

CHRIST'S HOSPITALITY: A RE-EXAMINATION FROM AN AFRICAN THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

By

Julius Mutugi Gathogo B.D., Dip.Th., Lth.,Mth.

A Dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of

Master of Theology in African Theology (MTH)

University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg-South Africa.

Supervisor: Prof. Isabel Apawo Phiri

15th September 2003.

DEDICATION

To Rt.Rev. Dr. Gideon Githiga Bishop of A.C.K Thika
For your great love and your conviction that I can make it
in the theological education right from the time you
taught me at St. Paul's Limuru.

ABSTRACT

This dissertation re-examines Christ's hospitality from the perspective of inculturation/contextualisation, which is a common trend in African Theology today. It starts on the premise that Christ is the ideal model of hospitality that African Christianity ought to draw some lessons from as we embark on a theology of reconstruction. In so doing, it has sought to trace the concept of hospitality from the ancient times to the present times thereby relating it with the contemporary issues. The work is divided into six chapters and a conclusion that serves as a seventh chapter. The Introduction chapter sets the argument, describing the background to and motivation of the research, the review of relevant literature, the research problem, the theoretical framework and the research methodology.

Chapter two defines the concept of hospitality tracing its linguistic roots, its ancient interpretations and practices; the Old and New Testament version of hospitality and concludes the chapter by assessing the characteristics of hospitable places with regard to Christ's hospitality. Chapter Three which is a continuation of chapter two continues with the survey of hospitality from Christian monasticism to post-reformation period where Rev. John Wesley emerges as a great beacon of hospitality after the Industrial revolution that took place in Europe.

Chapter four revisits the concept of hospitality in Africa from the ancient times to the present times. It cites the general features of African hospitality and examines its uniqueness by comparing it with the Western hospitality. It also looks at the abuse of African hospitality through the ages citing some cases such as slavery, colonialism and neo-colonialism. The chapter is premised on the conviction that African hospitality is compatible with Christ's hospitality hence the need to harness it through inculturation.

Chapter five examines the faces of Christ in African Christian hospitality. It is based on the premise that Christ is in each and every one of us when we extend love to one another; for he is in the faces of the suffering and all the afflicted peoples of Africa and beyond. In this chapter, Christ is examined as one who cares and is therefore concerned, thereby challenging us to seek

Christ in our day today lives. He is thus examined as a liberator, a reconstructor, a healer, a guest, a host, and a unique ancestor.

Chapter six is the climax of our study, which specifically examines Christ as a model worth imitating as we grapple with the concerns of the twenty first century. Christ is portrayed as a model in terms of liberation, reconstruction, family level, cultural level, and rural ministry. As an area that has not been exhaustively done in African Theology, the chapter, in some sections, allows the various contributors to give their interpretations on Christ thereby coming very close to chapter five where we were looking at the faces of Christ. A good example is Christ as the model of liberation where the contribution of African Women Theologians (otherwise called the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians) is given prominence as a case in point where women in Africa, have to look at Christ as the model of liberation from patriarchal structures and as one who supersedes all genders.

The chapter concludes by a passionate appeal that even if Africa may be walking through the valley of the shadow of death, we need not fear for Christ the ideal model in every sphere of life is with us. He will make us lie down in greener pastures, restore our souls, guide us in the paths of righteousness and lead us beside quite waters (Psalm 23). We must therefore seek to learn from him hence the caution, “my people are destroyed from lack of knowledge” (Hosea 4:6). The chapter therefore acts as a conclusion of the study in spite of the fact that we have chapter seven that concludes the whole study. Chapter seven concludes the study by an appeal to Africa of the twenty first century to swim into action and face the challenges such as sexism, tribalism, regionalism, HIV/Aids and corruption, with confidence knowing that the hospitable Christ is with us and will be there to guide us in our undertakings till the end of the age (Matthew 28:18-20).

DECLARATION

This work has not been presented in any other

University or any other institution of higher

Learning other than the university of KwaZulu-Natal,

Pietermaritzburg and that it is my original work



Signature/Candidate

Julius Mutugi Gathogo

15/9/2003

Date

Signature/Supervisor

Prof. Isabel Apawo Phiri

Date

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Sincere thanks to Bishop Julius Kalu of A.C.K Mombasa Diocese for releasing me to go and study.

Sincere thanks to Church Mission Society, London for your financial assistance

Sincere thanks to my wife Jedidah and my beloved daughter Angela Murugi for your perseverance and faithfulness during my absence.

Gratitude is due to Prof. Isabel Apawo Phiri for your inspiring teaching in African Women's Theologies and for your supervision of this dissertation giving it the weight it now enjoys.

Acknowledgement goes to Dr. Steve de Gruchy for our friendly moments that began before I joined the University of KwaZulu-Natal and also for your lectures in Theology and Development, which have enriched me as a student specialising in African Theology.

Acknowledgement also goes to Prof. Jonathan Draper and all the members of staff in the School of Theology who found me worthy to enrol as a Masters candidate.

Tribute also goes to my interviewees without whom I would have missed some rich cultural engagements.

Finally, I owe immeasurable thanks to all those, who, in one way or another have been instrumental in making me who I am today. That is, all of whose names are written in my heart- for their concern, prayers, encouragement, generosity and love.

If the dissertation stimulates further reflection and action, then, these efforts will have been for a worthwhile cause.

ABBREVIATIONS

AD -----	<i>Anno Domino</i> (After birth of Christ)
AIDS-----	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
A.T.R-----	African Traditional Religion
KANU-----	Kenya African National Union
Ven.-----	Venerable
Rev. -----	Reverend
Mr.-----	Mister
N.T.-----	New Testament
O.T.-----	Old Testament
Cf.-----	confer/compare with/close reference
I.V.P.-----	Intervarsity press
E.A.E.P-----	East African Education Publishers
P. -----	Page
Pp.-----	pages
No.-----	Number
Nos.-----	Numbers
NATO-----	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
N.R.M-----	National Resistance Movement
Ltd.-----	Limited
Jr.-----	Junior
O.U.P.-----	Oxford University Press
I.M.F -----	International Monetary Fund
E.A.R.M-----	East African Revival Movement
M.N.C-----	Multinational companies
G.M.O-----	Genetically Modified Organisms
G.M-----	Genetically Modified
IPR-----	Intellectual Property Rights
TRIPS-----	Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights
PhD-----	Doctor in Philosophy

Ed.	-----	Editor
Eds.	-----	Editors
Dr.	-----	Doctor
AMECEA	-----	Association of member Episcopal conferences in Eastern Africa
AAS	-----	<i>Acta Apostolicate</i>
AFER	-----	African Ecclesial Review
BETH	-----	Bulletin of Ecumenical Theology
Co.	-----	Company
e.g.	-----	<i>exempli gratia</i> (for example, for instance)
et al	-----	<i>et alii</i> (and other persons)
etc.	-----	<i>et cetera</i> (and so on)
Hg.	-----	<i>Herausgeber</i>
Ibid. /ibid.	-----	<i>Ibidem</i> (the same reference)
i.e.	-----	<i>id est</i> (that is)
Inc.	-----	Incorporated
IRM	-----	International Review of Mission
JBL	-----	Journal of Biblical Literature
JIAI	-----	Journal of the International African Institute
MonS	-----	Monastic Studies
NTS	-----	New Testament Studies
Prof.	-----	Professor
Rt. Rev.	-----	Right Reverend

TABLE OF CONTENTS	PAGE
Dedication-----	I
Abstract-----	II
Declaration-----	IV
Acknowledgements-----	V
Abbreviations-----	VI
CHAPTER ONE	
INTRODUCTION	
Background to and motivation for research-----	1
1.2 Preliminary literature study and the location of the research within the existing literature-----	3
1.3 Research problem-----	6
1.4 Research hypothesis/premises-----	7
1.5 Theoretical framework-----	7
1.6 Research design and Research methodology/methods-----	8
1.6.1 Library research-----	8
1.6.2 Participatory observation-----	9
1.6.3 Archival research-----	9
1.6.4 Oral interviews-----	10
1.6.5 Conclusion-----	10
1.7 Limitations-----	11
1.8 Research Ethics-----	12
1.9 Summary-----	12
CHAPTER TWO	
BACKGROUND SURVEY OF HOSPITALITY	
2.0 Introduction-----	14



2.1 Definition of hospitality-----14

 2.1.1 Linguistic roots and
 meaning of hospitality-----17

 2.1.2 From hostility to hospitality-----19

 2.1.3 Hospitality as a moral duty-----20

2.2 Ancient hospitality: An introduction----- 22

 2.2.1 Hospitality in the Ancient Greek world-----22

 2.2.2 Old Testament: Hospitality
 in Jewish tradition-----25

 2.2.2.1 Old Testament hospitality:
 The case of Abraham
 and Lot-----27

 2.2.2.2 Old Testament hospitality:
 Women’s contribution-----31

2.3 New Testament hospitality-----33

 2.3.1 Hospitality in the early church-----36

2.4 Characteristics of hospitable places-----39

CHAPTER THREE

SURVEY OF HOSPITALITY: FROM CHRISTIAN

MONASTICISM TO POST-REFORMATION PERIOD

3.0 Introduction-----47

3.1 Hospitality in Christian monasticism-----47

3.2 Early writers and Christ’s hospitality-----52

3.3 Women and compassionate gestures-----55

3.4 Hospitality in the Fourth and Fifth-century settings-----57

3.5 Hospitality during the medieval ages-----61

3.6 Hospitality during the reformation period-----64

3.7 John Wesley and Christ’s hospitality
 in the Eighteenth century-----67

3.8 Conclusion-----73

CHAPTER FOUR

AFRICAN HOSPITALITY REVISITED

4.0 Introduction-----	75
4.1 Socio-religious manifestation of hospitality-----	77
4.2 General features of African hospitality-----	86
4.2.1 Welcoming-----	86
4.2.2 Exchange of greetings-----	87
4.2.3 Communal involvement-----	89
4.2.4 Emphasis on respect-----	90
4.2.5 Emphasis on sincerity/honesty in all dealings-----	92
4.2.6 Sharing of food-----	94
4.3 Hospitality and interdependence-----	99
4.4 Uniqueness of African hospitality-----	103
4.5 Symbols of African hospitality-----	107
4.6 Some expressions of African hospitality in the modern church-----	113
4.7 Abuse of African hospitality through the ages-----	116
4.8 Modern challenges to African hospitality-----	122
4.9 Conclusion-----	124

CHAPTER FIVE

FACES OF CHRIST IN AFRICAN CHRISTIAN HOSPITALITY

5.0 Introduction-----	127
5.1 Christ as the Liberator-----	128
5.2 Christ as the Reconstructor-----	133
5.3 Christ as Lord of spirits and Giver of the Spirit-----	138
5.4 Christ as the healer-----	140
5.5 Christ as the African guest-----	141
5.6 Christ as the host/master of hospitality-----	144

5.7 Christ as our life-----	148
5.8 Christ as the unique ancestor-----	150
5.8.1 Christ as the source of fellowship-----	155
5.9 Conclusion-----	157
CHAPTER SIX	
CHRISTOLOGICAL MODELS:	
LESSONS FROM CHRIST’S HOSPITALITY	
6.0 Introduction-----	160
6.1 Liberation model-----	161
6.2 Reconstruction model-----	165
6.2.1 Reconciliation model-----	168
6.2.2 Rehabilitation model-----	172
6.3 Family model-----	176
6.4 Cultural model-----	178
6.5 Rural ministry model-----	181
6.6 Market theologian model-----	183
6.7 Celebration model-----	185
6.7.1 Liturgical model -----	186
6.7.2 Charismatic model-----	188
6.8 Conclusion-----	190
CHAPTER SEVEN	
Conclusion-----	191
BIBLIOGRAPHY-----	195
1.0 APPENDIX ONE	
List of informants-----	218
2.0 APPENDIX TWO	
Map of Africa -----	219
3.0 APPENDIX THREE	
The Legend of the proud Mr. Mwigatho-----	220

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to and motivation for the research

The background and motivation for writing about Christ's hospitality from an African Theological perspective stems from my earlier days as a finalist Diploma student of Theology at St. Andrews' College of Theology and Development, Kabare-Kenya in April 1995, when I was chosen to represent the student body at the annual meeting of the Association of Theological Institutes of Eastern Africa (ATIEA) in Nairobi- Kenya. During this meeting, Prof. J.N.K. Mugambi relaunched his book-*From Liberation to Reconstruction: African Christian Theology After the Cold War* during which time, he pleaded with the audience, who were mainly Lecturers in theological Institutes and Universities mainly from East Africa but also from Africa in general, to shift their theological gear from Liberation to Reconstruction. As he "introduced" Reconstruction as the new theological paradigm for African Christian Theology in the "New World Order"¹, he explained that Africa needs a theology of Reconstruction just as King Josiah needed such a theology in 622 B.C. (Mugambi 1991:35, 1995:165).

In this ATIEA meeting of April 1995, in Nairobi-Kenya, Mugambi stressed that after the end of the global cold war in 1989, which divided Africa into two ideological blocks-that is East (Warsaw pact) versus the West (NATO)² and in particular, following the end of Apartheid, the need to shift our method of articulating our theology is inevitable, for we have no more reasons to keep on blaming other people for African woes in the name of Liberation. It is like he was saying, "Africa is constitutionally free. This freedom needs to be harnessed through rebuilding and re-organising ourselves, in Africa, because we have the potential to mould our countries socially and theologically and in every other way—for God has provided the opportunity for us

¹ New World Order refers to the world after the end of the global cold war.

² NATO means North Atlantic Treaty Organisation.

to do so without necessarily blaming others for the prevailing situation”³. Thus, the reconstruction must address all departments of our lives. Theologically, reconstruction will mean inculturation and contextualising the Christian message to make it more relevant to the African community of faith to whom the gospel is being articulated.

According to Mugambi, reconstruction involves following the ministry of Christ by showing compassion to the less privileged in the society; attending to their needs and highlighting their concerns with the view to calling on the entire society to take charge of itself with regard to the marginalized groups. As he says, “the Good News which Jesus proclaims to the world is not theoretical. It is practical. It is news which in real life rehabilitates individuals and groups that are marginalized by various natural and social circumstances”. He goes on to say that “in Africa, the Good News understood in this way, ought to rehabilitate the afflicted individuals in every region, country and locality.... In particular, the church of the future ought to rehabilitate” the refugees and displaced persons, the women, the disabled, the youth and students and the hungry (Mugambi 1995:176-180). In this explanation, he inspired me to re-think of Christ as a hospitable saviour who rehabilitated humanity by his death and resurrection. He motivated me to see the acts of the “practical” Christ as all within the wider concept of hospitality which I realised is within the African heritage albeit not being paid much attention in the theologies of inculturation in African Christianity as, I believe, it should be the case.

Thus, in investigating Christ whom Mugambi describes as a “man of all cultures”, one realises that the concept of hospitality is a dominant theme in Christ’s mission. The New Testament portrays him as one who identified with all people, all cultures, backgrounds and status. I realised that unlike human beings who discriminate on the basis of prejudices such as colour, race, creed, status, gender and other biases, Christ, who is hospitable, welcomed strangers, outcasts, the gentiles, isolates, sinners and the diseased.

³ Charles Villa-Vicencio also captures this theme of Reconstruction in his book: *A Theology of Reconstruction: Nation-building and Human Rights* (Cambridge: Cambridge University press 1992). Villa-Vicencio contends that the changing situation in South Africa and Eastern Europe prompts the investigation of the implications of transforming liberation theology into a theology of reconstruction and nation building. He contends that the challenge facing the church is different. He goes on to argue that, this post-exilic theology calls for the church to oblige to begin the difficult task of saying “yes” to the unfolding process of what could culminate in a democratic, just and kinder social order (page 7).

Since that moment, I have authored and published a book entitled: *“The Truth About African Hospitality: Is there Hope for Africa?”* In 2001, which has sold over one thousand copies in Kenya so far. The book examines the contribution of African hospitality towards Church growth. It attributes the growth of the Church in Africa to the generosity that was displayed by Africans to the early 19th Century White Missionaries. In particular, they gave land, time and co-operation to facilitate Church growth. The book holds that despite the fact that the original African hospitality has been watered down by the effects of colonialism, slavery and slave trade, new ideologies brought by “modernity” such as capitalism and communism, corruption and mismanagement, bad governance amongst our African leaders who emerged after political independence in 1960s among other issues, Africans remain a reputedly hospitable people. They continue to display their hospitality without strings attached as the concept is inherently theirs-as they inherited it from their fore parents. The book recommends that Africa should seek to harness this concept of hospitality further in socio-political matters to overcome her wretchedness. And after researching and publishing the book, I later realised that I had overlooked one very important aspect—Christ’s hospitality. I concentrated on the contribution of African hospitality towards church growth without the initial background on Christ’s hospitality itself. Upon enrolling as a student of “African Theology” at the University of Natal, in 2003, my motivation to research on this topic was further boosted when we studied a topic on “African Women’s Hospitality”. In this study, it is hoped that the wider theory of Christ’s hospitality and its lessons to African Christianity will be investigated as faithfully as possible.

1.2 Preliminary literature study and the location of the research within the existing literature.

The preliminary literature available does not directly deal with our topic of research. This therefore means, that the study will by no means duplicate the existing literature. However, the study will use the existing literature on ancient hospitality, New Testament hospitality, African hospitality and other relevant literature that will lead us to re-examine Christ’s hospitality in our African context.

Byrne is one of the essential works consulted. He argues that “hospitality” conjures up the context of guests, visitors, putting on meals for them, providing board and lodging, making the stranger feel “at home” in our home-enlarging our home to make that wider “at home-ness” possible. He further contends that, hospitality, in a variety of expressions, forms a notable frame of reference for the ministry of Christ (Byrne 200:4). He hardens the debate on Christ’s hospitality when he stresses that the Gospels portray the whole life and ministry of Jesus as a “visitation” on God’s part to Israel and the world at large. For this raises the question: How will this guest be received? The connotation here is that Christ who comes as a visitor and guest, finally, becomes the host and offers a hospitality in which the entire world can be “at home”.

Haughton equates hospitality to one of the structures which traditionally made it possible for people to move through the vicissitudes of their own lives with some certainty that they were just that-personal struggles, successes, failures and hopes (Haughton 1997:3). He further contends that hospitality has a very ancient history. Abraham, visited by three strangers, got up and ordered the killing of his best calf and much baking and cooking, not because he was particularly generous but because the deep-rooted customs of desert people required that those who possessed food and shelter should share it with those who were at least temporarily without them (Haughton1997: 140).

Pohl offers a general survey of Christ’s hospitality by arguing that Jesus gave his life so that persons could be welcomed into the kingdom and in doing so linked hospitality, grace, and sacrifice in the deepest and most personal way imaginable (Pohl 1999:29). She further contends that Jesus as gracious host feeds over five thousand people on a hillside, and later explains to the crowd that he is the bread of life, living bread for them from heaven. He offers living water to any who are thirsty (John 6-7). This implies that, he is himself both host and meal-the very source of life.

Pohl revisits the scenario in the last supper where Jesus fills the basic elements of a meal with the richest symbolic meaning- the bread is his body, the wine, his blood (Matthew 26:26-29, Mark

14:22-25, Luke 22:19-20). She explains that as we remember the cost of our welcome, Christ's broken body and shed blood, "we also celebrate the reconciliation and relationship available to us because of his sacrifice and through his hospitality" (Pohl 1999:30).

Both Kenyatta (1938:41-52) and Oduyoye (2001:94) stresses that hospitality is inherently and genuinely African. Olikenyi holds that African hospitality aims at establishing and sustaining human cordial relationships and community. And it is based on the "principle of reciprocity"- an unconditional readiness to share (give and take) both material and non-material things such as food stuffs, clothes, visits, ideas, condolences and so on (Olikenyi 2001:106).

In Mbiti's view of Africa, hospitality and tender care are shown

To visitors, strangers and guests...This means that when a visitor comes to someone's home, family quarrels stop, the sick cheer up, peace is restored and the home is restored to new strength. Visitors are, therefore, social healers-they are family doctors in a sense (Mbiti: 1976:23).

Healey and Sybertz contends that an important development in African Theology is Guest Christology or the Theology of welcoming. They stress that Jesus is person-centred whose theology and praxis of his ministry reflect the basic values of African hospitality (Healey and Sybertz 1996:188). For as a guest Jesus could celebrate. He went to the wedding feast at Cana. At meals and social gatherings, he freely mixed with all kinds of people; breaking with traditional Jewish practices by eating with tax collectors and sinners (Matthew 9:10-11).

On the whole, the selected literature in this study is divided into three categories. These are: Literature on the background of hospitality from the ancient times. Examples are: Byrne (2000), Haughton (1997), Pohl (1999), Vanier (1989) Scott (1984), Ogletree (1985) among others. The second category is the literature about African cultural hospitality. Examples are: Kenyatta (1938), Oduyoye⁴ (2001), Wanjohi (1997), Mbiti⁵(1976), and Idowu, among others. The third category of the selected literature is about African Christology. Examples are: Healey and

⁴ Oduyoye appears in both the second (cultural hospitality) and the third (African Christology) categories of literature used in this research.

⁵ Mbiti like Oduyoye appears in both second and third categories of literature used.

Sybertz (1996), Oduyoye (2001), Olikeyi (2001), Mugambi and Magesa (1998), Mugambi (1995), Waruta and Kinoti (1994), Gehman (1991), Koyama (1993), Dickson (1984), Wasike and Waruta (1993) among others.

On the whole, my research is different from their approach because my starting point and my motivating factor is Christ's hospitality informing African Christian hospitality and not vice-versa. It is different from other works consulted because it has sought to investigate the lessons that Christ's hospitality has to offer to our contemporary world. It is not, for instance, like Oduyoye's works that almost addresses African Women's hospitality alone, as it goes beyond that; nor is it like Pohl's, Scott, Ogletree, Haughton or Byrne among others who addresses hospitality from a western perspective alone; nor is it like Kenyatta's who addresses hospitality from anthropological perspective. It has let Christ's hospitality to guide our African Christianity.

1.3 Research problem

Specifically, this study has sought to re-examine Christ's hospitality from the perspective of inculturation which is a common trend in African Christianity today. The statement of the problem therefore is:

What lessons can African Christianity learn from the ideal Christ's hospitality as we wrestle with the challenges of the 21st Century?

In attempting to answer the question, the study has sought to address the following questions:

- a) Is Christ the ideal model of hospitality?
- b) How hospitable is Christ?
- c) Is African hospitality compatible with Christ's hospitality?
- d) What are the faces of Christ in African Christian hospitality?

1.4 Research hypothesis/premises

This study is based on various hypotheses, which have guided its basic arguments: These hypotheses are:

- a) Christianity in Africa cannot afford to ignore some rich cultural concepts such as hospitality in its theological articulation.
- b) Christ is the model of hospitality that African Christianity need to draw some lessons from as we embark on a theology of Reconstruction.
- c) Christ did not come to abolish our rich cultural concepts such as hospitality. Rather, he came to strengthen them, hence, fulfilling them in the process of reconstruction (Matthew 5:17).
- d) The gospel in Africa will not be authentic, hence relevant, unless it is inculturated and made to speak in our African idioms, metaphors, narratives, rituals, symbols, riddles and in our theological emphases. This is as Mbiti says:

Christianity has made a real claim on Africa...the
question is: Has Africa made a real claim on Christianity?
Christianity has Christianised Africa, but Africa has not
Africanised Christianity...(Gehman 1991:20).

1.5 A theoretical framework

The study has adopted a conceptual/theoretical framework, which is informed by inculturation and contextualisation. Though relatively new in Africa, inculturation is an old process in the history of Christianity and which African Christianity is a legitimate heir. However, it is an inheritance that was lethargic and uneventful until the 20th century, when the African Roman Catholic Bishops and theologians popularised inculturation as a significant theological category.⁶ It happened as a result of the discovery of culture as a plural phenomenon; a discovery that has forced a revision of Christian theology, church history and the reading of the Bible. The concept of inculturation, therefore, became the resultant occurrence, which seeks to have Christian

⁶ The term and the concept of inculturation gained currency in the 1970's, largely because of the efforts of African bishops and theologians who saw it "as an ally against the consequence of cultural alienation and a guarantee of a genuinely African Christianity"(Shorter 1988:xi).

theology and hermeneutics planted in the cultural context of the particular community of faith. Interestingly, the formulation of the term underwent a metamorphosis from a series of terms implying similar concepts. In practice, the term inculturation is used to express the reality that underlines the importance of culture, as a reliable means of realising the incarnation of the Biblical message. As Shorter says, it is the recognition that “faith must become culture, if it is to be fully received and lived” (Shorter1988: xi).

The research, thus, has adopted the inculturation/contextualisation⁷ framework purposely to endeavour inculturating Christ’s hospitality as presented in the scriptures.

The fact that our frame of reference is mainly inculturation/contextualisation, did not, however, prevent us from drawing on a variety of sociological, historical, and cultural insights where necessary and applicable. It did not prevent us from drawing on analytical, narrative and Africanist approaches where the situation demanded.

1.6 Research design and research methodology/methods

1.6.1 Library research

Library research has formed the primary method through which this study intended to achieve its objectives. It included a study of relevant literature/materials of benefit to this study. It also means, comparing different authors and seeking to draw an analysis on the relevant literature that the library will provide. The libraries that have been consulted in Kenya are St. Pauls’ Limuru Library, University of Nairobi Library, the Kenya National Library-Mombasa and St. Andrews’ College of Theology and Development-Kabare Library; while the Libraries from South Africa, which were consulted, included the entire cluster Libraries namely, St. Joseph’s Theological Institute, St. Dominican, the Lutheran Seminary at Maphumulo and the Evangelical Bible Seminary of Southern Africa (ESSA) among others.

⁷ Contextualisation refers to the process of relating the “message” to the “context” (see Mugambi 1995:64).

In the library research, both published and unpublished documents relevant to our study were consulted. They included books, theses, periodicals, articles, and papers presented in various fora. Having drawn a working theory, we sought to correlate the materials in search of lessons that Christ's hospitality teaches the African church of the 21st century.

1.6.2 Participatory observation

Participatory observation included visiting different churches in order to observe the way the preachers using and interpret Christ's hospitality. The illustrations used to drive home the meaning of the text have been of great interest. This method agrees with John Stott when he says that a Christian preacher has no possible excuse for "neglecting illustrations for there is ample divine precedent to encourage him or her" (Stott 1982:236). For the purpose of an illustration is to throw light upon the subject of discussion. In this regard, I have visited about 10 Churches in South Africa and Kenya. Among those I have visited in South Africa included 3 Anglican churches namely: St. Paul's Pietermaritzburg, Alphahage- Scottsville, and Cathedral of Holy Nativity-Pietermaritzburg. I also visited some South African Pentecostal churches such as International Christian Centre-Scottsville and Assemblies of God-Scottsville. The Presbyterian Church-Scottsville also proved very useful in my participatory observation. In Kenya the experiences of the East African Revival Movement (EARM), which is interdenominational, has been highly consulted. The revival is made of the Anglican, Methodists, Presbyterians, the reformed Church and partly the African Independent Pentecostal church of Africa (AIPCA). In short my intention of visiting various denominations was for comparative study on how different people interpret Christ's hospitality and even how they relate it with our African heritage.

1.6.3 Archival research

Archival research included the search for primary materials, especially written sermons by early missionaries and pioneer African preachers-both lay and ordained-to see how they interpreted Christ's hospitality and then relating with the topic of discussion. In other words,

did they entertain such a concept? If so, how did they express this hospitality and what message do they communicate to the African church in this 21st century? Archival research was conducted from an interdenominational perspective. In this regard, the Methodist church's archive in Nairobi and the Anglican Church's archive in Kabare-Kenya were relevantly consulted. One limitation has been that there were little materials that clearly address our topic in the archives. In Kenya most archives store materials and not keen on past sermons.

1.6.4 Oral interviews

Since this is a secondary method of gathering information in this study, only a few selected people or groups were consulted, as the appendix will show. In addition, face-to-face method of interviewing has been preferred to the questionnaire method because it is more interactive and revealing. It has helped us to build a consensus on African hospitality especially when we seek information from a cross-section of some African communities. This gives out the researcher an opportunity to explain the purpose of the visits, which may likely arouse further discussions and interest in the subject. The danger in this method is the fear in Africa that most people like to discuss pragmatic issues such as "how do we generate funds to build our church" or "how do we carry out evangelistic campaigns" etc. and not on doctrinal issues like Christology. Such interviews are best done among students and teachers of theology.

1.6.5 Conclusion

In concluding on research design and research methodology, I must admit that the above was arrived at after the preliminary researching. That means, I have tried to be as honest as possible. I also acknowledge that each and every method has its own defects but it is in weakness that we become strong, as St. Paul tells us (2 Corinthians 12:10b).

1.7 Limitations

The study has been limited by the quest for the theory behind Christ's hospitality and the lessons that the African Christians will draw from it. It does not discuss the wider concepts of hospitality in Africa for it is impossible to exhaust the topic. For as Mbiti says religion in Africa permeates all departments of life (Mbiti 1969:2). The same can be said on hospitality in Africa. Hence the difficulty in handling the subject within a limited space and time.

Another limiting factor is Christ's hospitality. Like African cultural hospitality, Christ's hospitality is too wide given that we are limited by space and time. We have however addressed a few areas that demonstrates his hospitality such as: a) his act of death and resurrection b) his ministry to the marginalized, the disabled, the women, the outcasts, the poor, the diseased and the sinners c) His interactions like in social gatherings such as weddings, burials, and in his eating together sessions especially the last supper. The study has also been limited by lack of money to travel to various places to seek more information. It has also been limited by lack of many books that directly address the topic.

My research has also been limited by being conducted while in South Africa and not Kenya where I am more versed with the libraries and the people in general. This therefore means I have missed some books that I would have easily used if I were in Kenya. Having chosen the four research methods that I have employed, it has set limits to my research. In other words, I have been controlled by the four methods that I have chosen to employ. For one should not go against the ethics of research work! Another limiting factor is that, the topic I am exploring has very few scholarly contributors despite being a very crucial subject in both the Bible and the African traditions.

1.8 Research Ethics

This study has stuck to the ethics of research work. It has been conducted with honesty and integrity. In particular, I have stuck to what the scientific community requires; that the research is mine and that whenever I used the research of others, I acknowledged it. I have also strived to be accountable to community (ies) where my research is drawn from. I have been sensitive to the possible impacts of my research on society (ies) whether it be funding, publication, dissemination, etc. I have taken the obligation to conduct it accountably. I have upheld my ethical responsibility to the people whom I have worked with in my research. I appreciate that they have a right to privacy-including the right to refuse to participate in my interviews. They have a right to anonymity and confidentiality. They have a right to disclosure. They have a right not to be harassed in any way-be it physically, emotionally, psychologically or in whatever way. Finally, I have strived to uphold my ethical responsibility to our environment.

1.9 Summary

This chapter has laid the platform for our discussion. Here, we have examined the problem and the background of the problem that gives rise to the question,

What lessons can African Christianity learn from the ideal Christ's hospitality as we wrestle with the challenges of the twenty first century?

The statement of the problem therefore assumes that there are challenges to be grappled within Africa. Perhaps that's why, in the political front, there have been attempts to rejuvenate Africa through the formation of continental and regional bodies such as African Union (AU), African Renaissance, New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), Economic Community of West Africa (ECOWAS), East African Community (EAC) and the Common Market for East and Southern Africa (COMESA). The challenges in Africa are felt holistically, as the entire study will show. That is, the entire society feels the pinch when these challenges become

overwhelming; hence the conviction that it is in learning from Christ that we are all safe and secure.

The chapter is constructed under the premise that any mention of Christ in the entire thesis has a lesson to be drawn right from the first chapter to the end and therefore, the entire work will not subject the conclusion (of the entire work) to clarifying the lessons from Christ's hospitality; as we are convinced from our studies that Christ's life is too ideal for African Christianity and Christianity in general to lack something to learn. In other words, it always has got something to teach us. It is hoped that the study will generate more debate on Christ's hospitality with regard to our contemporary situations thereby enriching our African Christianity in the twenty first century and beyond.

CHAPTER 2

BACKGROUND SURVEY OF HOSPITALITY

2.0 Introduction

The chapter serves to define and describe the concept of hospitality as understood from the ancient times to the New Testament period. It is meant to give us a background information on what will help us in re-examining Christ's hospitality and its lessons to the African Christianity today.

As we shall see in this chapter, hospitality is understood to encompass physical, social and spiritual dimensions of human existence and relationships for most of the history of the church. It therefore means, addressing the physical needs of strangers for food, shelter, protection and also a recognition of their worth and common humanity. The distinctive Christian contribution is the emphasis on including the poor and neediest-that is –the ones who can not return the favour as Christ taught.

In this study we will find ourselves in agreement with the New Testament Theologian Krister Stendahl who wrote that “wherever, whenever, however the Kingdom manifests itself, it is welcome” (Russell 1987:76).

2.1 Definition of Hospitality

The word hospitality literally means friendly and generous reception and entertainment of guests especially in one's own home. It is also the food, drink and other comforts that are provided by the host to keep the guests happy. Although it is not a peculiarly Christian virtue, it has a very high profile both in the Bible and the history of the Church. Similarly, it also has a very high profile in African traditions, as our study in chapter four will show.

R. Boudens defines it as,

...giving that which mankind (sic) needs above all: friendship and understanding, security in the reassuring knowledge that someone cares for them, likes them sincerely, will never disappoint their trust and is spontaneously interested in their every day living-simple and sincere (Hoste 2001:9).

In this definition therefore, Boudens relates hospitality with love, friendship, understanding, care, sincerity, trust and simplicity. These virtues that he links to hospitality will feature prominently in our fourth chapter on African hospitality and in the entire discussion.

Martin Buber who agrees with Boudens says, “This is love for others; to sense their distress and to carry their affliction” (Hoste 2001:9).

Boudens further gives a definition on hospitality where he contends that true hospitality must address both the soul and the body,

Hospitality means understanding those who are hurried and over strung, the workaholics, the distraught, those who are fleeing from themselves, those who are strangers in a world of hurriedness. It is the knowledge that the old commandment of love-to supply shelter to others-now applies to all those numerous souls with the need for a little peace and quiet, in order to come to inner reflection and peace. For, on the path of our world, not only those who are weary of body, but so much more those who are weary of soul roam about (Hoste 2001:8).

His definition agrees with I.De Kesel, who says that,

Hospitality is a mutual process of growth in which guest and host exchange ideas and emotions and grow into a mutual enrichment and upliftment. Hospitality is true two-way traffic. It takes place where God is welcome in human hearts (Hoste 2001:11).

Oduyoye lists four concepts that make the meaning of hospitality: Welcoming/ receiving/ reception; Charity/almsgiving; Boarding and lodging/hotel, hospital and; Protecting/sanctuary, integration. She further adds that receptions, hospices, hospital and even integration, as in acquiring citizenship, have monetary price tags in our contemporary experience (Oduyoye

2001:93). But as she rightly says, hospitality in African tradition only hopes for reciprocity should the need arise. In other words, our African hospitality is not for Commercial purposes. It is simply sharing our love with our fellow humankind.

According to Byrne, Hospitality conjures up the context of guests, visitors, putting on meals for them, providing board and lodging, making the stranger feel “at home” in our home-enlarging our home to make that wider “at home-ness” possible (Byrne 2000: 4). True to Byrne’s view, even a casual reading of the Gospels in the New Testament makes clear how often-significant events and exchanges take place in the context of meals and the offering (or non offering) of hospitality in general. In a variety of ways, hospitality forms a notable frame of reference for the ministry of Christ, as we shall see.

William C. Martin in *The Layman’s Bible Encyclopaedia* defined hospitality as “the act of receiving and entertaining guests-either friends or strangers-generously and kindly” (Scott 1984:14). He further contends that the practice of hospitality to a degree that seems strange to us was quite common in Biblical times. Citing the case of Jesus, he says that his direction to the Apostles (Matthew 10: 9-14) and to the Seventy-two (Luke 10:1-24) to take nothing on their journey presupposes that they were to rely upon the hospitality of the people to whom they preached. This clearly sets out a model of working in Christian evangelism to our modern church. In interpreting Martin’s definition, we realise that he pointed out the essential elements of hospitality:

1. That, it is an act, which depends for its effectiveness on the spirit in which it is performed;
2. That, Old Testament hospitality was a welcome way of life up through New Testament times;
3. That, Bible principles of hospitality are not irrelevant in the mission of the church of the twenty first century. In fact, they are desperately needed.

In concluding this subsection on definition, it is important to underline Scott’s view that the “worldly hostess entertains” while the “Christian hostess shares and serves”(Scott 1984: 15). For

Christians therefore, hospitality has a lot to do with selfless service to our fellow humanity. This is as Jesus says in Mark 10:44 “whoever wants to be first must be a servant of all”. That means Christian greatness is determined by service and not necessarily material prosperity, academic might, or the high rank in the society in terms of promotion that we may find ourselves in. That also means, to be high ranking in society is good only when we are humbled by it to accept it as service to our fellow members of our human community. Jesus thus gave a new definition of greatness, which is to be hospitable. It also means that every one can be great. For one only needs to do at least simple acts of hospitality to earn greatness. An illustration: A politician can serve by representing the people hence carrying their burdens even at risk of death.⁸ A church leader can serve by shepherding the flock of God to the greener pastures. That means, being with the flock in times of joy and happiness and in times of bereavement and sadness. A sweeper or sanitation workers do serve by cleaning the compound. All this is service hence hospitality.

2.1.1 Linguistic Roots and meaning of Hospitality

The word “hospitality” is an English version of the Latin noun *hospitium/hospitalitas*. It stems from *hospes* meaning both “guest” and “host” (Koenig 1987: 470). Behind this double connotation is the Greek concept of *Xenos*, meaning, the stranger who receives a welcome or less frequently, acts as a welcomer of others (Koenig 1987: 470). Hospitality, therefore, covers both “host” and “guest” in a mutual relationship (Gilby 1979: 1716).

⁸ Nelson Mandela demonstrated political hospitality when as a politician, representing his own people, chose to die or to earn a life imprisonment rather than accepting the oppression in South African society through apartheid system where blacks were reduced to “hewers of wood and drawers of water”. He remained in jail for twenty seven years, that is, 1963-1990. While many African leaders see leadership as becoming bigger than others hence dominating and dictating them, Mandela sees leadership as mere service to the people hence agreeing with Christ’s hospitality (Mark 10:44). In a release rally in Cape Town on 11 February 1990 Mandela said: “I stand here before you not as a prophet but as a humble servant of you, the people.... I therefore place the remaining years of my life in your hands” (quoted from *Public Eye* July 17, 2003) p.7. After ruling South Africa for 5 years Mandela, unlike many African leaders who cling to power till death, rejected his admirers encouragement to rule for life arguing that a leader should “always leave power when the people still love you” (quoted from *Daily Nation* July 19, 2003). Reacting to the worries of his supporters who felt that he should not step down from leadership after 5 years he said: “Retiring from the Presidency is like being out of jail a second time. I am now going to concentrate on what appeals to me” (quoted from the *Sunday Times* July 20, 2003). He pledged to spend most of his time wooing big business to build facilities for the rural poor.

The New Testament word for “hospitality” is *philoxenia* which Healey and Sybertz (1996: 193) contend, means “love of strangers”. It is therefore within the Pauline call to “extend hospitality to Strangers” (Rom 12:13). However, Koenig feels that *philoxenia* refers literally not to a love of strangers per se but to a delight in the whole guest-host relationship, in the mysterious reversals and gains for all parties, which may take place (Koenig 1985:8). As he further notes, the noun *xenia* by itself already means “hospitality” or “friendly relations”, although its only occurrence in the New Testament describe a place for hospitality, hence “guest room” (Acts 28:23, Philemon.22). *Philoxenia* is an intensification of the basic noun that stresses the love of or attraction to hospitality (See Rom .12: 13, Heb. 13:2). *Philoxenos*, its adjectival form, has the same connotation (see 1Tim.3: 2; Titus.1: 8; 1 Peter 4: 9).

These analyses therefore show that in the practice of hospitality, the element of reciprocity, that is, a mutual giving and receiving-is very fundamental. Friendly exchanges of gifts, sharing of food or shelter through which “peace and harmony are achieved in what would otherwise be a chaotic world” (Koenig 1987:471) is among the many ways in which it is manifested.

The Greek epic tradition portrays this essential character of hospitality. For example, sometimes when gods put on human disguises and adopting the role of guests, they were welcomed. In turn, they reciprocated with good news or extraordinary gifts.⁹ Consequently, a single act of welcoming on the part of the one family group toward another, usually by means of a meal, was believed to result in a bond of friendship that lasted for generations.

On the whole, it should be noted however that the goal of hospitality is the establishment and maintenance of a cordial relationship. That is, a relationship that promotes human welfare and not necessarily the fulfilment of social obligations that go with it. In any case, as Nouwen (1974:7) says, the concept of hospitality is one of the richest concepts to deepen our insight in the relationship with our fellow members of the human race; and often, the hospitable are unaware of their quality; “of such is the kingdom of God”(Gilby 1979:1717).

⁹ Koenig refers to Homer, *Odyssey* 1.180ff. and Ovid, *metamorphoses* 8.678ff.

2.1.2 From hostility to hospitality

Originally, among the Greeks, like in most cultures, the stranger did not receive welcome. The relationship with him/her was generally a hostile one. But with time, an evolution brought a tendency towards a relationship that is friendly, as a glance at the social history will show. Indeed, at earlier periods of social history, a stranger was seen fundamentally as an enemy simply because he/she was unknown to the inhabitants of the area into which she/he moved (Olikenyi 2001:83). The other reason why the stranger was feared was due to the belief that she/he possessed some magical powers that would be detrimental to their general prosperity. Thus, a stranger was seen to be potentially dangerous as he/she was remarkably frightening. As such, he/she was confronted with violence that often led to her/his being outlawed and killed. At times, the Greeks would use their magical acts to ward off the harm in the stranger (see Bietenhard 1979:373 and Stählin1954: 3).

Concerning justice rarely did a stranger have a right. As time wore on, the hostility that was displayed to the stranger evolved to hospitality. The stranger was now seen as a messenger of gods, and for fear of the gods, he/she was accorded welcome and protection (Bietenhard 1979:373f and Stählin1954: 3f).

With this new development, any stranger was seen to come from the god Zeus. And for fear of revenge from Zeus-if his messenger was maltreated-a stranger was therefore given hospitality (Stelten 1995:117). In other words he/she was now treated politely and honourably. It is interesting to note how a stranger who was originally regarded as an enemy became a friend, and hence acquired the sense of a guest. As Olikenyi (2001:83) says, this explains how, also in the Latin Language, *hostis* (meaning enemy-originally-and friend) becomes *hospes* “the guest”. Thus, the relationship to the stranger moved from *hostility* (derived from *hostis* in its original meaning) to the *hospitality* (derived from *hospes*). It is no wonder that in the tradition of the ancient Greeks and Near-Eastern peoples, hospitality began to be seen as one of the pillars of morality upon which the universe stands. When guests and hosts violate their “obligations to each other, the whole world shakes and retribution follows” (Koenig 1985:2).

2.1.3 Hospitality as a moral duty

Ethicists such as Pohl (1999) and Ogletree (1985) see hospitality as a moral obligation and not necessarily a Christian duty. That means, every morally upright person regardless of race, gender, creed, religion or whatever background must subscribe to this ethical/moral demand of being hospitable to him/she fellow members of the human race-the neighbour.

Hospitality was viewed as a pillar on which all morality¹⁰ rested in a number of ancient civilisation (Pohl 1999:5); for it encompassed the “good”.¹¹ Indeed, the people of ancient Israel understood themselves as strangers and sojourners with responsibility to care for vulnerable strangers in their midst. This was part of what it meant to be the people of God (Pohl 1999: 5). Jesus, who was dependent on the hospitality of others during his earthly sojourn, also served as the gracious host in his words and his actions, as this study will seek to show. In any case, those who turned to him found welcome and rest. As a moral duty, Christ welcomed all in the words, “come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28). Those who turned to Jesus also found the promise of reception into the kingdom. Jesus urged his human hosts to open their banquets and dinner tables (Matthew 22:1-14) to more than family and friends who could return the favour, to give generous welcome to the poor and sick who had little to offer in return. As a moral duty, Jesus insisted that welcoming the stranger, feeding the hungry person, and visiting the sick were acts of personal kindness that ought to be adopted by humanity whole heartedly (Matthew 25:41-45).

In reading Matthew 11:28-30, we realise that Jesus’ welcome has a promise that has several parts. For example, an invitation (“come to me”); an understanding statement of our condition as he knows it (“you... are weary and burdened”); a responsibility (“take my yoke.... and learn of

¹⁰ For Sartre as well as Tillich, morality is linked to the self-integration of life. Not surprisingly, Sartre (who was an atheist philosopher) sees no possibility for agape love, which Tillich identifies, as the central content of the moral imperative (Ogletree 1985:43). Tillich therefore, roots the imperative to love “the other” in the fact that relation with “the other” is an essential component in the self-integration of life. Thus it is in part my need for “the other”, and precisely as other, which motivates me to honour norms of love and Justice in my dealings with “that other”.

¹¹ Shepherd of Hermas; *Mandate 8:8-10*, translated in *The Apostolic Fathers*, by Kirsopp Lake, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press; London: William Heinemann, 1914; hereafter cited as LCL), and vol. 2. See also John Koenig 1985: *New Testament Hospitality* (Philadelphia: Fortress) P.2.

me”); and a reassurance (“my yoke is easy and my burden is light”). The burden Jesus is referring to may refer to anything that prevents us from being hospitable. And as Scott (1984:127) says, in terms of being hospitable, when we think it might make us more tired, the first step might be asking the Lord for help. Thus it is appropriate to seek God’s help in upholding hospitality, as it is a moral duty that is very dear to the people of God. For Ogletree and perhaps many other people, hospitality means to uphold virtues of morality. Some examples are: Do not oppress, be honest, and do well to others, be patient, be modest, be just, and welcome others. Thus “to be moral is to be hospitable to the stranger” (Ogletree 1985:1). To drive the point, Ogletree quotes from Exodus 23:9 where the Israelites are cautioned: “you shall not oppress a stranger; you know the heart of a stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt”. This means that the Israelites had to uphold their moral duty by being very fair and understanding to the stranger-remembering the immorality on how they were treated under Pharaoh in Egypt when they were strangers. The oppression meted to them when they were vulnerable should ring in their hearts as a moral teaching in their life history. This is the message for everyone as we are always strangers in different “worlds”, “times” and “situations”; and since we would like to be given proper treatments in our strange “worlds” we should likewise obey Jesus by doing to others what we would like others to do to us “for this sums up the law and the prophets” (Matthew 7:12).

As a moral issue, hospitality in its metaphorical usage does not refer simply to literal instances of interactions with persons from societies and cultures other than our own. It suggests attention to “otherness” in its many expressions (Ogletree 1985:3). This attention to the “otherness: calls us to be open to the unfamiliar and unexpected, efforts to transcend barriers generated by “racial oppression,” receptivity to unconscious impulses arising from our being as bodied selves and perceiving strangers as equals who “share our common humanity in its myriad variations” (Ogletree 1985:3).

However, the moral imperative for the oppressed is not to display hospitality to strangers since the oppressed are daily subjected to an alien world quite against their wills; and are already forced to live in a society which denies them their full humanity. The challenge for the oppressed

is therefore to seek to secure social space within which an alternative world of meaning can be established and nurtured. They must resist oppression by seeking to open the way for “a new reading of social reality in the service of strategies directed toward social reformation” (Ogletree 1985:5). This therefore calls for the oppressed to expose the deceit and the distortions of the dominant culture, for as Paulo Freire once said: “It is only the oppressed who, by freeing themselves, can free their oppressors” (Freire 1970:32).¹²

2.2 Ancient hospitality: An introduction

The word ancient simply means of or from a long time ago, having lasted for a very long time, or very old. Thus, we have ancient civilisations, ancient rights, ancient laws, ancient rivalries, ancient monuments, and ancient kingdoms among others. Another good example is the history of hospitality industry. As a matter of fact, hospitality industry is ancient. For no one knows how old the hospitality industry is. Some argue that it began in Middle East. Sumaria (Iraq) records show 3000 BC when currency was developed to handle commerce.¹³

In this sub-section, we are treating the early Greek hospitality and the early Jewish hospitality as ancient hospitality as it took place early centuries and more importantly, before the birth of Christ. This ancient hospitality gives us a good background of Christ’s hospitality and further opens our minds as we focus on African hospitality in chapter four.

2.2.1 Hospitality in the Ancient Greek world

Hospitality has played a large role in ancient Mycenaen society and is even evident in the writings of the time as witnessed in Homer’s odyssey.¹⁴ As a matter of practice, hospitality

¹² Indeed as he further argued, true hospitality consists precisely in fighting to destroy the causes that nourish false charity. For to him, false charity constrains the fearful and subdued, the “rejects of life,” to extend their trembling hand. Real hospitality lies in striving so that these hands—whether of individuals or entire peoples—need to be extended less and less in supplication, “so that more and more they become human hands which work, and working, transform the world”(Freire 1970:20).

¹³ See Angelo, Walker and Brymer. [Http://www.hs.ttu.edu/RHIM2210/my-html/History.Doc](http://www.hs.ttu.edu/RHIM2210/my-html/History.Doc)

¹⁴ This section is designed to explain the Greek hospitality after they evolved from hostility to hospitality; and now, the stranger was no longer seen as an enemy.

seemed to play a major role in ancient Greek societies. Social status appears to have been determined by how well a person could accommodate his guests; and only the poor or uncivilised could not accommodate his or her guests (Stelten 1995: 116). The richest and most prestigious of Homeric society gave the best food and most expensive parting gifts. Giving good hospitality was, therefore, the best thing that the ancient Greeks could do to please the gods.

Among all cultural elements of ancient Greek society embodied in the *Odyssey*, hospitality was probably the most prominent. Nearly every encounter in the epic exhibited some form of hospitality.¹⁵ This shows that the ancient Greeks valued a social society in which each person was obligated to help others when in need.

One instance of the role of hospitality in the *Odyssey* occurs early on in the epic when Telemachus secretly set off to find Nestor. Upon first sight of Telemachus and Athene and without any inquiries about who they were, Nestor's son Peisistratus invited them to the banquet that was in progress (Koenig 1985: 5). It was not until after Telemachus and Athene had had their fill of food and gotten comfortable that they were asked who they were and where they came from."¹⁶ It seems to have been a common gesture of courtesy in ancient Greek culture to offer guests food and entertainment before attending to business.

A brief overview of Ancient Greek hospitality will show that as the societies evolved from hostility to hospitality, reception of strangers and travellers now became a popular element. Their myths and stories tell us: What was expected; and allows modern scholars to interpret what their actions revealed about the society as a whole. An explanation on this: The Homeric Hymn to the writings of Demeter and the writings of The Odyssey best demonstrate what these three aspects of Greek culture consisted of. The first of these questions can be addressed in the scene where Telemachus greets Athena, who is disguised as Mentos. Here we can learn some of what hospitality towards a stranger consisted of:

With such thoughts, sittings amongst the suitors, he saw Athene and went straight to the forecourt, the heart within him scandalised that a guest

¹⁵ <http://www.stormshock.com/articles/article.php?index=20>

¹⁶ <http://www.stormshock.com/articles/article.php?index=20>

should still be standing at the doors. He stood beside her and took her by the right hand, and relieved her of the bronze spear, and spoke to her and addressed her in winged words: 'welcome, stranger. You shall be entertained as a guest among us. Afterward, when you have tasted dinner, you shall tell us what your need is' (Odyssey, p.30, ll. 118-124).¹⁷

We see here that those who were being entertained could have expected to be provided with food, a comfortable place to sit, charming company and acceptance into the day's activities. Since the traveller would not usually be wandering out of his/her home into the dangers of the world, it was assumed he/she was on some sort of mission. The host then was expected to be able to provide some sort of assistance, as seen by the line "you shall tell us what your need is". It also agrees with ancient African hospitality, as chapter four will show. The uniqueness of Christ's hospitality unlike the ancient Greek's host is that Christ who is the host has already provided-not expected to- ours is only to seek and knock (Matthew 7:7) and all our needs will be addressed accordingly.

Another passage that explains the ancient Greek hospitality is:

Alkinos, this is not the better way, nor is it fitting that the stranger should sit on the ground beside the hearth, in the ashes. These others are holding back because they await your order. But come, raise the stranger up and seat him on a silver-studded chair, and tell your heralds to mix in more wine for us, so we can pour a libation to Zeus who delights in the thunder (Odyssey, P.115 ll.159-164).

This is a reference to the fact that they saw hospitality as a way to honour the gods; giving hospitality to a stranger was the same as offering it to a god. Zeus being the god of hospitality, one of the primary ways to worship this aspect of Zeus' godliness was to be hospitable to strangers and travellers.

In all these texts, the gods as well as the legendary human characters like Telemachos and Odysseus, primarily served as role models for the ancient Greeks, who would have been expected to emulate the interactions between the gods and these legendary humans. It also

¹⁷ See Kelly Taylor CLS 214—Nancy Evans December 13, 1996. Hospitality in the Ancient Greek world.
[Http://www.crowdog.net/hospitality.html](http://www.crowdog.net/hospitality.html)

seems likely that there was an attitude that one should be kind to strangers because one day you too might be a stranger in need of a warm fire or food. If there were no hotels, this reliance on the kindness of strangers was the only way to survive when one had to travel.

2.2.2 Old Testament: Hospitality in Jewish¹⁸ Tradition

Jewish laws and traditions concerning treatment of the poor, widows, orphans, travellers, and others in need grew directly from Biblical commands. The Old Testament repeatedly expresses the obligation to help those who, for whatever reason, could not help themselves. However, some Biblical injunctions, no doubt, grew out of commonly accepted cultural values. For example, the laws requiring hospitality to travellers (“strangers”) reflect the harsh desert environment of the Near East. Even modern Arabs place great significance on the proper treatment of guests (see Healey and Sybertz 1996:193). As a matter of fact, even the religion of Islam considers hospitality a holy task. Examples abound in North Africa of people going to great lengths to welcome strangers.

The Jewish traditions interpreted and applied the Biblical laws concerning the poor and the needy. Reading from Deuteronomy 10:17-19, we realise that these traditions arose from a profound understanding of God as a God of compassion and mercy. “For the Lord your God is... the awesome God who does not show partiality.... He (sic) brings about justice for the orphan and the widow, and shows His (sic) love for the stranger by giving him (sic) food and clothing. Therefore, show your love for the stranger”. So the Israelites were to care for the traveller or alien in the land because they had once been “strangers in the land of Egypt” (Leviticus 19: 34). They were to promote justice for the needy because “I the Lord, love justice” (Isaiah 61: 8; Psalms 146: 7). They were to help those who could not sustain themselves because God “supports the orphan and the widow” (Psalms 146:9).

¹⁸ Note that the term “Jew” is not really appropriate until after the emergence of normative Judaism about the time of Ezra (c.450 BC; Esther 2: 5). From the time of the exodus until the post-exilic era (c.1200-500BC) the people were called Israelites (“sons of Israel”; Exodus 1:7) or the older and more ethnic- Hebrew (Genesis 14: 13).

Jews took the biblical commands seriously. From the early period in the centuries before the Christian era down to the present, the responsibility to help the poor and needy has been central to Judaism. Simeon the Just, High Priest at the time of Alexander the Great (c. 325 BC), clearly defined the principle. He identified acts of compassion as one of three distinguishing characteristics of being Jewish (with the study of Torah and Temple worship). To deny this responsibility was to deny Judaism.¹⁹ The early rabbis (teachers) studied the Biblical traditions carefully and applied the Biblical mandates to all facets of daily life. They interpreted exactly how the biblical commands should be put into practice in the life of the community. Even though some specific practices changed through the centuries, the basic commitment to helping others remained a central feature of Judaism.

The Jews had, already, a specific term for these deeds of hospitality by New Testament times. One of the terms was called *gemilut chasidim*- “the bestowal of loving kindness” or “acts of compassion” (Scott 1984:19). *Gemilut chasidim* had, as its major aspect, as charity and almsgiving for the poor. The rabbis described such charity as *tsedakah* – “righteousness” or “justice”. Rabbi Eleazar interpreted proverbs 21:3: “To do righteousness-*tsedakah*-and justice is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice”, to mean that charity for the needy was more important than sacrifices offered in the Temple (Isaiah 1:10-17).

The attitude behind charity for the needy was that all possessions, lands, and goods ultimately belonged to God. A rabbinic story told about a Jewish sage emphasizes this view: “A beggar came to the sage expecting food. The sage asked him what he usually ate. The poor man replied, ‘Fatted chicken and aged wine.’ The sage chided the beggar for expecting so much and thus taxing the resources of the community. The man responded, “ Do I eat what is theirs? I eat what is God’s”.²⁰

On the whole, this section that we have just examined is very important considering Hickinbotham’s (1966:19) contention that the church is the true descendant and heir of Abraham and inherits the position of the old Israel. For him, Jewish unbelievers are like branches broken

¹⁹ See Dennis Bratcher 2002 “The needy in Jewish Traditions”. [Http://www.cresourcei.org/needdy.html](http://www.cresourcei.org/needdy.html)

²⁰ Dennis Bratcher 2002. “ The needy In Jewish Tradition”. [Http://www.cresourcei.org/needdy.html](http://www.cresourcei.org/needdy.html)

off and Gentile believers are new branches grafted in. But it is the same tree: 'it is the Israel of God' (Galatians 6:16); it is 'an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession' (1 Peter 2:9).

2.2.2.1 Old Testament Hospitality: The case of Abraham and Lot

As Pohl (1999: 40) observes, stories about Abraham, Lot (Genesis 18-19) and the angels, Rahab and the spies (Joshua 2), Abigail and David (1 Samuel 25), the widow of Zarephath and Elijah (1 Kings 17: 8-24) plus the Shunammite woman and Elisha (2 Kings 4: 8-37) in the Old Testament, the practice of hospitality occurred mainly within the household setting. In other words, strangers were welcomed into family settings, that is individual household, within which they could usually expect several days of attention and care. Interestingly, these households, like in African context, were often quite large—that is, involving extended family and servants. This explains why, in ancient societies, families generally conducted their economic activity from within the household.

The story of Abraham, Sarah and the three guests in Genesis 18 is the most significant of the above stories. In this story, Abraham graciously welcomed three visitors who mysteriously appeared as he sat outside his tent in the heat of the day. Accordingly, he addresses these unexpected guests with honour and difference, offered them water to wash their feet and an opportunity to rest. With his wife Sarah and their servant, Abraham quickly prepared a lavish meal for them. Abraham gradually came to understand the visit as a divine encounter, when these guests in whom God was somehow present brought to them (Abraham and Sarah) a confirmation that they would have a son Isaac in their old age (Genesis 18:9-15). It is in this visit that they also informed Abraham of the impending destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah for their rebellion against God. In both issues (of child and destruction) the privileged information was revealed only in the context of a hospitable welcome to strangers. The writer of the Hebrews (13:2) gives this (Genesis 18) story special status by saying: "Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares".

This encounter (Genesis 18) between Abraham and the three strangers at the Oak of Mamre made Abraham to be seen by the Jews of Jesus' day, and even early Christians, as a kind of patron saint for hosts.²¹

It is interesting to note that like in the African hospitality, where a visitor is escorted, at least out of the gate, Abraham accompanied them a bit on their way. The fulfilment of the news given by the three strangers was described in Genesis 21:1-2:

Yahweh treated Sarah as He (sic) had said, and did what He (sic) had promised her. Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age, at the time God had promised.

Indeed Abraham and his wife Sarah were marvellously rewarded for their hospitality.

On the same day that Abraham received his guests, two of them continued on to Sodom and there encountered Lot at the city gate (Genesis 19). Lot greeted these strangers graciously and invited them home for the night. Initially the strangers resisted Lot's invitation but then they agreed to go with him and share in a feast he prepared. Sadly the men of Sodom surrounded Lot's house and demanded that he give up his guests to them for sexual exploitation (read homosexuality). Lot left his house to reason with the mob, pleading with them to "do nothing to these men, for they have come under the shelter of my roof" (Genesis 19:8). Lot's remarks remind us of our previous discussion whereby we discovered that hospitality in ancient times included protection of the guest and, when extended by a particular household, the entire community was also bound to protect that guest (Pohl 1999:25). Interestingly, the men of Sodom who dismissed him as an alien without authority ignored Lot's appeal to conventional moral practice. Consequently, it turned out that, it was the two strangers/angels who rescued Lot from his failed attempt to protect them. That is, as the sodomites tried to force themselves into the house, the two men (angels) "dazzled those who were at the door of the house, one and all, with a blinding light, so that they could not find the door way" (Genesis 19:11). They also saved

²¹ Cf. J. Koenig 1985: *New Testament Hospitality* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press) P. 15, and J. Koenig "Hospitality" in M. Eliade (Ed.), *The Encyclopaedia of religion* Vol.6 (New York: Macmillan publishing co., 1987) p.471.

Lot on the following morning (and his family) when the total destruction of Sodom was taking place.

One can see the daring extent to which the ancient practitioners of hospitality would go. Lot demonstrates clearly, this daring hospitality by attempting to fulfil his obligation to the vulnerable strangers in a difficult context of an utterly sinful city and was unable to provide for their protection. His suggestion to the mob that instead of his guests they take his virgin daughters and do what they like with them (Genesis 19: 8) was an appalling attempt to bargain for his guests' safety. He seems to show no regard for the enormous potential costs to the more vulnerable members of his own household; and was thereby confronted by two evils, that is, to allow the forceful/evil sodomites to do homosexuality with the guests, who by then were considered sacred in the ancient times or to allow abuse of his daughters by the Sodomites. This can also be likened to what Joseph Fletcher coined as "situation ethics"²²-a situation whereby two evils-"greater" and the "lesser" have to be confronted by a Christian-and he/she must choose between the two so as to save a situation, from getting worse, at a point of emergency. Lot's gallant desire to uphold hospitality therefore forced him to choose what some ethicists may call the "lesser evil"-(though from a gender perspective, it is not a lesser evil. In some respects it may amount to a greater evil especially if Lot's virgin daughters were given out to the unruly crowd and eventually died of gang rape)²³ which was to surrender his virgin daughters; thereby

²² Professor Joseph Fletcher, an Episcopalian Priest, developed the original "Situational Ethics" theory in 1966. As a Professor at the Episcopal Theological School, he published his *Situational Ethics: The New Morality*. In it he advocates a so-called "Christian ethic" based on existential situations rather than prescriptive principles. He contends that decision-making should be based upon the circumstances of a particular situation, and not upon the Law. The only absolute is love. Love should be the motive behind every decision. As long as love is your intention, the end justifies the means. For in this theory, justice is not in the letter of the Law, but in the distribution of love. More specifically, in his book, Fletcher says, "whether any form of sex is good or evil depends on whether love is fully served" (p.139). For Fletcher, "any form of sex" includes hetero, homo, auto, bi a man (or woman) has to push his (or her) principles aside and do the right thing" (p.13). When should we push our principles aside? Fletcher answers, "The ruling norm of Christian decision is love, nothing else" (p.69) He believes that love is the only thing that matters, saying, "Only one thing is intrinsically good; namely, love: nothing else at all"(p.56). Concerning the ten commandments, Fletcher said, "...situation ethics has good reason to hold it as a duty in some situations to break them, any or all of them" (p.74). Fletcher's school of thought agrees with the likes of Martin Luther and John Calvin. It also agrees with "recent" and confessed situational ethicist such as Emil Brunner, Reinhold Niebhuur, John A.T. Robinson and Longenecker.

²³ Lot's act of deciding to offer his virgin daughters to be abused sexually rather than the guests being abused through homosexuality as a lesser evil can be understood on the basis that patriarchal structures have greatly informed the Old Testament times and even our African cultural hospitality such that some African communities like the Maasai of Kenya would offer their daughters or even wives to visitors to satisfy the visitors' biological

condoning abuse of the virgin daughters at the expense of homosexuality to the visitors. Lot's story also demonstrates that when hospitality is contrary to the intentions of the larger group, it can be dangerous—an act of defiance, a challenge to the unity and expectations of the community. In the context of a supportive environment, hospitality is often a taken-for-granted act of mutual aid. His treatment of the strangers distinguished him from his social context, and for this he is commended in the later tradition (2 Peter 2: 7-8, 1 Clement 11: 1).²⁴

On another note, Lot's action to surrender his daughters to be raped rather than allowing the gang to abuse his "guests" through homosexuality opens the wider debate on devaluation of women in the patriarchal societies in general and Africa in particular. Apart from the cases in East Africa where women/wives and girl children were given out to male visitors for sexual entertainments (Maasai cited as an example), Judith Mbula Bahemuka cites case studies on marriage where women were outrightly devalued and subjected to all kinds of abuse in the name of preserving culture (Bahemuka 1992:119-133). This included "ghost marriage" where in case a young man died before getting married, the family and clan got together and married a wife in the name of the deceased. Consequently, a close relative was chosen to act as a genitor. This disregard of women's feelings was done in the guise of avoiding discontinuity as if other clans or families did not exist to continue with the growth of the entire community. Another dehumanising case of downgrading women in patriarchal African society is found in the case of "child marriages". This was traditionally arranged in cases where an elderly couple bore an only son in their old age (Bahemuka 1992:122). The boy's father chose a girl for his son, which in itself was unfair to the girl chosen as she was denied her golden opportunity to marry a man of his choice whom they could share their affectionate love and comfort together. Consequently, the boy's father would then propose to the girl's family—something that would easily be rubber-stamped. This was done to ensure that before the father died, his son would have children to

needs as a gesture of hospitality which in reality amounts to an abuse to the dignity of women. Thus it is difficult to justify Lot's act as purely situational ethics as one cannot show love at the expense of injustice of women's humanity. However, the debate helps us to understand the patriarchal challenge that continues to dominate the Africa in the 21st century and invites us into action to save our gender boat from sinking further.

²⁴ See T. Desmond Alexander 1985. "Lots' Hospitality: A clue to His Righteousness," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 104/2(1985) P. 289-291

remember him. The girl was given to one of the relatives to act as a genitor until the son was old enough.²⁵

In these stories of hospitality shown by Abraham and Lot, some crucial elements of hospitality however, manifest themselves: spontaneous openness in the encounter between the host and the guest (the stranger), obliging invitation, whole-hearted welcoming, sharing of meal, giving of protection-which can be demanding, opening of a new and promising future: Sarah had a child, and Lot and his family were saved. Theologically viewed, these two stories clearly reveal what is really true of God: The fact that the speaker (for the three strangers) in Genesis 18: 13 suddenly becomes Yahweh, expresses a belief that God encounters human beings through the stranger.²⁶ In the context of hospitality, God is present; and reveals absolute faithfulness to Gods' words and to human beings. God is also rightly portrayed as one who is almighty who protects the weak, the good-hearted like Lot, and all those who have trust in God.

2.2.2.2 Old Testament hospitality: Women's contribution.

In spite of the fact that there are many patriarchal narratives in the Old Testament, almost to the exclusion of women in missiological issues, women have significant role in Old Testament hospitality. In this section, we intend to mention only two cases-the widow of Zarephath (1Kings 17-18) and the Shunammite women (2 Kings 4: 9) to demonstrate that the concept of hospitality is too dear even in patriarchal societies women have big role in it. The patriarchal society cannot afford to exclude any one in such a very dear human concept that directly affects our day-to-day lives. Characteristically, the two Old Testament stories describe the hospitality of women to travelling prophets. These stories can be used to encourage both men and women to provide hospitality from within their own households.

²⁵ For details see J.M. Bahemuka 1992. "Social Changes and Women's Attitudes toward Marriage in East Africa" in *The will to Arise: Women, Tradition, and the church in Africa*, eds. M.A.Oduyoye and M. Kanyoro (Mary Knoll:Orbis Books).

²⁶ According to J. Koenig (1987: 471), the three strangers in Genesis 18 "are variously understood to be human messengers, angels, or, in later Christian thought, the trinity".

In the first instance, 1 Kings 17-18, prophet Elijah is in the midst of doing battle with foreign gods. He went to a foreign widow to ask for hospitality. Anticipating death from starvation for herself and her son, the widow of Zarephath responded helplessly to Elijah's request for food and drink. Elijah, however, assured her that if she would share her last meagre resources with him, the God of Israel would provide for her needs; her supplies of flour and oil would not run out until the drought ended. The widow took him in as her guest and supplied him with food and shelter for a lengthy period of time. In the midst of his sojourn with her, Elijah restored life to her dead son. The importance of Elijah's sojourn and miracles in the household of the foreign widow is noted by Jesus in Luke 4: 25-26. Thus, the prophet in need turned to a woman in need and together they received God's provision.

In the second case, 2 Kings 4: 9, Elisha, the successor of Elijah experienced such hospitality. Acknowledging Elisha to be a "holy man of God", the wealthy Shunammite woman arranged to build a special guest chamber for Elisha so that he could stay in her household whenever he passed near Shunem. The story provides details of the furnishings of the special room: a bed, a table, a chair, and a lamp (2 Kings 4:10). Elisha, grateful for her kind hospitality, sought to reciprocate. For as in the story of Abraham and Sarah, the woman and her husband experienced the reward of the promise of a son. As in the story of Elijah and the widow, the son later died, and was brought back to life by the guest/prophet. In these two stories, guests brought their hosts into special connection with God which resulted in more forms of blessings as well. This shows that hospitality brings some benefits to the host- whether directly or indirectly.

In evaluating the Old Testament hospitality, we realise that acts of hospitality in the biblical narratives, tended to reveal and reflect the underlying good or evil of a person or community. In particular, deliberate acts of inhospitality, such as in the stories of men of Sodom (Genesis 19), and Gibeah (Judges 19), as well as the account of Nabal's encounter with David (1 Samuel 25), exposed foolish, evil, or corrupted character. That is, rather than experiencing blessings, they experienced destruction subsequent to their inhospitality.

On the whole, the Israelites welcomed strangers mainly out of gratitude for their experience of hospitality while they were in Egypt, and during their Exodus out of Egypt, as well as their wandering in the desert. Interestingly, even after the Exodus out of Egypt and the wandering in the desert, Israel did not cease to see itself as a God's guest. God is manifested as host to the people of Israel at a place that the Israelites regarded as the focal point of their land and life, namely the Temple in Jerusalem. For in the Temple, sacrifices were made to God, and all who participated in the sacrificial meal regarded themselves as God's guest (see Psalm 23: 5-6; Psalm 61: 3-5). To be hospitable did not just mean to welcome the visitors and strangers. It more importantly meant administering justice to the marginalized -the widows, orphans, children and all the less privileged members of the society. This theme is well captured by Jesus in the New Testament (see Luke: 4: 18-20).

2.3 New Testament Hospitality

In the New Testament, we realise that there are significant strands within it that reveal "a concern for guest-host relationships involving God, Jesus and humanity" (Koenig 1985: 3). Indeed, a guest-host relationship constitutes a key element in understanding the message of Jesus Christ, through whom God, as a stranger, visited humanity (Cf. John 1: 1-14), and also played host to it as a foretaste of eschatological banquet in his heavenly home (Cf. John 14: 2).²⁷ The entire life of Christ is rightly portrayed, in words and deeds, as God revealing unconditional hospitality to all human beings, especially to strangers, the poor, the cripple, the lame and blind (Cf. Luke 14:13).

In the three-fold ministry of Jesus as teacher, doctor and preacher (evangelist)-he is portrayed in the gospels as *Guest*, *Host* as well as *Gift* to humanity –as our on-going discussion will show. For example: He was often invited as guest as evidenced by the dinner at Bethany (see John 12: 1-11); he was invited as a guest at a wedding at Cana in Galilee (See John 2: 1-12); He was a guest at Peter's house (see Matthew 8: 14-15). He was also a guest at the house of Simon, a Pharisee where "a woman who had lived a sinful life in that town" came just as they were eating

²⁷ See A.J. Hultgren. "The Johannine Foot washing (13: 1-11) as a symbol of Eschatological Hospitality" in *NTS*, Vol.28, P. 544.

and brought an alabaster jar of perfume, stood behind this unique guest at his feet weeping and kissing Jesus feet (probably renouncing her sinful past to the guest-as healing process since guests, as we shall see in chapter four on African hospitality, are social healers), then anointed Jesus with this costly oil (See Luke 7: 36-50).

Jesus is also portrayed in the gospels as a host. This is evidenced by the fact that, he played host to five thousand men (and probably to about ten thousand people-since in those days women and children were not counted) whom he fed with five loaves and two fish (See Mark 6: 30-44). He also fed four thousand people with seven loaves and few small fishes (See Mark 8: 1-10).

On the occasion of the last supper (Mark 14:12-25; Matthew 26: 17-30) Jesus became both the host and the gift (meal). And the setting was in the evening came, he arrived at the place the disciples had prepared:

And as they were eating, he took bread and when he had said the blessing he broke and gave it to them. 'Take it' he said 'this is my body'. Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he handed it to them, and all drank from it, and he said to them. 'This is my blood, the blood of the covenant, poured out for many. In truth I tell you, I shall never drink wine any more until the day I drink the new wine in the kingdom of God' (Mark 14: 22-25).

He offered his own body and blood as symbolised by bread and wine respectively, as a clear demonstration that genuine and sacrificial hospitality is the one, which will redeem and heal the world that God so much loved (See John 3:16). In so doing, he taught us to give the best gifts whenever we decide to give. This reminds us of the story of the pig and the hen when they engaged in a heated debate over who can give better than the other. As each side sought to bring the other side down by borrowing from history, environment, and from general experience, a consensus was arrived at: That only an open and practical contest will reveal who gives the best and who sacrifices the most as a way of up holding hospitality. When the contest began, the hen began by giving the egg, which is very nutritious, and was unwilling to give more than that. But when the turn of the pig came, every one was surprised when she offered to give sausage, which

means, loosing her entire life to demonstrate the seriousness in giving.²⁸ In other words, the best gift is giving what you value most. For the meal to be taken as supper and not lunch in the evening can be interpreted to mean the session was very important for it did not only link with the Passover meal (for Israelites) but since supper is the last meal of the day-Jesus was therefore giving his audience the last and most important agenda. That is, at the end of the day, we should not forget to be hospitable to one another. Rather we need to come together at a round table of sharing and iron out the problems before us or just celebrate-as we thank God for the far God has taken us. This seems to be the message of the last supper! For the last supper now becomes the first supper as well. He thus gave hospitality a first priority in our day-to-day lives. Hospitality and seeking the kingdom (Matthew 6: 33) now goes hand in hand.

On the whole, Jesus admired hospitality. This is evidenced by the many visits he made even to the so- called renegades and outcasts like Zacchaeus the tax collector (Luke 19: 1-10). He used, in many occasions, hospitality sessions to demonstrate his power. For instance, while he was at the table with his disciples at Emmaus, after resurrection, before ascension- “he took the bread and said the blessing; then he broke it and handed it to them. And their eyes were opened and they recognised him....” (Luke 24: 30-31). Through this act of showing hospitality, Christ revealed himself. They would no longer doubt the act of resurrection. They started to reaffirm that, ‘truth crushed will raise again’ and that God cannot lie, hence humanity must keep the fire of trust and hope in God burning.

Christ’s admiration for hospitality is further seen in the way he used imageries in his parables. Instances are the parables of the lost sheep (Cf. Luke 15: 4-7), the prodigal son (Cf. Luke 15: 11-32), the wedding feast (Cf. Matthew 22: 1-14), and the good Samaritan (Cf. Luke 10: 29-37).

Hospitality acquires such a central place in the Gospel message that in Matthew 25: 31-46, Jesus appears as the judge of all nations and announces that hospitable acts performed for the least of his brothers have actually been done for him and that, moreover, “the end result of such acts is the opening of God’s kingdom to those who have served him incognito” Koenig 1987:471).

²⁸ Bishop Gideon Githiga first narrated this story when he was demonstrating the seriousness in giving to the Christians in 1998.

Thus, Jesus sets the mood of the New Testament hospitality by showing that the kingdom of God belongs to all who genuinely share their life with their fellow human beings especially with strangers, the poor, and the needy as he set the pace. This periscope, that is, Matthew 25:31-46- is a major motive for the practice of hospitality in the early church, as we shall see later. Having set the ball rolling, Christ had given the practitioners of Christian religion not only a food for thought but also an agenda that must be implemented at the end of the day-hospitality. It is no wonder that Paul authoritatively said: “practice hospitality” Romans 12: 13) and Peter continues: “offer hospitality to one another without grumbling” (1Peter 4: 9). John adds: “be faithful even to strangers (3John 5, 3 John 8). Perhaps, Paul sums up the New Testament hospitality better when he said: “welcome one another just as Christ has welcomed you” (Romans 15:7). All this was an attempt at echoing Christ. The concept, thus, gained more prominence in the early church and the practice of hospitality has continued despite the many modern threats to it.

2.3.1 Hospitality in the early church

Early Christian hospitality was offered from within the overlap of household and church. In other words, a home like setting provided a natural environment for expressing personal qualities of hospitality. This early Christianity was rooted in both Hebrew and Greek traditions. In other words, the church as the household (Greek: *oikos* Hebrew: *bayith*) of God was very important and “served as a basis for social, political and religious identity and cohesion”(Pohl 1999: 41) as the discussion below will show.

A survey of the early church in the New Testament shows that hospitality was “one of its charming features” (Koenig 1985:12)- a feature that not only promoted cordial relationships among Christians and operated within the framework of caring for the poor, widows and the persecuted, but also a feature that clearly demonstrates Christ’s hospitality as he intended it. St Luke’s authored book- the Acts of the Apostles- a book that today would not be wrong to be called “a history of the rise of Christianity”- for example, “ pictures the first church in Jerusalem as a banquet community” (Koenig 1985:12). Their giving and receiving welcomes demonstrate

this. In any case, the Christians in Jerusalem bore authentic and credible witness to Christ; they were of one heart, and many who were attracted by their way of life joined them (Cf. Acts 2: 42-47). Thus, as acts of hospitality increased among the early Christians, more non-believers admired this religion of Christ.

An important location of hospitality is seen in the fact that local Christian communities shared meals together as part of their regular church practice. These agape meals provided a setting for a communal response to the needs of the poor for food while simultaneously reinforcing a distinct Christian identity (Giordani 1944:205,325). These meals were intended to reflect on transformed relationships in which worldly status distinctions were transcended if not disregarded, and formerly alienated persons could be view themselves as brothers and sisters at God's table (Pohl 1999: 42). It is no surprise that ethnic and socio-economic differences sometimes surfaced in the context of eating together, although, this was not intended, as our discussion in chapter four will show.

Maynard-Reid quotes the Roman writer Aristides, who described the early Christians to the emperor Hadrian (76-138) in these terms:

They love one another. They never fail to help widows; they save orphans from those who would hurt them. If they have something, they give freely to the man (sic) who has nothing; if they see a stranger, they take him home, and are happy, as though he were a real brother. They don't consider themselves brothers in the usual sense, but instead through the Spirit in God (Maynard-Reid 1997:17).

Stephen Neill notes that the early church practised Christian philanthropy consistently, and there is even evidence of this from some of its enemies. The apostate emperor Julian (332-338) bemoans the fact that the "manifold exhibition of love in practice" was drawing many to the Christian faith. He writes:

Atheism (read the Christian faith) has been specially advanced through the loving service rendered to strangers, and through their care for the dead. It is a scandal that there is not a single Jew who is a beggar, and that the godless Galileans care not only for their own poor but also for ours as well;

while those who belong to us look in vain for the help that we should render them (Neil 1964:42).

As Riddle (1938:145) tells us, travel was a “common feature of Hellenistic life, as it had not been in classical times. Of course this was an aspect of the characteristic economic developments of the Hellenistic age”. It was a common feature because it was, then, relatively much safer and easier to travel, “one need not doubt that Christian heralds travelled widely, and that migration of Christian families was frequent. Certainly early Christian hospitality figured in this phenomenon. It became regarded as the right of travelling or migrating Christians to expect entertainment by fellow Christians where they stopped *en route*” (Riddle 1938: 146). Indeed, the accounts given in the Acts of the Apostles about the missionary activity of Paul reveal how hospitality facilitated the spread of Christianity to the Roman world. For example, Paul was welcomed at the house of Aquila and his wife Priscilla (Acts 18:1-11). From here, he went out regularly to preach the gospel and converted many people. Christ’s Hospitality thus was a major feature in the early church. The New Testament pastoral letters, “which reflect an advanced situation in the detailed specialisation of the duties of church officials, cite hospitality as a duty of the bishops...(Cf. Titus 1:8, 1 Tim.3: 2) on the one hand, and of the ‘widows’ at the lower end of the scale of workers. The good standing of a widow involves not only proper bringing up children, but the fact that she is known also as ‘being hospitable to strangers, washing the feet of the consecrated, helping people in distress...’(1Timothy 5: 10; Riddle 1938:141).

From our foregoing presentation, it is evident that hospitality is central to the Christian practitioners. It is something to be lived on day -to-day basis- a life/living testimony. Jesus himself, as we have already seen, preached and lived/practised hospitality. This became the engine of operation that guided the early church. Christ therefore became the cornerstone of hospitality from where the early church drew their inspiration. It is no wonder that Christian monasticism-a particular style of Christian perfection-incorporated hospitality as an important aspect of their vocation as the discussion below will show.

2.4 Characteristics of hospitable places

Hospitable places allow room for friendships to grow. In such environments, weary and lonely persons can be restored to life. As Jean Vanier writes, when people sense that they have a place, “then we witness a real transformation-I would even say ‘resurrection’” (Vanier 1993:15).

Describing the restoration of persons he witnessed in a catholic Worker House of Hospitality, John Cogley said:

The security of the House, poor as it was, regular meals, a sure place to sleep, work to be done, the knowledge of being useful to others...and the casual but very real fellowship of...the place-these things were enough. It was often as if you could see a change-taking place before your eyes, like something visible happening-colour returning to a face after a faint (Cogley 1995:56).

And as he went on to observe, “Even the crudest hospitality can work miracles” (Cogley 1995:56). Thus hospitable places are settings in which people are flourishing. Such places provide the people that inhabit them “with shelter and sanctuary in the deepest sense of these words”(Pohl 1999:152). They not only provide the people who inhabit them with the shelter of physical buildings but also with the shelter of relationships. And as Pohl (1999:152) further says, such places are safe and stable, offering people a setting where “they can rest for a while to collect themselves”. Such places communicate Christ’s love.

Among the sisters of St. Benedict and the monks of St. John’s monasteries in central Minnesota, daily prayer is at the heart of their life together. Their rich history of hospitality is tied to the emphasis it receives in the *Rule of Benedict*. For chapter 53 states that “all guests who present themselves are to be welcomed as Christ, for he himself will say: I was a stranger and you welcomed me (Matthew 25:35). Proper honour must be shown to all, especially to those who share our faith (Galatians 6:10) and to pilgrims” (Pohl 1999:195). Later in Chapter 53, Benedictines are warned, “Great care and concern are to be shown in receiving poor people and pilgrims, because in them more particularly Christ is received”. And as Barry (1987:15) notes,

Benedictines in recent years have generated a significant amount of writing and reflection on Christian hospitality.

Homes are some of the best places where hospitality can be clearly displayed. This is evidenced and strengthened by the frequency with which people define hospitality as “making someone feel at home”. In our homes, we can welcome Christ as our guest through the way we attend to our fellow humanity. This idea of “welcoming Jesus into our homes” is shaped by ancient church teachings on home-based hospitality. An illustration: Bishop John Chrysostom instructed his parishioners to make for themselves “a guest-chamber in your own house: set up a bed there, set up a table there and a candlestick.... Have a room to which Christ may come; say ‘this is Christ’s cell; this building is set apart for him’”. Christ’s room, Chrysostom wrote, would be for the “maimed, the beggars, and the homeless.” (Pohl 1999: 154). Chrysostom’s advice shows that the ancient church traditions have a big role in shaping the traditions of our modern times. It also shows that the characteristics of the hospitable places-be it homes, churches, monasteries or in social gatherings-ought to consider the welfare of others regardless of status, gender or whatever background.

In contributing to the nature of the characteristics of hospitable places, Martin Luther, like other reformers viewed homes and meals as a crucial setting for “edifying discourse” and growth in faith. He relished conversation at meals “for discourses are the real condiments of food if... they are seasoned with salt. For word is whetted by word; and not only is the belly fed with food, but the heart is also fed with doctrine” (Luther 1961:200). In his works therefore, Luther shows the characteristics of hospitable places as where there are discussions that enrich the heart/mind and where the ‘belly is fed with food’. Luther could be alluding to the fact that during the last supper, Jesus ate with his disciples while at the same time the discussions were on top gear with regard to his betrayal and the way forward. In so doing, he set up a trend where eating goes simultaneously with discussions or analysis on important issues of the day. Homes provide a healing environment where individuals and families can offer a place for bereaved, exhausted, and the sick to recover health and regain strength. In any case, hospitality provided in the homes of Christian people is a key foundation for hospitality in the church. For as one Pastor remarked:

The front door of the home is the side door of the church (Pohl 1999:157).

The church, like home, can provide clear characteristics of a hospitable place. For when we gather as a church our practice of hospitality should reflect God's gracious welcome, since Christ is host, and we are all guests of God's grace (Pohl 1999:157). As individual leaders of the churches, we can also act as hosts who welcome others, making a place for strangers and sojourners. In Buxton Anglican church, in the Kenyan port city of Mombasa, where I have been serving as a Priest, I have always attended strangers who get stranded in the city after failing to trace their relatives. Some need food, others money, while others need mere advice as to how they can trace their beloved ones. They see the church as a hospitable place where they expect to be treated kindly. The danger is that there are some who come with ill motives and pretend to be genuine seekers of hospitality from the church of Christ, only to be spying thieves. Whatever the argument, the church is a place where the bereaved, the depressed, the downtrodden or the needy cases ought to seek their consolation and further acquire spiritual nourishment.

As Pohl (1999:157) further says, churches tend to embrace a model of hospitality to strangers in an attempt to get past racial, ethnic, and other distinctions. In other words, it is the characteristic of the church to offer hospitality, which is free from racism, tribalism, biasness or whatever prejudices. It is also in the church as the assembly/household of God where both majority and minority groups have an equal place before God. Meals or drinks shared together in some churches that have such programmes "provide opportunities to sustain relationships and to build new ones" (Pohl 1999:159). They therefore establish a space that is personal without being private; an excellent setting in which to begin friendships with the new comers to the church. It strengthens the fellowships of believers that are a good characteristic of a hospitable place.

One contemporary testimony to the significance of shared meals comes from the African-American church tradition. Dodson and Gilkes (1995:520-521) explain:

African-American church members in the United States feed one another's bodies as they feed their spirits or, more biblically, one another's 'temples of the Holy Spirit'. In the process, an ethic of love and an emphasis on

hospitality emerge, especially in the sharing of food, which spill over into the larger culture. Ritual moments of most African-Americans occur at home and in their churches, and they are connected to food, meals, and their remembrance.

They note further that such meals are tied to anticipating the eschatological banquet, the “welcome table” with its abundance:

It is this hospitality, this love that is symbolised in the preparation and giving of food. The love ethic that pervades the ideology of African-American churches is constantly underscored and reaffirmed in the exchanges of food and the celebration of church contents with grand meals. This love and this hospitality remind the congregation that they are pilgrims and strangers and that as they feed somebody one day, they may stand in need on another (Dodson and Gilkes 1995: 535).

After attempting to show how African-American Christians interpret Christ’s hospitality, Dodson and Gilkes (1995:536) conclude, “And in a world of hatred and conflict, with its racism and deprivations, the saints are able to sit together at their welcome tables and remind one another in the giving and receiving of food, that they may continue to believe that ‘the greatest of these is love’. There is nothing like church food”. Thus, churches like homes ought to strengthen one another with fellowships that are accompanied by eating together sessions that aims at sustaining their identity as a community. In any case, as Christians, we are all members of one family of Christ For indeed, the table is central to the practice of hospitality in home and church especially in African traditional setting as we shall see in chapter three on “African hospitality”. The nourishment we gain there is physical, spiritual and social. For indeed, whether we gather around the table for the Lord’s Supper or for a church potluck dinner, we are still strengthened as a community. In attempting to explain the characteristics of hospitable places, Jean Vanier writes that “welcome is one of the signs that a community is alive. To invite others to live with us is a sign that we aren’t afraid, that we have a treasure of truth and of peace to share”. She offers an important warning: “A community which refuses to welcome-whether through fear, weariness, insecurity, a desire to cling to comfort, or just because it is fed up with visitors-is dying spiritually” (Vanier 1989:266-267).

As Pohl (1999: 163) says, one distinctive feature of many contemporary advocates of hospitality is their rejection of bureaucratic styles of helping. They stress minimal scrutiny and focus instead on respect and friendship. This is to avoid making the concept of hospitality a routine “service” business. It is to give it a human face and to avoid making it a mechanical undertaking. Thus while advocates of hospitality emphasise solidarity and mutuality, most practitioners do not consider personal hospitality a replacement for government provisions or political advocacy; it is concurrent with it.

Mary O’Connell, in her work on inclusion of people with disabilities in the practices and relations of ordinary life, stresses the significance of not defining people by their disability and the importance of welcoming people with disabilities “into situations that are not about disability” (O’Connell 1988:19). This view therefore suggests that it is wrong to categorise people into weak and strong or disabled versus normal people when dispensing our hospitality because we are all created in the image of God whatever our condition; for to be hospitable is to be kind and positive to everyone. This is a very important characteristic: To treat everyone with dignity and seeing Christ in every creature whatever the situation or context.

O’Connell is reasonably critical of social services where the focus is exclusively on disability because it adds to the person’s isolation. She therefore, rightly, sees an opportunity within the practice of hospitality, to focus on the individual and not on the category of his or her disability, on the whole rather than the part, and on a person’s capacity rather than on his or her deficit (O’Connell 1988:15). Ideally, therefore, hospitality allows people with disabilities to find a place within a network of relations where they can share their gifts, as well as bring their needs. It ought not give room for downplaying or isolating whatsoever. As a characteristic, hospitality is also an effort to empower the unskilled or the unprofessional amongst us. For as Murray remarks, “As professionals proliferate, the scope of activities that a non-professional feels competent to perform narrows”. Hospitality reclaims “basic areas of human social interaction for the nonspecialist” (Murray 1990: 5). This point is crucial especially when we consider that the professionalisation of care can intimidate and disempower persons inclined toward voluntary activity. If professionalisation is not taken care of, it may make the unprofessional to feel

insufficiently equipped or prompt an unskilled person to lose the much-needed self-confidence in carrying out social duties.

One of the few places in modern politics where the explicit language of hospitality is still used is in the reception of refugees. This is mainly an African phenomenon-as Africa is the continent which hosts the highest number of refugees.²⁹ In general, people continue to connect theological notions of sanctuary, cities of refuge, and care for aliens with the needs of today's displaced people-refugees inclusive. This plight of refugees naturally calls for Christians to make sure that their needs (refugees) are taken seriously by national governments. However, Christian calling goes beyond public policy to more personal involvement in voluntary agencies, communities, churches, and homes "where acts of welcome offer refuge and new life to some of the world's most vulnerable people"(Pohl 1999: 166).

Caring for people with terminal diseases like cancer and HIV/AIDS suggests another important place for hospitality in the 21st century, especially in Africa where over 11 million people have so far lost their lives due to HIV/AIDS. Especially as modelled in hospice,³⁰ such care is a move away from a highly clinical model in the face of impending death. As Pohl (1999: 167) says, hospice represents a return to hospitality that connects care with respect, comfort, and presence. It allows primary attention to be given to the relationships and connection. In short, hospice workers usually go to the home of the dying person and support the family in caring for their dying member.

Another area where Christ's hospitality ought to be felt is among the prisoners. Prison's hospitality will not involve inviting people "in". For a variety of reasons, some people cannot "come in". Rather hospitality to the prisoners requires that the concerned persons go to the

²⁹ See J.N.K. Mugambi 1995: *From Liberation to reconstruction*. (Nairobi: E.A.E.P) P. 176-180.

³⁰ The name "hospice", a resting place for travellers or pilgrims, was popularised by Dame Cicely Saunders (1918), who founded St. Christopher's Hospice, London, in 1967, and thereby launched the modern hospice movement. In other words, hospice is a programme of care for terminally ill patients and their families. In practice, most of the patients helped in this way have cancer. The launching of the hospice movement, in 1967, was dictated by desire to provide a type of care, which incorporated the skills of a hospital and the more leisurely hospitality and warmth of a home. In the hospice, the centre of interest shifts from the disease to the patient and family, from the pathological process to the person. In our modern Africa, hospice movement must rehabilitate HIV/AIDS sufferers, those orphaned as a result of the scourge, and their entire families among others.

prison and minister to the prisoners accordingly. Some prisoners are first offenders, others are hardcore criminals and others are on death row. In any case, care for prisoners, in the early church, was viewed as a work of mercy. Thus, as we enter the prison to assess the condition of prison and the prisoners, we should never forget the ministry of St. Paul and Silas while they themselves were prisoners in a Roman jail. Rather than being ungrateful to God now that they were previously stripped, severely flogged and then thrown to jail (Acts 16: 22-23) they displayed hospitality by blessing the other people around them through singing hymns to God and praying. Interestingly “ the other prisoners were listening to them”. This is reminiscent of Christ own words: “Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you... Do for others just what you want them to do for you....” (Luke 6:27ff). Thus, the drama in the Roman jails where Paul and Silas were the main characters (Acts 16) shows that even when we are experiencing the worst times in our lives-be it stress and depression, poverty and disease or even persecution, the concept of hospitality for the followers of Christ must be exercised and felt. It is interesting that St.Paul and Silas were even kind to the jailer and they stopped him from killing himself upon realising that the earthquake that had just taken place had set the prison doors open-and possibly the prisoners had escaped. Hence, the fear of punishment by his superiors for allegedly neglect of duty.

Modern communication gadgets such as fax machines; emails and ordinary telephone calls may be helpful as a place for hospitality. Given our high mobility and the numbers of people who live alone, these gadgets, for example, phone calls, can easily sustain crucial human relationships. In any case, a phone conversation with a lonely or weary person does represent welcoming someone into our lives. Similarly the other modes of communication such as fax messages and email messages can actually be an important way to care for one another. Jean Vanier (1999:283) offers an important challenge as we contemplate on how we might make places for hospitality in the future:

In years to come, we are going to need many small communities, which will welcome lost and lonely people, offering them a new form of family and a sense of belonging. In the past, Christians who wanted to follow Jesus opened hospitals and schools. Now that there are so many of these, Christians must commit themselves to the new communities of welcome, to live with people who

have no other family, and to show them that they are loved and can grow to greater freedom and that they, in turn, can love and give life to others.

For as in the words of an Irish proverb, “It is in the shelter of each other that the people live.”³¹

On the whole, hospitable places can be homes, churches, monasteries and other “Intentional communities”³² that we may create. Hospitality can also be manifested in our social services as we interact with one another in following the example of Christ. Characteristics of hospitable places will therefore include: care, restoration, justice, encouragement, welcoming, hosting, sharing, servant hood, reconciliation, capacity building, rehabilitation and compassion. These views will be explored further in the next chapter.

In the coming chapter three, we shall be looking at how various people at different times in history sought to interpret Christ’s hospitality. In so doing, we shall be looking at how the concept underwent various shifts and challenges from the early Christian monks to the post reformation period.

³¹ Quoted in Mary Pipher 1996. *The shelter of Each Other* (New York: Ballantine Books)

³² International communities are those, which we may desire to create-sometimes for short-term purposes. For example in Kenya, we have Kakuma refugee camp, where the United Nations agents and the church, especially the Catholic Church established thereby displaying hospitality. After the political crisis in Sudan and Somalia is over, then the camp will no longer be there.

CHAPTER THREE

A SURVEY OF HOSPITALITY: FROM CHRISTIAN MONASTICISM TO POST-REFORMATION PERIOD

3.0 Introduction

This chapter is a continuation of the background survey. It is going to inform us about the various shifts that the concept of hospitality has undergone after the success of the early church. In particular the fourth and fifth centuries, hospitality was negatively affected by Emperor Constantine's decree, which made Christianity the state religion in the Roman Empire; for nominal Christianity now replaced devoted Christianity. Similarly, devoted hospitality as exemplified by the monasteries replaced nominal hospitality that clearly contrasted Christ's hospitality as we have discussed in the previous chapter. As we move through the sixteenth century reformation, where the likes of Luther and Calvin come to the fore, the concept of hospitality, as Christ spelt it through his earthly ministry, had grown feeble and in need of re-activation and rejuvenation. The activator was found not later than in the eighteenth century in the name of Rev. John Wesley- an Anglican Minister who came to become the founder of the Methodist church as we know it to day. His new method of leading the flock towards renewed hospitality, no doubt, gave birth to the Methodist church. Thus, in attempting Christ by attempting to lead the life of love, this chapter has a lot for the African church of the twenty first century to draw some insights as we grapple with the issues of our time.

3.1 Hospitality in Christian Monasticism

Monasticism is derived from the word monastery, which means a large building or a group of buildings in which monks live and worship. Monks is used to refer to religions practitioners in a monastery. In these monasteries, monks lead a monastic life. They live quietly and simply without a lot of money or luxurious lives. They lead a life of prayer and devotion to God.

Christian monasticism is believed to have begun with St Anthony of Egypt who withdrew into Egypt desert in the 270s AD; and was followed by other monks (hermits). This movement developed mainly out of the zeal for a life of Christian perfection (see Greer 1974: 37). After the declaration of Christianity as one of the officially recognised religions in the Roman Empire by emperors Constantine and Licinus at Milan in AD.313, persecutions ended which “also meant the end of a certain quality of Christian commitment” (McBrien 1984:613). This also saw the emergency of the monk as a powerful force to reckon with. Consequently, the monk succeeded “the martyr as the expression of unqualified witness and protest against worldliness” (Bosch 1991:202).

At the very early stage of the monastic movement, the monks lived only a solitary life in the Egyptian desert. One of the significances of this early period of monastic movement is that, the monk was engaged in the task of, ‘creating his space’, that is, “building a spiritual room capable of giving hospitality” (Greer 1974:37). It is no wonder, therefore, that the founding of the first hospital-the hospital of Edessa in Syria in A.D 370 which was meant for the treatment of travellers attacked by illness, as well as strangers and inhabitants affected by famine-was inspired by the hermit, St. Ephraim (Bonet-Maury 1913:804). With time, the Christian monastic movement that was originally an individual affair incorporated a community character. St. Pachomius developed this community character when he began to organise the Egyptian anchorites into groups/communities. These communities of monks in the desert were good in many ways: They were exemplary in welcoming strangers. They associated with the poor and the maimed and invited all of them to their tables as guests, hence, raising to the occasion by practising Christ’s hospitality as he set it (Matthew 25:31-46). It is no wonder that Bishop John Chrysostom advised the Christians of his time to visit these communities of monks in the desert, and learn from them (Greer 1974: 42).

After visiting the monastic communities in Egypt and Palestine in A.D.357, and gotten impressed, St. Basil teamed up with St. Gregory Nazianzen and they founded a monastic community near Neocaesarea in Pontus. Even though monasticism had already made its way to Asia minor under Eustace of Sebaste, it is Basil, who was one of the most important figures in

the Eastern monasticism, organised it and laid down the regular foundations that speedily became predominant in the East (Greer 1974: 38). To do this, he first sought to bring solitary and communal life together. In seeking to implement this, he attempted to integrate the contemplative life of the monks with the life of the society at large (Greer 1974: 40). He therefore endeavoured to serve the purpose of attempting to “ensure that the monastic ideal will be preserved, the precepts of Christ obeyed, and the Christian life embodied perfectly as source of inspiration and hope to the world” (Greer 1974:40). In evaluating Basils’ effort of integrating lives of the monks with the life of the rest of the society, one reminisces Emperor Constantine’s effort of making Christianity a state religion which diluted Christianity once and for all, because by attending the church service, one was only fulfilling his state duties rather than fulfilling Devine obligations. Similarly, monastic life was diluted in a manner that it has never been the same again. Despite this ‘anomaly’, the monks not only welcomed Christ himself who identifies himself with strangers, the poor and the needy, but also bore witness to Christ who is host and gift.

Another outstanding figure in early Christian monasticism is St. Martin of Tours. Interestingly, Martin supported the transfer of Eastern monastic ideals to the west by establishing a monastery near Poitiers in AD 362 (McBrien 1984:618). In so doing, he maintained the tradition of practising Christ’s hospitality. He is the power behind the success of the monasteries that developed in the West, afterwards, which now took the practice of Christ’s hospitality seriously.

In general, monastery’s operation in the Middle Ages in dispensing hospitality is characterised by the establishment of hospices or almshouses, that is, the so-called *Xenodocia*. As Bonet-Mauray (1913; 805) says:

These hospices rendered valuable service at a time when the roads were infested by robbers, or exposed to frost and snow, e.g. those leading through the passes of high mountains, and subject to thick fogs or snowstorms.

This explains that, the monasteries used these hospices to extend hospitality to travellers attacked by thieves, and to those who were overcome by fatigue or benumbed with cold. These hospices also served as houses of welcome to pilgrims.

In the 6th Century, St. Benedict of Nursia emerged to give a distinctive shape to western monasticism. He imposed the duty of Christ's hospitality "upon the monks in the West" (Bonet-Maury 1913: 806). He was deeply convinced that the practice of Christ's hospitality was an essential part of monastic life. This is evident in his Monastic Rule, which is generally known as: "The Rule of St. Benedict"- which greatly influenced Christian Monasticism especially the western tradition. An illustration: The first sentence of Chapter 53 of the Rule of St Benedict states:

All guests to the monastery should be welcomed like Christ, because He will say, 'I was stranger, and you took me in' (Matthew 25:35).³³

St Benedict strongly held that in welcoming strangers, one welcomes Christ who identifies with strangers, the poor and the needy, hence being hospitable, one gains salvation. In the same Chapter 53, St Benedict gives instructions on how hospitality in the monastery should operate in concrete terms:

When a guest is announced, the superior or brothers should greet him with charity; and they should pray together in order to be at peace. The kiss of peace should not be given until after prayer because of the deviousness of the devil. The greeting and farewell should be offered with great humility for with bowed head and a prostrate body all shall honour in the guest the person of Christ. For it is Christ who is really being received. Guests, after reception, are to be led to prayer. Then the superior or his delegate shall sit with them. The abbot will wash the guest's hands and, together with the brothers, his feet. Then they shall recite, 'we have received your mercy, O Lord, in the midst of your temple', (Psalms 84:9). Special care should be taken of the poor and pilgrims, for Christ is truly made welcome in them;... The kitchen of the abbot and guests should be separate from that of the community so as not to disturb the brothers, for the visitors, of whom there are always a number, come and go at irregular hours...³⁴

³³ Benedict of Nursia 1975. *The Rule of St Benedict*, translated by A.C. Meisel and M.L del Mastro (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and co., Inc.,) p .89

³⁴ Benedict of Nursia 1975. *The Rule of St Benedict*, translated by A.C. Meisel and M.L del Mastro (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and co., Inc.,) p .89-90.

In the above instructions that St Benedict gave, we learn that he believed in the importance of prayer when welcoming a stranger. For as Winzen (1974:57) says, “In prayer man (sic) takes his stand in the presence of God”; as the spirit of God is given room to take charge of the encounter between the host and the guest. By giving prominence to prayer when dispensing hospitality, St Benedict was probably alluding to Jesus’ exhortation that “where two or three meet in my name, I am there among them”(Matthew 18:20). In recommending that the kiss of peace be given to the guests, St Benedict aimed at making the guests to become “a part of the community, to share in the peace of the monastery” (Winzen 1974:59). St Benedict, in the above text, portrayed a balanced theology when he was able to recognise the fact that human life is *psychosomatic*- from the two Greek words *psycho* (soul/mind) and *soma* (body). That is, human life consists of material and spiritual aspects, and since the ministry of Christ dealt with both body and soul, Christianity cannot therefore ignore or isolate any of the two aspects. It is for that reason that he (Benedict) recommended that both the material needs and the spiritual needs of the guest should be taken care of. Winzen clearly underlined this point when he wrote:

St Benedict realised that ‘religion’ is not something which moves in a vacuum, that the spiritual is not separated from the material, especially since the word of God was made flesh, and the living kindness (*humanitas*) of our Lord and saviour has appeared to us (Winzen 1974:62).

On the whole, Christian monasticism sought to apply Christ’s hospitality as much as they could. They could have erred-especially at the very early stage of the monastic movement-where the pioneers of the movement first isolated themselves in the desert which may seem to have contrasted with Christ’s hospitality which is all-embracing and not isolationist; but as time wore on, they were able to re-organise themselves better as our previous discussion has shown; and their dispensation of hospitality, now, became compatible with Christ’s ideal hospitality. It is no wonder that in most parts of Central Europe and many other parts of the world, it is these missionary monks who Christianised them. Just as these monks sought to learn from Christ, we as the church of the 21st century need to draw more lessons from them-as we make Christ’s hospitality the standard of measuring true hospitality.

3.2 Early writers and Christ's hospitality

A distinctive understanding of Christ's hospitality developed in the early centuries of the church. Indeed, as we have already noted, most of the ancient world regarded hospitality as a fundamental moral duty. That's why, it was a must for human well-being and was essential to the protection of vulnerable strangers. The continuation of hospitality, especially in the early centuries, was partly in continuity with Hebrew understandings of hospitality that associated it with God, covenant, and blessing "in contrast to Hellenistic practices which associated it with benefit and reciprocity" (Pohl 1999:17).

Another reason why hospitality continued is to do with the admiration that it received from those outside Christianity who found it a noble practice to attend to the plight of the weakest, the most vulnerable, the most needy or those not likely to be able to reciprocate. It is no wonder that the fourth century writers articulated a clear statement of the scope of Christian hospitality. An example: Lactantius, the tutor to the son of Emperor Constantine, explicitly contrasted Christian hospitality with classical practices. He recognised Christ's hospitality as a "principle virtue" for philosophers and Christians alike. He criticized those philosophers who tied it to advantage. He noted that Cicero and others urged that the "houses of illustrious men (sic) should be open to illustrious guests".³⁵ Lactantius rejected the argument that we must bestow "our bounty on 'suitable' persons". He argued instead "the house of a just man ought not be open to the illustrious, but to the lowly and abject. For those illustrious and powerful men cannot be in want of anything".³⁶

The demarcating line between Christ hospitality versus Greek and Roman views of benevolence and hospitality is that the latter "stressed formal reciprocal obligations between the benefactor and the recipient" (Mott1975: 60-72) while Christ's hospitality stresses on being hospitable to those who cannot pay back. The tradition among the Greek and Roman views emphasised the worthiness and goodness of recipients rather than their need because a grateful response from the

³⁵ Lactantius, *The Divine Institutes*, bk.6, ch.12, *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, ed. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1867-72; hereafter cited as ANF), vol.7, p 176.

³⁶ See Lactantius, *The Divine Institutes*, p 176.

beneficiary was key to the ongoing relationship. In Lactantius' words, such hospitality was "ambitious" and was offered for "advantage."³⁷ He fell short of saying that such hospitality is selfish and is different from Christ's hospitality.

John Chrysostom, like Lactantius felt that Christ's hospitality ought to be different. He recognised the earthly benefits that Christians could gain from entertaining persons of high status but he criticised such a practice: "whereas if thou entertain some great and distinguished man, (sic) it is not such pure mercy, what thou doest, but some portion many times is assigned to thyself also, both by vain-glory, and by the return of the favour, and by the rising in many men's (sic) estimation on account of thy guest."³⁸ In other words, Chrysostom was simply echoing Christ by saying that rather than entertaining people who had something to offer in return, Christians should move away from that Greco-Roman approach and welcome those who seemingly brought little to the encounter or nothing at all.

Most leaders of the ancient church, such as Lactantius, Jerome and Chrysostom were of the view that Christ's hospitality was a significant context for transcending status boundaries and all forms of prejudice that tend to crop up in the society from time to time (Pohl 1999:19). To them, therefore, Christ's hospitality counteracts the social stratification of the larger society by providing a modest and equal welcome to everyone; regardless of background, status, race or creed. Jerome, on his part, challenged clergy to let poor people "and strangers be acquainted with your modest table, and with them Christ shall be your guest". He further cautioned the Christian leaders against the temptation to entertain the powerful with grand hospitality to remember that they were servants of a crucified Christ, one who had lived in poverty and on the bread of strangers. It would be better, as he insisted, to depend directly on Christ for provision than to compromise holiness with ambitious entertainment-which to him borders on insincerity, hypocrisy and lack of virtue.³⁹

³⁷ See Lactantius, *Divine Institutes*, 176

³⁸ John Chrysostom, *Homily 20 on 1 Corinthians*, *A select Library of the Nicene and post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian church, First Series*, ed. Philip Schaff (Buffalo and New York: Christian Literature Company, 1886-90; hereafter cited as NPNFI), vol.12, p.117.

³⁹ Jerome, Letter 52: "To Nepotian", in *Select Letters of Jerome*, LCL, pp.217-19.

Lactantius went a step further and politicised the concept of hospitality when he contended that extending hospitality to strangers was equal to justice. In other words, every stranger must be given his or her justice by being treated kindly in a strange world. This was a daring way of interpreting Christ's hospitality! He stressed that to welcome those who could not give anything in return is "our true and just work," -the work that relates to God-for God is just.⁴⁰

John Chrysostom went short of declaring salvation by works through hospitality by explaining that God can take away our sins or forgive us because of our hospitable deeds. He said:

‘Thou receivest me’, He saith, “into thy lodging, I will receive thee into the kingdom of my Father; thou tookest away my hunger, I take away thy sins;.... thou sawest me a stranger, I make thee a citizen of heaven; thou gavest bread, I give thee an entire kingdom that thou mayest inherit and possess it.”⁴¹

Similarly, Augustine argued that such acts of kindness fit into a network of need. For to him, both the giver and the recipient are in need before God and although God needs none of a person's goods, God had “vouchsafed to be hungry in His (sic) poor. ‘I was hungry’, saith He, ‘and ye gave me meat.’”⁴²

Philip Hallie, an ethicist who spent years studying the human capacity for evil and good rightly concluded that “the opposite of cruelty is not simply freedom from the cruel relationship, it is hospitality” (Hallie 1981: 26-27). This agrees with Pauline caution when he echoes Christ in Luke 6: 27 ff and says:

Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.... Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody.... Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good (Romans 12:14-21).

⁴⁰ Lactantius, *Divine Institutes*, 176-179

⁴¹ John Chrysostom, Homily 45 on Acts, NPNFI, vol.ii, p. 276.

⁴² Augustine, sermon 10, NPNFI, vol.6, p.294; see also Sermon 210 “For the Lenten season,” in *Sermons on the Liturgical Seasons*, trans. Sr.Mary Sarah Muldowney, The Fathers of the church, Vol.17 (New York: Fathers of the church, 1959), p. 107

3.3 Women and compassionate gestures

Compassion literally means “suffering with”- from the Latin *cum patior* (Edwards 1991:175). To suffer one needs to not only be alongside the suffering one but also “to be so entering into the condition of that person as to be immersed, particularly in it”(Edwards 1991:175). It is the “very centrepiece of Biblical spirituality”(Fox 1990:26) and is an attribute of God. For God is a God of tenderness and compassion (Exodus 34:6), whose compassion fails not, being new every morning (Lamentations 3:22). Compassion is thus the opposite of injustice, the antidote to injustice. In this section, we are trying to argue that women have been pivotal in the acts of compassion hence hospitality all through in history, especially during Jesus earthly ministry (Mark 14, Matthew 27-28) to the time of Mother Theresa of Calcutta, yet their acts have not been given adequate coverage in church history.

As Fiorenza (1990:59) says, Women’s leadership and contributions to early Christianity can only become historically visible “when we abandon our outdated patriarchal-androcentric model of early Christian beginnings”. For example just as the history of Christian monastic hospitality, as we have already seen, tend to wrongly portray men as the only characters who contributed, the Bible likewise gives less prominence to the compassionate acts of women save for a few cases. A case in point is Prisca and Aquila to whom Gentile churches owe a debt of gratitude for their dedicated contributions (read hospitality) in the early church. However exegetes have long recognized that it is unusual that in four out of six New Testament texts Prisca is mentioned before Aquila (Fiorenza 1990:66). Their hospitality is experienced in the way they even risked their lives to save Paul and others during those difficult days of the early church (Acts 18).

Eleanor McLaughlin (1990:99) argues strongly on the women’s power and pursuit of holiness in medieval Christianity alongside men-a fact that has long been shelved in church history. She says,

....there is a suspicion among the twentieth-century Christians that the female holy ones were not quite as equal as their brothers. Was not the Queen of Sciences, theology, dominated by the lives and works of Saint Augustine, Saint Gregory 1, Saint Anselm, Saint Bernard, Saint Dominic,

Saint Bonaventura, Saint Thomas?.....I would suggest that the foregoing is at best misleading; that historiography has often badly served the Christian woman who is a feminist....

Mclaughlin goes on and gives the contribution of some Christian women such as Francine du Plessix Gray who commented on the “demise of that monastic ideal that had prevailed in Europe until the Reformation, and had suggested that women’s first allegiance is to a divine order, rather than to any patriarchal rule”

Mclaughlin (1990:101) cites Saint Lioba an Anglo-Saxon nun of good Wessex family, a scholar, an abbess, a missionary in the wilds of Germany. According to her, Saint Lioba became the spiritual friend and confidante of Saint Boniface, bishop and Anglo-Saxon missionary to the Germans, who called her and a number of other women from the abbey at Wimborne to minister among the heathen of Saxony. Her life, which was written half a century after her death in 779, was intended to edify, like all hagiography, but we can glean from its pages a sense of the strength and influence available to a woman within the eighth-century ideal of holiness. In general, her work was grounded in an amalgam of prayer, rock-like faith, learning, instinct for order and discipline, and energetic dissemination of the monastic vision of radical Christian detachment, which was purely, and simply the Benedictine ideal. It was sanctity where both men and women were coequally called and rendered hospitality, which was the clear stamp of holiness in those days (Mclaughlin 1990:105).

Another distinguished character is Christina (1096-98) of Markyate. An anonymous monk of St. Albans who must have known her well wrote her work of edification in the latter part of the twelfth century. At age thirteen or so, while visiting St. Abans Abbey with her family, “she made a vow to be the spouse of Christ and of no other” (Mclaughlin 1990:105). Firm in her resolution to remain a virgin and live for God only, Christina resisted the intention of her family to see her married. She later escaped the family to take up hiding first with an anchoress, then more permanently with Roger, a hermit. As time went by, her fame as a holy woman spread beyond England to the rest of the continent. Her vocation, her vow to Christ, prevailed over every man, obstacle, misery or doubt and as she said,

My one desire, as thou knowest, is to please thee alone and to be united to thee for all time without end.

There are many other exemplary cases of devoted women in early Christian spirituality, which was synonymous with hospitality by then. They included Saint Catherine of Siena (1447-80) and Julian of Norwich who addressed Jesus as a nurturing and caring mother (see McLaughlin 1990:118). Indeed we can argue that Christians were saved by the womb of God's body, the church, nourished at her breasts, fed and led by bishops and moderators or overseers. Thus the debate on hospitality is too dear to women just as it is to men. In fact women have played a pivotal role than men in terms of the dispensation of hospitality in Africa today and even in church history as our ongoing studies shows. It is, therefore, a terrible intellectual arrogance to assume that since there are scanty recorded materials on women hospitality, especially during the monastic life, women do not have substantial contribution on matters to do with the concept of hospitality; however further researches on this would help in shedding more light.

3.4 Hospitality in the Fourth and Fifth century settings

As time went by hospitality underwent paradigm shifts as the political temperatures changed. An illustration: In the first centuries, the church was distinct from the larger political system and often at odds with it (Pohl 1999:43). In fact the tension that developed with political authorities contributed in shaping some of the distinct characteristics of early Christian hospitality; for Christ's followers were severely a persecuted minority. In other words, the more the Christians were persecuted, the more they were forced by the circumstance to strength their dispensation of hospitality between themselves and to an extent, to their neighbours. The practice of hospitality was therefore important in sustaining identity and in providing care. Indeed, even ministry to prisons were understood as an aspect and on extension of hospitality (Lane 1982:267-274).

However, the location of Christ's hospitality expanded in several different directions after Emperor Constantine gave his support to the Christian faith. Indeed, substantial public resources

as well as substantial responsibilities flowed to the church (Pohl 1999:43). That is, hospitality as care for the needy came to be viewed as “public service”. By the middle of the fourth century, outsiders recognised Christian institutions of care as worth being imitated (Pohl 1999: 43). An example is Emperor Julian (A.D. 362). He instructed the high priest of the Hellenic faith to imitate Christian concern for strangers. In so doing, he was aiming at re-establishing a Hellenic religion in his empire only to realise that without the so-called Christian hospitality, the empire will not be as successful as he would have envisaged. Referring to Christianity as “atheism”, Julian asked:

Why do we not observe that it is their benevolence to strangers, their care for the graves of the dead and the pretended holiness of their lives that have done most to increase atheism? (Pohl 1999: 44)

Subsequently, he instructed the priest to establish hostels for needy strangers in every city and also ordered a distribution of corn and wine to the poor, strangers, and beggars (Pohl 1999:44). This is a significant testimony to the importance of charity and hospitality that came from, clearly, a hostile source.

Emperor Julian (A.D. 632) would go on and challenge his subjects to emulate Christ’s hospitality as demonstrated by the practitioners of the day:

For it is disgraceful that, when Jew ever has to beg, and the impious Galileans (Christians) support not only their own poor but ours as well, all men (sic) see that our people lack aid from us. Teach those of the Hellenic faith to contribute to public service of this sort.⁴³

In his attempt to withdraw the royal patronage given to the church by Constantine, Julian attested to the significance of Christian institutions of care for the society as a whole (Greer 1986:132).

All in all, Christians established many hospitals in the fourth century to care for strangers, particularly for poor strangers and for the local poor. With time, these hospitals were categorised into separate institutions according to the type of person in need, i.e., for orphans, widows,

⁴³ The work of the Emperor Julian, *LCL*, vol.3, pp.67-71.

strangers, sick, and poor (Uhlhorn 1883:323-329). Probably this categorisation of needy people marked the beginning of the weakening of hospitality. It sounds like ancient forms of Apartheid- where people are cared separately on the basis of status!

In about A.D 370, Bishop Basil of Caesarea founded the first hospital that received substantial literature of the time. Basil is remembered by the way he gathered the victims of famine and supplied the poor and the sick with prepared food and physical care.⁴⁴ He went on and established a variety of institutions to provide care for the sick, for travellers and for the poor (Forell 1979:125-126). In an eulogy for Basil, the hospital was described as a “storehouse of piety” and the finest wonder of the world, a place where those decimated by disease could have a city of their own, no longer objects of hatred and exclusion because of their illness.⁴⁵ Bishop Basil's immense contribution, as a Christian, shows how Christ's hospitality had been given serious attention in the fourth century settings. It also reflects how Christian care was originally connected to the practice of hospitality.

In the writings of Bishop John Chrysostom, from the fourth and early fifth centuries, we are able to identify multiple settings for hospitality as well as the tensions that emerged out of such diversity. He insisted that hospitality should start from a person's inner conviction and dedication. In other words, hospitality remains an individual responsibility as well. To drive the point home, he explained:

Even if the needy person could be fed from common funds, can that benefit you? If another man (sic) prays, does it follow that you are not bound to pray?⁴⁶

Bishop Chrysostom went on and urged his parishioners to make a guest chamber in their own houses, a place set apart for Christ; a place within which to welcome “the maimed, the beggars, and the homeless.” He, further, insisted that hospitality be offered personally with one's own

⁴⁴ Gregory Nazianzen, Panegyric on St. Basil, *NPNF2*, vol.7, p.407.

⁴⁵ Gregory Nazianzen, Panegyric on St. Basil p.416.

⁴⁶ Chrysostom, Homily 45 on Acts, *NPNFI*, vol.11, p 277. See also Greer's discussion in *Broken Lights* P.129-130.

hands rather than being left exclusively for the church to provide⁴⁷. In so doing, he was probably alluding to the fact that Jesus himself washed his disciples feet by his own hands and so Christian practitioners of hospitality must seek to imitate Christ as much as possible. In any case, hospitality in the fourth and fifth century had become an essential part of Christian identity-for welcome; compassion and treatment were all part of a proper Christian response to people in need (Pohl 1999:46).

In Homily 66 on Matthew, Chrysostom described the work of the church at Antioch. He explained that though the church was not wealthy, it cared for those for those in prison, sick, disabled and those who were away from their homes. The church also provided food and clothing to those who came “casually” everyday⁴⁸.

In trying to live up to the challenge of Christ’s hospitality, Bishop Chrysostom built seven “hospitality units” in Constantinople between AD 400 and 403. They provided care for strangers and orphans, as well as for those who were sick, chronic invalids, old, poor and destitute (Hastings 1913:805). This is the challenge for modern church leaders as well: Can we have, as a church, homes for street children, the orphaned, the elderly, the displaced/abandoned, the helpless/needy?

As observed in the previous section (2.5), within the fourth century, monasticism took root as an essential expression of the Christian life. Major figures in early monasticism, such as Basil, Chrysostom and Jerome appeared in this century. For example, Benedict of Nursia (ca.480-ca. 550), the father of western monasticism developed a rule of monastic life that gave a central place to hospitality to strangers while protecting other disciplines of the monastery from disturbance.⁴⁹

In concluding the section on the hospitality in the fourth and fifth centuries, we realise that it provided the most active moment as far as Christ’s hospitality is concerned. This is in terms of

⁴⁷ Chrysostom, Homily 14 on 1 Timothy, NPNFI, vol.13, p.445.

⁴⁸ Chrysostom Homily 66 on Matthew, NPNFI, vol.10, p.407

⁴⁹ See the rule of Benedict, Chap.53 in *Western Asceticism*, The Library of Christian classics, vol.12 (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1958).

writings and fieldwork attempt at implementing it. The period, also, saw the emergency of the hard working monasteries as far as hospitality is concerned as we have already observed. It also saw Jerome, Lactantius and Chrysostom, among others, defining Christ's hospitality as welcoming the "least" without commercialisation of hospitality. This is highly an ambitious undertaking-to recognise the "least" amongst us. It clearly echoes Christ and serves to implement every detail of Christ's theology that contrasted the theology of the Pharisees, the Sadducees, the teachers of the Law and the Scribes. Ironically, this distinctiveness of the fourth-fifth century was defined as the church was increasing in wealth, power and influence. This was probably because of the fact that the relation of the church and socio political institutions was changing. For the church and the political authorities were no longer at odds. They had become intertwined and dependent on one another as hospitality reinforced those relationships, as the above discussion has shown. If the world can embrace Christ's hospitality that sees the primary need is to welcome the very "least" amongst us, then the kingdom of God that Jesus told us to pray for (Matthew 6) will have come, as the people of God embrace "love of the neighbour" as their defining characteristic. Probably we would be thanking God that the kingdom has come to every one of us, as it is done in heaven! As a result, we would no more hear or see widening gap between the rich and the poor-rather the world would be looking forward to ways and means of bridging the gap in the local and international politics.

3.5 Hospitality during the Medieval Ages

Medieval ages refers to the Middle Ages, that is, the period from about AD 1000 to AD 1500 or from about AD 600 to AD 1500. But in this section, we are referring the medieval settings as from AD 500 to AD 1500. In this period, three institutional settings were important for the practice of hospitality. That is: Monasteries and their hospices for pilgrims; Hospitals; and the great ecclesial and lay households. Needy pilgrims and the local poor looked to the monasteries for hospitality and relief. On the other hand, monasteries distributed alms (Pohl 1999:48).

Interestingly, hospitality to the wealthy and the powerful reinforced important social and political bonds between the monastic authorities and the aristocratic powers (Pohl 1999:48). Thus, monastic hospitality in the middle ages generally reinforced social boundaries that are a

clear departure from the vision of the early writers and the entire philosophy behind Christ's hospitality.

Medieval hospitality was characterised by specialised Institutions with paid staff who cared for patients/recipients, welcome was now, often, fashioned according to the status of the guest. It was also characterised by reinforcements of existing patterns of wealth and power. Great households belonging to "senior citizens" like Bishop (who had by now acquired noble status as opposed to servants status), and lay aristocrats were central to the practice of hospitality in the middle ages. As Isidore of Seville says, in the early seventh century, "a lay man has fulfilled the duty of hospitality by receiving one or two (guests); a bishop, however, unless he shall receive everyone...is inhuman".⁵⁰ This shows that, although all Christians were responsible for hospitality, the bishop had a special role.

The *Decretum* that was compiled by Gratian in the twelfth century and providing the basis for much of Canon Law stated, "Hospitality is so necessary in bishops that if any are found lacking in it the law forbids them to be ordained".⁵¹ While the emphasis on Bishops being hospitable is good and Biblical, according to Pauline Theology (as the letters to Timothy and Titus shows); but the fact that hospitality lost its Christ like originality and was now, generally, dispensed according to one's social status makes the whole concept of hospitality in the Medieval period faulty and lacking in terms of imitating the ideal Christ's hospitality.

As Tierney notes in his works on the medieval poor Laws, there was a close connection between clerical hospitality and the relief of the poor:

The word, 'hospitality', is of some importance because the phrase most commonly used by the Medieval canonists to describe the poor relief responsibilities of the parish clergy was *tenere hospitalitatem*- they were obliged, that is, to 'keep hospitality'. The primary sense of the word

⁵⁰ Patrologia Latina 83.786, quoted in Sherman W. Gray, *The Least of my brothers: Matthew 25:31-46: A History of interpretation* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989) P.120.

⁵¹ Decretum Gratiani. Distinctio 82 ante c. I, Dist.87 ante c. I, Dist.84 ante c. I, Dist.85 ante c. I, quoted in Brian Tierney, *Medieval Poor Law: A sketch of Canonical Theory and its Application in England* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1959) P.68.

referred to the reception of travellers, the welcoming of guests, but the Canonists very often used it in a broader sense to include almsgiving and poor relief in general.⁵²

The church generally had a lot of property though it varied at the local level. As it is today in some parts of Africa, some clergy had very minimal resources with which they could offer hospitality. Christians were expected to tithe in the hope that some of the funds for hospitality and relief would be found (through their tithing).⁵³ Unlike in the fourth and the fifth centuries, hospitality in the medieval period began to diminish gradually. Complaints about absentee priests, misappropriation of funds, discrimination, and inadequately endowed clergy houses were now rampant.⁵⁴ It is no wonder that in the late Middle Ages, hospitality was explicitly and deliberately connected to power, influence, and grand displays of wealth and status among the great ecclesiastical and lay- households. As Henisch says, for one to retain his/her authority and influence, the great householder had “to show himself the source of all good things for his dependents, and to equal, or preferably surpass, the magnificence of his allies and enemies” (Henisch 1976:11).

Entertaining visiting dignitaries became an essential demonstration of one’s status while to lose the capacity to offer hospitality, or to be forced to depend on the hospitality of other great households, was clear evidence of a person's waning power and influence (Henisch 1976:12). Though money economy, as such did not yet exist, the nobility consumed its excess wealth “on its estate in the form of strategic hospitality” which “reinforced the complex bonds of interdependence between Lord and vassal, church and nobility, which were characteristic of feudal life” (Pohl 1999:50).

In early fifteenth-century England, households of bishops, as well as those of lay aristocrats, were drunk with the desire to display power that was often evidenced through the magnitude of the entertainment. This kind of hospitality involved an “elaborate deference to rank and power” (Heal 1982:544-563). Grand hospitality was “perceived as a means of securing good

⁵² See Brian Tierney, *Medieval poor Law*, p 168

⁵³ See Brian Tierney, *medieval poor Law* p. 93,97,126. Tierney further explains that the way of pastoral care was to feed the hungry and to receive guests-for clergy-among other things.

⁵⁴ Tierney, *Medieval poor Law* p. 71-72,107.

neighbourliness, of ensuring communal stability and promoting the general well-being of the commonwealth (Heal 1982: 547).

In the course of dispensing hospitality, those of lower status were received at a different table, fed different and coarser food and housed in different places/less privileged places/lodgings (Henisch 1976:12). In serving dinner, John Russell gives a fascinating insight into the complexities of serving dinner to clergy and nobility of different ranks. According to him, it included explanations/instructions of how ushers and marshals were to seat strangers, clergy, and men and women of high rank but no wealth, and those in reverse circumstances (Pohl 1999:51). As the Medieval period (AD500-1500) came to a close, Christ's hospitality among the Christians of the time had died a systematically co-ordinated death. By this time, most provision for the poor was done at the gate and not within the house. This indicates that the poor were now being seen as a nuisance, meaning that, people were no longer able to see Christ in the poor! This was a terrible reversal of the great gains that had been made in the past as our study has shown. In concluding this sub-section, we realise that the potential of hospitality was lost in the loss of the worshipping community and in the differentiation of care among the recipients. Thus, the medieval period did not fuel the fire of hospitality but instead it extinguished it through the strengthening of class society especially in the dispensation of hospitality.

3.6 Hospitality during the Reformation period

During the sixteenth century, many of the great households-monastic, clerical, and lay-were under siege; "the feudal and manorial systems were crumbling" (Pohl 1999:51). Further, breakdown of rural communities was evident. This was a result of urbanisation, increase of too many vagabonds, plague, war and the increased trade that now relegated the concept of hospitality into the periphery.

However, the sixteenth-century protestant reformers redefined the practice of hospitality and offered unrelenting critiques of the extravagance, indulgence, and waste that were associated with late medieval hospitality (Pohl 1999:52). They rejected both the elaborate welcome to the

rich and indiscriminate aid to the poor. They also called for a return to Christ's hospitality and patristic understanding of hospitality that had focused on care for poor persons and needy exiles. They emphasised frugality, prudence, discernment and orderliness in the dispensation of hospitality (Pohl 1999:52).

The sixteenth century was further characterised by a significant resurgence of the moral credibility and practical relevance of hospitality to needy strangers. The large numbers of protestant refugees fleeing persecutions during this period caused this. John Calvin asserted that welcoming these persons was the "sacred" kind of hospitality. He was thankful to the civic leaders of Geneva and Frankfurt for opening up their cities for refugees as a clear expression of hospitality (Calvin 1999:15-16).

Just as hospitality was very significant in the early Anabaptist experience, as believers sought refuge from persecution and cared for the families of martyrs, it was also an important practice for the early Protestants as they attempted to survive and prevail in the religious and political upheavals of that time (Umble 1998:1).⁵⁵

In the reformation period, Martin Luther wrote that when persecuted believers received hospitality, "God Himself (sic) is in our home, is being fed at our house, is lying down and resting".⁵⁶ "No duty can be more pleasing or acceptable to God than hospitality to religious refugees", asserted Calvin, who viewed such practice as a "sacred" form of hospitality.⁵⁷ He encouraged believers to see in the stranger the image of God and our common flesh.

According to Luther and Calvin, the primary practitioners of hospitality, during the 16th century reformation period, were Christian families and civic leaders (Pohl 1999: 52). Unfortunately, they did not recover from the ancient sources an appreciation for the church as an important location for hospitality. Instead, they identified hospitality with the civic and the domestic

⁵⁵ It should be noted that Anabaptist writers generally subsumed hospitality under the category of mutual aid. See, for example Jeni Hielt Umble (1998).

⁵⁶ Martin Luther, *Luther's works, vol.3: Lectures on Genesis, Chapters 15-20* (St.Louis: Concordia, 1961) P. 189.

⁵⁷ John Calvin wrote that hospitality was "sacred kind of humanity" in *Commentaries on the Catholic Epistle* (Grand Rapids: Wm.B. Eerdmans, 1948) p. 130.

spheres. Martin Luther, in particular, viewed these spheres as essential to the way of God ordered society. In so doing, the reformers killed the sacramental character of hospitality that we have discussed in ancient times; and hospitality was diminished and it became mostly an ordinary but valued expression of human care (Pohl 1999: 53). Further, by identifying Christ's hospitality with political authorities- that is –civic leaders, the reformers further opened the debate: To what extent should church and politics be juxtaposed? On the other hand, how far should the church leaders mingle with the politics of the land? As the salt and light of the world, how far can the Christians work hand in hand with non-converted to fulfil a noble cause? And by weakening or killing the sacramental character of the original Christ's hospitality how good or bad was it? Thus by normalising or secularising what was originally sacramental the reformers called attention to a theological debate on the parameters around which the church should or should not by pass when dealing with the "world". Despite the reformers' acknowledgement that hospitality was a "sacred" act, they simultaneously undermined some of the mystery that had "under girded the potent earlier understanding" of Christ's hospitality (Pohl 1999: 53).

Describing the Jews as unwanted and ungrateful guests of the German people, Martin Luther urged their removal from the Land. He portrayed them as plundering their hosts' goods and blaspheming their hosts' God. He complained:

We suffer more from them (the Jews) than the Italians do from the Spaniards, who plunder the hosts' kitchen, cellar, chest, and purse, and, in addition, curse him and threaten him with death. Thus the Jews, our guests, also treat us: for we are their hosts. They rob and fleece us and hang about our necks, these lazy weaklings and indolent bellies; they swill and feast, enjoy good times in our homes, and by way of reward they curse our Lord Christ, our churches, our princes, and all of us, threatening us and unceasingly wishing us death and every evil.⁵⁸

To be rid of the "unbearable, devilish burden of the Jews", Luther recommended that their homes, schools, and synagogues be razed, that they be forced to live in barns and to do manual

⁵⁸ Luther's Works, Vol.47: *The Christian and Society IV* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971), "On the Jews and Their Lies", pp.275-276.

work, if not expelled or “cut off like a gangrenous limb”.⁵⁹ This shows that even though the reformers did not quash away the concept of Christ’s hospitality, they, however relaxed it by encouraging the political (civic) authorities to work towards its realization and by Luther’s daring advocacy of a forceful removal of a hostile neighbour, Christ’s hospitality was clearly put in a litmus test!

3.7 John Wesley and Christ’s hospitality in the eighteenth century

The eighteenth century hospitality in England was championed by the evangelical revival during most desperate social times in European history.⁶⁰ Rev. John Wesley, sometimes called “the friend of the poor”, led this revival movement. In other words, Wesley championed hospitality after the industrial revolution when the social and the religious conditions had changed so drastically that people no longer had time for one another as the revolution ushered in a material minded quest in the eighteenth century Europe.⁶¹ The moral and religious decline is illustrated by the fact that feasts were ignored, daily worship was neglected and even the Holy communion, which is central to the Anglican faith was infrequently observed; and “the grand old Church of England seemed in danger from nothing but its own inertia” (Hempton1984: 31).

⁵⁹Luther’s Works, Vol.47: *The Christian and Society IV* pp. 269-75, 285-92.

⁶⁰ The eighteenth century English society was “punctuated by riots against high corn prices; low wages in the textile industry; turnpike roads; Papists, Methodists and Dissenters; and sometimes against the political violations of “the rights of the freeborn Englishmen””(Rack 1992:7). He also quotes Porter as saying that the century was kept in a state of relative control and equilibrium due to three factors. These were the strength and resilience of the social hierarchy, the possibility of movement up and down the hierarchy, as well as the ruling class’ efforts to gain consensus in society by influence, persuasion and religion, though ultimately by force if that was necessary (Rack 1992:6). Other significant features, especially of the seventeenth century that impacted on the times in which Wesley lived, include: The year 1665 marked the Great Plague which was the last major outbreak of bubonic plague, but which killed some 68,00 people. In 1666 the Great Fire of London destroyed much of the city, and a new city emerged. In 1670 Charles II with the help of Louis IV of France tried to make England a Catholic country again. In 1672 Charles issued a Declaration of Indulgence which suspended all laws against Catholics and Non conformists, but parliament withdrew it and passed the Test Act which further excluded Catholics from all official employment. Charles managed to rule the country without calling parliament to convene as Louis IV provided him with personal funds. In short, by the time Wesley was born in 1703, he found a society that was experiencing considerable tension in the political realm as the miseries of the lower class increased. During Wesley’s time, most had no schooling or training because of the movement towards the cities and towns. Housing was catastrophic, there was no medical care and there were very high birth and mortality rates. John Wesley himself was one of the seventeen children (See Marquardt 1992:19ff). Marquardt (1992:21) concludes that the wealthy were concerned with securing and maintaining property, and increasing income. In so doing, Wesley’s-Methodism- saved England from undergoing a revolution similar to that which had occurred in France in 1789 (Semmel 1971:10).

⁶¹ See H. Rack 1989. *Reasonable Enthusiast: John Wesley and the rise of Methodism* (London: Epworth Press) p.xii.

Howard Snyder has written a favorable analysis of John Wesley in *The Radical Wesley*. He acknowledges Wesley's vigorous opposition to slavery, and suggests it may even have been ahead of his time. He further claims that Wesley had deep compassion for the labouring victims of industrialising England, "but he made no fundamental critique of the free enterprise". Thus he says "it means that we do not have to buy into Wesley's social and political views in order to appreciate his ecclesiology" (Snyder 1980:158). This comment is a mistaken view, as we shall see later-for Wesley fought any form of marginalisation!

Interestingly, as the concept of Christ's hospitality was weakening, though not as much as during the medieval period, John Wesley and the eighteenth-century English Methodists were offering regular opportunities for intense personal interaction, relationship building, and oversight of new believers. In other words, Methodists small group meetings took place in the modest homes of Methodist believers' thereby re-integrating church and household (Pohl 1999: 54).

Wesley sought to transform people socially and spiritually by deliberately employing early church and patristic institutional models. In so doing, he viewed close community as "the very thing that was from the beginning of Christianity".⁶² He sought to recover the practice of shared meals by instituting love feasts, with simple food; and instituting regular meetings that provided a context that allowed a close union of believers with each other. This was clearly a move towards a recovery of Christ's hospitality that was lost during the medieval period (500-1500).

Wesley teamed up with others to build homes for widows, the destitute, children and others who were unable to provide for themselves. He wrote that in addition to the people who were in those homes, he and four or five preachers regularly ate their meals there:

For I myself, as well as the other preachers who are in town, diet with the poor on the same food and at the same table. And we rejoice herein as a comfortable earnest of our eating bread together in our Father's kingdom⁶³.

⁶² See Wesley, *Works of John Wesley*, vol.9: *The Methodist Societies* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1989). "General Rules of the societies, 1743", 70; "A plain Account of the people called Methodists", p. 256, 258.

⁶³ Wesley, "Plain Account of the people called Methodists, pp.267-68.

This was a bold attempt at returning to early church hospitality, which sought to demonstrate Christ's hospitality.

Wesley rejoiced that these homes for widows reflected apostolic institutions as well as the kingdom. He said:

I have blessed God for this house ever since it began;.... So that it is not in vain that, without any design of so doing, we have copied after another of the institutions of the apostolic age. I can now say to the entire world, 'come, and see how these Christians love one another'.⁶⁴

This home for the widows, like the group meetings and the common meals that Wesley instituted created a distinctive space in which participants transcended some of their social differences. In so doing, Wesley's initiative clearly reflected the commitments of the early church, as we read in Acts of Apostles. Interestingly, he did not identify it as "hospitality" as his concern was simply to do the will of God. It is no wonder that he frequently encouraged his parishioners to visit the poor and the sick in their homes as they work towards helping them physically, socially and spiritually (Pohl 1999: 55). Wesley therefore was that rare person emphasising Christ's hospitality while others were systematically killing it during his time. His success thereby confirms what President Julius Nyerere used to say, that history is never hopeless as it raises leaders fit for every generation.⁶⁵ Wesley was such a generational leader during his time- the lonely voice calling from the wilderness of inhospitality and asking the people to open up for another.

Snyder calls John Wesley "one of the great innovators of church history"; and speculates about the influence that Wesley could have on the church at the present time:

Perhaps the church today can learn new things from John Wesley. People, even the born again-kind, are notoriously weak at holding together paradoxes which belong together-like the Spirit and the Word, the private and the social, or 'things old and new' (Matthew 13:52). Yet true renewal in the church is always a return, at the most basic level, to the ideal of the

⁶⁴ Wesley, "Plain Account of the people called Methodists" p. 277.

⁶⁵ This is a common quote from Julius K. Nyerere- the former President of Tanzania 1961-1985. Wesley became that person who upheld hospitality in the generation of his time and he did it so successfully.

church as presented in Scripture and as lived out in a varying mosaic of faithfulness and unfaithfulness down through history. John Wesley represents an intriguing synthesis of old and new, conservative and radical, tradition and innovation that can spark greater clarity in today's new quest to be radically Christian (Snyder 1980:3).

It is the contention of this study that Christians, following the example of Christ and as demonstrated by Wesley- the founder member of the Methodist church, among other beacons of hospitality, as we learn in church history, could make significant and radical effects in the contemporary church of Africa and beyond. Thus Snyder's analysis of Wesley cannot be ignored.

As early as 1740, Wesley had organised a scheme for the distribution of clothes to the poor. He writes, "We distributed, as everyone had need, among the numerous poor of our society, the clothes of several kinds, which many who could spare them had brought for that purpose" (Works 1:291). From there, Wesley enlisted the help of others and as he writes:

I reminded the United Society, that many of our brethren and sisters had not needful food; many were destitute of convenient clothing; many were out of business, and that without their own fault; and many were sick and ready to perish: That I had done what in me lay to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, to employ the poor, and to visit the sick; but was not alone, sufficient for these things; and therefore desired all whose hearts were as my heart, 1. To bring what clothes each could spare, to be distributed among those that wanted most. 2. To give weekly a penny, or what they could afford, for the relief of the poor and sick. My design, I told them, is to employ, for the present, all the women who are out of business, and desire it, in knitting. To these we will give the common price for what work they do; and add, according as they need. Twelve persons are appointed to inspect these, and to visit and provide things needful for the sick. Each of these is to visit all the sick within their district, every other day: And to meet on Tuesday evening, to give account of what they have done, and consult what can be done further (Works 1:309).

These works shows the great extent that Wesley went in seeking to apply Christ's hospitality in his contemporary situation thereby giving the African church of the twenty first century a food for thought and a challenge that must not go unnoticed!

While Wesley did not mention the words “Christ’s hospitality” he extolled the philosophy behind the concept of hospitality-though implicitly through the mention of words such as Jesus, Holy Spirit, God, Church, Love, Grace, Poor, Poverty, Naked, Works of mercy, and Works of piety. An illustration: A computer search of the complete Works of John Wesley reveals the number of times a word is used in all of his writings as contained in the sermons, journals, letters and all publications as follows:

God	12,693 times
Jesus	1,388 times
Holy Spirit	579 times
Church	2,582 times
Works of mercy	118 times
Works of piety	39 times
Naked	192 times
Poverty	69 times
Holiness	831 times
Holy	1,895 times
Grace	1,612 times
Love	3,936 times

This clearly shows that Wesley was uniquely able to constantly bring the concerns of the less privileged members of the society to the fore, which is in line with Christ’s earthly ministry as the gospels shows.

In his sermon in *The Scripture way of Salvation* of 1765, Wesley argues that both works of piety and works of mercy are “necessary to sanctification”. In his sermon of 1785, “*On Working Out Our Own Salvation*” Wesley recommends the major means of working out full salvation, “is faithful engagement in both works of piety and works of mercy” (Maddox 2001:41). Wesley created structures for his “Methodist movement” as it was called, which were designed to help the materially poor as for example, medical assistance through clinics, programmes for the care of widows, publications targeting the poor, loan funds to the poor among others (Maddox

2001:41). With regard to the contribution of the works of mercy, Wesley held that these works are part of the means of grace together with the works of piety. However, “it appears he believed works of mercy make a unique contribution among the other means of grace to well-rounded Christian formation, and that he worried that his followers were neglecting its benefit” (Maddox 2001: 46). His ministry continues to speak to the modern church with regard to issues such as poverty eradication and the general welfare of the people of God who are created in God’s image (*Imago Dei*).

In his book on Christian spirituality, Trevor Hudson devotes a chapter to “Growing into Christlikeness”. He appeals for the gospel to show itself in hospitality, loving one’s enemies and what he calls the action of doing well. He describes the great Wesleyan Revival and its effects:

As John Wesley preached men and women into the kingdom, he simultaneously challenged them to bring an oppressive and decaying society into conformity with that Kingdom...Commenting on their efforts...Bishop Peter Storey points out...(the) first co-operatives, the beginnings of social work, the liberation of slaves, the emancipation of labour, popular education, the Trade Union movement; all these and more were established by the spiritual descendants of Wesley (1995:143-144).

In assessing our study so far, we realise that hospitality has undergone various shifts. And one of the most significant changes that it underwent came after the patristic period with the eclipse of the gathered church as a primary location for hospitality. It is from there that hospitality became associated with the bishop and his household rather than with the church. It worsened over the centuries when these bishops/Episcopal households gained material wealth and political power and abdicated their Christ’s commanded role thereby reinforcing the prevailing social arrangements. That became the saddest chapter to the concept of hospitality to date and only in re-seeking to learn from Christ’s hospitality, afresh, can we truly recover this noble concept that Christ encouraged us to live for and to practice.

3.8 Conclusion

In concluding this section, we need to underline the fact that the actual practice of Christ's hospitality as we know it from history to the modern day is not without serious problems, failures, tensions and ambiguities. In other words, practising the hospitality virtues of care, respect, recognition and equality has had its own share of problems that need further re-examination. An illustration: In responding to the needs of the strangers/guest, hospitality sometimes intensified the vulnerability of the powerless persons. The two Old Testament stories help us to clarify this point. Lot's willingness to sacrifice his virgin daughters for the well being of his male guests (Genesis 19) causes real tension. The account of the concubine who was not treated as guest or as family member, but rather offered to a hostile crowd in place of her master (Judges 19) equally causes tension. Such stories warn us against overlooking the protection and well being of those closest to us, and the vulnerable ones among us, as we offer hospitality to strangers.

While everyone is welcome in the New Testament, caution is sounded against false teachers: For as John (2 John 9-11) says: "Do not receive him into the house or give him any greeting; for he who greets him shares his wicked work". Thus, just as welcome given to true believers is welcome to both them and their message, and serves to support them and the spread of the message, hospitality to false teachers implicates the hosts in their "wicked work". It is imprudent therefore, to let the false teachers to undermine authority and morality, and to cause divisions under the guise of hospitality (see Jude 4,8,12,19). For indeed, we need a clear boundary to prevent false teachers from misusing hospitality of the hosts. It is in these respects that Christ cautioned the twelve disciples to be wise:

I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore,
be wise as serpent and as innocent as doves (Matthew 10:16).

While we may seem to be concluding this chapter as hostility rather than hospitality, it is important to underline the fact that Christ's hospitality should not be compromised in any way. For as St. Paul tells Ephesians (6:10-11):

Be strong in the Lord and in His (sic) mighty power. Put on the full armour

of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes.

The way to uphold our hospitality especially in this 21st century is to stand firm in support of the forces that aim at strengthening Christ's hospitality in every department of our lives.

In the coming chapter, we shall be revisiting the concept of hospitality from the African cultural perspective. We shall be keen to observe the areas of agreement or disagreement with the Ancient hospitality and the ideal Christ's hospitality.

CHAPTER FOUR

AFRICAN HOSPITALITY REVISITED

4.0 Introduction

African hospitality can be defined as that extension of generosity, giving freely without strings attached. This explanation agrees with Echema (1995:35) who says that, “it is an unconditional readiness to share” (give and take). It is, thus, the willingness to give, to help, to assist, to love and to carry one another’s burden without necessarily putting profit or rewards as the driving force.

Olikenyi (2001:102) explains that, African hospitality, which he contends, is a vital aspect of existence in Africa in general, is one of the few facets of Ancient African culture that is still intact and strongly practiced today by most Africans in spite of all the forces of recent external influence or even internal pressure. He quotes Uzukwu (1998:158) who develops this view further when he says:

Despite the destabilization of traditional life by colonialism, foreign world views, technology and modern living...African hospitality has held rather well to the extent that it could be described as a way of being an African.

African hospitality is simply African cultural and moral values, which are not theoretical, but a way of life (Moila 2002a: 1). This shows that the concept of hospitality is too wide that like African religion, it permeates all spheres of African life (See Mbiti 1969:1f).

While defining African hospitality as the brotherhood or sisterhood “between the members of the same family group and/or of the same clan”, Moila (2002a: 2) goes on and says that,

Each member of the same family group is bound to offer food and shelter to any member of his or her group who needs it. However, it is also an African custom to offer hospitality even to strangers. Hospitality is perceived and

practiced by Africans as open-handed, instinctive and the most natural thing in the world.

By saying that hospitality as practiced by Africans is “instinctive and the most natural thing in the world”, Moila is alluding to the fact that African hospitality is more unique from other versions that are practiced in many other parts of the world, especially in Europe and North America, as we shall see in our ongoing discussion in this chapter.

On the whole, this chapter is very important in that hospitality in Africa is not an academic theory that is simply exercised by ‘arm-chair’ practitioners but a practical way of life on how people live their lives on a day-to-day basis, as the study seeks to show. Moila (2002:1) explains the practicality of African hospitality as seen during his early upbringing and by so doing, he gives us a general picture of what African hospitality is all about and how it is lived and practised right from our villages,

African hospitality is one of those African cultural and moral values, which my parents absorbed into their Christian lifestyle. Not only my parents, but also all Christians on the farm where I grew up did this.... The farm was divided into Christian and non-Christian villages. However, these two villages did not prevent interaction between people. At all times, actions of hospitality transcended those physical divisions. For instance, on Christmas day or any other festive day, children from both villages would go from one house to another to sing and to be given bread or cakes and drinks. As such, Christmas day was used by families of both villages to display generosity and hospitality to all children on the farm.

This chapter is therefore important when we consider, Moila’s experiences, which, no doubt, represents the upbringing of the entire African children to adulthood. Its importance is clearly seen when we consider the fact that we are researching on African hospitality as African Christians. As believers in the gospel of Christ, the interaction between Christ’s ideal hospitality and the African hospitality serves the original aim of working towards this chapter.

Another point worth of note is the fact that African hospitality will be described, defined and be interpreted. On this basis, it is concluded that “ African hospitality is a powerful tool for gluing the community together as well as the community with ancestors and God” (Moila 2002a: 1).

Finally, this chapter is very important in our study for as Oduyoye (2001:94) says, hospitality is “inherent in being African, as well as in adhering to a religion that derives from the Bible...”. It is “given a religious meaning, and linked with the ancestors, Christ and God”.

As we study on African hospitality, its ancient practices, its present challenges, its compatibility or incompatibility with the Gospel of Christ, we need to underline Archbishop Tutu’s words that,

Africans believe in something that is difficult to render in English. We call it *ubuntu*, *botho*. It means the essence of being human. You know when it is there and when it is absent. It speaks about humaneness, gentleness, and hospitality, putting yourself on behalf of others, being vulnerable. It embraces compassion and toughness. It recognizes that my humanity is bound up in yours, for we can only be human together (Tutu 1989:69).

It is therefore of paramount importance to study about our history through focussing on the Ancient African hospitality as we examine its compatibility with Christ’s ideal hospitality in the modern day Africa.

4.1 Socio – Religious Manifestation of African Hospitality.

As earlier observed, hospitality like African religion permeates all spheres of African life. Whenever an African is, she or he carries his or her hospitality to the fields, in politics, to the social gatherings like funerals, weddings, church ceremonies, get-together parties, beer parties, fundraising at school if she or he is a student, Chiefs’ *baraza*, birthday parties among other places.⁶⁶ Hospitality is also manifested in our receptions of visitors and strangers. It is expressed and lived through African proverbs, sayings, riddles, and songs and in the general art of

⁶⁶ These are the findings have come as a result of my earlier researches in the year 2001 when I was researching for my published book on African hospitality. They agree with Mbiti’s explanation on African Religion in his book, *African Religions and Philosophy* 1969 p.1 ff.

socialising (Mutugi 2001:4). Someone who talks rudely is seen as inhospitable person who is indeed an enemy of the communal pattern of living; and is censured through children being cautioned not to be like so and so.⁶⁷

African hospitality in a home setting is clearly manifested when a stranger passes through a home late in the evening hungry, tired and worried on what to do (Mutugi 2001:4). This stranger is welcomed with nice words of comfort, and then supplied with warm water and soap to bath, then served with food and drinks and finally given shelter in case it is late in the night (Mutugi 2001:4). As Gladys Wanjiku rightly says,

African hospitality is expressed in a loving way. For example, when a visitor comes, you welcome him or her by ushering him or her to a seat, and then you give him or her something to eat or drink. Then you share or socialize, seek to know, politely the problems or issues or news that brought him or her.⁶⁸

Wanjiku's view agrees with the Kikuyu proverb that says that, "information is never sought from a hungry person" (*Ng'aragu ndihoyagwo ûhoro*). In other words, she stresses that when a visitor or a stranger comes to her traditional Kikuyu society, she or he is given something to eat or drink even before you start any formal or informal discussion. One cannot therefore rush to seek information from a hungry person. In any case, as the English saying goes, "hungry person is an angry person". The response to the caution is to feed him or her before you socialize.

On another note, a visitor has to be treated well for who knows? She/he may be a messenger who comes with a solution to unsettled issues. The Kikuyu people say that a visitor is like a river that just passes away thereby leaving multiple blessings⁶⁹. This proverb agrees with the Chewa of Malawi in their saying that a visitor is the one who comes with a sharp panga⁷⁰. It means that a visitor is the one who comes with words of wisdom to solve a family dispute. This section helps

⁶⁷ Interviews with Joseph Kamau a PhD candidate at the University of Natal 6 August 2003.

⁶⁸ Gladys Wanjiku is an elder of African Church of Kenya – Kirinyaga Diocese – Ngiriambu Church. I interviewed her on 8th November 1998 when I was preparing the draft of my published book.

⁶⁹ Interview with Clement Kamau

⁷⁰ Interview with Prof. Isabel Phiri on 13th September 2003.

us in understanding the guest Christology in Africa, in chapter five where Christ will be seen as the guest who heals by reconciling and encouraging us in the day today activities.

Prof. Moila (2002a: 3-5) best illustrates the three ways in which African hospitality manifests itself:

a). Religious Life

Firstly, African hospitality in the religious domain includes relating well with the ancestors. That's why, in the Ancient African hospitality, and to an extent, in the modern day, it is customary "when drinking beer, to pour out the last few drops in the calabash for the ancestors". Similarly, it is believed that, when a pot of beer cracks, it is said to be good for the ancestors are eating (Mönnig 1978:61). Moila (2001:3) contends that the Pedi woman will always dish out food for the ancestors when she is cooking. This is common even among the Kikuyu, the Giriama, the Digo, the Chonyi, the Kamba and the Taita communities of Kenya, only that the East African communities have had a characteristic of pouring anything, including water, tea, or food on the ground before they consume it as a way of seeking blessings from the ancestors before they consume it⁷¹ thereby appeasing them. It is equivalent to prayers offered in the modern African Christianity every time before we take meals. This symbolises a harmonious relationship between the living and the living-dead.

Who are the ancestors? It is the deceased people who become ancestors and still remain part of the community. They are also referred to as the living-dead. Traditionally, as Healey and Sybertz (1969:211) says, the living dead were remembered in the oral tradition for five generations. Their being remembered or not depended on how much good they had done on earth, especially hospitality to others. For as Dickson (1984:198) points out, "In African thought those who become ancestors must have lived exemplary lives; it is not everyone who dies who becomes an ancestor, so that the cult of the dead is not to be equated with that of the ancestors".

⁷¹ These findings have come out of my social interactions with the above people for years.

The question of ancestorship and hospitality is very crucial in Africa. For example, the Fang of Gabon believe that an ancestor passes by in the person of a stranger and, therefore, a stranger should be given a very kind and warm treatment (Olikenyi 2001:105). Similarly, the Bulsa treat strangers, orphaned, handicapped people, beggars and lepers very well because of their belief that their ancestors visit them in these forms (Olikenyi 2001:105).

Generally, in most African communities, it is believed that unexpected guests are the embodiment of ancestors; hence, they are given the ancestors' food (Moila 2002a: 3). In such hospitality, it means communing with ancestors through such impromptu services to guests hence, maintaining a relationship through the practise of hospitality.

b). Social life

Secondly, African hospitality manifests itself through social life, which is also fully permeated by religion. In so doing it serves for the sustenance of holistic community (Moila 2002a: 3). For that reason, activities such as dancing and singing are "perceived as hospitable activities in that they bind the community together" (Moila 2002:3). Africans dance to celebrate every "imaginable situation – joy, grief, love, hate, to bring prosperity, to avert calamity. In addition, singing and joyful conversation enable African people to minimise tensions within enclosed community" (Thorpe 1991:116).

Idowu (1973:84) observes that,

Songs constitute a rich heritage for the whole of Africa. For Africans are always singing and in their singing and poetry, they express themselves. In this way, all their joys and sorrows, their hopes and fears about the future, find an outlet. Singing is always a vehicle conveying certain sentiments or truths. When songs are connected with rituals they convey the faith of worshippers from the heart-faith in the Deity, belief in and about divinities, assurance and hopes about the present and with regard to the hereafter.

This shows that African songs are not just a concordance of notes and voices, but each song expresses a general mood and meaning of a given situation. It also shows that dance when being

accompanied by song is used to express more than just entertainment in that it becomes a manifestation of the feeling of the individual or a group thus communicating their interior sentiments, expectations and aspirations. In so doing, African hospitality is clearly expressed.

Whether in the church, in political arena, in educational institutions, or in whatever area of our social life, songs and dances have not lost their value in Africa. Chima (1994:60) stresses this point when he says,

Whether songs are used in rites of passage (birth, puberty, initiation, marriage etc.) or in the various human activities (work, hunting, harvesting etc.) and whether their contents refer to birds, animals, seasons or humans, songs have human life, behaviour and relationships as their main interest.

Thus, songs and dances are powerful expressions of African hospitality; and cannot be wished away when discussing this concept of hospitality throughout our study.

Another common expression of our African hospitality is through community drama. As Njino (1992:7) notes, drama is a play performed by actors based on poetry, legends, myths, past or present events, for either entertainment or teaching moral and social lessons. Thus, it is closely related to song and dance. From time immemorial, it has been used to mock evil or to mock ungodly behaviours, to caricature, to satirize and to conscientize the society on what ought to be taken seriously (See Njino 1992:8). It is also used to mock any abuse of African hospitality and to praise and to educate people on hospitality; and as we move on with the 21st century, it will be more useful in the African Church.

Song, dance and drama are accompanied by instruments like guitar (which is not originally African but a Western adaptation) “*Kayamba*” (an African musical instrument) and drum.⁷² In general instruments, themselves as Njino (1992:10) notes, communicates particular messages. A good example is a drum. Depending on the size of the drum, it was used to send a message of death and mourning (Mutugi 2001:82). In other words, the sound it produces matters a lot. It also communicates a message of joy and celebration. It is also used as a call signal for inter-village communication. This is especially done in times of war or any other urgency (See Njino

⁷² This is an observation made through participatory observation in both the Kenyan and South African context.

1992:10ff). In any case, the Chiefs *barazas* (meetings) in the ancient Africa relied on drums to announce or call upon the people to assemble (Mutugi 2001:82).

Interestingly, many African radios and television stations have adopted the use of the drums to announce the different programmes. Good examples include: The national television and Radios in Tanzania and Nation Television of Kenya – all in East Africa.⁷³

In other words, as Moila (2002:4) contends, in the social sphere hospitality plays the role of the life affirming and life sustaining. For indeed an individual is never alone. The Agikuyu of Kenya have a saying (proverb) that, “he who eats alone dies alone” (Wanjohi 1997:21). The Kamba of Kenya also have the same saying as Mbiti (2002:83) tells us. Mbiti contends that the proverb is used to highlight the value of sharing both joy (food) and sorrow (death). He further says that if there is no fellowship, there is no sharing of food during one’s life, this follows that there will be no sharing of grief and bereavement at one’s funeral. In this regard, hospitality means more than sharing of experiences by members of a group. Moila (2002a: 4) goes further and asserts that hospitality eradicates loneliness. Thorpe (1991:120) affirms this when he comments about the Zulu culture, “individuals cannot exist alone. They are because they belong”. Moila (2002:4) goes on to argue that any disruption of the well being of a community calls for the members of a societal group to sit down together and share a common meal.

After borrowing heavily from the many African societies such as Asu of Tanzania, the Nupe of Nigeria, the Efe (Pygmy) of the Democratic Republic of Congo, and the Fulani of West Africa, Mbiti aptly summarises the meaning of the ideal hospitality in Africa,

It can be made more palatable to avoid the state in which ‘a person who eats alone dies alone’. If we eat together, we can also happily die together-whether according to African Religion, Christianity, or other religious traditions. There is in each person something exceedingly valuable, wonderful, and indestructible....

⁷³ These examples can be noted through listening to the Radio and Television Stations.

In the social domain, African hospitality has a lot to do with material support on auspicious occasions such as betrothals, marriages, initiations fundraising for medical bills, mourning for the dead, burials, education of children and social gatherings. In such situations, villagers pour in without waiting for invitation cards or any formal invitation.⁷⁴ This is all to do with the communality of African society where one person's happiness is happiness for all and one person's sorrow is sorrow for all.

c). Economic life

Another area where African hospitality is manifested is in the economic life. This involves communal willingness to assist each other. From the ancient times, Africans have displayed their hospitality by co-operating in works such as agricultural work, the building and repair of houses, land cultivation and clearance of bushy areas, hunting, fishing among other areas.⁷⁵ With regard to the Kikuyu of Kenya, Kenyatta (1938:42ff) goes on to show how African hospitality depends heavily on industry.

By industry, it means a quality of being hard-working to promote the economic well being of the community – while at the same time discouraging laziness as the destruction of the community. Kenyatta goes on to analyse the type of industries among the Kikuyu of Kenya, most of which were conducted communally as a gesture of hospitality. They include ironwork, hut building, pottery, basket making, skin tanning, musical instruments, and agricultural activities.⁷⁶ The concept of hard working, therefore, assumes that it is when you are hard working that you will have something to be hospitable with such as food, shelter, clothing and other materials.

In Africa, one cannot be mean with his or her services. For a hospitable person is one who is generous in providing food and shelter for the needy and services for whoever needs help. With regard to the Luo of Western Kenya, Obengo (1997:53) explains that a hospitable and generous person is termed as “*jangwono*”, which means “a gracious person”. This agrees with the Kikuyu

⁷⁴ This paragraph is partly informed by research before 2001 when I was working for my book on “African hospitality”. It is also informed by Prof. Moila's researches (2002a: 4).

⁷⁵ These ideas can be found in Kenyatta (1938:42ff), Moila (2002:4) and Obeng (1997:53).

⁷⁶ For details see Jomo Kenyatta 1938. *Facing Mount Kenya* p.42ff

community who refer to a hospitable person as “*mutugi*” which has two meanings: “a gracious person” or/and “a hospitable person.” This shows how the word “hospitable” is to the Africans. For to be associated with grace, it means it is a divine name. For God is also described as “gracious” among the Africans. To be hospitable therefore is to participate in God’s gracious acts of doing well to others, including working to assist in improving the economic or social well being of the individual and the society in general.

As Obengo (1997:57) says, of the Luo people of Kenya, a sharply contrasting term to hospitality is “*ja wooro*” which describes both the greedy and the stingy. Among the *Kikuyu*, the vice opposed to generosity and hospitality, which is referred to as *ithunu* – is almost absolute. Mean or stingy people stand condemned as social outcasts and are believed to be cursed people (Wanjohi, 1997:114). In the ancient times, they were highly stigmatised; and were classed with robbers, murderers, prostitutes, witches, sorcerers, corrupt, defrauders and greedy people of the world who are short sighted and lacking in vision (Mutugi 2001:44). A Kikuyu proverb that says, “A mean person refuses to serve food to one who has eaten”, is used to caution against meanness or being stingy in socio-economic life. It is reminiscent of Christ’s words that, “He who saves his life loses it and whosoever loses it finds it” (Mark 8:34-35).

However, African hospitality is dispensed in moderation and in prudence. This is demonstrated by the following proverbs,

Too much generosity depletes the cows of the one visited in the morning
(Wanjohi 1987:61).

This Kikuyu proverb cautions on reckless hospitality, otherwise called in the Bible – prodigality.

Another proverb that cautions on foolish dispensation of hospitality is the Ganda proverb that says,

Visitor is a visitor for several days, then put the person to work
(Healey and Sybertz 1996:173).

It agrees with the Swahili proverb, which says that,

A visitor is a guest for two days, on the third day, put him or her to work (by giving him or her a hoe) (Healey and Sybertz 1996:172)

These proverbs imply that a person is not a visitor forever. At one stage he or she will be accepted as one of us, who now needs to work like the rest of us in our forms to promote the economic well being of the host and the entire community. This proverb was used in Tanzania by President Julius Nyerere, during the *Ujamaa* policies to discourage laziness among the idlers of Tanzania, and Africa at large, who consumes the sweat of others, like parasites, in the name of going for holidays and other excuses (see Healey and Sybertz 1996: 173ff).

Other proverbs that clarify that African Hospitality has to be in moderation and in prudence are,

Having too many friends empties ones pockets (Kikuyu),

The family oil is not to be used on strangers (Kikuyu) (See Wanjohi, 1997:27)

Thus, while acknowledging the need for hospitality they urge that prudence to be the guide in its practice. It also shows that hospitality is more than welcoming people; for it also means avoiding being misused or being exploited, as the above proverbs have shown.

While acknowledging that prudence as the guide in the dispensation of hospitality, many African proverbs tend to caution on the danger of the hosts themselves impatience with the visitors. This is especially so in our modern economy when people are too busy in this task oriented Africa, as the section on modern challenges will show. In addressing this, the Chewa have a proverb that says, “treat the visitor well because she/he is like a morning dew which disappears very quickly with the morning sun.”⁷⁷ It is mainly used when hosts get tired of the visitors and begin to mistreat them.

Oduyoye (2001:94-5) quotes Rose-Zoe Obianga who contends that Africans welcomed Europeans and adopted Europeans values only to find that the element of reciprocity was missing. As she further says, Africans resisted this misuse of their hospitality and continue to do

⁷⁷ Interview with Prof. Isabel Phiri on 13th September 2003.

so when the outside values are deemed incompatible with African norms.⁷⁸ Oduyoye (2001:95) cites the case of Nyerere of Tanzania who linked hospitality with work and economic productivity: “treat your guests as guests for two days, and on the third day, give them hoes”. That is, put them to work doing whatever you do to sustain your hospitality. Thus, hospitality demands that we teach not only life skills but also specifically economic skills in order to prevent dependency and parasitism” (Oduyoye, 2001:95). All in all, hospitality and generosity as Moila (2002a: 5) says, are inseparable virtues of a good person in most African traditions.

4.2 General features of African hospitality

Hospitality is a way of life that is intimately bound up with personal relationships and community. This will be seen in our analysis of the general features of African hospitality. Indeed, hospitality is ritualised in many traditional African societies (Uzukuwu, 1998:159). Consequently, it follows a dynamic nature of operation that will be reflected in this presentation.

4.2.1 Welcoming

Welcoming of the guest by the host is a feature that takes precedence over other features in African hospitality (Olikenyi 2001:110). In East Africa, and particularly Kenya and Tanzania, the first thing the householder will say to a visitor is *karibu*. *Karibu* is a Swahili word for “come in” “come close” or “welcome” (Healey and Sybertz 1996:168).

Similarly, the Igbo will say “*Nno!*”; the Ewe, “*Wezo (n)!*”; the Yoruba, “*Ekaabo!*”; the Mende, “*Seneo!*”; the Igala, *Wolale!*; the Kamba, “*Wimuthokye!*”, the Hausa, “*Sanu Dazuw!*”; the Tiv, *Nsuh de vaan!*”; the Berber (in Arabic), “*Marhaba!*” – each of them expressing welcome (Olikenyi 2001:111).

⁷⁸ The ongoing debate in the Anglican church on whether to accept homosexual clergy can illustrate this point in that the African churches have vehemently refused to accept the consecration of homosexual Bishops in both Europe and North America as they contend it is against African norms and Biblical traditions.

Consequently, the host will abandon every other undertaking in the house so as to pay attention to the visitor by making him or her to “feel at home”, enjoy a friendly conversation, and serve food and drinks (Healey and Sybertz 1996:173, Moila 2002a: 2ff.).

4.2.2 Exchange of Greetings

One of the most important aspects of welcoming the guest is the exchange of greetings; for as Healey and Sybertz (1996:168) says, the tradition of greeting is an important part of social life. Its main purpose is to establish a relationship. It is “considered an insult, unsociable and surly if one refuses to exchange greetings” (Olikenyi 2001:110).

Extended greetings are a very important part of the small talk before a more formal discussion takes places (Healey and Sybertz 1996:169). This is quite different from the “business focus” in task-oriented western countries. An example, among the pastoralists communities of Northern Kenya, exchange of greetings is done softly without any hurry. Among the Woborana for instance, one must prepare to extend his or her greetings so as to cater for the general cultural patterns and the concept of hospitality in particular. As a church worker, in 1996, I was forced to bear with the prevailing situation and lengthen my greetings, which are slightly longer than those of my own community – the Kikuyu. I would start as follows:

Akam? (How is your health?)

To which I could expect

Dansa (Fine, in case one was healthy)

Nagenibadada? (How is your peace?)

Dansa Dansa (Fine) – a reply

Then if it is in the morning I would continue

Babaro? (How is the morning?)

Dansa Dansa (Fine, fine – in case there was no problem)

On and on, it would continue until everybody feels that his or her friend has minded his or her welfare. Otherwise it is always seen as a rude gesture to go on and present your problem or issue to an African without first greeting him or her—as that is seen as disrespect⁷⁹.

Now, these verbal greetings are often accompanied by gestures that vary from community to the other. They also vary due to other cultural factors such as age, rank, and status and sometimes gender. The varied forms of these gestures include, handshake, crouching, kneeling (especially the Baganda of Uganda), nodding, prostrating, hugging and kissing (Olikenyi 2001:111). In Africa, the most widespread gesture of greetings is the handshake. In so doing enemies may reconcile through a mere handshake. It also denotes that neither of the two parties (that is, the host and the guest) is holding or hiding any dangerous instruments (Olikenyi 2001:111); thereby symbolising a friendly and peaceful encounter.

To affirm the meanings of the exchange of greetings, one will do so effectively by nodding the head. It is the expression of humility to crouch or kneel during the exchange of greetings as Yoruba and the Baganda does. It also shows respect, which is an essential part of an African life (Olikenyi 2001:111). Similarly, hugging each other symbolises friendship, closeness, affection and togetherness. Hugging is closely related to kissing which Olikenyi (2001:112) rightly says is not very common in Africa; and where it is practised, it is often restricted to known guests.

Olikenyi cites the example of the Berber who will shake hands with all the guests; they kiss the cheeks in addition to the handshake. This may appear discriminative and diversionary when the warm greetings are restricted to the guests alone. Indeed it is good to note that the Berbers (who are Arabs of Africa) do not live in Africa South of Sahara where cultural practices are almost similar. However, their kissing is almost similar to the hugging, which, as we have seen, is quite common in Sub-Saharan Africa. It agrees with St. Paul in his many conclusions of his letters to the followers of Christ to, “Greet one another with a holy kiss” (Romans 19:16, 2 Corinthians 13:12, 1 Thessalonians 5:26, Titus 3:5).

⁷⁹ Interview with Clement Kamau, PhD candidate, University of Natal, 20th August 2003.

4.2.3 Communal involvement

Another general feature in African hospitality is the communal involvement which was well summed up by Mbiti in the famous “I am because we are; and since we are, therefore I am”⁸⁰

Even in terms of visitations, the host does not see the visit of his or her guest as merely a private visit, but a community affair (Olikenyi 2001:113). This therefore calls upon a host to ensure that if the visit is formally organized, he or she informs the visitors that, “on such and such a day, I will be visited by people from such and such a place...”⁸¹

This is, on one hand, to invite the neighbours in celebrating the coming of friends, as the Kikuyu saying, says that a visitor is like a river he or she brings blessings. On the other hand, a guest is perceived as a threat, and the host is quite aware that she or he is taking “a risk especially if the guest is unknown and is staying for a long period of time” (Olikenyi 2001:113). In alerting the immediate neighbours, this will give them ample time to express their acceptance or disapproval of the presence of the guest. In my country Kenya, and in particular Mombasa island city on the shores of Indian Ocean, where I am currently settled, visitors have become suspects especially after a tourist centre was bombed by suspected Arab-Islamic fundamentalists, in 2001. This automatically calls for a communal involvement in dealing with visitors whom one is not sure about.

In some cases, the neighbours of the host usually bring some gifts as their contribution to what will be presented and shared by the guest(s) Olikenyi (2001:113). This usually takes place when the neighbours come to exchange greetings with the visitor(s). The community dimension of the African hospitality is very important in that the host “believes that whatever affects him or her affect the community and vice versa” (Olikenyi, 2001:113).

⁸⁰ This is from Mbiti's famous summary of the African philosophy as contained in his book, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 1969 (Nairobi: E.A.E.P) P.106

⁸¹ Interviews with Clement Kamau, 20th August 2003.

In any case, the African sees himself or herself as a “corporate personality”. This means, “the meaning of an individual’s life is found in and through his or her relationship with the other or others” (Nkemnkia 1999:111). It is as Setswana says, “a person is a person through other people” (Olikenyi 2001:113). Or as the Kikuyu say, “One log does not make a bridge”, or he/she who “eats alone dies alone” (Wanjohi 2001:21). This means that a person becomes human through his or her interactions with the rest of the society.⁸² One cannot, therefore, be fulfilled on his or her own hence the need for others to accomplish his or her dreams. This contrasts with the French Philosopher, Rene Descartes who summed up the Western philosophy as, “I am therefore I exist” (Mutugi 2001:21).

In attempting to demonstrate how the communal involvement is an important feature in African hospitality, Mbiti aptly writes,

Only in terms of other people does the individual become conscious of his (or her) own being, his (or her) duties, his (or her) privileges and responsibilities, towards himself (or herself) and towards other people. When she (or he suffers) suffers, he (or she) does not suffer alone but with the corporate group; when (she or) he rejoices, he (or she) rejoices not alone but with his (or her) kinsmen (or kinswomen), his (or her) neighbours and his (or her) relatives whether dead or living...Whatever happens to the individual happens to the whole group, and whatever happens to the group happens to the individual (Mbiti 1969:106).

Thus the communal involvement is a strong feature in the dispensation of hospitality, as hospitality is not dispensed in isolation from the hospitality of the host’s clan, tribe or family group. In so doing, Africans are able to strengthen their sense of community.

4.2.4 Emphasis on respect

African hospitality is characterised by respect as a very important feature that is highly emphasized. Among the Baganda of Uganda, kneeling during the exchange of greetings, especially the junior to his senior, is a sign of respect. The same case applies to the Yoruba of Nigeria. In some cases it could imply humility (See Olikenyi 2001:111). It can be compared to

⁸² See E.K Kuzwayo 1998. *African Wisdom* (Cape Town Kwela Books) p.29.

Christ's act of washing his disciples' feet -a call to humility and hospitality (See John 13:1-17). In fact, after Jesus literally washed his disciples feet, he told them to learn from him and do likewise to their neighbours – which may now turn metaphorical,

Do you understand what I have done for you? He asked them. You call me 'teacher' and 'Lord', and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you...Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them (John 13: 12-17).

This act of washing the feet of his students or his junior speaks volumes, especially if looked at from the African perspective. Christ seems to be communicating the message of respect that needs to be accorded to every person that God created regardless of age, status, and rank in society, gender, background, race, tribe or nationality. For the twelve disciples can be said to represent the twelve tribes of Israel and to a large extent, the whole of the world. This shows that African hospitality is compatible with Christ's hospitality.

Respect is a major feature in African hospitality that cannot be taken lightly. The Swahili people, in East and Central Africa have a saying, that, *heshima si utumwa wala si mzigo*. That is, “respect is not slavery nor is it a burden”, it is simply a costly undertaking. Similarly, the Tugen of Kenya attaches a lot of importance to “respect” such that they compare it to a cow, which is for them “a symbol of wealth, life and blessing as a producer of milk, meat and blood” (Ng’osos 1997:41). In order to emphasize its importance, they have a proverb that says, “respect is as great as a cow” (Ng’osos 1997:41). In general, African societies emphasize on respect to all people, something that automatically agrees with what we have seen in the story of Jesus washing his disciples feet, regardless of age, sex, or social status; and as Olikenyi (2001:112) points out, the greatest respect is given to guests (strangers) and to the oldest people. The danger with this is that, sometimes, the elderly people attach the idea of fear to the respect that they expect from the younger ones thereby replacing respect with fear. This fear can come as a result of threats that may come from the elderly. That is, “if you don’t treat me hospitably, I will leave a curse on

your life when I die. And you will never prosper.”⁸³ Such fears have a negative effect in that young people who might find themselves in such a situation where they are threatened by elderly grandparents may show respect out of fear and not from a sincere heart, as it should be.

In observing hospitality out of fear rather than out of respect or sincerity, it is indeed perversion. But Oduyoye (2001:93) addresses this danger when she says,

We are also aware that hospitality can be perverted. We are aware that providing hospitality can be risky, but then, did God not take a risk to hand over this beautiful earth to human beings?

Thus, whenever there are risks in dispensing hospitality, we must swim into action and wrestle with those risks to preserve this noble practice of hospitality that is inherently African. We must do the best we can to ensure that the concept of hospitality is not observed out of fear or hypocritically but sincerely.

4.2.5 Emphasis on sincerity/honesty in our dealings.

Another general feature of African hospitality is the emphasis on the need to be sincere when dealing with one's neighbours. Well, this feature need not be disputed on the basis that Africans are not angels who are honest while depicting others as dishonest. It is true as St. Paul says, "...all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God..." (Romans 3:23); and Africans are included in these fallen people. And as Mbiti says,

A visitor to the village will immediately be struck by African readiness to externalise the spontaneous feelings of joy, love, friendship and generosity. But this must be balanced by the fact that Africans are men (sic), and there are many occasions when their feelings of hatred, strain, fear, jealousy and suspicion also become readily externalised. This makes them just as brutal, cruel, destructive beings in the world (Mbiti 1969:210).

As a further illustration about the human nature of the Africans, Mbiti says,

⁸³ Interview with Dr. Peter Njuho of the university of Natal.

By nature, Africans are neither angels nor demons; they possess and exercise the potentialities of both angels and demons. They can be kind as the Germans, but they can be murderous as the Germans; Africans can be as generous as the Americans, but they can be as greedy as the Americans; they can be as friendly as the Russians, but they can be as cruel as the Russians; they can be as honest as English, but they can be equally hypocritical. In their human nature Africans are Germans, Swiss, Chinese, Indians or English – they are men (sic) (Mbiti 1969:210).

Thus, as much as African hospitality emphasises on sincerity/honesty in our dealings with our fellow members of the human race, we need to recognize the fact that the human heart which is the seat or source of feelings,⁸⁴ as Jeremiah (17:9) says is, “deceitful above all things and beyond cure”. It is in such understanding that Christ’s hospitality becomes the ideal hospitality that has lessons for African hospitality to draw some inspirations and direction from.

In spite of the human weakness, African hospitality is characterized by the emphasis on being honest/sincere, as we have already noted. This sincerity is in what Mbiti (1991:176) sees as, morals concerned with hospitality to relatives, friends, and strangers. For example, it is held to be a moral evil to deny hospitality to a stranger. It is also dishonesty to fail to recognize that we are all strangers in this world in one way or the other and so just as we would like to be treated well in a strange world, we should likewise do the same to those in need of our help (See also Luke 6:31). Therefore, when people travel they may stop anywhere for the night and receive hospitality in that homestead. The moral dictates that govern sincerity/honesty will automatically show that they should not be molested unless; they abuse hospitality that they have received.⁸⁵

In the ancient Kikuyu hospitality, a genuinely hungry person, in a strange land, was allowed to enter in somebody’s farm, eat ripe bananas or sugar cane as much as he or she was satisfied provided she or he did not carry with it from the spot. Due to the emphasis on sincerity/honesty, the victim would strive to obey the dictates of hospitality for failure to do so would not only

⁸⁴ Evil feelings of hatred, jealousy, greed and strain could lead to manifestations of evils such as murders, robberies, lies, rape, malice, quarrels, cruelty, jealousy – that are responsible for discord in any given society.

⁸⁵ There are some cases where strangers/visitors have posed as genuinely needy people only to turn to be robbers – ready to strike. This is mainly modern day town life problem.

affect his or her conscience, annoy the living but also annoy the ancestors who, themselves, were/are believed to be exemplary beings, hence sincere/honest.⁸⁶

However, due to modern challenges, this traditional African hospitality cannot remain intact, as we shall see in the foregoing discussion, but it is by no means extinct. It will be obviously, very difficult to erase it completely from the coursing blood of the African personality whatever exposure the African will receive from the outside world.

4.2.6 Sharing of food

Another major feature in African hospitality is the sharing of food. As John Ambe says, all at any time and anywhere shares food when it is available. An uninvited guest in a neighbour's house is "warmly welcomed to drink and eat with that person. No one takes unexpected visits at meal time amiss. The feeling of togetherness among the people surpasses all forms of formal invitations" (Ambe 1993:14).

Ambe's observation rightly suggests that unexpected visitors are always catered for in the meal preparations in African cultural context. It also, rightly, implies that extra food is cooked to cater for unforeseen guests and their needs. It also, rightly, implies that at local feasts, say rural homes, there is always room for one more as no one is excluded. This is the true picture of the traditional Africa, and as an African, brought up within the Agikuyu cultural traditions; I can affirm Ambe's accurate observation.

John Mutiso-Mbinda observes that the participation in the meals strengthens the fellowship among the members of the community, and is therefore seen as a positive step to share food together among people who are not necessarily from the same family or clan. As he says,

Every visitor to a home is always invited to share a meal with the family.
Not to be invited to do so is a sign of enmity; not to accept the invitation is

⁸⁶ This information is a result of the interview with Gatimu Kaburu when I was preparing to publish my book on *African hospitality* before 2001.

an insult or an act of hostility. Even if the visitor has previously eaten, he or she must try to participate in the meal (Mutiso-Mbinda, 1984:2).

Mutiso-Mbinda's observation agrees with Mbiti's (1976:23) when he says that,

Hospitality and tender care are shown to visitors, strangers and guests. In the eyes of African people, 'The visitor heals the sick' (African proverb). This means that when a visitor comes to someone's home, family quarrels stop, the sick cheer up, peace is restored and the home is restored to new strength. Visitors are therefore, social healers – they are family doctors in a sense.

Mbiti's view can be qualified, in line with Mutiso-Mbinda's in that, the arrival of the guest meant a big meal of welcome. Among the Luhya of Kenya, a guest's visit will mean killing a chicken, whose meat is highly valued; while among the Kikuyu a highly valued guest would cause either a goat or a chicken to be slaughtered the moment or before the guest arrives.⁸⁷ This automatically means that all the local members of the family will enjoy the special meal with plenty of good food and drinks. In other words, everyone will eat meat, which they would not have on an ordinary day. It now, becomes a special time of happiness for the children and a break from some of the ordinary family chores (See Healey and Sybertz 1996:173). In turn, the guest will be expected, though not compulsory, to bring gifts for the hosts and the family members. The gifts may include, meat, bananas, millets, sorghum and other types of food, which symbolises the building of good relationships. Sometimes, the visitor may bring seeds or medicine or anything that can help the life of the family, hence, the Kamba proverb that says, "A visitor is the only one who has ripe tobacco" (Healey and Sybertz 1996:174). This is reminiscent of the Angel's prophecy to Joseph, the earthly father of Jesus, when the angel implied that a guest would come who will save his people from their sins,

She will bear a son and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins (Matthew 1:21).

⁸⁷ Interviews with Mzee Chrispus Oduori PhD candidate 25th August 2003

In other words, the expected guest will bring the gifts of healing, reconciliation (2corinthians 5:17), forgiveness and empowerment (John 1:12); hence the need to take the arrival of guests with seriousness.

Among the Waembu community, eating together or sharing of meal is taken to be very important such that it is believed to reconcile enemies after the meal. As a result, it contains or controls anti-social behaviours like rape and general corruption in the community.⁸⁸ Among the Wameru, eating together is said to create, in some cases, permanent friendship. In the ancient times, this could happen during ceremonies such as weddings and other forms of get-together forums. As a result, people could do social events like trade together and clan wars would decrease. Similarly, a person could be adopted as a full member of Kikuyu community from another tribe or clan, after a goat was slaughtered and eaten together.⁸⁹

The importance of eating together, as a major feature in African hospitality is seen clearly when Kenyan theologian-anthropologist, John Mutiso-Mbinda (1984:2) emphasizes the important symbolism of the meal,

A meal is perhaps the most basic and most ancient symbol of friendship, love and unity. Food and drink taken in common are obvious signs that life is shared. In our (African) context, it is unusual for people to eat alone. Only a witch or wizard would do that. A meal is always a communal affair. The family normally eats together. Eating together is a sign of being accepted to share life and equality.

Thus sharing of food is of paramount importance in analysing the major features of African Hospitality. The Sukuma people for instance, have over two hundred proverbs on food, meals and eating (Healey and Sybertz 1996:254). During the time of farming and eating, the proverb that says that, “The sorghum in the stomach gives us the strength to farm” is constantly repeated (Healey and Sybertz 1996:254), thereby affirming the importance of food in African hospitality. On the theme of the necessity of work, the Sukuma people say, “let’s look for food which is produced by the rain”. Concerning a guest who arrives after the meal is over; the following

⁸⁸ These are the results of my findings when I was preparing for my book on *African hospitality* before 2001.

⁸⁹ Interview with Clement Kamau at the university of Natal

proverb is said as a way of apologising, “when you arrived the chief had already gone”. This proverb is based on the following story,

A long time ago when the chief met people at a meeting or at work, they would stand up and greet him. But if the Chief met them while they were eating, there was a taboo against standing up and greeting the Chief. If they wanted to greet him, he would forbid them and tell them: ‘I don’t take care of your life. Ugali (pap) takes care of your life. It also takes care of my life. I am not your chief. Food or ugali (pap) is your chief. It is not good to glorify the Chief more than food’ (Healey and Sybertz 1996: 255).

The reference to food as “Chief” shows the value with which the Sukuma and Africans at large value the sharing of meals. It also agrees with Oromo proverb that says, “Not even the lord would interrupt a person at supper” (Healey and Sybertz 1996:256). In both the Sukuma and the Oromo proverb, the importance of sharing meals as a major feature in African hospitality is underscored. It also underscores the sacredness of eating a meal together. The reaction of the Sukuma Chief is also commendable. That is, when the people wanted to glorify him, he politely rejected this version of “emperor worship”. He did not say “as your Chief, I am your guardian, therefore stand even if you are eating for without me you would not be having the harmony that you are enjoying.”⁹⁰ He humbled himself as a servant leader who is implied in Jesus ministry (Mark 10:44) by implying that even his juniors have their own dignity. It was like he was saying, “ even the food you are taking is important as we must eat in order to sustain our health and the community in general”. This gives us an example of good African leadership.

On the importance of meals, Mutiso-Mbinda (1984:2) adds,

Occasionally there are times when the daily rhythm of the families in a community is interrupted for the celebration of birth, marriage, initiations and thanksgiving rites. These celebrations call for a feast. At such a feast the symbolism of a meal is much more elaborate and therefore it is a meal on a much larger scale.

⁹⁰ The question of “emperor worship” is not new to Africa especially after the political independence in 1960s. Some of the political leaders abused our concept of Hospitality by demanding to be “worshipped”. Those who failed the test were killed, detained, or imprisoned. In this study, we have mentioned about the dictatorship of the likes of President Idi Amin of Uganda who killed thousands of people who failed to “toe the line.” Mobutu Seseko of the Democratic Republic of Congo is another and the list is long.

Mutiso-Mbinda's views reflect the real situation in African Christian hospitality as we experience today. That is, some elements of African cultural hospitality are incorporated in African Christianity thereby confirming our original hypothesis that Christ's hospitality is compatible with African hospitality.

Interestingly, the famous novelist Chinua Achebe (1958:26), in *Things Fall Apart*, describes the celebration of the New Year Festival in Nigeria as follows:

All cooking-pots, calabashes and wooden bowls were thoroughly washed, especially the wooden mortar in which yam was pounded. Yam foo-foo and vegetable soup was the chief food in the celebration. So much of it was cooked that, no matter how heavily the family ate or how many friends and relatives they invited from neighbouring villages, there was always a huge quantity of food left over at the end of the day.

This confirmation by Achebe of sharing food as an important feature in African hospitality shows the symbolic importance of food in Africa such that writers from all disciplines, that is, theology, English literature, dieticians and others, cannot afford to ignore it, particularly where there is a mention of African culture.

The importance of eating together is seen in African proverbs and riddles, as the following findings will show. The Ganda for instance have a saying that, "Relationship is in the eating together". This agrees with the Swahili proverb that says, "eating promotes relationships", while Akamba proverb says, "Food eaten together is sweet" (Mutugi 2001:24). The Luhya people say that, "Friendship is in the stomach" while the Shona, says that, "relationship (kinship) is a gap that is filled by eating". (Healey and Sybertz 1996:257). Further, the Sukuma people have a riddle, which goes as follows,

*I have a riddle
Let it come. Respondents tell the narrator
At the sound of the alarm nobody is afraid to go?
.... (Answer) Food (Mutugi, 2001:24).*

These proverbs and riddles further shows the importance of food and meals in African culture. Similarly in the Holy Eucharist, that Christ instituted and commanded us to continue doing so in his memory (Luke 22:14-19), we all join as African Christians, as the members of the African Church to partake the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. In so doing, we are brought together as a community of believers. In any case, Africans will never eat alone, nor will they eat in front of another person without sharing what they have. The food is always divided (in a similar manner to the Eucharist) and shared with all those present.⁹¹ This also agrees with Isaiah's (58:7) admonition when he says, "share your bread with the hungry."

Thus food sharing is an important feature and symbol of unity in African culture and it is for that reason that in celebrating the rites of passage, such as birth, initiation, marriage or funeral, a feast of celebration and unity is always included. At this stage however, it is important to note that the Anglican Church of Kenya is discouraging feasting during funerals or during the times of bereavements. On the whole, this section shows that the African Church of the 21st century ought to revise her liturgies so as to accommodate some (if not all) people who are locked out of the Lord's table as we seek to match with the African value of sharing together; and more importantly to make the liturgy match with Christ's all inclusive style in sharing meals, where he even ate with tax collectors (Luke 5:27, Luke 19), prostitutes (Luke 7:36-50) and the so-called out casts, as a way of inviting them to the kingdom of God.

4.3. Hospitality and Interdependence

As we have already seen, African hospitality is grounded on the fact that no one is an island of himself or herself rather each and every one is part of the whole. Mbiti's summary of African philosophy as we have already seen, that is, "I am because we are and since we are therefore I am" (Mbiti 1969:106) best sums up the grounds in which Africans hospitality is built. This is the emphasis on interdependence, which agrees with Pauline theology on the need to recognise other people's gifts and talents in order to edify the church and the society in general (See Ephesians 4:10-12, 1 Corinthian 12).

⁹¹ This information comes out clearly when we are evaluating the whole work.

Many African proverbs will express this communalistic approach to life:

One log does not make a bridge (Kikuyu) (Mutugi 2001:21).

It means, on himself or herself alone, an individual cannot do something substantial. One needs others for advice, teaching, rebuke, correcting and training above other things (cf. 2 Timothy 3:16). Since bridges help the people to cross over the river, and do businesses such as trading and general interactions, one log (read one person) cannot, without teaming up with the rest, ensure the continuity of the members of the community for by relying on him or her, the people may starve or be separated for lack of a good bridge to make them pass over and meet. Thus, one cannot advice himself or herself; nor rebuke his or her own wrongs; nor correct or train himself or herself; nor can he or she see his or her back; for a log needs other logs to combine and make a firm bridge to ensure safety as we cross over the valleys of life together.

Another proverb that explains the value of interdependence is, “Wealth comes by working together” (Kikuyu) (Mutugi 2001:21). It means that for a society to prosper, co-operation and mutual support is the key to success. This co-operation is to start from a house/family, clan, and tribe to the whole nation. It agrees with Christ’s caution that a house divided cannot stand (Matthew 12:25). To acquire wealth and thereby improve the nation’s economic well-being calls for a genuine hard work in a co-operative atmosphere.

The clearest expression of African hospitality in terms of interdependence is found in a Kikuyu proverb that says that, “All things are interdependent.”⁹² The original translation should have been, “no one can dare live without support from another person as success can not be assured”. It means that in the society of men and women, every one’s contribution is important and necessary. It agrees with St. Paul when he says,

He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe. It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith...

⁹² Interview with Clement Kamau, PhD candidate 20th August 2003.

and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ (Ephesians 4:10-14).

An exegesis on this will show that St. Paul contends that for the house of Christ to be completely built, it has to be erected by unity in diversity. That is, the different gifts will have to come in play, some as evangelists, others as prophets, others as pastors, others as teachers, others as administrators, others as singers and in every other way. For the church to be the way it was meant to be, all talents need to be seen as assets that will need to be given room to nourish the church and therefore edify it as St. Paul advised (1 Corinthians 12-14).

Another proverb, which explains the value of interdependence in African hospitality is, “The hornless animal leans on the one that has them” (Mutugi 2001:21). This Kikuyu proverb can be compared with what the New Testament implies by fellowship among the believers in Christ. The hornless animal can refer to somebody who is a doctor but he or she is not trained as a teacher and therefore cannot teach his children and therefore, even though his/her profession is noble, he or she needs the services of a teacher and vice-versa.

The theme of interdependence is so crucial in African cultural hospitality such that even in oral narratives animals have been personified thereby showing its value in African hospitality. In addition, the story below over a bird and animals will seek to demonstrate how human beings cannot afford the luxury of isolating themselves from one another; as it is costly, risky and unwise.

In Mwea plains of Kirinyaga District-Kenya, where I come from, there is a small spotted bird, which is often seen where cows are grazing. The locals have given this bird different names. Some call it *Ndeithi* – meaning the one who shepherds. Others call it *Nyange* – meaning the brown or “the white one who moves here and there”. It can also mean, the beautiful one. Others call it *Ndieri*, which is a meaningless word when translated in the local language – the Kikuyu. These many names show the many roles that she plays plus her importance in educating humanity on the theme of interdependence.

Interestingly, this bird follows the grazing cattle as if it were the Shepherd and the reason for doing this is that as the cattle moves in the grazing land, grasshoppers and other nutritious insects are disturbed and exposed. This in turn gives the bird the opportunity to feast on them easily.

In this analogy, we realise that both the cattle and the bird need one another in that the bird helps to remove the ticks that cling to the body of the cow to suck its blood, with the danger of infecting the animal with East Coast Fever and other diseases; while at the same time, the bird depends on the cow, who exposes insects from their hiding places thereby giving it a chance to feast on them.

This symbiotic behaviour clearly expresses the ideal African hospitality where we see one another as possible assets at all times. It agrees with St. Paul who echoes Christ when he says that the body is a unit of many parts which need one another at all times. For “the body is not made up of one part but of many. If the foot should say, ‘Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body’, it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body ...If the whole body were an eye where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? But in fact, God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be ...” 1 Corinthians 12:12-26).

Arguing on the value of interdependence, the retired Archbishop Desmond Tutu said,

In our African language we say, ‘a person is a person through other persons’. I would not know how to be a human being at all except (that) I learned this from other human beings. We are made for a delicate network of relationships, of interdependence. We are meant to complement each other. All kinds of things go horribly wrong when we break that fundamental Law of our being. Not even the most powerful nation can be completely self-sufficient (Tutu 1989: 71)

African hospitality is thus characterised by the emphasis on interdependence. It is in agreement with Pauline theology, which is echoed from Christology, especially on the assertion that we are one body, one people of God- despite the many different gifts, and talents that are bestowed upon each every one of us by God -our maker. This calls us to share whatever talents and gifts we

have for the sake of God and the general prosperity of our society as away of encouraging one another. For as Hebrew 10:25 says, we ought to encourage one another for the Day of the Lord is coming.

4.4 Uniqueness of African Hospitality

The overall study of this subject shows that African hospitality is unique from the hospitality in the rest of the world especially in comparison with that of North America and Europe. Its uniqueness is seen in the fact that it has less pretence and its natural approach. This is what Healey and Sybertz (1996:168) mean by their assertion that it is “deep and sincere”.

By nature, Africans are reputedly hospitable. This contributes to its uniqueness. As Eliab Mwendwa⁹³ says,

Such hospitality is not in England where I visited. In fact, you can stay with somebody for a whole month who has never greeted you, and whom you do not know his or her name. If he (or she) tells you ‘lets go for a cup of tea in a hotel’, for instance, do not be surprised if he (or she) tells you to pay for yourself.

Mwendwa goes on and further says that,

Eating is by appointments. You do not just join the supper or lunch when you find others eating as it is in Africa. If you are late for meals, just relax, you will eat another time.

The uniqueness of African hospitality can be argued on the basis that, unless you are invited for a meal or dinner by a westerner, you do not expect a treat.⁹⁴ In the ancient Kikuyu hospitality, it was more unique than it is today in that, a hungry person, a passer-by or a stranded stranger could go to the garden, in a strange land, and if he (or she) was genuinely hungry, he (or she) would get into somebody’s garden and consequently eat as much ripe bananas, sugar cane or any ripe fruit but was not supposed to carry it with him (or her) outside the spot.⁹⁵ The danger of this ancient hospitality is that it could encourage parasitism whereby when a person does not want to

⁹³ My interviews with Eliab Mwendwa on the 8th of November 1998

⁹⁴ My interviews with Rev. John Mararo on the 6th of November 1998.

⁹⁵ Interview with Julius Gatimu Kaburu on the 9th of November 1998.

work, he moves to a strange corner where he is not known and enjoys their hospitality like any other genuinely stranded stranger.

However, it is important at this stage to underline the fact that such attitudes are changing slowly by slowly in our modern day Africa. This can be attributed to the fact that supply in proportion to the people in our modern world is less. Surely, one cannot afford to cook such food that used to be cooked for the entire extended family and beyond! The population has grown bigger; the subdivision of land has left many with small pieces of land, which cannot adequately supply the family with enough food.⁹⁶ Still, the change of attitude, that is weakening our hospitality can also be attributed to the mushrooming of commercial places like hotels, restaurants, bars and bonding and lodgings which have replaced the many social gatherings for leisure such as beer drinking sessions that used to be there.

A German missionary, Rev. Johannes Beyerhaus (1994-99) was constantly surprised and overwhelmed by the unique hospitality that he received in Kenya while serving as a lecturer at St. Andrews' College of Theology and Development, Kabare-Kenya. As a lecturer, he one day went to *Kiathi* Anglican Church to supervise his theological students who were attached there, on one Sunday. According to him, his visit was unexpected but the local Christians insisted that he and the students should have lunch with them. Consequently, they got the food, which was cooked, for a particular family while the family went without lunch on that day. Now, what struck him considering that he was from a European cultural setting, is that these people did not display such unique hospitality grudgingly "as this would usually be the case in central Europe", but joyfully.⁹⁷

Beyerhaus further noted that whenever he attended weddings, funerals and other social events, people tended to give him the best chairs, the best places and the best food. He was overwhelmed by the fact that whenever he attended a function, even where he was less known, he was often invited to sit in front even though he did not have a function in the service (be it church service

⁹⁶ This information is gathered as a result of my participant observation in my Kenyan context and especially the central province. It is also as a result of my interviews with Julius Kaburu Gatimu.

⁹⁷ Interview with Rev. Johannes Beyerhaus, 24th December 1998.

or mere social activity). This would mean, a person vacating the seat so that he could get a place to sit. This, he observed, is very different from Germany or the rest of Europe where every thing is fixed, settled and organised in advance. Guests in Europe, usually, do not make people change their sitting arrangements⁹⁸.

According to both Beyerhaus and Rev. John Abdy, unless, guests are invited, or are very close to the hosts, they are often seen as a disturbance of ones schedule in the European context. It is, therefore, often seen as rather impolite just to pop in without prior notice. This is often even in the case when children visit one another.⁹⁹

Beyerhaus, whom I had an exhaustive interview explains that the concept of including strangers in ones hospitality is not very well developed in central and Northern Europe-even in the churches, the strangers often do not feel very welcome. However, there are notable exceptions. It would be especially rude in German culture to pay an unexpected visit at lunch time. This contrasts sharply with the African situation where people do not mind at all times, hence the welcome, as earlier observed in this study. Visits do not usually take much time in Germany since “time is money” unless a visitor is a very close friend or relative. This again contrasts with the rural Africa where hosts are never in a hurry to wave their guests off. Hospitality here shows itself strongly in the time taken for visitors just as we saw in the case of greetings, where hurried greetings are seen as an insult or downplaying the other person.

The reasons as to why there is a very sharp difference between Western hospitality and African hospitality is subject to a prolonged debate, which this study is not interested in going into. But the main reason might be rooted in a fundamentally different approach of life; for whereas Africa is a relationship oriented culture where good fences do not make good neighbours, the Western culture tends to be achievement oriented hence the individualism as opposed to the African concept of communalism.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸ Interviews with Rev. Johannes Beyerhaus, 24th December 1998.

⁹⁹ Rev. John Abdy is an English clergy whom I interviewed on the 16th October 1998.

¹⁰⁰ This debate on communalism versus individualism is well summed by John Mbiti's and Rene Descartes' philosophies as we observed earlier.

In Germany, fences are put around every house and children have to respect the property of other people. This includes not going into other people's gardens, which would be a great offence in the German culture. Beyerhaus explains further that, there is a law in some States in the United States of America, which allows the owner of a garden to shoot an intruder even though he may have no intention of getting into the house itself.¹⁰¹ For stepping on another people's ground is an offence enough to warrant killing! Obviously, this is totally different in Africa, as our previous discussion has shown.

The German absence of fences, which bar the visitor from entering a compound is a strong symbol in itself.¹⁰² Indeed my interview with both Rev. John Abdy (a British national) reveal that people in Southern Europe, that is Italy, Greece and Spain, have a much stronger concept of hospitality than people of central and Northern Europe. In the Southern Europe however, this concept of hospitality has of late been partly spoilt through the influence of tourism; that is, people discovering that they can make money with hospitality.

Our researches further reveal that weddings and funerals are private affairs in Europe unlike in Africa where they are more or less communal. In Europe, one cannot go to a wedding unless he has been invited, though occasionally a drink and a small snack may be provided for everyone who has attended the church service, but the main part takes place indoors and is strictly for invited people only- usually between 35-120 persons.¹⁰³ Similarly, in the funeral service, everybody can attend, like in African context, but again, only invited guests would share the meal, which follows after the funeral service. Beyerhaus however, admits that in small German villages where the sense of community is still strong, this may be slightly different.

In concluding this subsection on the uniqueness of African hospitality, it is important to note that in Europe, unlike the communalistic Africa, to be invited is much more appreciated than to be visited. On the contrary, in Africa, people feel honoured when they are being visited; for as earlier observed, visitors in Europe are seen, often, as a burden and bother to one's schedule.

¹⁰¹ Interview with Rev. Johannes Beyerhaus.

¹⁰² Obviously, this is different in cities

¹⁰³ Information gathered after the interviews with Rev. Abdy and Rev. Beyerhaus.

Being so close in touch to a visitor to an extent of sharing, as say one bed with a visitor (both Beyerhaus and Abdy contends) would make a European to shudder.¹⁰⁴ Further, in Europe, there must be a very special reason why a person has to stay overnight in somebody else's house. However, special guest rooms, for some special accessions are quite common.

On the whole, both the Western hospitality and the African hospitality have something to learn from the ideal Christ's hospitality, which is too sacrificial. And since none of us is perfect before God, we should therefore avoid being judgemental on whose hospitality is more Christ like or less Christ-like. Rather, we should simply let Christ perfect us. In any case, as St. Paul tells us (Romans 3:23), all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. This therefore means, to overcome our fallenness, seeking to learn from Christ will be the solution. Otherwise, we can rightly argue that rather than African hospitality being seen as unique when we compare it with the hospitality in the rest of the world, it is Christ's hospitality that is clearly and ideally unique and worth imitation by all nations of the earth. For as Abraham, the so-called the Father of our modern faith; and the first biblical character to display hospitality (though some may argue that Abel was) to strangers-who turned out to be Angels (Hebrews 13:1-3, Genesis 18) of God was told by God,

I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing ... and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you (Genesis 12:2-3).

In imitating Abraham and Christ – our Lord and Saviour, our hospitality will be truly unique and Christ's like, pleasant and worthy being envied by other nations.

4.5 Symbols of African Hospitality

There are various symbols of African hospitality; and they vary from community to the other. From ancient times, Agikuyu for instance, have used water as a symbol of hospitality. That is, when a visitor comes he or she is given water as a show of welcome and acceptance. This is

¹⁰⁴ The information has come after the interviews with the two Senior European clergymen/scholars.

because it is assumed that a visitor is tired and thirsty, may be after long travels. In our modern times, tea seems to have somehow overtaken the place of water or the traditional porridge or even the traditional beer (which was only shared among adults).¹⁰⁵

Water is thus the actual symbol of Kikuyu hospitality but for the urbanised or elite families, tea may be seen to be the way welcome is clearly expressed in our modern times. In the other words, when you visit a person, he tells you, “could you please sit for a cup of tea?” And from there one can excuse himself or herself if one is genuinely in a hurry- though this excusing of oneself to avoid the cup of tea can hurt the host especially if he strictly carries on with the ancient hospitality. Whether, there is food or no food, water, especially in the rural Africa, is given as a gesture of welcome. Since water is viewed as a symbol of life and sustenance, welcoming a visitor with a cup of water is an indication that the visitor’s life is valued and is wished well¹⁰⁶.

Concerning marriage in the ancient Kikuyu society, when a boy visited a girl whom he wanted to marry, he would always ensure that he would always be accompanied by another one¹⁰⁷ - a close friend who would do more talking than the other. And when they reached the home of the girl and met the girl in person, the talking brother will tell the girl set for betrothal,

Would you please let me sniff your tobacco?

If the girl did not like the other boy for marriage, she could politely reply,

No I cannot give you my tobacco. It is not enough for both of us.

This she could say even if the tobacco was enough because the message she would be communicating is that she has no room for marriage.. If she had room for him, she would just accept to give it out.¹⁰⁸ The refusal of the marriage offer is related to hospitality in that the man

¹⁰⁵ This information is gathered as a result of participant observation

¹⁰⁶ Interviews with Clement Kamau, PhD candidate at the university of Natal 25th August 2003.

¹⁰⁷ This accompaniment is an expression of interdependence, which is a dominant theme in African hospitality.

¹⁰⁸ Apart from tobacco, Wachege (1992:23) adds a new symbol of love among the traditional Agĩkũyũ community-porridge. As he says, marriage among the Kikuyu was a significant step for every individual. In courtship, a young man presented himself to a girl he was in love with. With respect and persuasive affection he asked her, “*mũirĩtu wa ng’ania, nĩ ũkũhe ũcũrũ?*” (Daughter of so and so, will you give me porridge?), i.e., will you marry me? If the girl liked him, she expressed her consent by responding, “*ũ ũcũrũ nĩngũkũhe*” (oh yes, I will provide porridge) And she would go ahead and literally provide the drink. Porridge here becomes both a symbol of hospitality and love. If she

could be rejected for reasons such as meanness, cases of incest, general immorality, laziness, being a witch or a sorcerer, being antisocial person and such like issues. On the other hand the girl could reject the boy if he came late in seeking marriage. He could have come when the girl in question is already engaged. Now, the overall study of marriage among the Agikuyu community is that tobacco became the symbol of romance unlike water, which is a general symbol for general welcome. Why the tobacco sniffing? It is because it was associated with romance and fun.¹⁰⁹

The Baganda of Uganda and the Haya of Tanzania uses a coffee bean, which is given to the visitor who in turn chews the bean and then pits out the shell. As Healey and Sybertz (1996:169) says, this ritual symbolises the acceptance of the guest into the respective community. The debate is further strengthened when Rita Ishengoma explains that as a symbol of charity and unity, "Coffee beans are passed out among visitors and friends for chewing to impart love, warm-hearted welcome and the wish for long life."¹¹⁰ Coffee is indeed a cash crop and a beverage in East Africa- a very respected tree just as the Jews respected the vine tree that Jesus referred to in a demonstrating who he is (John 15). Generally, it is a very important product and symbol in East Africa. As Healey and Sybertz (1996:169) further says,

It is chewed mainly by old people and is used ritually as a blessing and a symbol of reconciliation with the ancestors. The coffee bean is a special symbol of friendship and relationship and is used in blood-brotherhood pacts.

The Igbo present Kola-nut of which they and their guests partake. And in situations where no Kola-nut is readily available, the host makes a sincere apology to the guest for not having any Kola-nut in the house. Olikenyi (2001:115) says that if the apology is accepted, he (or she) may then offer any other type of nut or fruits in place of Kola-nut, depending on what is within reach. It is important to note that the kola-nut is the size of a ping-pong ball and signifies life. A guest, thus, is welcomed or rejected depending on whether the kola-nut is offered or not offered.

had already committed herself to another man, she would say, "*ndîna ithaga rîene*" (I have someone else's ornament).

¹⁰⁹ See Jomo Kenyatta 1938. *Facing Mount Kenya* (London: Heinemann)

¹¹⁰ See Rita Ishengoma 1994, *Pastoral Ministry with small Christian Communities: Object symbols on Cultural Heritage* (Bukoba: Unpublished paper) p.3

Consequently, the guest accepts the gift and chews the seeds of the kola nut. The Igbo, Igala and Ibibio plus other ethnic groups in Nigeria have a saying that, “The Person who presents the kola-nut offers life in effect” (Healey and Sybertz 1996:169).

Extending both hands in welcome is a special African symbol of hospitality. Even when guests come without invitation, the householder shows kindness to all guests and welcomes them with open hands and open arms.¹¹¹ The guests or visitors are therefore seen as part of creation that helps the host to celebrate life rather than mourn life.

The Chagga present water, locally brewed beer (*mbege*) and snuff. Olikenyi quotes R. Schott who points out that Snuff is the first thing of which the Chagga and their guests partake (Olikenyi 2001: 117). However, as time goes on, the partaking of the snuff is not getting widely practiced among the Chagga as before. This is probably because of the Christian evangelical wave sweeping across East Africa that is discouraging the partaking of beer, tobacco (snuff) any other substance that can burn the “Temple of the Lord.”¹¹²

The partaking of water by Chagga and their guests symbolically means sharing of life and values; for water is believed to restore the energy and life of the weary guest (Olikenyi 2001:117), as is the case with the Kikuyu of Kenya as we have already seen. It is also a sign of acceptance by the host. Water among the Chagga, is considered harmless and sacred. This is withstanding that fact that it can carry germs that can bring waterborne diseases such as typhoid, cholera and even amoebae. There is a saying among the Chagga that says that “water is not poisonous”. As such it plays a cleansing function especially when a guest comes, he or she is given water to wash his or her hands to rid himself or herself of any unclean reality that he or she must come into contact with on the way. The used water is then poured away in the direction of Mount Kilimanjaro- the second tallest mountain in the world (Olikenyi 2001:117. At this juncture, it is important to note that, the name “Kilimanjaro” is derived from the Chagga phrase *Kilima-cha-Ruwa*, which means “the mountain of God” This is related to the naming of Mount

¹¹¹ Information gathered through participant observation among my own Kikuyu people, and East Africa in general

¹¹² This is established through participant observation in carrying out this research.

Kenya which is originally a Kikuyu name as *Kîrîma Kîa Mwene Nyaga* -that is, the mountain of the owner who is God. Like the Chagga, the Kikuyu revered Mount Kenya as a religious symbol as they believed God lived higher on top of the mountain; such that even in prayer, they prayed facing Mount Kenya- the Mountain of God.¹¹³

Concerning the locally brewed beer, referred to as *Mbege* among the Chagga and *Mûratina* among the Kikuyu, it is offered to the guest as a way of refreshing and reactivating the body (Olikenyi: 2001:117). The same case applies to the Snuff. They both symbolise acceptance and friendship. This explanation shows that a single African community can have more than one major symbols of hospitality.

The Berber of North Africa present tea that is mixed with mint; a drink that is meant to refresh the weary guest, energising him or her with new life, in the assumption that the visitor has come from a long distance. He or she is also offered ground almonds and honey. In normal circumstances, the ground almonds and honey are presented to the guest in separate small bowls. Consequently, the eater-the visitor dips his/her finger into the honey. As a result, the finger that is now smeared with honey is then dipped into the ground almonds. Consequently, the ground almonds and the honey on the finger are licked up (Olikenyi 2001:118). Almonds and honey are very important to the Berbers as they are treated as their subsistence; therefore, sharing them with the guest symbolises “sharing of their life with him (or her) as well as wishing him (or her) good health” (Olikenyi 2001:118)

Among the nomadic Maasai of Kenya, milk is the symbol of hospitality. In other words, when the Maasai present milk that is produced by their cows, which they value so much, to their guests, of which both parties partake, they are apparently sharing life and values with their guests. To elaborate on the above explanation, Olikenyi (2001:118) translates a Maasai song that goes as follows:

Cow you are my beloved,
You are the only one that counts.
I exist because you exist.

¹¹³ See Jomo Kenyatta 1938. *Facing Mount Kenya* (London: Heinemann)

To whom shall I go:
When I will provide bride price for my son?
When I want to offer milk in the morning of the new day?
Or at the offering of the sheep which I bless with milk;
To whom shall I go: to you!

Thus, milk symbolises life to the Maasai of Kenya and Tanzania; and it is one of the most precious thing that one could ever receive from them. Therefore, when a Maasai presents milk, it symbolises acceptance and warm friendship to the visitor.

In concluding on this sub-topic on symbols of African hospitality, it is important to remember that the most common symbol in Christianity today is the cross (Mugambi 1989:86). It has always been the identification badge for Christians just as the fish was a common symbol in the early church while the symbol of the cross was almost unknown in the first three centuries of the Christian era (Mugambi 1989:86). An explanation on this: The first significant event in the popularisation of the cross as a central Christian symbol was the conversion of emperor Constantine the Great. This Roman emperor is reported to have seen a vision in which he was commanded by God to paint the sign of the cross on the shields of his soldiers on the evening of the 26th of October 312 AD (Mugambi 1989:86). It was the same night that Constantine stationed forty thousand troops in the outskirts of Rome; ready to fight with the forces of Maxentius for the control of the capital of the Roman Empire. That night Constantine was victorious. Consequently, Constantine and the subsequent Roman emperors respected the Christian God with much the same kind of semi-magical awe that the anti-Christian emperors had held towards traditional deities.¹¹⁴

The Christians were now tolerated, they were no longer persecuted through state instigation as in the past and the government began to aid the growth of the church! This was a result of the new policy in the Edict of Milan, which was issued in June 313 AD thereby declaring persecution of Christians a closed chapter (Kealy and Shenk 1975:206). Thus, the symbols in African hospitality are in exhaustible, like the symbols of Christianity, which have changed, for example-

¹¹⁴ Compare this with Daniel's case where the King after seeing Daniel emerge from the lion's den unhurt recognised the God of Daniel as true God (Daniel 6).

from fish to cross- the symbols of African hospitality have changed due to different circumstances and situations in the life histories of a particular people. An illustration on this: Some symbols of acceptance among the Kikuyu such as traditional local brew and Chagga's symbol of snuff are losing meaning as the society interacts with the Gospel of Christ thereby Christ's way is outdoing some cultural values. For as he implied in Matthew 5:13-17, he came to strengthen the law, thereby improving it. In this case, our cultural values can be looked at as one of the Laws that Christ so much loved and sought to improve upon.

4.6 Some Expressions of African Hospitality in the Modern Church

In this section, we intend to show how the Gospel of Christ has been inculturated through incorporating the concept of African hospitality especially in the church liturgy. In this journey of inculturation, we are agreeing with the Tanzanian theologian Joseph Kamugisha (Healey and Sybertz 1996:15) who states that the heart of inculturation is John 1:14: "The word became flesh and lived among us." Christ continued to live among the African people as the chief Diviner-healer, our liberator, our guest, our proto-ancestor and our victor over death among other images. In the church leadership and liturgy as well, Christ must be manifested through inculturation.

In the church leadership, the East African Christian Revival movement (E.A.R.M) are unique in the exchange of peace. This takes place in an informal, relaxed and unhurried atmosphere. In this, different types of handshakes and greetings are used, including hugging one another.¹¹⁵ It is like what St. Paul tells Thessalonians, "Greet all the believers with a brotherly kiss" (1 Thessalonians 5:26).

Though they may not be conscious of it, the East African Revival movement, which started in Rwanda in 1927 and spread through Uganda into Kenya by 1937 (Mugambi 1995:126), is essentially African. In its leadership structures and general organisation it has creatively derived its models from the African heritage. For example, their fellowships are non-hierarchical. Clerics and laity are equal. There is no one who is senior to others. This agrees with Christ's caution that

¹¹⁵ Information gathered through participant observation as a member of the East African Revival

“whoever wants to be the greatest must be a servant of all” (Mark 10:44). Secondly, all ideas or issues brought forward are taken into consideration before a final decision is made; and in so doing, they try as much as possible to avoid suspicion or any form of misunderstandings. They avoid this problem of suspicion by being very open to one another-“walking in the light always” and appreciating each and every ones contributions. This has some similarities with the African court, which appreciated the views of every participant and weighed the different opinions from everyone regardless of his social standing (Mugambi 1995:132). It is also in the line with the New Testament doctrine of the priesthood of all believers.¹¹⁶ This doctrine holds that every believer is a priest because he/she can intercede for others, pray for others (James 5:13, Matthew 7:7), can baptise during the time of emergencies among other issues.

Thirdly, a decision is reached through consensus for there is no formal voting. If for example, the members bitterly or irreconcilably fail to agree on an issue, the emphasis is, “go and pray”, so that when they meet again the Holy Spirit would have spoken to each and every one to enable the consensus building amongst them.¹¹⁷ Thus, postponing until a consensus emerges is purely an African way of decision-making. In avoiding divisions among themselves, they take Christ’s precaution when he said that “a house divided cannot stand” (Matthew 12:25). Fourthly, the members of the East African Revival Movement have maintained an oral leadership despite the fact that their current leadership is composed of educated people most of who are primary school teachers. This emphasis on the orality is carried over from the African heritage. This is also the way the Gospel of Christ was first presented- orally. However, if the movement has to survive, it must preserve theology in written form. It is the example that was set by people like of St. Paul and Saint Luke, among others, when they recounted the ministry of Christ thereby communicating with generations after generation to the present time.

In the ordinary church services mainly on Sunday, most of the churches in both Kenya and South Africa that I have visited constantly demonstrate African hospitality within their liturgies. They include:

¹¹⁶ We gather this from the New Testament studies and the Systematic Theology, which deals with Christian doctrines.

¹¹⁷ This information is gathered through participant observation.

(a) Welcoming and greeting the people, especially visitors with a warm handshake, as they arrive. In some cases, the parish or the church elders join the priest in welcoming visitors who arrive to the particular church, say, for the first time. This is in line with Christ's hospitality on doing good to others just "as you would have them do to you" (Luke 6:31). I remember in 1990 when I joined Mr. Jeremiah Nyaga with whom I taught in the same school (Githure Secondary School), at the Seventh Day Adventist (S.D.A) Gatumbi-Kenya, for a Saturday service when I received an overwhelming hospitality that I would always live to remember. Though I belonged to the Anglican Church, as is the case today, I was excited and overjoyed by the way we were received just before we got into the church compound. Almost every church elder was giving me a handshake that was accompanied by "welcome", "Feel at home", "This is the church of Christ, This is your Church". It was a humbling experience that resonates with Christ's ideal hospitality.

(b) Another special opportunity that demonstrates hospitality is the introduction of visitors at the beginning of the liturgy or during the announcement times. Depending on the particular church, some African sayings and expressions are used relevantly. They include, "You are welcome with both hands held out in friendship" or "We recognise the presence of visitors-welcome again" or "When you go back, take our greetings with open hands". Sometimes, there is rhythmic clapping to welcome the special guest.¹¹⁸

(c) In some churches, the visitors are invited to speak from the front; and before and after finishing their short speeches, as that is what is expected, there can be rhythmic clapping to welcome the special guests and even a special song of welcome. While this is very common in East Africa, it is not common among the South African churches, as my participatory observation in the Kwa-Zulu-Natal province has shown. However, there are exceptional cases: In Scottsville Presbyterian Church, the visitors are not only recognised, given forms to fill on prayer requests, membership and to state their needs; in addition, there are always ushers every Sunday who wait for visitors so as to assist them in every way possible. The areas of help can be: showing where the toilets are; to provide a form of security.¹¹⁹ Above all, every one is

¹¹⁸ This is very common in both the Catholic and the Mainline churches in Kenya such as Anglicans, Methodists, Lutherans, Reformed and the Presbyterian.

¹¹⁹ This is gathered out of participant observation-whenver I attend the particular church.

welcomed, after the service, for a cup of tea or coffee is freely given. This is highly an ambitious project that needs to be encouraged! On top of that there are very organised choirs who often sing in African melodies despite the fact that the church is multiracial. As for the pastor, he constantly delegates duties such that the mood of sharing is upheld, and in his Sermons he tries to be as contextual as possible to reflect the various needs of the worshipping congregation. This is the example that was set by Christ when he delivered contextual Sermons that were relevantly illustrated. Examples include, the use of the parable of the sower to reflect the farming community (Mark 4:1-20), the Sermon on the lamp on a stand (Mark 4:1-25) to challenge the hypocrisy of the religious leaders of the day, the parable of the mustered seed (Mark 4:30-34) to reflect on the doctrine of the Kingdom which was highly misunderstood by the religiosity of the day.

In evaluating this sub-section on expressions of African hospitality in the modern church, we need to underline the fact that there are a lot of needs to be done if the Gospel in Africa will be authentic. We also need to appreciate that the African church has the potential to convert itself into the African church of Christ by letting Christ to direct her inculturation. By imitating Christ, the Africa church, in the twenty first century, will remain contextual hence relevant to the modern generation. The section therefore has opened our mind to the reality that there is a lot to be done in our bid to inculturate the Gospel of Christ in Sub-Saharan Africa.

4.7 Abuse of African hospitality through the ages

In this sub-section, we intend to show how both the internal forces and external forces have in history, abused African hospitality. These forces include slavery and slave trade, colonialism, neo-colonialism and corruption amongst the African leadership after 1960s when most African countries attained their constitutional independence.

In the early 20th century, the ordinary Japanese felt threatened by the impact of Western countries on the Eastern countries. Joseph Kitagawa (1990:120) quotes a popular song of the Diplomacy that articulates the concern,

In the West there is England,
In the North, Russia
My countrymen, be careful!
Outwardly they make treaties,
But you cannot tell
What is at the bottom of their hearts
There is a Law of Nations, it is true,
But when the true moment comes, remember
The strong eat up the weak.

In the African context, a similar situation is expressed by George W. Carpenter (1960:1) when he says, “The missionary came first. Then followed the trader. Last came soldiers with guns to kill, conquer, divide, and rule. Missionaries were the means by which White people lulled African to sleep while they took away their land and freedom...”

Even though we cannot blame the early missionaries in total for the colonisation of Africa, as most of them must have been genuine seekers of the truth of the Gospel, it is no wonder, however that the proponents of colonialism must have exploited the situation. However, carpenter’s views graphically captures the situation as pertains the coming of Europeans and the colonial expansion.

Following the Berlin conference of 1884/85, Africa was partitioned by several Europeans powers whether the prospective subjects liked it or not. In fact, a look at the map of Africa shows the boundaries of African countries as they were drawn at this conference. Indeed, no African was present or consulted when these boundaries were drawn. However, minor revisions as with the case of Eritrea/Ethiopia border remain to this day. As Mugambi (1995:xii) says, the names of the countries have changed considerably, for Africans have renamed their countries (as with the case of Rhodesia which is now Zimbabwe), towns, cities, rivers, and lakes after they became republics. This renaming is important for it affirms the power of the human being to name his or

her environment. Certainly, the naming of Africa by Europeans was not only an abuse of African hospitality but also it more specifically showed that Africa had become an extension of Europe.

Kenyatta equates this partitioning/colonialism with the proverbial Kikuyu elephant that asked the innocent owner of the house (The African) to allow it to put its trunk inside his hut for it was raining. However, the man's hospitality was abused when the elephant insisted on putting the whole body within the small hut. This ended up in breaking the whole hut. In Kenya's well-considered view, that is what the colonial settlers did with the land of the Agikuyu people and Africa at large.¹²⁰ This cunningness is seen in the fact that the first few Europeans who, as Kenya says, passed near the Kikuyu country looked harmless. They passed through along the borderline of the country between the Kikuyu and the Maasai and between the Wakamba and the Kikuyu. He goes on to explain that in their natural generosity and hospitality, the Kikuyu welcomed these "wanderers" and felt pity for them. As such, the Europeans were allowed to pitch their tents and to have a temporary right of occupation of the land in the same category as those of the Kikuyu *Mũhoi* (borrower or beggar) or *Mũthoni* (in Law) who are given only cultivation or building rights; but cannot own the land as it belongs to the locals. Accordingly, these Europeans were treated in this way in the belief that one day they would get tired of wandering and finally return to their own country.¹²¹

Thus, after the scramble for Africa that culminated in the Berlin Conference of 1884/85, which partitioned Africa, Britain, Belgium, Portugal, Spain and Germany divided Africa into segments according to their liking, thereby creating spheres of influence (Mugambi 1995:81). Consequently, Africa was brought into its current shape, with 54 countries with different foreign languages i.e. some as francophone (French speaking countries), others as Anglophone (English speakers), and others as German, Spain and Portugal speakers, all the more confusing Africa. There was no deliberate attempt to make Africa speak the same language the way the East African speak Swahili or the way the islands that make the United Kingdom speak one language – English. Africa was divided in terms of different languages and was easily ruled! Thus Africa, in a short while, more than ever before, began to speak in tongues without an interpreter!

¹²⁰ See Kenya 1938. *Facing Mount Kenya* (London: Heinemann)

¹²¹ See Jomo Kenya 1938. *Facing Mount Kenya* (London: Heinemann)

While colonialism brought many diverse ethnic groups together, communities found themselves split at the centre after unfair, unrealistic and artificial boundaries were agreed upon. An illustration, the Maasai found themselves in Kenya and Tanzania, the Luo found themselves in Uganda, Kenya and Sudan; the Somalis found themselves in Kenya, British Somaliland, Italian Somaliland and French Somaliland; the Chewa found themselves in Malawi, Mozambique and Zambia; the Nguni found themselves in South Africa, Swaziland and Zimbabwe and the list is long (See Nthamburi 1991:39). To add an insult to an injury, the colonial powers did not only subjugate communities by using excessive force, they imposed their culture upon the people that were under their control. Now, in their wars of “pacification”, many innocent people were wantonly massacred. Thus as Nthamburi (1991:46) points out, a British colonel boasted that he had killed 300 people in Embu, Kenya in 1935. The Nandi’s even suffered a worse calamity because they seemed to be more “stubborn” than the rest. Such gross abuse of African hospitality was experienced as the whole world watched.¹²²

The worst form of abuse of African hospitality and perhaps the greatest tragedy to befall an African race besides HIV/AIDS is the slavery and the slave trade. This came before colonization but its memories are ever regrettable and painful in African history. Like in the case of colonialism, the Arabs and the Europeans in unholy alliance first, cunningly, befriended the Africans. Later, they enticed them to this trade. While it was witnessed in other parts of the world, it differed in the scale and the brutality that accompanied it in Africa, which was the worst, hit¹²³. Ships shuttled between Africa on the one hand, and Europe, America and the West Indies on the other, carrying human cargo for over two hundred years. They were carried in inhuman conditions such that they barely survived the trip. Some died from starvation, some from the beatings while others were thrown to the sharks in the seas and oceans if they were found to be too ill to deliver economically (Mutugi 2001:37) As a result, we have many Africans outside Africa- in the West Indies, the Caribbean Islands, Asia, Europe and America most of whom do not know African culture. For after the Industrial revolution in the eighteenth century where the machines were more important than the human labour, the workers of the sugar

¹²² There are many other sad effects of colonialism, for example, the infamous Soweto massacre of South Africa where children were indiscriminately killed for protesting against inferior education. Also, the imprisonment of Nelson Mandela for 27 years is fresh in our memory.

¹²³ See J.NK Mugambi 1989. *African Christian Theology: An introduction*

plantations in America and Caribbean Islands¹²⁴ were of no use as they lacked the skill to work in the industries!

After colonialism, the African nations found themselves vulnerable to the outside influences. The Industrialised countries of the North began to manipulate the economies of the third world countries (Nthamburi 1991:40). An illustration on this: In every corner of Africa where one goes, whether in Pietermaritzburg, Johannesburg, Pretoria, Nairobi, Blantyre, Lilongwe, Lusaka, Harare, Accra, one will always find Coca-cola, General Motors, Nestles, Firestone, Caltex and many others. These multinational corporations have “spread their tentacles everywhere with the object of sucking the life-blood from the already poor countries” (Nthamburi 1991:40). Most of these multinationals have a monopoly of their products and a protected market; thereby investing in areas where they maximise their profits and ensure that they will be able “to repatriate their profits”; though claiming to provide employment (Nthamburi 1991:40) despite paying meagre wages and not salaries to the locals.¹²⁵ It is interesting that this type of exploitation is done in the full knowledge of the indigenous elite, some of whom are given commissions, thereby allowing the plundering of their nation.¹²⁶ In accepting the abuse, of African hospitality in this form, it continues to impoverish Africa all the more. In short, the natural resources of most of the fifty-four countries that constitute Africa are foreign exploited and owned resulting in the economies of these countries to be externally controlled.¹²⁷ All this amounts to neo-colonialism hence abuse of our hospitality.

The political leadership that came after 1960s has also abused African hospitality. As Nthamburi (1991:41) notes, independent African states cannot be exonerated from the contribution to the suffering of their peoples. There are many examples to illustrate this: Uganda during the time of Idi Amin was stained with blood; the civil war between Biafra and Nigeria, reportedly left at least a million people dead (Mutugi 2001:133). Rwanda’s genocide that pitied Hutus versus Tutsi

¹²⁴ See T. Adeyemo 1997. *Is Africa Cursed?* (Nairobi: C.L.M.C) and T.E. Antony 1992. *Are Blacks Spiritually Inferior To Whites?* (New Jersey: Renaissance Productions)

¹²⁵ This information is gathered partly through participant observation.

¹²⁶ This is mainly from the Kenyan experience before December 30th, 2003 when the ruling party KANU was voted out and ushered in a new crop of leadership under Mwai Kibaki of National Rainbow Coalition

¹²⁷ See T. Obandina, “Getting the measure of African poverty”, in *Africa Today* vol. 5 No.7, July 1999 p.34.

tribes and civil war in Chad reportedly left many people dead; the civil war between Southern and Northern Sudan as well cannot be blamed on the foreigners abusing African hospitality per se but Africans themselves have to carry their cross as well. Coupled with dictatorial regimes that Africa has witnessed before the 1990s when multiparty politics swept across Africa, we can rightly argue that Africa has her own share of blame that she ought to rectify in line with the ideals of Christ's hospitality.¹²⁸

Corruption, which simply means impairment of integrity or moral principle, inducement to wrong by bribery or other unethical and unlawful means, (Okullu 1974:43) is another major abuse of African hospitality that has been a dominant problem since the 1960s. Speaking from the Kenyan context Bishop Githiga (2001:58) says that corruption is centred on "giving and receiving money where money has been considered as a means to attain any material benefits."¹²⁹ In traditional Africa, he further contends, it was accepted as a norm to give tokens or tips to religious specialists like kings, chiefs and medicine persons as genuine practice. This was because it was considered fair to give these officers something considering that they were under nobody's payroll (see Mbiti 1969: 166-193). In the case of corruption, as practised in Kenya, as we have already seen, it contradicts African hospitality "that was freely extended to religious and community leaders according to one's ability" (Githiga 2001:58).

As Olusegun Obasanjo, the president of Nigeria pointed out, there are many differences between gifts and bribes,

In the African concept of appreciation and hospitality, a gift is a token; it is not demanded. The value is in the spirit of giving, not the material worth. The gift is made in the open, never in secret. Where a gift is excessive it becomes an embarrassment and is returned.¹³⁰

¹²⁸ Dictatorial regimes have been clearly experienced in Kenya, Malawi, Zambia, South Africa, Uganda, Zimbabwe and other countries where freedom of expression was not granted. And political detainees have been dying in police cells.

¹²⁹ However, we need to appreciate that Kenya is a reborn country after the successful democratic elections on the 30th/12/2002.

¹³⁰ See John Bray, "Business in Africa" vol. 7.No.3, June 1999 p.15

Thus Obasanjo rightly rules out any justification of corruption as a way of doing business in Africa. On the whole, corruption that has been practised by some of our African governments since the 1960s always accelerates crime, hurts investment, stalls growth in the society, bleeds the national budget and it undermines our sovereignty as a nation when leaders ignore merit and practise tribalism, nepotism and embezzle public funds.¹³¹ Such theft from the nation is always theft from the weakest in the nation: the poor, the old, the disabled, the sick, the children, and the newborn, which is a sharp contrast to our African hospitality and Christ's hospitality. All in all, corruption does not provide a net profit rather; it distorts economic development rewarding the most dishonest rather than the most competent.¹³²

In concluding this subsection on the abuse of African hospitality through the ages, we need therefore to underline the areas of abuse such as colonialism, neo-colonialism, slavery and slave trade, bad governance, and corruption as just an introduction to the challenge of African hospitality in history from the earlier times. This is because; it is not possible to exhaust the possible areas of abuse within the time and space, which is limited. Our study appreciates that the effect of the ancient intertribal wars amongst the Africans and in particular the infamous Shaka- the Zulu Wars in the 19th century will need further review as abuse or strength of African hospitality. However, we have paid special attention to the abuse that is inflicted from the outside because the internal abuse is not too damaging as with the external abuse.

4.8 Modern Challenges to African Hospitality

Modern economic pressures, oriented society, technology, materialism and the urbanization in Africa growing individualism, religions fundamentalism, secularism, permissiveness, and science threaten African hospitality (see Healey and Sybertz 1996:196).

¹³¹ These have been experienced in Kenya. See also G.Githiga 2001. *The Church as the Bulwark against Authoritarianism* (Oxford: Regnum) pp.40-117.

¹³² See G.Githiga 2001. *The church as the Bulwark against Authoritarianism* pp.40-117.

In African cities, pressures of work and a task-oriented life-style, including the growing “time is money” reality is increasing. These pressures of time and work are winning out over the African traditions of personal relationships (Mutugi 2001:47).

The increase of “don’t care attitude” is, unfortunately working down over African hospitality (ibid.). Thus in this permissive atmosphere, one may find young people who do not respect the cultural norms and even the law of the land. They tend to say, “this thing is good because it pleases me.” As a result, vices such as, marriage breakages, abortion, rise in crime rate, premarital sex, irreligiosity, irresponsible parenthood, increase in street children among others is becoming a common trend in our modern towns and cities.¹³³

My interview with Mr Julius Gatimû Kabûrû shows that with capitalism as the way of doing business in Africa, the desire for profit is too overwhelming that it is killing our hospitality.¹³⁴ Due to the growing individualism, that is “the me and my immediate family and me” concept, it is no wonder that people are putting “Beware, fierce dogs can attack you” posters even when there are no dogs that can bite somebody in the particular compound. This is a way of keeping visitors away due to the modern tendency, which keeps people away from homes so as to attend other business outside. Sometimes they do it for the purpose of security as the rate of crime has increased with the so-called “modernity” (see Healey and Sybertz 1996:197).

In rural Africa, almost everyone knows who lives in the next village.¹³⁵ In other words, whether people in the rural areas are related to each other or not, every one naturally knows his/ her neighbours. Unfortunately, this is not the case in the urban areas. In the cities, people live in such a way that neighbours do not know each other well enough.¹³⁶ They tend to lock everyone out and lock themselves instead. In some neighbourhoods people are forced to meet each other periodically for some welfare and security matters. Others get to meet only when some disaster or misfortune occurs.¹³⁷ Fortunately enough, there are those who go out of their way to reach out

¹³³ This information is gathered through participant observation.

¹³⁴ Interview with Julius Gatimû Kabûrû 9th November 1998.

¹³⁵ This information is gathered through participatory observation in most parts of Kenya

¹³⁶ Interview with Julius Gatimu Kaburu 9th November 1998.

¹³⁷ This is my observation in both the two major cities- Nairobi and Mombasa.

to their neighbours with the claims of the gospel as the witnesses of Christ unlike in Britain where it is a taboo to speak the word of God –through preaching in public (Holloway 1989:37). In any case, if we truly believe, God will grant us the spirit of discernment, who will help us to differentiate between evil and genuine strangers whether we are in the villages or in urban areas. One cannot therefore ignore St. Paul when he rightly says, “ Love does not do harm to its neighbour. Therefore love is the fulfilment of the law”(Romans 13:10).

4.9 Conclusion

While the previous two chapters have dealt with the background survey of hospitality from the ancient near Eastern times through to the Old and New Testament; (chapter two) and through to monastic hospitality to the post – reformation period in the eighteenth century (chapter three), this chapter has sought to revisit the concept of hospitality in the African heritage. By so doing, it has attempted to show the social - religious manifestation of African hospitality. That is, it has sought to expound on how hospitality manifests itself in the religious domain whereby it is linked to the ancestors or the living dead. For acts of inhospitality embarrass the ancestors as much as they embarrass the living.

The chapter also tends to further develop the social manifestation of African hospitality, which is expressed through dancing, drama and singing, which are “perceived as hospitable activities in that they bind the community together”(Moila 2002a: 3). Singing and dancing are seen as some of the social activities that tend to minimize tensions within the African community (Thorpe 1991:116).

In the economic domain, the chapter has sought to show how Africans from time immemorial have co-operated in works such as agricultural activities, building and repair of houses, land cultivation and clearance of bushy areas, hunting, fishing, among other areas (Kenyatta 1938:42; Moila 2002a: 4; Obeng 1977:53). It thereby shows that African hospitality heavily relies on industry for its sustenance thereby adopting hard work as opposed to laziness, which even the Bible condemns (2 Thessalonians 3: 10).

The chapter has also expounded on the general features of African hospitality such as welcoming, warm handshakes, exchange of greetings, communal involvement, emphasis on respect, emphasis on honesty and sincerity in all dealings, the symbolism of food, interdependence, symbols, expressions of hospitality in African church today, abuse and the modern challenges.

In addressing the abuse and challenges, the chapter has sought to draw a line between the two by addressing abuse of African hospitality mainly from a historical perspective while letting the challenges to focus mainly on the day-to-day happenings.

In so doing, the chapter becomes a re-visitation of African hospitality because it is premised on the fact that the concept is so much part of the African personality such that it agrees with Oduyoye (2001:94) who sees hospitality as inherently African. And as a concept that like African religion permeates all spheres of life (Mbiti 1969: 1f), the better thing is to revisit it because we are writing and researching within it. We eat and drink within it. We socialise and worship within it and therefore we can better revisit the concept because it has already been with us and so, all we need is to re-focus our attention on ourselves-our lives, the lives of our fore parents and relate it with the present time when the gospel of Christ is calling the tune from every corner of Africa

In this chapter, we have noted that African hospitality is compatible with Christ's hospitality. This is evidenced by the fact that there are some expressions of African hospitality that have been incorporated into the modern church, especially as seen in the many examples of East African churches. This includes the way the East African Christian Revival Movement Conducts her fellowships as truly African and as truly Christian without compromising any of the two. It is also evidenced by the emphasis on virtues such as honesty, justice, truth, goodness, love, care and respect. These virtues are fully in Christ's hospitality as well as in African hospitality.

Having looked at the African hospitality, we shall now look at the faces of Christ as seen in African Christian hospitality. In so doing, the chapter assumes that every African Christian is

expected to have converted to Christianity without having neglected the concept of hospitality, which as we have observed is inherent in being African. Thus we shall now be more or less attempting the question, “As hospitable people, what kind of Christ do Africans see in Christ? What face do they see if they are reputedly hospitable as the discussion so far has tended to show?”

In addressing the many faces of Christ in chapter five, we are still trying to find out the lessons that the ideal Christ’s hospitality teaches the African Christianity as we grapple with the challenges of the twenty first century.

CHAPTER FIVE

FACES OF CHRIST IN AFRICAN CHRISTIAN HOSPITALITY

5.0 Introduction

In this chapter, we are trying to argue that Christ is hospitable to every one; and he is in each and every one of us when we love, comfort and help each other. He is also in the faces of the suffering, that is, those who need liberation from various bondages. He has many faces in African Christian hospitality. An illustration on this: William Barclay in his book, *Jesus as they saw Him*, identifies forty-two ways in which Jesus revealed himself to his contemporaries (Barclay 1962:7-421).¹³⁸ Here in Africa, many of our grand parents may see Jesus as a doctor who heals them when they are sick. The youth may see Jesus as a teacher who provides them with needed development skills to survive in the modern society. Travellers and refugees may see Jesus as a permanent companion. The hungry may see Jesus in the person who gives them daily food. The sinners see in Jesus the person who pardons them. Mourners may see in Jesus the person who comforts them. Those who are in a situation of war may see in Jesus the person who makes peace. In general, the chapter will seek to show how the hospitable Christ is seen to be involved in our daily lives.

This chapter also serves as an attempt at answering the question that Jesus asked to his disciples: “Who do people say I am?” (Matthew 16:13-20, Luke 9:18-21, Mark 8:27-30). It recognises that after the disciples replied that “some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets”, Jesus did not stop the debate at that. He prodded deeper into the issue by saying, “ But what about you?” The debate seems to have been closed when Peter answered, “ you are the Christ” (Mattheu16: 13-16). But even then, the debate did not stop at that because Jesus continued to reveal himself through signs and wonders. This chapter recognises

¹³⁸ Some of the forty –two faces that Barclay (1962:1-421) talks about are, son of David, son of God, son of man, messiah, the servant of God, the good shepherd, the divine physician, saviour, the judge, the Bridegroom, the stone, the door, the vine, the scape goat, Apostle, the just one, the bright morning star, the world, the Amen, the mediator, the surety, the forerunner and the beloved.

that African Christology is a very wide area that requires us to go deeper and deeper as he seems to have encouraged his disciples. That is, we shall, in this chapter attempt to translate, to interpret and to apply Peter's understanding of "you are the Christ".

Thus, Jesus Christ, the man from Nazareth is truly God and truly human. He was born, lived, died and resurrected. But the "hidden" Christ, the Jesus of faith, is alive, yesterday, today and forever (Hebrews 13:8). He is the subject of revelation; he is the concern of this chapter. We thereby recognise Waliggo's works on Christianity and inculturation when he says,

The permanence of Christianity will stand or fall on the question whether it has become truly African: Whether Africans have made Christian ideas part of their own thinking, whether Africans feel that the Christian vision of life fulfils their own needs, whether the Christian worldview has become part of truly African aspirations (Waliggo 1986:12).

Indeed for Christ to be truly incarnated on this continent, the African will have to view Christ, as did Saint John when he exclaimed,

Something that was in the beginning, that we have heard, and seen with our eyes; that we have watched and touched with our hands.... We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with God and with Jesus Christ. We write this to make our joy complete (1 John 1: 1-4).

5.1 Christ as the Liberator

Christ is seen as the saviour who liberates Africans from socio-cultural forces that dehumanise humanity. The forces of oppression may include: Poverty, disease, illiteracy, racism, tribalism, sexism, crime, discrimination, ungodliness among others as we shall see in this chapter.

The theme of liberation in African Christian hospitality is very crucial for the ideal motive of liberation connotes hospitality, that is, the need to see God's creation in its very best. Sobrino (1978:47) articulates this theme further,

That is why the Gospels place Jesus in the midst of situations embodying divisiveness and oppression, where the good news and salvation can only be understood as being in total discontinuity with them. The freedom that Jesus preaches and effects in practice cannot help but take the form of liberation. Jesus appears in the very midst of those who are positively despised by society and segregated from its life. It is to such people that he addresses his proclamation of the coming kingdom: to the sick, who are helpless in themselves and dominated by a stronger force; to the lepers, who are cultically separated from the rest of society, to the Samaritan woman, who is regarded as a foreigner; and to others of this sort. Jesus allows women to follow in his company and tend to his needs though women were allowed only a marginal role in society. He eats meals- a clear sign of the eschatological reality-not only with his friends but also with sinners. He goes out to meet those possessed by demons, which embodied the division existing within people.

In a significant way, Sobrino explains that the kind of liberation Jesus propagated inevitably confronted sin both in its personal perspective and social dimension (Sobrino 1978:50-55). As a liberator, Jesus earnestly summoned people to convert and follow the right way (i.e., his way) as radically prototyped in his sermon on the mount and discard the wrong enslaving way-yet respecting individual freedom of choice (Sobrino 1978:55ff). In other words, he was a servant completely committed and totally loyal to his mission, which he accomplished with patent awareness and absolute obedience (Sobrino 1978:77).

With regard to the African women theologians, for instance, Christ is seen as the liberator of women from patriarchal structures. Hinga emphasises that Jesus is the liberator who liberates women from poor handling of some cultural practices; for example, cases such as polygamy,¹³⁹ female circumcision, and spiritual imperialism among others. Oduyoye (2001:54) sees Christ as the liberator who suffered so that humanity might have the fullness of life intended for them by God. Christ is further seen one who liberates from the burden of disease and from taboos that restrict women's participation in their communities. He liberates them from the triple burdens of racism, poverty and marginalisation (Oduyoye 2001:55). Christ encounters these triple burdens as he liberates from oppressive cultures as our ongoing discussion shows. As a liberator,

¹³⁹ In treating the issue of polygamy, the missionaries asked the polygamist to abandon all but one of his wives as a condition of accepting the gospel, undoubtedly bringing untold pain to women and children thus discarded (Hinga 1992:188).

Nasimiyu contends that, Christ asks African women not to accept their hardships and pain fatalistically but to work at eliminating the suffering and creating a better place for all (Oduyoye 2001: 62). As a liberator, Christ does not think of himself as the “last of God,” but points beyond himself to “one who will come” (Ruether 1983:121).

As a liberator of women, Christ is the iconoclastic prophet. In other words, he stands out in scriptures as a critic of the status quo particularly when it engenders social injustices and marginalisation of some in society (Hinga 1992:91). He is thus the true shepherd who will not neglect the sheep at the hour of need (John 10: 11). The tendency to liberate becomes a hospitable behaviour in that Christ was able to demonstrate the sacrificial love to the people whom God so much love (John 3:16).

Christ is also the liberator who lightens women’s burdens (Matthew 11:28). For as Oduyoye (2001: 56) says, women now identify with a Christ who does not lay unnecessary burdens on their already burdened lives, but one whose power and victory over the powers of darkness they can experience and testify to. In Christ therefore, they find resources to transform the obstacles and suffering that they meet.

African women theologians also see Christ as the liberator who satisfies any circumstance. For as Oduyoye (2001; 63) says, in Christ all things hold together, giving back to women the integrity of their humanity. This is also the view of the East African revival Movement (Kinoti 1998:60). This view is more of an affirmation in Pauline theology when he says, “ I can do everything through him who gives me strength” (Philippians 4:190). It is not only in line with other writings of St. Paul in Romans 8:28, and Philippians 4: 19 when he says that “in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose,” but is also seen clearly when Ghanaian theologian, Efua Kuma says,

We depend on you as the tongue depends on the jaw.... You are the rock.
We hide under you, the great bush with cooling shades, the giant tree who
enables the climbers to see the heavens (Oduyoye 2001:60).

Oduyoye quotes Anne Nasimiyu-Wasike who sees the functional role of Christ the liberator as one who today would have insisted on women being also theological teachers, catechists, biblical interpreters, counsellors...(and as persons) called to restore the church and humanity to the initial inclusive, holistic and mutual relationship between women and men” (2001:62). African women theologians have highlighted the fact that Jesus gave particular attention to women (Luke 8:40-56, Luke 10: 38-42, Luke 13: 10-17, Luke 15: 8-10, Luke 18: 1-8, Luke 21: 1-4, 24: 9-11, 23: 27-31) and in so doing he challenged the taboos of his world. Mercy Amba Oduyoye, a Methodist originally from Ghana, is one of the several African women pursuing feminist theology that is distinctly African.¹⁴⁰

Oduyoye is as critical of Euro-American feminism as she is of African patriarchy. This is probably because, North American and European feminism has focused too narrowly on gender analysis alone, leaving issues of class and race on the side. Thus, African women’s works, as in their publications, does not see the African man as her enemy, but rather as a victim of first world imperialism and neo-colonialism. They see Christ as liberating, rather than seeing his maleness as an obstacle (See Abbey 2001: 151-155). Christ therefore means freedom and equality of women as well as men. In other words, Christ is talking about another way of being human other than into which patriarchal societies enculturate the African society. Thus, in Oduyoye pointing at Christ as saviour, the *Agyenkwa*, the Rescuer (Oduyoye 1986: 98) she depicts Christ as one whose hospitality goes to an extent of being a risk taker at the expense of love of humanity.

From the foregoing discussion, we realise that, women theologians underline the faith of women in Christ who is hospitable, real and satisfies any circumstance. In so doing they hope for total liberation from all socio-cultural forces that tends to isolate them from the mainstream of the society.

¹⁴⁰ Besides Oduyoye there are others like Bette Ekeya, Mary Getui, Teresa Hinga, Musimbi Kanyoro, Hannah Kinoti, Anne Nasimiyu-Wasike, and Nyambura Njoroge of Kenya, Teresa Okure of Nigeria, Elisabeth Amoah of Ghana, Rose Zoe, Louise Tappa and Grace Eneme in Cameroon, Bernadette Mbuy Beya and Justine Kahungu in Zaire, and Brigalia Bam and Denise Ackerman in South Africa, Isabel Apawo Phiri of Malawi, Musa W.Dube of Botswana among others. Since 1989, when the circle of concerned African women theologians was launched under the leadership of Mercy Oduyoye, they have participated in oral theology, through song, music, story telling, Bible reading and in particular, through written theologies that are evident in many emerging publications in recent times.

Christ's face as a liberator means that he frees people from all unjust structures and situations. Jean Marc Ela, one of Africa's greatest liberation theologians of note outside South Africa, a Cameroonian and a Catholic priest, has written that, "the Bible, which speaks of God and human beings in the same breath, always includes in the deliverance of God's people their political, economic, and social liberation... without however, its being reduced to these" (Ela 1986:90). This view by the revered liberalist, Ela, therefore implies that inculturation in African theology, is not the only requirement for an ongoing incarnation of the gospel and of Jesus Christ in the world. For if there is a "priestly" dimension of the image of Christ as healer, there is certainly a "prophetic" dimension to Christ as the liberator. For just as religion and society could not be separated in Christ's world, so likewise in Africa religion is coterminous with life (Waruta 1998).

Christ grounded liberation in a right relationship with God. However it is not confined to one's relationship with God, precisely because a relationship with God cannot be so confined (see Waruta 1998, Kinoti 1998). For to love God with one's whole heart is to love God's people as well, to desire justice, and to stand in solidarity with those disadvantaged by the social structures of our world. In any case, Christ reached out to social outcasts and those branded as sinners (Luke 7: 36-50, Luke 19: 1-10, John 3: 1-21, John 4: 1-26). Christ himself therefore, stands in this prophetic tradition (Nolan 1978: 146-147).

As a liberator, Christ becomes the personal saviour/friend to individuals in a very personal way. He desires to accept both men and women as they are and desires to meet their needs at their personal levels (Hinga 1992: 190). In turn the people come to accept Christ as the friend of lonely and healer of those who are sick, whether spiritually or physically. He is thus, the one who helps his friends (people) to bear their grief, loneliness and suffering (see Hinga 1992: 183). It is in focussing on the resurrected Christ that we have hope for eternal life, which is an act of liberation.

5.2 Christ as the Reconstructor

In addition to African women's theologies, there has emerged a new moment in African theology, a new generation, a new theology, and the theology of reconstruction. This new moment is foreshadowed in Emmanuel Martey's *African Theology, Inculturation and Liberation* (1993) and John Parratt's *Reinventing Christianity, African Theology Today* (1995). Martey indicates the interconnectedness and complementarity between theologies of inculturation and liberation. Parrat moves to a new phase in his works about reinventing theology in an era of reconstruction in Africa, following upon the collapse of the Soviet system and the cold war during which time Africa was a different kind of player in world politics between these two opposing systems vying for the future of humankind.¹⁴¹

Clearly suggesting a shift in the paradigm for African theology from "Liberation" to "Reconstruction" is J.N.K. Mugambi's *From Liberation to Reconstruction: African Christian Theology After the Cold War* (1995). The new theological language is also reflected in the collection, *The church and Reconstruction of Africa: Theological Considerations*, ed. J.N.K. Mugambi 1997.¹⁴²

In Kä Mana's works, a theology of reconstruction integrates the motifs of identity and liberation but moves then to the need to reconstruct Africa as well as the world in accord with humane requirements (Kä Mana 1993: 10ff). His political ethics has its starting point in the gospel. Christ the reconstructor is a key moment in the conscience of humanity, the ethical impulse. Yet Kä Mana is quite aware of the pluralistic character of our world and the need for a dialogical approach; for he calls upon Christians to be articulate in the public forum about Jesus as the horizon before whom we re-construct humanity (Kä Mana 1993: 10ff). The world must therefore

¹⁴¹ See J.N.K. Mugambi 1995. *From Liberation to Reconstruction* (Nairobi: E.A.E.P) pp.1-20. In this book, Mugambi gives a detailed account of how the two ideological blocks divided Africa before the end of cold war in 1989.

¹⁴² See also C. Villa-Vincencio, *A Theology of reconstruction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press) 1992 and J.N.K. Mugambi, "The Future of the church and the church of the future in Africa," in *The Church of Africa: Towards a Theology of Reconstruction* (Nairobi: All Africa Council of churches) 1994.

turn to Christ the reconstructor because he is the embodiment of the logic of love. He is indeed, essential to constructing a human future.

In attempting to answer the question on, 'who is Christ today?' Kā Mana argues that Christ is the catalyst of reconstruction, ethical and political energy, the force of our spirit, the power of conscience (Kā Mana 1994:103-105). In so doing, he rightly goes beyond a concept of Christ as simply the liberator. Christ is the breadth of a radical renovation, "Christ our breath and Christ our life" (Kā Mana 1994:106). He goes on and argues that to do Christology is to do ethics, and to do ethics with Christ, as centre is to reconstruct Africa from within and to reconstruct the world. The African Christ is our brother who was put to death by the idols of the western world but is coming back to life-in the process of reconstruction. He is the Egyptian who reconstructs after pharaonic Christologies (Kā Mana 1994:74-79).

As a reconstructor hence the restorer, Jesus calls his disciples' attention to the harmony, form and beauty found in the lilies to which no human splendour could equal even that of King Solomon (Matthew 6: 28-29). He was aware of the sufferings the people endured at the hostility of nature. He is also aware of and understands the sufferings of Africans today (Nasimiyu-Wasike 1998: 133). That is, drought, floods and famine are harsh realities, which have claimed millions of African people. Christ who rebuked winds and ordered harmony and tranquillity to be restored (Mark 4: 35-45) is the one who will restore peace and harmony to the African continent and to the world at large.

In his book, *From Liberation to Reconstruction*, Mugambi analyses the three levels of reconstruction that Christ the reconstructor addresses as,

a) Personal reconstruction

The starting point for social reconstruction is the individual; for Jesus teaches that constructive change must start from within the motives and intentions of the individual (Mugambi 1995: 150). The confession of the Publican who said, "God, have mercy on me, a sinner" and the conceit of

the Pharisee who boasted of his piety before God (Luke 18: 9-14), are contrasts intended to show the appropriate stance in social change. To the crowds, Jesus told them not to be like the Pharisees and scribes who sit on Moses' seat and preach and don't practise what they preach. They do all their deeds to be seen by people and they love the place of honour at feasts and the best seats in the synagogues, and salutations in the market places. They love to be called rabbi, but for you, "you are not to be called rabbi, for you have one teacher, and you are brethren" (Matthew 23: 1-13). As Mugambi (1995: 15) says, such chapters and verses, including Luke 12-13, emphasises that the individual must continually reconstruct oneself in readiness for the task and challenges ahead. Revivalist hymn writers echo the same message:

My Jesus, my Saviour,
My comfort, my shelter,
Tower of refuge and strength.
Let every breath, all that I am,
Never cease to worship you.¹⁴³

Or

Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound
That saved a wreck like me,
I once was lost but now I'm found
I once was blind, but now I see.¹⁴⁴

In Christ the Reconstructor, individuals are consecrated and saved from whatever levels of wreckage (Luke 4: 18-20). They are given a fresh impetus.

b) Cultural reconstruction

One of the simplest definitions of culture is by the anthropologist Edward B. Taylor who defined it as, that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and many

¹⁴³ Was composed by Darlene Zschech 1993 (Publisher is Hillsongs music, Australia). It is commonly sang during worship in the Scottsville Presbyterian Church-South Africa.

¹⁴⁴ It is one of the oldest songs that are contained in the hymnbooks and many Christians can sing it without necessarily looking at the hymnbook.

other capabilities and habits acquired by man (sic) as a member of society (Taylor 1871: 14). African culture, on the other hand, is the sum total of the African experience. It includes beliefs, myths, rituals, art, language and symbols (Bahemuka 1998:8).

The components of culture include, politics, economics, ethics, aesthetics and religion.¹⁴⁵ As Mugambi says, in each of the components, reconstruction is necessary from time to time, to ensure the social structures are finely tuned to the needs of the people (Mugambi 1995: 16). In any case, when some components of culture are not finely adjusted, tension may occur, because culture is life. As conscience of the society, the gospel of Christ will therefore need to be reconstructed culturally (Matthew 5: 13-17, Philippians 3:20).

c) Ecclesial reconstruction

The third level of reconstruction that Mugambi (1995: 170) talks about is something to do with the reorganisational framework of the church. Its dimensions include, mythological reformation, doctrinal teaching, social rehabilitation, ethical redirection, ritual celebration and personal response. Mugambi further says that ecclesial reconstruction should include financial policies, pastoral care, research, human resources development, management structures, family education, service and witness (1995: 17).

Christ is as Kā Mana (1993:10) says, “Is a key moment in the conscience of humanity.” This therefore means that, for social reconstruction to take place, Christ the reconstructor must be the focal point- to map out the direction. Indeed, the Bible is replete with chapters and verses, which clearly shows Christ as the reconstructor.

Christ’s reconstructed the theologies of the scribes, the Pharisees and the Sadducees by challenging them to shun hypocrisy (Matthew 6: 1-9, Matthew 23, Luke 18: 9-14). In particular, Jesus reconstructed the liturgy of prayer when he said:

¹⁴⁵ Mugambi has dealt with this theme in his book, *The African Heritage and Contemporary Christianity* (Nairobi: Longman 1989).

When you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to conduct their religious functions in the open in the hope of seeking public approval ... but when you pray go into your room, close the door and pray to your father, who is unseen. But when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your father knows what you need before you ask him...Matthew 6: 5-8).

Christ is seen as a reconstructor in the entire Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7). By saying that he has not come to abolish the law or the prophets but to fulfil them, may also imply that he has come to reconstruct the law and make it more responsive and relevant (Matthew 5: 17). For he could not have come to fulfil the law blindly without reconstructing some misused verses. After all, he was God (as he is today), he participated in its enactment (John 1:1) and he is able to participate in its reconstruction. As we read in Matthew 5:21, Christ sought to play his role of a reconstructor by saying, “you have heard that it was said to the people long ago, ‘Do not murder...’ (Exodus 20:13). But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his (or her) brother (or sister) will be subject to judgement”. The same pattern is repeated in other verses. For example, “it has been said, ‘Anyone who divorces his wife must give her a certificate of divorce’ (Deuteronomy 24: 1). But I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, causes her to become an adulteress, and anyone who marries the divorced woman commits adultery” (Matthew 5:31-32).

Concerning the controversial law of revenge, Christ the reconstructor says, “ you have heard that it was said, ‘Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth’ (Exodus 21:24, Lev 24:20, Deuteronomy 19:21). But I tell you, Do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.” (Matthew 5: 38-42). Similarly, Christ gives a new dimension on the law to do with the manner of treating an enemy, he says, “ you have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbour and hate your enemy’ (Leviticus 19:18). But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you....” (Matthew 5: 43-44). He then concluded the subsection by saying “ Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect” Matthew 5:48) thereby equating the whole question of seeking perfection to the quest for reconstruction.

Jesus reconstructed the general mode of worship by rejecting the theologies of the time. He did this by giving parables, saying, analogies teaching, evangelising and preaching. This is climaxed by his act of driving out those who were buying and selling in the Temple (Matthew 19:45-48), reminding them that, “ My house will be a house of prayer” (thereby quoting Isaiah 56:7). In other words, he used the same scriptures that they were using as a way of saying, “ Look, your interpretation of scripture is wrong. You need to reconstruct your hermeneutics and live by it.” All in all, Christ reconstructed the ethical issues of the day so as to make them meet the challenges of the centuries to come as they provide the ethical guidance. These ethical issues included believers and murder (Matthew 5:21f), believers and adultery (Matthew 5:27f), divorce (Matthew 5: 31f), oaths (Matthew 5:33), revenge (Matthew 5:38f), ethics of handling an enemy (Matthew 5:43f) among other issues. By so doing, he has provided food for thought to the Africa of the twenty first century where tensions, rivalries, wars, promiscuity and general immorality have become the order of the day.

5.3 Christ as Lord of spirits and Giver of the spirit

In African cultures, the centrality of “life-force” is equalled only by the theme of the spirit-world (Nthamburi 1991:61-64). In other words, there is no dichotomy or antagonism between matter and spirit as in some western philosophies. Rather, the spiritual and the material form one interconnected organic and cosmic whole in which there is continuity between this world, the living dead, the ancestral spirits, and God. Thus, in African view of the world, the Holy Spirit is at home. The Holy Spirit is promised by Jesus and given by the risen Christ (John 14, Acts 1). An African Christology ought to be a pneumatic or Spirit Christology which shows Jesus’ power over the world of spirits and his connectedness to the Holy Spirit. For as Bediako (1995: 176) writes, “ It is hardly surprising that the Christologies that have emerged in African theology so far are predominantly ‘pneumatic’, presenting a Christ who is living power in the realm of spirit.”

The Holy Spirit is Christ’s supreme gift to those who are his disciples (Acts 1:8, 2:1ff). Some of the texts from the Gospel of John are: “ And I will pray the Father, and he (sic) will give you

another counsellor, to be with you for ever" (John 14:16). "But the counsellor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you" (John 14:26). " Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the counsellor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him (sic) to you" (John 16:7). And when he (the risen Christ) had said this, he breathed on them, and said to them, "receive the Holy spirit" (John 20:22). These Johannine texts are very important considering that Christology is always interwoven with pneumatology and vice-versa. In any case, African theology recognises that, it was the Holy Spirit who was already present in Africa and African religions before the arrival of Christian missionaries.¹⁴⁶ It is the same spirit who animates African religion and African Christianity. Yet this Spirit who was active in the world even before the Christian era comes to us from the first person in the trinity to the second (Christ). He is Jesus' Spirit as well as God's Spirit. Thus the Holy Spirit is seen as Jesus' gift to us hence God's hospitality.

In assessing the above discussion, we find that Christ is the one who gives the generous host. This generous host, who is Christ, is described by Johannine, Lucan and Pauline writings as counsellor, helper, friend, and teacher (See John 14:16, 14:26, 15:26, 16:7, 20:22). An African pneumatology, accompanies African Christology, for the African Jesus is one who shares (hospitality) his very own Spirit (the giver of life) totally with us (see Banana 1991:109). Christ is, thus, the exemplary host, source of life, and giver of the spirit. As an African host, Master of hospitality, he is also the host at the banquet of everlasting life. He is source of our life, natural and supernatural, a generous giver, the one who gives us the gift of the life giving Spirit, who together with the first person in trinity and the son is the Lord of all Spirits (John 1:1-5). He breathes Africa his very own spirit (John 20:22). He is the risen Christ for whom death does not have the final word; and is Africa's hope for the future (Mugambi 1995:173ff).

¹⁴⁶ See Jacques Dupuis 1997. *Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism* (Marry Knoll: Orbis Books), for an excellent discussion of the relationship between Christianity and the other religions of the world.

5.4 Christ as the healer

Another hospitable face in African Christian hospitality is Christ as the healer. Here Christ is seen as the healer who heals physically and spiritually. Shorter (1985:51-58) whose theme is healing as perspective for his Christology, sees healing as a central feature of the life and ministry of Christ. For this reason, he contends that the African traditional interest in healing requires a Christology based on Christ's healing function¹⁴⁷. He then goes on and compares the Galilean healers (whose techniques were adopted by Jesus) with African traditional medicine men. He notes the similarities between them in that both traditions practised a holistic form of healing on the physical, psycho-emotional, social environmental and moral-spiritual levels.

Banana (1991:63) goes a step further when he sees Christ as *N'anga* (traditional herbalist). He goes on to say that Christ's healings show that he imitated the mumbo-jumbo of contemporary diviners and healers. In his days, diviner-healers frequently used saliva as a vehicle for healing. It is no wonder that in Mark 7:34, we are told that Christ touched the tongue of the deaf mute, having spat on his fingers, and the patient was healed. In another incident, Christ also mixed mud with his own spittle in order to heal a blind man (John 9: 6). This shows that, like African traditional healers, Jesus usually touched or manipulated the affected part of the body. In any case, he allowed healing power to pass through his clothes, as is also alleged of ancient healers (cf. Mark 5: 27-29). Christ himself encouraged his disciples to use oil in healing (Mark 6:12-13), Luke 10: 34). Christ's healing method is also, sometimes, accompanied by gesture of laying hands upon the sick; which is also a characteristic of African traditional healers. For Christ, curing of the sick was a sign of more fundamental restoration of health and wholeness, of forgiveness and reconciliation, which typifies God's reign (Banana 1991:64). He himself viewed these healings as a means of inaugurating the kingdom of God (Luke 11:20). This makes the face of "Christ as the healer" more unique and ideal over the African *N'anga* (herbalist) or *Nganga* (medicine-person).

¹⁴⁷ In an earlier article, Shorter published an article in which he pleads for a functional Christology based on: a) Liturgical: That is presenting Christ as Lord of life in the Eucharist, which is the feast of life and through which the life of the spirit is given to believers
b) Christ as *Nganga* (doctor-diviner, healer, Medicine-person) (see "Folk Christianity and Functional Christology" *AFER*, June 1982, pp.133ff.

As Nasimiyu-Wasike (1998: 133) points out, Christ the healer, as a Christological model is much closer to the African reality where the need to eradicate suffering is paramount. Christ attached great significance to exorcism and general healing as our study has so far shown. The Gospels are replete with cases where Jesus healed both physical and spiritual (psychological). In these healings it was the faith of the individual or the faith of his or her sponsor that went hand in hand with healing. For example, in Jesus' cure of the paralytic, he says: "my son, your sins are forgiven.... stand up, take your bed and go home" (Mark 2: 5-11). In Matthew 9: 27-29, we find a similar situation. Jesus the healer and a reconstructor, restored the vision of the two blind men after they affirmed that they believed in the power possessed by Christ. He touched their eyes, saying, "According to your faith be it done to you."

Healing need not imply only personal needs and, in an African context, always implies something communal (Bujo 1998: 20). Seen in that light, African nations have been injured by the effects of colonisation, slave trade, the post-colonial formation of the nation-states, neo-colonialism's- economic dependency, intertribal violence and war, the corruption of many post-independence national leaders, endless wars-civil wars, poverty, racism, manipulations by the industrialised world, political mismanagement, religions intolerance, unjust international economic systems, human-made environmental crisis among others (see Nthamburi 1991:41ff). With all these injuries, is Christ not what Africa needs than ever before?

This clearly shows that Africa is wounded and is in dire need of healing. It also shows that Africa needs one who is beyond N'anga and Nganga. That person is Jesus Christ, the supreme priest, the healer par excellence. Only such immeasurable ideal hospitality from Christ can heal Africa and nurse all her wounds-some of which too deep to bear.

5.5 Christ as the African guest

Guest Christology or theology of welcoming is an important development in African theology. As a guest to Africa, he comes with gifts like other guests. These gifts include, the charismatic

gifts (1 Corithian12). He welcomes strangers, outsiders, the Gentles, the pagans,¹⁴⁸ outcasts, sinners and the diseased.¹⁴⁹ As Mugambi (1995:90) says, he identified himself with people of all cultures in Palestine, and in a wider sense with all people on earth. His uniqueness, above other ordinary guests in the African context, is seen in his emphasis on the need to rise above ethnic, racial, class and hierarchical barriers, as above implied. He therefore showed no discrimination. He welcomed all thereby becoming their unique and special guest. In particular, he came into contact with Samaritans, Roman soldiers, Syro-phoenicians, tax-collectors like Zacchaeus, prostitutes, peasants, fishermen, Scribes, the powerful, the destitute, women and children (see Mugambi 1995:90). The fact that Jesus was not a respecter of rank or position or wealth shows that a theology of hospitality is closely connected to confronting all kinds of social, racial and sexual discrimination. Thus as Healey and Sybertz (1996:188) says, hospitality as an African cultural value and a deeply Christian value challenges the pervading individualism, selfishness and exclusivism of the contemporary world.

As a guest, Christ could celebrate. He went to the wedding feast at Cana in Galilee (John 2) where he turned out to be the bringer of the missing gift-that is- additional wine! This miracle of turning water into wine was to assist in the provision of hospitality on the wedding day. At meals and social gatherings, he freely mixed with all kinds of people (Luke 7: 36-50). He told parables about banquets and feasts (Matthew 22:1-4). As a unique guest, he broke with traditional Jewish practices by eating with tax collectors and sinners (Matthew 9:10-11).

In eating with sinners (Matthew 9: 10-11, Luke 7: 36-50), and introducing the meal ministry as evidenced by feeding of the five thousand (Matthew 14: 13-21), Christ emphasised the importance of symbolism of meal, which is a common phenomenon in Africa. This shows that his theology and praxis of his ministry reflect the basic values of African hospitality (Healey and Sybertz 1996:188). The Kenyan priest- anthropologist John Mutiso-Mbinda emphasises the importance of the meal when he says,

¹⁴⁸ The meaning of this word has shifted over the centuries. Today in Africa, it has a negative, even pejorative meaning. Now the preferred term is "member of an African traditional religion"

¹⁴⁹ The chapters and verses of the scriptures that shows these acts of Christ have been variously mentioned in our study and so they will not be repeated in this sub-section.

A meal is perhaps the most basic and most ancient symbol of friendship, love and unity. Food and drink taken in common are obvious signs that life is shared. In our (African) context, it is unusual for people to eat alone. Only a witch or wizard would do that. A meal is always a communal affair. The family normally eats together. Eating together is a sign of being accepted to share life and equality (Mutiso-Mbinda 1984:1-5).

One of the African names for Christ therefore is “our Guest”. Through the incarnation, he became the most important Guest of all time. The writer of Philippians says that though he was in the form of God, he did not count equality with God but emptied himself taking the form of a servant, being born in likeness shows how he so much loved humanity such that he joined the human race thereby becoming our permanent guest and a friend from personal level to communal level (Mutugi 2000: 53). St Luke tells us that he grew like us, underwent intellectual, physical, spiritual and social growth. Likewise, we should learn from him and grow like him (Luke 2:52).

As a good African guest, Christ brings gifts. One of the best gifts that he brought is reconciliation between humanity and the maker-God. St. Paul stresses this point by saying, “ If anyone is in Christ, he (or she) is a new creation everything old has passed away: see, everything has become new!” (2 Corinthians 5:17). He is that guest who in reconciling us to our maker makes us new and better creation. As unique and ideal guest, Christ stays with human beings and remains with them forever (Matthew 28: 20). He is unique guest who is the good shepherd (John 10: 11) who knows his people whom he has visited (John 10: 14). Having been privileged to have such a unique guest who cares so much over our welfare, the African challenge now is as St. Paul advised, “ welcome one another just as Christ has welcomed you, in order to bring praise to God” (Romans 15:7).

As African guest, Christ comes as the “healing guest”. This is seen from his first sermon that he delivered (Luke 4: 18-20), where he announces his mission-healing the world from its sickness-economic mess, oppression, blindness and bringing forth a fulfilling life. This therefore means that by relating with Christ, we expect our healing miracle in our daily encounter. He says,

“people who are well do not need a doctor but only those who are sick” (Matthew 9:12). He is that great healer of all seasons. The greatest healing that he administered to us is healing us from death; thereby making death not to be a serious bother. As Martin Luther King captured this idea,

Death is (now) not the end. Death is (now) not a period that ends the great sentence of life, but a comma that punctuates it to a more lofty significance. Death is not a blind alley that leads man into life eternal... (King 1986:101).

These words get their affirmation from St. Paul’s (Philippians 1: 21) words when he says, “ For me to live is Christ and to die is gain....” Thus Christ, the African guest brings many gifts including the gifts of healing us from death, thereby making it necessary to receive him with great anticipation.

5.6 Christ as the host/master of hospitality

As Healey and Sybertz (1996: 189) says, another dimension of Guest Christology is contained in the “Guest paradigm” of Nigerian theologian Enyi Ben Udoh whose thesis is that expatriate missionaries introduced Christ to African traditional life as an uninitiated stranger; thereby making it an urgent task for Christ to be initiated into the African World. Udoh (1988: 229-230) develops the Christological model of Christ -as- guest in a three-phase process of initiation of Christ and Africa to each other as follows:

1.Christ as alien, guest, stranger, traveller and visitor

He describes this by using an Ibibio proverb that says, “A visitor is unfamiliar with safe exits and detours”. He portrays Christ as a human who enters the host society from below. In this explanation, a “ Christology from below is compatible with the structural and conceptual; understanding of the family” (Udoh 1988:222). The visitor (Christ) is welcomed through cultural initiation rites such as the Kolanut Rite.¹⁵⁰ The “rite of incorporation has continued to

¹⁵⁰ According to Uchendu (1965:74), the Igbo, traditionally grow a type of Kola-nut they call *Oji Igbo* (Igbo Kolanut-cola *acuminata*) to meet social and ritual obligations. It is less prolific and commercially less important

demonstrate that enormous potential capable of transforming strangers into rightful and respectable citizens” (Udoh 1988:200). Thus, through the initiation by ritual process, Christ is dedicated to new benefits and to new commitments.

2.Christ as a Kin

Christ now enjoys the same citizenship as his host whose history and destiny he now shares. His new status is characterised as participatory, relational and friendly terms.

3.Christ as divine Lord and King

Christ as Lord means, “ he is the head of the household, of our lives and our daily deliberations” (Udoh 1988:254). Udoh also brings out some interesting scriptural parallels:

The idea of Jesus as a guest is not totally new. The N.T. is particularly familiar with this portrait. Thus John observed that Christ was in the world, but the world failed to recognise him adding that he entered his own cultural realm and his own would not receive him (John 1: 1-10). Jesus was not only an unknown. On many public occasions he was publicly rejected.... Already aware of his alien image in the world, Jesus once warned an aspiring attorney who may have misread the sign of the kingdom, thus: ‘Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests; but the son of man has nowhere to lay his head’ (Matthew 8:20)) (Udoh 1988:229-230).

In trying to interpret Udoh, we find that he has a point in asserting the foreignness in Christ of the 19th century missionaries to Africa. Though they did a commendable job in introducing Christianity, commerce, modern form of education and medicine, their Christological

than the less disease-resistant cola *nidita*, which the Igbo call *gworo*-a Hausa word for Kola-nut. The Igbo Kola-nut (cola *acuminata*) is so unique that every component part seems to carry a symbolic charge, ranging from its structure to its colour and taste. In attempting to show the importance of the Kola-nut among the Igbo, Ekwunife (1990:109) writes,

Kola-nut expresses, communicates and unifies Igbo ideas of friendship, acceptance and approval, achievement, productivity and wealth; joy and sorrow; family, village and clan; royalty and diversity of the Igbo world; hierarchy, authority, royalty and purity; wholeness of the human being; fullness of life and the perpetual presence of the spirits among men (sic).

presentation was faulty. The Christ of the missionary is, therefore, a stranger in Africa. He remains too often a western Christ. His status, no doubt, is then similar to that of an illegal alien; for in Africa, one remains an outsider until initiated into the beliefs and practices of African societies and communities (see Healey and Sybertz 1988: 188-189).

After being initiated into Africa, the African believer realises that he is the actual host and the Master of hospitality (John 1:1). He was there from the beginning and he fits into the beliefs and practices of African societies and communities as discussed above. In any case, hospitality is genuinely African (Kenyatta 1938: 41-52). In East Africa, for instance, the word *Karibu* (Swahili for welcome) is more often spoken. It symbolises and embodies African life; for the true African is always a host. An indigenised African Christ is, therefore, also a host; indeed a host par excellence, a Master of hospitality.

The image of Christ as the perfect host or Master of hospitality carries with it the connotation of an indigenised Christ, a native to Africa. This should be the actual interpretation of Bediako's (1995) emphasis on Christianity as no longer a western religion. African Christology will no doubt contend with the fact that Christ is as African as anything else; yet he is not only African, he is universal host (see Mugambi 1995:90). He is a pan-ethnic host, a host to Africans and also to non-Africans. He is particularly host to the poor (Luke 4:18-20), those without status in society, and to women (Luke 24:1-12). Thus Christ the host is not only an inculturated Christ but a liberating Christ. He welcomes all into the realm of God (Mathew 11:28-31, Matthew 6: 33). He welcomes all to share in God's dream for humanity (Matthew 28: 18-20).

Christ as host is a biblical image, and various scholars in Africa have stressed the importance of the scriptures for doing theology in Africa.¹⁵¹ Indeed, the earthly Jesus was always in solidarity with people-which was one of his fundamental characteristics (Mugambi 1995: 90). He welcomed them and in turn, they felt welcomed by him; for as he says, "I am the true vine... remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me" (John 15: 1-4). By declaring that he is

¹⁵¹ See *The Bible in African Christianity, essays in Biblical Theology*, eds. Hannah Kinoti and John M. Waliggo (Nairobi: Acton 1997).

the vine and “you are the branches” (John 15:5), Christ confirms himself as the host-the Master of hospitality. No meaningful development can take place without him, as we would be operating on a deficit rather than the asset.

Christ’s parables in which a meal to which many were invited played a significant role in his teaching about God and God’s kingdom. In particular, the parable of the wedding feast (Matthew 22: 2-10, Luke 14: 15-20); plays a significant role in addressing the above point. In multiplying the fish and loaves, he played host to the crowds, not only nourishing them with a word of exhortation but also by providing for them with food (Matthew 14: 13-21). Indeed he is noted for the meals he shared.

St. Paul addresses this theme when he later put it this way, “in Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek, neither slave nor free, neither male nor female” (Galatians 3: 28). This shows that we must grapple with the tension between the fact that Christ was Jewish and yet in another sense, he transcended Judaism while still remaining thoroughly Jewish. So Christ must also be indigenously African, although not only African, for he transcends our human categories. This view is borrowed from Abbey (2001:151) and Nasimiyyu-Wasike (1992: 76) when tackling the gender of Christ when they insist that Jesus was a man whose mission pointed towards humanity and not necessarily revolving around man for indeed, “Jesus was a man, a masculine being; but as messiah, Christ supersedes humanity” (Abbey 2001:151). Indeed, Jesus is African, initiated in all our rites of passage but on the other hand as messiah, he supersedes our Africanness. In Christ therefore, there is neither Zulu nor Xhosa, neither, Pedi nor Tswana, neither Shona, nor Kikuyu, neither Blacks nor whites, neither African nor European. In African Christian hospitality, therefore, we all experience both our dignity and our equality. Since Christ has made us equal, we ought to discard both inferiority and superiority status (Mark 10: 44). In any case, Christ the African host, also hosts all of Africa respecting, while at the same time relativising tribal and ethnic identities, affirming our identities and yet challenging us to see our human identity and solidarity as well. Christ is thus, the universal host of all peoples.

In evaluating the question of Christ as the host/master of hospitality, we realise that the image of host manifests both the generosity of God (through Christ) and the generosity ethic of Africans. It calls forth from us a response of gratitude. We must be grateful to Christ who has come to us and welcomes us in spite of the destructive ways in which he was preached among us, by the pioneers of Christianity in this part of the world. We must be grateful that as host/Master of hospitality, he has come to us as Africans. And through the invitation to follow Christ or to dine with him, we are invited into a living relationship with God, to dine with God, both now and at the eschatological banquet (Matthew 22:1-22). Thus Africa's Christ goes back to the question: "Who do you say I am?" (Luke 9: 18-21). And the obvious answer to Christ is: " yes Jesus, we know that you are our host and we are your guests."

5.7 Christ as our life

Another face of Christ in African Christian hospitality is " Christ as our life." This agrees with the seven " I am's" in John's Gospel:

I am the bread of life (John 6: 35)
 I am the light of the world (John 8:12)
 I am the door (John 10: 7,9)
 I am the good shepherd (John 10:11)
 I am the resurrection and the life (John 11:25)
 I am the way, and the truth, and the life (John 14: 6)
 I am the true vine (John 15: 1)

Indeed, life is the overarching theme which threads its way through Placide Temple's seminal work on Bantu philosophy,¹⁵² through the works of Bénézet Bujo,¹⁵³ up to Laurenti Magesa's recent exposition on African religion and morality.¹⁵⁴ Life, vitality, the life force become the hermeneutical keys to an African view of the world. In any case, if we look at the previous faces of Christ, we will find that life is central to each: as the liberator, as the reconstructor, as Lord of

¹⁵² See Placide Temple 1959. *Bantu Philosophy* (Paris: Présence Africaine)

¹⁵³ See Bujo, B. 1998. *The Ethical Dimension of Community*, where both community and life are woven together as foundational for an African ethics. In his other book, *African Theology in its Social_Context* 1992, p. 34, Bujo writes, " the Focus of African religion is life." See especially pp17-37.

¹⁵⁴ See L. Magesa 1997. *African religion, The Moral Tradition of Abundant Life* (Mary Knoll: Orbis Books).

spirits and giver of the spirit, as healer, as guest and as host/ Master of hospitality, we find Christ's focus is life. Even when he reconstructs the Law of Moses by strengthening it (Matthew 5:17) and not abolishing it, it is geared towards making a better life for all. Even when we look at "Christ as the ancestor" in the coming section, the theme of Christ as our life" will still be felt strongly. An illustration on this: In both Nyamiti (1984) and Bujo (1986), the concept of ancestor is also connected to life and the transmission of the life force. The liberator is concerned with the life, the quality of life and the life-giving freedom of the people. Still, the task of the healer or diviner or witchdoctor is also the fact of the concern for life. And Christ as the host invites us to the fullness of life, which is the fulfilment of the promises of God (Matthew 11:28-30). He welcomes us to the banquet of life (Matthew 22:1-14). Alward shorter, in a brief article on folk Christianity and Christology, alludes to the value of "the image of the risen Christ as the Lord of life in the Eucharis"¹⁵⁵. Thus the theme of life is overwhelmingly related to almost every African Christological title, which therefore means, life itself can serve as a synthetic principle for African Christology.

Christ as our life has potential biblically, liturgically, and ethically, just as with "Christ as the host". This is what we learn from the fourth Gospel and in particular when John quotes Jesus as saying "I am the way, and the truth, and the life" (John 14: 6). Even in John 10:10, Jesus says, "I came that they may have life and have it abundantly." It is no wonder that the prologue of the Gospel of John already sees Jesus Christ as source of life. It says,

In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God. He was in the beginning with God; all things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of human kind (John 1:1-4).

In concluding this subsection, we realise that a Christology in the metaphor of life is thoroughly African and thoroughly Christian. For African Christians, Christ is our life, life-giving, life-healing, life-guiding, life sharing (*Koinonia*), Sacramental life, and communal life, life that is both divine, human and salvific life (Nthamburi 1991:61). It is for God gave his life (in Christ)

¹⁵⁵ Shorter, A. 1982. "Folk Christianity and Functional Christology". P 135. In the same article, he talks of the life giving, Spirit-imparting Christ.

so that whoever believes and lives in love will have life in all its fullness (John 3: 16, Mark 12:28-31)) and will have it abundantly (John 10:10). In order to have life, we must therefore commit our lives to Christ our life.

5.8 Christ as the unique ancestor

Traditions concerning ancestors vary from one ethnic community to the other. As Nyamiti explains:

There is no uniform system of beliefs and practices of this cult in black Africa. In fact, one finds differences of detail even in the same ethnic group. Moreover, the ancestral veneration, which will be described here, is not found in each African traditional community. Nevertheless the cult belongs to the majority of the African peoples. Besides, notwithstanding the differences referred to above, there are many elements shared in common conceptions on ancestors and their cult among black Africans (Nyamiti 1996:38).

In other words, the ancestors of Kikuyu in Kenya are not ancestors of the Zulu in South Africa. Moila (2002b: 68) agrees with this view when he says that the length of the journey to reach to the “ world of the dead” differs from” tribe to tribe”. As he continues to say, “ In some tribes the journey may take a number of years. Hence the deceased are buried with food and weapons to sustain and protect them on this journey to the world of the dead. It is believed that the world of the dead is in heaven (*Legodimong*)”.

Ancestors are always related by blood, as members of one’s family or tribe. Accordingly, not everyone becomes an ancestor. Ordinarily, only those who show exemplary qualities in life qualify as ancestors (Moila 2002b: 68). Thus Setiloane argues that “*badimo* are merely our deceased parents” (Setiloane 1989: 18-19). This, according to Moila (2002b: 68), means that children and unmarried adults do not become ancestors. Moila further quotes Mönnig who highlights this by saying, “ not all the spirits of dead persons are worshipped, and not all dead persons are considered to become *badimo*. It is held that the spirits of young people, and particularly of children, go to their forefathers, but do not become *badimo*” (Mönnig 1978:54-55). Hence “ the death of a young person or a child is mourned bitterly by Africans” who even

think it is unfair for God to take children (Moila 2002b: 68). Interestingly, the young warriors who die during the times of war also qualify to be ancestors as well (Moila (2002b: 68). In Pedi society, those are regarded as “ the heroes of the tribe” (Mönnig 1978: 55).

Another interesting dimension on this subject is that the ancestors do not have same rank and status. For example, parents who die at old age and leave behind many descendents are regarded as ancestors of high rank and as such they are highly “respected and appeased or venerated more often” (Moila (2002b: 69). Thus, the qualities, ranks and status of ancestors include parenthood, old age, military status and heroism.

It is further believed that in many African societies that on arrival in the world of the living dead, “the deceased attain supernatural powers; that is, unlimited powers over the lives of the living” (Moila 2002b: 69). Mönnig adds that, “ they have power over life and death, over sickness and health and over poverty and prosperity” (Mönnig 1978: 55).

Some ancestors, it is believed, intercede with God for us, others are responsible for the animal kingdoms, and others are responsible for other kingdoms of the universe (Moila 2002b: 69). This is true of my Kikuyu community as well as many other African communities. They are seen to have more command than the living hence, a Kikuyu will never contradict the wish of a dead person, especially if he was elderly or responsible enough.¹⁵⁶ In addition, the ancestors are expected to utilise their power for the benefit of the living offspring. In some cases, the Kikuyu, like many other communities believe that the ancestors do visit the living when one is sleep. They can even help in solving difficult issues of the day by offering good advice.¹⁵⁷

Ancestors are believed to mediate between God and humans. Hence it is believed that they have a wider “Understanding of the laws of nature and a more enlightened outlook of the course of life. They now exist on a higher plane of existence immune from error” (Moila 2002b: 70). Consequently, the living treats them as lesser gods who are careful not to compete with God-the maker.

¹⁵⁶ Interviews with Rev. Humphrey Waweru, PhD candidate, university of Natal, 22 August 2003

¹⁵⁷ Interview with Dr. Peter Njuho of the University of Natal on 22 August 2003

Among the Shona-Ndebele religions, ancestors are models of behaviour; the living descendants try to imitate their ancestors in daily moral conduct (Banana 1991: 65). This draws its parallelism with Paul's call to the Corinthians to imitate him as he imitates Christ (1 Corinthians 11:1). In a similar manner Christ, who in this sub-section is being looked at as the unique ancestor, is also a model of conduct to his living brethren.

Among the supernatural powers ascribed to ancestors are their ability and the will to heal bodily ailments; for indeed, they are regarded as the guardians of the living at family and tribal levels. They look after the wealth of their living descendants (Nthamburi 1991:62). It is therefore necessary to examine Christ's healing ministry in relation to his ancestorship. In combating these evils, through healing, Christ was fulfilling his soteriological and ancestral mission, to re-establish the original harmonious condition of humankind by defeating the acts of the devil (Nyamiti 1984:19). Thus he did the miracles, raising the dead and exorcisms (Cf. Luke 7: 1-160, John 11: 1ff, Mark 1: 23-26, 5: 25ff). There is therefore, a striking parallel between Christ's healing formation and that of the ancestors.

Moila (2002b: 71) lists problems that threaten Christ's qualification as an African ancestor. They include,

- 1) First Christ died outside Africa and no funeral rites were done for him. He explains that if he were an ancestor, then he under took the journey to the world of the dead without food, weapons or beer to sustain and protect him.
- 2) Secondly, Christ was neither a chief nor a parent
- 3) Thirdly, ancestors are venerated rather than worshipped goes radically different from the Christ of the Bible who is actually God.
- 4) Fourthly, libation and sacrifices should be made in order to keep the ancestors in their place.

The question that one is now left wondering is, who is doing these things for Christ and for what reason?

However, these questions can be counterbalanced by the fact that Christ is a unique ancestor in African Christian hospitality. As an ancestor who combined both divinity and humanity at the same time, he goes above human standards. The Bible says that he was present from the very beginning, during creation, interceding for us (John 1:1) even before the later ancestors came into being. In that way, he can be described as the first ancestor and ideal ancestor who need not undergo every ritual that the later ancestors underwent.

Mutiso-Mbinda asserts that Christ is our ancestor par excellence as he is our mediator who intercedes for us. As our ancestor, Christ becomes the new source of human lineage (Mutiso-Mbinda 1979: 1ff). Mutiso-Mbinda's argument is derived from his analysis that portrays African ancestors as being mediators, and intermediaries. The ancestors are also considered important for preservation of stability and progress of a community of the living and the living dead. It is from this analysis that Christ supersedes them all.

John Pobee focuses on the African concept of ancestorship to show how Christ is the great ancestor. The Akan "*Nana*" (ancestor) is full of power and authority. The ancestor can judge, reward or even punish human beings. According to Pobee, every Akan belongs to a kinship group because he or she has "*Mogya*" which one receives from one's mother. One also receives "*sunsum*" from the father, a spirit that gives one character and personality. On the other hand, the "*Kra*" is the soul that unites an individual with God, since the "*Kra*" returns to God after death. In this regard, Christ has a unique "*Kra*" which connects him to God. This is evidenced by the many miracles that we find in the New Testament. Pobee emphasises the uniqueness and superiority of "*Nana*" Christ in that he has power over all cosmic powers and over all other ancestors (Pobee 1979: 81-98).

To avoid misunderstanding due to limitations associated with the ancestor concept, Bujo prefers the title Proto-Ancestor for Christ. The historical Jesus lived the African ancestor-ideal to the highest degree. He manifested those qualities, which Africans attribute to their ancestors. Yet the concept as applied to Jesus is only applied analogically. For Jesus is not one ancestor among

many, but the ancestor par excellence. The title of Pro-Ancestor “signifies that Jesus did not only realise the authentic ideal of the God-fearing African ancestors, but also infinitely transcended that ideal and brought it to new completion” (Bujo 1992:80).¹⁵⁸ It is not only the earthly Jesus’ exemplary life but also his death and resurrection which establish him as Proto-Ancestor. Christ’s proto-ancestors, thus, is ultimately grounded in his incarnation as the meeting point between God and humanity.

Nyamiti (1984: 41-80) explains how through death, a person attains the super-natural status which brings one closer to God. This is from the premise that African ancestors who died in the state of friendship with God can become Christian ancestors by virtue of the fact that they participated in Christ’s unique ancestorship. Death therefore is important in making an ancestor, for an ancestor is one who has joined the company of the living dead. Through his death, therefore, Christ becomes, our brother-ancestor in fullness. Nyamiti goes on to argue that, by being linked to with Adam, Christ’s ancestorship acquires a transcendental quality since he is able to transcend family, clan, tribal and racial limitations in a way that our own ancestors are not. This makes it possible for Christ to become the brother-ancestor of humanity (Nyamiti 1984: 41).

Ambrose Moyo gives a Shona illustration, which depicts Christ as “a supreme universal ancestor spirit.” He is called the supreme universal spirit ancestor through whom all other spirits must get access to God. By virtue of being a direct offspring of God, Christ becomes *Mudzimu* (a Shona word for ancestral spirit) with powers of interceding. His Jewish ancestry ceases to be paramount as he becomes *Nyadenga* (heavenly only), who in effect becomes universal. Moyo concludes that Christ’s heavenly role makes him a universal spirit who connects us to different peoples (Moyo 1983: 97). Christ is, thus, an intermediary spirit between God and people.

One of the major strengths of an ancestor Christology is that it enables the development of a Christology that is both thoroughly African and also thoroughly Christian. Bediako’s (1995:

¹⁵⁸ Nyamiti (1996:41) indicates five items that are sufficiently common within the African concept of ancestor to make it theologically helpful for constructing an African Theology. These are the ancestor as kin and source of life, his or her sacred status, the mediatorial role, exemplary behaviour, and the ancestor’s right to regular sacred communication with the earthly Kin.

210-233) treatment of ancestrology and ancestor Christology is also particularly helpful in this regard as is his entire discussion of Christianity as a non-Western religion. Indeed, “Jesus our ancestor”, inculturates Jesus within African cultures. It inserts Jesus into African soil thereby incarnating him as God’s word in an African context. This African Jesus is also our great ancestor, an ancestor of all Africans, the proto-Ancestor of us all, the new Adam, our new ancestral origin.

As Nthamburi (1995:63) notes, “like human ancestors, Christ’s ancestorship is our model of behaviour, “thus “making his ancestorship archetypal”. The difference between his ancestorship and that of the African ancestorship is the fact that Christ is a prototype of divine nature (Nyamiti 1984: 23). Thus the depiction of Christ as the unique ancestor, who was at one stage both man and God, hence ancestor par excellence, Christians ought to have a personal relationship with Christ who is, indeed, the saving ancestor. This can be through constant prayer (Matthew 6), regular communication through ritual, hymn, reading of scripture, Eucharist, fellowship with our fellow believers, intimacy as part of our being. It is a great challenge for students of Christology to live by what they preach.

5.8.1 Christ as the source of fellowship

As Moila (2002a: 5) says, African Christians view Jesus as the source of the Christian fellowship. This means that their perception of Christ is that of the common Lord in the same way that Africans regard ancestors as their common family guardians. In any case, accepting Jesus Christ as Lord for African Christians means accepting the fact of being made one family of Christ (Moila 2002a: 5). This point can be qualified further on the basis that Christ demonstrated his expertise in developing relationships that J.Moltmann sees as the basic characteristic of his life (Moltmann 1976:60). In deed for Jews to share table-fellowship with publicans and the ostracized, “was a sign of extreme intimacy and closeness” (Aulen 1976:60). Jesus did not only demand the removal of dividing walls and discriminative segregation but he also showed how to go about establishing an all-embracing solidarity among people (Moltmann 1976:61). Moreover, though women were downgraded and undermined, Christ associated with them openly in a

healthy relationship (Luke 8:2,3; John 4:9). This was better than the revered African elders who in some aspects were even discriminatory against women (Wachege 1992:206) He preoccupied himself in a personalistic manner with each and every individual (Kealy 1978:58).

As Obengo (1997: 53) contends, good deeds such as welcoming others and striving for providing in abundance are, therefore, done with the hope of receiving blessings from Christ the source of Christian fellowship. Such blessings from Christ are to be received in the same way that Africans expected blessings from the ancestors.

The term “fellowship” in Greek means *Koinonia*. In trying to translate the meaning, Webber (1960:52) implies that it is a fellowship of men and women of all sorts and conditions who are united by the fact that Christ is their common Lord-the source of the fellowship. This clearly echoes the African beliefs that the rewards of hospitable behaviours come from our ancestors (Obengo 1997: 53). It is from this analysis that African converts to Christianity “continue to practice Christianity as one of African moral values” (Moila 2002a: 50). Indeed this understanding of Christ as the source of *Koinonia* is easily understood especially coming from a background where cultural dictates drive us to regard ancestors as “factors for cohesion” (Obengo 1997:61).

Koinonia can also be described as a joint participation of community with the Father, the son and the Holy Spirit (Banana 1991: 76). It embraces fellowship of Christians a feeling of togetherness and a feeling of forming a family unit. This is where every member feels important and loved before others.

St John emphasises on the value of Christ fellowship when he says:

That which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you may have fellowship with us, and fellowship with the father and with his (sic) son Jesus Christ (1 John 1:3)

The fact that Christ gave his life for the sake of humanity, gave it up freely for the remission of sins and instituted God’s new covenant with his church is an example of Christian hospitality.

St. Paul in Galatians 3: 28 implies that the fellowship being put in place by Christ—who is the source, there are no more distinctions between Jews and Gentiles, between men and women, or between slaves and free people. With Christ, therefore, having inaugurated the Christian fellowship, Africa has a lot to draw from this fellowship, in terms of grappling with tribalism, which the late Mozambican President Samora Machel once described as, “the commended-In-Chief of Anti-African Forces” (Museveni 1992: 42). As Banana (1991:54) says, tribalism, in many African countries has wittingly superseded racism and is a potential danger to the sacred values of equality based on merit and is “undoubtedly destined to succeed Apartheid as a new force of discontent, destabilisation, under-development”. There is therefore a need to face regionalism, racism, sexism and other forms of sectarianism that threatens the *Koinonia* that Christ has put in place for the benefit of this world that he loved so much (John 3: 16).

The church of Christ, source of fellowship, therefore, ought to manifest this *Koinonia* by seeking to cement love and understanding among people whom she ministers. To do this, leadership should be exemplary, free from corruption, nepotism, favouritisms or any prejudice. By setting the example of good governance, good management which is free from extra-vagance, inertia, dictatorship and other vices, the church will truly be a place of fellowship where love replaces hate, suspicion and malice. It will be a place where various gifts will be allowed to edify and terrify the church rather than suppression (1 Corinthians 12-14). Only by so doing shall the church become the light and salt of the world (Matthew 5: 13-17). Indeed it is a great challenge for our modern churches to become the beacons that will map out the direction for the rest of the society. As the conscience of the society, the churches will lose their moral power to guide others if they are not exemplary social institutions. Thus, the foundation of the Christian church in Africa has been laid through *Koinonia*. And the peoples of this great continent are now more than ever before called to be the “chosen race” and “a holy nation” in order to proclaim the glory of God.

5.9 Conclusion

In studying the faces of Christ in African Christian hospitality, we realise that there are new and fresh ideas and insights that a theology of Christ's hospitality can teach the African church of the twenty first century. In turn, the African Christianity based on Christ's hospitality, can remind the world church of the importance of the concept of hospitality.

It also shows that inculturation is the task that African Christianity, in its attempts to reconstruct our theology, will lay more emphasis on. In his famous statement, Karl Rahner (1979:718,724) put the challenge of inculturation and contextualisation very succinctly,

The church must be inculturated through the world if it is to be a world church... This, then is the issue: either the church sees and recognises these essential differences of other cultures for which she should become a world church and with a Pauline boldness draws the necessary consequences from this recognition, or she remains a western church and so in the final analysis betrays the meaning of Vatican II.

This challenge for the inculturation of the Gospel in Africa is expressed in the words of Pope Paul VI in Kampala, Uganda, in 1969. When he said, " you may and you must have an African Christianity."¹⁵⁹ This agrees with Bishop Peter Sarpong of Kumasi, Ghana who said, "If Christianity's claim to be universal is to be believed, then it is not Africa that must be Christianised but Christianity that must be Africanised."¹⁶⁰ In any case, the encounter of African culture with Christianity brings newness, freshness, originality, and a difference like a spice that brings a new taste to food. For in one way, the core Christianity is the same food but it tastes differently. It is for that reason that deep African values such as cultural liberation and reconstruction, believe in spirits, hospitality (in specific terms), the living dead (ancestors), patient endurance in adversity, and holistic healing bring something new and truly enrich world Christianity and the world church.

¹⁵⁹ Paul VI, Discourse at the closing of the First Plenary Assembly of the symposium of the Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM), Kampala (31 July 1969), AAS 61 (1969): 575.

¹⁶⁰ Peter Sarpong, as quoted in Joseph G. Healey, *A Fifth Gospel: The experience of Black Christian values* (Mary Knoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1981).

The study of the face of Christ in African Christian hospitality helps us to identify the “ Christ of Africa” and thereby seek to learn from his hospitality as evidenced by his ancestorship, his being a liberator, his being a reconstructor, his being a giver of the spirit, his being the healer, his being the African guest and host at the same time; his being the bread of life (provider) and his being the proto-Ancestor. The overall lesson is that we have a friend in Christ as the revivalist, Joseph Scriven, 1820-86¹⁶¹ sang,

What a friend we have in Jesus,
All our sins and griefs to bear!
What a privilege to carry
Everything to God in prayer!

Can we find a friend so faithful?
Who will all our sorrows share?
Jesus knows our every weakness:
Take it to the Lord in prayer.

Indeed, the time has come, as Cardinal Maurice Otunga of Nairobi, Kenya, once said, “ for the seeds of the Gospel to germinate in Africa and to bring forth flowers the world has not yet seen.”¹⁶²

This chapter on the “Faces of Christ in African Christian hospitality” has prepared us to study the climactic chapter on “Christological Models” and the lessons that we acquire from Christ’s hospitality in the coming chapter. Thus, we shall now, in the coming Chapter six, climax our study by attempting to answer the question, “in regard to our contemporary African society, what message is the Christological models communicating to us today? How hospitable is Christ in Africa of the twenty first century?”

¹⁶¹ Refer to the Golden bells (hymn book).

¹⁶² Maurice Otunga, as quoted in the Mystery of death and Life, a brochure produced by the social communication department of IMBISA (Inter-regional Meeting of Bishops of Southern Africa in Harare, Zimbabwe.

CHAPTER SIX

CHRISTOLOGICAL MODELS: LESSONS FROM CHRIST'S HOSPITALITY

6.0. Introduction

This chapter serves as a climax of our study as it leads us towards the lessons that Christ's hospitality offers to the modern world and especially the African church of the 21st century. Before we engage with the discussion to do with the Christological models and the lessons in it, we shall first attempt a working definition on what Christology is all about. Afterwards, we shall then address various models such as liberational, reconstructional, family, cultural, missiological and socio-political models. By so doing, we shall be attempting to unearth the unspoken message that Christology offers in the African context.

Having learnt that African hospitality is compatible with Christ's hospitality; and that Christ's hospitality is the ideal hospitality, we shall therefore embark on a theology of reconstruction, that lets the latter to speak to the African church of the 21st century with the view to making it to revise her theology in this regard.

The word Christology is derived from two words, 'Christ' and 'logy' - (study of) - which comes from the Greek word *logos* meaning word or reason. It literally means the study about Christ or reasoning about Christ. Oduyoye defines it simply as, "a reasoned account of what the word Christ stands for" (Oduyoye 2001:52). She goes on to say that, Christology is the story of Jesus who saves, the one who brings and lives good news. According to the Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church, Christology is the external expression of God and also the manifestation of God in time (Nasimiyu-Wasike 1998:123).

As Ruether says, Christology is a place where we envision the redemption from all sin and evil. It is a symbol, which encompasses our vision of our authentic humanity and the fulfilled hopes

of all human persons.¹⁶³ This chapter agrees with Oduyoye (2001:63) when she says that Christology is not meant to analyse the nature of Christ, but to identify acts and to cling in hope of liberation, as we celebrate his victories.

6.1 Liberation Model

As a model of liberation, Christ unifies both Jew and Greek, both slave and slave master/mistress, both gender are liberated from all prejudices thereby bridging the huge gaps that may be exploited to divide the people of God. In our time, Jesus the liberator has become a socio-political force that overthrows empires, even the so-called Christian empires, as we shall see in this study.

Gutierrez helps in explaining Christ as a liberating messenger. He views Christ as our model in complementing orthodoxy with orthopraxies, in rendering liberation especially to the non-persons, i.e., the poor, the oppressed, the dehumanised as well as the marginalized. For to him, liberation hints “at the biblical sources, that illuminate man’s (sic) presence and actions in history: the liberation from sin by Christ our redeemer and the bringing of new life”. In his view, the term “liberation” as applied to Christ and people has a triple implication: “the political liberation of oppressed peoples and social classes, man’s (sic) liberation in the source of history and liberation from sin as condition of a life of communion of all men (sic) with the lord” (Gutierrez 1973:248). For Gutierrez, asking what liberation is in relation to Christianity is to ask the meaning of Christianity itself.¹⁶⁴ This is not a simplistic statement. It involves an integral approach to Christ and his serving relationship to people. It involves taking seriously his words, actions, miracles, attitude and love, as the entire work has strived to show.

The charter and the agenda for liberation in Jesus Christ were formulated in what has been called the magna Charta of Christian liberty, the epistle of Paul to the Galatians: “there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.... For freedom Christ has set us free; stand fast, therefore, and do not submit again

¹⁶³Radford Ruether, “Christology and Feminism”, Lecture notes, Hiram College, Ohio, 1987.

¹⁶⁴ See Theological Digest 19 (12), p.141.

to a yoke of slavery” (Galatians 3:28; 5:1). Neither Jew nor Greek; neither slave nor free, neither male nor female - each in its historical turn, these three captives have originally been justified in the name of Christ the creator as belonging to the natural order and to the natural law, but they have finally been challenged, and have eventually been overcome, in the name of Jesus the liberator (Pelikan 1987:209).

One of the most persistent tests case for the complicated dilemma of the relevance of Jesus the liberator to the social order has been the debate over slavery. This has been the case from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century.¹⁶⁵ Both opponents and proponents of slave trade appealed to the text of the Bible and the authority of the person of Jesus. Both sides, as Abraham Lincoln said in the second inaugural of 4 March 1865, “read the same bible, and pray to the same God; and each invokes his (or her) aid against the other. As he pointed out there, moreover, “It may seem strange that any man should dare to ask a just God’s assistance in wringing their bread from the sweat of other men’s (sic) faces”. But he added, quoting the commandment of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount, “ Let us judge not, that we are not judged” (Matthew, 7:1). It was above all his awareness that, “ Since man (sic) is finite he (sic) can never be absolutely sure that he rightly senses the will of the infinite God” that made Abraham Lincoln in a real sense the spiritual centre of American history (Pelikan, 1987:210). Many Christian theologians have had uneasiness about the institution of slavery. Many have recognized that because of Christ’s coming (John 3:16), “ Slavery had been deprived of any claim to be an inner necessity derived from the structure of human nature.”¹⁶⁶

St. Augustine articulated this uneasiness when he declared it to have been the original intention of the Creator “that his (sic) rational Creature should not have dominion over anything but the irrational creation - not man over man (sic), but man over the beasts”. Slavery, therefore, was not a natural institution created by God, but was a result of the fall of the human race into sin.¹⁶⁷ In the 21st century, the African church has to grapple with modern versions of slavery - that is, allow the hospitable Christ to speak through their leaders about the necessity to bridge the

¹⁶⁵ For details see John Francis Maxwell 1975. *Slavery and the Catholic Church* (London: Bary Rose) pp.88-125.

¹⁶⁶ Wilhelm Gass, *Geschichte der christlichen Ethik* 3 vols. (Berlin: G. Reimer, 1881-87), 1:226.

¹⁶⁷ Augustine, *City of God* 19.15.

widening gap between the rich and the poor. She must respond to the cries of those who are enslaved by the policies of World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), such as forcing the poor African countries to privatise even commodities such as water which are very basic.¹⁶⁸ One major aspect of slavery that has happened in the 21st century is the retrenchment of workers after the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund pressurized the African governments of the non-industrialised world to reduce their workload. This was one of the conditions set for the nations in need of donor aid/loans. In Kenya alone, over 25, 000 civil servants (government employees) were sacked in August 2000 without any psychological preparations. This downsizing caused more confusion as it caught a number of people unaware. Some had bank loans to service and others had many dependants to educate or to sustain; which is a common characteristic in Africa that, a salary for one person belongs to the individual and his or her surrounding. It can educate ones' children, ones' sisters or brothers or even relatives. It can be given to a fund raising to take a friend's or a neighbour's child to school, college or even pay the medical bill for a needy case.¹⁶⁹

Thus, in a communalistic society, like in Africa, retrenchment needs a thorough consultation if it must take place. In any case, the Kenyan experience showed that it impacted negatively as the increase of jobless led to idleness which in turn resulted to social unrest, increase in the rate of crime, illiteracy and poverty, hence the lack of Christ's hospitality¹⁷⁰. It is along this background that the message of Christ calls the church of Africa, in the twenty first century, to refuse to "submit again to a yoke of slavery" (Galatians 5:1) by keeping quiet as the people whom Christ so much loved (John 3:16), suffer under such modern versions of slavery.

Another sensitive and enslaving issue that the church of the twenty- first ought to grapple with is the ethical issues to do with biotechnology and food security in Africa. Following the refusal of the Zambian government to accept the Genetically Modified foods, in 2002, on the basis that

¹⁶⁸ The Kenyan example speaks for Africa where the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund has pressurised the government to privatise even the basic commodities like water. While it may have succeeded in Europe, it cannot work well in Africa. Again, when something is privatised, it is bought by the very rich who in turn exploit the poor, as they try to make profits, as the Kenyan examples can tell.

¹⁶⁹ See Daniel arap Moi 1986. *Kenya African Nationalism Nyayo Philosophy and Principles* (London: Macmillan Publishers).

¹⁷⁰ This is partly informed through participant observation and my interviews with Julius Gatimu.

they have a lower nutritional quality and also that they represent a danger in terms of antibiotic resistance in both animals and human beings, the United States ambassador to the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO), Tony Hall remarked: "The world needs to put pressure on the leaders in the region that are turning this food down saying that it is poison...." In direct reference to Zambian President Levy Mwanawasa he went on, "...leaders who deny food to their people....should be held responsible for the highest crimes against humanity, in the highest courts of the world" (Misser 2003:33). This enforcing of these Genetically Modified foods to Africa is clearly suspect thereby calling upon the church to work towards unravelling this suspicion in following the way of Christ who stood by truth (John 8:32) and encouraged us to follow his footsteps as a way of getting our inherent freedom.

In assessing the question on biotechnology, we realise that it has many ethical implications that need to be addressed as an urgency of the moment. This includes the complications brought about by the Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) and the Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS), which increase dependency syndrome by disfavours Africa. It also includes the question of biotechnology going against stewardship of environment due to heavy use of chemicals such as pesticides, herbicides, etc. Others include: the problem of the monopoly of multinationals, unfair trade, the failure to respect what is already there and reducing life into a matter of technology. It is therefore, unethical for its promoters to go on marketing their products without first addressing the concerns so far raised from an ethical perspective.

As a model of liberation, Christ the good and true shepherd (John 10:11-18, Psalms 23) will not allow the sheep to suffer as he as he monitors such developments with unique and lovely concern (Matthew 28:18-20); nor will he allow the flock to be blackmailed or tricked. This is the sacrificial hospitality that he offered on the cross to redeem humanity from all dehumanising forces. He will see to it that no more enslavement of the poor or exploitation in whatever form (Luke 4:16-20). That is the model that the African church of the twenty first century will have to imitate with regard to the quest for social justice.

6.2 Reconstruction model

In this section, our central thesis therefore is that Christ is the model of reconstruction that African church of the 21st century must seek to learn from. This is, the church that is referred by Mugambi (1995:160ff) as the church that must be tasty (salt) and enlightener of the world (Matthew 5:13-17). To be the salt and light, the African church must imitate Christ, as we have already seen.

This contention of the Christ being the model for us to reflect upon has been contested by the western radical feminist theologians, as epitomized in the works of Mary Daly. In her works, she holds the view that Christ cannot be a model of women and the society in general, as the society is irredeemably patriarchalized and therefore, it cannot be reconstructed. She advocates a rejection of the dogmas concerning Christ that have previously been formulated as largely oppressive to women. With regard to the way Jesus has been presented, she suggests that imitating Christ as a model would only lead women to becoming more entrenched in the dilemma of defeat (Daly 1973:69). Thus, emulating Christ as a model would lead on women to take on the role, which they are already playing (of being oppressed). Hence, Christ cannot be a model for reconstructing the situation that the African women are already in.

However, the view is sharply contrasted by the reformist western feminist theologians who, on the contrary contends that social institutions (society) are not distorted beyond repair, as in the radical view. For to them, aspects of culture and religion are salvageable and that theology (read Christ's hospitality) can help women in their struggle for emancipation and justice (Hinga 1992:185). In this category fall feminist theologians like Rosemary Ruether, Elisabeth Moltmann, Phyllis Trible, and Elisabeth Fiorenza, among others. This reformist western feminist view is in working relationship with the African women Theologians view. Abbey (2001:151-155) strongly argues that both men and women should emulate Christ as the role model of great distinction. To demonstrate her point, she quotes Nasimiyu-Wasike who rightly argues that the term *logos* that is used for Christ points to the whole of humanity, and not to men alone. She however contends, rightly that the term (*logos*) was overshadowed by the cultural realities of the

time (Abbey 2001:151). Nasimiyu-Wasike therefore agrees with Abbey that Christ is a model for both genders. Abbey rightly asserts that God did not incarnate in the male form to show that God is a male but rather to change society's attitude to the oppressed- the poor, the sick and women - through his own attitude to them. This view agrees with the view of Reverend Nick Cuthbert when he was preaching on the "maleness" of Christ. Here, he contends that God incarnated as a male to challenge the traditions of the time, that is, patriarchy (Abbey 2001: 151-152). Abbey cautions that when we hang on the maleness of Christ, we miss the point, for Christ lived, as God wants us to live. As she further says, Christ's life on earth is meant to give us a lesson on ideal humanity. His maleness "Shows us that he was real, after all, human beings are either male or female. She goes on to conclude the argument, on Christ as a model (of reconstruction), by rightly asserting that Christ's divinity, however, "Obviously embodies both the male and the female and even transcends them both" (Abbey 2001:152).

Mercy Oduyoye differs with the radical view of western feminist theologians by asserting that Christ is a model for every Christian-male or female. She says that African women theologians see the Christ as the one who voluntarily lived "a life that was life giving for others and even died for the same." Following Jesus African women approve of costly sacrifice but they insist it must be voluntary and it must be the duty of both men and women (Oduyoye 2001:55).

In acknowledging that the church has always been discriminating against women in areas such as ordination and exclusion from decision-making thereby showing inhospitality rather than hospitality, Oduyoye explains that women's solidarity with the church will continue; for their solidarity is "through the eyes of Jesus" (2001:83) for they know the real church and its shortcomings as well as its strengths. They therefore understand that the mess in the African church today is man made and not God made, and therefore it can be corrected anytime when the attitude changes or whenever Christians accepted to let truth (Christ) to set them free (John 8:32). In so doing, Oduyoye acknowledges Christ as one who is capable of reconstructing the mess that has befogged the African church with regard to gender disparities.

African women will thus continue looking forward to Christ the reconstructor, be the majority in the church, as they currently are; participate in all church activities, including doing acts of hospitality such as visiting the sick amongst them, consoling the bereaved, tending to the children and guiding them to adopt the way of Christ as they grow, whenever an opportunity comes their way while at the same time, they will continue seeking and calling for the Kingdom of God to come in the church "as it is done in heaven" (Matthew 6:1ff). They will therefore remain in the church as part of their "Journey to Golgotha."¹⁷¹ because they know they are called by the Christ the reconstructor to do so.¹⁷² Hence their royalty is directly to God rather than to human beings.¹⁷³ Further, women seems to agree with the old dictum that says that if your shirt or blouse is dirty, the best thing to do is to wash it clean rather than to throw it away.

In so doing, they hope to see the transformation (read reconstruction) in the church, for how can you desert what rightly belongs to you? This hope is energized by positive factors such as the fact that the church provides some forums for meetings, for example, as Mother's Union, as Women's Guild and other organizations. In such forums, women can take the opportunity to address some of the issues with the view to improving their lot now that there is a reconstructor - who came to reconstruct matriarchy and patriarchy to give the society a better life (John 10:10).

On the whole, this discussion, in this sub-section shows that Christ reconstructs all the three levels that Mugambi (1995:15-16) talks about, as we saw in chapter five. That is personal reconstruction, cultural reconstruction and ecclesial reconstruction - meaning that he reconstructs the entire spectrum of life and the African Christianity will have to do justice by imitating him as the model of reconstruction through whom the society can

¹⁷¹ Journey to Golgotha is a coinage by Nyambura Njoroge when she extols the virtue of working under pressure. See Nyambura Njoroge 1996:9.

¹⁷² This contrasts with Potgieter (1996:20) who when she realized that the minister who was preparing her for ordination was only interested in sexual advances from her, then withdrew from the church totally. This shows that despite women solidarity with the church, there are few pockets of disillusioned women here and there who have left the church once and for all after failing to contain their emotional pain. Who knows? Some could have joined other religions or forced to move from this church to another in the hope of finding an accommodative church in terms of the issues raised in African women ecclesiology.

¹⁷³ See Acts 5:29 where Peter declared "we must obey God rather than man", when the enemies of the gospel of Christ threatened their ministry.

reap harvests. Only then can we truly have a church of the present being converted to the church of the future.

6.2.1 Reconciliation Model

As A.P. Adams once wrote, “God himself (sic) endeavours to conciliate people,... to reconcile them to Himself....But the most blessed and comforting (thing) is that, ‘God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself’ (sic)...(this) loving God is ‘working’ (John 5:17) to win back the prodigal to the arms that are ever stretched out to receive him (sic), and the heart that has never ceased to love him”. Adams continues with this remarkable realization, “ If God allowed man (sic) to fall into sin and to become estranged from himself for his own good, then surely God would not fail to provide a way whereby man (or woman) might be delivered from his (or her) sin, the ‘enmity’ (Romans 8:7; Ephesians 2:15) be destroyed, and a perfect restoration effected, to his (her) former position of harmony and union with God.”¹⁷⁴ This fact of reconciliation of humankind is especially seen when searchers realise that they were “born” into the state of “death” and through “re-birth” they are brought into resurrection life in Christ” (Adams).

Jesus’ acceptance of the baptism of John, which was “a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins yet he was without sin (Hebrews 4:15) was an act of reconciliation. It is for this reason that his first act was to ally himself with sinners. His being baptized, at least, as sinners were baptized, therefore, was an act of identifying himself with his mission of addressing the plight of the ‘poor’ (Luke 4:16-20), hence reconciliation. In other words, Christ deliberately places himself on our side. Such action on the part of Jesus is repeated again and again. He touches the leper (Matthew 11:5, Luke 17:12), eats with sinners (Luke 7:36-52) reaches out to women and outcasts (Mark 15:41; Luke 23:27; 24:11, Luke 7:39, Mark 5:25, 7:27; John 4:7; 2:4, 8:3). He later says explicitly, “I have come to call not the righteous but sinners” (Matthew 9:13). By giving Jesus baptism the weight of first encounter, undiluted by infancy narratives, highly theologised

¹⁷⁴ A.P Adams <http://home.att.net/spiritualworld/reconcile>.

prologues, or awkward explanations, Mark gives us a powerful indication of the nature of Jesus' ministry: that is, Jesus does not set himself as separate from and over against sinners. He calls them to conversion as one who stands in their midst. His, then is, truly and ideally, a ministry of reconciliation. As Michael Corso says, he immerses himself in our human condition, binds us back to God, and, in so doing, brings about the very reign of God he proclaims.¹⁷⁵ The ideal reconciliation as Jesus shows us takes the form of Jesus removing all the obstacles to God's reign in people's lives - from illness to demons consuming self-interest. He continues his reconciliation by participating in our life even unto death - a challenge to the African Christians in the 21st century to team up with the Governments and non-governmental organisations to bring peace in a continent full of wars, tribal mistrust, racism, Muslim/Christian tension, and general sectionalism. In other words can the Jew and the Gentile sit together at a round table of comradeship without getting bogged down by their ritual blindness?

In his lifetimes, Erasmus manifested himself as a man of peace who pointed to the man of peace, i.e., Jesus Christ as his model (Dolan 1964). This was proved both by his lifestyle and his writings: he lived in such a way that observers wondered whether he was a protestant or a catholic. To avoid hostile confrontations, he opted for criticising indirectly and jokingly. Yet, Erasmus indicated that Christ, more than he, had truth as his weapon of reconciling. Erasmus reflected on the transfiguration episode (Matthew 17:1-8, Mark 9:2-8, Luke 9:28-36) to bring the awareness that the glory of Christ and blissful peace were shown magnificently in the company of the selected three apostles. It is in this extraordinary blissful experience that Peter desired to have permanent "nests" on the mount. A nest, in Erasmus elaboration "is that in which man's (sic) desire is satisfied, in which he tranquilly nourishes his (sic) chicks, that is, his desires and wants" (Dolan 1964:355). He understood Christ as truth personified. This is why, for him, Christ is the worm of peace (read reconciliation) since truth implies peace and, consequently, as Erasmus expounds, our kind of peace should be re-made to fit Christ's mode (Dolan 1964:357).

¹⁷⁵ See Michael J Corso, Ph.D., Coordinator of Continuing Education and Supervised Ministry, BC's Institute of Religious and Pastoral Ministry. <http://bostontheology.zal.org/rec/corso.htm>

Interestingly Jesus' ministry of reconciliation continues even after his death. For, after his resurrection, the young man, who the women discovered in the tomb early Easter morning says, "Go tell his disciples and Peter that he is going ahead of you to Galilee. There you will see him, just, as he told you (Mark 16:7). These are the disciples who deserted him and fled in Gethsemane. This is Peter who three times denied knowing Jesus (Mark 14:66-72). But as an ideal reconciler, Jesus continues to reconcile others to God. Indeed, his resurrection makes the scope of his reconciliation universal. We, who are members of his body, are called to participate in his life as he continues to participate in ours, hence his assurance, "I am with you always, to the very end of the age" (Matthew 28:20).

In Luke's Gospel, Jesus begins the beatitudes with the words, "love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you", pray for those who treat you badly (Luke 6:27). Our human response is usually quite opposite; yet the grace from welcoming the cross at these moments enables us to react with tenderness and peace. This joy of the cross springs from the fact that Jesus conquered death and revealed for all eternity that "Love is greater than sin, and weakness... it is stronger than death; it is a love always ready to raise up and forgive."¹⁷⁶ Our obedience at times of suffering reflects the kingdom of God in a real way and brings reconciliation with God to others. It is no wonder that, the kingdom of God in our world is often greeted with opposition. Pope John Paul tells us, "If this mission seems to encounter greater opposition nowadays than ever before, this shows that today it is more necessary than ever and, in spite of the opposition, more awaited than ever."¹⁷⁷ Thus, in times of opposition Christ's mission is to reconcile them to himself as evidenced by his love for the world (John 3:16).

With regard to the divisions in the modern church - that is-some call themselves mainline, evangelical, Pentecostal, full gospel church hence the division of the African church, Christ reconciliation role shows that, it is a diversion of the true calling of the church. It is as Paul says "Is Christ divided?" (1 Corinthians 1:10). If Christ is building up

¹⁷⁶ See *Redemptor Hominis*, p9

¹⁷⁷ See *Hominis* P. 11.

a family and a people bound together in love, the church which is that family and people ought to be part of its own Gospel; for as Hickinbotham (1996:20) says, “the good news is that in the church we are made one with each other through Christ as well as one with God through Christ”. Church divisions therefore are a denial of the Gospel and a falling short of Christ’s reconciling purpose. Divisions at Holy Communion are particularly grievous, because Christ instituted the Lord’s Supper as the pledge of his new covenant in which he reconciles us to God and to one another in the one family and people, the new Israel of God (Hickinbotham 1966:20). And as Hickinbotham further says, “ the whole symbolism of the sacrament with its emphasis on sharing in the one bread and the one cup stresses that those who receive the Body of Christ and are united thereby to him are by that act” united to all others who receive him, and themselves become thereby one Body (1966:20). The church of the 21st century therefore ought to avoid any form of division because divisions pervert the nature of the church of Christ, which he made to be one fellowship, and thus distort Gospel (1Corinthians 10:17).

With regard to HIV/AIDS, there are reports in Kenya that Christians refuse to take the Holy Communion with the alleged sufferers.¹⁷⁸ This defeats the reconciling role of Christ in that the greatest of the Ten Commandments is love (Mark 12:28-31). Such divisions at the Lords’ table pervert the sacrament itself, and turn what Christ gave as an effectual sign of our reconciliation to one another in him into a “declaration of our failure to accept his reconciliation” (Hickinbotham 1996:21).

As a reconciler, Jesus plays the role of the African elders who, as peace lovers and initiators, reconciled people in their differences and disputes (Wachege 1992:32). Their main role in the community is to bring calmness, restore peace and harmony. Jesus however as the ideal elder, he surpasses their wisdom and skills of managing the affairs of the nation; hence the need to model our reconciliatory skills from him.

On the whole, Jesus emerges in the Gospel as a reconciler who is an excellent counsellor worth being imitated. People with different personal problems approached him for help,

¹⁷⁸ Information gathered through participatory observation as a Kenyan.

consultation or advise. Some of them were very prominent people like Nicodemus (John 3). Christ counsels younger people such as Mary and Martha accordingly (John 11). This model will, no doubt, continue to inform the African church of the twenty first century and beyond. For Christ did not turn away those who came for help, be it for healing or for doctrinal questions like, "Should we pay taxes to Caesar or not?" (Matthew 22:17). He listened to their problems and responded accordingly. In most cases Christ helped them to seek their own solutions to their own problems by posing another question (Matthew 22:15-22). This was to inspire the counselee to build confidence on himself or herself and overcome whatever sort of stress or depression. It was a way of providing fishing skills rather than just giving a hungry person a fish.¹⁷⁹ As a reconciler Christ gives African Christianity an exemplary model for others to draw some lessons from.

6.2.2 Rehabilitation Model

Jesus is the ideal rehabilitator whose death and resurrection rehabilitated humankind. In other words we were sinners but Christ died on behalf of the sinners to justify them - to declare them righteous thereby rehabilitating us.

In following the way of Christ as our study on hospitality has shown us, Mugambi (1995:176) calls on the church of the present to convert herself into the church of the future, in Africa, by being practical and not theoretical in restoring hope and dignity to all those who are under various types of bondage. She must let the good news that Christ brought to restore sight to those who suffer from various types of blindness and proclaim the jubilee to those who eagerly and desperately await the year of God's favour (Luke 4:16-22, Matthew 25:31-46). In particular, the church of the future in Africa, as Mugambi (1995:176) notes, ought to rehabilitate the following:

¹⁷⁹ This is attributed to a popular saying by President Julius Nyerere of Tanzania who used to say, "if you find an hungry person, don't just give him fish, show him or her how to fish".

(a) Refugees and displaced persons

It is saddening to note that the constitutional independence in most African countries, in 1960s, did not make the citizens to enjoy a higher standard of living and "experience greater cultural self-actualisation (Mugambi 1976:176). As a result of the failure of the leadership, in Africa, millions of people have become displaced due to natural and social disturbances. In Kenya for instance, the government has sometimes become unable to respond adequately to displacements caused by droughts (as in the semi arid Northern Kenya) and floods (as in the Lake Victoria Basin). As Mugambi (1995:177) further says, the Church of the 21st century and beyond is challenged to become an effective agent of reconciliation between culture and nature, "so that people will not have to be displaced by floods, droughts and other natural disasters". For the church to be effective as an alternative government, it will require of the churches to take science and technology more seriously than in the past. That therefore means, as agents of the future, the church in Africa will require to cooperate with researchers who have expert knowledge on such issues.

With regard to social issues, the African Church will need to effectively meet this challenge by launching "a long-term programme for conflict-resolution within and between denominations and also in the context of national and international conflicts" (Mugambi 1995:177) that lead to civil war, that in turn result in people fleeing to neighbouring countries as refugees, thereby threatening the security of the host community - by bringing crude weapons. An example is the Kakuma refugee Camp in Northern Kenya. This camp, which is maintained by the funds from mainly the United Nations and the Roman Catholic Church, has posed security problems to the locals who were otherwise not used to gunfights.¹⁸⁰ Thus, by the church, for instance, working with international bodies to bring the civil war in Southern Sudan to an end, the peace for Kenyans living along the Kenya/Ethiopia border will be assured.

¹⁸⁰ This information was acquired when I was serving in the remotest part of Northern Kenya-Moyale district, Sololo/Uran parish of the Anglican church of Kenya.

(b) Women

Women as the majority in our congregations and being the doers of 80% of domestic work ought to be given more attention by the church of the future (Mugambi 1995:177). It is no wonder that in times of social strife, the majority of the victims are women and children.¹⁸¹ The way to rehabilitate women will include affirmative actions, enabling them to take more active roles in ecclesiastical affairs, enabling them to increase their productivity through income-generating activities, as we saw of John Wesley's case in Chapter three where he encouraged the church to give soft loans for such undertakings. This will in turn boost self-confidence of women and will help Africa to highlight hope rather than hopelessness.

(c) The hungry

In following Christ's hospitality, the church of the 21st century will have to address the question of hunger as an urgent issue. For food security cannot be left entirely to 'secular' institutions. As Mugambi (1995:179) says, "the congregations ought to have food security committees to advise the members of the best ways to avoid famine". By taking the question of hunger seriously, Christians can become responsible to one another, helping each other to build food reserves at the local levels. This agrees with Christ's commendation in the parable of the talents where the person who was able to invest in the talent that he or she was given is highly praised.

(d) The disabled

As Africa gets more and more impoverished by some policies imposed from outside such as Structural Adjustments Programmes, "there is a great risk that the weak and the disabled might be forgotten" (Mugambi 1995:178). This therefore means that the Church

¹⁸¹ We can affirm our argument by the examples of Rwanda's genocide, the war in the great lakes region and the ongoing war in Southern Sudan. In these wars women and children have been forced to camp in both Ugandan and Kenyan refugee camps in very pathetic conditions. However, we thank God that Rwanda is recovering first enough as climaxed by the first democratic elections in August 2003 since the genocide of 1994.

of the 21st century, in focusing on the future, will have to learn from Christ's hospitality as applied by the church fathers such as Bishop Chrysostom¹⁸² and John Wesley¹⁸³; and embark on specific projects to help the blind, the deaf, the physically handicapped and so on. In any case, the healing ministry of Jesus is exemplary in this respect.

(e) Youth and students

With HIV/AIDS prevalence threatening to wipe the people of Africa, and the youth/adolescents being the most vulnerable, the churches of Africa will need to focus on youth and students by embarking on such a ministry. This ministry will require training chaplain, counsellors, and the youth leaders. As Mugambi (1995:178) says, a strong student programme in the All Africa Conference of Churches may help to establish their own responses to this urgent challenge.

(f) Street Children

As poverty increases in most African cities - Nairobi, Pietermaritzburg, Mombasa, Lagos and so on -more children are now seen in the streets (this is my observation). This therefore means that there is an urgent need for pastoral care for street children, who are mainly destitute or homeless. In Kenya, several government ministries have attempted to rehabilitate them but the church input is more important because of its spiritual aspects.

It is no wonder that some of these children have come to the streets after their sole breadwinner dies, say as a result of HIV/AIDS. This therefore calls for the African Church to press the African governments to provide antiretroviral drugs to their citizens who are also taxpayers and are infected by HIV/AIDS as we pray for the discovery of the cure for the disease. We trust that Christ the healer will provide the wonder drug by empowering and enlightening those who are involved in that task.

¹⁸² Chrysostom features prominently in early hospitality in chapter two.

¹⁸³ Rev. John Wesley features prominently as a leading example in the 18th century hospitality in chapter three.

On the whole, the question of rehabilitating street children is crucial, for like other displaced people in Africa, who need to be taken care of, such as widows, the aged, the orphaned and the jobless, street children need to be rehabilitated because they are the most vulnerable resource and they are also our own future (Mutugi 2001:4). A child who is neglected or abused is a future that is lost. Thus, they need help because they are African Children born in a continent whose traditions have placed a high value on the well being of children. In any case, Jesus has modelled the love for children when he says; “ Let children come to me” (Matthew 19:14).

Thus, the theme of Christ as the model of reconstruction will no doubt remain prominent in the Africa of the twenty first century as the concerns our time will need to be addressed. Thus, as a reconstructor, Christ manifests himself in rehabilitation, reconciliation, and in restoration. Africa will therefore be at an advantage by focussing on Christ in his reconstruction role.

6.3 Family Model

In his public ministry, Jesus affirms his ties with immediate and extended family, while at the same time, he distinguishes himself from the rest of his kith and kin through his unique ministry to the Jewish community in general and the world at large (Mugambi; 1995:139). This double identity of Jesus as a family member serves as a model for the African Christian who comes from traditions that place high value on extended family (Compare his genealogy in the first chapter of Matthews gospel). For, Christ, he maintained a status of a member of his immediate family and respects his mother and father (Luke 2:21-52, 8:19-21). As a member of the Jewish community, he obeys the law rather than abolishing it (Matthew 5:17-20) and as a member of the world community, he goes beyond his immediate family, his extended family and the Jewish community to serve the non-Jews such as the Romans (Matthew 8:5; Mark 15:39; Luke 7:2), the Samaritans (John 4:39) and the Syrophoenicians (Mark 7:26; John 19:20; 7:35).

Wachege (1992:205) contends that Christ goes beyond the respected African elders whose reverence is seen in their ability to build up families, to shepherd them effectively and in guaranteeing their communitarian-vitalistic prosperity. Christ on his part established his family i.e., the church and stabilized it by loving it and sacrificing himself for it. He accomplished this so well that, “better than the Agîkûyû elders”, he became the saviour (Ephesians 5:23) who gave hope to his family (John 16:33); and this can be noted throughout the gospel (Wachege 1992:205). He fulfilled the above in his conduct, words, parables, miracles and his whole life as we have already studied about his earthly ministry. Indeed, by preaching love of neighbour (Matthew 5:22ff, 22:39; Mark 12:30; John 13:34-34), mutual forgiveness (Matthew 5:38ff; 18:21-22; Luke 17:4; 6:27ff) and by condemning divorce (Matthew 5:32ff, 19:3ff; Mark 10:1ff; Luke 16:18), he superseded our revered African elders in establishing and stabilizing families thereby becoming our model of family life.

As Mugambi says, the definition of family as the nuclear social unit of the husband, wife and children is not strictly biblical. Rather it is a product of industrialization and urbanization (Mugambi 1998:139). The challenge for the African Christians in the 21st century and beyond is to decide whether to adopt the Euro-American norm of the family in their own understanding as Christians or revise the understanding of family in the light of Christ as a model through whom we should define ourselves.

By refusing to be dragged into being with his parents during his presentation in the Temple and going to sit among the teachers to listen and ask questions and further contribute to the debates (Luke 2:41-52), Jesus was not rebelling against his parents who looked for him for three days. Rather, he was cautioning the danger of over-emphasizing the immediate and extended family at the expense of the universal community. After all, all human beings regardless of the race, tribe, creed or background are brothers and sisters. It is no wonder that when his mother and brothers came to see him and were unable due to the crowd; and someone told him, “Your mother and brothers are standing outside, wanting to see you”, He replied, “my mother and my brothers are those who hear God’s word and put it into practice” (Luke 8:19-21). It is this danger of over-emphasizing

the extended family or immediate family that Jesus changed the definition of a neighbour to mean, anyone in need of help, and she or he ought to be given any hospitality possible (Luke 10:25-37).

The history of the Apostolic Church shows us that the family was appreciated as a significant unit of conversion. This is clearly demonstrated by the conversion of Lydia and her household (Acts 16:15); and the jailer who was converted together with his household (Acts 16:33). This therefore means that individualistic conversion ought not be popularised as the only possibility¹⁸⁴.

As Mugambi (1998:139) says, the risk of over-emphasizing the immediate and extended family at the expense of the universal community could be coped with if conversion is distinguished from acculturation. For example, in the East African Revival Movement, the Christian Fellowship uses family concepts such as 'brother' and 'sister' though it is understood that these concepts refer to the spiritual relationship rather than natural kinship or biological considerations.¹⁸⁵ Thus, the Christianity of the 21st century - Africa - must guard against over individualisation of conversion. And since the family model of Christ shows that there is no need to break vital ties with ones extended family, denominations need not break the family unit, as it has happened in various parts on Kenya.

6.4 Cultural Model

African Christianity will have to learn to value culture from Christ's hospitality, as his earthly life was full of goodness and perfection. Culturally, Jesus was born a Jew and raised as a Jew. He did not disown his heritage. On the eighth day, he was circumcised

¹⁸⁴ This is the emphasis among the Pentecostal churches of Kenya, as my participatory observation will reveal. They, unlike the mainline churches like Anglican, Presbyterians, Methodists and Catholics contend that child baptism is not scriptural. These churches that include the Full Gospel church, the Redeemed church, the Gospel outreach tend to ignore these household conversion in the Acts and emphasise on the baptism of John the Baptist.

¹⁸⁵ These are my observation as I interact with them.

according to the Jewish custom, and at the age of twelve, he was presented in the Temple as demanded by Jewish tradition (Luke 2:41-51).

It is no wonder that the Christological debates in the early Church were concentrated on whether Jesus was bound by Jewish culture or not (Mugambi 1998:138). Niebuhr addressed himself to this question when he argued that Christ is the Lord of culture, he is culture, and he transcends culture and transforms culture (Niebuhr 1995:10ff). As a model of inculturation, Jesus teaches contextually by relating the message to the particular Jewish culture in the imperialistic Graeco-Roman setting. He gives, for instance, a contextual example of Jews and Samaritans, to show the ethnic prejudice between the two (Luke 10:25-37). In so doing, he teaches us about good neighbourliness through addressing the cultural differences that existed between the Jews and her neighbours and shows how tribalism, which is a thorny issue in Africa can be eradicated by changing our definition and attitude towards our fellow members of the human society (Luke 10:25-37) - the neighbours. Interestingly, he instructs us to go to and do likewise, thereby, making it official to not only see our fellow members of the humanity as neighbours who need to assist one another in time of need and also to be proud of our cultural backgrounds and diversities.

As Mugambi (1995:90) says, the disciples were not expected to denounce their cultural heritage. Rather, they were to learn to assert their heritage with due care and consideration of the cultures and religions of those to whom they preached. St. Paul used the same approach with regard to the people he evangelised to in the Mediterranean region (Acts 17:22-34, Acts 19, 20). Without abandoning his Jewish heritage, he demonstrated how thoroughly and constructively he appreciated the people's cultures. Thus, as Mugambi further says, "we are all, regardless of who or what we are, urged to continue to assert our cultural and religious heritage fairly, while respecting and appreciating the religions and cultures of those around us". He goes on to express his worry, "To what extent has the modern Christian missionary undertaking adhered to this principle?" (Mugambi 1995:91).

The cultural models in the New Testament are very useful in African Christianity as they distinguish between inculturation and conversion. As (Mugambi 1998:138) rightly says, conversion involves a change of worldview, whereas acculturation is a superficial conformity to the norms of a dominant invading culture for the sake of survival or benefit. For when one is fully converted, a shift in cultural way of doing things will have to change. Thus, for inculturation to yield a lasting impact on African Christianity, it must arise from a radical conversion like the case of the Samaritan woman (John 4:29), who even had the audacity to call the rest of the Samaritans who were ethnically not in line with the Jews, to “come and see a man who told me everything I ever did”. Such radical conversion is clearly portrayed by St. Stephen (Acts 7), and St. Paul (Act 9) and others in the New Testament.

The cultural model as espoused by Christ, in his hospitality, should help African Christians to appreciate that the African culture, if well harnessed, has something to contribute to the growing African Christianity.

In protesting against clerical domination, which is a by-product of patriarchy, in the modern church, Ruether (1983:206) says that “once we free ourselves from clericalism we will be able to rediscover the value of special celebration garments... and special modes of communication such as ritual gesture, chant and song that distinguish liturgy from ordinary life”. Perhaps, we may paraphrase Ruther’s words and say that, once we accept to learn from Christ’s cultural model, we shall therefore begin the process of authenticating the Gospel of Christ in our African context by spicing it with some of the neglected but rich cultural values such as African traditional dance, African traditional songs, use of drama during worship and liturgy, and use of African musical instruments such as drums. We shall be able to indigenise the gospel of Christ through African oral narratives; African myths, proverbs, sayings and riddles hence the gospel of Christ in this great continent that we are called to steward. In so doing, we shall be able to experience true worship which Dr. William Barclay¹⁸⁶ sees as that which sees the whole world and

¹⁸⁶ Exegesis on Romans 12:1-3.

its creation as the temple of the Lord hence the need to treat life in general as sacred and deserving honour.

6.5 Rural ministry model

With Africa's population being predominantly rural, and likely to remain so for quite sometime, Christ's earthly life where he was a rural dweller becomes a model in African Christianity today. First, he was born in Bethlehem about ten kilometres to the South of Jerusalem, and grew up in Nazareth. Nazareth was a small town about a hundred and thirty kilometres north of the revered city of Jerusalem (Mugambi 1989:91). Joseph and Mary, his parents, were poor rural dwellers like most African Christians in the rural areas. He spent most of his youth and adolescent days in the province of Galilee, which was a rural area. In this, he consequently inspires the African Christians in the rural areas not to concentrate on rural –urban migration, as the solution to their socio-economic problems for God's love is manifest through out in history (Matthew 18:20).

Another interesting dimension in the public ministry of Jesus is that he did not abandon the rural areas; rather, he spent most of his time as a devotee to the rural society in a country where the population was predominantly rural (Mugambi 1989:91). Indeed, it would have been fashionable for a leader of the stature of Jesus to spend most of his time in the prestigious city of Jerusalem and also launch his public ministry in that cosmopolitan capital (see John 18:36). Interestingly, that is what the prominent leaders of the time did, except John the Baptist and Jesus.¹⁸⁷ The Sanhedrin-the Jewish council of elders-held its meetings in Jerusalem (Muller 1957:53-55). In fact, Herbert J.Muller observes that the Graeco-Roman civilization was city-centred, and leaders had to move to cities in order to distinguish themselves.¹⁸⁸ Jesus, however, moved to the city only occasionally, during the religious festivals. We can argue that, it is probably the reason why his public ministry was very unique and successful was also popular with its audience (Luke 9:10-17).

¹⁸⁷ This is the way the gospels present Jesus and John the Baptist.

¹⁸⁸ See H. J. Miller 1957. *The uses of the past* (New York: Oxford University Press) pp. 53-55, 162-176, 210-134.

According to the gospel of Matthew, Jesus began his public ministry in Capernaum, a little town on the Northwestern shore of lake Galilee. His first followers were not scholars or respectable teachers. They were not rabbis and scribes. He chose his disciples from various backgrounds. For example, Matthew was a tax collector (among the hated people in the society due to excesses in tax collection), Simon the Zealot,¹⁸⁹ two pairs of brothers- Simon and Andrew; and James and John were the sons of Zebedee. Thus, he chose his first four disciples among the petty fishermen (Mugambi 1989:92).

Jesus' first inaugural sermon was not in the prestigious Temple at Jerusalem. It was in the countryside on a hill near the shores of Lake Galilee. This sermon has been referred to as the "Sermon on the Mount" (Matthew 5-7). Since the followers of Jesus were ordinary rural individuals, the bringing of a Centurion's sick servant to Jesus for healing indicates that his fame was immense not only among the Jews and other Roman subjects, but also to Greeks and Romans living in Palestine at the time (Matthew 8:5-13).

As Matthew (4:23-25) tells us,

....he went about all Galilee, teaching in their Synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every infirmity among the people. So his fame spread throughout all Syria, and they brought him all the sick, and those afflicted with various diseases and pains, demoniacs, epileptics and paralytics, and he healed them. And great crowds followed him from Galilee and the Decapolis and Jerusalem and Judea and from beyond the Jordan.

Thus, in evaluating Christ's rural-ministry model, we realise that the concerns of the majority who are mainly rural people, even in the present day Africa is poverty, diseases, lack of visionary leadership and teaching. This is the good example that African Christianity can learn from Christ's hospitality. That is, the need to address the concerns of the neglected, the marginalized and those who are vulnerable. Having won their confidence, he was freely visited by the people with problems (as we have already seen); and he did not let them down. Likewise, the church today in Africa is challenged to make

¹⁸⁹ Zealots were a political party that had a soft spot for the forceful overthrow of the Roman government by military intervention.

itself available and be relevant to rural society, so that it may fulfil the demands of Christian discipleship.

6.6 Market Theologian Model

This sub-section is in line with “Rural Ministry model”. The only emphasis is that as a market theologian, he moved to the market places where people are- be it rural or urban and articulated the theology of salvation (Matthew 21:12). As he aptly said, “seek first the kingdom and its righteousness, and all those things will be given to you as well” (Matthew 6:33). As a market theologian, he becomes an evangelist par excellence when he invites his audience to salvation by saying,

Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light (Matthew 11:28-30).

This appealing message of invitation to enjoy the benefits of being in the kingdom is very relevant to African Christianity as we wrestle with the burdens of Africa such as moral decadence, HIV/AIDS, promiscuity, tribal hatred, political tensions, hunger, poverty, disease and general permissiveness especially among our teenage youths. It is a message of hope and comfort to know that there is one who cares and understands fully our relevant situations (see Jeremiah 29:11).

A market is a place where people from all walks of life converge. It is cosmopolitan. It is the “theatre of the poor, those of low or no income as opposed to the metropolis” (Banana 1991:68). Whilst the market place is predominantly patronised by the low-income people, non-the-less this does not preclude a sprinkling of all other social groups.¹⁹⁰

Upon the above basis of the meaning of “market”, we can rightly say that Jesus was a “market theologian” both literally and metaphorically. For just as a market is a public

¹⁹⁰ This is my observation in both East Africa and South Africa

place, we find that Jesus was a public person. As Messiah, he taught in such a way that his message contained normative signals both to church and society for the restoration of humanity and the world to date (Banana 1991:69). His messages addressed the concerns of the general public; and were characterised by his vehement attack on social injustices, social and moral decadence, religious orthodoxy and the general corruption of the religious leaders of the day like Pharisees, Sadducees and the Scribes (cf. Matthew 23). He targeted every one in the “market”, as the ongoing discussion shows, and in turn, every one had something to learn.

Christ success as a market-theologian is evident in the accusation by the Jews:

We found this man perverting our nation, and forbidding us to give tribute to Caesar, and saying he himself is Christ the King (Luke 23:2).

His success can also be seen in the continuation of his ministry, in the early church as Luke tells us in the book of Acts where the apostles became market theologians, in following in the footsteps of their master. As a market theologian par excellence, Christ had taught his disciples, and to a large extent his entire followers in all ages, to draw their images as he did- that is- from folklore, wisdom and popular traditions – for example parables pertaining to agricultural activities (cf. Luke 8- the parables of the sower). As one who came to seek and save the lost (Luke 19:10), he knew that the lost were not to be found in the synagogues, although ironically there were many there, but in the countryside- the markets!

Africa will need to accept the “Market -theologian model” that is well espoused by Christ or Christianity will die a painful death as our studies show. An explanation on this: In Britain, it is a taboo to talk about Christian gospel in the public square (Holloway 1989:37). This has weakened the church so much that in some buildings only a tiny group will attend the Sunday service. Some have already closed completely (See Holloway 1989). The fact that Christian faith, in Britain, does not get a public reference and is exclusively private therefore goes against the market theologian model that Jesus set for

us to draw some relevant lessons from. For how can the church grow? Where then will the custodian of the message of Christ get the opportunity to take the message of “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened...” (Matthew 11:28-30). Market theologian model, in this study, seeks to offer a suggestion by insisting that the message of Christ has to be shared in season and out of season (2 Timothy 4:2), in public and in private. For it is the only way that the church will grow.

6.7 Celebration model

According to the Christian doctrine, the enactment of the last supper is always a commemoration of the communion of Jesus with his disciples and, by extension, with the whole universal church (Mugambi 1998:160). For in the last supper, he established a communion between his closest followers- the disciples- and those who were apparently less committed, who included the traitor Judas. Since then, the last supper has become ritualised into the central feast of the Christian faith. This is as he said, “Do this in remembrance of me” (Luke 22:19). Thus Jesus becomes the chief celebrant in the feast, which unites all Christians worldwide.

As Jesus said during the unique celebration of the last supper, “drink from it, all of you” (Matthew 26:27), the Eucharist as Christ said is an invitation to all people to be reconciled to him. Unfortunately, in Africa, there is what we may call “Eucharistic famine” (Mutugi 2001:26), whereby the vast majority of the Mainline churches, and in particular my Anglican church of Kenya- Kirinyaga Diocese, are excluded from this very sacrament. In particular, the polygamist and single mothers are excluded from partaking in the Lord’s Table during the Holy Communion. Further, those who have not formalized their weddings in the church are excluded from partaking the Eucharist, even, if they have been married for over forty years under the African customary law¹⁹¹. This exclusion seems to go against Christ’s own confession, “I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full” (John 10:10). It also calls us to revise our denominational

¹⁹¹ I gathered this information as a result of almost one and half decades in the Anglican Church ministry as a priest.

theologies and see how best we can accommodate as many people as possible, for it is they whom God so much loved (John 3:16).

In Eucharist¹⁹² Christians thank God for what has been done for them in Christ - that is, God's saving work (Healey and Sybertz 1996:259). "For by grace you have been saved through faith and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God- not the result of works, so that no one may boast" (Ephesians 2:8-9). The only thing that African Christians can do is to offer union with the whole Christ, head and members, this perfect sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. For indeed, human beings are like the leper who returned to thank Christ for the hospitality that was dispensed to him through his healing (See Luke 17:11-19). Sunday, Saturday or any other day, Christians ought to return to the church of Christ to thank God for what the Lord has done for humanity in Christ. In any case, "what shall I return to the Lord for all his (sic) bounty to me?" (Psalms 116:12). This calls the African Christians to take the lessons from Christ's model of celebration and therefore convert challenges into opportunities as they celebrate the gift of life above every other thing. Indeed, as Healey and Sybertz (1996:275) says, in the African view, the Eucharist as "Assembly" is closely connected to the Eucharist as "thanks giving". For Christians come together to thank God for the great deed of salvation, for Jesus Christ's gift of the medicine of everlasting life. In any case, Africans like to give thanks to God for concrete blessings-fertility of mothers, healthy children, passing examinations (this is a new development) and good harvests (See Healey and Sybertz 1996:275). Thus the Eucharist as a thanksgiving rite should automatically become a holistic celebration of life, in following the example of Christ.

6.7.1 Liturgical model

Just as Christ started his public life with prayer (Luke 3:21, Mark 3:13-17), he concluded it in prayer (Luke 23:46, Mark 15:34, Matthew 27:46). This prayerful life made him totally and wholly involved first with God and then with human beings (Kung 1976:186f). This impressed his disciples so much that one of them requested him to teach them how to pray (Luke 11:1). Christ thus offers a structure of prayer, which has become

¹⁹² The Greek word for Eucharist is " thanks giving (see Healey and Sybertz 1996:259).

the standard in Christian liturgy today (Matthew 6:7-15). As a liturgical model, he teaches us how to worship God in truth and sincerity unlike the Pharisees who wanted to be seen as holy and yet their hearts were far from what they were outwardly displaying (Matthew 6:1-4, Matthew 23:1-36). He commends the publican who was self-conscious of his low social esteem and humbled himself before God and said, as prayer: "God have mercy on me, a sinner" (Luke 18:13). He contrasts this tax collector with the Pharisee who stood up and prayed about himself:

God, I thank you that I am not like other men - robbers, evildoers,
and adulterers- or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week
and give a tenth of all I get (Luke 18:11-12).

In condemning the Pharisee who boasted of his superficial religiosity, Jesus gives us the model of prayer and to a large extent, the model of Christian worship- that is-observing the virtues of being honest in all we do- to ourselves, to our fellow human beings and to God our maker

In the incident that may be referred to as the "cleansing of the Temple" (Matthew 21:12-13), Jesus demands a separation between liturgy and commerce. Rather than turning the house of God into a stock exchange, it should be preserved as a house of prayer. While giving the guidelines, Christ did not fix a clear-cut formula of worship that must be followed-rather he insisted on the sincerity in liturgy. He sent his followers freely to creatively build on the guidelines that he had given, provided they remained faithful to the prophetic tradition.¹⁹³ In particular, he did not restrict the power of the Holy Spirit in worship (1 Corinthians 12-14). African Christianity will therefore build on the liturgical model of Christ to engage in a task of liturgical renewal that will contain Schism and the widening gaps between churches, especially in many parts of Africa, as a result of liturgical differences. After all, as Paul wondered: "Is Christ divided?" (1 Corinthians 3). In any case, "There is one body and one spirit- just as you were called to one hope when you were called- one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father (mother) of all, who is over all and through all and in all." (Ephesians 4:4-6).

¹⁹³ This comes clear in the book of Acts and 1 Corinthians 12-14 as Paul attempts to interpret Christ.

6.7.2 Charismatic model

Christ is the most charismatic leader who has ever lived in history.¹⁹⁴ Though he had incomparable spiritual gifts (*charis*), he chose the cabinet of twelve disciples to bring in their gifts as well, thereby showing the need to value one another's gifts (Luke 5:1-11, Mark 1:14-20, Matthew 4:18-22, John 1:35-51). The fact that these disciples had different backgrounds means that they had different gifts that needed to be shared corporately.¹⁹⁵

Christ's charismatic stature was such that he commanded reverence from the multitude that followed him and envy from the Jewish elite who were overshadowed by his power (Mugambi 1998:150). He taught as one who had authority, not as scribes (Mark 1:21-22). Using his charismatic authority, he commanded even the unclean spirits, and they obeyed him (Mark 1:27). He commanded even the winds and the water, and they obeyed him (Luke 8:25). He withstands the devil's schemes (Luke 4:1-29). He healed the sick (Luke 4:38-44), fed the hungry (Luke 9:10-17) comforted the afflicted (Luke 4:18-20), and restored hope to the desperate (Matthew 9:35-38) as "he had compassion for the crowds who were like sheep without a shepherd. When he sent the disciples, he bestowed on them the charisma to go out and heal, teach, preach and restore hope (Matthew 28:18-20). They were, thus, able to comfort, counsel, teach, preach, and heal among other things. From the charismatic model, African Christianity will learn to accommodate various gifts in the church without the leaders feeling intimidated by those who excel over them. St. Paul contends that if these gifts are well harnessed, they can build the church (1 Corinthians 12-14, Ephesians 4:10-11), "until we all reach unity in the knowledge of Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ" (Ephesians 4:13).

¹⁹⁴ This view is informed in the fact that he was truly man and truly God.

¹⁹⁵ We have already examined their respective backgrounds as the gospels present them.

The African church of the twenty first century will no doubt learn the need to value interdependence from this charismatic model. This theme of interdependence is well developed by St. Paul when he says that:

The body is not made up of one part but of many. If the foot should say, 'because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body'; it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body... If the whole body were an eye where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? But in fact God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be... (1 Corinthians 12:12-26).

Aristotle also recognized the need for interdependence when he defined human being as a political animal, a creature who is ordained by his nature to live in a polis (city), or very simply, in society (Wanjohi 1997:113). Agreeing with Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas says that:

Man (sic) is a social animal, having many wants he cannot supply for himself. He is born into a group by nature. By living with others, he is helped to the good life. First, as regards necessities without which life cannot be lived, his parents support him on for his birth, feeding, and upbringing. Each member of the family helps the other. Secondly, as regards the conveniences without which life cannot be lived well, he is helped by the civil group, both for material benefit, for the state provides public services beyond the means of one household, and for moral advantage, thus public authority can check young criminals when paternal warnings go unheeded (Wanjohi 1997:113).

What does this portend for African Christianity? As Mugambi (1998:150) says, there has been a tendency in some strands of African Christianity to restrict charisma only to preaching and conversion. But as we have already noted, St. Paul's interpretation of charismatic power shows that all skills arise from God's grace and should be regarded as gifts of the Holy Spirit. According to this interpretation, therefore, we are challenged to take every profession seriously, as our service to God and humanity. These professions may vary from engineers, architects, political scientists, computer scientists, environmental scientists, medical doctors, teachers, artisans, carpenters, lawyers, artists, archivists, and so on. It is a great challenge for the African church of the 21st century to

become the beacon that maps the direction for the rest of the society by making productive use of the many talents that troops in the individual churches every week.

6.9 Conclusion

In this chapter, we have learnt from the hospitable Christ on the need to work hand in hand to bring total liberation to the people of the world, whom he so much loved (John 3:16). We have also learnt about the urgency of reconstructing our theologies and our socio-economic lives, in Africa, so as to be compliant with Christ's ideal hospitality that embraces all regardless of weakness or strength. The chapter has highlighted the models of reconciliation, rehabilitation, family, cultural, rural ministry, market theologian, celebration, liturgical, and charismatic model. Indeed, learning from Christ is very enriching as it inspires us on how to wrestle with the day-to-day challenges that keep on following us as a shadow. As the true shepherd, African Christianity will have to borrow from his models (John 10:11); because he will always make us lie down in greener pastures, restore our souls, guide us in the paths of righteousness and lead us beside quiet waters. Even though Africa may be walking through the valley of the shadow of death, there is no need of fear for he is with the people of Africa (See psalm 23). He will teach us and we shall need to continuously seek to learn from him. In any case, as Hosea (4:6) noted, "my people are destroyed from lack of knowledge". Rather than destroy, his knowledge will heal Africa holistically.

In concluding this chapter- on Christological models, we have learnt that it is very hard to exhaust or to conclude the lessons from Christ's hospitality; for Christ continues to inform and to empower his church in the twenty first century and beyond as he has done in the past (Matthew 28:20).

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this work is to re-examine Christ's hospitality from an African theological perspective. The study has demonstrated that Christianity cannot afford the luxury of ignoring some rich cultural concepts such as hospitality from African traditions as they are compatible with Christ's mission. It has thereby encouraged further dialogue between Christ's hospitality and African hospitality with the former being superior over the latter as Christ's becomes the ideal model having had the rare opportunity of being human and God at the same time. It has also enlightened us on the fact that Christ's hospitality like African hospitality addresses all spheres of life. In other words, wherever Christ is, whether it is in the African church, whether he is confronting the hypocrisy of the Pharisees or in the socio-political arena, he carries with him his hospitality, which is to the benefit of the people whom God so much loved (Matthew 28:16-20, John 3:16, 10:10, Matthew 11:28ff).

The study has also unveiled the centrality of hospitality to the social practices of many society attests to its almost universal importance. Indeed, hospitality as a necessity to human beings has been seen in this work, as that which offers protection, provision, and respect for strangers while at the same time it sustains fundamental moral bonds among family, friends, and acquaintances. This is for instance, demonstrated by the fact that, in the first centuries of the church, Christians gave hospitality to strangers a distinctive emphasis by pressing welcome outward toward the weakest and those least likely to be able to reciprocate.

The study has also shown that Christ's hospitality reflects and participates in God's hospitality for God loves the sojourner and provides for the vulnerable. God gives the lonely a home and offers us a place at an abundant table (John 10:10). The concept of hospitality, therefore, has been portrayed as one that which depends on a disposition of love; and as that which has more to do with the resources of a generous and

grateful heart than with availability of food or space. Our study has also shown us that our moral life is inseparable from close attention to the life of Christ. For in the gospels, Christ is presented as both the gracious host and the needy guest; who welcomes the outcast and depends on the welcome of ordinary folk. In his table fellowship, he challenges the cultural assumptions about who is welcome in the community and in the kingdom. He identifies himself with the stranger and sick such that ministry to them is ministry to him (Matthew 25:31-46). He teaches explicitly that we are to include the poor and infirm in our invitations to dinner (Luke 14:12-14). Thus, we are able to know how hospitality should look like when we dwell in and on the life of Christ.

As African Christians therefore, the challenge is to address and literary face issues that are threatening the joys of the twenty first century together. Some of these issues, most of whom have been discussed in this dissertation are, HIV/Aids, tribalism, global imbalance that makes Africa an underdog, corruption especially among our African elites, regionalism, racism and sexism. In other words, having learnt from Christ's hospitality, the people of Africa will need to get rid of the racist, sectional, sexist, and nepotistic mentality for these are the vices that are detrimental to and incompatible with human and economic development.

It is of paramount importance that our lives, as Africans, be characterised by the virtues of sharing, justice, equity and a spirit of oneness and fraternity that transcends ordinary boundaries in our day-to-day lives. This is possible because as he promised, he (Christ) will continue to teach us through the holy spirit (Acts 1:1, John 14) and whenever we ask, he will give; whenever we seek, we will find; and when we knock, he will open the door (Matthew 7:7). He is that unique, ideal and therefore hospitable friend who opens even at midnight when we knock, for as a servant leader, he values our comforts (Luke 11:5-5). He will be with us as we grapple with the challenges of the moment (Matthew 28:18-20). Indeed, he is the good shepherd who restores our souls, makes us lie down in green pastures where there is no lack but abundance. His

goodness, love and compassion will follow us as we face the third millennium (Psalm 23).

Finally, it is the recommendation of this work that a subject or a course on hospitality should be introduced in our tertiary institutions and especially in our theological colleges and schools. In my opinion, it should be part of philosophical studies. Alternatively, various academic disciplines can design different ways of handling this topic as it permeates various disciplines. For example, the study of African Women's theologies can develop this topic further thereby widening the scope of study. Similarly, the studies on political science or Social ethics can be designed in such a manner that hospitality is studied within the framework of theories such as "just war", "pacifism/non-violence", armament versus disarmament in the new world order. In a situation where terrorism is threatening the world peace, a topic on hospitality need to be given more attention and be looked from all angles as Christ set the pace in his sacrificial hospitality. This would ensure that the learners will evaluate themselves from time to time with regard to the concept of hospitality thereby assessing the society in general. In so doing, it will ensure that such an important concept, in a continent ravaged by war, diseases, hatred as evidenced by sectionalism discussed above, poverty and other challenges, will not die but will be strengthened further.

It is through the study of hospitality that we can be able to overcome the obstacles or hindrances to the practice of hospitality today - racism, ethnic conflicts, male chauvinism, status, political and religious barriers, religious sectarianism etc. It is a great challenge for the people of Africa to practice hospitality in the context of racial discrimination, tribalism, nepotism, oppression, exploitation, emigration restrictions, class barriers, caste barriers, religious barriers, antagonistic political parties and factions, gender barriers and generation barriers.

It will be a great challenge for African Christianity to become the beacon mapping the direction for the rest of society through the study of a concept that is so dear in Biblical traditions and the African heritage. Thus the foundation of the Christian

Church in Africa has been laid through the concept of hospitality. The peoples of this great continent are now more than ever before called to be the “chosen race” and a “holy nation” in order to proclaim the glory of God.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abbey, R.T 2001. “Rediscovering Ataa Naa Nyonmo-The Father-Mother God” in (eds.) N. Njoroge and Musa W. Dube in *Talitha Cum! Theologies of African Women* (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications).
- Achembe, C. 1958. *Things Fall Apart* (London: Heinemann Educational Books).
- Adagala, K. &
Kabira, W. eds. 1985 *Kenyan Oral Narratives: A selection* (Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers).
- Alexander, T.D 1985. “Lot’s Hospitality: A clue to His Righteousness”, in *Journal of Biblical Literature* 104/2 (1985).
- Ambe, J. 1993. *Meaningful Celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation in Africa* (Eldoret: AMECEA Gaba Publications).
- Aulen, G. 1976. *Jesus in Contemporary Historical Research* (Philadelphia: Fortress).
- Bahemuka, J.M. 1992. “Social Changes and Women’s Attitudes toward Marriage in East Africa” in *The will to Arise: Women, Tradition, and the church in Africa* eds. M.A.Oduyoye and M.Kanyoro (MaryKnoll:Orbis Books).
- Bahemuka, J.M. 1998. “The hidden Christ in African Traditional Religion” in

- J.N.K.Mugambi and L.Magesa eds. *Jesus in African Christianity: Experimentation and Diversity in African Christology* (Nairobi: Acton).
- Banana, C.S. 1991. *Come and share: An introduction to Christian Theology* (Harare: Mambo press).
- Barclay, W. 1962. *Jesus as they saw him* (New York: Harper and Row).
- Barry, J.& Spaneth R.L eds. 1987. *A Sense of Place: Saint John's of Collegeville* (Collegeville, Minn.: Saint John's University Press).
- Bate, S.C. 1995. *Inculturation and Healing* (Pietermaritzburg: Custer publications).
- Bediako, K.1995. *Christianity in Africa, The Renewal of a Non-Western Religion* (Edinburgh: University press).
- Bietenhard, H. 1979. "Xenos" in Lotha, C. et al. (Hg.), *Theologisches Begriffslexikon Zum Neuen Testament*, Band 1, Wuppertal: Theologischer Verlag R. Brockhaus.
- Bosch, D.J. 1991. *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Mary Knoll, New York:Orbis Books).
- Bratcher, D. 2002. "The Needy In Jewish Tradition"
<http://www.cresourcei.org/needy.html>
- Bray, J. 1999. "Business in Africa" *Vol. 7. No. 3* June 1999

- Bruce, D. &
Ann eds. 1999. *Engineering Genesis: The Ethics of Genetic Engineering in Non-Human Species* (London: Earthscan).
- Bujo, B. 1992. *African Theology in its Social Context* (Mary Knoll: Orbis Books).
- Bujo, B. 1998. *The Ethical Dimension of Community, The African Model and the dialogue Between North and South* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa).
- Byrne, B.2000. *The hospitality of God: A Reading of Luke's Gospel* (Minnesota: The liturgical press).
- Calvin, J.1949. *Commentary on the Gospel According to John, Vol.1* (Grand Rapids: Wm.B.Eerdmans).
- Calvin J. 1949. *Commentary on the Harmony of the Evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke* (Grand Rapids: Wm.B.Eerdmans).
- Carpenter, G.W.1960. *The way in Africa* (London: Edinburgh House Press).
- Chima, A. 1994. "Story and African Theology", *AFER Vol. 26*,
- Christian Aid. "The Biosafety Protocol-Controlling trade in GMOs"
www.christianaid.org.uk/indepth/0003bias/biossafet.htm

- Christian Aid. "Selling suicide-farming, false promises and genetic engineering in developing countries".
www.christianaid.org.uk/indepth/9905suic/suicidel.htm
- Churu, W.1997. "African Christology in process: Making a Christology within the Christian Community", *Hekima Review*, n.18 (1997): 28-36.
- Cogley, J. 1995. "House of Hospitality", October 1947, in *A Penny a Copy: Readings from "The Catholic Church Worker"*, ed. Thomas C. Cornell, Robert Ellsberg, and Jim Forest (Mary knoll, N.Y.:Orbis Books).
- Daly, M.1973. *Beyond God the Father* (Boston, Mass: Beacon press).
- Dickson, K.A. 1984. *Theology in Africa* (New York:Orbis books).
- Dodson, J.&
Gilkes, C.T. 1995. "There's Nothing Like Church Food", in *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 63/3 (Fall 1995).
- Dolan, J.P. 1964. *The Essential Erasmus: On mending the peace of the church* (New York : Orbis).
- Donaldson, M.E. 1991. "The invisible Factor-19th Century: Feminist Evangelical Concern for Human Rights" in *Women Hold up Half the Sky* eds. D. Ackermann, J.A. Draper, & E. Mashinini (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster).

- Dupis, J.1997. *Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism* (Mary Knoll: Orbis Books).
- Echema, A. 1995. *Corporate personality in Igbo Society and the Sacrament of Reconciliation* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang).
- Edwards, F. 1991. "Compassion, the Neo-feminine and the Bliss of Christ" in *Women Hold up Half the Sky* eds. D. Ackermann, J.A. Draper, & E. Mashinini (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster)
- Ekwunife, A.N.O. 1990. *Consecration in Igbo Traditional Religion* (Enugu: Jet Publishers Nig. Ltd.).
- Ela, Jean-Mark 1986. *African cry* (Mary Knoll:Orbis).
- Ela, Jean-Mark 1988. *My faith as an African* (Mary knoll:Orbis Books).
- Erikson, E. 1969. *Gandhi's Truth: On the Origins of Militant Non-Violence* (New York: Norton).
- Fiorenza, E.S.1990. "Missionaries, Apostles, Co-workers: Romans 16 and the Reconstruction of Women's Early Christian History" in *Feminist Theology A Reader* (ed) A. Loades (London: SP.C.K).
- Forell, G. 1979. *History of Christian Ethics, Vol.1* (Minneapolis: Augsburg).

- Fox, M. 1990. *A spiritually renewed compassion and the healing of the global village: Humpty Dumpy and us* (San Francisco: Harper&Row).
- Freire, P. 1970. *Pedagogy of the oppressed* (New York: Continuum).
- Gehman, R.J. 1991. *Doing African Theology* (Kijabe: Kesho).
- Gilby T. 1979. "Hospitality" in P.K. Meagher et al. (Eds.), *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Religion* (Washington D.C.: Corpus Publications).
- Giordani, I. 1944. *The Social Message of the Early Church Fathers* (Paterson, N.J: St.Anthony Guild Press).
- Githiga, G. 2001. *The Church as the Bulwark against authoritarianism* (Oxford: Regnum).
- Greer, R.A 1974. "Hospitality in the First Five Centuries" in *MonS, No.10* (1974).
- Greer, R. A. 1986. *Broken Lights and Mended Lives* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press).
- Gruchy, S. "Faith Food and Famines" at www.hs.unp.ac.za/theology/article01.htm
- Gruchy, S. 2002. "Life: Livelihoods and God: Why GMOs oppose caring For life" in *The Ecumenical Review*, vol. 54.3, July 2002 (Geneva: WCC).

- Gutierrez, G. 1973. *A theology of liberation* (Mary knoll, New York:Orbis).
- Gutierrez, G. 1983. *The power of the poor in History* (London: SCM Press).
- Gutierrez, G. 1984. *We Drink From Our Wells: The spiritual Journey of a people* (London: SCM Press).
- Hallie, P. 1981. "From Cruelty to Goodness" in *The Hastings centre Report 11*(1981).
- Hallie, P. 1994. *Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed* (New York: Harper and Row).
- Hallie, P. 1997. *Tales of Good and Evil, Help and Harm* (New York: Harper- Collins).
- Hastings J. (ed.) 1913. *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics* (New York: Scriber's).
- Haughton, R.L. 1997. *Images for change: The Transformation of Society* (New York: Paulist press).
- Heal, F. 1982. "The Archbishops of Canterbury and the Practice of Hospitality" in *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 33/4 (October 1982).
- Healey, J. & Sybertz, D.1996. *Towards An African Narrative Theology* (Nairobi: Paulines).
- Hempton, D. 1984. *Methodism and politics in British Society 1750-1850*

- (London: Hutchison).
- Henisch, B.A. 1976. *Fast and Feast: Food in Medieval Society*
(University Park: Pennsylvania State University press).
- Hick, J. 1973. *God and the Universe of Faiths* (London: Macmillan).
- Hick, J. 1982. "Is There Only One Way to God?" In *Theology*,
January 1982, (London: SPCK).
- Hick, J. 1982. *God has Many Names* (Philadelphia:
Westminster press).
- Hickinbotham J.P. 1966. *The Open Table: Christian Hospitality at the Lord's
Supper* (London: Hodder and Stoughton).
- Hinga, T. 1992. "Jesus Christ and the Liberation of women in Africa,"
in *The will to Arise: Women, Tradition, and the
church in Africa*, Eds. M.A. Oduyoye
and M. Kanyoro (Mary knoll: Orbis Books).
- Holloway, D. 1989. *Ready Steady Grow: Principles for the Growth of the
Church in Britain* (Eastbourne:
Kingsway publications).
- Hultgren, A.J. 1986. "The Johannine Foot washing (John 13:1-11)
as a symbol of Eschatological Hospitality" in *NTS*,
Vol. 28.
- Hoste, A. 2001. *Hospitality is a precious gift* (Vereeniging:
Christian Art Gifts).

- Idowu, E.B.1973. *African Traditional Religion: A definition*
(London: S.C.M Press).
- Ishengoma, R. 1994. *Pastoral ministry with small Christian Communities:
Object Symbols on Cultural Heritage*
(Bukoba: Unpublished Paper).
- Kä Mana 1993. *Théologie africaine pour temps de crise*
(Paris: Karthala).
- Kä Mana 1994. *Christ d'Afrique* (Paris: Karthala).
- Kanyoro, M.1996. "African women's Quest for Justice: A Review of African
Women's Theology", *Pacific Journal of Theology* (1996),
reprinted in journal of Constructive Theology 2 (1996).
- Kealy, J.P.1978. *Jesus the Teacher* (Denville, New Jersey: Dimension).
- Kealy, J.P. &
Shenk, D.W. 1975. *The Early Church and Africa*
(Nairobi: Oxford University Press).
- Kenyatta, J. 1938. *Facing Mount Kenya* (London: Heinemann).
- King, M.L. 1968. *Stride Toward Freedom* (New York: Harper
and Brothers).
- King, M.L. 1968. *Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or
Community?* (Boston: Beacon Press).

- King, M.L. 1986. "An Eulogy for the Negroe Martyred Children", 15th September 1963 in Birmingham, Alabama, in *A Testament of Hope: Essential writings of Martin Luther King*, James Washington (ed) (San Francisco: Harper and Row).
- Kinoti, H.& Waliggo, J.M. eds. 1997. *The Bible in African Christianity, Essays in Biblical Theology* (Nairobi: Acton).
- Kinoti, H.W.1998. "Christology in the East African Revival movement" in *Jesus in African Christianity: Experimentation and Diversity in African Christology*, J.N.K.Mugambi and L. Magesa eds. (Nairobi: Acton).
- Kitagawa, J.M.1990. *Spiritual Liberation and Freedom in Asia* (New York: Peter Lang).
- Kneen, B. 2002. "Caring for life; Genetic Engineering and Agriculture" in *The Ecumenical Review*, vol. 54.3, July 2002. (Geneva: WCC).
- Koenig, John 1985. *New Testament Hospitality* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press).
- Koenig, J. 1987. "Hospitality" in Mircea Eliade (Ed.) *The Encyclopaedia of Religion*, Vol.6, New York: Macmillan Publishing).
- Koyama, K.1993. *Extended Hospitality to stranger-A missiology of Theologia Crucis*. International Review of mission, July-October 1993.

- Kung, H. 1976. *On Being a Christian* (London: Collins).
- Kuzwayo, E.K. 1998. *African wisdom* (Cape Town: Kwela Books).
- Kwesi, D. 1984. *Theology in Africa* (London: Longman).
- Lane, W.L. 1982. "Un expected Light on Hebrews 13:1-6 from a Second Century Source" in *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 9/3 (Fall 1982).
- Lewis, D.L.1971. *King: A critical Biography* (Baltimore: Penguin Books).
- Loades, A. (ed.) 1990. *Feminist Theology: A reader* (London: S.P.C.K.).
- Luther, M. 1961. *Works, Vol.3: Lectures on Genesis Chapters 15-20* (St. Louis: Concordia).
- Maddox, R. 2001. "Visit the poor," *Transformation* Vol. 18 No.1
- Madeley, J. 2002. "Introduction" in *Food for All: The need for a new Agriculture* (London: Zed Books).
- Magesa, L.1989. "Christ the liberator and Africa Today," in *Jesus in African Christianity*, (eds.) J.N.K Mugambi and L. Magesa (Nairobi: Initiative Publishers).
- Magesa, L. 1997. *African Religion, The Moral Traditions of Abundant Life* (Mary Knoll:Orbis).
- Magnus, D. "Statement" at <http://pewagbiotech.org/events/0726/mangus.php3>

- Marquardt, M. 1992. *John Wesley's Social ethics* (Nashville: Abingdon Press).
- Martey, E. 1993. *African Theology, Inculturation and Liberation* (Mary Knoll:Orbis).
- Martin, D.A 1965. *Pacifism: An Historical and Sociological Study* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul).
- Maxwell, J.F. 1975. *Slavery and the Catholic Church* (London: Bary Rose).
- Maynard-Reid, P. 1997. *Complete Evangelism* (Scottsdale: Herald Press).
- Mbiti, J.S.1969. *African Religions and Philosophy* (Nairobi: E.A.E.P).
- Mbiti, J.S.1976. *The Forest Has Ears* (PHP/Peace, happiness and prosperity, 7,July 1976).
- Mbiti, J.S.1986. *Bible and Theology in African Christianity* (Nairobi: O.U.P).
- Mbiti, J.S. 1991. *Introduction to African Religion* (Nairobi: E.A.E.P).
- Mbiti,J.S. 2002. "A person who Eats Alone Dies Alone": Death as a Point of Dialogue Between African Religion and Christianity' in Mwakabana, H.A.O (ed.) *Crises of Life in African Religion and Christianity* (Geneva: The Lutheran World Federation).
- McBrien, R.P.1984. *Catholicism, Study Edition* (Cassell Ltd.).

- Mclaughlin, E. 1990. "Women, power and the Pursuit of Holiness in Medieval Christianity" in *Feminist Theology A Reader* (ed) A. Loades (London: SP.C.K).
- Misser, F. 2003. "America, EU and food aid to Africa" in *New African*, March 2003.
- Moi, D.T 1986. *Kenya African Nationalism Nyayo Philosophy and Principles* (London: Macmillan Publishers).
- Moila, M.P. 2002 a. *Challenging Issues in African Christianity* (Pretoria: CB Powell Bible Centre).
- Moila, M.P. 2002 b. *Getting the message Heard: Essays on Contextual Theology* (Pretoria: CB Powell Bible Centre).
- Moltmann, J. 1976. *The Open Church: Invitation to a Messianic Research* (Philadelphia: Fortress).
- Mott, S. C. 1975. "The power of Giving and Receiving: Reciprocity in Hellenistic Benevolence", in *Current Issues in Biblical and Patristic Interpretation*, ed. Gerald F. Hawthorne (Grand Rapids: Wm.B.Eerdmans).
- Mönnig, H.O. 1978. *The Pedi* (Pretoria L Van Schaic).
- Moyo, A.M. 1983. "The Quest for African Christian Theology and the problem of the Relationship between Faith

- and Culture-The Hermeneutical Perspective”, *African Theological Journal*, Vol. 12, No. 2, 1983.
- Mugambi, J.N.K. 1989. *African Christian Theology: An Introduction* (Nairobi: Heinemann).
- Mugambi, J.N.K. 1989. *African Heritage and Contemporary Christianity* (Nairobi: Longman).
- Mugambi, J.N.K.1995. *From Liberation to Reconstruction: African Christian Theology After the Cold War* (Nairobi: E.AE.P).
- Mugambi, J.N.K & Magea. L (eds) 1998. *Jesus in African Christianity: Experimentation and Diversity in African Christology* (Nairobi: Acton).
- Muller, H.J.1957. *The uses of the past* (New York: Oxford University press).
- Murray, H. 1990. *Do Not Neglect Hospitality: The Catholic Worker and the Homeless* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press).
- Museveni, Y. 1992. *What is Africa 's Problem?* (Kampala: N.R.M Publications).
- Mutugi, J.G. 2001. *The Truth About African Hospitality: Is There Hope For Africa?* (Mombasa: The Salt Productions).
- Mutiso-Mbinda, J. 1984. “The Eucharist and the Family-In An African Setting,”

- AMECEA Documentation service, 282 (April 4, 1984).
- Mutiso-Mbinda, J. 1979. "Anthropology and the paschal mystery", *Spearhead* No. 59 Ggaba Publications, Eldoret, Kenya.
- Muzorewa, G.H. 1985. *The origins and Development of African Theology* (Maryknoll:Orbis Books).
- Mwakabana,H.A.O (ed.) 2002. *Crises of Life in African Religion and Christianity* (Geneva: The Lutheran World Federation).
- Neil, S. 1961. *Who is Jesus Christ?* (London: Luther worth press).
- Niebuhr, H.R.1951. *Christ and culture* (New York: Harper and Row).
- Njoroge, N.J. 1996. "Groaning and Languishing in Labour pains" in Kanyoro, M.R. and Njoroge, N. (eds.) *Groaning in Faith: African Women in the household of God* (Nairobi: Acton).
- Njino, J. 1983. *Communicating the Gospel Message in Africa Today* (AMECEA: Gaba publications).
- Njururi, N. 1983. *Gikûyû proverbs: With an English Translation* (Nairobi :Oxford University Press).
- Nkemnia, M.N 1999. *African vitality: A step Forward in African Thinking* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications-Africa).
- Nolan, A. 1978. *Jesus Before Christianity*

(Mary Knoll: Orbis Books).

- Nouwen, H.J.M. 1974. "Hospitality" in *MonS, No.10 (1974)*.
- Nthamburi, Z. 1995. *The African Church at the crossroads* (Nairobi: Uzima).
- Nyamiti, C. 1984. *Christ as our ancestor: Christology from an African perspective* (Zimbabwe: Mambo press).
- Nyamiti, C. 1996. "The Trinity from an African Ancestral perspective", *African Christian Studies, Journal of the Catholic University of Eastern Africa*, Vol. 12, no.4 (1996).
- Obandina, T. 1999. Getting the measure of African poverty, in *Africa Today*, vol.5, No.5 July 1999.
- Obengo, T.J. 1997. The role of ancestors as guardians of morality in African Traditional Religion, *Journal of Black Theology in South Africa* Vol. 2, no.2, November 1997.
- O'Connell, M. 1988. *The Gift of Hospitality: Opening the Doors of Community Life to People with Disabilities* (Centre for urban Affairs and Research, North-western University, and Department of Rehabilitation services of Illinois, Feb. 1988).
- Oduyoye, M.A. 1986. *Hearing and knowing, Theological Reflections on Christianity in Africa* (Mary knoll: Orbis Books).
- Oduyoye, M.A.& Musimbi K. eds. 1992. *The will to Arise, Women, Tradition and the*

- Church in Africa* (Mary knoll: Orbis Books).
- Oduyoye, M.A 1995. *Daughters of Anowa: African Women and Patriarchy* (Mary knoll: Orbis).
- Oduyoye, M.A.2001. *Introducing African Women's Theology* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press).
- Ogletree, T.W.1985. *Dimensions of moral understanding: Hospitality to the stranger* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press).
- Okullu, H.J.1974. *Church and politics in East Africa* (Nairobi: Uzima).
- Okullu, H.J.1984. *Church and State in Nation Building and Human Development* (Nairobi: Uzima).
- Olikenyi, G.I.2001. *African hospitality: A model for the Communication of the Gospel in the African Cultural context* (Nettetal: Steylerverlag).
- Parratt, J. 1995. *Reinventing Christianity, African Theology Today* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans).
- Pelikan, J.1987. *Jesus through the centuries: His place in the History of culture* (New York: Harper and Row).
- Phiri, I.A 2002. "Caring During Burial and Bereavement in Traditional Society and the Church" in Mwakabana,H.A.O (ed.) *Crises of Life in African Religion and Christianity*

- (Geneva: The Lutheran World Federation).
- Pipher, M. 1996. *The shelter of Each other* (New York: Allan tine Books).
- Pobee, J.S.1979. *Toward an African Theology* (Nashville: Abingdon).
- Pohl, C.D.1999. *Making Room: Recovering Hospitality as a Christian Tradition* (Michigan: Eerdmans).
- Potgieter, S.1996. "Church praxis and women who remain within the church" in Njoroge,N.and Kanyoro, M.R. (eds.) *Groaning in Faith: African women in the household of God* (Nairobi: Acton).
- Rack, H. 1989. *Reasonable Enthusiast: John Wesley and the rise of Methodism* (London: Epworth Press).
- Rahner, K. 1979. "Towards a Fundamental Theological Interpretation of Vatican 2", *Theological Studies*, 40, 4 (December 1979).
- Riddle, D.W.1938. "Early Christian Hospitality: A Factor in the Gospel Transmission" in *JBL. Vol. 57 (1938)*.
- Robra, M. 2002. "Farmers Under Threat of the World trade Organization: A challenge to the churches" in *The Bulletin for Contextual Theology*, vol. 8.2&3 (2002).
- Ruether, R.R.1983. *Sexism and God-Talk* (London: SCM).
- Russell L. 1987. *Household of Freedom* (Philadelphia: Westminster).
- SACBC, "Genetically Modified Food" at www.neccsa.org.za/Documents-GMOs.htm

- Sawyer, H. 1978. "Jesus Christ-Universal Brother", in *African Christian Spirituality*, Alyward Shorter, ed. (London, 1978).
- Scott, L.C.1984. *Open Up Your Life: A Woman's Workshop on Hospitality* (Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House).
- Shorter, A.1988. *Towards a Theology of Inculturation* (London: Paulines Publications-Africa).
- Semmel, B. 1974. *The Methodist Revolution* (London: Heinemann).
- Setiloane, G.M.1989. *African Theology: An Introduction* (Johannesburg: Skotaville).
- Shorter, A. 1985. *Jesus and the Witchdoctor: An approach to healing and wholeness* (London: N.Y).
- Sobrino, J. 1978. *Christology at the crossroads: A Latin American Approach* (London: SCM Press).
- Stahlin, G.1954. "Xenos" in G. Friedrich (Hg.), *Theologisches Worterbuch Zum Neuen Testament*, B and 5, Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer Verlag.
- Stelten, L.F.1995. *Dictionary of Ecclesiastical Latin* (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers).
- Stendahl, K. 1980. "When you pray, pray in this manner: A Bible Study", in *The Kingdom on Its Way: Meditations and Music*

for Mission, RISK Book Series (Geneva: World Council of Churches).

- Snyder, H. 1980. *The Radical Wesley* (Downers Grove:IVP).
- Stott, J.1982. *I believe in preaching* (London: Hodder and Stoughton).
- Talbot, C.H. 1959. *The life of Christina of Markyate, a Twelfth Century Recluse* (Oxford: Oxford).
- Taylor, E. B. 1871. *Primitive Culture* (London: John Murray).
- Taylor K. 1996. CLS 214—Nancy Evans December 13, 1996.
“Hospitality in the Ancient Greek World”
<http://www.crowdog.net/hospitality.html>
- Tempel, P. 1959. *Bantu Philosophy* (Paris: Prèsence Africaine).
- Thiong’o, N. 1965. *The River Between* (Nairobi: East African Education Publishers).
- Thorpe, S.A 1991. *African traditional religion*, 116
(Pretoria: University of South Africa).
- Tutu, N. 1989. *The words of Desmond Tutu*
(London: Hodder and Stoughton).
- Uchendu, V.C. 1965. *The Igbo of Southern Nigeria*
(New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston).

- Udoh, E.B. 1988. *Guest Christology, An Interpretive view of the Christological Problem in Africa* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang).
- Uhlhorn, G. 1883. *Christian Charity in the Ancient Church*, translated by Sophia Taylor (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark).
- Ukpong, J.S. 1984. "The Emergence of African Theologies," *Theological Studies* 45 (1984).
- Umble, J.H. 1998. "Mutual Aid Among the Augsburg Anabaptists, 1526-1528" in *Building Communities of Compassion: Mennonite Mutual Aid in Theory and Practice*, ed. William M. Swartley and Donald B. Kraybill (Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald Press).
- Uzukwu, E.E. 1988. "Missiology Today: The African Situation" in E.E. Uzukwu (ed), *Religion and African Culture: Inculturation-A Nigerian perspective* (Enugu: Snaap press).
- Vanier, J. 1989. *Community and Growth* (New York: Paulist Press).
- Vanier, J. 1992. *From Brokenness to Community* (New York: Paulist Press).
- Vanier, J. 1995. *An Ark for the poor: The story of L'Arche* (New York: Crossroad).
- Villa-Vincencio, C. 1992. *A Theology of Reconstruction: Nation-building and*

Human Rights (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

- Wachege, P.N. 1992. *Jesus Christ, Our Mûthamaki (Ideal Elder)* (Nairobi: Phoenix Publishers).
- Waliggo, J.M (et al) 1986. *Inculturation: Its meaning and urgency* (Nairobi: Paulines).
- Wanjohi, G.J. 1997. *The wisdom and philosophy of the Gikûyû proverbs* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications).
- Waruta, D.&
Kinoti, H. (eds) 1994. *Pastoral Care in African Christianity* (Nairobi: Acton).
- Waruta, D.W 1998. "Who is Jesus Christ for Africans Today? Prophet, Priest, Potentate" in *Jesus in African Christianity: Experimentation and Diversity in African Christology*, J.N.K.Mugambi and L.Magesa (eds.) (Nairobi: Acton).
- Wasike, N.A. 1992. "Christology and African Women's Experience" in R.Schreiter (ed.), *Faces of Jesus in Africa* (London: SCM Press).
- Wasike, N.A 1998. "Christology and an African Women's experience" in *Jesus in African Christianity: Experimentation and Diversity in African Christology*, J.N.K.Mugambi and L. Magesa (eds.) (Nairobi: Acton).
- Wasike, N.A. &
Waruta, D.W (eds) 1993. *Mission in African Christianity*

(Nairobi: Uzima).

- Wesley, J. 1994. *Sermons on Several Occasions*
(London: Epworth Press).
- Wesley, J. 1979. *The Works of John Wesley*. Third Edition
(Grand Rapids: Baker Book House).
- Wesley, J. 1995. *The Works of John Wesley on Compact Disc*.
(Franklin: Providence House Publishers).
- Winzen, D.1974. "Conference on the Reception of Guests"
in *MonS.No.10 (1974)*.

1.0 APPENDIX ONE LIST OF INFORMANTS

NAME	PLACE	AGE	DATE
1. Alfian Murage	Ngariama-Kenya	80	19/11/2000
2. Chrispin Karuri	Ngariama-Kenya	72	19/11/2000
3. Eliab Mwendwa	Kianyaga-Kenya	57	8/11/1998
4. Francis Njogu Nyamu	Ngariama-Kenya	70	15/11/2000
5. Gideon Githiga (Bishop)	Thika-Kenya	50	31/3/1999
6. Johannes Beyerhaus (Rev.)	Kabare-Kenya	42	24/12/1998
7. John Abdy (Rev.)	Limuru-Kenya	60	16/10/988.
8. John Mararo (Rev.)	Kutus-Kenya	50	6/11/1998
9. Julius Gatimu Kaburu	Muragara-Kenya	47	9/11/1998
10. Matthews Kimori	Ngiriambu-Kenya	70	28/11/1998
11. Michael Muciga	Ngiriambu-Kenya	73	8/11/1998
12. Peter K. Karanja (Ven.)	Ngiriambu- Kenya	50	6/11/1998
13. Peterson Muturi	Gacaru-Kenya	49	9/11/1998
14. Reuben Kimotho	Kagumo-Kenya	60	8/11/1998
15. Robert Gicubi	Ngariama-Kenya	76	15/11/2000
16. Stanley Ndei	Ngiriambu-Kenya	71	8/11/2000
17. Peter Karani Ruri	Mutira-Kenya	50	6/11/2000
18. Joseph Kamau	Scottsville- South Africa	50	6/8/2003
19. Clement Kamau	Scottsville- South Africa	47	20/8/2003
20. Gladys Wanjiku Muriuki	Ngiriambu-Kenya	36	6/11/1998
21. Peter Njuho	Scottsville -South Africa	51	10/8/2003
22. Mzee Oduori	Scottsville-South Africa	47	25/8/2003

2.0 APPENDIX TWO

MAP OF AFRICA



3.0 APPENDIX THREE

THE LEGEND OF THE PROUD PERSON

There is a legend probably set after the coming of missionaries to the land of the Agikuyu in the 19th Century that talks of a person who was too proud and arrogant. It goes like this: During Jesus' earthly ministry when he went all over preaching the Gospel, removing and cursing out demons, healing the sick etc., a man named Mwigatho was a prominent personality by then. After hearing Jesus speak as no person has ever spoken, he got very excited and asked Jesus to visit his family one-day. Jesus accepted the offer and promised to come on specified day.

Full of joy, Mwigatho went to prepare for the coming of the Lord. He mobilized his wives and children to sweep the house and the compound clean. He told them to decorate inside and outside the house to the best of their ability.

Happy with the way members of the family had done, he sat down and waited for the Lord's arrival with joyful expectation. As a family, they organized a small choir, rehearsed songs to welcome Jesus with them. They also cooked heavily.

On the specific day that Jesus had indicated he would appear in bodily form as he was doing those days, a bent old man appeared at Mwigatho's house. Flabbergasted at this visit, he told the bent man sharply: "Walk out! I am waiting for an important visitor; I don't want you messing up my house. Get out of my house!" He obeyed and left. A little while later, a very old woman dressed in rags and supporting herself with a stick appeared. Just as in the first case, he rebuffed the second one. The old mama, as well, left unhappily.

Finally, a badly injured boy appeared. He was writhing with a lot of pain and was seeking first aid. He raised a cloud of dust as he dragged along his aching body. Probably, a tree had fallen on his body on his way. Like in the first and second cases, he told the boy that

he was not a medicine man and so he should keep off. He never took time to listen. The boy limped or crippled away to where the hell knows.

The next day Mr Mwigatho saw Jesus and asked: "Jesus, Why didn't you keep your promise? We waited for you at home. Psychologically and physically; we were ready to receive you. The food went sour as we waited to eat with you. Can we make another appointment with you? Jesus finally replied: "Mr. Mwigatho, I came to visit you three times but you were too proud to receive me. When you refused to receive the three visitors, you denied me three times". After some time, Mr. Mwigatho began to realize what it meant to be a follower of Christ and he realized the meaning of African Christian hospitality.