x 3
Ji: *Duong ni Duong* x3 People: His Greatness is great x 3

In reciting this portion antiphonally the minister and the congregation three times acknowledge God as great and three times acknowledge that his greatness surpasses any other. This is an affirmation of the centrality of the concept of "one God only" in the worship of the NC. In the NC prayer the one God is God who is Omnipresent and transcendent; God of all creation, all nations and all ethnic groups. This is expressed in the Prayer of Jehova:

Jehova Nyasach Yesu Jehovah the God of Jesus
Jehova Nyasach Musa Jehovah the God of Moses
Jehova the God of Elija Jehovah the God of Elijah
Jehova the God of Muhamadi Jehovah the God of Mohammed
Jehova the God of Rafaeli Jehovah the God of Raphael
Jehova the God of Mayahudi Jehovah the God of the Jews
Jehova Nyasach Warabu Jehovah the God of Arabs
Jehova Nyasach Luo Jehovah the God of Luos

5.9.10.8 Removal of Cap in Prayer

The NC seems to have two variant prescriptions on the wearing of the cap during worship. According to Olali (2015) the cap should be removed at the start of service in a prescribed holy place. This prescription is according to 1 Cor. 11:3-4 that suggests that the man who

prays or prophesizes with something on his head disgraces his head but the woman who prays or prophesizes with her head unveiled disgraces her head. However, according to (Owalo 70), the cap should be retained during worship: “God’s order or command is greater than St. Paul’s, so we take God’s order in Ex.28:34-40; 39:28; Ezk.44:18 and we stay with church caps on our heads.” This position is similar to that taken by Islam.

5.9.10.9 Shariff

The title for the office of the circumciser in the NC is *Shariff* or *Ja-shariff*. This title is believed by most NC adherents to have originated from Owalo’s brief spat with the Muslims. However, an Imam-Musa Ogera Mboya said that Islam does not have such a name for the circumciser and secondly that the Muslim circumcision is not day specific.

5.9.10.10 Mir’aj

Prophet Owalo’s excursion to heaven bears a lot of resemblance to Prophet Muhammad’s own similar journey to the heavens. For Owalo this was a landmark experience that consequently was to define and determine the direction of the NC worship to God whose selfdisclosure outlined his expectations of the human response. The similarities are as glaring as Kateregga and Shenk (1993) demonstrate:

In the meantime the Holy Prophet was taken on a night journey (*isra*) to heaven. He was transported from Makkah to Jerusalem on an animal called *al-Buraq* and then ascended (*Mir’aj*) to the seventh heaven. Mir’aj was a physical as well as a spiritual journey. The prophet, who had been greatly honoured by Allah, was shown all that was in heaven and the universe. He saw the light and glory of God. This was the greatest gift from God to man. It was during the Mir’aj that Allah commanded the five daily prayers and fasting for Muslims. The Prophet was given the honour of meeting the earlier prophets...(43).

Like Prophet Owalo, Prophet Muhammad was shown in the presence of the Holy God from whom the Islam worship and doctrines were gleaned.

5.9.10.11 Polygamy

Polygamy in the NC is a practice accepted and entrenched in the Church constitution: “The Church allows polygamy but ministers of the Church would be allowed not more than four wives.” The prescription for polygamy in the NC is that men were allowed to have a maximum of four wives and particularly if they were interested in the leadership positions in the church. This prescription coincides with the Islamic marital jurisprudence where men are

allowed to practice polygyny: “Nevertheless the fact remains that the Koran permits polygyny: “You may marry two, three or four wives but not more (Huston, 1991). The Qur’an in Sura 4 Ayah 3 is solid in its emphases that marriage is by choice and one is permitted up to four wives depending on his capacity to deal justly with them. Here once again the concurrence is obvious.

5.10 Influence of CMS on Johana Owalo

The CMS which was the last ground of association of Johana Owalo and the foreign mission can be said to have impacted him in a very special way. Archbishop Owalo is clear that Prophet Owalo’s times at CMS Maseno had a profound impact on his life and by extension the NC worship to this day. Some of these great markers experienced from CMS include the liturgy and the order of service of the CMS, the second is the age old hymns of the Anglican tradition; Ndeda (2005) argues that in the many Hymns borrowed from the Anglican Church he replaced the word Jesus with Jehova (See DC/KSM/1/10/45).

5.10.1 Liturgy

Archbishop Owalo, in an interview also notes that the liturgy used in the NC borrows a lot from the Anglican Church worship. The order of service as well as a number of prayers can be traced back to the Anglican Liturgy that was designed by Archbishop Thomas Cranmer. The Catechism can also be traced back to the same source. The most interesting feature of the NC prayers is that the congregation has committed to memory the lengthy prayers. The prayers are recited and at each and every step suitable hymns are sang.

5.10.2 Hymns

The other area where the influence of CMS can be recognized in a big way is in the Hymns. A number of NC hymns can be traced back to CMS. The only unique thing in them is that the tune remains the same but the name of Jesus has been replaced by that of Jehovah. The hymns have their tempo changed. In most cases the tempo assumes an accelerated form while some of them are dragged in a fashion that the Luo refer to as *denko*. Hymns have been memorized by all and are accompanied by drums and other assorted musical instruments. Dancing and jubilation mark the services. The Hymn here below is an example of one of the

Anglican hymns called *Jayath Maduong Osudo Ka* “The great Physician now is here.” In the NC version the physician concept has been replaced by the overarching idea in the NC, the concept of God; the same is recognized where the name Jehovah replaces the name Jesus:

Nyasaye maduong’ osudo ka

1. *Nyasaye maduong’ osudo ka* The great God has moved close
Obiro mondo okonywa He has come to help us
Duonde mamiyo chunywa mor His voice makes glad our hearts
Winjuru duond Jehova Listen to the voice of Jehovah

Chorus *Nying’ mamiyo polo mor* The name that makes the heavens glad

Nying’ molooyo nying’ ma ka The name above the earthly names

Onge nying’ mamit kama There is no name as sweet as this one

Jehova kende Jehova Jehovah alone Jehovah

2. *To richou oweyonu* Your sins he forgives

Winjuru duond Jehova Listen to the voice of Jehovah

WuothuruWaa e piny ma ka Walk as we move away from the world

To wanadhi ka Jehova We will go to Jehovah

3. *Wadende Ruodhwa man malo* Let us sing in praise of our heavenly king

To wan wayie Jehova We believe in Jehovah

Wahero nying’ ma konyowa We love the name that helps us

Wahero nying’ Jehova We love the name of Jehovah

5.10.3 Scriptures

The NC like the Anglican Church uses and recognizes the Old Testament and the New Testament scriptures. The NC provides the freedom to every believer to read and expound the scriptures. The fact that the Roman Catholic background did not allow the adherents close interaction with the Bible, then Owalo’s deep and thorough understanding of Scriptures can be located in his time at CMS. The Rev. Willis is on record as suggesting that Johana Owalo who was the cleverest boy and who was involved in the translation of the Gospel of John to Luo decided to part ways with CMS.

Owalo (76) has this to say about the NC and the Scriptures: “The Nomiya Church holds faith in the sacredness of the Holy Scriptures. The Holy Bible contains all that is required to the Word of God, how man is, the issues on salvation and the suffering of evil-doers. The commandments of the Holy Scriptures are sacred and do bind people. It contains true history of what actually happened, and what is commanded does not change forever.”

5.10.4 Clerical Titles

The NC titles for clergy and the division of the areas of jurisdiction for clergy oversight tally with the Anglican Church areas of jurisdiction and titles of the heads of these divisions: Bishop over a diocese, Archdeacon over Archdeaconry, Rural Dean over a Rural Deanery, Priest over a Parish and Lay Reader over a church. According to Archbishop Gideon Charles Owalo this titles came from the Anglican Church and were first introduced by Meshack Onyango who worked with Bishop Petro Ouma.

5.10.5 Clerical Robes

The NC mode of dressing for the clergy follows the Anglican Church vestments. The clerical robes will include a cassock, a surplice and a scarf for all the clergy and Bishops. The cassock takes several shades: blue for church teachers and lay readers, green for Rural Deans, Purple for Archdeacons and yellow for the Bishops. On top of the Cassock will be a surplice (wide ranging from hip length to knee length with wide sleeves). Every cleric has a scarf that will have colors according to the rank and order of ordination. The Bishops will have on their heads a mitre.

5.10.6 The NC and the Cross

The NC has one outstanding difference with most Christian denominations in the fact that the symbol of the cross does not exist in the church. The NC as a church stands different from the other churches because it does not display the sign of the cross prominently on the vestment, buildings or Linen. The symbol of the cross is used only on baptism. On the use of the cross in other Churches Owalo (128) has this to say:

Many Church goers wear a cross or have a crucifix in their homes and crosses are found in many church buildings. As the Jews professed to revere the law so do Romanists claim reverence to the cross. They exalt the symbol of Christ’s sufferings, while in their lives deny Him whom it represents...Everywhere is seen the insignia of the cross. Everywhere it is outwardly honoured and exalted. But the teachings of Christ are deeply buried beneath a mass of senseless traditions, false interpretations

and vigorous exaltations. The saviour's words concerning the begeted Jews apply with still greater force to the leaders of the Roman Catholic Church and other protestant missions 'They bind heavy burdens hard to bear, and lay them on the shoulders of men...' (Owalo, 128).

Instead of the cross the NC has a flag. Like a number of the African initiated churches the NC has a flag which has the following colours, Green, Blue, Red and White. The flag will always bear the name of the Diocese or Church. The NC flag will be placed strategically to announce the presence of an NC congregation gathered at a particular place. Olali (2015) notes that the flag is always raised whenever Nomiya faithful assemble for prayer as signal and invite of people for prayer.

5.11 Influence of Catholic Church on Johana Owalo

The influences of the Roman Catholic Church on Owalo's theology are numerous. The Catholic Church like the Anglican Church came to Africa with the missionary enterprise that defined belief in God based on the prescription and understanding of the Old and New Testaments. Owalo was taught as a catechist to accept that the scriptures were sufficient for salvation. Owalo came face to face with the missionary zeal of the Roman Catholic Church to make converts of Africans who otherwise were destined for hell (Burgmann). He was baptized in the Roman Catholic Church where he learnt the details of what is necessary for one to be considered a full member of the Church. In the same church he served as a catechist in whom the Church placed a lot of trust.

The Catholic influence can be said to be more negative than positive. Prophet Owalo's experience in the heavenly vision to a large extent led him to dismiss the long held tradition of the Roman Catholic Church. These included for example: the Trinity, the Mary worship, the Clerical marriage and Purgatory. According to Ndeda (2005):

He refuted the reliability of the Catholic doctrine of purgatory, since on his way to heaven he only saw hell and not purgatory. ...Owalo was warned against these because they marred the image of God. This experience touched very closely on the cardinal Catholic belief in the supremacy and infallibility of the Pope and the intercession of the saints particularly that of Mary. In fact in the first heaven the abode of men, he was informed that the Pope was barred from heaven because of misleading the faithful to rely on relics and images in worship and to believe in the intercession of the saints. In the third heaven another cardinal Catholic sacrament was declared an unacceptable sacrifice before God. Owalo was to teach his adherents that the only acceptable sacrifice was a broken and contrite heart. The Catholic practice the sacrament of bread and wine, which they consider as the real or actual

body and blood of Christ, was declared sinful and Owalo was reprimanded for having tasted the components... (Ndeda 2005:7) (See Owalo, 22).

The influence of the Roman Catholic can also be said to be in the scriptures. The Roman Catholic Church during this period did not allow the adherents free use of the scriptures. This definitely led prophet Owalo to seek the truth for himself as he read the scriptures. He was considered an ardent seeker for truth which he sought for himself in the Scriptures.

5.11.1 The NC and Icons

The Roman Catholic Church has icons prominently displayed in the worship space. The NC does not approve the use of religious images. Owalo (131) argues that Jehovah is not pleased with the use of material objects of devotion but requires that the adherents put their full trust in him, the true living God. Use of images and statues in worship he argues is a reproach to God (John 4:12, Isaiah 40:18; Acts 17:29) and it proved fatal to the nation of Israel (Exodus 20:4-5). Olali (2015) concurs saying displaying of images borders on Devil worship.

5.12 Influence of the Unitarian faith on Johana Owalo

According Owalo (61), Prophet John Owalo, after in-depth perusal of the Holy Bible, held that there is only one God, and he alone is to be worshipped. Followers of the NC, therefore, are forbidden to adore other gods. In the same manner the church followers are forbidden to commit adultery, to gamble, to eat pork and to drink wine. They have also to follow certain prayer rituals. Owalo (61) argues that all members of the NC are “practically Unitarians” because: “they completely reject the doctrine of the Trinity.” And like the Unitarians they believe that the Almighty God is one person only, God the Father who is all powerful and eternal. Owalo stayed with Judge Morrison at Mombasa immediately following his baptism at Ojola. Judge Morrison according to Ogot (2009) was a Unitarian.

Although one may argue that the teachings on Unitarianism could be traced back to Judge Morrison who was a professed Unitarian, the influence is glaring and complete and this affirms the authenticity of the source. There is evidence that Judge Morrison on learning of Owalo’s experience in the third heaven advised him of the need for further grounding and especially at Ojola (Ogot, 2009). It is also evident that he stayed severally with Judge Morrison, earlier at Kisumu, then Mombasa and later when he was Town Magistrate at Nairobi. During these periods of interaction more knowledge **could have been imparted to**

Prophet Owalo especially now that he had the previous experience at Ojola and Maseno and that of the third heaven to use as yard sticks against the new found knowledge. It is also instructive that during this period his heavenly experience was continuously challenged and strengthened by the constant visits by angel *Jibraeli* questioning “why he had not undertaken the commission” (Ogot, 2009).

Unitarianism belief the world over can be said to stand on the basis of rejection of creeds while at the same time being committed to freedom, reason and tolerance (Ferguson and Sinclair, 1988).

According to Ferguson and Sinclair (1988): “Though Unitarians reject creeds and have a wide spectrum of beliefs, they stress the oneness of God and deny the divinity of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit...Organized ecclesiastically only since the Reformation, they have some precursors such Monarchians and Arians.”

Although Unitarians reject the creeds, the NC accepts a creed and recites it in her worship services. The NC creed has some fundamental differences with the Apostles creed as cited above. Unitarians argue that Trinitarianism has no scriptural basis and its continued proclamation and teaching entrenches corruption in the church, and could be the reason for non-conversion of Jews and Muslims. The development of the Unitarian theology yielded several tributaries but Ferguson and Sinclair (1988) argue that the common thread running through them is that worship is to be addressed only to the Father. Although Jesus has religious authority there is a distinction between the Father and Jesus in worship. The greatest weakness of the Unitarians is that they have never displayed a strong missionary spirit (Ferguson and Sinclair, 1988). The same may be said of the NC which for years has remained predominantly a Luo Nations denomination despite crossing over into the neighboring countries.

5.13 Influence of the Luo Culture

The Luo culture had such a big influence on the NC. Prophet Owalo was born and was socialized in the Luo Culture. Owalo went through the Luo rites of passage for example *Nak* (the removal of the six lower teeth) at puberty. It is possible he also went through *tuchruok* (a puberty rite in which boys about the age of fourteen and fifteen cut the *ligament frenulum*

of the penis, (Ocholla-Ayayo, 1984). He came to know the Luo God *Nyasaye* as transcendent and molder of the universe and all that is seen and unseen.

Owalo grew up in a polygamous family and was the son to the second wife. He himself got married to two wives. During his time the Luo prescription for the taking care of widows was prevalent and it is important to note that his brother Nyunja married his widow Elizabeth Alila with whom she sired the immediate former Archbishop the late Gideon Charles Owalo.

The Luo are communitarian, they are actually best described by the African saying: “I am because we are and since we are therefore I am” (Mbiti, 1969). The community defines and prescribes how an individual should behave. Individual actions are dictated by the community with its set of rules that describe the rewards and retribution for members. The NC is a church where merry-making through music, drumming and dance are held dearly. This is a powerful indication of the Luo cultural background.

5.14 A Biblical Analysis of the Double Rite of Passage in the NC

This study discusses the double rite of passage of circumcision and baptism in the NC in their cradle connection with the rite of birth. A woman who gives birth in the NC is expected together with the new born infant to be in a seclusion of forty days and eighty days for a male and female infant respectively. During this period the rites of circumcision and baptism will be performed and at the end of the period of seclusion an elaborate service of purification and reincorporation of the infant and the mother takes place. All the three stages delineated by Van Gennep are clear in the NC birth, circumcision baptism and purification rituals.

5.14.1 Covenant: The Basis of the Double Rite of Passage

The religious rites of baptism and circumcision affirm the divine initiative whereby God moves graciously to man in every age and time declaring his desire for fellowship. God and man come into a mutual relationship, a bilateral relationship also understood as covenant partnership (Brueggemann, 2003). In the movement a series of promises are evident. According to Marshall et al (1996) the covenant defines the totality of divine promises which are applied to divinely nominated recipients. This relationship referred to as

“appropriation dialogue” entails mutual reciprocity whereby God moves **to establish a** relationship with human beings and human beings in return respond in obedience.

The Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments is replete with examples as discussed below that convey the centrality of these rites in a relationship with God. In the Scriptures the concept of circumcision progressively assumes a different understanding as an event with spiritual overtones much more than a surgical operation on the flesh of the body (Jer. 31:31). This seems to be what the Bible refers to as circumcision of the heart (Deut. 10:6, Col. 2:11; Jer. 4: 4, 9:26) and it means being united in heart and soul to the Lord (O’Donovan, 1995). Entering the new covenant according to Paul means being baptized into Christ’s death and being raised with him into new life (Rom 6:11 c.f. Col. 2:12). The circumcision of the heart is effected by the gift of the Spirit and it has rendered circumcision unnecessary (Gal. 3:3; 5:3-5; Rom. 2:28-29). Christ’s once-for-all sacrifice is God’s covenant that opens human beings to blessings and responsibilities of life in the new community.

5.14.2 Biblical Basis for Circumcision

Male circumcision, which is the surgical removal of the foreskin (prepuce) from the penis, manifests as a puberty rite or an infant rite of passage in the communities where it is practiced. Religious male circumcision is seen in Islam and Judaism. Other religious groups that practice circumcision include the Coptic Church, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, the Lemba among others. In the NC male circumcision presents itself majorly as infant circumcision and in a few cases among the mature adults. Here it is believed that the genesis of circumcision can be traced to the brief time that Owalo fellowshipped with the Muslims in Kisumu. The NC circumcision however has all the trappings of the Jewish circumcision.

5.14.2.1 Jewish Circumcision

Jewish circumcision according to the book of Genesis was first practiced by the patriarchs and it involved all males of the household (Gen.17). This rite was enjoined upon Abraham and his descendants as a “token of the covenant” between him and all the generations thereafter (O’Donovan, 1995). Jewish circumcision *brit milah* is performed on the eighth day of a newborn son's life by a specialist called a *mohel*. This ritual has been performed by the Jewish People unchanged, for almost 4000 years. Dosick (1995) observes that: “When Abraham declared his belief in the One Lord God, he was commanded by God to circumcise

himself ... In affirmation of the covenant between God and Abraham- and thus between God and the Jewish People in every succeeding generation-every Jewish male is circumcised on the eighth day of his life. The text of Gen. 17 remains the sole biblical account of the origin of Israelite circumcision: This is my covenant with you and your descendants after you, the covenant you are to keep: Every male among you shall be circumcised.... My covenant in your flesh is to be an everlasting covenant. Any uncircumcised male who has not been circumcised in the flesh, will be cut off from his people: he has broken my covenant (Gen. 17:7-11).

Circumcision was later integrated into Mosaic system in connection with the Passover (Ex. 12:44). Aliens were expected to undergo circumcision before they could be allowed to partake of the covenant feast of the Passover (Ex. 12: 48) or even to marry into the Jewish community (Gen. 34:14-16). Non-Israelites especially the Philistines were often described as uncircumcised (1 Sam. 14:6, 1Sam. 21:4). Uncircumcision was viewed as a blemish which could only be removed through circumcision. The Book of Jeremiah among others testify that circumcision was continued throughout the OT (Jer. 9:25-26). The child was born into a community and circumcision was a sign of belonging to the community of Israel (Marshall et al, 1996; McGrath, 2001).

Circumcision was a requirement of God's covenant along with Sabbath observance and food laws. A good example is seen when Joshua had to circumcise all males who were born in the wilderness just before celebrating the Passover (Jos. 5: 2-9). Failure to observe this strict ordinance resulted in excision from the covenant community. According to Gen. 17:12-13 any uncircumcised male shall be cut off from his people because he has broken my covenant. Every male within the household who is bound by rules and regulations that governed the *bet-ab* (Fathers house) were to be circumcised (Gen. 17:12-13). However, non-Israelites who wished to partake of the Passover were of necessity required to be circumcised:

This is the ordinance for the Passover: "no foreigner shall eat of it, but any slave who has been purchased may eat of it after he has been circumcised; no bound or hired servant may eat of it...If an alien who resides with you wants to celebrate the Passover to the Lord, all his males shall be circumcised then he may draw near to celebrate it; he shall be regarded as a native of the land (Ex 12:43).

Circumcision and obedience to the covenant went hand in hand. The transformation of one's heart was of essential significance. Being uncircumcised among the Israelites was not only a shame but a disgrace. When Joshua eventually reinstated circumcision of the children of Israel after forty years in the wilderness God expressed his pleasure with the aftermath saying: "Today I have rolled away from you the disgrace of Egypt" (Jos. 5:9). It is significant that the circumcision at Gilgal for all who were born in the wilderness using flint knives preceded the Passover celebration (Jos. 5:10-11).

The physical surgery of the foreskin is also seen in other scripture passages e.g. in Gen. 34:1-35:5 we find the sons of Jacob persuading the Shechemites to accept circumcision in order to win the hand of Dinah their sister who had been raped by Shechem the son of Hamor. This the Shechemites gladly did but in their time of healing on the third day when they were vulnerable they were attacked and utterly destroyed by Jacob's sons. In another interesting story we find King Saul demanding of David to bring to him one hundred foreskins of the Philistines as part of the dowry settlement for his daughter Michal (1Sam. 18:25). One of the most difficult texts to understand is the circumcision by Zipporah, Moses' wife in the wilderness when the Lord visited them with imminent death: "On the way, at a place where they spent the night, the Lord met him and tried to kill him. But Zipporah took a flint and cut off her son's foreskin and touched Moses feet with it, and said, "Truly you are a bride-groom of blood to me! So he let him alone. It was then she said, "A bridegroom of blood by circumcision."

5.14.2.2Circumcision and Jewishness

The Israelites used the name a *relin* (uncircumcised) as a pejorative term particularly for the Philistines (1 Sam. 14:6; 31:4). The term uncircumcised that takes several meanings portray the Israelite progressive understanding of circumcision especially from the spiritual connotation. In Isaiah 52:1 the meaning of unpure (*tame*) comes out:

Awake, awake,
Put on your strength, O Zion!
Put on your beautiful garments,
O Jerusalem, the holy city;
For the uncircumcised and the unclean
Shall enter you no more

The same word in Leviticus brings out the meaning of impermeable: "... if then their uncircumcised heart is humbled and they make amends for their iniquity, then will I remember my covenant with Jacob..." (Lev. 26:41-42). In Deuteronomy 10:12-16 yet another application of circumcision is seen where God commands his people to circumcise the foreskin of their hearts (cf Jer. 4:4): "So now, O Israel, what does the Lord your God require of you? Only to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him ... yet the Lord set his heart in love on your ancestors alone and chose you, their descendants after them, out of all the peoples as it is today. Circumcise, then the foreskin of your heart, and do not be stubborn any longer."

God's standard that enables a harmonious relationship with his people is much more than the circumcision of the foreskin evidenced in the male procreation organ. This then is the development of the understanding of circumcision as more of a spiritual requirement than a physical mark on the male body. Prophet Jeremiah makes this emphasis when he observes that neither the circumcised nor the uncircumcised will escape God's wrath:

The days are coming, says the Lord, when I will attend to all those who are circumcised only in the foreskin: Egypt, Judah, Edom, the Ammonites, Moab, and all those with shaven temples who live in the desert. For all these nations are uncircumcised and all the house of Israel is uncircumcised in heart (Jer.9:25-26).

Another dimension of circumcision as a spiritual act is evident when it is related to the hardness of hearing. In Jer. 6:10 we read of God's despair at having no community that waits upon him:

To whom shall I speak and give warning,
That they may hear?
See, their ears are uncircumcised, they cannot listen.
The word of the Lord is to them an object of scorn;
They take no pleasure in it (Jer. 6:10).

John the Baptist and Jesus in accordance with the Jewish prescription were circumcised on the eighth day after birth (Lk. 1:59; 2:21). Circumcision is not required by Judaism for one to be considered Jewish and similarly it was not required by the church for one to be considered a Christian. The first Christian Council of 49 AD made this explicitly clear: "For it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to impose on you no further burden than these essentials: that you abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols and from blood and from what is strangled, and from fornication" (Acts 15:28).

Circumcision is a foundation feature of NT Judaism. It occasioned the Judaistic controversies of the apostolic period. Circumcision of proselytes was the occasion of controversies between Hellenistic Jews (Greek speaking) and Palestinian Jews (Hebrew speaking). These Judaizing teachers (a section of Jewish Christians in the early Church) insisted that except the Gentiles who turned to Christianity were circumcised they could not be saved (Acts 15:1) (See Anderson, 1983). The Jerusalem Council of AD 49 discussing this controversy decreed that circumcision should not be imposed upon the Gentiles because salvation is by grace:

...And God who knows the human hearts testified to them by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as he did to us and in cleansing their hearts by faith he has made no distinction between them and us. Now therefore why are you putting God to the test by placing on the neck of the disciples a yoke that neither our ancestors nor we have been able to bear: On the contrary, we believe that we will be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, just as they will (Acts 15: 1-29).

The weight of this controversy continued in the NT times: At one point Paul circumcised Timothy 'because of the Jews who were in town' (Acts 16: 2-5); at another point Paul did not circumcise Titus (Gal. 2:3) although both were of Greek descent. Paul who identified with the Gentiles and who called himself: "Apostle to Gentiles" attacked circumcision but not with consistency. Paul wrote in praise of circumcision in Rom. 3:1-2:

Then what advantage has the Jew? Or what is the value of circumcision? Much, in every way. For in the first place the Jews were entrusted with the oracles of God. What if some were unfaithful? Will their faithlessness nullify the faithfulness of God? By no means! Although everyone is a liar, let God be proved true...

The Jews in the NT by associating circumcision with Moses had forgotten its more fundamental association with Abraham. Jesus had to remind them that it antedated Moses (Jn. 7:22). Paul in Gal. 5:2-3 says that the Mosaic connection was obnoxious to Christianity; their submitting to circumcision was a contradiction of their faith in Christ (Marshall et al, 1996). This is clear in verse 6: "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything; the only thing that counts is faith working through love (Gal. 5:6). Faith in Christ sealed in the rite of baptism seems to supersede any other marking and this thus is the essence of this study; why does the NC fall back to circumcision?"

5.14.2.3 Paul's New Message in Circumcision

In radical shift from the traditional conception of circumcision, Paul gives it a new and significant understanding; Obedience to the law gives circumcision its true value. Paul talks of an inward circumcision, the circumcision of the heart, which is of benefit only when one truly observes the Law. When the Law is broken then circumcision becomes uncircumcision. (Rom. 2:25-27).

Circumcision indeed is of value if you obey the law, but if you break the law; your circumcision has become uncircumcision. So, if those who are uncircumcised keep the requirements of the law, will not their uncircumcision be regarded as circumcision? Then those who are physically uncircumcised but keep the law will condemn you that have the written code and circumcision and break the law

True circumcision, Paul says is that of the heart, it is spiritual and not that required in written Law; it is not outward and physical. Further he notes that an uncircumcised person who is righteous is to be regarded as if circumcised. A man is not a Jew by outward appearance; the true Jew is a Jew inwardly: 'Rather, a person is a Jew is one who is one inwardly, and a real circumcision is a matter of the heart-It is spiritual and not literal. Such a person receives praise not from others but from God' (Rom. 2:29 cf Rom. 2:1-2). Adewuya (2009) sounding Paul's stand declares that circumcision or lack of it is not what commends one to God but the important thing is to keep God's commands right where you are, in the situation you find yourself in. The importance of being unperturbed by the situation of our calling is emphasized in the following text of 1 Cor. 7:18-19:

However that may be, let each of you lead the life that the Lord has assigned, to which God called you...Was anyone at the time of his call already circumcised? Let him not seek to remove the marks of circumcision. Was anyone at the time of his call uncircumcised? Let him not seek circumcision. Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing; but obeying the commandments is everything. Let each of you remain in the condition which you were called.

In the epistle to the Galatians Paul stresses the fact that neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value apart from faith expressing itself in love (Gal.5:2-5). Paul in Colossians connects the removal of the sinful nature in baptism to circumcision in Christ.

Baptism like circumcision is a sign that one stood in a covenant relationship with God: "In him you were also circumcised ...not with a circumcision done by the hands of men but with circumcision done by Christ" (Col. 2:11-13).

Marshall et al (1996) says that Paul's argument against necessity of circumcision was that the circumcision made without hands also referred to as the circumcision of the heart is what mattered most (Col. 2:11; Rom. 2:28-29). This circumcision of the heart he says is effected by the gift of the Spirit and it has rendered circumcision unnecessary (Phi. 3:3; Gal. 3:3; 5:35). In Rom. 2:28-29 Paul declares that it is this gift of the Spirit that defined the Christian:

If anyone has reason to be confident in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, a member of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews, as to the Law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless. Yet whatever gains I had these I have come to regard as loss because of Christ. More than that, I regard everything as loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord.

The progression and development in Paul's theology is evident in his rejection of the practice of circumcision and even out rightly condemning those who were still engrossed in the practice or those who for one reason or another reverted to and became proponents and supporters of the practice. He accused the Galatian Christians who promoted the practice as turning from the Spirit to the flesh and on this note he strongly condemned their wavering spirit: "Are you so foolish? Having started with the Spirit, are you now ending with the flesh. Did you experience so much for nothing? Their change of heart is so disturbing that Paul wonders what power outside them has caused this change: You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you?"

Paul is so infuriated by the advocates of circumcision that he accuses them of promoting the practice for individual gratification and gain: "It is those who want to make a good showing in the flesh that try to compel you to be circumcised-... Even the circumcised do not themselves obey the law, but they want you to be circumcised so that they can boast about your flesh." Gal. 6:12-13). In the same vein Paul warns Christians in his letter to the Philippians to beware of the proponents of circumcision: "Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, beware of those who mutilate the flesh! (Phil.3:2). Consequently, Paul identifies a true Christian as one who worships in the Spirit of God and who boasts in Christ Jesus and who has no confidence in the flesh as the circumcision (Phil. 3:3).

Marshall et al (1996) concludes that for Paul the Spirit had replaced circumcision as the hallmark of the covenant people: the evidence of the Spirit in a person's life serving as sign

and a seal of the new covenant just as circumcision served for the old covenant (2Cor.3:3-6; Jer. 31:31-34; 2 Cor.1:22). For Paul therefore the only thing that matters is faith: for in Christ

Jesus neither circumcision nor circumcision counts for anything... (Gal. 5:6). The New Testaments conclusion that relationship with Christ sealed by baptism outweighs all other mediums of connecting with God raises the question of the continued stress and relevance of circumcision in the NC.

If baptism with its essential mark of the cross is the way into the covenant and eternal salvation and that circumcision is no longer required, then this study is justified in asking why the practice is central to the NC.

5.15 Metaphorical use of circumcision (Circumcision as a Spiritual Component)

a) ‘Circumcision’ of the Heart

Circumcision of the flesh of the heart is connected in one way or another to righteousness. In Deut. 10:16 circumcision of the foreskin of the heart is related to eradication of the stubborn spirit and it provides an opportunity for the present generation and the succeeding generations (your offspring’s) to love the Lord God with all the heart and soul. Circumcise yourselves to the Lord and take away the foreskins of your heart (Jer. 4:4). This means that God’s people should dedicate themselves to God (close to what Paul writes to the Romans in chapter 12 present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God which is your spiritual worship). Prophet Ezekiel presents God’s clear message on the same: “Thus says the Lord God: No foreigner, uncircumcised in heart or uncircumcised in flesh... shall enter my sanctuary (Ezek. 44:9). Talmage (1975) concludes from these verses that both the circumcision of the flesh i.e. the flesh of the foreskin and of the heart are obligatory: “If you are prevented from {entering} His sanctuary on one count, you are most certainly {from doing so} on two. For whoever transgresses the commandments and murders, fornicates, steals, oppresses, speaks abusively to people and mocks and robs them is uncircumcised in heart (Talmage, 1975).

b) ‘Circumcision’ of the Mouth (Ex. 6:12, 30)

Communication can be said to be effective when the recipient receives and appreciates the full content and import of the speaker’s message. In the Exodus episode Moses feared that

he will be misread. Moses twice refers to himself as a poor speaker: “I am of uncircumcised lips. How then will pharaoh listen to me, poor speaker that I am?” In the same vein Isaiah termed his limitation as ‘unclean lips’: “Woe is to me I am a man of unclean lips, yet my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts” (Isa.6:5). It took God’s messenger to touch his lips with a live coal in order to purge him of the impurities. Jeremiah who confessed his limitation had God himself touch his mouth (“Now I have put my words in your mouth” Jer. 1:9). This three incidents show clearly that the word of God washes away the ritual pollutants giving the servant of God “circumcised lips.”

c) ‘Circumcision’ of the Eyes, and of the Ear

God’s word fails to be effective as it falls on deaf ears. In Jer. 6:10 the “uncircumcised ear” fails to hearken to the word of God. “To whom shall I speak, and give warning, that they hear? Behold, their ear is uncircumcised, and they cannot hearken: behold the word of the Lord is unto them a reproach; they have no delight in it. When the ears and eyes are opened

God’s people behold the beauty of the world where God has placed them. Isaiah in a negative message challenges God’s people to turn to him:

Go and say to this people
‘Keep Listening, but do not comprehend;
keep looking, but do not understand.’
Make the mind of this people dull, and stop their ears and shut their
eyes, so that they may not look with their eyes, and listen with their
ears, and comprehend with their minds,
and turn and be healed.” (Isaiah 6:9)

In Isaiah 44:18 the circumcision of the heart is connected to the circumcision of the eyes and that of the mind: “They do not know, nor do they comprehend; for their eyes are shut, so that they cannot see, and their minds as well, so that they cannot understand.” A New Testament quote from the Book of Acts 7:51 support the connection of pollutants to uncircumcision of both the heart and the ears: “You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you are forever opposing the Holy Spirit just as your ancestors used to do.”

5.16 Origin of Christian Baptism

Christian baptism is the sacrament of initiation into life in Christ. It marks the beginning of the journey of faith and discipleship that lasts throughout one’s life. In baptism a person is

immersed in water, or water is poured or sprinkled upon him or her, in the Triune name of God. Authorization of baptism is often found in the command of Jesus:

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you... (Matt.28:19-20).

Baptism is not only based on this command by Jesus but on his freewill submission to be baptized by John the Baptist.³ In the act of baptism Jesus enters into solidarity with the lost humanity. Baptism is a sure sign of fellowship and union with Christ and all the saints. Baptism as a sacrament serves that very special function of enhancing cohesion and integration (Migliore, 2004).

Baptism according to McGrath (2001) is the second major sacrament in Christianity (a sacrament is an outward sign of a special inward grace on the person who participates). Baptism is the rite of washing with water as a sign of religious purification and consecration (Placher, 2001). When Nicodemus the Pharisee visits Jesus in

John's Gospel, Jesus tells him he must be born again; "No one can enter the reign of God without being born again (John 3:4-5). Jesus himself was baptized by John the Baptist an event that according to Placher (2001) is described in the first three Gospels and the fourth alludes to it. The crucifixion of Christ is the most important element of the new covenant. Entering the new covenant means being baptized into Christ's death and being raised with him into new life (Rom. 6:11 cf Col. 2:12).

Baptism rite was practiced frequently in the OT. It signified purity or cleansing from sin and devotion to God. Since baptism was first instituted in the OT many have practiced it as a tradition yet have not fully understood its significance and meaning. Bathing in the Old Testament corresponds to this rite. Yet baptism became the way a Gentile convert entered the Jewish community. The beginning of Jewish baptism is shrouded in obscurity. Baths for ritual purity is a possible source (Placher, 2001).

Placher (2001) notes that in the Old Testament we have several examples that are connected to baptism: In Gen. 1:2 the spirit of God swept over the face of the waters; in the story of Noah all living things were destroyed except Noah and those saved in the ark; When the Israelites escaped from Egypt the Lord sent a great wind that divided the waters turning the

sea into a dry land thus the Israelites were delivered; Forty years later the same miracle happened and the Israelite procession crossed the dry Jordan bed.

In the NT Jesus uses the image of baptism to relate the life of the adherents to his mission. Baptism (going down into water and coming up out of it) in the Christian thought was related to several key events in the Old Testament that include for example: Salvation of Noah, his family and living creatures and the deliverance of Israelites across the dry bed of the dry sea (Placher, (2001). This is what Paul writing to the Corinthians implies when he says “that our ancestors were all under the cloud and all passed through the sea, and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea...” (1 Cor.10:1-2).

Migliore (2004) says that baptism marks the beginning of the Christians participation in the life, death, and resurrection of Christ. This truth is clearly symbolized when the candidate goes down into the water (a picture of going down the grave) and coming up out of the water (a picture of being raised with Christ) and beginning a new walk in Christ (Grudem, 2003). This participation in the life, death and resurrection of Christ according to Migliore (2004) presents several sides to baptism in the NT. Two key elements bring out the relationship between Christ and his Church and these are: Baptism as washing of a sin-stained life and baptism as incorporation. In the former God’s forgiveness washes away the sins of those who are truly repentant who begin a new life in Christ (1Cor.6:11). In the later humanity is united with Christ and with each other and with all the people of God in every time and place. In this new fellowship the members lose their individuality as they become members of a new family/ citizens of a new society. Magesa (2004) concurs noting that baptism is the effective incorporation into the Christian clan of the persons being baptized as pure and responsible adults.

5.16.1 Baptism in the Early Church

The earliest Christians according to Gonzalez did not consider themselves followers of a new religion (Gonzalez 1984; P’Bitek, 1970). This affirms that at its beginning Christianity was preached by Jews to Jews as reformed Judaism. The Jews, the first converts to Christianity had imposed circumcision on the Gentile converts as a pre-requisite to their admission to the Christian faith (Acts 15:1-7). Anderson (1983) notes that those Gentiles who chose to be admitted into Judaism were required to be circumcised and baptized and also to keep the whole Law of Moses. This scenario gave rise to the Jerusalem Church

Council of AD 49 that decided to abandon circumcision (Cross *et al.*, 1997). O'Donovan concurs and notes physical circumcision was then abolished and replaced with the ritual of water baptism as a necessary sign of belonging to God's covenant people (Acts 15:1-6).

The rules of baptism were developed in the early church. Right from the 1st century baptism has been by triple immersion or affusion on the head. Baptism has been in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The Didache which is an extant document from the first century outlines the duties of a baptism candidate as well as the method of administering baptism. In the 2nd century, Tertullian notes that baptism was by triple immersion, preceded by a preparatory fast and vigil. Anointing using oil and imposition of the hand by the minister were expected. The candidate was also expected to confess his/her sins and renounce the devil.

Baptism in the Early Church was understood as the washing away of sin. In baptism, the old person has to die so that the new one can be born; Christians share in Christ's resurrection. It also involves joining a community: through baptism we become part of the church, united not only to Christ but to all those who are also united to Christ (Placher, 2001). The candidates were to be dressed in white after the baptism and then participate in a symbolic meal of milk and honey (Eucharist) (Cross *et al.*, 1997; Placher, 2001). As from the 2nd century baptism was to be done during Easter and Pentecost but later Christmas and Epiphany were also accepted.

The practice of baptism in the NC seems to be based on the gains made as from the times of the early Church. However its departure from the early church is based on the choice of two specific times for male and female infant baptism. On the eighth day male infants on top of baptism are circumcised; female infants are baptized on the fourteenth day. The question remains why and when this departure was chosen as the path to God.

5.16.2 Infant Baptism

Infant Baptism is that rite of passage that is acknowledged and practiced in the majority of Christian churches worldwide; yet rejected by a number of churches. Baptism entails giving of a new name and the rite normally involves sprinkling of water on the head of the infant as the baptism formula of baptism in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit is pronounced by the priest. For this reason baptism is also popularly known as

'christenings' a name derived from 'Christ-naming', since it would be when the child would be given his/her Christian name publicly. Baptism is a joyous occasion that demands the presence of the parents and God Parents and congregation that would contain in many instances friends and relatives. The key role of the God Parents and parents is to make promises to bring the child up in the Christian faith. This they do by making solemn vows on behalf of the infant, the same vows that will be repeated when the child comes of age and goes before the Bishop for confirmation.

Infant baptism has continued to attract criticism over the centuries (Migliore, 2004; Placher, 2001). These arguments include for example: Infant baptism has no solid biblical foundation; It only became normal in the post-apostolic period and not the New Testament period; Baptism is a witness to the grace of God and is a mark of the response by human to this grace; Because infants cannot make a meaningful response to this grace the theological meaning of baptism becomes obscured. Such opposition has been seen in the Baptist tradition and in the writings of Tertullian and those of Karl Barth (McGrath, 2001; Migliore, 2004).

These arguments have been countered by reference to several covenantal promises of God given to believers and to their children (Acts 2:39) and the fact that scriptural evidence shows instances where entire households were baptized (Acts 16:15, 33; 1 Cor.1:16). Scholars have debated whether these families included infants. By second century Christians were baptizing infants (Placher, 2001). Infant baptism has been viewed as a sign of the covenant between God and his people. Baptism of infants inside the church is seen as a direct counterpart to the Jewish rite of circumcision.

The church based on scriptures has practiced believer's baptism (for those who have given reasonable evidence of believing in Christ) and infant baptism (administered to all infant children of believing parents) (Grudem, 2003). Infant baptism is one area that Christians continue to differ (Placher, 2001). There seems to be no specific reference in the NT for the baptism of infants and according to McGrath the NT does not explicitly forbid it. There are a number of passages that can be interpreted as condoning it. It is possible that the parallel with the Jewish rite of circumcision led Christians to devise an equivalent rite of passage for Christian infants. It must be stressed that there is genuine uncertainty concerning both the historical origins and the social or theological causes of the practice. By second century the

practice had become normal (McGrath, 2001). Following McGrath (2001) on the uncertainty of the origins of infant baptism then the prescription of the eighth day and fourteenth day baptism for male and female infants respectively in the NC is a novelty. The desire to get to the origins of this new practice and its significance in this study is thus justified.

5.16.3 The NC and Baptism

The choice of the eighth day for the sacrament of baptism in the NC is based on the circumcision narratives of the infant John and Jesus in the text of the Gospel of Luke. The controversy surrounding the choice of name for the infant John brings to the fore the naming ceremony that forms part of the circumcision ritual (Lk.1:59-64). Luke 2:21 records that: “After eight days had passed, it was time to circumcise the child; and he was named Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.” In the NC Circumcision/ Baptism service the baptism is performed first as a distinct service led by a priest and followed by the circumcision service led by a *shariff*.

The NC understands that in performing baptism they seek the authority from heaven; authority is from God. Calling upon the name of God ensures that everything is sanctified particularly the waters of baptism. The NC assents that the Scripture is revelation concerning God the Father. According to Owalo (59-60):

...in calling on the name of the Father the Christians believe him to be the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ and our Father as well as our Creator, Preserver and Benefactor. Further he says that in baptism when we call on the name of Jesus we assent as Peter did: “Thou art Christ the son of the living God (Matt 16:16) and consent as Thomas did “My Lord and My God” (John, 20:28). We take Christ to be our Prophet, Priest and King and give up ourselves to be taught, saved and ruled by him as Mediator between God and men (1Timothy 2:5). And on calling on the Holy Spirit we give ourselves to his conduct and operation as our sanctifier, guide and comforter from the Almighty God (Owalo 59-60).

The NC baptism like that in most Christian churches is by immersion or affusion. Both believers (adult) and infant baptism are practiced in the NC. According to Owalo (81-82) Baptism must be by immersion:

A final question arises how must we be baptized? Or what is the mode of baptism? To this, the Bible shows only one way, and in view of its symbolism no other way will suffice. New Testament Christians have no doubt, because the very word “baptizes” means “to dip” or “to immerse.” There can be no question in their minds. Those who are plunged submerged or immersed into water are said to have been

baptized...Baptism by immersion is a symbol of death, burial and resurrection. This old self-serving nature suffers death when the spirit of God takes control of the life a symbol of the burial which follows the Christian death; the Christian is immersed or buried in the baptismal water...Baptism by immersion is the doorway into the church. It is sacred ordinance enjoined by Christ and observed by him. It is a public testimony of faith and allegiance by converted Christians who have love for the Lord, and are determined to follow him. It is a beautiful symbol of the most essential experience anyone can have (Owalo 81-82).

Owalo (82) says that the NC still practices infant baptism despite their inability to profess their faith in Christ. On this, Owalo follows the Anabaptist and declares that infants baptized in their infancy must be rebaptized: "Christians baptized as infants must be rebaptized (Anabaptists), because Christ said "He who shall believe and shall be baptized shall be saved." But infants do not believe. Thus under the Nomiya Church, it will be the responsibility of the parents and god parents to ensure that as soon as children are sufficiently prepared and ready, they are brought for confirmation. At such time they will take the baptism on their own (Owalo, 82).

Owalo (78) is clear that infant baptism is a prescription from God that can only be repealed by God himself:

Now it is a fact beyond dispute that children of God's people under the old dispensation were recognized as members of the Church. Circumcision was a sign and a seal of their membership...The New Testament does not exclude the children of believers from the church. It does not deprive them of any privilege they enjoyed under the Old Testament...The Church membership of infant believers has never been set aside. The ancient practice appointed by God himself, must remain a law of His Kingdom until repealed by the same divine authority (Owalo, 78).

From the foregoing, it is apparent that the NC baptism carries with it the same understanding as that practiced by all other denominations. There are two outstanding differences, one is that baptism in the NC for the infants is day specific: on the eighth day for male infants and on the fourteenth day for female infants. Baptism is also done in the context of circumcision for male infants. Two is that the formula for baptism in the NC is not in the triune formula: that is in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. In the NC the name of the Holy Spirit is not mentioned at all and the name of Christ is only called in the marking of the baptism candidate (*Kitap Lamo* 56).

5.16.4 Baptism and Circumcision as Covenant

It has been a long standing tradition within Christian theology to interpret baptism as the Christian equivalent of circumcision. Male infants born within the bounds of Israel were to have an outward sign of their membership of the people of God (McGrath (2001). Further he notes that infant baptism was thus analogous to circumcision as a sign of belonging to the covenant community. Placher (2001) observes that circumcision among the Jews was recognized as so important a ritual that it could be performed even on the Sabbath. He further notes that associating with Christ restores people to full membership in the community of Israel.

According to McGrath (2001) the more inclusive and gentle character of Christianity was publicly affirmed by infant baptism (of both male and female infants). This contrasted sharply with Judaism that recognized only the marking of male infants. The gentle character of the gospel was publicly demonstrated by the absence of pain or the shedding of blood. Baptism was not only a sign of belonging to a community (the church) but also the public demonstration of this membership (McGrath, 2004). Placher (2001) concurs noting that in this new community what matters most is not Hebrew descent but community with Jesus. The NC has chosen the gentler and the painful seals of belonging to a community. This is the double rite of passage whose practice brings together an Old Testament prescription and a New Testament prescription into a blend that is truly unique. The origins and significance of this hybrid practice is analyzed here below.

5.17 Circumcision and Baptism on the Eighth Day

The text of Gen 17:7-11 is clear that infant male circumcision is on the eighth day: “For the generations to come every male among you who is eight days old must be circumcised, including those born in your household or bought with money from a foreigner—those who are not your offspring.... Any uncircumcised male who has not been circumcised in the flesh, will be cut off from his people: he has broken my covenant. Circumcision on the eighth day has remained a central practice in Judaism for over 4000 years based on the prescription of Gen 17.

Circumcision for male infants can be seen also in a few cases across Africa. Instances of these are observed in Islam, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, the Abayudaya, the Lemba, the Coptic Orthodox Church of Egypt, and the Falasha of Ethiopia among others. Some of these

practices resemble that in the NC in one way or another. Circumcision in Islam does not have a specific time; the timing depends on country, family, culture and region. Infant circumcision on the seventh day after birth is seen in some regions. The influence of Islam on Owalo's theology is profound as seen above. The influence centers on the identity of God as one and he alone is to be worshipped. Owalo strictly identifies God as Jehovah who is God the Father and who alone is worthy of all honor and praise in worship. Like in Islam, Jesus is here identified not as God but as messenger.

5.18 Points of Contact between Jewish Circumcision and NC Circumcision

When Abram declared belief in the One Lord God, he was commanded by God to circumcise himself (remove the foreskin of his penis) as a physical sign of the covenant (Gen 17:10). As an affirmation of the covenant between God and the Jewish people in every succeeding generation, every Jewish male is circumcised on the eighth days of his life. Circumcision takes place on the eighth day of a boy's life counting the day of birth as day one – for example if a child is born on Tuesday before sundown, the *brit milah* takes place the following Tuesday. If however the birth takes place on Tuesday evening after sundown-then the *brit milah* takes place on the following Wednesday (Dosick,1995).

According to Dosick (1995) the *brit milah* is so central to Jewish life, that it takes precedence over everything else including Shabbat and even Yom Kippur. However medical consideration always supersedes religious law. If the health of the baby would in way be jeopardized by having circumcision on the eighth day, the *brit milah* is postponed until a physician certifies that the boy is healthy enough for the procedure. Although it is not a Jewish requirement to have godparents, many families choose to honor a close relative or friend with the designation (Dosick, 1995). Prayers and blessings are recited as part of the circumcision ceremony indicating that this circumcision is for the purpose of entrance into the covenant with God. Immediately following the procedure, appropriate prayers and blessings are made of the child's Hebrew name, the identity by which he will be known among the Jewish people (Dosick, 1995).

The *brit milah* just as in the NC most often takes place in the morning. That circumcision calls for an early morning surgery is well attested in the songs that are sang in connection with this great occasion: *Nyange momiyo anindo oko*-the **circumcision exercise that**

compels a candidate to spend the night in a vigil or *Pand Jo-Kowalo mingado kogwen*- the knife of the NC adherents that cuts at dawn.

Under certain circumstances according to Dosick (1995) ritual circumcision does not take place in the usual way for example when babies are born without a foreskin; babies who were medically circumcised before the eighth day or without proper prayers and blessings; adult male who convert to Judaism. Jewish law provides a way to turn a medical circumcision into a proper ritual circumcision *hatafat dam* (literally meaning drawing a drop of blood from the skin behind the head of the penis) and the proper blessings are recited. Here there is a concurrence with the NC practice that will also draw a drop of blood in the context of prayers and blessings.

Certain men and in liberal Judaism some women train to become a highly skilled expert in the art of ritual circumcision. This expert called a *mohel* (Dosick, 1995) is appointed by the father to act as his agent to circumcise his son and to recite the proper prayers and blessings. Here there is a stark contrast with NC understanding and practice: The NC has only male circumciser called *Jasharif* who are led into the job by the Holy Spirit. The *Jasharif* will do the physical surgery in the context of prayers and blessings.

Circumcision in the NC can be said to be one area where a lot of concrete success has been realized. Empirically the success over the last century is phenomenal, despite the lack of medically trained personnel and crudeness of the methods and tools employed. The traditional circumcision tools were very crude and could include the kitchen knife or the pocket knife. In the NC *Jasharif* is regarded as a mysterious man, a man who knows how to hide his tools of trade; they say that you do not see him carrying the knife but you only see the result of his work. No wonder the NC membership talks of *Pand Jo-Kowalo mi siaya a siaya to dhi*- the knife of Owalo's people that cuts in a flash. Traditionally there was no sterilization of the tools and no anesthesia. According Rev. Bernard Ogolla traditionally to stop bleeding fine dust could be put on the cut. Pieces of cloth were also used to cover the wound although this was always a result of great pain when dressing was being done. In the present, the *Jashariff* are now trained to use the surgical blade that they have to display openly and even hand over to the family after its use. *JaShariff* now uses Spirit, Iodine and Hydrogen Peroxide as agents that help in cleaning the wound and healing. Such wounds they have come to understand should not be bandaged.

Ouma Okongo (Okongo 2014) says that many NC believers were obviously led on this belief that having the evidence of the sharp sword on one's body was a license to heaven and many men could indulge in sinful acts in confidence that they already had on their bodies the mark of God. Archbishop G.C. Owalo was insistent that the Sharp Sword was the word of God that brings salvation.

While the above coincidences may be cited, circumcision in Judaism seems to be the only true origin of that practiced in the NC and particularly when it is again expressed in connection with the purification rites of women after child birth. In its details of performance for both infant and adult members and also the fact that it is performed in the context of prayers and blessings (religious circumcision) the NC practice bears resemblance to the Jewish practice. This fact is confirmed by the constant reference to the same scriptures by the NC membership in her worship to justify and support the practice.

5.19 The Theology of Golo or Yepo (Service of Cleansing of the Mother after 33/66 days)

John Mbogo Oidho of Ogwedhi Diocese observes that the process of making a full member of the NC involves three steps: baptism and circumcision, followed by a period of isolation that climaxes in the ceremony (*sawo*) of *Golo* or *yepo* (cleansing after child birth). The informants agreed that the baptism and circumcision service in the NC are so intertwined and interconnected with the period of seclusion for the mother and child that they cannot be handled minus the service of cleansing that crowns the period of seclusion. On the eighth day after birth in the morning the male infant is baptized first and then circumcised in a service that is held within the home of the parents. A priest and the *Shariff* are the key officials; the godparents and parents and a congregation is of necessity present. After this service the mother and her child are to remain in seclusion for thirty three days. On the other hand the baptism of the female infant is on the fourteenth day and thereafter the mother and her infant daughter remain in seclusion for sixty six days. The female infant does not undergo any other rite other than baptism. The informants agree that this prescription is as it is stipulated in the Book of Leviticus 12:1-8. Other texts including Num.6: Gen. 17 and Lk.2 are also used in conjunction with the Leviticus text. These texts then form the foundation on which the complex subject in its entirety is to be understood.

This is significant in that it implies that the import of this complicated process can only be understood by referring back to the Jewish prescription of the practice. Verse 3 of Lev.12 is critical to unraveling the essence of this process: “If a woman conceives and bears a male child she shall be ceremonially unclean seven days; as at the time of her menstruation, she shall be unclean”. The central issue here then is ritual impurity. Ritual cleanliness is required to keep a person in a state of ritual purity for the purpose of performing *mitzvot* commandments. One who is ritually unclean was not eligible for ritual observance with a full and complete heart. This ritual impurity in birth for the woman is comparable in terms of length and quality to the impurity at the time of her menstruation. According to Dosick (1995) the Torah has a number of instances where a person comes into a state of ritual impurity that are all related to the loss of essential elements of the body:

These circumstances all revolve around loss—loss of bodily fluids, loss of potential life, loss of life itself. In a state of loss a person was not considered whole and thus was not able to participate in ritual observance (for example bringing of sacrifice to the sanctuary).with a full and complete heart... Examples include a person with leprosy(Lev.13:3ff) considered to be a manifestation of some kind of spiritual defect; a person with any discharge from the body(Lev.15:2ff) considered to be a manifestation of a spiritual defect; a man who has a discharge of semen because this was understood as a loss of the potential for creation of life; a menstruating woman(Lev15:19) because this was considered as the loss of the potential for the creation of life; a woman following childbirth(Lev 12:2ff), because immediately after child birth a woman cannot conceive; a person who comes into contact with a corpse((Num.19:11ff), because a dead person cannot perform *mitzvot*. (Dosick, 1995).

A state of ritual purity, is reentered when one immerses in natural flowing water as a symbolic act of purification (Lev. 14:8; 15:5; 15:9; 22:6 and Deut. 23:12). The natural body of water can be a river, a stream, pond lake or ocean. The immersion removes any ritual impurity and the person is considered to be ritually pure. The water serves as a symbolic rebirth, and one emerges therefrom purified, and ready to forge ahead in a new beginning. Where conditions do not provide natural water the Jews are required to build a *mikveh* (a pool-like structure built to collect enough natural water). Over the *mikveh* is a building that allows for the protection of the person immersing. Immersion calls for one to be completely naked minus all jewelry, make-up, nail polish, bandages or anything else that may obstruct the water from touching every part of the body. A bath or a shower before entering the *mikveh* is necessary (Dosick, 1995).

Menstruating women are considered ritually impure because of the loss of both bodily fluid and most important the loss of potential life. They are therefore ineligible to participate in the ritual observances of the Jewish people. When the monthly flow begins a woman becomes *niddah* (literally it means to “remove or separate, expulsion or elimination”) According to Milgrom (1991) the word *niddah* originally referred to the discharge or elimination of menstrual blood which came to denote menstrual impurity. Milgrom, (1991) further observes that the word *niddah* also came to refer to the menstruant herself for she too was discharged or excluded from the society not by being kept at arm’s length from others but by being banished and quarantined in separate quarters. For a menstruating woman this marks the beginning of a period of sexual seclusion from her husband that lasts for five days of the menstrual flow plus another seven ‘clean’ or bloodless days, a total of twelve days. On the evening of completion of the twelfth day the woman goes to the *mikveh* to immerse as an act of symbolic purification (Dosick, 1995). This notion is upheld by the NC particularly in the exclusion of the menstruant from participating in the worship.

The seven days of ceremonially uncleanness of the mother of the newborn in Leviticus 12 is akin to that during her period of menstruation. This is well attested in Milgrom’s elucidation: “that the quality of the impurity and not just its length is equivalent to that of the menstruant.” He also argues that the mere statement that the period of the parturient impurity lasts seven (or fourteen, see verse 5) days assumes that this period is terminated by ablution (Milgrom, 1991). Seven days limit of impurity for the mother of a male child corresponds to the normal limit of the menstrual flow and the fact that it is shorter than that for female child has universal connotation. Milgrom (1991) cites several examples from various localities among them that for the Hittites where the mother’s impurity following the birth of a male was also shorter than for a female.

5.19.1 Expectation of the NC for a Mother in Seclusion

The mother of the newborn is to be in isolation for a total of forty days for the male child and eighty days for a female child. The circumcision and naming rites in the NC takes place on the eighth day of this isolation period and the naming of the female child is on the fourteenth day of the isolation period. During this period the NC prescription and expectation is as follows:

- a. They (mother of child) are to remain indoors and inaccessible to visitors. Visitors were said to affect the healing process especially of the circumcised infant, and more so a visitor who had been in touch with some form of uncleanness for example touching of a dead body. The adherents observed that a visitor in contact with a dead body would be a bad omen that may cause the wound that was healing to start bleeding again.
- b. The mother of child is not supposed cook, fetch firewood or water.
- c. The mother of child is not to greet anybody even a visitor with her hand.
- d. That the woman avoids contact with any item regarded as holy (the Bible or the priestly vestments).
- e. The woman does not attend any funeral even be it that of a very close relative. However, when the pangs of losing a loved one are such that the woman may not continue in her seclusion then a priest may be invited in to pray with her and release her from the vows. This then marks the end of her seclusion and the services of readmission are terminated. She will not attend any church service until her days of blood purification are completed.
- f. That the woman does not attend the Church service or any other such gatherings for worship purposes.
- g. During the period of seclusion the father is not to hold the child especially if he still has to go the general village activities including funerals.
- h. The woman and her husband have to retain separate beds for the period of isolation (Abstention). The adherents were very emphatic about this stressing that if the family cannot afford another bed then the husband must sleep on a mat. The priests who at the end of thirty three days or sixty six days of isolation are to be involved with the family in purification process repeatedly stated that they will always detect signs that abstention was not fully observed especially on the infant's state of health. A child who appears healthy, jovial and strong at the end of the isolation period will be displaying some of vital tell-tale signs indicating that the parents did not have sexual intercourse. Such a child will receive significant attention during the purification service in the church

before he/she and the mother are welcomed back to the community of adherents and the larger community of the Luo people.

- i. The NC made several arrangements to ensure that the above are strictly adhered to for example, wherever possible the woman could get a helper who would ensure that the water, firewood and other daily livelihood requirements were availed.
- j. Polygamy played a very vital role during this period of isolation because it enabled the man and the parturient to totally abstain from sexual intercourse. It also provided the man with a comfortable lodging other than the strained sleeping quarter with the woman under confinement. In this case a polygamous man would continue his conjugal rights with the other wives and would have little stress as far sexual intercourse was concerned. This arrangement assured the confined woman a period of uninterrupted rest whereby the child will on the day of purification be found healthy, strong and without a tell-tale sign that the period of abstention was interrupted. The clergy in the NC claim that wherever the couple failed the test of abstention from sex, the child's health and demeanor always betrayed this fact.
- k. At the end of the isolation on the eve of the service that restores the woman and her child to the normalcy of the village life, her hair and that of the infant that have 'not been touched by the razor' are clean shaven as a sign of the end of the period of vows. Mbiti (1969) observes:

Seclusion as we have seen, symbolizes the concept of death and resurrection; death to one state of life, and resurrection to a fuller state of living. It is as if the mother and the child 'die' and 'rise' on behalf of everyone else in the family. The shaving of the mother's hair is another act symbolizing and dramatizing the death of one state and rising again to another. The hair represents her pregnancy, but now that this is over, old hair must be shaved off to give way to new life...The hair also has a symbolic connection between mother and child, so that shaving it indicates that that the child now belongs not only to her but to the entire body of relatives, neighbours and other members of the society (Mbiti, 1969).

- l. To mark the end of the seclusion the NC meets in the homestead of the isolated mother where they hold a colorful night vigil *Mony*. The *Mony* gathering gives this celebration its very essence as a two day presence before God acknowledging his immense bounty and grace to his people. The essence of this meeting is to ensure that those who will officiate spend the night away from their beds. The officials are expected to have

abstained from sexual intercourse for at least four days prior to this ceremony. The vigil is characterized by merry making, dance, drumming and singing punctuated by preaching. The sermons are specifically designed to bring out the essence of the covenant of God carried in the flesh in case of circumcision of a male infant. Traditionally the essence of the covenant with God that comes out in the mark of circumcision on the flesh of the male sexual organ has been the emphasis of the *Mony*. The not so obvious change is that the place of Jesus Christ as the savior is increasingly moving towards the center of the stage. In a few services attended preaching salvation through Jesus Christ was observed. The adherents were challenged to shift from circumcision of the flesh to that of the heart.

- m) The climax is the early morning sacrifice of a bird or a lamb which is partaken by only those who have been circumcised and by those women who have in their lives held an infant on their knees as he is presented for circumcision or at those who have been through the period of seclusion after child birth. This service as specified in the Book of Leviticus 12 is at the entrance of the tent of meeting: “When the days of her purification are completed, whether for a son or for a daughter, she shall bring to the priest at the entrance of the tent of meeting a lamb in its first year for a burnt offering and a pigeon and a turtle dove for a sin offering.” Anybody who is not circumcised is not allowed into the room where this meal is partaken. The parents of the infant are partakers as this marks their readmission into the larger society.
- n) In the service that follows in the church the mother and infant are received and for the first time in forty days or eighty days the mother is now free to greet the adherents and mingle freely with the community at large. During this service the church welcomes the mother and child by offering to them various gifts. The offering of gifts is here equated to that by the Magi from the East who brought to the infant Jesus: Gold, Myrrh and Frankincense (Mt.2:1-12). The woman now resumes her regular routine including sexual intercourse.

Abstention from sex is a major characteristic of this period of isolation which is recognized and kept by many ethnic communities. According to Milgrom (1991) abstention is also observed by the neighbors of the Hebrew people the Samaritans, the Falasha and the Karaites. Sexual resumption is only at the end of the period of isolation: “now after forty

days for a boy or eighty days for a girl may she resume sexual intercourse with her husband” (Milgrom, 1991).

Following the menstrual flow a woman was in a state of ritual impurity and for her to be eligible once again to participate in the ritual rites she was expected to bathe. This act of ablution and the prescription of ritual bath would have been expected on the thirty third (and sixty sixth) day following her severe menstrual like impurity though no such ablution is mentioned in the text. The ritual bath would be to allow her conjugal intercourse with her husband and the absence of any mention of ablution at the end of her purificatory period would then imply that none was necessary (Milgrom, 1991).

In the text of Lev. 12:1-8 the blood from the parturient is mentioned at least three times (vv4, 5 and 7). This is an emphasis of the long duration beyond the initial seven/fourteen-day impurity. The first discharge of blood is bright red, and with time it turns brown and increasingly assumes a paler and much paler hue (Milgrom, 1991). According to Joyce Amollo Were of ogwedhi Diocese, *Nyawiwu* the blood discharge that gets paler and paler with time, is irregular but women recognize it for a long time. The total discharge lasts for up to six weeks. Many of the adherents interviewed concurred that somehow the flow in the case of a female child was heavier and lasts for a longer time. Some women were also of the opinion that the difference if any was not so obvious to be pinpointed with accuracy. It is universally acknowledged that it takes longer for the mother of a female child to be cleansed and accepted back into the community much more than the mother of a male child. The Hittite law states: “The mother of a male child is cleansed on third month after birth while that of a female child is cleansed in the fourth month” (Milgrom, 1991).

5.18.1 An analysis of Lev. 12

An analysis of the verses of Lev.12 reveals the following pertinent issues on purification:

Touch anything sacred (v 4): The prohibition against contact with anything holy (*sancta*) is not limited to the priestly tradition. This instruction covers a wide range of things other than sacred food only. For the NC the prohibition list is even longer because the NC combines the laws in Lev.12 with those of the *Nazirite* in Num. 6. The woman is considered as a *Nazirite* and is not supposed to drink wine and any strong drink and neither is her hair to be shaved for the whole period of her separation. The *Nazirite* is not to go near a corpse be it that of a close relative (father, mother, brother or sister. Num. 6:7)

Entry into sanctuary (v4): The Historical sources indicate that the fear of entering the sanctuary in an impure state was deeply ingrained in the Jewish woman's psyche. The same is deeply ingrained in the mentality of the NC women that in case of the abruptness of the menstrual flow when she is attending a service she will do the rest of the service while outside. In her menses she understands that she is not supposed to go the church, however if she has to be at the church then she will participate outside the sanctuary. Immediately she gives birth she gets out of circulation until the day of her purification ,when through a series of activities that start on the eve of the purification day and climax on the early morning with the special service led by *Simeon-Ka-Lawi* she is free to mix and socialize with rest of the community. An interesting observation from the Jewish culture is that continued breast feeding may suppress the menses and in this case after the purification ceremony the woman may be allowed to participate fully in the cult (Dosick 1995). It is clear from biblical passages (cf 1 Sam. 1:22-24; Isa. 7:15; 28:9-10; 2 Macc. 7:27) that mothers nursed their children up to three years, resulting in the suppression of the menses. The implication of this evidence is that the biblical woman who was generally in a state of pregnancy or nursing was rarely excluded from participating in the cult.

Thirty three days (v4): A total of forty days is given for the purification period following the birth of a boy. According to Milgrom (1991) this number is well attested in other cultures for example among the Greek the parturient was not allowed to enter the Greek temple for forty days. A parturient will undergo purification forty days after birth. Several possible reasons have been given in order to explain the disparity:

The reason for the disparity between sexes is unknown. Some have conjectured that the postnatal discharge for a female is longer. Rabbi Ishmael proposes a biological distinction: the male embryo is completely formed in forty one days and the female in eighty one days. Greek sources suggest that: The male is formed in forty days and the female in three months. An old legend offers the etiology that whereas Adam was created at the end of the first week and brought to the Garden of Eden on the forty first day, Eve was created at the end of the second week and admitted into the Garden of Eden on the eighty first day (Milgrom, 1991).

5.20 The Theology of Double Period of Ritual Impurity

Fourteen days (v5): This is double the period for males. The period for the ritual impurity following the birth of a girl is always longer. For the birth of a girl the mother's menstrual impurity is double that of the normal menstruation. While no exact explanation of this was found among the adherents, it is apparent that the woman has given birth to a potential

mother in whom the cycle of events that surround the woman biology will be replicated in the future. Suggestions to the effect that a woman's blood flow (*Nyawiwu*) is heavier and lasts longer in the case of the birth of a female infant were made. However many adherents for lack of a better explanation concluded that these were prescriptions from God that require no questions but acceptance and practice in faith. Given the fact that the birth of a male infant entailed circumcision which was a painful operation some informants thought that the period of isolation in this case would have been longer, but since this was not the case then Mama Esther Oiro (Oiro, 2014) of Ujwanga Diocese argued that the whole issue rested on the understanding that they are and remain "Instructions from God." "Shauri ya Mungu" in Swahili

The NC has introduced baptism on the fourteenth day. Baptism on the fourteenth day is a novelty; unique to the NC because the Bible nowhere mentions it and neither does the Jewish tradition of naming choose the fourteenth day. Girls in the Hebrew tradition are given Hebrew names which are the identity by which they will be known in the Jewish community (Dosick, 1995). The giving of girls names is in no way tied to the fourteenth day but is tied to the day when the *Torah* is read in the Synagogue (According to Dosick, (1995) that is Monday or Thursday, or on the Shabbat morning or afternoon). For the NC to choose the fourteenth day as the day of baptism for female infants and to put it forth as a doctrinal prescription of the church is indeed unique.

The *brit milah* or baby naming ceremony is always followed by a festive meal. Family and friends meet together to congratulate the newborn baby and the parents. The festive meal in the Hebrew community is a special occasion that Dosick (1995) describes as follows: "the giving of a Hebrew name is cause for great joy and happiness, because it means that another precious child has been born into the Jewish community and has entered into the sacred covenant with God." For the NC yet another novelty is realized here for the celebration of the child is delayed until the mother is ritually acceptable in the community of worshippers. This celebration is done on the day that the woman is purified, the very day when the woman enters the assembly of believers after eating together with *Simeon-Ka-Lawi*. On this day the woman and the child are welcomed by the congregation who not only hug and greet them but also shower them with gifts as they congratulate them.

5.20.1 The Theology of the Double Period of Blood Purification (Period of Seclusion)

Sixty six days (v5): is also double the period of Blood Purification prescribed for the birth of a boy giving a total of eighty days before the parturient may enter the sanctuary or touch anything holy. Leviticus 12:5 “Her time of blood purification shall be sixty-six days; she shall not touch any holy thing or come into the sanctuary until the days of her purification are completed.”

The parturient on birth of a female infant is then considered as *niddah* for double the period set aside for male infants. Like for the double period of ritual impurity scholars have advanced several possible reasons: some scholars argue that the cultic inferiority of the female sex is expressed in giving the female a double ‘uncleanness effect’ (Milgrom, 1991). Whichever explanation is given for the double period of blood purification the key thing is that the ritual impurity here is as a result of the loss of potential life in the loss of bodily fluid.

On the completion (v6): This implies the forty first and eighty-first day. The prescribed number of days is significant and has to be observed to the letter. These numbers of days have a significant bearing to the flow of blood. The text of Lev. 12:6 is specific in that it states that “when the days of her purification are completed” only then shall she bring before a priest her burnt offering and sin offering. In verse 7 the sacrifice so offered by the priest is to accomplish one special thing that is: “she shall be clean from her flow of blood. This is the law for her who bears a child, male or female.” In verse 8 there is the repetition that states that “...and the priest shall make atonement on her behalf and she shall be clean.” That the parturient has to undergo immersion at the end of her first menstrual period of seven or fourteen days is assumed by the Rabbis. But they dispute the necessity of the second ablution at the end of forty or eighty days (Milgrom, 1991).

She shall bring (v6): burnt offering (*ola*); purification offering (*hattat*). The burnt offering is necessary because it purifies the parturient. “The purpose of the burnt offering, like that of the purification offering is expiation. The offer of a lamb indicates that the birth of a child deserves a decent gift.

The entrance of the Tent of meeting (v6): The active agent in the purification service is the woman-the new mother. It is she who must scrupulously keep count of the days of her

purification period and, its termination, bring its requisite offerings. The priest is merely the passive recipient, awaiting her and her offerings in the sanctuary. The woman brings the offertory to the entrance of the Tent of Meeting to the priest. The priest will offer them (Milgrom, 1991).

A pair of pigeons or a pair of turtledoves (v8). The sacrifices are brought after the impurity has totally disappeared. This prescription which was less costly was meant to take care of those families that were not well to do as attested in the text Lev. 12:8 “If she cannot afford a sheep, she shall take two turtledoves or two pigeons, one for a burnt offering and the other for a sin offering; and the priest shall make atonement on her behalf, and she shall be clean.” The fact the parents of Jesus offered the birds must have been an indication of their economic status (Lk. 2:22-24). For the NC because neither turtledoves nor pigeons exist they have instead adopted the use of chicken. The NC offers only one chicken and it differs in this respect from the other Nomiya groups who follow the Leviticus prescription to the letter.

Because the NC has adopted the *Nazirite* prescription and ascribe the same to the woman who is to be purified we find here that a basket of unleavened bread (*Chapat*) is also offered. This together with the chicken that has been roasted will be taken by the priest and those who are eligible as a purification meal. According to Num. 6:19 “The priest shall take the shoulder of the ram, when it is boiled and one unleavened cake out of the basket and one unleavened wafer, and shall put them in the palms of the *nazrites* after they have shaved the consecrated head.” It is from this scripture portion that the concept of shaving of the woman’s and child’s head is lifted to the Levitical prescription. The shaving of the mother and the child’s head on the eve of the purification is again a novelty in the NC.

And then she shall be pure... (v8): Now that the forty days (or eighty days) have elapsed and she has brought her requisite sacrifices to the sanctuary, she is purified and is eligible to make contact with sacred objects.

The Priestly Benediction: From the Book of Numbers comes another unique feature that has become part of the purification service, the benediction (Num. 6:24-26) “The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you; the Lord

lift up his countenance upon, and give you peace.” The benediction is a blessing pronounced in this case to the couple and their child as they enter back into the larger community.

Circumcision: Verse 3 switches from mother to the boy. This is clearly an editorial parenthesis that interrupts the prescriptive ritual for the mother. Nor can it be claimed the circumcision is purificatory rite for the boy and therefore equivalent to the purificatory rites enjoined upon his mother for there is no equivalent rite for a newly born girl. The purpose of the interpolation is to emphasize the uniqueness of the rite; not the rite itself, which was practiced ubiquitously by Israel’s Semitic neighbors but the timing of the rite, which in Israel alone was performed in infancy and, precisely on the eighth day (Milgrom, 1991).

The rite of circumcision is attested throughout the world (Jer. 9). Everywhere it is a puberty rite that fits a man for marriage. The significance of infant circumcision in the Israelite community is best understood only in the context of a covenant between God and Israel. Milgrom (1991) brings out this connection and the continued relevance of the circumcision mark in Israelite oath taking:

With the transfer of circumcision to infancy it became a sign of the covenant, an initiation rite into the religious bond between Israel and its God. The fact that the uncircumcised may not participate in the Paschal sacrifice (Exod 12:43-49, Josh 5:210) and that in the oldest narrative stratum circumcision was required for non-Israelite bridegroom (Gen 34:14-17,22) indicates that the covenant idea was associated with circumcision from earliest times. Israel’s ancient custom of taking an oath while holding the circumcised *membrum* (Gen 24:2-9; 47:29-31... As no image of God was permitted, the circumcision, the sign of the covenant was employed instead. The circumcised *membrum* indicates the presence of God as a divine witness who, by implication, will punish the violation of the oath). (Isa 52:1). (Milgrom 1991).

After the period of seclusion is over, the initiates are reincorporated into their community, and this marks the time of their rebirth. Their hair may be shaved off, their old clothes may be thrown away, and they may receive new names, all symbolic gestures indicating that they have become new, mature individuals. The reunion of new initiates with their family and community is a collective festive time. All rejoice now that the new initiates are ready to assume their new place in the community.

5.21 Symbolism of Numbers

This section brings out the concept that numbers in the Hebrew theology can be said to portray symbolic significance. In the discourse of the blood purification of women after

child birth the following numbers appear prominently and suggest their significance: The seventh day, the eighth, the thirty-third day, the fourteenth day and the sixty-sixth day. Seven and multiples of it, as well as forty and its multiples are repeated severally in the scriptures.

After the birth of a male infant the woman is regarded to be ceremonially unclean for seven days and the child will then be circumcised on the eighth day. The child has to complete the first week and be circumcised on the first day of the following week. Seven is regarded theologically to signify completeness or perfection; it also indicates fulfillment and restoration. There is a sense that having completed seven days the child was now fully formed and was ready to begin a new week as a perfect offering to God. Dosick (1995) puts forward two possible reasons for the choice of the eighth day as the day of circumcision: one, that it is connected to a pagan practice meant to appease the gods, and two it can be explained through scientific facts. Accordingly, he suggests that the pagan practice saw circumcision as an offering on the eighth day to appreciate and appease the gods in order to assure the child's life and health. The scientific explanation is that the factor in blood that causes coagulation matures at about the eighth day, thus it makes sense that the circumcision is done only when blood clot is assured so that the delicate infant does not bleed to death.

In Numbers chapter six we find a prescription in verse nine that states that in case the *Nazirite* vows are broken for reason of being in touch with a corpse then the *nazir* was to shave on the seventh day and on the eighth day bring his/her offering at the entrance of the door of meeting. The seven day of uncleanness is hereby broken by an offertory made on the eighth day for the purpose of making atonement for the guilt incurred. In the same vein multiples of seven seem to have equal significance. For this reason it is significant that in the case of the birth of a female infant the woman was ceremonially unclean for fourteen days double the time for a woman who gave birth to a male infant.

The fortieth day (7+33) is also significant in this prescription because it marks the completion of the period of blood purification and allows the mother and the child access to the routine life of the community. Forty can also be said to have special significance theologically. Forty is considered to indicate the completion of complete cycles. Marshall (1996) argues that forty is associated with almost each new development in the history of

God's mighty acts of salvation e.g. the Flood, redemption from Egypt, The advent of Christ and the birth of the church.

After forty days the child is now ready to be integrated into the wider society to take its rightful place in a community of faith. The double period of seclusion introduces a female child into the community of believers eighty days after birth. The forty day/eighty day period of seclusion has been spent in the confines of the bedroom or a room set apart for the express purpose of "seeking the face of God." The forty day period in this case may be connected to salvation of the mother and the child. The crown of it all is the initiate going before God in the tent of meeting with the prescribed gifts which will be received by God's representative, the priest.

5.22 Discussion of the Relevance of the Double Rite of Passage

Theology is about God. Dyrness (1977) argues that communion with God is only possible when we come to know the character of God through his personal self-disclosure (God's self-revelation). Owalo's theology is based and organized around the figure of God who is sovereign and the originator of the cosmos. At the core of this theology is that God is great: *Nyasaye Duong', Nyasaye Duong', Nyasaye Duong', Duong'ne Duong', Duong'ne Duong', Duong'ne Duong'* (God is Great x3; His Greatness is Great x3). For Prophet Owalo heaven is a reality. The larger picture in Prophet Owalo's theology is that heaven is the abode of God the ultimate home for those who respond to God's invitation for a relationship. Owalo teaches that there is only one God, eternal and all-encompassing God, He does not beget and He is not begotten, there is none co-equal with him. This line of thinking that puts great emphases on the unity of God gave Prophet Owalo the label of being a Unitarian and therefore a heretic and a rebel for not toeing the line of the Missionary led churches.

This understanding of God as sovereign was formed and influenced by Prophet Owalo's background in the Luo tradition and in the European missions as well as that in Islam. As much as Prophet Owalo was heavily influenced by his experience in these churches, his single and most important influence comes from his excursion of the heavenly realm led by angels *Jibraeli* and *Rafaeli*. The teachings that accrue from these visions are well fleshed out in the Nomiya Scriptures Sura 1-6. Heaven is the abode of God and only the righteous attain it. Jesus Christ and the angels are with God in this abode. Prophet Owalo recognizes Jesus sitting at the right hand of God and immediately is led forward by the desire to worship him.

Jesus Christ does not allow Prophet Owalo to kneel before him but together they kneel before God and worship Him.

Salvation is the desire of every nation on earth and this is demonstrated by the zeal with which they raise ladders in order to reach out and pick the ripe fruits. Even the efforts of Christians to place their ladders on tables are thwarted. Prophet Owalo realizes that without the aid of the angel *Jibraeli* who provides the right ladder then the fruits are beyond human reach. Jesus holds the end of a long rope in heaven while Prophet Owalo holds the other end on earth. Direct connection to God is hereby emphasized rather than connection through other medium for example the saints and Mary. The heavenly vision led Prophet Owalo to reject the doctrine of Trinity and the divinity of Jesus together with several doctrines of the Catholic Church.

The double rite of passage is best understood as both the circumcision of the flesh and that of the heart. The sharp sword in this case is the word of God that is living and active, and which effects the circumcision of the mouth, the ear, the eye and the heart so that God's people are presented to him without ritual pollutants. Ezekiel 44:9 summarizes the essence of the double rite of passage, "Thus says the Lord God: "No foreigner, uncircumcised in heart and flesh... shall enter my sanctuary."

The period of seclusion is a period of soul searching for the parents and the church at large. Foremost is the reflection on God's plan for the continuity of humanity and on the role of the couple as co-creators with God. In marriage God created the first important institution and consequently the future of a stable God fearing society begins in stable families. Ross (1998) agrees arguing that sign of circumcision was a constant reminder for the people to preserve the purity of marriage:

With this symbol God instructed his people regarding the joining of faith with the act of reproduction. The sign was sexual-the promise was for seed. The covenanters would be reminded (1) that human nature alone was unable to generate the promised seed if God was not willing to grant such fruitfulness, and (2) the impurity must be laid aside, especially in marriage (Ross, 1998).

The double rite of passage that entails circumcision and baptism of the male infant informs the adherents of God's desire for a mutual and beneficial relationship. The double rite of passage is therefore the total religious life of the NC adherents.

5.22.1 Argument for Circumcision or Baptism

As cited above in the Biblical narratives circumcision seems to give way to baptism with the passage of time. In the Old Testament Scriptures there was a gradual change and a progressive expansion of the meaning of circumcision as the physical surgery on the foreskin of the male member to the circumcision of the heart. Goldingay (2000) quoting G. Von Rad comments on this expanded meaning saying” Circumcision must surely have been implicitly an act of bodily purification, and a dedication, otherwise it could hardly have become a metaphor for inner circumcision.” This is a change from a purely outward sign on the flesh to an inward transformation of the heart wrought about by the death and resurrection of Christ.

McGrath (2001) says “in Christian theology baptism is seen as the Christian equivalent of circumcision. In making this proposal McGrath (2001) seems to imply that for Christians the rite of baptism plays the role that was played by circumcision. In this respect he seems to perpetuate the conclusion of the Jerusalem Council of 49 AD that circumcision was not a must in Christian conversion. Paul in his letter to the Colossians raises the bar arguing that baptism is a spiritual circumcision done by Christ as contrasted to the circumcision done by human hands

In him you were also circumcised, with a spiritual circumcision, by putting off the body of the flesh in the circumcision of Christ; when you were buried with him in baptism, you were raised with him through faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead (Colossians).

Paul’s argument against necessity of circumcision was that the circumcision made without hands also referred to as the circumcision of the heart is what mattered most (Col. 2:11; Rom. 2:28-29). This circumcision of the heart is effected by the gift of the Spirit and it has rendered circumcision unnecessary (Phi. 3:3; Gal. 3:3; 5:3-5); Rom. 2:28-29). It is this gift of the Spirit that defined the Christian (Marshall *et al.*, 1996).

In this process a new creation is created. According to Rabbi Molen “Paul conflates two rituals: circumcision and immersion. Immersion (Baptism) in Judaism washes away pollutants that separate the human being from God. A “new self” is born in this set of customs imitative of birthing process. Paul amplifies this saying; “Therefore we have been

buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life” (Rom. 6:4).

Consequently baptism can be said to be a sign of a new covenant realized in the death and resurrection of Christ Jesus; a covenant with Jesus Christ in the equation. Marshall *et al.*, (1996) concludes that for Paul the Spirit had replaced circumcision as the hallmark of the covenant people: the evidence of the Spirit in a person’s life serving as sign and a seal of the new covenant just as circumcision served for the old covenant(2 Cor.3:3-6; Jer. 31:31-34; 2 Cor.1:22). This is what Paul terms ‘circumcision done by Christ and not by human hands. This “circumcision” calls for a special response from human beings that is exhibited in faith in Christ. For this reason in Galatians 5 Paul emphasizes that faith in Christ is of greater significance than circumcision or uncircumcision: “For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything; the only thing that counts is faith working in love.” Ross (1998) concurs that circumcision has to be coupled with faith to have genuine meaning or else it could easily become an empty ritual.

God is one and his invitation is to all human beings; God will justify all the circumcised and the uncircumcised on the basis of faith alone. This is Paul’s argument as he stresses the concept of faith: “Or is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles also, since God is one; and he will justify the circumcised on the ground of faith and the uncircumcised through the same faith.” If circumcision or uncircumcision counts for nothing but faith in Christ Jesus then all who believe in Jesus and are baptized will surely be saved. The New Testament is clear that relationship with Christ which is sealed by baptism outweighs all other mediums of connecting with God. Paul in Galatians 3:26-29 makes this more explicit:

For in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith. As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male or female for all of you are one in Christ. And if you belong to Christ then you are Abraham’s offspring according to the promise.

Having established the centrality of baptism in Christian salvation then the question remains: Is the practice of circumcision a reversal of gains made by Christianity? If this be the case then what is significance of the continued stress and relevance of circumcision in the NC? On the surface this conclusion may be reached given the emphasis placed again on the circumcision done by hands rather than that done in the spirit and also given the acceptance

of a practice that was outlawed by the council of 49AD. However, if we look at the practice of the double rite of passage in the NC it becomes apparent that it is baptism that is first done followed by circumcision. Baptism still maintains its universal character in that females are also enjoined in this ritual. The reasons for the choice of circumcision in the NC cannot be fully ascertained but its root is surely in the Jewish tradition.

The NC is first a Christian denomination which like many African Initiated Churches has chosen one Old Testament practice or another or an African heritage practice or many and which they have so blended together with Judeo-Christian practices in order to yield a practice that is authentically African. All these were means of asserting their 'Africanness' in the face of the oppressive missionary enterprise and white hegemony. In the NC three areas stand out and they are hybrid practices that effectively demonstrate her uniqueness; these include: circumcision, polygamy and leviratic marriage and burial rites. For the NC the fact that the rites of circumcision and baptism have now become a tradition they are understood as a rite of admission into the body of Christ and a sign of the seal of the covenant relationship between God and his people.

This is the NC Christian identity that cannot be varied. Baptism can be done without circumcision but circumcision will always be done after baptism. A number of NC adherents for one reason or another may choose only baptism and not circumcision for themselves or their children. Although members, the uncircumcised are limited in their participation in the following ways: they will never be priests or leaders in the church until they are circumcised, they cannot step on the altar area; and they are not allowed to partake of the sacrificial meal of the newly made full members of the church.

The double rite of passage will always be followed by specified period of seclusion; in the case of the infant this involves the mother also but for a mature initiate the seclusion is the length of time it takes to heal. The success of the NC can be identified in the enrichment of the African expression of Christianity effectively and more particularly in the ongoing process of emancipating Christian thought and praxis from domination by European concepts and values. For the NC the double rite of passage is a blend of the Luo culture, the Jewish culture and the European enterprise influence that has given rise to a practice so unique that most of Christendom will find strange while the Jews may not agree with it though it stems from the Old Testament (Hebraic) prescription. The Missionary Enterprise

that rejected the same NC in the early 20th century would still reject it today and on the very same grounds: the question tag on the divinity of Christ, the legitimizing and justifying of polygamy and the acceptance of circumcision as a rite with equal significance to baptism.

5.22.2 Argument for the Sharp Sword as God's Word or the Knife

In the NC revelation Prophet Owalo is sent to carry the sharp sword to God's people and like in the Book of Revelation the recipients are challenged: "Let anyone who has an ear listen to what the spirit is saying..." Prophet Owalo in very clear and sharp instructions receives God's message: "I am now sending you to be my messenger and the bearer of my sharp sword. I shall require you to raise it high; he who hears your message and understands it, let him hold fast to it. He who refuses shall be left alone." God's message requires hearing, understanding and decision. The hearers may decide for God's word in which case they are advised to hold fast onto it; they may decide otherwise. In the scripture there are several instances where the word of God is compared or linked to the sword Ephesians 6: 17 says: "And accept salvation as a helmet, and the word of God as a sword which the spirit gives you."

The double rite of passage entails lifting up the sharp sword which is the word of God that has to be living and active in order to effect the circumcision of the mouth, the ear and the heart in order to wash away all ritual pollutants and present to God a people who are pure. Human beings are consecrated and purified through baptism and circumcision for a mutual relationship with the holy God: "For I am the Lord your God; sanctify yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am holy" (Lev. 11:44).

The Book of Hebrews says "The word of God is alive and active, sharper than any doubleedged sword. It cuts all the way through, to where the soul and the spirit meet, to where joints and marrow come together. It judges the desires and thoughts of man's heart." In the Nomiya Church Prayer Book particularly in the scriptures God spoke to Prophet Owalo and said

I have been alone since time immemorial; I have had nobody with me, nor above me. But now look, my own creation has deserted me and is now worshipping their own resemblance. For this reason, I am now sending you to hold high this sharp sword and whoever hears believes should uphold; but him who refuses should be left alone."

Given the introduction of Circumcision among a people who did not circumcise their male, the connection of the sharp sword with circumcision soon caught up. Infact for many of the NC adherents this still remains the only understanding attributed to the sharp sword. Accordingly Owalo (74) refutes this claim saying:

The word of God is the sharp sword which Prophet John Owalo held high. For a long time the circumciser's knife has been mistakenly considered as the sharp sword which Owalo was commanded to hold high. Far from it! Paul himself to the Galatians that "And I testify again to every man who becomes circumcised that he is a debtor to keep the whole law (Galatians 5:3). The act of circumcising all males is by itself an ordinance of the Lord (Genesis 17:9-14) and must be honoured just as we do accept baptism and even marriage (Owalo 74).

Just because the practice of circumcision was a novelty among the Luo People, the sharp sword was for a long time understood only as it related to circumcision. A number of adherents still see the sharp sword only in this manner and for them the sayings like *Pand JoKowalo motimo remo* and *Pand Jo-Kowalo misiayo asiaya to dhi* (The Knife of the Owalo adherents that is blood stained and the knife of Owalo adherents that cuts in a flash) make a lot of sense. For them salvation is through circumcision and whoever is circumcised in the flesh as the law stipulates has booked himself a place in heaven.

However as one moves across the NC Dioceses there is now a strong movement that holds and preaches that the sharp sword is nothing more than the word of God. This Word they are now connecting to Jesus Christ and to salvation. The salvation movement is gaining momentum. There is little doubt that the influence comes from without through the shared platforms with other denominations.

5.22.3 Argument for Authenticity of Prophet Owalo's Religious Experience

A prophet can be said to be the Mouthpiece of God. According to Deut.18:18 a prophet has two distinct qualities, one that he is raised from among his own people and two that he speaks words given to him by God; "I will put my words in the mouth of the prophet, who shall speak to them everything that I command." As the prophet utters God's oracles to the people of God they will either respond obediently or blatantly disobey. In all these God **has** the final say as seen in Deut. 18:19: "Anyone who does not heed the words that the prophet shall speak in my name, I myself shall hold accountable." The prophet of God does not speak about things that do not come to pass. Given the possibility of self-made prophets who

have not been in the presence of God, God provides a clear way of differentiating the false prophet from a true prophet:

You may say to yourself, “How can we recognize the word that the Lord has not spoken?” If a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord but the thing does not take place or prove true, it is a word that the Lord has not spoken. The prophet has spoken it presumptuously; do not be frightened by it (Deut. 18:21-22).

The word of God is active and has a purpose. Like the rain that come from God and eventually makes things to grow and give yields so does the word of God: “So shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose.”(Isa. 55:10-11).

The experience of God is a process: “So faith comes from what is heard and what is heard through the word of Christ” (Rom.10:17). Prophet Owalo’s experience of God began in the Luo background of formation. The Luo background seemingly was not a hindrance to acceptance of the Christian teachings. Mugambi (2002) observes that the phenomenal expansion of Christianity in Africa can only be explained by the deep religious heritage of the Africans which facilitated rather than hindered the acceptance of Christianity. This background of formation provided a platform on which the subsequent challenges and experiences in the Christian and Islamic religions could be compared and contrasted. As Prophet Owalo moved from one faith group to another his previous experiences were called into play in order to determine his present reception and actions. Godin (1985) on religious experiences says:

The experience of God is never a first experience. It always has a long pre-history and in most cases, a religious prehistory. It is never chronologically a primary one. Every child comes to speak of God as the result of the human relationships through which he or she grows and through what is said about God.

Prophet Owalo saw God and continued living, narrated his experience and wrote about it, accounts of which are analyzed above in the six chapters of the NC scriptures. Prophet Owalo’s experience so inspired him that following the instructions so received to the later he founded a religious group that has outlived him based solely on the tenets of the heavenly experience he had. Prophet Owalo’s experience presented in the six chapters of the NC Scriptures and in the life and practice of the NC is full indication of a community that has experienced real transformation. Godin (1985) argues that such changes must be pegged on an experience of the divine presence: “stories of conversion take account of changes and

transformation as a result of this experience of God... God exists and it is all true. The authenticity of Prophet Owalo's experience can be gauged against Godin's four questions about the personal experience of God:

1. How much of the story is devoted to an autobiography of the author and how much to the divine encounter proper?
2. In the description given of the encounter with God, do we have solely or mainly emotional reverberations? Do we also have consequences in the life of the convert that flow from a new grasp of the divine mystery?
3. Which particular features of the divine mystery are shown in the new light? Does the author tackle it by means of a particular vocabulary or style? Is he an innovator?
4. Lastly, does the story suggest a spiritual trail, an approach or method of prayer which would allow the readers, in their turn, to make some aspects of the converts experience their own? (Godin, 1985)

It is true that the personal experience of prophet Owalo is presented more as a divine encounter than an autobiography of the Prophet. God is seen in every step revealing himself and his plans for salvation of humankind: I am God from before and none is equal to me. But creation has turned away from me and is now worshipping fellow creatures and now I am sending you to carry aloft the Sharp Sword whoever hears let him accept but he who refuses let him be (Sura 2). The story tells of means of accessing God and stresses severally on the commissioning to carry the pure word of God. The story is also clear that the ultimate focus of this relationship is attaining heaven the abode of God. Heaven will be accessed by others and not others; this seems to be at the discretion of God. Practices in the Roman Catholic Church that before God are contrary to God's will are clearly explicated.

In answer to the second and third question we see instances in the life of Prophet Owalo that indicate a struggle with the divine mystery. At the end of these experiences it becomes more apparent that these are new ways of looking at old experiences. Prophet Owalo's old experiences in the Roman Catholic Church will be so challenged that at the end a new Church will have been founded. The NC is not only unique but an innovation.

In the very first instance Prophet Owalo is shocked to realize that the Pope, the Spiritual leader of the Roman Catholic faithful's is absent in heaven (Sura 1). Secondly and much

more shocking is the outright refusal by Jesus Christ to allow Owalo to bow down in worship to him. Instead Jesus leads him before God where they both bow (Sura 1). Thirdly, Prophet

Owalo is given the only ladder that can access the “ripe fruits” with the express instructions that whoever accepts is free to use it but whoever does not accept should be left alone (Sura 2). In the fourth instance Prophet Owalo is made to realize that he has direct connection to God through the ladder: it is not to be placed on top of anything be it a creature. Prophet Owalo demonstrates his obedience in that he places the ladder in the right position and he is then able to access the fruits. His humility as a hallmark of a successful ministry is hereby demonstrated (Sura 2). However his frailty as a human vessel comes in the challenge to his ministry after commissioning: ‘Why were you sent to preach the word of God yet you are preaching peoples message... leave those alone you preach the pure word of God’ (Sura 3).

In the sixth instance Prophet Owalo is reminded again not to worship Jesus but to worship God alone: He is told that a messenger cannot worship another messenger; in this case Prophet Owalo cannot worship Jesus a messenger like him (Sura 4). In the seventh instance Prophet Owalo recognizes that Holy Spirit emanates from God and not from Jesus (Sura 4). In the eighth instance Prophet Owalo is told that it is not sacrifice that opens ways to God but a broken and contrite heart (Sura 4). Here like in the instance of the ripe bunch of fruit Prophet Owalo is given a long rope whose one end he holds here on earth while Jesus holds the other end in heaven (Sura 4). In the ninth instance Prophet Owalo is reminded not keep quiet but to preach because Jesus also preached: Jesus himself preached as shown in the scriptures (Sura 5).

The tenth instance shows Owalo’s witness of the desire of the nations of the earth to access heaven but to their utter dismay the angels block the gate to them. However the Jews and Arabs get access and the issue of the Jews leads the Prophet to ask why they are allowed in yet they killed Jesus. The answer is very interesting that the Jews have access to the abode of God but it is the earthly kingdom that they have no access to (Sura 5). The eleventh instance which is equally shocking is that the Pope in his ministry has blocked the way of Christ through the worship of images and relics. The twelfth instance is that the Roman Catholic mass is not the acceptable sacrifice but a broken heart. The thirteenth instance is the realization that purgatory does not exist as advocated by the Roman Catholics but only two ways; one to heaven and the other to hell.

Indeed the experience is a shattering one both in the life of the prophet and that of the reader. The reader is transported through layer after layer of new experience that at the end the reader is sure to feel exhilaration in the divine exposure. The sharing of this self-revelation of God that Owalo had written down in his own handwriting in Kiswahili and whose title was “*Upanga Mkali*” is enigmatic but transforming. There is in the six episodes a clear spiritual trail that indicates the type of attitude expected of a worshipper and the duties of every adherent that are defined within the parameters of praying without ceasing and preaching in season and out of season. Every adherent must avoid the traps of religiosity that comes with creativity at the expense of being right before God. Godin (1985) makes a conclusion that would be the best crown for this section:

The more the author focuses attention on his own life without presenting anything that might renew and enrich the image each one has of God, the more religiously insignificant his story is. In an extreme case, it would no longer be a question of God at all; it would flatter the readers wish without drawing him toward the reality it claims to talk about...It remains true that to be approached by God, directly transformed by God, will always keep a kind of dream for that is its fascination for psychologically natural religiosity.

Prophet Owalo’s experience keeps its flavor of fascination to the adherents and to all who dare seek the truth that he stood for, fought for and even died as he struggled to live it. The fascination has been going on for over a century and it has not shown signs of waning. This study concludes that Owalo was indeed a prophet of God whose message has remained an experience of God that leads to God and Salvation. Now that the NC has a life of its own her adherents are born into this community and mature to adulthood being guided by the tenets, hopes and aspirations of the NC. Being a member of the NC is a long walk with God to God.

5.23 Conclusion

This study has shown that the practice of circumcision and baptism in the NC is the one original prescription by Johanna Owalo the founder, which has retained the initial design and intentions even in the secessionist groups. The NC can be said therefore to have retained the initial teaching on the double rite of passage which has remained unaffected by the pressures and exigencies of life.

Jewish origins for circumcision on the eighth day cannot be disputed. The circumcision of Jesus and that of John the Baptist on the eighth day (Lk. 1:59-61) are two New Testament examples that confirm that the *brit milah* was as common as it was in the Old Testament

times. The influence of Owalo's visions particularly in inaugurating a new way of looking and understanding an old Jewish prescription cannot be overlooked. The theology and the worship practice of the NC is grounded in the six chapters of the NC. In chapter 2 of the NC scripture the fact that Owalo is directed to carry the sharp sword has been taken by many as having a direct correlation to circumcision as betrayed by the terminologies used for example: *Pand Jokowalo misiayo asiaya to dhi adhiya* (The NC knife that cuts in a flash).

This populist view is represented in Ndeda's expansion of chapter 2 that adds the element of circumcision: "Go! Take a well-sharpened knife to circumcise all men..." (Ndeda, 2005). In the same chapter Owalo's confidence is kindled as he gets preferential consideration over the many Christians struggling to raise their ladders to reach the ripe bunch of fruits. Owalo's ladder then is the only ladder that is to be used and whoever chooses not to use this ladder will not be compelled to. Similarly in chapter four Owalo has the special advantage of being the one to whom a long rope is offered. Owalo holds the end of the rope here on earth while Jesus holds the other end in heaven. This direct connection now argues strongly against other media of reaching God other than through the way of Jesus. The concept of the ripe bunch of fruits and that of the long rope seem to suggest and emphasize on the word of God as the essence of the sharp sword. God's command to circumcise and to baptize can then be understood as the means through which the adherents live out the prescriptions from God in a bid to complete and maintain this relationship. Most adherents concur that the sword can only mean the word of God that was given to Prophet Owalo. A number of NC members are still persuaded that the sharp sword means nothing less than circumcision.

Baptism on the other hand and especially infant baptism seemingly has no documented evidence of being done on the eighth day or even on the fourteenth day; and being an at home service. The examples above support the uniqueness of the practice by the NC. The at home service seems to have roots in the Hebrew *brit milah*, but the naming of girls was a synagogue service on the day the Torah is read (Dosick, 1995). From the foregoing it is apparent that naming of girls in the Hebrew culture was not connected to the fourteenth day. This is an affirmation that the baptism of a girl on the fourteenth day is a novelty having neither a Jewish background nor a Christian background because baptism in the Christian Church has never been a day-specific event. Baptism for infants whose parents are not full members of the NC (man is not circumcised and the woman has not been admitted as a member of NC) will be done in the church on a Sunday after the mother of the infant is accepted as ritually clean.

Jesus was circumcised and named on the eighth day according to Jewish customs (Lk. 2:21). Jesus like all true Jews carries the mark of the covenant on his flesh. He was baptized at about age thirty when he was just about to inaugurate his ministry. Paul, like every Jewish convert was baptized after he met the risen Lord (Acts 9:18). Converts who were Jews and had been circumcised on the eighth day were also baptized as a sign that they had been united with Christ and were now members of the body of Christ (Gal. 3:27). This self-same prescription they desired of the Gentile converts, and were ready to enforce it (Acts 15:1). This issue was hotly debated and eventually became the core issue in the Jerusalem Council of AD 49. The Council's decision was that circumcision would no longer be a requirement for conversion. The first Church Council decided for Baptism rather than circumcision.

For more than eighteen centuries most of Christendom accepted and propagated that the entry requirement for Christian membership was baptism. Infant baptism was equally accepted despite the many controversies that continued to plague its practice. It called for the backing and support of the vows and pledges made by parents and God-parents on behalf of the infant. Circumcision and baptism practiced together was a rare practice and was only found in a few Christian churches that somehow had a very strong Jewish background for example: The Ethiopian Orthodox Church, the Coptic orthodox and Eritrean Orthodox Church. This study has demonstrated that the double rite of passage of circumcision and baptism on the eighth day for male infants and baptism on the fourteenth day for female infants in the NC and especially in its mode of execution is a novelty. The showering of gifts at the time of readmission of the mother and infant at the end of the period of isolation is also a novelty.

In view of the foregoing it can be concluded that Prophet Owalo from his heavenly visions received the mandate to found a church whose commissioning was to bear and raise high God's sharp sword. In raising high the sharp sword Prophet Owalo was to remain a messenger like Jesus here on earth connected to Jesus as his source of power and inspiration and directing his followers to the ladder that leads to God's eternal promises. This is arguably the basis of the double rite of passage and the Unitarian teachings. Both bring to the surface issues that the Church imagined it had dealt conclusively with: the issue of circumcision and that of the Trinity. It is worth noting that the heavenly excursion in which Jesus identifies himself as a messenger seems to hand to Arius an affirmation that the Nicenoconstantinopolitan Councils denied him and even excommunicated him for. The

Unitarian teachings seemingly will not be wished away easily and for this reason this study adopts the observation by Father Burgmann that what the church today may dismiss as heretical teachings are loans to the Church that the Church will at a later date be compelled to repay.

CHAPTER SIX

THE SOCIO-THEOLOGICAL ISSUES IN THE DOUBLE RITE OF PASSAGE AS A BASIS FOR GENDER DISPARITY IN THE NC

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents data from primary respondents on socio-theological issues in the double rite of passage that form the basis of gender disparity in the NC.

6.2 Ceremonial Uncleanness a Basis for Gender Disparity in the NC

Bishop Osumo (Osumo, 2014) says there are three major instances when a member of the NC would be considered to be ceremonially unclean (*mogak*): after childbirth, during the menses and on handling a dead body. The only instance where the male gender is deemed to be ceremonial unclean is after handling of a corpse or for one who is a widower. One who is *mogak* was not eligible for ritual observance with a full and complete heart. Osumo (2014) notes that all these instances call for a period of seclusion followed by a purification service to restore the person to full communion status. Osumo (2014) further notes that a woman after childbirth is ceremonially unclean (*mogak*) for seven days as at the time of her menstruation on the birth of a male infant and for fourteen days on the birth of a female infant. Osumo (2014) also notes that a woman who gives birth to a male infant will then go through an isolation period of thirty three days and the one who gives birth to a female infant will go through a sixty six days period of blood purification. Silas Onyando Nyarath (Onyando, 2014) from *Got Anyango* Diocese argues that the double rite of passage and the shorter period of confinement of only thirty three days for women on the birth of a male infant was an indication of the male gender superiority over the female.

Osumo (Osumo, 2014) also says that this prescription followed strictly by the NC gets its grounding in the Biblical teaching on how a community of believers would maintain holiness and thereby attract the presence and dwelling of the Lord in their midst. Bishop Nyarath (Nyarath, 2014) concurs saying that it is the desire of the Lord to dwell among his people so that his presence will continuously bless them. According to Bishop Olali (Olali, 2014) the NC prescription for circumcision and purification after childbirth trace their roots to the prescription in the Book of Leviticus 12: 1-8 (Lev15:19-33).

Nyarath (2014) says that the other instance in the women sexuality that led to ritual impurity was the period succeeding birth. He argued that this period was comparable in terms of length and quality to the impurity at the time of her menstruation (Lev. 12:2-5). It was taken as seven days of ceremonially uncleanness of the mother of a male newborn and fourteen days for the mother of a female infant. John Mbogo Oidho (Mbogo, 2014) of Ogwedhi Diocese observes that the process of making a full member of the NC involves three steps: baptism and circumcision, followed by a period of isolation that climaxes in the ceremony (*sawo*) of *Golo* or *yepo* (cleansing after child birth). The baptism and circumcision service in the NC are so intertwined and interconnected with the period of seclusion for the mother and child that they cannot be handled minus the service of cleansing that crowns the period of seclusion. The NC will circumcise and name the male infants on the eighth day and name the female child on the fourteenth day after birth. According to Simeon Ngore Odie (Ngore, 2014) of Ndwara diocese the mother and the newborn are to be in isolation for a total of forty days for the male child and eighty days for a female child in order to successfully complete her period of blood purification. Magdalene Abogi (Abogi, 2014) from Oboch diocese says that the NC has brought together the prescription in Lev. 12 and those in Numbers 6 to define what it means to be set apart for God. The woman in isolation is not allowed to attend to funeral matters even of a close relative or take an intoxicating and she has to keep her hair long.

Sophia Obura (Obura, 2014) of Got Anyango Diocese says that a woman in seclusion is to remain indoors and inaccessible to visitors. Household chores including cooking, drawing water, fetching firewood and even visiting the market should be avoided. The church where possible arranges for a woman (*Jadong*) to assist or where this is not possible the husband takes charge. Items regarded as holy including for example the Bible or priestly vestments are not touched by the woman; she is not to attend the church service or any such gatherings for worship. This prescription she says follows the Biblical instructions in Leviticus 12:4. Furthermore, Obura (2014) says the woman in isolation is not to attend any funeral even that of a very close relative (Numbers). During the same period the father of the newborn is not allowed to hold the child because his livelihood activities would introduce pollutants to the infant. Obura (2014) observes that this aspect resembles the traditional Luo practice where women particularly young women and children were forbidden to enter the house of a woman who had just given birth until her cleansing in the first ritual sex (*ngado imbo nyathi*), the third or fourth day after birth depending on whether the child was female or

male. Obura (2014) notes that during the entire period of isolation the couple is expected to abstain from sex and to have separate sleeping arrangements.

According to Jerusa Oluoch (Oluoch, 2014) of Atoyo Diocese a polygamous marriage, contributed immensely to the success of the isolation in the following manner: it enabled the couple to observe abstinence; it also provided the man with a comfortable alternative lodging and a fulfillment of his conjugal rights with the other wives; it assured the confined woman and her child a period of uninterrupted rest. Apart from a monogamous situation where the husband to some extent feels the burden associated with the confinement, for a polygamous situation seemingly it is business as usual.

Selina Anyona (Anyona, 2014) of Oboch Diocese observed that to mark the end of the isolation three things happen: First, on the eve of the purification the mother and child are shaved clean as a sign of the end of the period of the vows; Secondly, a night vigil (*Mony*) is held in the homestead; and thirdly the completion of the blood purification is marked by an early morning *sawo* (sacrificial meal). This early morning celebration has only a few participants: the parents, the officiating priest and few circumcised male and women who have had similar experiences in the past. Partaking of the sacrificial meal is the cleansing ritual that marks the readmission of the mother and her child into the larger society.

6.2.1 Ritually Impurity and Leadership

Penina Omanga (Omanga, 2014) of Ujwanga says that menstruating women are considered ritually impure and therefore a woman who happens to be in her periods is technically excluded from attending the church service. Olali, 2015 says that women on monthly period are not allowed to enter places of worship (Holy places). The separation entailed the foregoing of church services and should the flow begin during the worship service the woman was required to finish the service while outside the sanctuary. Being ceremonially unclean especially for women every month and immediately following childbirth according to Joyce Oiro (Oiro, 2014) denies women leadership positions in the NC. Oiro (2014) says therefore that in the NC the male are the spiritual leaders as well as administrators. They are the baptizers as well as the circumcisers. Archdeacon Joseph Ooro (Ooro, 2014) of Oboch Original says that it is for this reason of being ceremonially unclean (*mogak*) that women cannot just lead the worship service in the NC.

Nerea Ojuaka of Atoyo Diocese says that leadership in the NC is purely male. Leadership in the NC like that among the Luo people is generally apportioned to the male gender. This leadership traces its roots right from birth. The Luo custom requires that the infant remains with its mother in her house for three days if it is a female child and four days if it is male. Male superiority is tied to the contact time of the child with the sun. Male superiority according to Nereah Ojuaka is also tied to the general understanding of the place of the boy child in the Luo Community: *Wuowi e tipo yath ma bade oke kendo olak* (the boy child is a shade tree with many branches spread far); *Wuowi e siro kendo e tado* (the boy is kingpost and the roof).

Bishop William Achola (Achola, 2014) of Madiany Diocese says that baptism of females in the NC stands distinct from that of the males. Baptism of female infants is day specific on the fourteenth day. It is done in the parents' home and the parents must be full communicant members. (Achola, 2014) further notes that after baptism on the fourteenth day the infant and her mother remain in seclusion for sixty six days. The period of ritual impurity (fourteen days) as well as the period of blood purification (sixty six days) on the birth of a female infant are all double that for the birth of a male infant (Lev.12:1-8). The female have no other ritual like circumcision in males. According to Achola (2014), this doubling of the period of ritual impurity and that of blood purification is regarded by some members as alluding to female inferiority.

Achola (2014) further argues that Female infants whose parents' are not full communicant members will be baptized in the church after the requisite period of blood purification for the mother has been completed; they do not go through a period of seclusion. Adult females, possibly from other faith backgrounds, have to be taught the *Katekism* and thereafter be baptized with a new name or the very one she already has. The officiating clergy are all male. The mother has the role of holding her infant on her bosom as she is baptized. The other female members participate in song and dance.

Achola (2014) in conclusion says that the fact that the male infants have an extra ritual seemingly gives them an edge over their female counterparts as it affirms the patriarchal tendencies of dominance. This glaring gender disparity can only be explained by making reference to the Jewish culture and even in this respect the instructions for the practice originate from God. The male were socialized that they must succeed in their role of being

the umbrella of the community is as far as being the provider of material needs and security. This in essence is the root of male domination over the women. Women on the other hand were socialized to invest their time and energy in nurturing and loving members of their community. In this social space women as the dominated do exist for and in the function of the dominant male.

Bishop Enoke Agedi of Ujwanga notes that these two instances of ritual impurity on women push forward the idea that female sexuality is a pollutant and contaminant to all things they get in contact with. This he says is in full agreement with the Book of Leviticus that says that: “When a woman has a discharge of blood that is her regular discharge from her body, she shall be in her impurity seven days, and whoever touches her shall be unclean until evening. Everything upon which she lies during her impurity shall be unclean... (Lev. 15:19). He concludes that it is for this reason that for the NC male, it is inconceivable that a woman may be ordained a minister in the church. Bishop Olali (Olali, 2015) strongly argues that the fact that women are regarded as “unclean” is not a creation of Nomiya Church but a prescription in the Bible which the Nomiya Church cannot vary. Christopher Anguka from Atoyo Diocese made this stand clear when he said that: “the rules given by God to his people and written in black and white cannot be varied and if ever they will be varied then we need fresh instructions or a messenger like prophet Owalo to instruct us on the variation.”

Archdeacon Joshua Opere (Opere, 2014) says that women leadership in the NC is somehow tied to the male leadership in that the female leaders are leaders by virtue of being spouses to the male leaders. He says that women leadership positions include church teachers, secretaries, treasurers and leaders of the women wing and the following women leadership positions are common across the board in the NC dioceses: *Mama Diocese* (a woman or women designated as leaders in the Diocese), *Mama parish* (a woman or women designated as leaders in a parish), *Jagoch Parish* (secretary to the parish), *Jakeno* (Treasurer), *Japuonj* (Women Preachers) *Jagoch Mine Parish* (Women Wing Secretary) *Jalup Jagoch Mine* (Assistant Secretary). Opere (2014) notes that the actual picture in every NC congregation is that there are more female members than male members with a ratio of 5:1.

According to Malachi Otweyo of Got Anyango diocese the membership of the Synod which is the supreme decision making organ of the NC is all male. The NC having accepted the

superiority of the male gender over the female gender understands only one thing that decision making is the preserve of men.

6.2.2 The Double Rite and Sitting Arrangement in the NC

According to Opere (2014) the sitting arrangement in every NC congregation is ordered and very organized. Men and women sit separately and also according to their ranks.” He notes that sitting in the church is divided into three distinct areas: the raised platform area (*Sunagogi*), the male side and the female side. He observes further that the sitting on the raised platform is specifically for clergy who are purely male and who have undergone the double rite of passage. Bishop Olali concurs saying that “the clergy sit facing the congregation with their back to Kibla while in front of them sit the female congregation on their left and the male congregation on their right. Olali (2015) says that the raised platform in the church may only be stepped on by clergy who are “clean” and to whom the church bestows the honor of connecting it to God. Further, Olali (2015) argues that the *Sunagogi* area is considered out of bounds for other categories of NC membership that is women, uncircumcised and unclean clergy. The clergy and the entire congregation will kneel at the moment of prayer facing Kibla. The male will sit on the left while women will sit on the right of the Church from the main entrance.

The *Mony*, according to Bishop Ayaga Ayaga (2014) is a very special moment where the NC members spend the whole night in praise and worship. The occasion could be a night vigil at a funeral or a night vigil to mark the end of the period of seclusion of a mother and her child after birth and baptism. Most of such occasions are in homes of the NC members and in many instances call for erecting of tents *Siwandha* to accommodate the members. Ayaga (2014) says that in this set up the leaders (men only) will be seated at the front while the congregation will sit in front of them. Mats (*par*) are laid at the feet of the leaders to allow the comfort of their shoeless feet. In front of them will be seated the women members with their feet stretched out before them. This arrangement allows the congregation to easily break into song and dance which is the characteristic feature of an all-night vigil. Other women and men will be seated behind the women sitting on the floor/ground.

6.2.3 Death as a pollutant

Bishop Agedi of Ujwanga (Agedi, 2014) says that other instance of ritual impurity comes with the handling of a dead body. He notes that touching the body of a dead person makes a

person unclean for seven days. The specification for purification is to sprinkle water on the third day and on the seventh day and so be clean. The clean person shall sprinkle the unclean ones on the third day and on the seventh day. Then they shall wash their clothes and bathe themselves in water and at evening they shall be clean. The purification on the third and seventh day according (Agedi, 2014) enables the bereaved persons to reenter the community life. Agedi (2014) argues that a widow or a widower is not to marry or remarry after this purification but only after seventy days. A widow is eligible for the leviratic marriage 70 days after the burial of her husband whereas a widower will remarry only after the seventieth day ceremony of opening the grave-*Yawo Liel*. Agedi (2014) argues further that the seventy days service of restoration is a Christianization of a Luo custom by the NC.

6.2.4 Marriage and Gender disparity

Bishop Nikolao Anyona (Anyona, 2014) says that the Luo marriage forms and prescriptions are the basis for marriage in the NC. The traditional Luo society permitted both monogamy and polygamy and there was no law demanding one to remain with a single wife nor was there one for polygamy. Consequently, Anyona (2014) says that the NC accepts and promotes levirate marriage as a means to ensure comfort of the widow and orphans.

According to Sulman Ogacho Audi of Ogwedhi diocese men are the owners of land and other assets which they apportion to their families as they think best; a woman owned nothing. In the polygamous homestead the husband was the head of many households. By virtue of their marriage into family women became heads of households. Additional wives can, therefore, be considered as a way to increase the size of a man's household and consequently his standing in the local community... Additional children may be considered as a valuable economic asset."

According to Bishop Nyarath salvation that entails accepting Jesus as Lord and savior is an area where the NC in its rank and file is not in agreement. Sermons in the NC according to Nyarath (2014), are increasingly reflecting salvation as a higher calling than circumcision (Rom. 2:25-29; Gal. 3:28). It is becoming commonplace to hear altar calls accompanying the sermons. Rural Dean Sila Akoko agrees terming salvation as the circumcision of the heart and the way to God.

Apollo Obago (Obago, 2014) of Got Anyango diocese says that the concept of salvation has now been embraced by some NC members; a number are still adamant advocating for circumcision. Further, he notes that the NC is not an island and the changes and events taking place in the other Christian denominations reach and affect the NC. Women have shown leadership in this area with many accepting salvation and are even members of the East African Revival Movement.

According to Bernard Odhiambo (Odhiambo, 2014) of Ujwanga preaching seems to be the preserve of men but women are among the many preachers especially in the *mony*, the night vigil. Preaching according to Olali (2015) goes hand in hand with the leadership of rituals and thus it is mainly the role played by the worship leaders. This role is not only denied women but the uncircumcised also: *Joma ok oter nyangu ok yal ekanisa mar jo Nomiya* “Nomiya does not allow the uncircumcised to preach in their places of worship. Further, Olali says that women are expected to be silent in the church-*Mon ok yal e kanisa*. This silence according to Odhiambo (2014) is only limited to preaching because women in the NC have the full freedom to lead in singing and in their use of various musical instruments. Certain musical instruments like the drum and giant horn are for men while women are left with shakers, kayamba and cymbal. Many NC male members are equally competent as choral leaders. The singing by women in the NC gives the energy necessary to carry out the heavy task of ministering through song. In a night vigil (*Mony*) for example the NC will have eight or more preachers and at any one time before welcoming a preacher sing eight or more songs. This contribution by women is so invaluable because in a way it allows them to control and determine the direction the service takes.

Odhiambo (2014) says that the fact that female members are not part of the leadership structure they were expected by their male counterparts to perform those duties that ensure the welfare of the leaders. Given the nature of the NC worship where feasts (*sawo*) accompany the rituals their women are called severally to serve at tables to ensure the visitors are well taken care of.

James Oiro of Ujwanga Diocese says emphatically that the NC worship and regulations all have their basis in the Bible. Similarly he notes that all NC practices and rituals are all based on instructions from God. The Bible is then the source and definition of social structure and roles based on gender. Leadership and teaching roles were therefore viewed as the preserve

of men. Men were and remain the main actors in roles of leadership and decision making, ritual leadership, preaching and teaching. The NC has entrenched some of these into her general rules and regulations regarding worship and even in her constitution.

Most of the informants Archbishop Owalo (Owalo, 2014) observed that right from the creation story in Genesis women have been variously regarded as subordinate and subservient. The notion carried forward is that they were created from the rib of man and consequently they were as it were the ones who succumbed to the trickery of the serpent (Satan) and cheated man. The patriarchal stories and stories of other heroic Bible characters, the informants said, portrayed the patriarchal tendencies.

Owalo (2014) argued that the mark of circumcision carried by the NC members who have gone through the rite of circumcision emphasizes a sense of corporateness and distinctiveness. The circumcised are hereby considered as those carrying on themselves the mark and seal of God as members of the covenant community. As such they are regarded as accepted before God. Circumcision gives the circumcised men a special status; way above the uncircumcised men and women. Olali (2015) argues that the raised area of the church is not accessible to women, the uncircumcised male and the unclean clergy. The distinction comes again when the Olali (2015) makes analysis of the attributes of circumcision: “as a means of marking those of a higher social status...circumcision gave advantage to the tribes that practiced it...in a physical sense, it is a sign of cleanliness.”

6.3 Discussions of the Socio-Theological Grounds for Gender Disparity in the NC

Gender disparity in the NC takes several shades but the central issue surrounds the biological aspects of women that make them ceremonially unclean *mogak* periodically during their lifetime. Women’s ritual impurity is a key issue that in the NC forms the basis of gender disparity. In the NC there are a few occasions where a member is said to be *mogak*. These instances include: a woman during her menstruation, a woman after child birth or a woman handling of a dead person. One who is *mogak* was not eligible for ritual observance with a full and complete heart (Dosick, 1995). In the above scenario the women have to go through a period of purification before they can be readmitted into the covenant community.

Menstruating women are considered ritually impure. The impurity is due to the loss of both bodily fluid and most important the loss of potential life (Dosick, 1995). Accordingly, the women were ineligible to participate in the ritual observances of the Jewish people and by extension now the NC worship. According to Milgrom (1991) such a woman automatically

When the monthly flow begins a woman becomes *niddah* (literally it means to “remove or separate, expulsion or elimination”) According to Milgrom the word *niddah* came to refer to the menstruant herself for she too was discharged or excluded from the society not by being kept at arm’s length from others but by being banished and quarantined in separate quarters (Milgrom, 1991).

The idea that the monthly menstrual period is held as contaminant particularly by the male adherents has been pushed as the main reason for denying women leadership roles in the NC. Ndeda (2005) concurs saying this is the social environment in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women while the belief that female sexuality contaminates and pollutes is commonplace.

The informants concurred that leadership in the NC is purely a male affair. The spiritual leaders, administrators as well as the circumcisers (*Shariff*) are all male. Ndeda (2005) concurs and consequently gives possible reason for this: “Paradoxically women attended and attend church in greater numbers than men and thus largely concords with the commonly held view that women are intuitive, receptive to religious experiences and by nature more devout than men.

Although women form the majority of the population the informants agreed that the ritual leaders were all male. This scenario paints a picture of an “inverted pyramid” where many women are led by a few men (Ndeda, 2005). The position now looks healthy as women participation is enhanced but still women remain at the periphery of important administrative decisions and ritual decisions.

This understanding sums up the conception of women in the NC mentality. Women, due to their two periods of ritual uncleanness are regarded as subordinate to men, while men due to the double rite of passage are superior to the women. Added to this is the common reading of the Genesis 2 creation story where many people understand that because Eve came from Adam it connotes inferiority and subordination of the female gender. These patriarchal tendencies that lead to repressive domination of male in societies must be the reason behind

the double rite of passage in the NC and by and large the gender disparity that tips the scale in favor of the male gender. Here below are several instances in the faith and practice of the NC that seem to get their grounding in the two aspects outlined above: the periodic ritual impurity of the female gender and the double rite of passage for the male gender.

The NC in her innovation have the male infants go through the double rite of passage of baptism and circumcision on the eighth day whereas the female infants are only baptized on the fourteenth day after birth. The rite of passage is followed by a period confinement of either thirty three days or sixty six days depending on the sex of the child. This coincides with the Jewish tradition of purification.

6.3.1Patriarchy

Patriarchy is defined as a family, group or government controlled by a man or a group of men. These are societies or institutions organized according to the principles or practices of patriarchy. Patriarchy is usually thought of as men striving to keep women in low position and men in a high one. Miles (2010) gives an all-encompassing picture of what patriarchy is in society:

In patriarchal cultures, men compete and fight to get honor, power, glory, and high position over each other. Maintaining one's pride and avoiding embarrassment are of great importance. All slights or insults must be revenged, for to fail to revenge any insults takes away the family honor and makes the man look weak...Men may be expected to demonstrate their manhood or power by drinking a lot of alcohol, sleeping with many women, or humiliating other men...This worldly drive to gain the praise of man, revenge insults and avoid shame results in a strong desire for sons who can help the father or his family reach a high position (Miles, 2010).

Patriarchy in the Israelite society shows the male dominance in every sphere of life a fact that it shares with the Luo People; According to Frymer-Kensky (2002):

Ancient Israel, like all other great historical civilizations, was a patriarchy. Men dominated every sphere of life. They were the owners of the land, which they passed on from father to son. In the legal tribunals sat the judges and the elders who were all men. The army as was the administrative bureaucracy was composed of men. Men also dominated public religious life serving as officiants in local and national rituals and holding all the positions in the temple hierarchy. Women while not physically confined to the home, expended most of their energies at home. Economically dependent on the head of the households, they had limited ability to determine events beyond their own families, and even within the family they ultimately had to conform to the wishes of the father or husband (Frymer-Kensky, 2002).

Like in the Jewish culture, women in the Luo society were understood as submissive and subservient. A woman did not belong: in her father's homestead she belonged to the father and in her marriage she belonged to her husband and after the husband's death she belonged to her sons. In her father's homestead she was considered as an outcast *Ogwang*. Ndeda (2005) describes the birth of a girl as bringing forth the wild cat (*Ogwang*), a symbol of unknown abode. Her place was always outside the homestead. If she were to die before being married then she could only be buried in the home where her sister was married or outside her father's compound especially in her grandfather's compound.

6.3.2 Gender and Property Ownership

A woman owned nothing: the Luo word for ownership was *wuon* which is the same word for father and this implies that the person who owned something *Wuon gi moro* was equally the father of or the head of the thing. By virtue of their marriage into family women became heads of households. Ndeda (2005) observes that in a polygamous homestead the husband was the head of many households while each co-wife was *wuon ot* that is the head of the house and the leader of its domestic and economic activities. According to Wilson (1965) land belonged to the man but he allocated portions to his wives... if the women however deserted before bearing a male child the farms reverted to him. Ndeda says that the land of one's mother (*puoth min*) was shared by the sons as they married (Ndeda, 2005).

The Luo socialization also gave the women the understanding that their men were the people, they were not. A visitor arriving in a homestead would announce his presence by asking *ng'ama ni ka?* 'Who is here?' Should the owner of the homestead be absent then the women and children present would answer back saying: *ngato onge mana wan* 'There is nobody but us.' The process of socialization among the Luo was a continuous and a life-long process that begins at childbirth and continues until death (Ocholla-Ayayo, 1976). There were several methods through which the value systems, the beliefs, the norms, the customs of the Luo were inculcated in the young and consequently transmitted down the generational divide from one generation to another. These included for example: the songs and riddles; stories and poems, funeral dirge and dances; proverbs and sayings.

The young girls were socialized on their roles as potential mothers of the society. Ndisi (1974) argues that a young girl learned the task of women by observing her mother. At about age six girls accompany their mothers to the river carrying their own small pots. They are also socialized on other domestic chores like fetching firewood, gathering fruits and

harvesting grains and vegetables, cooking and washing of utensils and children, field work and even cooking. At the age of eight she assisted her mother look after her young siblings as a nurse “*japidi*.” The roles of women were thus defined around the domestic chores and more importantly and of priority is the respect that must be accorded the men folk. The socialization prescribed values around which women understood their place and roles in the society. Magesa (2004) argues that a woman was seen as source of life and her voice in all areas of cultivation was valued, yet she was oppressed in the same area where her value was seen only as a source of children, food and not a full human being. Further, he argues that for this reason they were married young, socialized to accept polygamous unions and their labour was exploited.

The socialization of boys took place in the context of the discussions concerning the affairs of the village. Boys learnt from elders the art of building, basketry, shield making and house thatching among many of the manly roles (Ndisi, 1974; Ocholla-Ayayo, 1976; Achieng, 2001). The socialization of men prepared them for leadership roles in the society, and according to Achieng (2001) the following roles were purely for males: Supreme chief (*Ruoth*), Clan elder (*Jaduong dhoot-wagayi*), Village elder (*Jaduong gweng*), Owner of the village or homestead (*Wuon pacho*), Peace makers or war mediators (*Ogayi*), Diviner (*Jabilo*) among others. However, some categories of men were not eligible for leadership and these included the following: A bastard (illegitimate child) (*Kimirwa*), An unmarried man, A sojourner, One whose mother was not a Luo, Physically disabled persons (*mirema*), People whose mothers were separated from their husbands and Persons who had broken the tribe’s taboo, for example, shedding the blood of a kinsman, *nego japacho* (Achieng (2001). Leadership roles from the cultural prescription were male-specific while domestic roles were set aside for the female. The NC has maintained and continued the patriarchal tendencies as witnessed in her worship practices.

In the NC understanding, women in the church have boundaries beyond which they are strictly not allowed to step. They are not allowed to step on the altar area (*Sunagogi*). Olali (2015) arguing that the restrictions in the Nomiya Church are not an indication of any form of biasness against women says: “If women are not allowed in the raised area of the church (*Sunagogi*), it is a restriction covering all the uncircumcised or even unclean clergy. Further in the same vein he says that:

The Bible is the only book in the universe that has been specially inspired, protected and preserved to give us the truth about God. If God created man in his image... (Gen 1 verse 27)... and when God saw that it was good to give Man a Helper in the form of a woman these were not Biblical manipulation by Nomiya Church to glorify man and downplay the role of Women...The understandable fact of most women being “unclean” almost monthly is not a creation of Nomiya Church and if the Bible defines this restriction, it is not for Nomiya Church to vary it as a practice... (Olali, 2015).

Accordingly the NC argues that women are what they are because that is God’s design that they remain submissive and subservient to men (Owalo 53). These religious prescriptions that are Biblical based are a product of the missionary enterprise.

The same patriarchal tendencies were brought into the African cultural milieu by the missionary enterprise as well as the colonialist factor. Both had such an impact on the African cultures with which they interacted and the net effect was a shift in cultural values and aspirations. The missionary enterprise endeavored to bring about civilization, commercialization and conversion of the communities it evangelized. Christian civilization according to Burgman (1990) could only be established as soon as the devil of ignorance, hunger, cruelty and immorality was ejected out of Africa. Christianity in its Western clothing and its efforts of civilization represented a superior culture which according to Mugambi (2009): “... was also understood in terms of civilizing those peoples who were considered to be in primitive stages of development. It was taken for granted that the western world represented the highest form of civilization and that this civilization was a Christian one. The claim that the missionary way of life was supposedly superior to the traditional way of life was manifested in the newly introduced institutions like schools, hospitals and buildings for worship. In these institutions the place of women was subordinate to that of men. A good example is in the education sector in Nyanza which for a long time was male dominated as many parents saw no sense of educating a woman.

Employment for wages was introduced by the colonialists and the missionaries. This possibility encouraged men to leave their rural homes for employment in European firms. Whisson (1962) observes that the arrival and settlement of the European administrators and missionaries in effect rekindled the migratory spirit of the Luo People because work outside provided them with an opportunity of living of a higher standard than those who remained at home. Consequently, employment became an attractive venture drawing the able men from the village economy.

Although the wages provided the laborers with the means to a better life and a means to pay off the taxes they were still meager and this led many of the workers to be detached from their ancestral lands for long periods. Hughes (1963) argues that: “Employers paid a wage sufficient only for the labourer himself on the assumption that his wife, family dependents, could sustain a subsistence life in the reserve.” This situation generated a problem of separation of families. Mbiti (1969) concurs arguing that:

This geographical separation of families creates great strains on the emotional, psychological, sexual and marital life of husband and wife... For the wife, the husband is simply a person who descends upon her once a year or less often, to quench his sexual passion, fertilizes her and disappear. The wife is both mother and father. It is inevitable that such family life produces a serious strain upon every member (Mbiti, 1969).

Women were through this dispensation rural folk who could only visit towns once in a while.

Through this definition women’s role as house wives and the men as wage earners was entrenched. The aspirations of men were redefined from being *Jodong dhoudi* (Community elders and leaders) and *thuondi* (brave men) to better education and better jobs. Ogutu (1994) gives a graphic description of this cultural shift affected by the missionary enterprise and the colonial factor:

The arrival of missionaries... coupled with the introduction of literary education, did a death blow to the Luo traditional beliefs and practices. As a result a new social, economic and political landscape was put in place and *Jo-somo* (school men) and *JoKapango* (the salariat). Concurrently there emerged indigenous *Jo-injili* (Christian priests and evangelists), *Jo-Digri* (university graduates) and *Jo-siasa* (political elites)...The consequence of all this has been a dramatic shift in cultural identity formations... (Ogutu, 1994).

The situation has changed drastically over the years and the number of women leaders in social economic and political spheres has increased considerably. However, the patriarchal prescriptions still have a big hold and in quite a number of families’ women still project themselves as subservient.

6.3.3 Baptism of the Female Infants

While the scriptures prescribed circumcision for male infants on the eighth day there seems to be no direct scriptural evidence for a specified time for the baptism of the male and female infants. Circumcision is done on the eighth day after the woman has been

ceremonially unclean for the first seven days. The OT understanding of the need for purification is that some bodily discharges make people unclean. The discharge of blood in the menstrual flow is understood in the scriptures as defiling and a woman in her monthly period will be unclean for seven days, during which time anything she comes into contact with becomes unclean (Lev. 15:19-24). This impurity especially the menstrual flow is later connected to the acts of disobedience of God's people. This is a clear indication that sin defiles not only the individual connected with the sinful actions and conduct but those in his surroundings. In Ezekiel this connection is well attested: "Son of man, when the people of Israel were living in their own land, they defiled it by their conduct and their actions. Their conduct was like a woman's monthly uncleanness" (Ezek.36:17).

The unbecoming conduct is cleared first by a return to fellowship with God, cleansing from sin and eventually renewal of the heart which is followed by the enablement by God's Spirit. The uncleanness is cleared by a ritual act of cleansing that involves the sprinkling of clean water which alludes to Christian baptism: "I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart, and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give a heart of flesh" (Ezek.36:25-26). In the Book of Hebrews the connection to baptism becomes even more apparent; "Let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water"(Heb.10:22). Both sprinkling of heart and washing of bodies allude to the Christian ritual of water baptism that puts the initiates right with God through the sacrificial death of Christ.

Bodily discharge after birth is also considered as another pollutant. Marshall *et al.*, (1996) notes that: "Mothers are polluted by the puerperal discharge for forty days after giving birth to a son and for eighty days after bearing a daughter." Circumcision is then connected to this period of purification; circumcision of the male infant will according to Jewish prescription take place on the eighth day. After the period of purification is completed the child and the mother are required to present a sacrifice of a burnt offering as well as a sin offering:

She shall not touch any holy thing, or come into the sanctuary, until the days of her purification are completed... When the days of her purification are completed whether for a son or a daughter, she shall bring to the priest at the entrance of the

tent of meeting a lamb in its first year for a burnt offering and a pigeon or a turtle dove for a sin offering. (Lev. 12: 1-8).

The NT concurs and brings out the element of circumcision and naming on the eighth day (Lk.1:59; 2:21; Phil. 3:5). The naming ceremony here is then seen as different from baptism which for Jesus was done at about age 30, just prior to the inauguration of his ministry. The NT also agrees with the notion of purification being done before a priest:

After eight days had passed, it was time to circumcise the child; and he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb. When the time came for the purification according to the Law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord (Luke 2: 21-22).

The Hebrew names given to children according to Dosick (1995) are an affirmation of the Jewish identity as covenant partners. The choice of the eighth day seems to have no Scriptural basis or significance (Migliore, 2004). Dosick (1995) however proposes that it could be linked to the practice of pagan tribes: “the pagan chose the eighth day for sacrificial offering to appease gods because they reasoned that if the gods permitted the child to live for a full week it was most likely they would protect the child from harm or death. He also argues that the choice of the eighth day could be for medical reasons: “In a newborn, there is a factor in the blood that gives the blood the ability to coagulate and clot, and which does not mature until approximately the eighth day.

There seems to be no evidence in the scriptures of female infant baptism on the fourteenth day. However the evidence for the fourteenth day may be gleaned from the purification rites after birth as stated in Leviticus 12:

If a woman conceives and bears a female child “she shall be unclean two weeks as in her menstruation; her time of blood purification shall be sixty six days. When the days of her purification are completed ... she shall bring to the priest at the entrance of the tent...

In the Jewish tradition, naming for girls seems to take a special ceremony because they do not undergo the circumcision rite. According to Dosick (1995): “Since there is no circumcision ceremony for girls, traditionally girls are given their Hebrew names at a synagogue service on a day that the Torah is read (Monday, Thursday, or Shabbat morning, Shabbat afternoon or a festival morning). Many liberal Jews are now having “at home” naming ceremony for girls. Here unlike the male prescription there is no special day for the naming of girls. Because the prescription for circumcision for male infants on the eighth day

is given under the same breath as that for the purification of a woman after the birth of a girl, then the choice of the fourteenth day for baptism of girls by the NC may find its grounding.

Many African ethnic groups that practice the puberty rite of circumcision circumcise their female members, and the implication in both instances is a mature, responsible, and fully integrated member of the community. In the Jewish culture however there is no circumcision of girls but only for boys. On the other hand when it comes to Christianity baptism is prescribed for all and this is the basis of baptism for both adults and infants. Paul in Galatians brings out the universality of baptism when he says that all who have been baptized in Christ have no distinction: "...there is no longer male and female for all of you are one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28).

Baptism in the Christian churches has been associated with the naming ceremony for as long as the missionary enterprise introduced Christianity on the African soil. Paradoxically, this is once again a Western custom rather than a Christian custom. Mugambi (2009) says that the view most African Christians hold of baptism as the ceremony at which they acquire new names (usually a foreign name) has no scriptural basis. He presents this notion saying:

The practice of linking the Christian sacrament of baptism with the re-naming of African converts came with modern missionary enterprise. ..In the context of African Christianity it is a western rather than a Christian custom. Most missionaries did not make a distinction between western culture and Christianity and so they introduced the practice of re-naming their African converts as though it was an essential part of the sacrament of baptism (Mugambi, 2009).

Further Mugambi (2009) asserts that in Kenya a child receives all the names at birth by which he will be called and which are entered into the birth certificate. He therefore asks a significant question in this regard: "If all the names of a child have been endorsed before baptism, how can the sacrament of baptism become a naming ceremony for that particular child? He concludes then that "the cultural custom of naming should be separated from the sacrament of baptism."

6.3.3.1 The Double Period of Impurity

The birth of a girl like that of a boy has a period whereby the mother is considered to be ritually impure. Whereas in the birth of a boy the period is seven days in which the woman is ceremonially unclean like during her menstruation, in the case of a girl the woman is

unclean for fourteen days. This is double the period for males. For the birth of a girl the mother's menstrual impurity is double that of the normal menstruation. Adherents did not agree on a common explanation for this variance: Quite a big proportion were convinced that a woman's blood flow (*Nyawiwō*) is heavier and lasts longer in the case of the birth of a female infant; while the rest concluded that these being prescriptions from God can only be appropriated through faith. Some adherents even suggested that since the woman had given birth to a potential mother in whom the cycle of events that surround the woman biology will be replicated in the future then the period was bound to be longer. Mays (1988) agrees: "Her ability and potential to give birth generate the greater time of impurity"

To have the female get a corresponding date of naming like their male counterparts the NC has introduced baptism on the fourteenth day. Baptism on the fourteenth day is a novelty unique to the NC because the Bible nowhere mentions it and neither does the Jewish tradition of naming choose the fourteenth day. Girls in the Hebrew tradition are given Hebrew names which are the identity by which they will be known in the Jewish community (Dosick, 1995). The giving of girls' names is in no way tied to the fourteenth day but is tied to the day when the *Torah* is read in the Synagogue which is Monday or Thursday, or on the Shabbat morning or afternoon. For the NC to choose the fourteenth day as the day of baptism for female infants and to put it forth as a doctrinal prescription of the church is indeed unique.

In the Hebrew tradition, the baby naming ceremony is always followed by a festive meal (Dosick, 1995). For the NC yet another novelty is realized here for the celebration of the child is delayed until the mother is ritually acceptable in the community of worshippers. This celebration is done on the day that the woman is purified, the very day when the woman enters the assembly of believers after eating together with *Simeon-Ka-Lawi*. On this day the woman and the child are welcomed by the congregation who not only hug and greet them but also shower them with gifts as they congratulate them.

6.3.3.2 The Double Period of Blood Purification

The period of Blood Purification following the birth a female infant is sixty six days and this is double that prescribed for the birth of a male infant. This then means that the infant and her mother are in seclusion for a total of eighty days before the parturient may enter the sanctuary or touch anything holy (Lev. 12:5). Scholars have advanced several possible

reasons for this doubled period: some scholars argue that postnatal discharge for a female is longer; others argue that there is a biological distinction where the male embryo is completely formed in forty one days and the female in eighty one days; others argue that the cultic inferiority of the female sex is expressed in giving the female a double ‘uncleanness effect’ (Milgrom, 1991). A number of the women respondents interviewed confirmed from their experience in birthing that indeed the flow of blood (*nyawiwo*) was heavy at the beginning and it lasted for several weeks. A number of NC adherents were convinced that the explanation can only be found with God. The Jewish explanation that connects the double period of ritual impurity to the double period of blood purification is that the ritual impurity here is as a result of the loss of potential life in the loss of bodily fluid (Dosick, 1995).

At the completion of the specified period in this case sixty six days from the date of baptism the woman shall present before a priest at the entrance of the Tent of meeting a burnt offering and sin offering. The prescribed number of days is significant and has to be observed to the letter because they have a significant bearing to the flow of blood (Lev 12:6). The sacrifice so offered by the priest was to accomplish one purpose: “she shall be clean from her flow of blood...This is the law for her who bears a child, male or female” (Lev.12:7-8). The specified sacrifices were: “a pair of pigeons or a pair of turtledoves.” This prescription which was less costly was meant to take care of those families that were not well to do as attested in the text Lev. 12:8 cf Lk. 2:22-24). For the NC because neither turtledoves nor pigeons exist they have instead adopted the use of chicken. The NC offers only one chicken and it differs in this respect from the other Nomiya groups who follow the Leviticus prescription to the letter.

6.3.4 Leadership in the NC

Most of the interviewed respondents agreed that ritual leadership in the NC is the preserve of the male gender. Following the prescription of the Bible all clergy were supposed to be from the male gender. The NC borrowing heavily from the biblical patriarchal value system emerged within a society (the Luo) that was wholly patriarchal. This double dose of patriarchal emphases ensured male domination, as well as oppression and exploitation of the women adherents in the NC. The oppression and exploitation of women is manifested in a traditional structure that dictates that a girl remains under the patronage and care of her father who hands over his role to the future husband. In such a long and protracted system of

subordination women grow and accept their subservient status and their 'voicelessness' while failing to recognize and activate their potentials and God given-talents.

The hierarchy of the church is not only male dominated but almost purely male. The male adherents are the decision maker and although they are outnumbered by the female adherents in the pews they remain the leaders of the sacraments and also the administrators of the church. Ndeda (2005) concurs arguing that women have been excluded from the leadership roles in all public rituals for example no women officiates during ordinations and baptismal ceremonies and to date there is no female *sheriff* (circumciser). Owalo (53) presses this point further arguing that the order of seniority of man over woman is from God:

...the superiority of the man is over the woman. Christ is at the head of the mankind. In this high office, Christ has a superior, God being the head of Christ and Christ is the head of the whole human kind, so the man is the head of the two sexes; and the woman should be in subjection and not usurp the man's place (1 Corinthians.11:3 and also Ephesians 4:6) (Owalo 53).

The NC understands the male-specific roles in leadership of the Church and for this reason Owalo (53) says women should "be in subjection and not usurp the man's place." Women's role in the church apart from leading in the praise and worship; a role that many NC male adherents are equally competent and always eager to perform, still maintain and carry the traditional womanly domestic chores of cooking and serving. This role of serving their men is one they do with relish, dignity and distinction because in patriarchal society from time immemorial it has remained the defined and expected role of the female gender. The NC develops in a strong patriarchal Luo society and at the same time her theological formation is based on teachings and tenets of the Jewish society that was equally grounded in Patriarchy.

Accordingly Ndeda (2005) says:

...it should be noted that the society from which it emerged was guided by strong patriarchal tendencies which were real and quite durable. This system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women was clearly replicated in the Nomiya Luo Church. The tendencies caused the subordination of women in the movement. The NLC developed fundamental organizational principles based on the traditional social structure with gender as the major determinant of the division of labour (Ndeda, 2005).

Leadership in the NC is a factor of many components brought together, the major ones being that it has not only to be male dominated but should also be determined by marital status as well as age. According to Ndeda (2005) the ingredients to conferring status are titles as well as marriage and age. She argues that: “The ideal leader in addition to being male must be middle aged and married. The leader must be literate but not necessarily have high level of education.” (Ndeda, 2005) .The leaders so selected take their various roles responsibly in as far as decision making is concerned. Like in the rest of the larger Luo nation the major decision makers and functionaries were and remain men. Ndeda (2005) observes that the key decision makers in the NC, those who turn the wheel of change are men who take up spiritual leadership positions as well as administration. Spiritual leadership requires that one is ordained in the presence of many adherents.

Women in the NC who get to the Synod the highest organ of administration of the church do so as the leaders of the women wing; and even here they may meet just as women rather than attend as joint members of this major decision making organ. Women are not priests and women are not allowed to perform as the *Shariff* (the circumciser). Women who may be called church teachers are only teachers on the floor of the church and they do not have an opportunity to serve the church from the altar area because that area is exclusively for men and particularly and specifically those circumcised through the NC religious circumcision rite. According to Ndeda (2005) women in the NC occupy and operate on a subordinate level. “It is categorically stated here, therefore, in the NLC, then and now women have been subordinated against. This subordination means to put a person or group in a less important position.”

It remains an undeniable fact that prohibitions that are made against women in the church ascending to leadership positions are generally tied and related to female sexuality. Female sexuality is important because of the two biological cycles of monthly menses and giving birth. These two factors are believed to pollute and contaminate things they get in touch with. For the NC women are expected to skip the Sunday service during their menses. The same scenario repeated itself during the period succeeding child birth where the woman was expected to be confined in a place that affords her a special opportunity not to mix or continue with hub and bustle of daily life.

The confinement of women after birth (for forty and eighty days) is one long period of isolation. During this same period the woman should avoid the daily routine of a woman's call as a wife and similarly avoid her conjugal rights with her husband. The energy that emanates from women during these two important biological instances has been used by men to curtail women's involvement in ministry. An elaborate service officiated by men signaled the end of this period of confinement. According to Mays (1988) period of confinement and the subsequent purification before a priest were means by which the priesthood and by extension the male of the society gained ritual control over childbirth. Its purpose was to restore the woman back to the traditional prescription of womanly role in the society while welcoming the new born to start the long journey of socialization in his/her society. The NC still does not allow women in ritual leadership. Judaism on the other hand, now allows not only women as Rabbis but also as *Mohel* (circumciser) (Dosick, 1995).

6.4 Conclusion

Historically, the NC faith and practice has shown clear demarcation of women and men both in their roles and expectation as analyzed above. Women form the majority of the population yet the ritual leaders as well as administrators are all male. The NC practices where gender disparity is clearly demonstrated include: the sitting arrangement, exclusion of women from the service because of their menses and expectation of women to serve at tables. These are further amplified in the other aspects of NC worship. Examples of these include: baptism and circumcision of male infants on the eighth day and the female infants on the fourteenth day, isolation of women and infants for forty and eighty days following the birth of male and female infants respectively, prescription for marriage of a maximum of four women for NC leaders and the acceptance and promotion of levirate marriages. It is apparent that instances of gender disparity in the NC are connected directly or remotely to the double rite of passage that gives the male gender an edge over their female counterparts.

The sitting on the raised platform is specifically for clergy who have undergone the double rite of passage. Women in the NC have boundaries beyond which they are strictly not allowed to step. They are not allowed to step on the altar area (*Sunagogi*). Women because of their biology are deemed to be ceremonial unclean every month due to menstruation and after child birth they are isolated for periods of forty and eight days depending on the sex of the infant. In the above scenario the women have to go through a period of purification before they can be readmitted into the covenant community. The only instance where the

male gender is deemed to be ceremonial unclean is after handling of a corpse or for one who is a widower. The mark of circumcision carried by the NC members emphasizes a sense of corporateness and distinctiveness. The circumcised are considered as those carrying the mark and seal of God as members of the covenant community. Circumcision gives the circumcised men a special status; way above the uncircumcised men and women.

From the foregoing the NC presents several innovations. Baptism and circumcision on the eighth day is a novelty. Baptism for female infants on the fourteenth day is unique to the NC because the Bible nowhere mentions it and neither does the Jewish tradition of naming choose the fourteenth day. The Hebrew baby naming ceremony is always followed by a festive meal. The NC has yet another novelty for the celebration of the child is delayed until the mother is ritually acceptable in the community of worshippers. This celebration is done on the day that the woman is purified. For purification of the woman after child birth the NC because neither turtledoves nor pigeons exist has adopted the use of chicken. The shaving of the mother and the child's head on the eve of the purification is again a novelty in the NC. Connecting the purification rite of women after birth with the priestly benediction in numbers is another novelty. On widow inheritance the NC takes a Jewish cultural practice together with a Luo cultural practice and comes up with a blend that is unique in Christianity. Here is the grounding for her doctrine on widow care and remarriage of widowers. The significance of which comes right from the baptismal vows where the NC replaces the question: "Will you remain with one wife only all the days of your life?" With the question "Do you agree to help the poor, the widows and the orphans according to your ability?"

Gender disparity in the NC is a product of the Biblical prescription and the Luo socialization that ultimately gave the male gender an edge over the female counterpart. Patriarchy in the Bible coupled with that in the Luo nations affirm the superiority of the male gender. In the NC the ritual leaders, Bishops and priest and the *shariff* (the circumciser) are all male. Leadership among the Luo traces its roots right from birth, where male superiority is tied to the contact time of the child with the sun. Female infants see the sun after three days while male infants see the sun on the fourth day. Consequently all leadership roles are designed for the male.

This double dose of patriarchal emphases ensured male domination of the women adherents in the NC. Accordingly the NC argues that women are what they are because it is God's design that they remain submissive and subservient to men. The NC structure argues that man is the head of the two sexes and the woman has to remain in subjection to man, because God is the head of Christ and Christ the head of all humanity. Women in the NC therefore carry the larger burden of purification and the onus of ensuring that it is carried out in its details falls on the man.

The NC mentality which is the main reason for gender disparity can be gleaned from Christopher Anguka of Atoyo Diocese who said that: "the rules given by God to his people and written in black and white cannot be varied and if ever they will be varied then we need fresh instructions or a messenger like prophet Owalo to instruct us on the variation." This means that male monopolization of leadership roles is set to continue as long as the religious socialization dictates that men are by design the spiritual leaders of the NC. As long as many women find their place and develop besides one man, the concept of male gender dominance will be perpetuated. Women are so socialized to accept their position thereby handing over to the male the instruments of dominance and oppression.

CHAPTER SEVEN

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Summary

This chapter is a summary of the findings, conclusion and recommendations from the study. The study was carried out in the dioceses of the NC in Rarieda Sub-County, Siaya County between March 2013 and April 2015.

The double rite of passage in the NC creates in the initiates the story of who they are as they find and live the story of the covenant community for which they are part. It provides the biggest window for the community to transmit to the initiates its core value; that is a community in a mutual partnership relationship with her God.

The bilateral relationship between the adherents and the supernatural is manifested in the rites of passage of baptism and circumcision which are the human response of obedience. The religious rites of baptism and circumcision affirm the divine initiative whereby God moves graciously to man in every age and time seeking fellowship. Circumcision and baptism have an equal significance as a sign to a personal relationship with God. Both baptism and circumcision give rise to a community marked for God in fellowship with each other and with God. Baptism has the universal character as a rite that cuts across the gender divide irrespective of age. Baptism marks the beginning of the Christians participation in the life, death, and resurrection of Christ.

In the Bible, the concept of circumcision progressively assumes a different understanding as an event with spiritual overtones (referred to as circumcision of the heart). In the New Testament circumcision of the heart seems to imply that the ritual of physical circumcision has been replaced with the ritual of water baptism as the sign of membership of God's covenant community. The double rite of passage serves the purpose of preserving the ongoing community as a symbol of collective immortality and permanence as well as providing a guided means for transition from one life stage and sphere of responsibility to another. Circumcision and baptism that are done in the context of prayers and blessings are perpetual reminders of the compact made with God. In this way, the roles and responsibilities of the initiates in the covenant relationship is delineated.

The NC is uniquely the only church in Kenya that practices the double rite of passage of baptism and circumcision for male infants on the eighth day after birth and female infant baptism on the fourteenth day. The baptism of a girl on the fourteenth day is a novelty having neither a Jewish background nor a Christian background because baptism in the Christian Church has never been day specific. Adult males will be circumcised and baptized on their admission while adult female will be baptized on their admission. Like in the *brit Milah* or baby naming ceremony, where a Jewish child is given a Jewish name, in the NC during baptism a child is given his or her name. The sources of the names vary but some children are named after living relatives while others after deceased relatives. Although the NC in her theology has prescription for rebaptism or confirmation for those initiated as infants practically only a few rebaptisms were reported.

The rites of passage for infants are in the context of a seclusion period for the mother and infant (A forty day period for male infants and an eighty day period for female infants). This is also unique to the NC because women who give birth to female infants have an outstanding difference that is reflected in the double period of ritual impurity and the double period of blood purification.

At the end of the period of seclusion an elaborate service of reincorporation of the infant and the mother takes place. The height of the service is in the church where for the first time in forty days or eighty days the mother and the newborn are reincorporated to the community life. This purification service with roots in the Jewish culture brings out a unique practice in a Christian Church.

The three phases of the rites of passage defined by Gennep are visible in the double rite of passage performed together with the purification rituals. The NC can be said therefore to have retained the initial teaching on the double rite of passage which has remained unaffected by the pressures and exigencies of life.

7.1.1 The Socio-cultural Basis for the Double Rite of Passage in the NC

The first objective was to examine the socio-cultural basis for the double rite of passage in the NC as indicated by the following points:

7.1.1.1 The NC as an Ethiopic church

The NC is an Ethiopic church (a protest against missionary paternalism and colonial oppressive structures led by Prophet Johana Owalo). Owalo's teaching denied the doctrine of Trinity and the divinity of Jesus while promoting polygamy, leviratic marriage and circumcision; all teachings that went against the grain of the Christian Missionary enterprise doctrines. The NC is a member of the Organization of African Instituted Churches (OAIC - the family of African instituted churches). The NC is the first group to venture out and initiate education programs meant to elevate Africans from their status of ignorance. It is the only Christian body in Kenya that does circumcision as a religious ritual simultaneously with baptism.

7.1.1.2 The Missionary Enterprise

The Western Kenya region was opened up when the railway line reached Kisumu in 1901. The missionary enterprise brought with them the European prescription to remove the darkness from the African lives. The missionary teaching was regarded as a superior culture and would bring about release of the Africans from their captive and oppressive culture. Africans soon expressed their dissatisfaction with European teachings. Owalo's rebellion and many of its kind provided such an avenue in which they could affirm their dignity as human beings and children of God. Here was a chance not to be thrown into a religious oblivion but to affirm their African cultural and religious heritage. When Owalo told the DC off to let him do the needful bidding of God in reaching out to the Luos he was essentially rejecting Westernism and thereby launching Christianity on the terms given to him in the heavenly excursion.

Owalo's challenge was double-pronged as he attacked the weaknesses in the existing mainstream theologies while insisting on maintaining the valuables in the Luo culture like polygamy and leviratic marriage. Owalo showed that he was a man of character, strength and determination. His unending search for truth led him to different Christian denominations and to Islam. He recognized the idea of the centrality of God in all the three traditions he interacted with and to this central concept he wove and brought every other idea into a relationship that affirmed God's sovereignty. The practice of the double rite of passage is the conceptualization of the 'appropriation dialogue.' Human beings appropriate God's apportioned goodness as they respond in obedience to God's laws and stipulations for circumcision and baptism. Prophet Owalo eventually seceded from the CMS to found the

NC, a denomination so distinct in many respect from all the traditions he had been part of for a period of ten years prior to this.

7.1.1.3 The Founding of the NC

Prophet Johana Owalo was born in August 1871 at Orengo village of Asembo Kochieng in Asembo location of Rarieda District close to the shores of Lake Victoria. He founded the first Independent African Church in Kenya. Owalo's church called Nomiya Church (I was given) because of the visitation and vision that he supposedly received from God in 1907 celebrated its centenary in 2007. Owalo was one of the very first catechists in the Roman Catholic Church. Here he showed eagerness to get baptized and he was the first Luo to be baptized on 13th June 1906. His time at the Catholic mission was very short lived because seemingly he had a restless spirit that was not easily satisfied. He felt the power of the Holy Spirit in him and could not back down. He considered none of the teachings of the various religious groups conformed to his idea of the Almighty so he founded a religion on lines as revealed to him by God. He assimilated teachings from the Roman Catholic at Ojola, the Quakers in Maragoli, from the Muslims, from the Presbyterians in Thogoto and from the Anglicans at Maseno. Prophet Owalo's religion thus grew out of a blend of Anglicanism, Catholicism, Unitarianism, Islam and Luo belief systems.

7.1.2 The Theological Context of the Double Rite of Passage

The NC is a Christian denomination that bases its doctrine and teachings in the scriptures of both the Old Testament and the New Testament and on the Luo traditional religion. The NC recites as part of its worship the prayer taught by Jesus Christ, the Lord's Prayer. The NC also as an integral part of its worship recites the central creed of Christendom which is basically referred to as the Baptismal creed or the Apostles creed but with addendums that project the NC theology. The NC also practices Baptism as the rite of admission into the body of Christ. Infant baptism in the NC is day specific: Baptism for male infants is on the eighth day while that for female infants is on the fourteenth day. Baptism for adults takes place on their admission to the NC. The rich and diverse heritage of the Luo Traditional aspects in the NC includes accepting God as the Supreme Being who is also the creator of the universe and in the practices of polygamy, leviratic marriage and burial rites. This heritage defines how a people who are identified by God as his own ought to relate to their God.

Cohesion in the NC is threatened by several areas of inherent weaknesses that have plagued the church in its history of development and these include organizational weaknesses, having leaders with little or no training and having no clear programs on evangelization and discipleship.

7.1.2.1 The NC Theology and Other faith theologies

Prophet Owalo in a very intelligent way integrated Christianity, Islam and the Luo traditional beliefs, in a serious dialogue with each other. It is also the only church where the same practices continue as part of their day-today worship practices. His was an attempt to find meaningful experience of God that cuts across the three traditions.

The NC is the only church in Kenya that borrowed heavily from the practices of Islam. As outlined above a number of NC practices including their mode of dressing (circumcised male adherents put on the white robe *Kanzu* and a cap on their head), removal of shoes outside the sanctuary, the adherents face Kiblah in worship, and polygamy that allows a maximum of four women among many others; together with the central idea that *Nyasaye duong* 'God is great all coincide with the Islamic practices.

As much as Prophet Owalo was heavily influenced by his experience in these traditions, his single and most important influence can be isolated in his excursion of the heavenly realm. In this visitation he was led by angels *Jibraeli* and *Rafaeli*. The teachings that accrue from these visions are well fleshed out in the Nomiya Scriptures Sura 1-6. Heaven is the abode of God and only the righteous attain it. Jesus Christ and the angels are with God in this abode but are agents of God. Although Prophet Owalo recognizes Jesus sitting at the right hand of God, he learns that Jesus is not to be worshipped but he is to be regarded and recognized as a messenger of God.

Salvation is the desire of every nation on earth and this is demonstrated by the zeal with which the nations raise ladders in order to reach out and pick the ripe fruits (salvation). Prophet Owalo realizes that without the aid of the angel *Jibraeli* who provides the right ladder then the fruits are beyond human reach. The right ladder does not require any support or platform; it is not to be placed upon anything or upon a creature. All the other human contraptions have to be thrown away first and their destruction witnessed before one can find and use the right ladder. Like the long rope mentioned in Sura 4 it significantly shows

that the way to God is direct; there is no need for any other medium. It is on this foundation that the NC disagrees with *Marianism* and particularly the concept of Mary as co-redemptrix because salvation is a matter of choice: whoever refuses to use (this ladder) let him be. Prophet Owalo demonstrates that the way of salvation calls for humility and obedience. In humility, Prophet Owalo accepted the angel's direction to stand the right ladder up and to throw away all the rest; he thereby reached the ripe fruit (salvation).

Relationship with God involves first accepting his call and consequently accepting his bidding: "If you accept God's bidding then you will be his own possession forever" (Sura 3). He who has accepted God's bidding must not be quiet but preach only the word of God because that it is what Jesus also did (Sura 5). It is instructive that the NC scriptures should specifically make reference to Matt.18. This chapter demands that the preacher should preach the words that Jesus preached as recorded in Matthew 18. Matt 18 is a special discourse with three pillars that hold the church. There is no sacrifice other than that offered by a believer who truly worships God with whole of his heart (Sura 4).

Owalo in his visions that enabled him to get direct instructions from the heavenly court comes back with the larger picture of heaven as the ultimate home for those who have the right relationship with God. Heaven is a beautiful place where all ethnic groups aspire to enter, however some nations were allowed in while other nations were closed out: Jews, Arabs and Luos were allowed in while the Europeans, Goans and Banyans were closed out and even chased away.

The prominent truths arising from Prophet Owalo's heavenly excursion were the many flaws that were connected to the European Missionary enterprise. Prophet Owalo's visit to third heaven could be taken as an indication that God wanted to admit the Luo like he had done to the Arabs and Jews through the efforts of prophet Owalo. Prophet Owalo was then given the mission to make God's message relevant to the Luo needs and consequently usher those who accepted into heaven. Owalo was given the power of discernment that enabled him to differentiate between clean grain and chaff. Prophet Owalo recognized that only heaven and hell were identifiable, whereas the much preached place of temporal torment (purgatory) did not exist.

Prophet Owalo teaches that there is only one God, eternal and all-encompassing God, He does not beget and He is not begotten, there is none co-equal with him. Prophet Owalo realized that Jesus was not to be worshipped because like him, Jesus was a messenger sent by God. From this experience Prophet Owalo came to the conclusion that the Anglican Church and the Catholic Church were wrong to worship “three gods” and this led Johana to reject the concept of the “Triune God.” From Judge Morrison his Unitarian employer Prophet Owalo might have learned the Unitarian concept of God.

Doctrinally, Prophet Owalo differed with the missionary churches on two major issues; the first was that of the Trinity and particularly the divinity of Jesus and the second was that the NC allows polygamy and wife inheritance as legitimate and acceptable practices within her membership. Prophet Owalo is emphatic on the teaching that God is one and He alone is to be worshipped. Jesus is the son of God who has revealed the will of God but he is not to be worshipped. The Spirit, according to Prophet Owalo proceeded from the God the Father and not from Jesus. Therefore, the NC understands itself as a Unitarian denomination. On polygamy, priests may not marry more than four wives or marry a divorcee or take a widow in a leviratic union.

In the double rite of passage, the church comes initially to baptize and circumcise the child and then to prepare and usher in the mother to the period of isolation in observing the *Nazirite* vows. This period of seclusion primarily is a period of soul searching for both the parents and the church at large essentially as they reflect on two things: God’s plan for the continuity of the human race and secondly that in marriage the couple act as co-creators with God. In marriage God created the very first important institution. The future of a stable God fearing society begins in stable families. The sign of circumcision was a constant reminder for the people to preserve the purity of marriage. In the symbol of circumcision we find God leading his people to identify in the element of faith continuity in the regeneration of the community; faith is joined together with the act of reproduction.

The circumcision/baptism service and the seclusion and purification service that follows are constant reminders of God’s covenant with his people. The taking of vows by the God parents is serious reminder of their commitment to God to keep and uphold his commands since they belong to the covenant community whose obedience God desires. This is the bedrock of NC theology around which everything in the NC revolves, finds their place and

definition. The sharp sword that the NC adherents are to hold aloft is the banner of the Lord God in his word. The word of the Lord demands that the community responds in faith in order that they are identified as God's own possession.

Prophet Owalo was a determined fighter who fought fiercely and tenaciously to maintain without corruption or tainting the ascertained truth. The basis of his truth was the scripture of the Old and New Testaments. His stand on the truth caused the clash he had with the missionaries. Eventually Prophet Owalo broke free from the missionaries and was free to preach to the Luo. Owalo's preaching soon formed around him a group of committed and zealous men of God. These men broke ranks with general Luo society by accepting to be circumcised as part of a new religious movement. Their zeal and enthusiasm was soon rewarded by an ever increasing number of converts in the whole of Luo Nyanza and even beyond. This phenomenal growth is attributed to one with charisma of leadership that enabled him to break clan boundaries to move across the region of Luo Nyanza planting churches and schools.

7.1.3 The Socio-theological issues in the double rite of passage as a basis of Gender Disparity in the NC

The socio-theological context that explains the gender disparity in the NC can be illustrated by the following points. The Luo culture just like the Jewish culture has one concurrence that is in their patriarchy. Every sphere of the day-to-day life promoted male superiority and dominance and women seem to be systematically disadvantaged and subordinated. The areas of disparity may be seen in the few cited cases: The double rite of passage from the outset seems to favor men over women. Women are not allowed circumcision or any other rite that would entail bloodshed. Baptism of female infants has been fixed on the fourteenth day for those infants whose parents are full communicant members. The period of ritual impurity is longer for the birth of female infants that is fourteen days compared to seven for male infants. The period of blood purification is longer in case of the birth of female infants that is sixty six days compared to thirty three days for male infants.

It is apparent that during the period of confinement, it is the woman who is subjected to a host of regulation while her male counterpart seems to go scot free and can even enjoy his conjugal rite with another spouse in the same marriage. From the foregoing it is apparent that the balance seems to be tilted in favor of the male of the society. Many societies all over

the world consider the male child as the heir apparent. One wonders whether the double period of blood purification is simply a perpetuation of subordination which is the order of patriarchal societies.

For Prophet Owalo to advocate for polygamy was to the European missionaries a turning back of the clock. Consequently, polygamy is entrenched in the NC constitution. Polygamy and wife inheritance are two issues that come out prominently in Prophet Owalo's theology. These two practices were the reasons of the big rift between Johana Owalo and the missionary enterprise. These two practices were highly valued in the Luo culture as social means to a stable, caring and progressive society. Among the Luo's therefore any monogamous marriage had the potential of becoming polygamous as soon as the right time and the necessary ingredients presented themselves.

Marriage among the Luo people is a lifelong contract that brings not only the couple together but the two families and clans also. In a Luo marriage set up death of the husband does not dissolve the marriage as the wife remains legal bonded to the late husband and is expected to raise children to his name through the leviratic husband, if she is still within the birth-giving bracket. When Prophet Owalo's theology reemphasizes the care of widows as one of the pillars of the NC it seems to be a reversal of the gains made in Christianity over the years that viewed such an act as bordering on breaking the laws of God.

The hierarchy of the church is not only male dominated but almost purely male. The male adherents are the decision makers although they are outnumbered by the female adherents. Women's role in the church apart from leading in the praise and worship; a role that many NC male adherents are equal competent and always eager to perform, still maintain and carry the traditional womanly domestic chores of cooking and serving. This role of serving their men is one they do with relish, dignity and distinction. Leadership in the NC is a factor of many components brought together, the major ones being that it has not only to be male dominated but should also be determined by marital status as well as age. The NC male adherents argue that female leadership as priests is out of question due the two biological occasions when the church regards them to be ritually impure; during their menses they are expected to skip the Sunday service and in the period succeeding child birth the woman was expected to be confined. During this period the woman was not to touch anything holy or go into the sanctuary and she is also not allowed any intoxicant or shave her hair or even attend

to funeral matters even of a relative. The NC combines the prescription in Leviticus 12 with that in Numbers 6.

The stand of the NC on women leadership seemingly is changing. Now there are many more women accepted as church teachers. Their participation is however limited to serving the church but not from the Altar area. Women preachers are also common during the night vigil (*Mony*) prior to the purification and readmission of the mother and infant after the period of isolation, and in funeral vigils. The women's wing is another moment in the development of the NC where women have an opportunity to exercise their God given talents as women. This space that is slowly by slowly expanding is an indication that the initial rigid stance against the leadership of women in the NC is not only softening but also changing.

For a number of leaders this positive change is a clear indication that the church is not an island in itself but it is a listening and caring church which responds to the environment in which it is. For a long time women have been accepted as subservient a position they have almost associated themselves with. Of paramount importance is that women consider these rituals as God given opportunity for their uniqueness as women and mothers to be expressed and consequently appreciated. These periods in a woman's life should be considered as special opportunities for a reconnection with their God and also as very special opportunities for women to loudly proclaim that they are God's special vessels that bring out the creative side of God.

7.2 Conclusions

The double rite of passage in the NC is a sign to a personal relationship with God. They give rise to a community marked for God and in fellowship with each other and with God. Baptism and Circumcision give the NC life as they lead the adherents to salvation.

7.2.1 The Socio-cultural Basis for the Double Rite of Passage in the NC

This study has conclusively demonstrated that the double rite of passage in the NC provides the community with a channel to transmit its core values to the initiates. Through the double rite of passage the NC has created in the initiates the story of who they are; a story replayed every time in the story of the community of faith they are part of. The baptism and circumcision service is strategically placed at the very beginning of life as a significant

reminder of God's desire to walk with his people. This study listened with attentive ears to the life experiences of the believers that they truthfully narrated and described to the researcher. The researcher placed himself in the believer's position. This study has weaved different strands that build the tapestry of the society to bring out the larger picture of the NC and its primary purpose as the body that lifts her members up to God. This study was an inter-disciplinary one that included the following disciplines: Sociology of Religion, Anthropology of Religion and Theology of Religion. The study has shown that religion plays an important role in any society's public life and has an important role in its social functions. Religion is a way of life in which beliefs are embedded in and formed by the practices of faith. Here we see a religion that has introduced a new culture that has generally been accepted, welcomed and now lived. The culture of circumcision and baptism has brought with it a new set of values.

7.2.2 The Theological Context of the Double Rite of Passage in the NC

Through this study it is apparent that although religions have a lot in common their theology that is defined in the religious traditions and practices are distinct and each should be acknowledged and appreciated as an entity. The NC stands as a unit with substances and truth that can only be unraveled in a study like this one. The NC which was considered in the 1920's as "cult" by the then missionaries and colonial administrators can now stand tall and look at the practices in the mainstream traditions, challenge them and even call them heretical. The NC religious traditions are not just conceptual belief systems but rather a way of life in which beliefs are embedded in and formed by the practice of faith that includes the religious rituals, symbols and religious artifacts. This study has attempted to analyze the system of meaning that exists in the religious symbols of circumcision and baptism, and their relationship to the larger society.

Religion is regarded as the mainspring in the functioning of human society. This study has emphasized the dimension of power dynamics and change by examining the general organization of the NC. The basis of NC as a religion is due to its relationship to social change and social cohesion. Indeed the study has affirmed that the NC adherents are notoriously religious as Mbiti (1969) made a claim and the social cohesion in the NC is due to the fact that religion is an agent of collectivity. Everything that the NC does is for the cohesion of the community of believers who appropriate the benefits accruing from God in the present and in the future after life anticipations.

The NC with its springboard in the Luo Traditional Religion has interacted with various religious traditions bringing out a blend that is here called the double rite of passage. The double rite of passage can only be understood as ‘appropriation dialogue’ (covenant partnership) where God moves graciously and invites a community of believers to Him who reciprocate God’s eternal love and promises through obedience. The study has also shown that the religious practices and beliefs in the NC are a hybrid of the Luo Traditional Religion, Anglican Tradition, Roman Catholic Tradition and Islamic Tradition. Consequently it is an expression of Christianity in an authentically African manner.

The study has also shown that for over a centenary the core practice of the NC which is the double rite of passage has remained unchanged even in the NC splinter groups. This fact demonstrates that the founder’s message of carrying aloft the sharp sword was well taken in. Originally the idea was that sharp sword was related to circumcision and a number of adherents still hold and cherish this teaching to be at the core of the NC doctrines. The reason for this is that in accepting and embracing the practice of religious circumcision the NC stood out distinctly from the rest of the Christian denominations. This theology is expressed in what the NC understands as ‘*Ligangla Mabith*’ the sharp sword which gives them their distinct stand as a religious group with a difference; a Christian group that practices circumcision. A good number of NC adherents think otherwise and actual say that the sharp sword is the word of God which Prophet Owalo was given in order to bring salvation to the Luo People. Through the sharp sword he was to usher in to God’s abode believers who were to number among the Jews and Arabs recognized in his vision.

This study concludes that Owalo was indeed a prophet of God whose message has remained an experience of God that leads to God and Salvation. Now that the NC has a life of its own, her adherents are born into this community and mature to adulthood being guided by the tenets, hopes and aspirations of the NC. Being a member of the NC is a long walk with God to God.

The study has also shown that one of the weakest points of the NC is evangelization. The NC has not opened its doors wide enough for the Luo people where it has its base and even more so to the wider community of Kenya. The NC worship is largely still conducted in Dholuo.

Leadership wrangles that have plagued the NC right from the 1920's after Prophet Owalo's death continue to date. Leadership spends a lot of its precious time seeking solutions to the wrangles and squabbles at the expense of spending precious time seeking to consolidate the Church internally and externally as a missionary Church.

The NC doctrines have not been streamlined and in this respect several schools of thought still surround various important doctrinal issues; a good example is the issue of the Trinity. Pluralism that is the presence of different groups within a locality who practice their religion differently has impacted the NC in several ways. Many of the Christian denominations talk of salvation as that personal relationship with Jesus Christ which is the highest ideal to be sought by Christians. This teaching has now impacted the NC with such a force that seemingly there are now two distinct groups within NC; those who think that circumcision of the flesh is the all-in-all that is necessary for salvation while others suggest that circumcision of the heart is the more important as it entails a personal relationship with Christ. Similarly when one takes the vows in the process of baptism to renounce Satan, his works and all evil powers of this world, and at the same time to renounce the desires of the human sinful nature and worship of all forms of idolatry to some NC adherents this is salvation. For these claimants, those who claim to be saved are making an unfounded claim.

The "three self-policy of a self-supporting, self-governing and self-propagating church" which was formulated by Henry Venn, the CMS Secretary from 1841 to 1872 can be said to have been fully realized in the NC. The NC is one of the churches in Africa that has succeeded in standing as an indigenous institution that is self-supporting, self-governing and self-propagating status for over 110 years. Christ and his message of salvation has been made accessible and appropriate first to the Luo but with time other cultures are accepting the invitation to the NC worship space and doctrines. It has a fully-fledged organization that runs the affairs of the church in a top-down approach with the Archbishop at the apex and Church teachers on the bottom rung.

7.2.3 The socio-theological issues in the double rite of passage as a basis for gender disparity in the NC

The Luo culture lays emphasis on patriarchy and male superiority and dominance is the order of things. Women are not only subordinated but also disadvantaged. The double rite of passage seems to favor men over women. The period of ritual impurity and that of blood

purification is longer in case of the birth of female infants. During the period of confinement the woman who is subjected to a host of regulations. The above among others suggests that the balance seems to be tilted in favor of the male of the society.

Polygamy is entrenched in the NC constitution. Polygamy and wife inheritance are highly valued in the Luo culture as social means to a stable, caring and progressive society. In a Luo marriage death of the husband does not dissolve the marriage as the wife is expected to raise children to his name through the leviratic husband.

The NC hierarchy is not only male dominated but almost purely male. The male adherents are the administrators' decision makers and leaders of worship. Women's role in the NC is still pegged on leading the praise and worship serving tables. Women space in the NC is slowly expanding.

The hard stand of the NC on women leadership seemingly is softening up. Now there are many more women accepted as church teachers. Their participation is however limited to serving the church but not from the Altar area. Women preachers are also common during the night vigil (*Mony*) prior to the purification and readmission of the mother and infant after the period of isolation, and in funeral vigils. The women's wing is another moment in the development of the NC where women have an opportunity to exercise their God given talents as women. This space that is slowly by slowly expanding is an indication that the initial rigid stance against the leadership of women in the NC is not only softening but also changing.

7.3 Recommendations

The future of the NC lies in identifying, redefining and embracing the core message that is found in the NC Scriptures and in the double rite of passage. The double rite of passage in the NC stands out as that ritual around which all that defines the NC as a Christian denomination find their basis. The double rite of passage of baptism and circumcision defines the sovereignty of God in mutual relationship with the adherents. The following recommendations therefore based on the three objectives of the study are grounded on aspects of the NC worship and practice that needs to be revamped.

7.3.1 The Socio-cultural Basis for the Double Rite of Passage in the NC

7.3.1.1 The biggest challenge that has plagued the Church for a long time is the separatist spirit. It has led the dioceses to splinter into tiny units that are economically not viable. The Church needs a serious and concerted effort to bring the leadership into healing programs that will enable them to appreciate the need of building an integrated unity. The church should identify her strengths especially those elements that define what it means to be an NC member and what is expected of an NC member and ensure their packaging in such a manner that ensures the church remains vibrant and relevant. The NC needs a revolution towards larger and better organized dioceses rather than the tiny, numerous and poorly organized entities.

7.3.2 The Theological Context of the Double Rite of Passage in the NC

7.3.2.1 The NC has a rich theological heritage that should be collated in order to maintain the NC doctrines. Already enormous effort and resources have been poured in the production of a prayer book. Archbishop Owalo put in a lot of effort towards that end and even in his rich unpublished work on doctrine: *My Father is Greater than I am*. Bishop Eng. Olali has also come up with his new book: *My Faith, My Religion: History of Nomiya and Basic Doctrine of Nomiya Church*. In attending the 95th celebrations of the passing on of Prophet Owalo at Sagam Primary School the researcher observed two things, one the church is yearning for both historical and doctrinal information about the NC and two already there is a rush towards this end as prayer books with NC history and hymnals are coming up. Some of these write-ups differ on several historical facts and content. This run-away tendency should be arrested immediately by the NC commissioning a group of experts to come up once and for all with an accepted book on doctrine, Book of Prayer and Hymnals. At the same time the Constitution should be revisited to see that it presents an up-to-date picture of the church. Allowing the runaway tendency has the danger of infiltrating the NC with borrowed religious ideas as well wrong historical facts and the danger then is that the succeeding generation of adherents will not find the NC bequeathed by the ancestors as the baby will have been thrown out with birth water.

7.3.2.2 The NC should urgently revisit her Constitution that gives training of clergy and leadership a big space. The future of the Church lies in empowering her leadership who will carry the Church faithfully to other levels.

7.3.2.3 On Baptism the NC seems to advocate for rebaptism of those who were baptized at infancy. This has not been fully implemented and as such it leaves a doctrinal gap that if not filled will raise a generation of Nomiyaitees who are less conversant with the doctrines of the church. Grounding of the adherents starts at this level.

7.3.2.4 There is also an urgent need to offer mass education to all levels of adherents in order to appraise their understanding of their Church. Religion is a mass movement and a mass that speaks with one voice have a long way to go united.

7.3.2.5 The NC should embark on evangelization programs that will make her an attractive destination for the would-be-adherents. At the same the NC needs to open up so that it breaks from the cocoon of 'Luonness' in order to attract other ethnic groups. In this respect the language of worship should be a national language Kiswahili or English. Such reforms will lift the Church from a tribal religion to a worldwide religion as its mandate dictates.

7.3.2.6 The NC circumcision may be considered to be based on non-medical situations using crude and unsterilized instruments and performed by personnel who are not medically competent, has a high success rate. This success rate is witnessed on all initiates from day 8 to initiates who are mature even seventy years and above. However, the Church accepts that damage that could have been avoided has been caused by the use of the crude instruments in the hands of people not medically trained. Liaising with the medical experts and the Voluntary Medical Male Circumcision (VMMC) personnel will ensure that their experience and expertise is shared to ensure health and safety. Medical circumcision can be turned into a proper ritual circumcision.

7.3.3 The Socio-theological issues in the double rite of passage as a basis for gender disparity in the NC

7.3.3.1 The NC is opening up on leadership issues. Women are increasingly allowed roles that were taboo to them. However, the biggest bottleneck seems to be the ritual impurity that comes with every month of menses. This is an area the NC needs to brainstorm so much being informed by contemporary gender definitions. The religious climate is changing and even the Jews now have women Rabbi and *mohel* (circumcisers). The NC should embrace change in order to be relevant without any extra cost in watering down her accepted tenets.

7.3.3.2 The double dose of patriarchal emphases based on the Jewish patriarchal prescriptions in the Bible and the Luo Patriarchal values have a common denominator in their conclusion that women sexuality contaminates and needs periodic purification. The NC should seek to conform to the contemporary understanding of equality of gender without compromising the values handed down by the founder.

7.4. Areas for Further Research

7.4.1 The rich theological heritage of the NC and in particular the liturgy that is evidently an amalgam of several traditions calls for further research. A good example is the *Lamo Mar Jehova* that is a sequence of descriptives that provide the divine attributes and divine names. There seems to be a connection to the “Beautiful Names” from the Quran (See Cragg, 2000).

7.4.2 The double period of blood purification together with the double period of ritual impurity that are all associated with the birth of a female child is an area that calls for further research.

7.4.3 The period of seclusion of woman and child after giving birth on the surface may seem to be an unnecessary long period of confinement given the exigencies and demands of contemporary life. However, it seems to have a number of attendant benefits that impact on the health of the parturient and the infant. A research on this area would open up these benefits on the mother and child health in relation to maternity leave.

7.4.4 The Unitarian faith ideas that the NC espouses and which seem to divide her with the other Christian denominations that teach about the Trinity is another area of research that should help establish the Christian truth.

7.4.5 The six chapters of the NC Scriptures as the basis of the NC theology is definitely another area of research and particularly in their connection to *Upanga Mkali* the purported original write-up by Owalo in Swahili.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT (FORM)

TITLE OF THE STUDY: THE SOCIO-CULTURAL AND THEOLOGICAL CONTEXT OF THE DOUBLE RITE OF PASSAGE IN NOMIYA CHURCH IN RARIEDA SUB-COUNTY, SIAYA COUNTY

NAME OF INVESTIGATOR: SAMUEL OTIENO SUDHE, DEPARTMENT OF RELIGION, THEOLOGY AND PHILOSOPHY, SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES-MASENO UNIVERSITY, KENYA

STUDY LOCATION: RARIEDA SUB-COUNTY-SIAYA COUNTY

PURPOSE OF STUDY/PROJECT: I am a PhD student at Maseno University. I would like to investigate the socio-cultural and theological context of the double rite of passage of baptism and circumcision in the Nomiya Church (NC). The specific objectives will be to examine the socio-cultural basis for the double rite of passage in the NC, to evaluate the theological context of the double rite of passage in the NC, and to examine socio-theological issues in the double rite of passage as a basis for gender disparity in the NC. You have been selected since you are a member of one of the NC. This study has been approved by the School of Graduate Studies- Maseno University.

DESCRIPTION OF THE RESEARCH STUDY/PROJECT: The study population will be the NC members from Rarieda Sub-County in Siaya County, Kenya. The accessible population will be based on NC membership in eight dioceses sampled out of the fourteen in Rarieda Sub-County.. Simple random sampling was used to get the eight dioceses. A sample of 345 NC leaders and baptized members will form the respondents. Purposive sampling will be used to sample 113 church leaders who will include: the Archbishop, bishops, clergy, lay readers, senior lay members, and women representatives. Snowball sampling will be used to sample 232 baptized adherents. The baptized members will include both male and female, aged eighteen years and above. Methods of data collection for this study will be Key Informant Interviews (KII), self-administered questionnaires, observation and focus group discussions. The research instruments will include interview schedule, questionnaire, observation schedule and discussion schedule.

RISK/BENEFITS: Since this information will be captured through structured and semi-structured questionnaires, there is no potential risk associated with the study. The participants are involved at their own free will. Although it is not likely that you will benefit directly, the information from this study is expected to benefit your community by enabling the different stakeholders involved to appreciate why the NC practices double rites of

passage. The participant will not incur any expense as we shall provide all the materials needed to carry out the study.

REFUSAL TO PARTICIPATE/ WITHDRAWAL: Your right to refuse to participate in the study or withdraw your participation during the study will be upheld. Participants will be at liberty to refuse consent with or without explanation, and without penalty or prejudicial action towards them.

CONFIDENTIALITY: We will make every effort to protect your identity in any reports or publications of this study. In order to ensure complete confidentiality of the test results, questionnaires filled by you will be identified only by unique identification numbers and the names of the participants will only appear in the final data files on consent.

CONTACT INFORMATION: If you have any queries now or in future regarding this study, kindly ask any of the field officers involved in this study or contact me Rev. Samuel Otieno Sudhe, the Principal Investigator on +254 710751684 (Department of Religion, Theology and Philosophy, School of Arts and Social Sciences-Maseno University).Regarding the right to participation please contact the Dean, School of Graduate Studies- Maseno University, Private Bag, Maseno; Telephone numbers: 057-51622.

DECLARATION OF CONSENT: I have understood the content of this consent form; the details of the study and the basis for my participation. I also understand that I am free to choose to be part of the study and I can withdraw my participation at any time. I have therefore agreed to participate in this study without any coercion whatsoever.

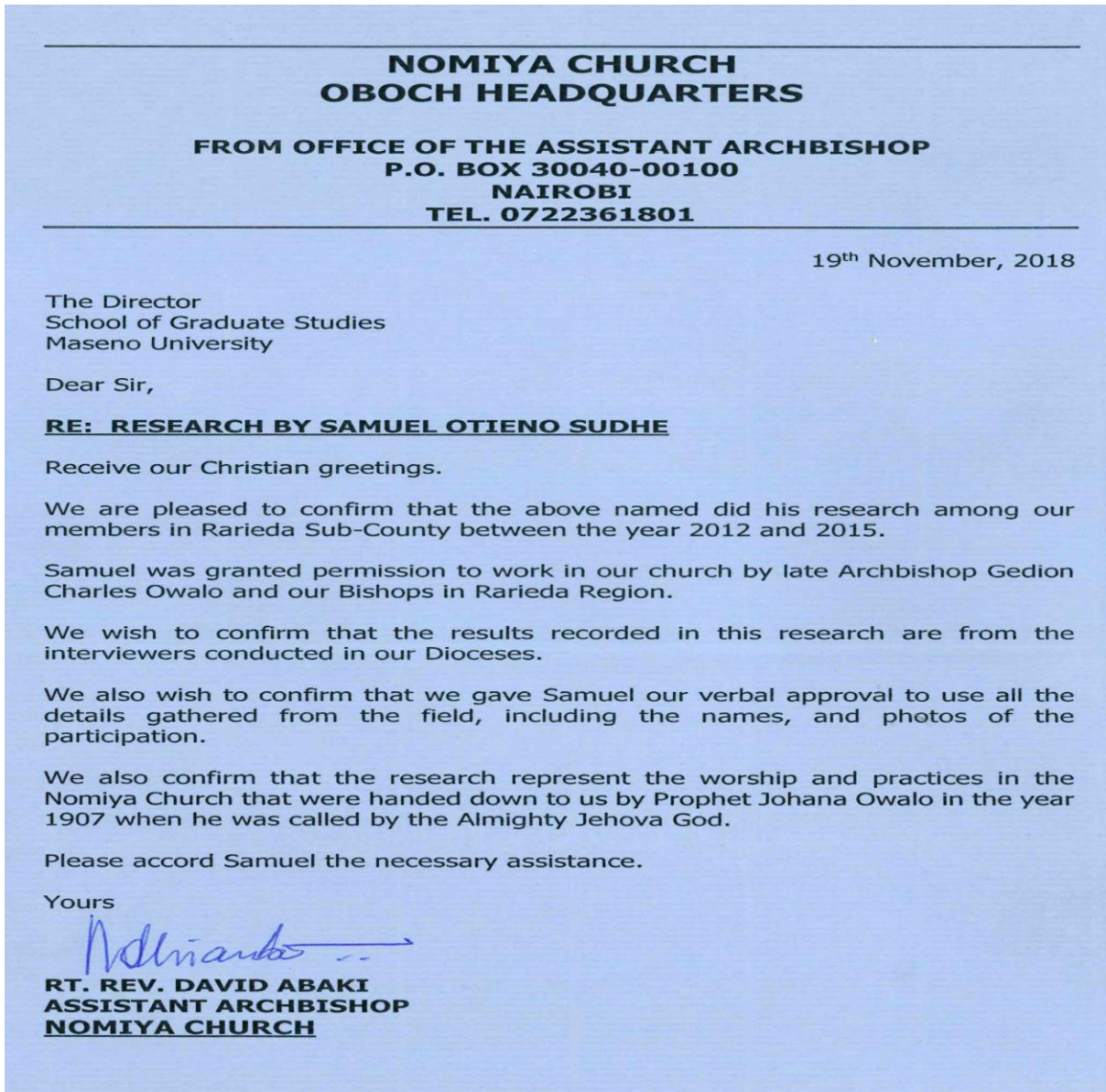
Participant's Ref. No.:

Signature (Participant).....**Date**.....

Name of person obtaining consent**Signature** **Date**.....

APPENDIX 2

LETTER OF APPROVAL



Source: The Rt. Rev. David Abaki-Assistant Archbishop Nomiya Church

APPENDIX 3; QUESTIONNAIRE FOR CHURCH LEADERS

THE SOCIO-CULTURAL AND THEOLOGICAL CONTEXT OF THE DOUBLE RITE OF PASSAGE IN NOMIYA CHURCH IN RARIEDA SUB-COUNTY, SIAYA COUNTY

Dear respondent, this study in which you are about to participate is being conducted by a student from Maseno University. The study seeks to examine the Socio-cultural and theological Context of the double rite of passage in the Nomiya Church in Rarieda Sub-County, Siaya County. We thank you for your time and the valuable information on the rites of baptism and circumcision practiced in the Nomiya Church. Please answer the questions in the questionnaire to the best of your knowledge.

Part A: Personal Details

Please provide answers in the spaces provided. Put a tick or fill in the spaces as appropriate.

1. State your names (Optional).....
2. State your age.....
3. Are you a baptized member of the Nomiya Church: Yes [] No [] 4. If yes were you baptized on
 - a. The eighth day []
 - b. The fourteenth day []
 - c. Adult convert []
5. If on the eighth day was that the day of you circumcision?
6. If Adult convert when were you baptized (Year..... Month.....)
7. Were you a member of another Christian denomination Yes [] No []
8. If Yes Which One?
9. If male state how long it was before you were circumcised?
10. State your marital status: Single [] Married []
11. How many children do you have: Male.....Female.....
12. Are all your children members of the church Yes [] No []
13. Have your children or members of your family moved to another faith Yes [] No []

14. If yes what could be the reason(s)

.....
.....
.....

Part B. Leadership

1. Which is your Diocese.....

2. Which is your parish.....

3. Which is your church.....

4. Are you in a leadership position in the church Yes [] No []

5. State your position.....

6. How long have you served in this position

>2yrs []; 2-5 yrs. [] 5-10 yrs. [] >10 yrs. []

7. Which other position have you held in the church.....

8. Is a member of your family serving in a leadership position Yes [] No []

9. If Yes which?

10. Are you an ordained leader Yes [] No []

11. Briefly state your role/s in the church

.....
.....
.....

12. Did you undergo theological training Yes [] No []

13. If yes where.....

14. How long was your training

Less than six months []

One year []

More than one year []

15. How many congregations/Parishes are you in-charge of.....

16. Estimate the population of the members under your care.....

17. Identify the hierarchy in the Nomiya Church

.....
.....
.....

Part C. Baptism

1. Who does the baptism
Priest []
Lay person []
2. Is baptism in the context of a baptism service Yes [] No []
3. Does the church have a prescribed baptism liturgy Yes [] No []
4. Does baptism in the Nomiya Church have any scriptural basis Yes [] No []
5. If yes which scriptural passages have greater significance
.....
.....
.....
6. Who are the candidates of the baptism
Infants []
Adults []
7. If infants when is Baptism done...
 - a. Within 2 weeks []
 - b. Within 1 month []
 - c. Any time []
8. If adult convert when is Baptism done?.....
9. Which is the most common?
 - a. Infant baptism []
 - b. Adult baptism []
10. Of the Adult Convert baptism which is higher?
 - a. Female convert baptism []
 - b. Male convert baptism []
11. Is the baptism by
 - a. Immersion []
 - b. Sprinkling []
12. Is a new name given to the initiate Yes [] No []
13. If yes what kind of name is given
 - a. Biblical []
 - b. African []
 - c. European []
14. Is baptism in the name of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit:
Yes [] No []
15. Are there any special Hymns for a baptism service: Yes [] No []
16. Where is the baptism done? In a Church building [] In a Home [] In a flowing water [] In a pool []
17. Are there pledges made by those who are to be baptized Yes [] No []

18. If so which elements of belief do they touch?

.....
.....
.....

19. Is there a creed to be recited during baptism Yes [] No []

20. If yes which one.....

21. What would you say is the significance of baptism in the Nomiya Church

.....
.....

22. What connections are there between baptism and circumcision

.....
.....
.....

23. According to you has this practice (of baptism and circumcision) remained the same

Yes [] No []

24. If no state what visible changes you have noted in the recent past

.....
.....
.....

Part D: Circumcision

1. Is circumcision the removal of the foreskin of the male sexual organ Yes[] No []

2. Is circumcision in Nomiya Church a religious rite Yes [] No []

3. If yes is there a document(s) of the church that prescribes the instruction Yes[] No []

4. Name these documents

.....
.....
.....

5. Does circumcision rite have any scriptural connection Yes[] No[]

6. If yes which scriptural passages are used by the church?

.....
.....

7. **Please** briefly state the significance of the circumcision rite in the Nomiya Church

.....
.....

8. Can the church accept members who are not circumcised Yes [] No []

9. If no what is required of a new member

.....
.....

10. What is the significance of the eighth day for the circumcision of male infants
11. Could circumcision for male infants be done on a different day other than the eighth day
12. Who does circumcision? Priest Specialist
13. If specialist what title does the church identify him with..... 13. Could the specialist be a medical practitioner Yes No
14. Could circumcision be done within a medical facility Yes No
15. Does the specialist undergo training Yes No
16. If so where.....
17. What tools does the circumciser use: 1).....2).....
..... 3).....4).....
18. Is anesthesia used? Yes No
19. Who are circumcised
- i. Male infants
 - ii. Youths at puberty
 - iii. Male adults
 - iv. All the above
20. If the answer is (iv), when is circumcision done for each category?
.....
21. What kind of preparation is required before circumcision for the parents in case of an infant.....
.....
22. What kind of preparation is required for the infant
.....
23. What kind of preparation is required for an adult
.....
24. Where is circumcision done?
- a. Church
 - b. Home
 - c. Other site(specify).....
25. How long is the healing period for infants.....
26. How long is the healing period for adults.....
27. What significant observations are required for the parents during the period of healing.....
.....
28. What significant observation will be required for an adult during the period of healing

.....
.....
29. What connections would you say exist between baptism and circumcision in the

Nomiya

Church.....
.....

30. What roles are expected of a circumcised member of the church

31. Other than baptism do the female members of the church undergo an extra rite of passage Yes [] No []

32. If yes state which?

33. Analyze the place of circumcision in the Nomiya Church

.....
34. Briefly state the origins of circumcision in the Nomiya Church

.....
What is the future of circumcision in the Nomiya Church?
.....

APPENDIX 4: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR BAPTIZED MEMBERS

THE SOCIO-CULTURAL AND THEOLOGICAL CONTEXT OF THE DOUBLE RITE OF PASSAGE IN NOMIYA CHURCH IN RARIEDA SUB-COUNTY, SIAYA COUNTY

Dear respondent, this study in which you are about to participate is being conducted by a student from Maseno University. The study seeks to examine the Socio-cultural and theological Context of the double rite of passage in the Nomiya Church in Rarieda Sub-County, Siaya County. We thank you for your time and the valuable information on the rites of baptism and circumcision practiced in the Nomiya Church. Please answer the questions in the questionnaire to the best of your knowledge.

Part A: Personal Details

Please provide answers in the spaces provided. Put a tick or fill in the spaces as appropriate.

1. State your names (Optional).....
2. State your age.....
3. Are you a baptized member of the Nomiya Church: Yes [] No []
4. If yes were you baptized on
The eighth day []
The fourteenth day []
Adult convert []
5. If on the eighth day was that the day of you circumcision?
6. If Adult convert when were you baptized? (Year..... Month.....)
7. Were you a member of another Christian denomination Yes [] No []
8. If Yes Which One?
9. If male state how long it was before you were circumcised?
10. State your marital status: Single [] Married []
11. How many children do you have: Male..... Female.....
12. Are all your children members of the church Yes [] No []

13. Have your children or members of your family moved to another faith Yes [] No []

14. If yes what could be the reason(s)
.....
.....
.....

B Gender issue

15. When is baptism done for female infants?
14th day after birth [] Any other day []
16. When is baptism for Female adult converts?
17. Why is this day of baptism important?
18. Could baptism be done on another day other than this day? Yes [] No []

19. Do women undergo circumcision? Yes[] No[]
20. Do female undergo any other rite of passage? Yes{ } No{ }
21. If Yes which one?.....
22. When is it done?.....
23. What role do women play in baptism service?
 Baptizer { } God Parent { } Parent { } singing { } observer { }
24. What role do women play in circumcision service?
 Circumciser { } Parent { } Singer { } Observer { }
25. What roles do women play during the period of seclusion?
 a)..... b).....
 c)..... d).....
 e).....
26. What roles do men play during the seclusion?
 a)..... b).....
 c)..... d).....
 e).....
27. What other roles do women play in the church
 a)..... b).....
 c)..... d).....
 e).....
28. How many women are involved in leadership in the church(Leadership means leading the service and administration? None { } Few { } Many{ }
29. How would you call the church leadership structure
 Purely male
 Male dominated with a few female
 Balanced with male and female in fairly equal proportion
- 30) In your diocese how many women clergy exist? Less than 5 [] less than 10[]

APPENDIX 5: KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW SCHEDULES

THE SOCIO-CULTURAL AND THEOLOGICAL CONTEXT OF THE DOUBLE RITE OF PASSAGE IN NOMIYA CHURCH IN RARIEDA SUB-COUNTY, SIAYA COUNTY

Dear respondent, this study in which you are about to participate is being conducted by a student from Maseno University. The study seeks to examine the the Socio-cultural and theological Context of the double rite of passage in the Nomiya Church in Rarieda Sub-County, Siaya County. We thank you for your time and the valuable information on the rites of baptism and circumcision practiced in the Nomiya Church. Please answer the questions in the spaces below to the best of your knowledge.

Personal Details

1. State your names (Optional).....
2. State your age.....
3. Are you a baptized member of the Nomiya Church: Yes [] No []
4. If yes were you baptized on
The eighth day []
The fourteenth day []
Adult convert []
5. If on the eighth day was that the day of you circumcision Yes [] No []
6. If Adult convert when were you baptized?.....
7. If male state how long it was before you were circumcised
8. State your marital status: Single [] Married []
9. How many children do you have: Male.....Female.....
10. Were the male children baptized on the eighth day Yes [] No []
11. If not give reasons for the variance
.....
.....
15. Were all the female children baptized on the fourteenth day Yes [] No []
16. If not give reasons for the variance
.....
.....

Part B Baptism

1. Does the practice of baptism in the Nomiya Church have any scriptural basis
Yes [] No []
2. If yes which scriptural passages have greater significance
.....
.....
Who are the candidates of the baptism

- Infants []
- Adults []
- 4. If infants when is baptism done...
 - Within 2 weeks []
 - Within 1 month []
 - Any time []
- 5. If adult convert when is baptism done.....
- 6. Which is the most common
 - Infant baptism []
 - Adult baptism []
- 7. Of the Adult Convert baptism which is higher
 - Female convert baptism []
 - Male convert baptism []
- 8. Is the baptism by
 - Immersion []
 - Sprinkling []
- 9. Is a new name given to the initiate: Yes [] No []
- 10. If yes what kind of name is given
 - Biblical []
 - African []
 - European []
- 11. Is baptism in the name of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit:
 - Yes [] No []
- 12. Are there any special Hymns for a baptism service: Yes [] No []
- 13. Where is the baptism done?
 - in a church building []
 - in a home [] in
 - flowing water [] in a
 - pool []
- 14. Are there pledges made by those who are to be baptized Yes [] No []
- 15. If so which elements of belief do they touch
 -
 -
- 16. Is there a creed to be recited during baptism Yes [] No []
- 17. What would you say is the significance of baptism in the Nomiya Church
 -
 -
- 18. What connections are there between baptism and circumcision
 -
 -
 -

19. According to you has this practice remained the same Yes [] No []

20. If no state what visible changes you have noted in the recent past

.....
.....

Part C Circumcision

1. What kind of preparation is required before circumcision for the parents in case of an infant.....

.....

2. What kind of preparation is required for the infant

.....
.....

3. What kind of preparation is required for an adult

.....

4. What significant observations are required for the parents during the period of healing

.....
.....

5. What significant observation will be required for an adult during the period of healing

.....
.....

Part D. Leadership information

1. Give the name of your denomination.....

2. When was it founded.....by whom.....

3. State the reasons for its founding

.....

4. How many Dioceses.....Parishes.....Congregations..... do you have

5. How many members do you have

1) Adult..... Males.....Females..... 2)

Youths..... Males..... Females 3) Sunday

School.....

6. Is your group registered Yes[] No []. Reg. Certificate No.....

7. What is your church organizational structure

.....
.....

8. What are central teachings from the founding father Johanna Owalo

.....
.....

9. What is the significance of baptism in the NC

.....
.....

10. What is the significance of circumcision in the NC

APPENDIX 6: OBSERVATION SCHEDULE FOR CIRCUMCISION AND BAPTISM

Date of observation.....Time.....

Locality.....

Circumcision/baptism service (male infant).....

Baptism service (Female).....

Part A: Participants

1. Who are the participants in a circumcision/Baptism ritual
2. How many are they and how are they related to each other?
3. Which are their ages and what is their sex
4. Who are the officiants and how many are they
5. What are the patterns of interactions

Part B: Settings

1. Where is the event taking place
2. What is the layout of the setting
3. What is the significance of the setting
4. What kind of behavior does this setting call for

Part C: Purpose

1. What is the purpose of this event
2. What are the goals; Are the goals harmonious or antagonistic

Part D: Socio-Religious behavior

1. What actually takes place and what do the participants do
2. What activities are involved
3. Is there a meal that brings everybody together; what kind of meal?

Part E: Frequency and Duration

1. What is the frequency
2. How long is the circumcision/baptism service
3. Can two or more infants be circumcised/baptized at the same time

APPENDIX 7: DISCUSSION SCHEDULE FOR THE CHURCH MEMBERS

THE SOCIO-CULTURAL AND THEOLOGICAL CONTEXT OF THE DOUBLE RITE OF PASSAGE IN NOMIYA CHURCH IN RARIEDA SUB-COUNTY, SIAYA COUNTY

Dear respondent, this study in which you are about to participate is being conducted by a student from Maseno University. The study seeks to examine the Socio-cultural and theological Context of the double rite of passage in the Nomiya Church in Rarieda Sub-County, Siaya County. We thank you for your time and the valuable information on the rites of baptism and circumcision practiced in the Nomiya Church. Please answer the questions in Part A below to the best of your knowledge. Part B,C are topics to be discussed in a group setting.

Part A: Personal Details

Please provide answers in the spaces provided. Put a tick or fill in the spaces as appropriate.

1. State your names (Optional).....
2. State your age.....
3. Are you a baptized member of the Nomiya Church: Yes [] No []
4. If yes were you baptized on
The eighth day []
The fourteenth day []
Adult convert []

Part B: Topics for Discussion on Baptism

1. What is the genesis of baptism in the NC?
2. Why is the male infant baptism done on the eighth day?
3. What is required in baptism?
4. Is baptism done in the name of the triune God?
5. Why is baptism done first?
6. Why are there two baptism dates in NC?
7. What is your opinion on Paul's position on baptism?
8. Is the white robe and cap in any way connected with an initiate? 9. What celebration activities are done on this day

Part C: Topics for Discussion on Circumcision

1. How was circumcision received by the NC?
2. What is the genesis of the concept of circumcision in NC?
3. Why is Circumcision for male infants on the eighth day?
4. Why is circumcision important in NC?

5. Is it compulsory that to be a member of NC one has to be circumcised?
6. What is your opinion about Paul's stand on Circumcision?
7. Is there female circumcision in NC?
8. If not is there an alternative?
9. Is circumcision done by the specialist medically accepted?
10. Does the specialist go for any specialized training?
11. What is the genesis of the Sharif?

Part D Double Rite of Passage

1. Why does the NC have two rites of passage?
2. What is the significance of the double rite of passage?
3. Why is the rite of passage connected to the period of seclusion of the woman after birth
4. Why is female baptism on the fourteenth day
5. Why is the period of seclusion different for the male and female infants
6. As a Christian Church would it be possible for NC to forego circumcision for baptism
7. What is the future of the NC practice of the double right?
8. What part if any does the Luo culture has on the practice of the double rite of passage
9. What additional information on the double rite of passage can you give?

APPENDIX 8: GLOSSARY OF LUO TERMS

| | |
|-----------------------|---|
| Aboro | The number eight |
| Abuu | The musical horn |
| Agwata | A calabash used for serving Kuon (bread) or Nyuka (porridge) |
| Ajuoga(Ajuoke) | Medicine man(Medicine men) |
| Atieno | The name given to a Luo baby girl born at night |
| Atonga | A basket used for carrying or measuring out grains |
| Ayie | I accept |
| Bade/ Bede | Hand/hands or branches of a tree. |
| Batiso | Batiso is the Luo word for Baptism. |
| Bul | A drum is a major musical instrument in the NC |
| Chapat | Flat roundish bread made from flour that has no yeast (Unleavened bread). Used in the purification ceremony. |
| Chode | Boyfriends whom the girls visited and with whom they spent the night in the <i>Simba</i> (boys hut) |
| Dak (Degi) | A large earthen vessel used mainly for grain storage |
| Dholuo | The language of the Luo People |
| Dhoot (Dhoudi) | Clan/s |
| Duol | Men's hut (a place where elders in the village sit to discuss and plan. Food from the women in the homestead is served here. |
| Duoko | Answer |
| Firimbi | Whistle used effectively as musical instrument |
| Gak | Unclean/Polluted (Ritual unclean). |
| Mogak: | That which is ritually unclean |
| Golo | Restoring back to normalcy (as in the breaking of the 33 or 66 days of seclusion the child and the mother. Also called <i>yepo</i> |
| Jabilo | Prophet /Diviner |
| Jachwech | Moulder (Weaver). Used for God it brings out the sense of creation out of existing materials as portrayed in Gen. 2 |
| Jadong | A woman assigned the care of the woman in seclusion. |
| Jaduong | Elder (Minister) |
| Jajot | A mature initiate |

| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| Jakwath | A shepherd or Herdsman |
| Janak | The initiator who removed the lower front teeth in nak |
| Jaote | A prophet (messenger) |
| Japidi | Baby-sitter |
| Jashariff (Japala) | The specialist who does circumcision. |
| Jodak (Jobedo) | Strangers who have been welcomed among the Luo clans |
| Joga | A signal word indicating a loving relationship of ownership “my people”; in this case between God and His people. |
| Juogi | These are forces or spirits that exist beyond the life on earth. Juok ka Kwaro ancestral Spirits are those that children are named after. |
| Ji | People (Congregation) |
| Ka-Lawi | A Levite. The priest who officiates on feast of Yepo. The name is connected to Simeon who received the infant Jesus in the feast of purification (Lk 2:22-32). |
| Katekism | This is the Luo word for catechetical instructions |
| Keno (Tuo) | This is the Luo word referring to the period of seclusion for infant and the mother or the period of healing for the mature initiate. |
| Kibla | Prayers to Jehova made with the congregation faces the Holy Land-Middle East; burial with the heads facing “KIBLA” |
| Kuon | Luo bread made out of flour ground from grains sorghum or millet |
| Kumu | A conception before a woman realizes her menses again after birth |
| Ligangla | A sword |
| Luo | A Nilotic group that speaks Dholuo |
| Mabith | Sharp/ something sharp |
| Migumba | A woman who is barren |
| Mikayi | The first wife in a polygamous marriage |
| Misango | An offering presented at the tent of meeting to signify (Pwodhruok) purification of a woman after child birth |
| Misawa | Greetings |
| Mony | Prayer meeting (Night Vigil) |
| Nak | The Luo puberty rite that entailed removal of the six lower front teeth of men and women. |
| Nomiya | This is a Luo term that means “ I was given.” Johana Owalo’s visions originated from God |
| Nyachira | The second wife in a polygamous marriage |
| Nyadhi | The LUO special way to communicate their strengths. Borders on virtue boasting and characterize the Luo as <i>Jo-Nyadhi</i> |
| Nyange | Nyange is the Luo word for circumcision. |
| Nyakalaga | The one who spreads out or one who is everywhere |
| Nyasaye | One who is implored (God) |
| Nyasachwa | Our God |

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|-------------------------|--|
| Nyathi | Child (chieng yiego nyathi -the day that the new born was shown the sun for the first time; Chieng ngado imbo nyathi - The day the parents have (ritual sex for the first time) |
| Nyawiwo | The menstrual flow and gets paler and paler with time |
| Nying | Name particularly that given to a child immediately after birth |
| Nyi udi | Other women married in a polygamous marriage after the first three (<i>Mikayi, Nyachira and Reru</i>) |
| Oganda(Ogendini) | Tribal states which belong to a Ruoth (chief) |
| Ogaye | The peace maker, arbitrator. A member of the Supreme Council |
| Ondong | A small basket that is used for measuring out grains in particular |
| Ongeng'o | A metallic rod and round piece of metal (musical instrument) |
| Okebe | An influential leader who has conquered several other chiefs |
| Oseke | Long straw used for drinking of the local brew in the beer parties |
| Otenga | Dancing style. Shoulders are shaken rythimically with the music |
| Otieno | Refers to Night time. The name given to a boy born at night |
| Oyieko | Shaker (musical instrument) a tin containing seeds or stones |
| Par | Mat made out of the papyrus reeds. Used for sleeping/ sitting. |
| Penjo | Question |
| Pim | An old woman past menopause.Her home a <i>Siwindhe</i> dormitory |
| Piny | The earth/down |
| Polo | The Heavens/up |
| Puodho | Purify. |
| Puodhruok | The process of purification |
| Raidhi (Raithe) | Ladder/ Ladders |
| Reru | The third wife in a polygamous marriage |
| Ruoth (Ruodhi) | Chief / Chiefs |
| Sawo | Celebration (feast) e.g the feast of Yepo(Purification after birth) |
| Sayo | Beseech |
| Sigalagala | Ululations commonly used when the songs reach a climax |
| Simba | The boy's house is that institution of socialization for boys |
| Singo | Promise/Pledge |
| Singruok | Making a pledge |
| Siro | Pole.The Luo round huts were built supported by a Kingpost |
| Siweho | A sister who marries after her sister |
| Siwindhe | A girls dormitory a center for the early education for the young |
| Sula | Equivalent to Sura in the Quran /Kiswahili and it means Chapter |
| Sunagogi | The raised platform in the Church where the clergy seat. Women, the uncircumcised and unclean clergy are not allowed here (Altar) |
| Tado | Roof of a house normally supported by a central pole called Siro |

APPENDIX 8: LIST OF INTERVIEWEES

| S/n o | Name | Sex | Age | Position | Date of interview | Place |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----|-----|------------|--|-------------|
| Key Informant Interviews | | | | | | |
| 1 | Archbishop Charles Gideon Owalo | M | A | Archbishop | 7.03.13/11/06/13. 24.10.14/27.01.15 | Oboch |
| 2 | Bishop Nicolao Anyona Ranga | M | A | Bishop | 13.06.2014/17.06.2014 | Oboch |
| 3 | Bishop Apollo Okungu Osumo | M | A | Bishop | 12.06.2014/20.06.2014 | Atoyo |
| 4 | Bishop Enock Agedi | M | A | Bishop | 3.02.2014/10.04.2014 | Ujwanga |
| 5 | Bishop Moses Kisembo | M | A | Bishop | 10.07.2014/30.07.2014 | Odiero |
| 6 | Bishop Jotham Ochieng | M | A | Bishop | 4.04.2014 | Ogwedhi |
| 7 | Bishop Tobias Nyarath | M | A | Bishop | 5.04.2014 | Got Anyango |
| 8 | Bishop William Acholla | M | A | Bishop | 10.07.2014 | Madiany |
| 9 | Bishop Appollo Monye | M | A | Bishop | 5.06.2014/05.07.2014 | Ndwara |
| 10 | Bishop J.Asinjo | M | A | Bishop | 7.03.2015 | Rarieda |
| 11 | Bishop J. Ayaga | M | A | Bishop | 30.07.2014 | Ginga |
| 12 | Bishop Eng Caleb Olali | M | A | Bishop | 28.12.2014 | Ndori |
| 13 | Archdeacon Joshua Opere | M | A | Archdeacon | 17.03.2013/04.07.2014 | Ujwanga |
| 14 | Archdeacon Otieno Joseph Ooro | M | A | Archdeacon | 17.06.2014/19.04.2015 | Ndori |
| 15 | Mama Mary Owalo | F | A | W/Wing | 24.10.2014 | Oboch |
| 16 | Mama Abisage Owalo | F | A | W/Wing | 27.01.2015 | Oboch |
| 17 | Mama Selina Conslata Anyona | F | A | W/Wing | 17.06.2014 | Oboch |
| 18 | Mama Rispa Nyarath | F | A | W/Wing | 5.04.2014 | Got Anyango |
| 19 | Mama Vilvia Okungu Osumo | F | A | W/Wing | 20.06.2014 | Atoyo |
| 20 | Mama Margaret Omollo | F | A | W/Wing | 26.04.2015 | Ginga |

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|---|----------------------------------|---|---|------------|-----------------------|-------------|
| 21 | Mr. Jared Owalo | M | A | S/Lay | 5.06.2014/12.04.2015 | Ndwara |
| 22 | Mr. Benjamin Ngoe | M | A | S/Lay | 22.01.2015 | Ujwanga |
| 23 | Mr. Samson Ogacho Audi | M | A | S/Lay | 26.11.2014 | Ogwedhi |
| 24 | Mr. Hezron Dawo | M | A | S/Lay | 30.11.2014 | Got Anyango |
| 25 | Mr. John Omolo Ojango | M | A | S/Lay | 30.11.2014 | Got Anyango |
| 26 | Mr. Amos Omondi | M | A | S/Lay | 26.04.2015 | Ginga |
| 27 | Mariko Okongo | M | A | S/Lay | 19.04.2015 | Oboch |
| Self-Administered Questionnaires Leaders | | | | | | |
| 28 | Archdeacon Julius Ndonga | M | A | Archdeacon | 26.11.2014 | Ogwedhi |
| 29 | Archdeacon Daniel Akech | M | A | Archdeacon | 30.11.2014 | Got Anyango |
| 30 | Archdeacon Sulman Ogolo Okongo | M | A | Archdeacon | 12.04.2015 | Ndwara |
| 31 | Archdeacon Zakayo Ouma | M | A | Archdeacon | 26.12.2014 | Ujwanga |
| 32 | Archdeacon Alfred Abok | M | A | Archdeacon | 26.04.2015 | Ginga |
| 33 | Archdeacon Joshua Opere | M | A | Archdeacon | 17.03.2013/04.07.2014 | Ujwanga |
| 34 | Archdeacon Otieno Joseph Ooro | M | A | Archdeacon | 17.06.2014/19.04.2015 | Ndori |
| 35 | Rural Dean Sila Akoko | M | A | Rural Dean | 12.03.2013 | Ujwanga |
| 36 | Rural Dean Timeo Owalo | M | A | Rural Dean | 30.11.2014 | Got Anyango |
| 37 | Rural Dean Narkiso Oyiera odundo | M | A | Rural Dean | 12.04.2015 | Ndwara |
| 38 | Rural Dean Moses Opala | M | A | Rural Dean | 26.11.2014 | Ogwedhi |
| 39 | Rural Dean John Otieno Ahenda | M | A | Rural Dean | 20.06.2014 | Atoyo |
| 40 | Rev Paul Obado Akinyi | M | A | Priest | 17.06.2014 | Oboch |

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|----|---------------------------|---|---|--------|------------|-------------|
| 41 | Rev. Stephen A. Ganda | M | A | Priest | 19.04.2015 | Ujwanga |
| 42 | Rev. Joseph Onono | M | A | Priest | 19.04.2015 | Ujwanga |
| 43 | Rev. Daniel O. Okongo | M | A | Priest | 19.04.2015 | Ujwanga |
| 44 | Rev. Henry Obiro | M | A | Priest | 26.11.2014 | Ogwedhi |
| 45 | Rev. Charles Njiri Oluga | M | A | Priest | 26.11.2014 | Ogwedhi |
| 46 | Rev. Cleon Ombima Nyagudi | M | A | Priest | 26.11.2014 | Ogwedhi |
| 47 | Rev. Appollo Obago | M | A | Priest | 5.04.2014 | Got Anyango |
| 48 | Rev Joshua Adhoch | M | A | Priest | 12.04.2015 | Ndwara |
| 49 | Rev. Oscar Were | M | A | Priest | 12.04.2015 | Ndwara |
| 50 | Rev. Moses Awuor | M | A | Priest | 5.04.2014 | Got Anyango |
| 51 | Rev. Isaack Ooko | M | A | Priest | 10.09.2014 | Ujwanga |
| 52 | Rev. Charles Otonde | M | A | Priest | 10.09.2014 | Ujwanga |
| 53 | Rev. Abner Jayalo | M | A | Priest | 10.09.2014 | Ujwanga |
| 54 | Rev. Jared Awiti | M | A | Priest | 10.09.2014 | Ujwanga |
| 55 | Rev. Elisha Onyango | M | A | Priest | 10.09.2014 | Ujwanga |
| 56 | Rev. Maurice Ounga | M | A | Priest | 10.09.2014 | Ujwanga |
| 57 | Rev. Joshua Opala | M | A | Priest | 10.09.2014 | Ujwanga |
| 58 | Re. Isaack Apiyo | M | A | Priest | 10.09.2014 | Ujwanga |
| 59 | Rev. Benard Odhiambo | M | A | Priest | 10.09.2014 | Ujwanga |
| 60 | Rev. Samson Juma | M | A | Priest | 10.09.2014 | Ujwanga |
| 61 | Rev. Henry Obiero | M | A | Priest | 10.09.2014 | Ujwanga |
| 62 | Rev. John Arwa | M | A | Priest | 10.09.2014 | Ujwanga |
| 63 | Rev. Fanuel Ondiek | M | A | Priest | 10.09.2014 | Ujwanga |
| 64 | Rev. Joseph Ondiwa | M | A | Priest | 10.09.2014 | Ujwanga |
| 65 | Rev. Androniko Omondi | M | A | Priest | 10.09.2014 | Ujwanga |

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|----|--------------------------------|---|---|--------|------------|----------------|
| 66 | Rev. Steve Ouma | M | A | Priest | 10.09.2014 | Ujwanga |
| 67 | Rev. James O. Omol | M | A | Priest | 10.09.2014 | Ujwanga |
| 68 | Rev. Elly Achola | M | A | Priest | 10.09.2014 | Ujwanga |
| 69 | Rev. Paul Odinga | M | A | Priest | 26.04.2015 | Ginga |
| 70 | Rev. Musa Ogola | M | A | Priest | 10.09.2014 | Ujwanga |
| 71 | Rev.Solomon Ndiege | M | A | Priest | 10.09.2014 | Ujwanga |
| 72 | Rev. Wilson Odongo | M | A | Priest | 10.09.2014 | Ujwanga |
| 73 | Rev. Daniel Adhola Maima | M | A | Priest | 20.06.2014 | Atoyo |
| 74 | Rev. Andrew Nyanya | M | A | Priest | 20.06.2014 | Atoyo |
| 75 | Mama Rispa Nyarath | F | A | W/Wing | 5.04.2014 | Got Anyango |
| 76 | Mama Rebeccah Omuony | F | A | W/Wing | 10.09.2014 | Ujwanga |
| 77 | Mama Peres Agedi | F | A | W/Wing | 10.09.2014 | Ujwanga |
| 78 | Mama Alseba Okoth | F | A | W/Wing | 10.09.2014 | Ujwanga |
| 79 | Mama Joice Atieno | F | A | W/Wing | 10.09.2014 | Ujwanga |
| 80 | Mama Alice Abidha | F | A | W/Wing | 10.09.2014 | Ujwanga |
| 81 | Mama Penina Omanga | F | A | W/Wing | 10.09.2014 | Ujwanga |
| 82 | Mama Esther Olala | F | A | W/Wing | 10.09.2014 | Ujwanga |
| 83 | Mama Hana Arwa | F | A | W/Wing | 10.09.2014 | Ujwanga |
| 84 | Mama Joyce Atieno Ondo | F | A | W/Wing | 10.09.2014 | Ujwanga |
| 85 | Mama Esther Oiro | F | A | W/Wing | 10.09.2014 | Ujwanga |
| 86 | Mama Peres Obilo | F | A | W/Wing | 10.09.2014 | Ujwanga |
| 87 | Mama Magdalene L. A. Otieno | F | A | W/Wing | 17.06.2014 | Oboch |
| 88 | Mama Phoebe Angina | F | A | W/Wing | 10.09.2014 | Ujwanga |
| 89 | Mama Alseba Okoth | F | A | W/Wing | 10.09.2014 | Ujwanga |
| 90 | Mama Selline Walo | F | A | W/Wing | 10.09.2014 | Ujwanga |

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|-----|----------------------------|---|---|------------|------------|-------------|
| 91 | Mama Nerea Adera Ojuaka | F | A | W/Wing | 20.06.2014 | Atoyo |
| 92 | Mama Mornica Olweny Obure | F | A | W/Wing | 20.06.2014 | Atoyo |
| 93 | Mama Clarish Anyango Opilu | F | A | W/Wing | 20.06.2014 | Atoyo |
| 94 | Mama Carlyne Ohinga | F | A | W/Wing | 20.06.2014 | Atoyo |
| 95 | Charles Oiro | M | A | Leader | 10.09.2014 | Ujwanga |
| 96 | John Odhiambo | M | A | Leader | 10.09.2014 | Ujwanga |
| 97 | James Atieno | M | A | Leader | 10.09.2014 | Ujwanga |
| 98 | Fanuel Odhiambo | M | A | Leader | 10.09.2014 | Ujwanga |
| 99 | Joannes Ouma | M | A | Leader | 10.09.2014 | Ujwanga |
| 100 | Jacob Akama | M | A | Leader | 10.09.2014 | Ujwanga |
| 101 | Charles Owiny | M | A | Leader | 10.09.2014 | Ujwanga |
| 102 | Josephat Odige Ojuaka | M | A | Leader | 10.09.2014 | Ujwanga |
| 103 | George Omondi Odeyo | M | A | Leader | 20.06.2014 | Atoyo |
| 104 | Boaz Odeny Adhola | M | A | Leader | 20.06.2014 | Atoyo |
| 105 | Bernard Omondi | M | A | Leader | 20.06.2014 | Atoyo |
| 106 | Mama Martha Oyiera | F | A | W/Wing | 5.06.2014 | Ndwara |
| 107 | Mama Wilkista Owalo | F | A | W/Wing | 5.06.2014 | Ndwara |
| 108 | Mama Margaret Kula | F | A | W/Wing | 5.06.2014 | Ndwara |
| 109 | Mama Jane Atieno | F | A | W/Wing | 5.06.2014 | Ndwara |
| 110 | Dan Otieno Rakwaro | M | A | Lay/Reader | 26.11.2014 | Ogwedhi |
| 111 | Elizabeth Akech | F | A | W/Wing | 30.11.2014 | Got Anyango |
| 112 | Elizabeth Onguka | F | A | W/Wing | 30.11.2014 | Got Anyango |
| 113 | Kenneth Omondi | M | A | L/Reader | 30.11.2014 | Got Anyango |

| SelfAdministered Questionnaires Baptized Members | | | | | | |
|---|---------------------|---|---|--------|------------|---------|
| 114 | Vilvia Okungu Osumo | F | A | Member | 20.06.2014 | Atoyo |
| 115 | Mornica Obara Osumo | F | A | Member | 20.06.2014 | Atoyo |
| 116 | Margaret Oluoch | F | A | Member | 20.06.2014 | Atoyo |
| 117 | Mary Ochieng | F | A | Member | 20.06.2014 | Atoyo |
| 118 | Florence Opige | F | A | Member | 20.06.2014 | Atoyo |
| 119 | Malaki Apunda | M | A | Member | 20.06.2014 | Atoyo |
| 120 | Everline Otieno | F | A | Member | 26.12.2014 | Ujwanga |
| 121 | Margaret Ochiengo | F | A | Member | 26.12.2014 | Ujwanga |
| 122 | Jacob Akama Akumu | M | A | Member | 26.12.2014 | Ujwanga |
| 123 | Apollo Onyao Owuor | M | A | Member | 26.12.2014 | Ujwanga |
| 124 | Samuel Olango Akoko | M | A | Member | 26.12.2014 | Ujwanga |
| 125 | James J. Oiro | M | A | Member | 26.12.2014 | Ujwanga |
| 126 | Dauglas Opala | M | A | Member | 26.12.2014 | Ujwanga |
| 127 | Perez Oniare Obilo | F | A | Member | 26.12.2014 | Ujwanga |
| 128 | Rebeccah Olago | F | A | Member | 26.12.2014 | Ujwanga |
| 129 | Penina Omanga | F | A | Member | 26.12.2014 | Ujwanga |
| 130 | Rose A. Danga | F | A | Member | 26.12.2014 | Ujwanga |
| 131 | Perez A. Okal | F | A | Member | 26.12.2014 | Ujwanga |
| 132 | Eliud Wambi | M | A | Member | 26.12.2014 | Ujwanga |
| 133 | Seline Asewe | F | A | Member | 26.12.2014 | Ujwanga |
| 134 | George Oleche | F | A | Member | 26.12.2014 | Ujwanga |

| | | | | | | |
|-----|-----------------------|---|---|--------|------------|-------------|
| 135 | Rebeccah Omuony | F | A | Member | 26.12.2014 | Ujwanga |
| 136 | Penina Omanga | F | A | Member | 26.12.2014 | Ujwanga |
| 137 | Pamela Atie | F | A | Member | 26.12.2014 | Ujwanga |
| 138 | Jael Amuko | F | A | Member | 26.12.2014 | Ujwanga |
| 139 | Beatrice Oiro | F | A | Member | 26.12.2014 | Ujwanga |
| 140 | Hana Arwa | F | A | Member | 26.12.2014 | Ujwanga |
| 141 | Dorothy Obudho | F | A | Member | 26.12.2014 | Ujwanga |
| 142 | Millicent Otieno | F | A | Member | 26.12.2014 | Ujwanga |
| 143 | Richard Obilo | M | A | Member | 26.12.2014 | Ujwanga |
| 144 | Norah Obura | F | A | Member | 26.12.2014 | Ujwanga |
| 145 | Rose Guda | F | A | Member | 26.12.2014 | Ujwanga |
| 146 | Selina Adhola | F | A | Member | 30.11.2014 | Got Anyango |
| 147 | Perez Osumo | F | A | Member | 30.11.2014 | Got Anyango |
| 148 | Millicent Awuor | F | A | Member | 30.11.2014 | Got Anyango |
| 149 | Rose Kenyatta | F | A | Member | 30.11.2014 | Got Anyango |
| 150 | Paul Owang Akeyo | M | A | Member | 30.11.2014 | Got Anyango |
| 151 | Hezron Dawo | M | A | Member | 30.11.2014 | Got Anyango |
| 152 | Silas Onyando Nyarath | M | A | Member | 30.11.2014 | Got Anyango |

| | | | | | | |
|-----|---------------------|---|---|--------|------------|-------------|
| 153 | Benta Ochieng | F | A | Member | 30.11.2014 | Got Anyango |
| 154 | Monica Wasonga | F | A | Member | 30.11.2014 | Got Anyango |
| 155 | Mary Nyawond | F | A | Member | 30.11.2014 | Got Anyango |
| 156 | Pamela Awuor | F | A | Member | 30.11.2014 | Got Anyango |
| 157 | Malachi Otueyo | M | A | Member | 30.11.2014 | Got Anyango |
| 158 | Joram Osumo | M | A | Member | 30.11.2014 | Got Anyango |
| 159 | Millicent Omolo | F | A | Member | 30.11.2014 | Got Anyango |
| 160 | John Omolo | M | A | Member | 30.11.2014 | Got Anyango |
| 161 | Eudia Oleche | F | A | Member | 30.11.2014 | Got Anyango |
| 162 | Juliana Okoth | F | A | Member | 30.11.2014 | Got Anyango |
| 163 | Sophia Obura | F | A | Member | 30.11.2014 | Got Anyango |
| 164 | Herina Omolo | F | A | Member | 30.11.2014 | Got Anyango |
| 165 | Mary Owiti | F | A | Member | 30.11.2014 | Got Anyango |
| 166 | Hellen Otieno | F | A | Member | 30.11.2014 | Got Anyango |
| 167 | Benter Ochieng | F | A | Member | 30.11.2014 | Got Anyango |
| 168 | Belinder Omondi | F | A | Member | 30.11.2014 | Got Anyango |
| 169 | Christine Okoth | F | A | Member | 30.11.2014 | Got Anyango |
| 170 | Charles Asila Odero | M | A | Member | 26.11.2014 | Ogwedhi |

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|-----|-------------------------|---|---|--------|------------|---------|
| 171 | Lillian Awino | F | A | Member | 26.11.2014 | Ogwedhi |
| 172 | Jane Odindo | F | A | Member | 26.11.2014 | Ogwedhi |
| 173 | Jane Ndonga | F | A | Member | 26.11.2014 | Ogwedhi |
| 174 | Margaret Ongere | F | A | Member | 26.11.2014 | Ogwedhi |
| 175 | Miriam Okeno | F | A | Member | 26.11.2014 | Ogwedhi |
| 176 | Sarah Opala | F | A | Member | 26.11.2014 | Ogwedhi |
| 177 | Christine Odero | F | A | Member | 26.11.2014 | Ogwedhi |
| 178 | Rispa Ngode | F | A | Member | 26.11.2014 | Ogwedhi |
| 179 | Saulina Atieno | F | A | Member | 26.11.2014 | Ogwedhi |
| 180 | Jane Ogola | F | A | Member | 26.11.2014 | Ogwedhi |
| 181 | Benta Obola | F | A | Member | 26.11.2014 | Ogwedhi |
| 182 | Henry Juma Asila | M | A | Member | 26.11.2014 | Ogwedhi |
| 183 | Christina Ondego | F | A | Member | 26.11.2014 | Ogwedhi |
| 184 | Josephine Akumu Rakwaro | F | A | Member | 26.11.2014 | Ogwedhi |
| 185 | Judith Otieno | F | A | Member | 26.11.2014 | Ogwedhi |
| 186 | Michael Ouma | M | A | Member | 17.06.2014 | Oboch |
| 187 | Pamela Olali | F | A | Member | 17.06.2014 | Oboch |
| 188 | Sarah Ooro | F | A | Member | 17.06.2014 | Oboch |
| 189 | Magdalene Abogi | F | A | Member | 17.06.2014 | Oboch |
| 190 | Monicah Ouma | F | A | Member | 17.06.2014 | Oboch |
| 191 | Christine Aulo | F | A | Member | 17.06.2014 | Oboch |
| 192 | Annah Abila | F | A | Member | 17.06.2014 | Oboch |
| 193 | Doris Otieno | F | A | Member | 17.06.2014 | Oboch |
| 194 | Nancy Opiyo | F | A | Member | 30.12.2014 | Oboch |
| 195 | Fredrick Ooro | M | A | Member | 30.12.2014 | Oboch |
| 196 | Alice Aulo | F | A | Member | 30.12.2014 | Oboch |
| 197 | Regan Ouma | M | A | Member | 30.12.2014 | Oboch |
| 198 | Everline A. Otieno | F | A | Member | 30.12.2014 | Oboch |
| 199 | Jared Opiyo | M | A | Member | 19.04.2015 | Oboch |
| 200 | Kennedy Omondi | M | A | Member | 19.04.2015 | Oboch |

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|-----|-------------------------|---|---|--------|------------|--------|
| 201 | Felix Omondi | M | A | Member | 19.04.2015 | Oboch |
| 202 | Agnes Omondi | F | A | Member | 19.04.2015 | Oboch |
| 203 | Shallan Ouma | M | A | Member | 19.04.2015 | Oboch |
| 204 | Zablon Nyawara | M | A | Member | 19.04.2015 | Oboch |
| 205 | Amos Ywaya | M | A | Member | 19.04.2015 | Oboch |
| 206 | Mariko Okongo | M | A | Member | 19.04.2015 | Oboch |
| 207 | Monica Ndeda | F | A | Member | 19.04.2015 | Oboch |
| 208 | Peter Oyugi | M | A | Member | 19.04.2015 | Oboch |
| 209 | Jenipher Olang | F | A | Member | 19.04.2015 | Oboch |
| 210 | Philemon Okach | M | A | Member | 19.04.2015 | Oboch |
| 211 | Musa Ogola | M | A | Member | 19.04.2015 | Oboch |
| 212 | Isaya Onyango | M | A | Member | 19.04.2015 | Oboch |
| 213 | Jane Ndeda | F | A | Member | 19.04.2015 | Oboch |
| 214 | Jocinta Agoya | F | A | Member | 19.04.2015 | Oboch |
| 215 | Sellina Anyona | F | A | Member | 19.04.2015 | Oboch |
| 216 | Joice Olali | F | A | Member | 19.04.2015 | Oboch |
| 217 | Rose Atieno | M | A | Member | 19.04.2015 | Oboch |
| 218 | Diana Ochonge | M | A | Member | 19.04.2015 | Oboch |
| 219 | Elijah Onyao | M | A | Member | 19.04.2015 | Oboch |
| 220 | Musa Asembo | M | A | Member | 19.04.2015 | Oboch |
| 221 | Amos Owich | M | A | Member | 19.04.2015 | Oboch |
| 222 | Risper Ndege | F | A | Member | 19.04.2015 | Oboch |
| 223 | Margaret Asembo | F | A | Member | 19.04.2015 | Oboch |
| 224 | Simon Odundo Odeny | F | A | Member | 12.04.2015 | Ndwara |
| 225 | James Mitiro Japango | M | A | Member | 12.04.2015 | Ndwara |
| 226 | Lorna Akoth Odundo | F | A | Member | 12.04.2015 | Ndwara |
| 227 | Simeon Ngore Odie | M | A | Member | 12.04.2015 | Ndwara |
| 228 | Monica Ayima Oluoch | F | A | Member | 12.04.2015 | Ndwara |
| 229 | Christopher Anguka | M | A | Member | 19.04.2015 | Atoyo |
| 230 | Sospeter Abuoro | M | A | Member | 19.04.2015 | Atoyo |

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|-----|-------------------|---|---|--------|------------|-------|
| 231 | Jerusa Oluoch | F | A | Member | 19.04.2015 | Atoyo |
| 232 | Sylvia Sinde | F | A | Member | 19.04.2015 | Atoyo |
| 233 | Margaret Oluoch | F | A | Member | 19.04.2015 | Atoyo |
| 234 | Jane Dawo | F | A | Member | 19.04.2015 | Atoyo |
| 235 | Pamela Oloo | F | A | Member | 19.04.2015 | Atoyo |
| 236 | Florence Odhiambo | F | A | Member | 19.04.2015 | Atoyo |
| 237 | Florence Odero | F | A | Member | 19.04.2015 | Atoyo |
| 238 | Enoka Odhiambo | M | A | Member | 19.04.2015 | Atoyo |
| 239 | Josephat Opige | M | A | Member | 19.04.2015 | Atoyo |
| 240 | Jaccline Adhiambo | F | A | Member | 19.04.2015 | Oboch |
| 241 | Lisa Achieng | F | A | Member | 19.04.2015 | Oboch |
| 242 | Joel Ooro | M | A | Member | 19.04.2015 | Oboch |
| 243 | Alice Aulo | F | A | Member | 19.04.2015 | Oboch |
| 244 | Susan Anyango | F | A | Member | 19.04.2015 | Oboch |
| 245 | Lilian Buong | F | A | Member | 19.04.2015 | Oboch |
| 246 | Nancy Opiyo | F | A | Member | 19.04.2015 | Oboch |
| 247 | Joyce Olali | F | A | Member | 19.04.2015 | Oboch |
| 248 | Michael Ouma | M | A | Member | 19.04.2015 | Oboch |
| 249 | Isaya Oluoch | M | A | Member | 26.04.2015 | Ginga |
| 250 | Dorina Agutu | F | A | Member | 26.04.2015 | Ginga |

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|-----|-------------------|---|---|--------|------------|--------|
| 251 | Rispa Ogola | F | A | Member | 26.04.2015 | Ginga |
| 252 | Norah Odhiambo | F | A | Member | 26.04.2015 | Ginga |
| 253 | Rose Odungo | F | A | Member | 26.04.2015 | Ginga |
| 254 | Philister Omollo | F | A | Member | 26.04.2015 | Ginga |
| 255 | Margaret Otieno | F | A | Member | 26.04.2015 | Ginga |
| 256 | Shem Okuro | M | A | Member | 26.04.2015 | Ginga |
| 257 | Keneddy Agutu | M | A | Member | 26.04.2015 | Ginga |
| 258 | Christina Owiti | F | A | Member | 26.04.2015 | Ginga |
| 259 | James Okech Awino | M | A | Member | 26.04.2015 | Ginga |
| 260 | John Odungo | M | A | Member | 26.04.2015 | Ginga |
| 261 | James Asoro | M | A | Member | 26.04.2015 | Ginga |
| 262 | Wilfrida Akech | F | A | Member | 26.04.2015 | Ginga |
| 263 | Elizabeth Otieno | F | A | Member | 26.04.2015 | Ginga |
| 264 | Willis Owiti | M | A | Member | 26.04.2015 | Ginga |
| 265 | Ruth Okech | F | A | Member | 26.04.2015 | Ginga |
| 266 | Amos Omondi | M | A | Member | 26.04.2015 | Ginga |
| 267 | Rose Okuro | F | A | Member | 26.04.2015 | Ginga |
| 268 | Ambrose Auma | M | A | Member | 03.05.2015 | Ndwara |
| 269 | Jackson Onyango | M | A | Member | 03.05.2015 | Ndwara |
| 270 | Naftal Okeno | M | A | Member | 03.05.2015 | Ndwara |

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|-----|-------------------|---|---|--------|------------|--------|
| 271 | Samwel Adhola | M | A | Member | 03.05.2015 | Ndwara |
| 272 | Maurice Olanda | M | A | Member | 03.05.2015 | Ndwara |
| 273 | Fredrick Okeyo | M | A | Member | 03.05.2015 | Ndwara |
| 274 | Leah Ooro | F | A | Member | 03.05.2015 | Ndwara |
| 275 | Magdalene Onyango | F | A | Member | 03.05.2015 | Ndwara |
| 276 | Joyce Bolo | F | A | Member | 03.05.2015 | Ndwara |
| 277 | Augustino Adhola | M | A | Member | 03.05.2015 | Ndwara |
| 278 | Millicent Okeno | F | A | Member | 03.05.2015 | Ndwara |
| 279 | Charles Dulo | M | A | Member | 03.05.2015 | Ndwara |
| 280 | Joshua Asewe | M | A | Member | 03.05.2015 | Ndwara |
| 281 | Benjamin Oundo | M | A | Member | 03.05.2015 | Ndwara |
| 282 | Mikal Oluoch | F | A | Member | 03.05.2015 | Ndwara |
| 283 | Carren Odhiambo | F | A | Member | 03.05.2015 | Ndwara |
| 284 | Helida Ouko | F | A | Member | 03.05.2015 | Ndwara |
| 285 | Alice Agida | F | A | Member | 03.05.2015 | Ndwara |
| 286 | Rose Awuor | F | A | Member | 03.05.2015 | Ndwara |
| 287 | Selline Akoko | F | A | Member | 03.05.2015 | Ndwara |
| 288 | Elizabeth Onyango | F | A | Member | 03.05.2015 | Ndwara |
| 289 | Mercy Omondi | F | A | Member | 03.05.2015 | Ndwara |
| 290 | Paul Oduwo | M | A | Member | 03.05.2015 | Ndwara |

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|-----|-------------------------------|---|---|----------|------------|---------|
| 291 | Charles Odhiambo | M | A | Member | 03.05.2015 | Ndwara |
| 292 | Eunice Okola | F | A | Member | 03.05.2015 | Ndwara |
| | Focus Group Discussion | | | | | |
| 293 | Dan Okong'o | M | A | G/Leader | 04.07.2014 | Ujwanga |
| 294 | Jack Apiyo | M | A | G/Leader | 04.07.2014 | Ujwanga |
| 295 | Daglas opala | M | A | G/Leader | 04.07.2014 | Ujwanga |
| 296 | Jacob Akama | M | A | G/Leader | 04.07.2014 | Ujwanga |
| 297 | Joshua Anyango | M | A | G/Leader | 04.07.2014 | Ujwanga |
| 298 | Gordon Owino | M | A | G/Leader | 04.07.2014 | Ujwanga |
| 299 | Josia Langi | F | A | G/Leader | 04.07.2014 | Ujwanga |
| 300 | James Yugi | F | A | G/Leader | 04.07.2014 | Ujwanga |
| 301 | Jenipher Gwa | F | A | W/Wing | 04.07.2014 | Ujwanga |
| 302 | Susan Adhola | F | A | W/Wing | 04.07.2014 | Ujwanga |
| 303 | Peres Angina | F | A | W/Wing | 04.07.2014 | Ujwanga |
| 304 | Lyllian Jayalo | F | A | W/Wing | 04.07.2014 | Ujwanga |
| 305 | Rhoda Anyango | F | A | W/Wing | 04.07.2014 | Ujwanga |

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|-----|---------------------------|---|---|--------|------------|----------------|
| 306 | Rose Danga | F | A | W/Wing | 04.07.2014 | Ujwanga |
| 307 | Rose Ogaya | F | A | W/Wing | 04.07.2014 | Ujwanga |
| 308 | Benter Odhiambo | F | A | W/Wing | 04.07.2014 | Ujwanga |
| 309 | Benjamin Ngoe | M | A | Member | 04.07.2014 | Ujwanga |
| 310 | Bernard Odhiambo Ogola | M | A | Member | 04.07.2014 | Ujwanga |
| 311 | John Omolo | M | A | Member | 04.07.2014 | Ujwanga |
| 312 | George Oleche | M | A | Member | 04.07.2014 | Ujwanga |
| 313 | Paul Owang | M | A | Member | 04.07.2014 | Ujwanga |
| 314 | Apollo Obago | M | A | Member | 26.02.2015 | Got Anyango |
| 315 | Moses Awuor | M | A | Member | 26.02.2015 | Got Anyango |
| 316 | Malaki Otweyo | M | A | Member | 26.02.2015 | Got Anyango |
| 317 | Daniel Akech | M | A | Member | 26.02.2015 | Got Anyango |
| 318 | Rosline Otieno | F | A | Member | 26.02.2015 | Got Anyango |
| 319 | Jane Omondi | F | A | Member | 26.02.2015 | Got Anyango |
| 320 | Elizabeth Anguka | F | A | Member | 26.02.2015 | Got Anyango |
| 321 | Mornica Wasonga | F | A | Member | 26.02.2015 | Got Anyango |

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|-----|----------------------|---|---|--------|------------|-------------|
| 322 | Lucia Owalo | F | A | Member | 26.02.2015 | Got Anyango |
| 323 | Lilian Abor | F | A | Member | 26.02.2015 | Got Anyango |
| 324 | Audia Oleche | F | A | Member | 26.02.2015 | Got Anyango |
| 325 | Mornica Obuya | F | A | Member | 26.02.2015 | Got Anyango |
| 326 | Zadock Okuku | M | A | Member | 26.02.2015 | Got Anyango |
| 327 | Charles Odero Asila | M | A | Member | 15.02.2015 | Ogwedhi |
| 328 | John Mbogo Oidho | M | A | Member | 15.02.2015 | Ogwedhi |
| 329 | Samson Ogacho Audi | M | A | Member | 15.02.2015 | Ogwedhi |
| 330 | Sulman Kudha Nyagudi | M | A | Member | 15.02.2015 | Ogwedhi |
| 331 | Joyce Amollo Were | F | A | Member | 15.02.2015 | Ogwedhi |
| 332 | Risper Ngode | F | A | Member | 15.02.2015 | Ogwedhi |
| 333 | Margaret Ongere | F | A | Member | 15.02.2015 | Ogwedhi |
| 334 | Margaret Okech | F | A | Member | 15.02.2015 | Ogwedhi |
| 335 | Lucia Achola | F | A | Member | 15.02.2015 | Ogwedhi |
| 336 | Benta Obala | F | A | Member | 15.02.2015 | Ogwedhi |
| 337 | Mary Achola Owiti | F | A | Member | 15.02.2015 | Ogwedhi |
| 338 | Miriam Okeno Ayala | F | A | Member | 15.02.2015 | Ogwedhi |
| 339 | Mercy Omondi | F | A | Member | 15.02.2015 | Ogwedhi |

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|--------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------|-----|------------------------------|--------------------------|---------|
| 340 | Jane Adero Oluande | F | A | Member | 15.02.2015 | Ogwedhi |
| 341 | Grace Okwama | F | A | Member | 15.02.2015 | Ogwedhi |
| 342 | Jane Odindo | F | A | Member | 15.02.2015 | Ogwedhi |
| 343 | Tabitha Otieno | F | A | Member | 15.02.2015 | Ogwedhi |
| 344 | Mary Ochieng Waone | F | A | Member | 15.02.2015 | Ogwedhi |
| 345 | Dorothy A. Akuku | F | A | Member | 15.02.2015 | Ogwedhi |
| Observation | | | | | | |
| s/no | Name of Child | Parents name | sex | Priest/Shariff | Date | Diocese |
| 1 | Thomas Odhiambo Juma | Peter | M | Fanuel | 25.02.2014 | Ogwedhi |
| | | Juma Njiri | F | Ondiek | 6.04.2014 | |
| | | Joyce Atieno Juma | | Bishop Samuel Onyango Onunda | | |
| 2 | Erick Ochieng Orege | George Otieno Orege | M | Fanuel Ondiek | 23.09.2014 | Ogwedhi |
| | | Rosemary Atieno Orege | F | Rural Dean Moses | 2.11.2014 | |
| 3 | James Elisha Odhiambo | Bernard Odhiamb Benter Odhiamb | M | Peter Ongiri Onege | 23.10.2014 30.11.2014 | Ujwanga |

Inter views on Non NC Members: Fr. Burgman, Fr. Futa, Rabbi Molen

Legend: M=Male; F=Female; A=Adult; S/Lay=Senior Lay; W/Wing=Women Wing

G/Leader= Group Leader; **Member**=Baptized and Circumcised if male; Baptized and admitted if female