An integrated conceptual model of crises intervention for Gikuyu people utilizing traditional family social support systems, Christian resource systems and crisis theories (Kenya)

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AN INTEGRATED CONCEPTUAL MODEL OF CRISIS INTERVENTION
FOR GIKUYU PEOPLE UTILIZING TRADITIONAL FAMILY SOCIAL
SUPPORT SYSTEMS, CHRISTIAN RESOURCE SYSTEMS
AND CRISIS THEORIES

By

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Doctor of Ministry
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1995
ABSTRACT

AN INTEGRATED CONCEPTUAL MODEL OF CRISIS INTERVENTION FOR GIKUYU PEOPLE UTILIZING TRADITIONAL FAMILY SOCIAL SUPPORT SYSTEMS, CHRISTIAN RESOURCES SYSTEMS AND CRISIS THEORIES

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The purpose of the dissertation is to construct an integrated conceptual model of crises intervention for Gikuyu people that would effectively inform the conceptualization of the nature, the methods employed and the purpose of utilizing traditional Gikuyu families and Christian resources for crises intervention. It will also inform the values for integration and the usefulness of systems and the crisis theories for the construction of the model for the Gikuyu. Moreover, the dissertation will report the significance of Christian pastoral resources and the relation to Gikuyu.

The model is a strategy in the attempt to revive some of the distorted Gikuyu people's values of family unity (belongingness), which was their norm for intervening into family crises. Family values of unity for the Gikuyu suffered distortion over the years of the Christian missionary work to the Gikuyu in the nineteenth century. The model is limited for use in the Presbyterian Church in Kenya. However, other churches serving Gikuyu people are welcome to use it.
The study is intended to be a foundation for the development of authentic literature, focusing upon new approaches toward crises intervention for Gikuyu, intended to mobilize families systems, Christian resources, and other networking systems for better work of crisis intervention.

From the systems and the crisis perspectives, the study examines the usefulness of systems and the crisis theories for their relevancy in developing a model of crises intervention for Gikuyu families. It examines the viability of correlation between traditional Gikuyu families resources and the Christian resources, examining how each one is related to the other.

The term "crisis intervention" refers to the usefulness and the effect of the work of correlating resources from the two perspectives. Correlation is the criteria for determining the interdependence of the two sources of intervention. The term "model" refers to the proposed methods of approaches utilized in reviving values of families interdependency, unity, and belongingness. The term "differentiation of self" informs the need for family members and significant others to work together for better working crisis, while each maintains individual unique abilities of differentiating intellectual decision-making from those of families emotional fusion.

The dissertation uses two methods. The first method is founded on the concepts of families systems and the crisis theories for the construction of an effective model of crisis intervention for the Gikuyu and informing the reasons for its use.

Second is the method of correlation which is a theological application to the action of mobilizing and utilizing the traditional Gikuyu resources together with Christian
Gikuyu resources. In this second method Christ becomes the common norm of correlation for the purpose of liberation and the giving of hope to the individual and families in crisis. Moreover, through the theological method the integration of the model is accomplished.

Before examining the usefulness of systems and crisis theories for analyzing data from the case study of illness, the history of the Gikuyu is examined. The purpose of the history is to inform the guidelines to which this model of crisis intervention should respond. For clarification purposes, these guidelines are the origin of the Gikuyu people, the nature of their corporate living, and the kinship governing principles. As part of the historical motivation of this dissertation, the role which was played by the social protest of the Gikuyu against Europeans and the missionaries is also examined. The protest was a symbol of dissatisfaction of the Gikuyu upon the mistreatment and the abuse of family values.

The dissertation has several illustrations of crises intervention based on various concepts of family therapy which include: Uri Rueveni in networking families in crises, Murry Bowen’s eight interlocking ideas of family therapy, Edward Wimberly’s theory of pastoral care of the Black Church, and also the work of Nancy Boyd-Franklin in multisystems approach to family therapy.

In concluding this study, it has been found that Gikuyu family and relational systems can be mobilized to resolve crises within the systems. It has also been discovered that the implication for further research is viable through the analyzing and the questioning of the claims in the data provided in this dissertation.
DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my parents, Priscilla Wambaire and Josiah Wandu, and my parents-in-law, Leonard Chege and Cecilia Gathegu.

J.G.W.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Problem

The purpose of the dissertation is to construct an integrated conceptual model of crisis intervention for Gikuyu people that would effectively inform the conceptualization of the nature, the methods employed, and the purpose of utilizing Gikuyu traditional and Christian resources for crises intervention. It will also inform the values for integrating those resources, the usefulness of systems and the crisis theories for the construction of the model for the Gikuyu. Moreover, the dissertation will report the significance of Christian pastoral resources and the relation to Gikuyu traditional life. The model is a strategy in the good attempt to revive some of the distorted Gikuyu people’s values of family unity (belongingness), which was their norm for intervening into family crisis. Family values of unity of the Gikuyu suffered distortion over the years of the Christian missionary work to the Gikuyu in the nineteenth century.

The Impact of the West on the Lifestyle of the Gikuyu

The effect of the European settlement in Kenya was progressively to obliterate the traditional way of life. Direct suppression was activated by imposing conditions of living under which the ancient traditional practices and sanctions ceased to be relevant. The most far-reaching of the conditions imposed by the newcomers was linked to the freedom of land use. As in other African worlds, the philosophical methods
which the Europeans used to destroy the life of the people was to disrupt the people’s chief occupation. That alone was a major step toward the total destruction of the African peoples.

Gikuyu chief occupation to date is farming; the most far-reaching of all the conditions which newcomers had imposed by the halting of the Gikuyu traditional (the methods used by the Gikuyu) ways of expansion into virgin forested areas. Of course, some of the land they had occupied had also been given to immigrants and there was no assurance that the Gikuyu title to the rest was regarded as valid. The halting of expansion rendered the old economy unworkable and, together with the lack of security for the existing lands, created a tension in which sooner or later explosion was inevitable. The circumstance forced some to move far away into European farms in the Rift Valley part of Kenya, where they became squatters and living like slaves.

The breakdown in the traditional economy brought a corresponding decline in the strength of the kinship bonds of which the provision of land for every member of the family group was the guarantee; since when the family group could no longer provide the means of subsistence, its bond became ineffective. Furthermore, where no new land was available for settlement, no new family groups could be set up. Thus, the halting of expansion undermined the Gikuyu way of life at its foundations.

To talk the unspeakable, the propagation of the gospel to the Gikuyu was totally unethical. It was forceful and abusive to the family integrity, decisive with intent to rob the Gikuyu of their land and finally to use the families for cheap labor in their new lands, and undermining the traditional social organization of the Gikuyu family.
Those people who have no knowledge of the imperiled structured destruction of the Gikuyu family would understand it from the slavery operation of the West. According to Nancy Boyd-Franklin, from African tribal communities, Black people were captured and transported to the West where they were sold as slaves, and the impact of the whole process of the slaves is well described by Boyd-Franklin.\(^1\) The institution of slavery was disruptive by nature. Slave masters attempted to destroy the kinship bonds and the cultural systems of Black Africans. It was an attempt to rob the African people of their identity as well as their human rights. This dehumanizing process deprived the African men and women of their traditions including family ties, language, customs, food and spiritual rituals. Boyd-Franklin appropriates Kinney, saying that African people were brought to the new lands for commercial reasons.\(^2\)

**The Missionary Legacy**

By 1926, traditional Christian and materialistic was clearly in evidence. Together with the manifestations of social disorganization which accompanied it, it had produced a complex and difficult pastoral situation, for which the infant Church was now called to make itself responsible. For this task, the missionaries had bequeathed to it a certain tradition. They had trained leadership through Church Councils which was consonant with New Testament pattern and with some pattern of tribal life. They had set means of achieving literacy. Gikuyu had a version of the New Testament in Gikuyu language. However, it is worthy to mention that missionary tradition was weak in its understanding of the patterns of religious and social life, not only of the Gikuyu but in African society as a whole and of the relationship of those patterns to Christian values.
As a result, their methods to approach pastoral care were negative and very abusive to the Gikuyu. To clarify the negativity of the methods that were used by the missionaries, the writer will give more attention to it in Chapter IX of the dissertation.

The model of this dissertation is a construction of an alternative approach to the missionary model which allows comfortable interaction between traditional Gikuyu family approach, Christian resources and systems and crisis theories for the purpose of developing one integrated intervention approach.

The following pages will focus on some Christian resources to be integrated with the Gikuyu family social systems of approach for crisis intervention.

**Christian Resources and Their Relation to Gikuyu Traditional Resources**

Even though the Christian resources that can be integrated with the Gikuyu family social fabrics systems for crisis intervention are many, the writer’s concern is to give a detailed analysis of a few theological, ethical, biblical and Gikuyu traditional resources.

**Theological and Ethical Resources**

Worship can be an important Christian resource for integrating Gikuyu traditional values for the purpose of crisis intervention. Holy Communion is such a resource.

1. **Holy Communion**

Holy Communion, according to the Presbyterian tradition, would be a meaningful resource. The notion of this ritual of communion is fellowship. It calls for regrouping of members of the family/clan for the purpose of reconciliation. In the
fellowship all are called to settle differences, hurts, and hatred in order to love, make friends and eat together. It also calls for those estranged and isolated to find company.

In times of a crisis, those who are victims will be called into the community of believers of Christ where they can claim some sense of belonging; one head, one Lord. Equally important, it is necessary to understand that the Holy Communion to be celebrated carries unique purpose and meaning. It is a meal within a meal. For this meal is served on the context of seeking consultation relationships that are missing within a family system. The occasion is a specific one, celebrated in the behalf of Gikuyu who are at loggerhead, and customary during such gatherings food has definitely to be served. So whether Holy Communion precedes or succeeds in the events for the purpose, the important thing is the understanding that the Holy Communion is a simultaneous meal to a social family meal.

J. E. L. Oulton has a very useful view for the development of my model of care. According to him, Jesus’ action and words during the occasion of the Last Supper were important. He says, "But we must remember that the scene a supper, it was a social meal, a social gathering."³

Holy Communion as a meal is pastoral care because what participants (Christians) feast is Christ and the center of our feasting is his paschal mystery. In Holy Communion, Christ becomes the Christian norm of victory over the crisis of sin, victory over crisis of death, division in the families, hatred and many other crises.

The sacramental dimensions of the symbolic liturgy of Holy Communion connects those individual recipients to the ultimate truth of life and assures them the reality of

5
their continuity as part of the whole family or as part of the congregation of faith. Moreover, it helps individuals to establish an equilibrium between one’s self and the social self. Holy Communion, therefore, is a means of grace while grace also assumed the role of liberation, peace, and hope not only to the individual persons but for the family experiencing a crisis.

At the time of communion as a resource for crisis intervention, the Church is drawn together with those who are crisis victims. In that dimension, the Church, as the community of those who share the life of God in Christ, continues the mission of Christ in manifesting and discovering the Father’s life and love in space and time. Furthermore, Holy Communion becomes a means for mobilizing the community of Christians to be integrated with the traditional Gikuyu community who gather for the purpose of intervening into crises of Gikuyu people. Christians, too, who participate in Holy Communion become a means for correlating Holy Communion as a Christian resource with the traditional Gikuyu resources, for the purpose of incarnating Christ as a meaning of life for those crippled by crises. Moreover, Christ’s meaning of life is liberation of all in existential crises.

In the case of my conceptual model under construction, Holy Communion would be celebrated at an occasion of an existing family system though surrounded by experiences of differences and alienation among the members. During the communion fellowship those who are victims of crisis and those who are concerned directly or indirectly can come forward for confession, forgiveness and acceptance. The celebration of communion with all people together removes the burden of guilt and fear. In this
meal, the broken relationships are restored and the bond of the people is re-established in Christ.

In the occasion the participants in the Holy Communion share a new value system where all are neighbors, brothers, sisters, mothers, and fathers. The bond of the extended family is strengthened. For those who are victims of family emotional crisis one would say with joy and relief that Christ took his/her infirmities and bore their pain and diseases (Matt. 8:17). In another way, it is to mean that in the midst of an existing family gathering, Holy Communion facilitates a unique family gathering that is for all.

In relation to Gikuyu family social network systems, Holy Communion is similar to Gikuyu family system of government. For through the organization of the Gikuyu family household of the extended family structures, crises of all kinds were intervened with confession or reconciliation and forgiveness.

Kenyatta gives some useful examples of the problems: "The majority of cases which were heard in the 'Kiama' (family general assembly) were those dealing with debts resulting from transactions of sheep and goats or cattle which were exchanged in buying land or paying marriage insurance (ruracio). There were also a few criminal cases such as murder, theft, trespass, assault and witchcraft."4

Like in the Christian Holy Communion where the meal is shared and is part of crisis intervention process, Gikuyu also have provided (from both plaintiff and defendant) sacrificial beer and goat or sheep for meat. The beer and the meat were communally shared. By drinking and eating together a spirit of inclusion than exclusion becomes a vital part of the people’s mind. All things were done in common and collectively.5
2. Holy Communion and Peace Meal

The celebration of what the writer calls the peace meal is an important part as Holy Communion is especially at a certain time before the intervention deliberations are finished. Although the purpose is for all people, much more is for family members who are not Christians. Where all are not celebrants in the communion meal, there is a need for Christians and non-Christians to interact at a common meal. The meal should be the responsibility of the family concerned, who by virtue of their faith could not participate in Holy Communion (cf. Joy, 1937).

The writer’s view (not influenced by sense of faith) emphasizes the meal to be ritually shared after celebration of Holy Communion and before the end of the meeting. One of the reasons is that some family members may walk long distances and are unable to be present in the intervention meeting until some hours much later. However, in the peace meal all those related to either the sick or crisis victim in one way or the other or belonging to the family crisis intervention team are invited to interact and feast, while at the same time the spirit of oneness is also facilitated.

The significance of the peace meal is theological and ethical. It is a practical application of the one reconciliation in Christ. It is an application of that reconciliation in a particular case that involves all. The peace meal symbolizes oneness between Christians and the Gikuyu who are non-Christians, however strong in their traditional faith, and who experience exclusion during the meal of Holy Communion. It also facilitates family interaction, regained sense of belongingness if not intimacy, and also
the needed interpersonal relationship. For more information about Holy Communion and peace meal, see the chapter on the constructed model of intervention.

In relation to Gikuyu, the peace meal is a common feast that serves as the Gikuyu meal of common bond and for taking action. At the meal food, beer and gruel were used after the settlement of the disputes. The meal which was shared among all the participants also served as an action, welcoming and thanksgiving to all the family members who had sacrificed their time for the issue. Moreover, the meal facilitated further informal discussion upon the deliberated issue, and in most times beer especially was shared from one horn of a cow to symbolize friendly relationships, oneness and cooperation within the family systems.

3. Music or Singing

Music can be another Christian resource to be integrated with the Gikuyu family social systems theory for crisis intervention. A particular song or hymn which is conducive to the experience can be sung as a means for therapy. Because Christian songs represent specific occasions and situations, singing of relevant songs can be helpful in times of family crises. Singing represents and reflects the living experiences of an individual or family. During funerals some Christians sing family favorite songs. It is not uncommon to see people weeping or in ecstasy while singing a particular song. Also, during sad crises of death or illness, Christians often have used hymns of prayer to God in behalf of the descendants of the deceased or in prayer for the sick member of the family system.
Music or songs can be used in many different ways for crisis intervention. One of the ways is to use a song at the beginning of the crisis intervention. When the anxiety and the defenses of the crisis victims are high and the counselor at times is at a loss to know what enhances rapport or destroys it, a song of association rather than words of association may be helpful. A song of association helps to relieve tension and anxiety which create defenses. A good example of such a song is what David did for King Saul whenever he experienced a spirit from God. By playing the harp Saul found relief (1 Samuel 16:22-23). Also common to all Gikuyu people is a song composed from 1 Peter 2:25. In Gikuyu it says, "Ninjangite o kuraya ningwirira riu." Other methods of using music or songs are in the middle and at the end of a crisis situation. In either case the pastor or any other members of the crisis intervention group can ask the people to identify parts of the song that have meaning for their experience, while at the same time they share the meaning with others.

Songs help in awakening the holistic being of the people; holistic would mean somatic, spiritual and physical beings of the person. Songs also enhance people’s relationship with God, relationship with other people and also the relationship with one’s self. Singing helps people feel the need of other people’s companionship. By penetrating into the personal-subjective feelings, music meets psychosomatic needs of people’s life. In the history of the church mission, music has been widely used for proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ—the gospel of love, the gospel of familhood, of unity and of sweet peace. For example, in 1882 William J. Kirkpatrick wrote the following song:
'Tis so sweet to trust in Jesus,
Just to take Him at his word;
Just to rest upon His promises,
Just to know, 'Thus saith the Lord.'
Jesus, Jesus, how I trust him!
How I have proved him o'er and o'er!
Jesus, Jesus, precious Jesus!
O for grace to trust him more!  

Such a song of trust and hope has a lot of meaning to a family whose trust and hope in God has been invaded in hate, alienation, mistrust and divisions in the family system. Songs can also carry helpful symbols. For example, the combination of the word "sweet" in the first line of the song and the word "rest" in the third line have strong symbolism of Jesus, as Jesus of sweet rest. A troubled person would identify his/her need of peace of mind with the sweet rest that Christ Jesus gives. However, the interpretation of the symbols would depend upon situational experiences of life.

Music occupies an integral part of the Gikuyu life. For the Gikuyu, music is accompanied with verbalization of the words, movements of the body and the activation of the mind. It is used among the Gikuyu much the same as it is used in other African peoples' lives, especially during transitions from one stage of life to another such as rites of birth, death and in marriage. Singing should correspond to an occasion or situation. It may be birth, death, initiation, celebration of victory in a war, disaster, anger, guilt or helplessness. All these could be both individual or corporate.
As John Mbiti has said about songs and African peoples,

God is often worshipped through songs, and African peoples are very fond of singing. Many of the religious gatherings and ceremonies are accompanied by singing which not only helps to pass on religious knowledge from one person or group to another, but helps create and strengthen corporate feeling and solidarity. Music, singing and dancing reach deep into the innermost parts of African peoples, and many things come to the surface under musical inspiration which otherwise may not be readily revealed.7

Hence, the writer emphasizes music in this conceptual model that will utilize family traditional resources. For music or singing are common to the traditional intervention theory and the Christian theory of crisis intervention.

**Biblical Resources**

The conceptual model to be constructed will utilize biblical resources as much as they can be useful. For example, Bible study is a helpful Christian resource that can be integrated with the Gikuyu family social systems for crisis intervention. A biblical text that corresponds to the situation in the family can be used; for example, the story of Jesus and the woman at the well in gospel of John, 4th chapter, is a good illustration when used for intervening into religious or ethnic differences.

The interaction between Jesus and the woman was a unique symbolic relationship. Jesus was a Jew by his birth and the woman a Samaritan. Both Jews and Samaritans were enemies and their interaction could be an astonishment. However, Jesus’ use of a common need (water) channeled his discussion to the Samaritan woman, and not only to the woman, but even to all the Samaritans who the woman invited to come for reconciliation. The condemned Samaritan woman becomes a saint, and in her newness
of life she goes back to her mean community and proclaims love. The vehicle in which this love is carried is reconciliation.

Gikuyu have a magician of cult (Mundu Mugo) and since Mundu Mugo’s role will be defined later, it is not necessary to discuss his office here in detail. However, Gikuyu believe in Mundu Mugo’s magical power of intervening into crises of all kinds. If a Gikuyu family (those who are not Christian) turned dysfunctional, they attributed the problem to witchcraft treatable only by the traditional diviner, who in response divines the causes, and together with the family members divines the possible solution. In the same way, if the crisis was a disease which was beyond the family’s understanding, then people turned to a diviner for help.

To integrate biblical resources, this conceptual model will utilize Christian language. The model will need to use a common language (as Jesus used water) that will be acceptable to the Gikuyu who have leaned to their traditional faith. In addition to Christian language traditional language will be used in the model. For example, Gikuyu use the word "kuraguriruo" (divine). Instead of the use of the statement, "Let us read the word of God," that can be replaced with "Let us divine in the word of God" (rekei turaguriruo ni kiugo kia Ngai). Again, instead of "Let us pray," that can be replaced with "Let us divine with the Lord" (rekei tuthathaiye Ngai). Drawing on Christian and traditional African language will be a bridge that this model of crisis intervention will use for linking the known to the unknown.

In addition to the language, traditional Gikuyu values are used especially in the resources of musical rhythm. The other thing that this model will uphold is the Gikuyu
value of belongingness. The Samaritan woman expressed incomplete healing until her sick community was healed too. For the culmination of her healing she went back to the community and extended an invitation for healing to all. For the Gikuyu, an individual "becomes" because others "are." John Mbiti defines the word "being" from the African perspective, saying "I am because we are and because we are, therefore I am." An individual's healing is never complete until one's whole family community is also included in healing. Healing is both an individual and corporate function.

**Definitions of Main Terms**

Owing to the nature of the dissertation and some of the terms applied to the construction of this conceptual model of crisis intervention, it is necessary to define some of the terms and their relation to the specific model.

**Crisis** - a collective word that defines all Gikuyu family emotional problems, family problems, marriage, sickness, differences between family members, deaths, hunger and even religious and educational problems.

**Family** - refers to a unique relationship within people of the same lineage, and can be either a blood or marriage relationship. In the first category, the relationship is biological; being related by birth. For example, father/son, father/daughter, mother/son, mother/daughter, or in the extended relationship we have brother/sister, brother to brother, and sister to sister. Briefly, in the family there is a father, mother, children, grandchildren and even grandparents.

In the second category, family membership applies only to women after marriage. A woman after marriage automatically leaves her parents' home to join the family of the
husband to which she will belong (according to the Gikuyu) for the rest of her life. Marriage bond between a man and a woman is entered as a life commitment.

**Gikuyu** - refers to one of the tribes of Kenya. The tribe occupies the entire central region of the country, part of Nairobi and the Rift Valley regions. Their chief occupation is farming. They are well-educated and are notoriously religious. The Gikuyu mentioned in this model of crisis intervention occupy a small percentage of the total Gikuyu habitation; however, the model is applicable to the whole tribe.

**Model** - refers to the structural design which the writer will utilize as a strategy for intervening into personal and family crises for the Gikuyu. Because the term is determined by its usage in this dissertation, the structure will be developed for the purpose of establishing goals and suggesting ways of implementing these goals.

"**Mundu Mugo**" - is a Gikuyu name given for a traditional medicine man (women were also acceptable for this office), a magician or diviner, who divines the causes and methods of healing illness, or divines the cause(s) of a problem. The term also refers to a traditional purifier of unclean omen. For the Gikuyu, "Mundu Mugo" is believed to have acquired from Ngai (God) the magical power for divining and to know the strategies necessary for a crisis solution. In today's terminology, the person can be likened to a chaplain or a counselor.

**Pastoral Care** - refers to the total ministry of the Christian community to all humanity, particularly people facing crises. Its foundation is God's love manifested in the God and human natures of Jesus. It is derived from the biblical image of a shepherd
and refers to the solicitous concern expressed within the religious community for persons with emotional problems of living.

**Traditional Family Social Systems** - refer to the relational network of the Gikuyu’s members of a family; how their social life is governed and controlled by the set rules and requirements for all. Rules and requirements of the Gikuyu regulate the behavior of one individual to the other and again to the whole family, especially the interpersonal relationships.

**Unity** - refers to experiential behavior of a family; in times of problems like illness, death, or hunger; in times of prosperity, joy and times of peace. It is used to mean belongingness which binds the members of one family together in an inseparable manner.

**Value** - the term used to denote the quality of a family’s functioning. It is primordial to the formation of a common bond that will tie a family together when intervening into a crisis. For example, in the Gikuyu family the individual person does not have an exclusive identity from other members of the family to which one belongs. The interdependence of the family members creates an atmosphere of a shared responsibility to problem-solving.

When one person within the family suffers a problem, the value of oneness in the family pulls together the responsibility of every member to intervene. The term, value, therefore is the essence of the whole family’s interrelatedness which binds all members in decision-making within that relationship.
Review of Literature

Very little has been published which focuses upon the Gikuyu family systems and the crisis intervention theory. However, there are a few works already published which helped the writer in the construction of this conceptual model of family systems and crisis intervention for the Gikuyu.

From the pastoral care perspective, Abraham Adu Berinyuu has reflected on two concepts. The first is what he terms as *Towards Theory and Practices of Pastoral Counseling in Africa.* Berinyuu's primary concern is the need for the Western churches and communities to understand the African people and what they need, the methodology of offering pastoral care and other ministries to the Africans. His book addresses an African from his/her cultural milieu and that helped in the construction of the needed approach to healing.

In his other book, *Pastoral Care to the Sick in Africa,* he raises a contextual question. Using his country Ghana which, even in the period before the arrival of missionaries, had established ways of dealing with sick, Berinyuu's question is: What is the appropriate pastoral care approach in a society like Ghana? He represents many African societies by the use of the word "diviner." In the African definition, a diviner is the one who uses God's given magical power to divine both the causes of illness and the methods of healing.

Uri Rueveni, *Networking Families in Crisis,* has a psychiatric conceptual approach. His key method is using the community (mobilizing the community) resources and support systems for interactions and meshing of structure. He focused on social
network of people whose concern should be to maintain an important, often ongoing relationship in our lives. Reuveni, unlike Abraham, addressed the importance of not only the family systems and relatives, but also friends neighbors, and other significant systems within the community.

Kenyatta, specifically, has mentioned the Gikuyu family systems in his book, *Facing Mount Kenya*. The book was written from an anthropological perspective. It gives quite a lot of information on the autobiography of the Gikuyu. Like Abraham, he sincerely unfolded the truth of the Western missionaries. To the missionaries, African culture was inferior and needed a complete replacement with the culture of the West. Today, it is evident that Africans are people of culture and therefore their cultural values need to be understood and honored if any articulate healing methods can be established.

Macpherson, a missionary, wrote *The Presbyterian Church in Kenya* to give a clear picture of the damage that missionaries caused to the Gikuyu families. His book has a negative implication on today’s problems facing the Gikuyu families, especially in their disability to function as one whole body. However, it is an important book in the construction of the model of systems and crisis theory for intervention into Gikuyu problems.

In terms of Black history and the Black Church, the works of two Black writers were very helpful. First is the work of Edward P. Wimberly. His dissertation at Boston University, "A Conceptual Model for Pastoral Care in the Black Church Utilizing Systems and Crisis Theories," focuses on the utilization of systems and crisis theories while developing a model of pastoral care for the Black Church. His conceptual model
helped the writer of this dissertation to understand methods of developing a model of crisis intervention for a specific ethnic people. Also, the dissertation has the important information of how to examine alternative theories helpful for the construction of a new model of pastoral care.

The other work is *Black Families in Therapy: A Multisystems Approach* by Nancy Boyd-Franklin. In this context of the Black family, the knowledge of the culture of a particular ethnic group is seen as a necessary understanding, which expands the clinical view of the people they treat. The unique help is how that understanding gives to the approach of families, each as a unique entity rather than limiting families to stereotypical perceptions. Irene Goldenberg has also been examined for more material on family therapy and especially her analysis of Bowenian theory of family therapy.

Gikuyu, like other African societies, fall into the category of the peoples addressed by John S. Mbiti. In his book, *African Religions and Philosophy*, he is concerned about those societies that were not Christians nor Muslims in Africa before the colonial period. This was useful literature, not only by ways it has exposed the writer in his wider horizons of understanding the African’s cultures and values, but it also has the encouragement that everything traditional in Africa was not completely changed, damaged or forgotten. In the case of the writer of this dissertation, therefore, in the Gikuyu people’s family systems there are still traces that can be a light to the construction of this conceptual model for the Gikuyu.
Methodology

There are two methodologies to be used for the development of this model for intervening into the Gikuyu family emotional crisis. Gikuyu live a family life which is evident of a communal type of life. It is a life that promotes oneness and the needed help to facilitate family interaction whenever a crisis occurs. The first method to be used in this dissertation is founded on the theoretical concepts of family systems and the crisis theory. These two theories are key to any of the methods used for the dissertation and with this first method the model to be developed will explore the usefulness of the family systems and the crisis theories for intervention into crisis affecting the Gikuyu people, both Christians and non-Christians, while using the concepts from these two perspectives and the application of the theological perspective from the data of a case study. The data will be used in a view to explore deeper insights that inform further research.

Although the employing of family systems and the crisis theory perspectives is to find the usefulness of the two theories for the development of the model for crisis intervention for the Gikuyu, the traditional Gikuyu family systems will need another perspective. This system is of the Christian community which is formed out of the larger Gikuyu community with a unique faith. It is a system of an organized community of believers in Jesus Christ and the Jesus, who is the "norm" of this community. The community or the Christian resources for crisis intervention differ greatly from those of the traditional family of the Gikuyu.

To develop an authentic and articulate model of crisis intervention for Christians and non-Christians, another method will be necessary. For this purpose there will be a
need for correlating the Christian resources with the Gikuyu family systems resources. This correlation of the two perspectives culminate in the creation of an integrated model useful to all Gikuyu. It is this second perspective of integrating resources of the Gikuyu family systems and the Christian resources which constitutes the second method for this dissertation. The integrated method not only will be the needed model for the dissertation, but also will become a theological methodology through which all members of the community, both the Gikuyu traditional and the Gikuyu Christians become part and parcel of family crisis intervention as will be seen in the constructed model.
NOTES

CHAPTER I


2. Ibid.


5. Ibid., 188.


8. Ibid., 108.


10. Adu Berinyuu Abraham, *Pastoral Care to the Sick in Africa* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1988).


CHAPTER II

THE PROJECTED SETTING

Introduction

In this part of the dissertation, the writer's focus is to give an overview picture of the intended setting for the model of crisis intervention. As has been mentioned before, this conceptual model is developed for a specific ethnic group, the Gikuyu of Kenya. However, because of cultural affinity between the Gikuyu and many other tribes, to name just a few for examples, the Meru people, Gichugu, Embu and the Akamba, this model can be of great help. Some of these tribes, besides cultural similarities with the Gikuyu, have suffered the same frustrating family, social, religious and political experiences from the Europeans' imperialism which included the harsh missionary work in the early period of the 19th century.

The writer's aim is not to construct a model for the Christian Gikuyu group, which will probably be disappointing to some church readers because of the lack of heavy Christian theologizing. That lack of Christian pastoral theologizing makes this document different from the work of many Africans whose concern has been for the Christians and in almost no way includes the non-Christian folk. The document is limited for use within the Presbyterian Church even though other denominations may find it useful in their setting.
The Presbyteries of the Northern Kiambu

Because of the recent rapid growth of the Presbyterian Church in Kenya, the church counts as her responsibilities other surrounding countries, which include Tanzania and Uganda. For the purpose of implementation of this model, the writer's intention is to limit it to the Gikuyu families living within the smaller area known as the "North Kiambu." The area is composed of three Presbyteries. It is one of the most thickly populated areas of the Gikuyu people who occupy the vast central region of the Republic of Kenya. The Presbyteries comprise several parishes with a total of more than 69 churches (congregations) with a membership above 90,000.

The Larger Presbyteries' Area

The immediate areas with close relationship to the Presbyteries of the North Kiambu are also occupied primarily by the Gikuyu people. To the South are the South Kiambu Presbyteries, to the far East is the Presbytery of Muranga which extends its horizons to the Akamba people, to the West of North Kiambu is the vast area which includes the city of Nairobi, and to the far North is part of the well-known Rift Valley region of Kenya. Most of the population living within the larger North Kiambu Presbyteries area are Gikuyu. However, there are also people of other tribes living in those areas, especially the Akamba and the Maasai people.

The Immediate Neighborhood

Evidently the immediate neighborhood is Gikuyu. The largest part of the population is comprised of small-scale coffee and tea farmers who grow the crops for commercial purposes. A smaller number of the people own very large-scale coffee and
tea industries occupying lands of varied acreage, from a hundred to thousands of acres a farm. Although most of the farms are owned and managed by the Gikuyu, there are a few of the farms owned by the Western companies; that is, the Europeans, Americans, and the Germans. There are a few industries like the textile, metal and iron products industries, all owned by the Gikuyu and some by Asian community living in the area.

Labor in all these occupations is provided by the residents of the area. However, the unemployment crisis is horrifying. The farming industry is the chief occupation, not only for this part of the country, but also in the Republic. The tragedy facing most of the population is unemployment.

Education is entirely minimal up to the 12th grade (Western terminology), in Kenyan language is “form four.” That is not to say that there are no college and university graduates. Truly there are, but a very small percentage comparatively.

**Theological Stance**

In the beginning (1891-1926) the theological doctrines and the methods of teaching were wholly the work of the foreign missionaries. The majority of the Christians adapted the theology of the '70s and '80s of the last century, which was born in the American Baptist congregations using the techniques of evangelical preaching and gospel hymn singing. Today, the Christian theology is Calvinistic conservative Presbyterianism, claiming its origin from Scotland. Theology is discriminative against the adherents of other beliefs. That being the case, then it would be naïve for the writer to claim an effective pastoral care theology, when the existing model of the Christian life does not develop the entire society to live a human life.
As with sensitivity to wholeness, Lartey offers the following definition of pastoral theology: "a helping activity undertaken by people who recognize a spiritual or religious dimension to life, which by the use of verbal or non-verbal, direct or indirect, literal or symbolic modes of communication aims at preventing or relieving the anxieties of a person and fostering their growth as fully functioning human beings and the development of a society in which all persons can live a human life."¹ Lartey explains the writer’s earlier mentioned decision not to construct a model which only cares for a small number of the Gikuyu people. It is deliberate and intentional not to do so. Again, the purpose of this model, its nature and meaning are articulated in the ability of the family to function and interact as one whole. As John Mbiti has put it,

chapters of African religions are written everywhere in the life of the community, and in traditional society there are no irreligious people. To be human is to belong to the whole community, and to do so involves participating in the beliefs, ceremonies, rituals and festivals of the community. A person cannot detach himself from the religion of his group, for to do so is to be severed from his roots, his foundations, his context of security, his kinship and the entire group of those who make him aware of his own existence.²

Mbiti’s view of the Africans and their life clearly and briefly explains the damage that was caused by the Western missionaries to my people, the Gikuyu, for to the West to be religious was equal to being a Christian. The teaching discriminated the Gikuyu traditional belief in the living God that has respect to the cultural, religious and the total life of the people. It also undermined relationship between the Christian believers and non-believers.

The Presbyterian Church in Kenya maintains the missionaries’ status quo where Christians and non-Christians remain alienated. The goal of the model of crisis
intervention to be constructed for Gikuyu is therefore an attempt of rediscovering the lost family values and cultural belongingness of the Gikuyu regardless of the religious attachments. Because of religious, political and social differences, Gikuyu do not function as one whole even in families.

The West, that is, Europe, America and Scottish worlds left the religious life of the Gikuyu in terrible diffusion that will need remodeling. Their intended destruction of the family dignity, however, never flourished to the extent of extinguishing the traditional family observance of the Gikuyu deity (Ngai). To remove this diffusion, it will be necessary for the model for crisis intervention under construction to address the legitimate need or problem that keeps families apart. To do that, families will have to respect each and every member regardless of their religious, political or social status attachments, respect each member’s faith, individual differentiation of "self", and developing the ability to integrate thoughts and feelings, while maintaining the family equilibrium.

It is never possible to destroy a people completely as Boyd-Franklin comments on the life of African-Americans:

Despite the attempts to deprive them (slaves) of any form of human rights and of their own culture, Black people sought to maintain family tribal customs and spiritual rituals. There are many examples of this survival of human dignity in the face of enforced degradation. Black people created their own marriage rituals such as 'jumping the broom' which acknowledged a union between a man and a woman.3

Boyd-Franklin unfolds the truth which underlied the intention of the slave master to destroy the African peoples in the diaspora. The attempts to destroy their traditional
concepts of family was a means of robbing them of their humanness and this motive prevails today in some white churches and in their communities.

To conclude the theological stance of the church, Edward P. Wimberly's view of the theological ministry of the church is noted. "The ministry of liberation is not confined within the walls of the church. The ministry of liberation reaches out to the community. Thus, 'witness' refers to the demonstration and communication of values, which are celebrated and actualized within the church and in the world. This enables the Black Church to have a prophetic ministry." This is also true for the model the writer is attempting to develop.

**Organization Structures**

The organization of the church is systemized with three autonomous councils (courts of the church) with expressed power of decision making. The first council is the parish council, of which an ordained pastor is the moderator. All church work and any other ecclesiastical matters, under the jurisdiction of the council (session) are managed by this body. However, whatever decision made by the session has to be adopted by a higher council, the Presbytery council. Presbytery is the body that makes the second church council. Above the session or the parish council and the Presbytery council is the highest council called the General Assembly. For clarification purposes, the following composes each council.

1. Under the parish there are numerous churches or congregations. In each congregation there is a group of ordained elders including the pastors. Therefore, the parish council is composed of all ordained elders from each congregation. Together with
the elders of the congregations, the parish pastor or pastors, in some cases, form that body of the church council. If there is more than one pastor, then the senior by ordination automatically assumes the moderatorship of the council.

2. The council of the Presbytery is composed of all ordained pastors of all parishes within that presbytery, plus an equal number of elders as deemed right by the Constitution. Together with the presbytery constitution, there are others representing various interests of the presbytery. That is the constitution which creates or makes up a presbytery, for without parishes there is no presbytery at all. If such a case arises, e.g., several persons come together and start a new church, and where a parish does not exist, then that organized group is recognized by the closest constituted presbytery and thereupon included in that presbytery's responsibilities. The Presbytery moderator is one of the senior pastors by election.

3. The General Assembly is by the nature of its name the last of all councils. It is the highest Presbyterian Council. The regular meetings of the General Assembly are held once every three years. One very important thing about the General Assembly is the acquisition of its powers. Just as the presbyteries are formed by the representatives from each parish, so is the case with the General Assembly. The membership of this body of the church are ordained elders and pastors from every presbytery in the entire church. However, only two-thirds of each presbytery's active clergy and elders qualify for Class "A" General Assembly's membership. The number of the qualifying (two-thirds) clergy is equalized to the same number of elders. Class "B" is one-third of the retired presbytery clergy with an equal number of active elders (where applicable in this
case) in the presbytery. The General Assembly also has under it active committees which operate under its auspices.

**Interpersonal Relations**

The organizational structure of the church is one of the multifacets of a living Church of Christ. There are many other constituted groups of the church through which effective, successful congregations share a strong theology of community of faith and provide substantial relationships of sharing and caring. The interpersonal relations of the writer’s church are provided through various church group meetings. As has been mentioned before, the councils of the church have helped it to manage its affairs and resolve crisis through its decentralized powers and responsibilities. In the same capacity and through such groups as youth, Sunday school, Christian education, Women’s Guild, Boy Scouts, Girls’ Guides and many other activities, games and sports, the church provides adequate interpersonal relations.

**Christian and Non-Christian Interpersonal Relation of the Gikuyu People**

*(Gikuyu Family System)*

For the usefulness of the model of crisis intervention for the Gikuyu family, this portion of the dissertation is very important. The interpersonal relations through various church groups discussed above can be extended to the community in an attempt to create connections with families. Since members of the church come from families of the community around the church, connections to those families are relatives, friends of the family members, and church elders. The purpose for connections should be specific, for
example, illness, marriage preparations for a member of the family, or death loss in a family.

When a crisis of any kind arises, the church needs to participate as a church body. Then the pastor's or the church's task becomes processing the meaningful way through which the church will be involved. The interaction should therefore seek to enable the affected family members to unite together for the purpose of resolving the crisis, and at the same time help them to identify the value of the family as a system (whole and not parts) with the life experience through which they are going.

The intervention should avoid any type of projection, accusations, impositions, or even taking control. These are defensive reactions and may end up in displacing the real problem. Moreover, in a situation like this some of the participants may prematurely withdraw from the intervention team, therefore defeating the purpose of intervention. It should be the process of enabling quality of all involved including the pastor to be the well of living water for all the people. As mentioned in Chapter I of this dissertation, the interactions of both Christian and non-Christian members of the Gikuyu families should call for unconditional reciprocal acceptance, openness and unqualified trust.

**Summary**

This chapter has reported the projected specific place where this project will be carried out and how this project differs from other written models, especially in the intended scope which assures care to all the Gikuyu Christians and non-Christians. It has
also reported the church structure and the nature of interpersonal relations of the people to be cared for.
NOTES

CHAPTER II


CHAPTER III
SYSTEMS THEORY

Introduction

Before discussing the systems theory’s history, the writer needs to mention that the first three chapters of this document attempted to evidence a proliferation of the Gikuyu family social systems made possible by age-groups and kinships. The whole life of the Gikuyu people can therefore be understood only through the two principles, which throughout the ages have controlled the total life of the Gikuyu. More than kinship, age-group was a circumcision ritual, although to both every person was attached without exception until death. There were moral requirements which undergirded the life and behavior of every person belonging to it. In time immemorial these two principles have been attempts to fill the gaps of needed community and family social responsibilities, and by the observance of the principle requirements Gikuyu have existed as systems.

Every crisis among Gikuyu people has always been understood from the world view of systems that are interdependent. Every person is part and parcel of the networking support systems to solve a family or community crisis. However, the form of networking processes have always depended on the age-grading or kinship relationship, for the benefit of the whole family or the clan and not that particular single system only. Therefore, when European colonizers and missionaries attempted to destroy
the Gikuyu family and customs, they automatically disrupted the family systems without which the Gikuyu did not know how to exist.

The primary purpose of this chapter is to explore systems theory as a means to inform the reviving of the destroyed and lost family systems of the Gikuyu, and for the construction of a model of crisis intervention which will utilize Gikuyu family systems and the crisis theory concepts. To be of great consideration are the implications raised by the history of the Gikuyu peoples’ life after the missionaries. Although the history of the systems theory in this chapter is founded on scientific and humanistic philosophies, the concern here is to illustrate how these philosophies are related to the systems of the Gikuyu, of which parts belong to the whole and the parts function interdependently to support the work of the whole in crises intervention. Gikuyu is a complex system which has been in the past century disintegrated especially by the colonial power and religious confusion. As a matter of clarity, the traditional Gikuyu, who until today believes the power of the Mudu Mugo (traditional diviner), works independently of the Christian Gikuyu who believes in scientific methods of healing or the power of healing in Jesus Christ. This is what is referred to in this document as disintegration of Gikuyu family systems.

The Overview of Systems Theory History

In the field of science, systems theory was born in a contextual inquest. A warning was made by Alfred North Whitehead in 1920 stating that the intellectual capital of science was running out so long as it remained exclusively mechanistic in its approach.\(^2\) Scientifically, it is known as General Systems Theory because it is a system
theory which borrowed ideas from interdisciplinary scientific areas and minds. William Gray calls it a continually evolving body of ideas increasingly useful to large numbers of persons in diverse scientific disciplines, and located in widespread geographic areas.3

As a discipline, General Systems Theory owes its authorship to Ludwig Von Bertalanffy. He was a leading biologist with wide-ranging scientific and cultural interest. According to Bertalanffy, it is the formulation and derivation of those principles which are valid for systems in general.4 Bertalanffy saw a system as sets of elements (in this model this reflects a family composed of nuclear families), standing in interaction, dealing with the doctrine of wholeness, dynamic interaction, and organization.

Kenneth Boulding, in his contribution to the concept of General Systems Theory, states, "the objective then of general systems theory is to deal with the critical problem of loss of relevant communication between scientific specialists and as such to become a theory of interdisciplinaiy scope."5 In relation to Gikuyu family (see Chapter I), the word destruction of the Gikuyu family's social organization caused them the loss of the interaction which kept the families united as one whole.

Anatol Rapoport views the general systems theory as having received its historical impetus from two sources: (1) the realization of the inadequacy of mechanism as a universal model in science and (2) a tendency to counteract the fragmentation of science into isolated specialties. Rapoport's conceptual theory carries relevance to the families and their systems value of working together in relationships. Rapoport further argues that general systems theory is an effort to fuse the mechanistic and organismic approaches and so to introduce into the theory of physical processes such teleological
notions as purpose and goal-seeking behavior, which became no longer truly teleological. Rapoport recognized Bertalanffy’s work that general systems theory is to be based on fundamental distinction between isolated and non-isolated systems—a theory of open systems.\(^6\)

Bertalanffy delayed his theory until much later after a long and interesting evolution of views which included two concepts in particular as the chief precursors of general systems theory. These were the theory of organismic biology about which he wrote in 1928 and the theory of open systems presented in 1932. Although he had presented his concept at a Charles Morries Philosophy Lecture at the University of Chicago in 1937, he never did want to publish them until the conclusion of World War II. He feared an overwhelming criticism by the classical and orthodox biologists of the day.\(^7\)

The Gikuyu families systems structure reflects dynamic isolated groups, though seemingly one family. However, if the groups within the entire family network are well-mobilized, each one has a unique contribution. Those contributions are well discussed in Chapter V of this project dissertation.

**The General Systems and the Age of Physics**

General systems theory started at the time when physics dominated the field of science, and of course was considered to be the only science. At that time when Bertalanffy initiated the concept, the theory of mechanism was also looked upon as the key scientific method. Gray stated that it was the Laplacean ideal which resolved the world into an aimless play of atoms governed by the laws of chance, with the future
entirely determined by initial conditions. But the climate of the times also included an air of tension in the scientific world, as more and more the study of systems of greater complexity was undertaken—that is, the systems of biology and the behavioral sciences—and it was found that these could not be understood through the use of the mechanistic approach. Apparently such systems were not additives and understanding the whole could not be accomplished simply by understanding the various parts and then adding them together.

The fervor of the adherents to the mechanistic approach can be understood in the light of Aristotelian teleology in which he had locked scientific advance until it was replaced by the Galilean concept of mechanism. The concept of mechanism made possible the development of science and led to its flowering in the nineteenth and early part of the twentieth centuries. But biological and behavioral explanations, in which the concept of goal or purpose seemed necessary, were viewed with fear, as if the danger of a return to pre-scientific Aristotelian teleology might result. The result was a conflict in intellectual and scientific circles which Von Bertalanffy has described as a mechanistic-vitalistic conflict.

**Mechanistic-Vitalistic Conflict**

From the perspectives of biological science and behavioral science approaches to the concept of systems theory, this document observes both the dichotomy that existed between the two schools of thought as stated by Gray, Duhl and Rizzo, who gave valuable contributions. The scientific minds of Hans Driesch’s experiment of the 1890s will also be discussed.
According to Gray, Duhl and Rizzo (1969), mechanistic-vitalistic conflict was typified by the argument between those who insisted that the teleological type of systems found in biology and the behavioral sciences could somehow be explained in a mechanistic way, thus preserving the validity of the reductionist approach, and those who insisted that the teleological goal directed systems of biology and behavioral science could be understood only by the assumption that a vitalistic element was present. Vitalism depended upon the action of a higher intelligence, and therefore was beyond scientific understanding. General systems theory resolves this controversy by expanding the mechanistic approach so that teleological systems could be dealt with and understood in terms of physical properties. Thus, the validity of the scientific approach was maintained and vitalism became an unnecessary assumption.  

Hans Driesch’s famous experiment of the 1890s played a central role in stimulating Von Bertalanffy’s thinking in the direction of solving the apparently insoluble paradox of a scientific approach to teleological systems. In his experiment, Driesch noted that urchin embryo divided in half developed into whole sea urchin larva, smaller than usual, but normal and complete instead of developing into the half sea urchin that one might expect. The strange result of this experiment was explained by Driesch by the principle of equifinality, an equational event being one in which the same goal is reached from different starting points and in different ways. Since according to the classical mechanistic science of the day a final state is unequivocally determined by the initial conditions, Driesch concluded that equifinality contradicts the law of physics and could be accomplished only by a soulike vitalistic factor which governed the processes in
foresight of the goal, that is, the normal organism to be established. This conclusion was nothing less than a declaration of the bankruptcy of traditional science.

Other prescriptions in the general systems theory was the work of John Spiegel in the concept of foci in a transactional field, and the work of Lawrence K. Frank on organized complexity. The conceptual theory of Frank saw general systems theory as a better model of politics if the systems theory would encompass organized complexities, open systems, cybernetics and self-organized systems. Norbert Wiener\textsuperscript{10} initiated a propositional model of cybernetics; the proposition that invades the concept of limiting its applicability only to static entities and inertial systems. Frank went beyond Wiener to propose that cybernetics is a probe or can be used as an external force to evoke from the environment data necessary for correction and direction of coordination of growth.

**Philosophical Foundations**

This part of the dissertation will deal with two aspects that the writer thought are fundamental to the formulation of the general systems theory. These are the presuppositions and the humanistic foundations.

**The Presuppositions**

One presupposition underlying the organismic views of systems theory is the law of evolution by Darwin.\textsuperscript{11} Systems theory borrows from the law of evolution. According to the principle of thermodynamics, the general trend of events in physical nature is toward states of maximum disorder and leveling down of differences. In marked contrast to this, the living world shows in embryonic development and in
evolution a transition toward higher order, heterogeneity, and organizational
differentiation, according to Gray and Rizzo.12

Another presupposition of general systems theory was the mind of Von
Bertalanffy,13 one of the leading scientists and authors of General Systems Theory. He
emphasized that living organisms are essentially open systems, maintaining themselves
in a continuous state of inflow and outflow, building up and breaking down components,
ever being, so long as they are alive, in a state of chemical or thermodynamic
equilibrium, but rather in a steady state of balanced tensions.

Another presupposition of general systems theory is the development of
"generalized ears," that is, to develop a framework of general theory which would enable
one specialist to understand relevant communication from others. The integrative
potential (Boulding)14 of general systems theory is one of its most important
characteristics. It constitutes a modern approach to the unification of science and is
based on the similarity of laws in different fields. Von Bertalanffy calls this view
"perspectivism" and comments that the unifying principle is that of organization.

Another presupposition, according to Beckett,15 underlying systems theory is that
of universal interrelatedness, which assumes that reality is a collection of wholes and that
the parts that make up the wholes cannot be understood apart from the whole.16 Helen
Durkin points out that the part is usually related functionally to the whole and is carrying
out the functions of the whole.17 Moreover, there is a dynamic interaction among these
parts which make up the whole, and each part performs separate but highly coordinated
functions that enable the organism to function smoothly.
Humanistic Foundations

The humanistic view underlies the philosophical foundations of systems theory, according to the discovery of some research authority. In their study, the recent authors disagreed with the findings of Reisman. He saw behavior and mental life as essentially response to stimuli; or response conditional by stimuli in the past, which he called other-directedness of present humanity. But recent biological and psychological experience shows otherwise. Their view is that internal activity or spontaneity of the psychological organism characterizes persons as internally active system. The view is based on the concept of open system in persons' lives. Gray, Duhl and Rizzo state, "both in individual development and in evolution, autonomous active behavior precedes reaction to external stimuli."

Departure from Homeostasis Model

This is indicated in the limit of homeostasis model, that is the concepts that behavior is composed of the gratification of biological needs, satisfaction of drives, relaxation of tensions, adjustments, re-establishment of biological, psychological and social equilibrium. Gray and Rizzo argue that the drives, equilibrium and homeostasis schemes cover only a limited aspect of behavior and mental life. Beyond that they have the view that processes of development, evolution and increasing order are, in general, beyond the homeostasis and equilibrium scheme. Bertalanffy, according to Wimberly, has the view that "persons are not totally biologically determined, but they have the ability to act and to influence their environment. Moreover, they have the ability to create and to pursue values which may be, at times, in opposition to the biological needs."
of the organism. The nature of human personality is seen by Bertalanffy as an open system, that is it maintains a continuous inflow and also outflow within the external environment and with other systems.

**The Concepts of Networking Support Systems and Crisis Intervention in Systems**

As described by Bertalanffy, the nature of human personality as an open system does not only allow a continuous inflow and outflow with the external environment and other systems. It initiates attempts to mobilize the social family network support systems in a collaborative effort (family unity) to solve emotional crisis. As will be analyzed in the last two chapters of this project dissertation, the action of networking support systems for this model should be time-limited and goal-oriented. Moreover, its purpose is to mobilize those human beings with family relationships, and in crisis to assemble their own social network including relatives, friends and neighbors who will work in collaboration to intervene into family crises.

From the crisis intervention perspective, the process should create an atmosphere that is capable of modifying destructive relationships during the intervention process. The systems intervention should be able to develop a temporary support team that would care for unexpected uncontrollable members of the support systems.

Among the Gikuyu people, small disputes were "and are" intervened within the father, mother and children systems. If a big dispute, it is always necessary to call together heads of families within "Mbari" (kinfolk). These elders compose the "ndundu ya mucii" (family council) who intervene into such crises within a family system. The chief purpose of the council is to bring the disputing members of the family into a mutual
agreement without breakin family unity. Therefore, networking systems is an attempt to develop a model that has the potential to contribute to a model of crisis intervention for the Gikuyu. In that attempt, the systems model organizes data of all systems or sub-systems involved into a meaningful whole for better networking emotional problems of the people.

Homeostasis in Relation to the Gikuyu

In the Gikuyu setting every happening had religious significance. The regeneration of the Gikuyu family systems began with two persons, namely Gikuyu (the man) and Mumbi (his wife). God provided Gikuyu with a beautiful Mumbi and blessed them (Gikuyu and Mumbi) with nine beautiful daughters and no sons. Based on the inside mind open system, initiatively Gikuyu and Mumbi prayed to God for the provision of equal numbers of men into their family. The wish of Mr. and Mrs. Gikuyu to have nine men was based on procreation (regeneration) and also the belief that the family system could also accommodate more people, that is more systems. Therefore the more came into the family system, the more left the system to establish elsewhere and continue with the procreation. "Homeostasis" is very well activated in the Gikuyu open system with its incoming systems and outgoing systems.

The nine girls systems welcomed nine men systems who became established families, and out of those families (Mbari) were regenerated the nine clans (Mihiriga) and from clans there was the Gikuyu society who, before the coming of the Europeans, operated as one whole. The methods of establishing Christianity halted a lot of the Gikuyu social organizations, interaction of the families, the ability for the Gikuyu to act
as one whole family and therefore the halting of the family equilibrium. The intended model is therefore purposed to address that distorted family interaction (as discussed in Chapter I) by the utilization of both the Christian resources and the traditional Gikuyu resources. This proposed open family systems model is primordial to the theory of crisis intervention for the Gikuyu people.

**Summary**

In this chapter the nature and history of systems theory have been examined as important background material for developing a model for Gikuyu families systems. Attention has been paid to the claim that systems can work together in relationships, and that systems are sets that deal with the doctrine of wholeness, dynamic interaction and organization.
NOTES

CHAPTER III


3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

6. Ibid., 8.


9. Ibid., 11.


12. Ibid.

13. Ibid.

15. Edward P. Wimberly, "A Conceptual Model for Pastoral Care in the Black Church Utilizing Systems and Crisis Theories" (Ph.D. diss., Boston University, 1976), 44.


19. Ibid.

20. Ibid.

21. Ibid., 40.

CHAPTER IV

BOWEN'S FAMILY SYSTEMS THEORY

Introduction

In this chapter the focus concerns the following: (1) to analyze Bowen's approach to theory and practice of family therapy and (2) to explore the relation of his conceptual theory to the integrated conceptual model of crisis intervention of the Gikuyu family social fabrics systems.

Murry Bowen is one of the foremost original thinkers in the field of family systems theory from which much of mainstream family therapy has sprung. As a developer of family systems theory, he conceptualizes the family as an emotional unit; a network of interlocking relationships. His theory emphasized the importance of a multigenerational or historical framework. Bowen's theoretical contribution, along with their accompanying therapeutic efforts, represents a bridge between psychodynamically oriented approaches that emphasize self-development, intergenerational issues and the significance of the past, and the systems approaches that restrict their attention to the family unit as it is presently constituted and currently interacting.

Bowen's theory comes from two perspectives; first, from his knowledge as a psychiatrist and second, from his practical clinical work with schizophrenics and their families. Bowen has stressed the importance of theory for research, for teaching purposes, and as a blueprint for guiding a clinician's actions during psychotherapy. His
notion of the field of psychotherapy is that of lacking a coherent and comprehensive
theory of either family development or therapeutic intervention and its all too tenuous
connections between theory and practice. According to Goldenberg, Bowen invested
a lot of efforts to dismiss theory in favor of an intuitive "seat of the pants" approach.
The approach has a contextual resource exhibited in the process of dealing with a reality
as opposed to rationalization theory.

Some of Bowen's influences to reach into the use of the intuition approach for
family therapy came from his personal interaction with family systems. For example,
his interest is in the impact of a mother-child "symbiosis" consistent with his then
psychoanalytic viewpoint in the development of schizophrenia. Assuming schizophrenia
to be the result of unresolved symbiotic attachment to the mother, her immaturity and
need of the child to fulfill her own emotional needs, Bowen began working with mother
and child together. Another source of influence came from Bowen's personal association
with entire families with schizophrenic members living on the research wards for months
at National Institute of Mental Health in Maryland. He discovered that the emotional
intensity of the mother-child interaction was even more powerful than he had suspected.
More important, the emotional intensity seemed to characterize relationships throughout
the family, and not merely those between mother and child. The role of fathers and
siblings was viewed by Bowen as fostering and perpetuating family problems. Because
of the apparent reciprocal functioning of the individual family members, he began to
expand his earlier mother-child symbiosis concept. Bowen viewed the entire family as
an emotional unit. However, his views never embraced the concept of cybernetic
epistemology as Goldenberg has put it: "Although he did not adopt a cybernetic
epistemology per se, Bowen had moved from concentrating on the separate parts that
make up the whole to a focus on the whole itself, what he called the family emotional
system." 7

**Family Systems Theory**

Bowen's conceptual theory of family systems emphasized that the emotional
disturbance in an individual arises from and is maintained by relational binds with others.
His theory departed from the theories of psychopathology in which mental disturbances
were viewed as rooted within the person. In his conceptual theory of family systems,
Bowen emphasized the role of the family as an emotional unit in the etiology of
individual dysfunction. Rather than functioning as autonomous psychological entities,
individual family members are inextricably tied in thinking, feeling, and behavior to the
family relationship system. Furthermore, Bowen paid attention to the multigenerational
trend's functioning and hypothesized an orderly and predictable relationship process
connecting the functioning of family members across generations.

**Bowen's Eight Interlocking Theoretical Concepts**

Bowen's theory of the family as an emotional relationship system consists of eight
interlocking concepts. Six of the concepts, formulated before 1963, address emotional
processes taking place in the nuclear and extended families. Two later concepts,
emotional cutoff and societal regression, added in 1975, speak to the emotional process
across generations in a family and in a society. His eight forces shaping family
functioning are:
1. Differentiation of self

2. Triangles

3. Nuclear family emotional system

4. Family projection process

5. Emotional cutoff

6. Multigenerational transmission process

7. Sibling position

8. Societal regression

**Differentiation of Self**

Bowen’s notion of the differentiation of self is based on the degree to which one is able to choose between having his or her functions guided by feelings or thoughts. People with the greatest fusion between the feelings and thoughts function poorly. Bowen argues that:

They are likely to be at the mercy of involuntary emotional reactions and tend to become dysfunctional even under low levels of stress. Just as they are unable to differentiate thought from feeling, such persons have trouble differentiating themselves from others and thus fuse easily with whatever emotions dominate the family.⁸

Another concept by Bowen is the one of what he calls *undifferentiated family ego mass*. Derived from psychoanalysis, the concept conveys the idea of a family "stuck together," one where "a conglomerate emotional oneness exists in all levels of intensity."⁹ The symbiotic relationship of interdependency between mother and child represents the most intense version of Bowen’s concept. The ego mass concept is seen
by Bowen as the determinant force of the degree to which any member is involved in the emotional life of the family unit. He says, **"To be human is to belong to the whole community (in my case the Gikuyu), and to be close to each other."**

John Mbiti's contribution helps us understand what it means for the Africans to be close in a family.

Close relationships, he says, are expected to exhibit in a situation of a family that both alliances and reflections are expected to exhibit in a situation of a family. A person cannot depend on the Gikuyu that both associations and reflections are expected to exhibit in a situation of a family.

And as Mbiti understands, Among the Gikuyu the closeness of the members of a family is an indigenous cultural value and is indispensable. It is also understood by the Gikuyu family understanding. Among the Gikuyu the closeness of the members of a family is of origin. That an individual becomes free of unresolved emotional attachments to his or her family sets of terms underscores Bower's insistence that maturity and self-actualization demand family ego mass—his later research in systemic language as fusion differentiation. Both Bowen and initially characterized in psychoanalytic terms—underdifferentiated

Sometimes the emotional closeness can be so intense that family members know each family from moment to moment. He says, **"To be involved as the determinant force of the degree to which any member is involved in the emotional life of the family unit."

Bowen sees the emotional closeness as a state of alliances and reflections. In a family system, emotional tensions shift over time (sometimes slowly, sometimes rapidly) in a series of alliances and reflections. To two members. In other words, within a family system, emotional tensions shift over uncomfortable, developmental, and ultimately to a phase of mutual reflection between other's feelings, thoughts, fantasies, and dreams. This intimacy may lead to sometimes the emotional closeness can be so intense that family members know each

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Mbiti gives us a clear perception of traditional African families' enmeshment. It would be wrong for any therapist or counselor to confuse the enmeshment of the Gikuyu or the Africans with Bowen's undifferentiation.

There is affinity between the Gikuyu and the Black family in America, and especially in relation to Boyd's point of view. Boyd has the notion that in the complex extended family in which many Black children are raised, it is not unusual for an enmeshment or blurring of boundaries to occur. In the extreme, this can be seen as a fusion or lack of self-differentiation. In the more enmeshed Black family, this lack of differentiation of self can be exaggerated. The therapeutic task is to help family members differentiate and still remain connected to the family and extended family.12

Owing to education, profession and social class, Gikuyu today have among the young adults those who have gone beyond the families. The level of differentiation activated today that is necessary for this mobility is somewhat frightening, which can result in the development of symptoms in family members.

Bowen's conception assumes that an instinctively rooted life force in every human propels the developing child to grow up to be an emotionally separate person, able to think, feel and act as an individual. At the same time, Bowen proposes that corresponding life force, also instinctively rooted, propels the child and family to remain emotionally connected. As a result of these counterbalancing forces, argues Bowen, no one ever achieves complete emotional separation from the family of origin.

In relation to the Africans and the African families' emotional attachments, John Mbiti's conception is very helpful to understanding why and how the Gikuyu live with members of each family, attached to each other and belonging to each other. He says:
Only in terms of other people does the individual become conscious of his own being, his own duties, his privileges and responsibilities towards himself and other people. When he suffers, he does not suffer alone but with the corporate group; when he rejoices, he rejoices not alone but with his kinsmen, his neighbours and his relatives whether dead or living. When he gets married, he is not alone, neither does the wife 'belong' to him alone. So also the children belong to the corporate body of kinsmen, even if they bear only their father's name. Whatever happens to the individual happens to the whole group, and whatever happens to the whole group happens to the individual. The individual can only say I am, because we are; and because we are, therefore I am.\textsuperscript{13}

**Triangles**

Using the husband and wife relationship as his example, Bowen's theory emphasizes anxiety or emotional tension within the individual or in that person's relationship. "Stress between husband and wife may arise, for example, as they attempt to balance their needs for closeness with their needs for individuation. The greater their fusion, the more difficult the task of finding a stable balance satisfying to both."\textsuperscript{14} Bowen's use of the concept of "triangle" is an attempt to resolve such two-person stress within a family. Triangulation brings in another person (member of the family) to form a three-person interaction.

According to Goldenberg's interpretation of Bowen's conception, triangulation may spread beyond the relationship of the husband and the wife to the third person, and this helps to initiate involvement. She says:

The twosome may 'reach out' and pull in the other person, the emotions may 'overflow' to the third person, or that person may be emotionally 'programmed' to initiate involvement. This triangle dilutes the anxiety; it is both more stable and more flexible than the twosome and has a higher tolerance for dealing with stress. When anxiety in the triangle subsides, the emotional configuration returns to the peaceful twosome plus the lone outsider. However, should anxiety in the triangle increase one person in the triangle may involve another outsider, and so forth. Sometimes such triangulation can reach beyond the family, involving social agencies or the courts.\textsuperscript{15}
Among the Gikuyu triangulation is a well known problem-solving strategy. For example, as Kenyatta has put it:

The proper procedure adopted in recovering a debt was that a man brewed sugar-cane beer and took it to his debtor. He took with him also one of the elders of his village. The beer was presented to the debtor as a reminder and a sign of friendship and of the wish to settle the matter peacefully. In this way the debtor might be moved by the friendly approach and perhaps make full settlement or promise to pay it in installments. If the debt was not paid, another beer was prepared and presented to the debtor, and this time two elders accompanied the creditor. If this failed to bring any successful arrangement towards settlement of the debt, a third visit was made, taking the beer as before and three elders as witnesses. Now the creditor had full right to take the matter before the 'Kiama' (court), because he had tried his best to persuade his debtor to settle the matter mutually out of court and had failed. Jomo Kenyatta affirms what Bowen’s perception is in his concept of triangulation, while of course, at the same time he contributes to the understanding of how Bowen’s theory of solving relational problems can be applied to some of the Gikuyu’s situational family crises.

**Nuclear Family Emotional System**

Bowen is affirmed by Goldenberg in that when two poorly undifferentiated persons marry, the most probable outcome is that of being more fused to each other, and will produce a family of the same characteristics.

The nuclear family emotional system will be unstable and will seek various ways to reduce tension and maintain stability. The greater the nuclear family’s fusion, the greater will be the likelihood of anxiety and potential instability, and the greater will be the family’s propensity to seek solution through fighting, distancing, the impaired or compromised functioning of one partner, or banding together over concern for a child.

In a clearer way Kerr and Bowen regard three possible symptomatic patterns in a nuclear family as the product of the intense fusion between partners. Each partner is intensified by anxiety and when intensity reaches a sufficient level, it results in a
particular form of symptom development. The person (or the relationship) who manifests the specific symptom is largely determined by the patterns of emotional functioning that predominate in that family system. The following are the patterns:

1. Physical or emotional dysfunction in a spouse sometimes becomes chronic as an alternative of dealing directly with family conflict; the anxiety generated by the undifferentiated functioning of every family member is being absorbed disproportionately by a symptomatic parent.

2. Overt, chronic, unresolved marital conflict, in which cycles of emotional distance and emotional overcloseness occur; both the negative feelings during conflict and the positive feelings for one another during close periods are likely to be equally intense in roller-coaster fusion; the family anxiety is being absorbed by the husband and wife.

3. Psychological impairment in a child enabling the parents to focus attention on the child and ignore or deny their own lack of differentiation; as the child becomes the focal point of the family problem, the intensity of the parental relationship is diminished, thus the family anxiety is being absorbed in the child's impaired functioning; the lower a child's level of differentiation the greater will be his or her vulnerability to increase in family anxiety and thus to dysfunction.\(^\text{18}\)

The dysfunction in one spouse may take an imbalanced form of reciprocity, which Goldenberg calls "overadequate-underadequate reciprocity." In a situation of this kind, one of the partners will be overloaded with family responsibilities (earning for living, caring for the children, cooking and many others), while the other plays the counter role of being underresponsible. Fused together, the two pseudo selves develop an arrangement in which one partner increasingly underfunctions while the other takes up the slack by assuming responsibility for them both. When the tilt gets too great, "the one giving up most pseudo self for the sake of family harmony becomes vulnerable to physical or emotional dysfunction."\(^\text{19}\)
Goldenberg and Boyd both agree on the notion that the nuclear family emotional system is a multigenerational transmission process or phenomenon. It is very possible for individuals to repeat in their marital choices and other significant relationships the style of relating learned in their families of origin, and to pass similar patterns to their children. Boyd clearly affirms this in a family case study. In the case study, the involvement of a maternal grandmother paved the way for some resolution of the mother's unresolved issues with her own mother.\textsuperscript{20} To Bowen, the way to deal or resolve current family problems is to change the interactions with the family of origin. This change will help in the differentiation process, rendering the individuals involved less overactive to the emotional forces transmitting through the family.

**Family Projection Process**

According to Goldenberg, parents do not respond in the same way to each child in a family, even though it is so claimed. The parental differences in how they respond to each child make for significant differences in the function of each child. Generally, the child who becomes the object of the parental focus will develop greater fusion to the family than other siblings and consequently remain more vulnerable to emotional stresses within the family. Goldenberg further says that Bowen "believes that the parents, themselves immature, select as the object of their attention the most infantile of all their children, regardless of his or her birth order in the family. This is what Bowen calls family projection process."\textsuperscript{21}

The projection process operates, says Goldenberg, "within the mother-father-child triangle; the transmission of undifferentiation occurs through the triangulation of the most
vulnerable child into the parental relationship." Kerr affirms Bowen's view that "the greater the level of undifferentiation of the parents and the more parents lean to the projection process to stabilize the system, the more likely that more than one child will be emotionally impaired. This process of transmission of parents' undifferentiation becomes active or may begin as early as the initial mother-infant bonding."23

Goldenberg has related two factors to the intensity of the family projection process: the degree of immaturity or undifferentiation of the parents and the level of stress or anxiety the family experiences. She uses Singleton's view on triangulation:

The child responds anxiously to the mother's anxiety, she being the principal caretaker; the mother becomes alarmed at what she perceives as the child's problem, and becomes overprotective. Thus a cycle is established in which the mother infantilizes the child, who in turn becomes demanding and impaired. The third leg of the triangle is supplied by the father, who is sensitive to his wife's anxiety and, by attempting to calm her, plays a supporting role to her in dealing with the child. As collaborators, the parents have now stabilized their relationship around a 'disturbed' child, and in the process perpetuated the family triangle.24

**Emotional Cutoff**

Children who are less involved in the projection process usually emerge or develop greater ability against family fusion, to separate decision-making and feelings. For the children who are more involved they try different strategies upon reaching adulthood; for example, trying to insulate themselves from physical relationship with the rest of the family and living away from the family. They can also use psychological barriers, or by wrong perception or conclusions assume that they are completely separated from relatives and therefore free from them. Bowen considers such supposed freedom an emotional cutoff, a flight from unresolved emotional ties; this is not true emancipation. Avoidance of attachments may simply represent denial of unresolved
conflicts and mask unexamined fusion. Emotional cutoff reflects a problem. It also can solve a problem and can also create a problem.

Goldenberg argues that families with high levels of anxiety and emotional dependence experience most cutoffs from their family members. She says, As both increase and greater family cohesiveness is expected, conflicts between family members may be disguised and hidden. Should the fusion demanding situation reach an unbearable stage, some members may seek greater distance, emotionally, socially, perhaps physically, for self-preservation. When communication is demanded, it is apt to be superficial, inauthentic and brief.

According to Goldenberg, Bowen insisted that adults must resolve their emotional attachments to their families of origin. Bowen, in a very personally revealing paper, delivered in 1967 to a national conference of family researchers and therapists, openly described his personal struggles to achieve a differentiation of self from his own family of origin. Without this differentiation, Bowen argues that family therapists may unknowingly be triangulated into conflicts in their client families (much as they were as children in their own families), perhaps overidentifying with one family member or projecting onto another their own unresolved difficulties. In general, the therapist is vulnerable to the client family’s effort to resist change and retain homeostasis.

Multigenerational Transmission Process

Bowen in 1976 developed another concept for family therapy which he called the multigenerational transmission process. In this concept severe dysfunction is conceptualized as the result of the operation of the family’s emotional system over several generations. For the development of this concept, Bowen put into consideration of his two earlier concepts, which are important here, the selection of a spouse with a
similar differentiation level and the family projection process that results in lower levels of self-differentiation for certain offspring. These two concepts have been detailed earlier in this chapter.

Bowen assumes that when the least well-differentiated members of two families marry, that at least one of their children, as the result of the projection process, will have an even lower differentiation level. The eventual marriage of this person to a person with a similar poor differentiation of self transfers the increasingly lowered level of differentiation to the members of the next generation. This process repeats itself generation after generation. The production of individuals with progressive, poorer differentiation will increase the vulnerability to anxiety and fusion. In a period of time, say about eight to ten generations, a level of impairment is reached that is consistent with schizophrenia. If for any cause severe stress is encountered, schizophrenia will be realized much earlier. In some less stressful cases or under favorable life circumstances, Bowen believes poorly differentiated people may keep their relationship system in relatively symptom-free equilibrium for several generations longer. However, the process may be reversed should someone in the same lineage marries a person considerably higher on the differentiation-of-self scale.

Sibling Position

On sibling position Bowen’s thinking is influenced by the order of births, personalities and the role of the child in the family. His theory provides that the older child has influence on his/her sibling and, not only that, but also the interactive patterns between marital partners may be related to the position of each partner in his or her
family of origin. This is because birth order frequently predicts certain roles and functions within one’s family emotional system. According to Toman, an older person who marries a younger will expect having more responsibilities in their marital relationship.28

Goldenberg argues that two youngest children who marry may both feel overburdened by responsibility and decision making. The marriage of two oldest children may be overly competitive because each spouse is accustomed to being in charge.

Among the Gikuyu, Bowen’s theory has relevance only to the manner in which the younger person would behave towards the older. This behavior applies to the order of births in a family, since the younger siblings are required by the family social system to respect those who are older.

For the Gikuyu marital relationship and responsibility of each partner are not determined by who is older or who is younger. Education to both sexes (male and female) is the determining factor. This education on how the marriage partners should relate to each other and also the male responsibility and the female responsibility in their marriage life is given before any marriage is solemnized. Whether the man is older than his wife or vice versa, that does not influence their relationship behavior to each other.29

Societal Regression

In this final concept, "societal regression," Bowen goes beyond his concept of family emotional functioning to society’s emotional functioning.30 When the family is subjected to chronic, sustained anxiety, what happens as a result is losing contact with its intellectually determined principles. To allay the anxiety of the moment, the family resorts more and more to emotionally determined decisions. Under conditions of chronic
anxiety (economy, unemployment, health, and political security of the people), "the societal concept postulates that the same process is evolving in society," as it happens in families. Bowen argues that society, like the family, contains within it opposing forces toward undifferentiation and toward individuation. Further, Bowen considers "chronic anxiety as the product of population explosion, decreasing supplies of food and raw materials necessary to maintain man's way of life on earth, and the pollution of the environment which slowly threatens the balance of life necessary for human survival."32

Summary

This chapter analyzes Bowen's conceptual ideas useful for networking family crisis. His eight interlocking ideas will need to be summarized for the purpose of making a connection between the ideas and their usefulness to the Gikuyu people and for the purpose of this model of crisis intervention. It is not only for the purpose of connecting the eight ideas with their usefulness to the Gikuyu, but also the ideas address some important Gikuyu traits that need to be understood. Gikuyu people naturally live a life similar to the life of the families Bowen studied for his theories of family therapy. Gikuyu are intelligent, suspicious and very resistant to any strange change which interferes with the families structures.

Bowen's ideas can be useful to the Gikuyu people in that they provide information that every network support system would need to understand before attempting to network Gikuyu crises. Moreover, they serve as the criteria for understanding extended family dynamics and also provide theoretical framework of hypotheses that inform the problems common to a family structure similar to those in which Bowen worked. The
family constellations of the Gikuyu are very complex but with permeable boundaries. In that perspective and in the understanding of the traits already mentioned, his ideas proposed an approach to the Gikuyu crises which address values such as the need to know who composes the intervention network, only family kinfolk need to be involved, and also the confidentiality of the family's affairs. Until a trust and credibility are established by the Gikuyu family with the networking support groups, nothing positive should be expected. The involvement of any other systems outside the family structure has to be the final decision of only the members of the Gikuyu family. More about the Gikuyu people will unfold in the following chapters of this project dissertation.
NOTES

CHAPTER IV


2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., 146.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

6. Ibid.

7. Ibid.

8. Ibid., 148.

9. Ibid., 149.

10. Ibid.


15. Ibid.


22. Ibid., 154.


27. Ibid., 156.


31. Ibid., 386.

32. Ibid.
CHAPTER V

THE GIKUYU PEOPLE

Introduction

The main focus of this chapter is to show why the writer sees the traditional life of the Gikuyu as a system. It will also explore in a detailed way the origin of the Gikuyu (history), the possibilities of utilizing the Gikuyu family system for crisis intervention, and it will also discuss the interrelatedness of the tribal components which help to maintain an ongoing relationship in the families and the individual members. Finally, the chapter will address some areas of Gikuyu religion and spirituality.

The Gikuyu people are part of the family of Bantu-speaking peoples which inhabit nearly three-quarters of Africa South of the Sahara, where the appearance of the language, with its characteristic features, indicates the spread of the people. The distinguishing features of Bantu languages are roughly the division of nouns into a number of groups characterized by different singular and plural prefixes; and the agreement of the words in a sentence by the addition of a variant of the normal prefix to any related adjective or pronoun, and to the verb.\(^1\)

Again, according to Oliver and Wilson, "Gikuyu are considered to have originated in the lower Niger/Calabra area, thence via the Cameroon to the Congo-Zambezi watershed, then south of Lake Victoria Nyzana\(^2\) and then east and south to their present-day location. They brought with them a knowledge of working in iron and their distinctive language forms, and these by intermarriage and the dominance of a superior culture, they imposed on the inhabitants of the areas where they settled. The Kikuyu "system" of land acquirement and tenure, which are in use up to the present day, are probably an
indication of their mode of advance in many areas. The main reason for their "spread" (see Chapter I concerning their expansion into the new forest areas) is seen as the increased agricultural production made possible by the knowledge of working in iron.

**Social Organization: Tribal Origin**

The tribal identity of the Gikuyu and their social organization are maintained by three important factors or principles, without which there can be no harmony in the tribal activities. Together with the tribal origin, the behavior and the status of every individual in the Gikuyu society are also determined by the same three principles. The first is the family group, the second is the clan, and the third is the age-grouping. Before the details about the three principles, it is important to discuss the tribal origin which later gives us light to the understanding of the other aspects of the Gikuyu’s life.

**Origin**

According to Kenyatta, in the beginning of things, when mankind started to populate the earth, the man Gikuyu, the founder of the tribe, was called by the "Mugai" (the Divider of the Universe), and was given as his share the land with ravines, the rivers, the forests, the game and all the gifts that the Lord of nature (Mugai) bestowed on mankind. At the same time, Mugai made a big mountain which he called Kiri-Nyaga (Mount Kenya). He made the mountain his resting place when on inspection tour, and also the mountain was a symbol of his wonders. The Lord of nature, therefore, took the man Gikuyu to the top of that mountain of mystery, showing Gikuyu the beauty of the country that Mugai had already given to him. While still on the top of the mountain, the Mugai pointed out to the Gikuyu a spot full of fig trees (Mikuyu), right in the center of
the country. Gikuyu, while on the top of the mountain, was commanded to descend and
establish his homestead on the selected place which he named "Mukurwe wa Gathanga"
(this has no English synonym). Before Gikuyu departed, he entered a contract with the
Lord of nature that whenever in need he will pray to him, raising his hands up while at
the same time facing to Kiri-Nyaga (the mountain of mystery), and the Lord of nature
will come to his assistance. When Gikuyu descended from the mountain, he went and
reached the spot, there he found Mugai had provided him with a beautiful wife whom
Gikuyu named "Mumbi" (creator or moulder). Both lived happily, and had nine
daughters and no sons.

Gikuyu was very disturbed at not having a male heir. In his despair he prayed
to Mugai who responded quickly telling Gikuyu not to be perturbed but to have patience
while the Mugai was in the process of fulfilling his wish. Gikuyu had a flock of sheep
from which Mugai directed him to go and take one lamb and one kid, kill them under
the fig tree (Mukuyu) near his homestead. He was also directed to pour the blood and
fat of the animals on the trunk of the tree. He and his family (family systems) were
asked to make a big fire under the fig tree and sacrifice the burned meat to the Mugai.
Gikuyu was also directed to take his wife and daughters back home after the sacrifice
while he was asked to go back to the fig tree, where he would find his wish fulfilled.
He (Gikuyu) would find there nine handsome sons who eventually married his daughters.

The nine small families lived together with their parents (Gikuyu and Mumbi)
acting as the head of the Mbari ya Mumbi family. The family grew large with parents,
daughters and their husbands together with their children, grandchildren and great-
grandchildren, which evidently symbolized a system type of life. After the death of Gikuyu and Mumbi, their daughters inherited their movable and immovable property which they shared equally among them.

During the time for mourning the loss of parents, all the daughters’ families remained very attached to each other and as one group. However, the population increased; the family group multiplied and spread. The spreading followed a system of "classification," nomenclature without forming more family sets and clans.

It was then decided that each of the nine daughters should call together all her descendants and form one clan under her own name. Thus, Gikuyu clans were founded with their names as follows: (1) Acheera; (2) Agachiku; (3) Airimu; (4) Ambui; (5) Angare; (6) Anjiru; (7) Angoi; (8) Ethaga; and (9) Aitherandu. The clans became the system of kinship extended from Mbari (family) ya Mumbi, as mentioned earlier, to several Mbari and Mihiriga (clans) which then later were thought necessary to bring them (all groups) under one strong bond (unity) of kinship in which they could act in solidarity regarding one another as members of one big family (general family systems). The entire analysis of the origin of the Gikuyu is fundamental to the understanding of why Gikuyu becomes to the writer a system utilizable for the formation of this model for the Gikuyu, which will use systems (family systems and the Christian resources) for the intervention into their crises.
The Gikuyu Governing Principles

The Family Group (Mbari or Nyumba)

The principle of kinship finds its most direct expression in the family group, known in Kikuyu as the "Mbari" or "Nyumba ya Ngania" which may be translated as the side or "House of So and So." The early part of this chapter carries information about the principles to be discussed here. The Mbari is the basic social unit. It is a system that consists of the land-owning founder of a family, his wife or wives, and their children and grandchildren. The family may extend beyond the third generation if the land owned by the family is extensive and its founder a man of strong personality, but usually by that time, the group is so large and diversified in its interests, the pressure on the family so great, and the leadership of the original founder so overlaid by that of his sons that the original group identity tends to fade out and be replaced by new families headed by the sons or grandsons. In this way, the Mbari groups multiply. The common origin of the Mbari can be traced back in the history of the founder and his wife, "Gikuyu and Mumbi" (see Kenyatta for more information). Thus, a Gikuyu, when establishing his identity as a true tribesman, will say, "I am of such-and-such a clan of the family of so-and-so" (Ndi Munjiru wa Mbari ya Ngania). In this way, kinship bonds were maintained which promoted the unity of the whole clan, ranging from the intimate family ties of the extended family group resident on a particular estate to the extremely scanty but still effective ties uniting one family group with others of the same clan which might occupy land anywhere in Gikuyu country or outside it.
The Mbari is also the basic economic unit. In the past the Gikuyu economy was based on farming (mixed farming—cultivation and stock-raising). Today, livestock farming is no longer a pride of the Gikuyu since the introduction of coffee and tea farming. Gikuyu methods of farming and land ownership were primary bonds of the families. Chapter I has a detailed account on Gikuyu occupations.

The Gikuyu (Mbari) is also the basic religious unit. Traditionally, Gikuyu believe in the life after death. Therefore, the society is larger than the physical and embraces not only the living members in the ordinary sense of the term, but also the dead who were remembered by the living and whose assumed wishes were taken into account in decisions affecting the welfare of the "Mbari" as a whole—both living and dead. The more remote ancestors were also respected and were regarded as having an interest in the family fortunes and an effect upon them for good or ill, but they were only dimly remembered (this practice still exists today even among Christians), if at all, and the relationship with them lacked the immediacy of the contacts believed to be possible with the "living dead." Today, the living members of the family groups (systems) are the basic link between the generations, those who are alive, the unborn and those who have departed. The senior man of the family acts as intermediary, but where the issue between the living and the spirit of the living dead was believed to be delicate or obscure, the services of professional "Mundu Mugo" might also have to be enlisted.

Clan (Muhiriga)

Muhiriga (clan) is the second principle which joins in one group (several Mbari units) who have the same clan name (names are already mentioned earlier), and are
believed to have descended from one family group in the remote past. It is obvious that, owing to the polygamous system of marriage, a family or Mbari unit increased rapidly, and in one generation it is possible for a Mbari to have a hundred members or more. In a few years the number of generations increases from just hundreds to thousands, which renders it impossible for a Mbari to live together in a group where they could refer to one another as father, mother, sister, brother, uncle, aunt, grandmother, grandfather and so on.\footnote{7}

Gradually and inevitably, identity of blood relations disappear, and the only bond left between a system (group) which once was united by a close blood relation is the Muhiriga (clan) identity. This knits together distant relatives and facilitates the feeling of rendering mutual support in all important matters in the interest and the welfare of the whole body (Muhiriga). The viability of the Muhiriga’s components (the Mbari groups), and their ability to maintain relationships as systems will be discussed later after the third principle.

**Age-Grading (Rika)**

The third principle factor in the unification of the Gikuyu society is the system of age-grading (Rika). The kinship relationship described before in this chapter might seem to promote independent action by clan and family interests. However, looking at their interdependence, we can see that there should be another thing to bond the interests of the two. In practice, the third principle becomes the needed bond, namely age-grade. Irrespective of clan or family affiliation, all Gikuyu, both male and female, were admitted by circumcision to age-grade membership at some suitable time after reaching
adolescence. (For more information about adolescents and their care, see the model of crisis intervention.)

Each age-grade was given a name relating to some outstanding event of the time, and membership of each carried with it powerful obligation of brotherhood and sisterhood toward all other members, thus unifying the clans and family groups of that particular age-grade throughout the whole tribe. Each age-grade had precedence over and exacted loyalty from its juniors and each accorded precedence and loyalty to its seniors, the oldest surviving age-grades, acting through councils of elders, being regarded as the repositories of tribal tradition, and the age-grading pattern as continuing beyond death among the ancestral spirits (cf. Kenyatta, 1938).^8

Gikuyu family, clan and the age-grade were very well-supportive principles under which a lot or all the Gikuyu crises were taken care of. The system also took care of problems such as senility inherent in the system, if ever it occurred. The danger inherent in such a system of having tribal authority vested in age-grading or age-groups of men approaching senility was avoided by a system of "generation-grades," called alternatively Mwangi and Maina. A generation grade held office for some 30 years, at the end of which it would give up its authority to its successor in a very solemn ceremony called the "Itwika"; the literal meaning of the word is "the breaking" or the act of relinquishing of the office.

**The Gikuyu Household**

In the Gikuyu concept of household, it is defined as the smallest family unit, consisting of the children, their parents, and sometimes includes grandparents. At times
the household membership can be larger than the expression above. It applies even to the Gikuyu people as John Mbiti has said:

In many areas there are what anthropologists call 'extended families,' by which it is generally meant that two or more brothers in the patriarchal society establish families in one compound or close to one another. The joint households together are like one large family. There are cases where one man has several wives and in such cases, households have extended membership, according to the numbers of households.9

The Individual

In the corporate life of the Gikuyu, the individual does not and cannot be without others. He owes his existence to other people, as Mbiti further says, "including those of past generations and his contemporaries. He is simply part of the whole. When he suffers, he does not suffer alone but with the corporate group, when he rejoices, he rejoices not alone but with his kinsmen, his neighbors and his relatives whether dead or living. He can only say, 'I am, because we are; since we are, therefore I am.' "10

Another reference from the African point of view is by Abraham Adu Berinyuu. In his book, Pastoral Care to the Sick in Africa, Berinyuu points out:

The human person is not an isolated individual in this world view. He/She is at all times interacting with other beings in the universe, whom he/she is linked to by a network of relationships. The human being is essentially a member of a community of beings as well as a unique individual person. He/She is a force in a universe of living forces, a member of the community of humans, while at the same time, a unique individual endowed with the responsibility to create and share life in the universe.11

Kenyatta12 also supports that the individual boys and girls had to be initiated ritually to an age-grade. By circumcision ceremony, they automatically became members of one age-grade (riike rimuve), irrespective of "Mbari," "Muhiriga" or district to which
individuals belong. They act as one body in all tribal matters and have a very strong bond of brotherhood and sisterhood among themselves.

Continuation of Muhiriga Legacy
(Viability)

This part concludes the systems theory of the Gikuyu family. It helps in linking the future generations within the extended "Muhiriga." In perpetuation of the Muhiriga’s relationships, the representatives of a Muhiriga generally used to meet on occasions of big events, such as marriage ceremonies and circumcision ceremonies. The first applies even today to some families in some areas, but the latter may have died completely, especially in women’s circumcision which is almost history today.

In such gatherings, the elders brought with them young ones and introduced them to the other young ones from other "Mbaris." There being the representatives of the whole Muhiriga and not the Mbaris anymore, they were told how their lineage links their particular "Mbari" to the "Muhiriga." "This information helped the youth, so that when they grew and took the responsibility in the leadership of their own Mbaris, they would be in a position to conduct wisely the affairs of the family systems, and at the same time, to follow the correct line of their ancestors in promoting the unity of the whole of the Muhiriga."13 The analysis of the Gikuyu social fabrics systems in this chapter links us to the understanding of the relevances between Gikuyu people’s interdependence and the interdependence of the general systems theory and how parts cannot be understood apart from the whole. The history and the analysis of system theory is well described in the next chapter. How this is addressed in the model to be constructed will come later in the adolescence model example.
Relation to Crisis Intervention Theory

The various social organizations and social groups of the Gikuyu people are very important. It was through these social organizations that Gikuyu traditionally resolved their crises. The social life, as previously discussed, provided the society for the strategies of intervening into crisis with immediate response. The society’s involvement into the human life experiences was a continuous lifelong responsibility, beginning long before a person’s arrival in this world, and continued until after the person’s physical life. People’s lives for the Gikuyu were not limited to the physical life nor the physical death. It was therefore necessary for the Gikuyu to start caring for a person from the time of pregnancy until after death. When a mother became pregnant, the Gikuyu concept was that a new member of society was on the way. The expectant mother became a special person and received special treatment from her neighbors and relatives. The special treatment started before and continued after childbirth.

There were regulations about food to be observed. Expectant mothers were forbidden to eat certain foods for fear that some foods would interfere with the health and safety of the mother or child, or would have had misfortune to either the mother of the unborn baby. Some illustrations are that of not eating the meat of a dead animal. They were forbidden to eat fat, or any other kind of food which would have caused her to become fat. However, in addition to the food she was allowed to eat, a pregnant mother was supposed to eat a kind of earth found on ant hills. The earth was first chewed by the ants (a certain kind) and then deposited on grass or piled up to form a mound. It was believed that such earth strengthened the body of the child.
After birth the mother screamed five times if the child was a boy and four times if a girl. The nursing women around her were also expected to join her in the scream, so that the community would know what sex of a child was born. The knowledge of that suggested to the community what immediate care would have been needed. About the care of the sexes, this will be discussed in detail in Chapter VII of the dissertation.

Also after birth, both the child and the mother were kept in seclusion from the public for several days or even weeks until both had gained some strength. During that period the mother and child continued to receive treatment. The mother used juice from boiled meat mixed with herbs. The juice was a medicine to protect the mother from different illnesses. Because Gikuyu breast fed their babies, the mother's milk was believed to have secreted some digested herbal medicine; therefore, by breast feeding the baby also received treatment.

The whole occasion of birth was marked with feasting and great rejoicing among the relatives and neighbors of the parents concerned. The rituals of feasting and rejoicing were symbols of introducing the new human being into the community, which immediately became corporately responsible for the child as he/she grew up. If there were difficulties during the birth of the baby, the father sacrificed a goat, and a medicine man was invited to purify the house.

As the child grew up, he/she was introduced to the community life through various Gikuyu social groups. In those groups, then, the person became a participant in the life activities of the Gikuyu through ethical and religious, political (if a male), and social groups. As Kenyatta said, "In the Gikuyu community, there is no really individual
affair, for everything has a moral and social reference. The habit of corporate effort is but the other side of corporate ownership; and corporate responsibility is illustrated in corporate work no less than in corporate sacrifice and prayer. “

This analysis of how Gikuyu were involved corporately in the life of their people introduces the unique purpose and meaning of this model of crisis intervention. The integrated model will help in bringing the Gikuyu and Christians (see Chapter I) together as they participate in the care of their people. Continued social, ethical and religious interactions will help to understand the people’s needs and problems, and how those crises can be intervened into. Through social and religious corporate interactions, the model will help the Gikuyu to come closer to one another, bury their differences already existing and join hands as one whole, as they intervene into those problems affecting the life of their people.

**What Gikuyu Believe**

Gikuyu believe in one Ngai (God); *Mumbi wa indo ciothe na muhei kirindi indo ciothe* (the creator and giver of all things). Gikuyu believe in a Ngai (God or Deity) who has no father, mother or companion of any kind. The biblical parallelism is John’s Gospel. "In the beginning was the Word. The Word was with God, and that the Word was God" (John 1:1). Also, in Genesis 1:1ff, "In the beginning God created..." Gikuyu believe, as mentioned before, that God has no companion, parallel to Exodus 20:2-4: "I am the Lord your God. You shall not have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven or in the earth or in waters below." God, according to the Gikuyu, does His work in solitude. He loves
or hates people according to their behavior. This God (Ngai) lives in the sky. He also has temporary homes on earth (according to his situational, periodical or persistent revelation to the Gikuyu), situated on the high mountains from where He makes his visits to the Gikuyu. He is a high lofty Being who controls the earth.

Ngai (God), though a distant Being and invisible, the Gikuyu call for his presence, especially in the time of crises, or at the birth, initiation, marriage, illness and death of every Gikuyu. Communication is established on his behalf with God. From the perspective of the crisis intervention, Gikuyu have "Ngai" as their norm. The historical acts of God are the Gikuyu’s reference to their belief that likewise God will intervene into any other problem.

**Family System’s Priesthood Theory**

Gikuyu traditional religion has no provision for official priesthood. "This is due to the fact that the religion is interwoven with traditions and social customs of the people. Thus, all members of the community are automatically considered to have acquired, during their childhood teaching, all that is necessary to know about religion and custom.”

Chapter VII of this dissertation will discuss the methodology of the Gikuyu education beginning with the child or children. Parents were looked upon as the providers of the needed knowledge, and they therefore operated as both religious ethical teachers and teachers of social customs of the Gikuyu.
The parents’ responsibilities were then by initiation transferred to different age-grades who nurtured the person until death. It was through age-grade institutions that most of Gikuyu priesthood was practiced. Kenyatta illustrates this very well:

The most solemn religious service is that of sacrificing to Mwene-Nyaga (owner or God). This duty and privilege belongs to the elders. These may be, and often are, chiefs and sub-chiefs, high political officers; but they perform in the sacrificial ceremonies simply in their role of elders of various gradings. 'Athuri a Kiama', i.e., miraculous elders. In this category of sacrificial elders, some of them are 'wise men' or seers (Arathi). The men were believed to be endowed with powers beyond those of ordinary human beings. They are held to be in direct communication with Mwene-Nyaga who gives them instructions, generally during their sleep. Mwene-Nyaga 'assists' and directs them in executing their sacred duty. The powers so given, it is said, are never to be used for personal purposes, but only for the welfare of the community. For it is feared that if anyone dared to misuse such powers, thus acting contrary to Mwene-Nyaga's instructions, the result would be disaster, not only to himself but to the whole of his family group. 'Mundu Kunyitwo ni ngoki O hamwe na ruciaro rwake,' literally, 'defilement befalls a man and his children.'

A seer's office was a very delicate one, for he was not required to seek earthly aid in executing his sacred mission. The seer always exercised care, to be sure that the message from Mwene-Nyaga (God) was clear to him. The message was not universal, it was limited to only the specific Gikuyu within the jurisdiction of the seer. No message could be given to the people unless the seer had repeatedly heard the same from God. If for any reason the seer conveyed a wrong prophecy or incomplete message, he misled the people and he could be punished by putting him to death.

The biblical parallelism can be found in the Old Testament and in the New Testament. To give some illustrations: Moses in the episode of the burning bush where God speaks and Moses thought he never understood the source of the message (Exodus 3:1ff). He therefore asked a clarification question. He was a seer and had to be fully
clear. In Acts 10:12ff and Acts 9:3ff (Paul’s conversion), Jesus calls him several times and then Paul double checked the source of the message.

The Gikuyu seer becomes a community diviner while at the same time becomes an agent of carrying God’s message. More than those, the seer in his offices becomes the community mobilizer. As a community mobilizer he helps the community network systems to resolve the sin or problems with which God is not pleased.

Validating community approach from a family community approach for crisis intervention, Uri Rueveni states it clearly:

Family network intervention is an attempt to mobilize the social support system in a collaborative effort to solve an emotional crisis. It is a time-limited, goal-oriented approach (specific) that will help family members in crisis to assemble and mobilize their own social network of relatives, friends, and neighbors. This network will become collectively involved in developing new options and solutions for dealing with a difficult crisis.19

Gikuyu priesthood was situational. The seer’s task was only "when they were (are) in great need or distress, resulting from such causes as drought or illness of the people or livestock."20

Summary

The chapter has discussed the history of the Gikuyu people in a view to inform the model to be constructed who Gikuyu are, and also to inform the necessity of this model for the Gikuyu. It also reports the Gikuyu family structure, the three principles which govern the life and the behavior of the Gikuyu. The chapter also has analyzed the Gikuyu family structure as an attempt to link family systems to the theory of general systems in the next chapter. Also discussed in the chapter is the relation of the family systems to crisis intervention.

82
NOTES

CHAPTER V


2. Ibid., 8.


4. Ibid.


8. Ibid., 4.


10. Ibid., 108.


13. Ibid.


15. Ibid., 225.
16. Ibid., 232.

17. Ibid., 233.

18. Ibid.


CHAPTER VI

THE WESTERN WORLD’S VIEW ABOUT GIKUYU

Introduction

The ideas here are first, to inform the Christian theology of pastoral care and counseling concerning the missionaries’ misleading view about the Gikuyu people, and second, to discuss some fundamental concepts and values of the Gikuyu that are primordial to the effectiveness of the existing model of Christian pastoral care. For the sake of the model under construction, the effectiveness to be evaluated should not be limited to the Christian Gikuyu, but to the Gikuyu as a people.

The Western World’s Misrepresentation of the Gikuyu People

Before the end of the last century, general perception about the Gikuyu was the same as that of other African peoples and Africa. To the Europeans and other Western world, black Africans (in my case the Gikuyu) were like nothing more than some seemingly moving objects. Africa was void and in it dwelt the forces of evil. "Indeed for some, Africa was (Abraham Berinyuu uses the word "perhaps") the kingdom of Satan and all her followers."¹

The way the Gikuyu are seen today and the way the pastoral care and counseling has been provided have been founded on all the distortions and the derogatory descriptions of the nineteenth century by missionaries who destroyed the family systems of the Gikuyu.
The most disgraceful thing of all is not that these distortions were accepted by the Gikuyu, but as it is, the fact is that they were subjected to the oppressive and dehumanizing conditions of life that forced (much later) them to accept what was not true about themselves. "The unfortunate thing was that these distortions were accepted, and deliberate competitive attempts were made to find theories to justify them."²

Abraham Berinyuu’s appropriation of Edwin W. Smith is our living evidence. Smith wrote that "the black man (today would be man and woman), with a thin veneer of civilization and with religious faith, is a dangerous person." Berinyuu further says, "Smith like many other Europeans thought that Africans had no morals."³ His research was done among the Bantu people in Africa, and his opinion leaves a lot to be desired by the Gikuyu, who are some of the Bantu people.

One book among the series written by Smith, The Religion of the Lower Races, according to Abraham Berinyuu "aimed at impressing his sponsors than educating them."⁴ It is a ridiculous attitude and an act of shame for especially the missionary of the gospel of Jesus Christ to propagate wrong stories about people. In Berinyuu’s book, Smith is mentioned quoting another "well known writer" who also stated: "The pagan African is what he is because of religion. Give him a new religion, vital, enlightened religion, and he will be a new man. Christianity will save him, because it will enter into every relation of his life to give it restraint and uplift."⁵

The basic assumption of the Europeans was that everything that was African and anything that the African (Gikuyu) did was evil. In that case, therefore, it would be true for the writer to say that Gikuyu have, like other Black people, suffered not only from
misdiagnosis of disease from which they never suffered, but also from labels that were given, which only showed the ignorance, insensitivity and perhaps arrogance of people who felt they knew everything about them. Many of these labels included words like savage, prelogical, primitive, fetishist, and animist, and these are just a few.

Parrinder could not compromise. He told the truth about the Africans which his colleagues avoided, while leaning to false versions of writings. He remarked: "It seems by far the best plan to this confusing and unjust word fetish (and I will add savage, primitive, prelogical), all together, they need to be relegated to the museum of the writings of early explorers."6

Smith, being one of the pioneers in the mission enterprise to the African peoples, had some of the prevailing ideas of mission and the theological methodology in Africa. However, Smith's pervasive and derogatory impression (and those of his colleagues), according to Kenyatta,7 assumed that Africans were like empty containers or slates. An empty container can be used for any purpose, good or bad, helpful to the people of even hazardous. Slate was a writing board in the form of a chalkboard. If it is empty, anything can be written on it depending on the minds of the user. Smith thought Africans were like those illustrations, ready to be filled by Western Christianity and civilization brought by missionaries and Europeans. Those missionaries and Europeans thought Africans' culture, mentality and personality were inferior to theirs.

The numerous mentioned and unmentioned expressions about Africans, undoubtedly, applied to the Gikuyu people as well. The assumptions about these or in these ideas, as the writer has mentioned earlier in this chapter, indicate that Gikuyu and
the rest of the African peoples were treated with more contempt than commitment to announce the Kingdom of God. The thoughts that Gikuyu peoples' personality was inferior to that of the white people indicate to the writer how naive the Europeans and missionaries were. Not only were these writers naive, but very illogical and racist; the reasons why most of them, other than a few like Parrinder, could not express anything positive about the Africans.

Like other human beings, in order to appropriate meaning from symbols Gikuyu needed (need) symbolic points of reference. An illustration about this would be that of a school teacher. A teacher who succeeds in educating a people or students should have to consider points of reference. The points of reference are the daily experiences of the student, or what the writer would call the known experiences that help the class to understand the higher and unknown. Therefore, for the colonizers and missionaries to expect Gikuyu to accept their symbols and faiths, without drawing on their traditional and cultural experiences and the equivalent symbols, was not only illogical but also defied all theories of learning and human behavior. Of course, we have later generations of writers whose views differ by far from those of their predecessors. Placide Temple can be a good illustration with his view as follows:

It has been often remarked that a European who has given up, during his life, all practice of the Christian religion, quickly returns to Christian viewpoint when suffering or pain raises the problem of the preservation and survival or the loss and destruction of his being. In the same way among Bantu we see even the Christians return to their former ways of behavior whenever they are overtaken by moral lassitude, danger or suffering. They do so because their ancestors left them their practical solution of the great problem of humanity, the problem of life and death, of salvation or destruction.8
Placide is a good example to understand the key point of this dissertation. Many of the readers may be confused, and ask why the need for a conceptual model like this. The writer in his long years of parish experience learned what Placide Temple talks about. Traditional belief of the Gikuyu (even those who are Christians) is still very much alive in their minds and in their blood. When they experience sicknesses, or problems which defied their knowledge, some of them have referred to their traditional healers, diviners "ago," and traditional teachers, come what may. Some have been ex-communicated, denied their rights to celebrate Holy Communion or in the Sacraments, but all these do not mean anything so much to them.

Thayer writes on a necessary and important component in spirituality and pastoral care which is pivotal to the writer’s point of view. "The subject of spirituality and the pastoral care must take seriously the cultural context within which pastoral care occurs. Pastoral care does not occur in a vacuum, but within a matrix of social processes." This being the truth, then what? In the case of this model of crisis intervention for the Gikuyu, the answer is easy because the writer advocates an imperative observance. That is, pastoral care of the Gikuyu people must be done with the reference to their psychological and religious cultural context. It is what the writer calls integration of Gikuyu and Christian resources.

Understanding the Gikuyu People
(The Writer’s Point of View)

In a previous chapter of this dissertation, details about Gikuyu’s world view of spirits was discussed. In any discussion about the life of the Gikuyu, therefore, the writer would not see a point of departure between the ancestral spirits (the living-dead)
and the living community. The Gikuyu believe in spirits, and God through the spirits intervenes into the life of the living people is very prevalent. This part of the document will look into how Gikuyu view them and also will discuss the significance or the values of observing some rituals that preserve relationships between those Gikuyu who are living and the living ancestral spirits.

Spirits to the Gikuyu are the personal element that cannot be destroyed by death. This is conceptualized in the belief of the living-dead. In other words, the physical death is not the destiny of Gikuyu. Life continues even after death. It is imperative for any pastoral care model or any therapeutic group, dealing with emotional crisis of the Gikuyu to respect this belief. God uses ancestors and other spiritual beings as agents of blessing and cursing. John Mbiti's contribution on how Gikuyu perceive the spirits helps us to understand. "The Gikuyu," he says, "see the spirits in the same structure as their own society." These are the living-dead or the spirits of the ancestors (the parents' spirits). This concept has already been discussed. However, the writer sees a need to mention it again.

A lot of affinity exists between I. Sow's concept of God and Gikuyu concept of God, and needs the writer's noting here.

In Africa, man (person or man/woman) is permeated with a world that is crowded, studded with a myriad of signifiers, visible and invisible, penetrating every facet of life. This world is dominated by the presence of a supreme being, a universal rule presiding over the destinies of humans, animals, plants, things. Eternal and omniscient God, the Creator, is at the center of existence even though he has withdrawn from the world of humans, can make himself manifest on the earth, in the air, or in the water at any time, in the most diverse forms. He is a hidden force, an imperceptible energy that diffuses throughout the whole expanse of the cosmos, determining the cycle of seasons, the movement of the stars, the activities of the four
great natural elements (rain, wind, vegetation and lightning). In short, his power and dominion is boundless.\textsuperscript{12}

It is true to Gikuyu also. Together with the concept of God being a spirit, this Supreme Being is also a distant "Being." Yet at the cries of the Gikuyu’s lives he is invariably called upon. He intervenes into the causes of their cries. The concepts of the being of God, the relationship between God and the living-dead and the relationship that exists between God, human beings and the living-dead or the ancestral spirits are the key notions that underlie the Gikuyu concept of relational values.

It is in very rare cases or never that a Gikuyu person would die before blessing those who are left. An illustration is that if a father or mother becomes terminally ill, he/she will invite all the children and all the relatives, and in ritual of sharing either food or drink from one vessel or plate, everyone blesses the other (even though little children are believed clean), but they have to receive blessings themselves. If a person dies after this ritual, he/she will be re-lived by procreation.

Here the writer draws the attention of the readers of this dissertation to what John Mbiti says:

This recognition by name is extremely important. (Among the Gikuyu a newly born child will be named after the name of the one the child re-lives physically.) The appearance of the departed and his/her being recognized by name may continue for up to four or five generations, so long as someone is alive who once knew the departed personally and by name. When, however, the last person who knew the departed also dies, then the former passes out of the horizon of the sasa period. ("Sasa" means the period of physical living.) He/She has sunk into the Zamani period ("Zamani" means the gone and forgotten period after death.) But while the departed person is remembered by name, he/she is not really dead: he/she is alive, and such a person I would call the living-dead. The living-dead is a person who now is physically dead but alive in memory of those who knew him in his life, as well as being alive in the world of the spirits. So long as the living-dead is thus remembered, he is in the state of personal immortality. This personal immortality
is externalized in the physical continuation of the individual through procreation, so that the children bear the traits of their parents or progenitors.¹³

This analogy of life cycle relationships is true to the Gikuyu. It presupposes a systems relationship of love, unity or belongingness within the Gikuyu family, and the harmony of the family. This is what the writer refers to as the concept of family values. Unless Gikuyu are able to rediscover those values that were destroyed by the Europeans and the missionaries, then they do not therefore exist as Gikuyu. "Umoja ni ngugu" ("Unity is strength") for the Gikuyu.

The acts of pouring out libation (of beer, milk or water) or giving portions of food to the living-dead are symbols of communion, fellowship and remembrance. It is a symbol of a continued family systems' intervention into the crisis of death loss, though by being re-lived by the libated spirits, it also symbolized the defeat of that death. From the birth of a person, through stages of traditional education of the person's life, until the person's physical death, Gikuyu have strategies of family crises interventions. There is a similar relation between Gikuyu and Christians. Christians also have a symbol of the continued celebration in Jesus' death. Their symbol is the sharing in the Lord's Supper. The bond of the Christian relationship between themselves and between them and Christ is strengthened. This bond includes the saints (Christian ancestors) who have gone before them. Symbolically, the meal with wine and the traditional libation of the Gikuyu would have the same meaning. The meaning, according to the writer, is their will to reach down into the depth of their differences, religious, ritualistic and social values, and discover their original unity, peace and serenity in the pain of alienation and differences.
However, a difference also exists in the theological interpretation of the Christian Holy Communion and the mysterious religious influence of the traditional libation. In the Holy Communion, Christians celebrate the gifts of unconditional mercy and redemption of God for the human race in the resurrection of Jesus the Christ. In the traditional ritual of libation, the central focus is the perpetuation of the relational connectedness between the living and the ancestral spirits of the living dead, with mysterious influence only to one people, the Gikuyu, who believe in its unique power capable of preserving the needed relationship.

**Gikuyu Ethnicity and Gikuyu Family Organism**

The term ethnicity here means the unitary being of the Gikuyu. It is a synthesis of a person's personality, which to the Gikuyu cannot be understood in any other way than in terms of other people. Moreover, ethnicity of the Gikuyu is a unique unity through which the individuals become conscious of their own being, duties, their privileges and responsibilities toward themselves and toward other people. The unity of the Gikuyu is part of the family or community life, and therefore a very deep and serious religious transaction. Like other African people, "religion of the Gikuyu permeates into all the departments of life so fully that it is not easy or possible to isolate."  

The unity of the Gikuyu provides that there is no really individual affair, for everything has a moral and social reference. In the family, economic possessions, whether they are money, animals, or land are communally owned, and a senior member of that family can decide within that unitary without any other objection. People from the Western societies may not understand this type of unitary life. However, for Gikuyu
people it is a part of their life. A person does not become a member of a community by his/her choice. One is born into it. Therefore, Gikuyu communities are not aggregates of individuals who consciously decide to belong or not to belong to a community of a family. Gikuyu communities are made of people with blood connection and not by ideological interest of individuals. That is why decisions are made only within that unity of the family or community. In the same bond of community unity, the individuals and the corporate spirituality is nurtured. Moreover, that corporate spiritual welfare of the people helps in the mobilization of the families whenever a crisis occurs (cf. the model of crisis intervention for practical understanding).

The word development means "growing toward." Some people would prefer the biological term of evolving, but the writer of this document avoids that term. People or things can truly evolve but never become one. The term growing presupposes the concept of multiplying or regeneration. For human beings to regenerate is a religious concept of procreation. That is to mean a unique institutionalization of relationships, of love, peace, harmony, interdependence, interconnectedness and solidarity. Therefore, development to the Gikuyu can only be comprehended in the concept that to be human is to belong to the whole. This whole also carries to itself the components which help in the development or the growth. It is what the writer prefers to call the movements of the tribal or ethnic development. Those ingredients or movements are beliefs, ceremonies, rituals, festivals accompanied by music, dances, feasts, storytelling and myths. Ethnicity and development of the Gikuyu cannot be real without some protective
or undergirding and well laid down taboos and rights, which help the growth to hold together in the action of multiplying.

In this model ethnicity in the form of a unitary organism will be able to utilize and to pull together, for its benefits, the traditional Gikuyu resources and the Christian resources, synthesize those resources, own them and live with high consciousness of their synthesis. The model example on adolescence as a crisis aims at this value though it is not spelled out. This model of crisis intervention for the Gikuyu will endeavor to create that needed ethnicity. In doing so, it will at the same time consider the synthesis of spiritual and physical, divine and human, finite and infinite, eternal and temporary, transcendence and immanence, natural and supernatural, sin and holiness, and weakness and strength. A faith which does not consider Gikuyu in all those qualities does not either care about their ethnicity and is like Gikuyu never existed. Christian pastoral care approaches failed to recognize those values of the Gikuyu families, which is the reason why pastoral care is not well accepted even today. The writer is attempting an alternative model that will work.

Ethnicity is what Abraham Berinyuu has termed as rejecting total dichotomy as absolute but a synthesis of more than one. A unitary person tries to recognize all aspects of personhood as attempts to serve all dimensions in any one act. Hence ritual is needed (used) in almost all activities. Survival for a unitary person in Africa is not an individualistic opportunity but includes a sense of awareness of participation in a community by all, for all, and with all.15

However, the writer is influenced by the views of Mosala. Mosala is sympathetic that the problems experienced by the Blacks in South Africa are not dealt with through family systems. He argues rather convincingly that the Blacks’ system of counseling,
which used to be available to the individual through extended family throughout one’s stages of life, is being destroyed by unique problems of South Africa, and mass adaptation of inappropriate Western models of counseling. He also says that this problem may be for Africa in general. The problem "may not" just be the fact that these models started in the West. The problem may be that these models "may not have been critically evaluated" to determine their suitability or non-suitability. Further, there may not be any attempt to integrate them into an African system of counseling. He attributes this situation of counseling to some same kind of powers, which the writer blames for the situation in Kenya, namely, the uprooting of families, violence on families, and satanic, inhuman and apartheid policies.¹⁶

Blacks all over the world have, to a certain degree, been actively involved in the search for the cure. In her book, Boyd-Franklin appropriates Alex Haley’s Roots: "Family reunions have long served a function of bringing together extended kin who may not see each other regularly. There has been a resurgence of interest in this time-honored family ritual since the publication of Roots."¹⁷ Boyd-Franklin’s illustration is that some Black families have constructed a "family tree" that includes special pictures and memories. Some have interviewed older "family historians" who know the background and generational connections of the family.¹⁸ This conceptual model of crisis intervention for the Gikuyu is an attempt to rediscover those kind of cultural values by the utilization of the Gikuyu family systems and the cultural heritage as expressed in the dissertation model.
NOTES
CHAPTER VI


2. Ibid., 17.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.


16. Ibid., 95.


18. Ibid.
CHAPTER VII

GIKUYU TRADITIONAL SYSTEM OF EDUCATION AND ITS USEFULNESS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THIS CONCEPTUAL MODEL OF CRISIS INTERVENTION FOR THE GIKUYU PEOPLE

Introduction

Traditional Education As the Foundation of Gikuyu Family Unity

In this chapter, the writer’s concern is to provide an explanation of the traditional education of the Gikuyu has been the key foundation for the unity of the Gikuyu family. There are four ways through which education was processed: the child education, the male role in boys’ education, the female role in girls’ education, and the forms of education. Together with those, the writer will discuss the different ways of utilizing that education for crisis intervention for the Gikuyu people. In this document the word education refers to the oral tradition of the Gikuyu people.

Child Education

Child education among the Gikuyu begins at the time of birth and ends with death. The child has to pass various stages of age groupings with a system of education defined for every status in life. Gikuyu parents are the custodians of children’s education until the children have reached the stage of tribal education. Regrettably, the writer would need to point out that traditional education of the Gikuyu became contaminated by the introduction of the modern education of the West, so much that only a very small percentage of the people practice it. The fact that this negligence is there to date is one
of the reasons for developing this model of crisis intervention, which will utilize the Gikuyu family systems in an attempt to rediscover some lost values. In fact, the negligence by itself is a crisis. The Gikuyu people, it is true, need modern education; however, the Western world never cared about the methodology of providing that form of education without destroying what Gikuyu had practiced for years and years.

In the early days of European colonization, many white people, especially missionaries, came to our country with preconceived ideas of what they would find there, and how they would deal with the situation. The assumption was based on their conviction that Gikuyu, like other Africans, were heathen (according to the Europeans), and that everything they traditionally practiced was evil. Thus, traditional education of the Gikuyu was condemned, and the traditional educational process was disrupted.

Gikuyu education, beginning with the parental role, was centered on the person. It was a developmental process designed to help the person not only to become skillful and knowledgeable, but also a productive person in the community. In other words, it was for instilling into the child or children what the Gikuyu called "utaari wa mucii" or "Kirira kia mucii," meaning "educating the children in the family and clan tradition." This is one of the objectives of the model of crisis intervention to be constructed.

The parents' role in child education was very valuable. The children got the firsthand introduction to the family members and the family values. They were told how to respect the social and ethical values of the family and the importance of becoming part of that family. It was one of the methods by which the history of the people was passed
on from generation to generation. Parents helped children in understanding the cultural value of relationship between them and the entire family.

**Relation to Systems Theory**

In his dissertation, Edward Wimberly appropriating Beckett, says that systems theory in humanistic foundation presupposes universal interrelatedness. That means that the reality of wholeness is only realizable when the wholes are collected and that "the parts that make up the wholes cannot be understood apart from the whole." Based on the same presupposition, Wimberly also appropriates Helen Durkin whose view is like that of Beckett. He says that "part is usually related functionally to the whole and is carrying out the functions of the whole." The other important point worthy of noting concerns the dynamic interaction among the parts which make up the whole, even while parts perform separate, is that parts have highly coordinated functions to enable smooth functions of the organism.

Similarly, traditional education of the Gikuyu is founded on various indigenous systems. Kenyatta's view on this is very helpful. He states that the character of the individual is formed within the family circle through local groups and then through the whole tribal organization or through Gikuyu age-groupings. To illustrate these groups or systems, the writer would put them as follows: First, the family (Mbari or Nymbua), that is husband and wife and their children. In the family, the children start their education before they are weaned to other groupings. Second group is the clan (Muhiriga) which joins in several families. In Chapter III the writer discussed the nine Gikuyu clans and also the origin or the emergency of the clans. The third system or
group is that of age-grading which unites and solidifies the whole tribe in all of its activities of which traditional education is primary. Through traditional education each group operates independently as separate parts, while at the same time there is a dynamic interrelatedness of all the members. The task performed by separate groups is not for the groups only but for the whole Gikuyu tribe.

**The Male Role in Boys' Education**

Here the word male is used for the "father" in the family. It was entirely the responsibility of a father to teach sons. In all the tasks involving the father, the sons in the family were required to join, observe closely and where necessary a little participation was expected. Boys learned the skills of agriculture, woodwork, caring for and rearing livestock, differentiating edible and non-edible fruits, herbs and foodstuff, to mention just a few. The father also taught the boys how to make weapons for use to protect families against enemies. The most important skill that was required of the sons was the ability to "observe and to reckon things by observation." Counting by pointing was forbidden, "especially of sheep, goats, cattle or people." That act was taboo (mugiro) and was believed to be capable of causing ill luck.

The presupposition of the father's (male) role in teaching is that of providing and sustaining. God, according to the Gikuyu, is a father, the "source" of all things. A father in the family is the source of the whole family's maintenance. The males are the family's providers, and the boys needed the education in those possibilities as early as possible. All men in the Gikuyu were required to have the ability to maintain a family. The boys' education by the male also was a major "initiation" into the community.
responsibilities. It was an early development of the boys into the fatherhood, that is, provider, sustainer and protector of the family. In the absence of a biological father, the oldest son living in that family assumes the task of carrying the father’s wishes, especially facilitating family meetings when needed for decision making, sustaining and caring for the family members left behind.

**The Female Role in Girls’ Education**

Although sexual harassment is never a thing (never known), man could not be allowed to teach girls anything. Girls’ education was women’s responsibility especially for mothers. Women were capable of knowing better the biological changes of the girls, and it was not a disgrace if a mother used sexual language to her daughter. If a man ever attempted that teaching to a girl, that behavior was punishable by the men of his age-grade. At times a man could never find a woman to love him for marriage if he was known to be mannerless to women. (See the model example on adolescence.)

The writer would like to point out that the mother’s responsibility was not limited to girls only. She (the mother) had the responsibility for co-education. Together with educating her daughter on all things concerning domestic duties of women (wives) in managing and harmonizing the affairs of a homestead, she also, like the father, taught agriculture to the girls. Furthermore, the mother was in charge of co-education. In the evening boys and girls both learned laws and customs, “especially those governing the moral code and general rules of etiquette in the community.”

The teaching movement was in the form of folklore and tribal legends, mental exercises by use of riddles and puzzles. These types of classes were held in the evening.
after meals or before meals when food was being cooked. Songs and praises for children were other forms of giving knowledge to the young ones. At any kind of teaching, behavior modification to children was seriously emphasized. Therefore, both parents were expected to be present in times of these dances, which drew all children in a district to one specific location. "Very strong criticism was (is) directed at the parents whose children did not behave according to the approved tribal law of conduct. Such parents are considered to have neglected the important task of preparing their children to become worthy members of the community."¹⁰

**Education and Crisis Intervention Theory**

As has been previously mentioned, traditional education for the Gikuyu is a crisis-centered phenomenon. It is a strategy to equip a person from birth to death, for the ability to be used in crisis resolutions, either personal or those of other people. In all tribal (the whole Gikuyu society) education the emphasis ties on a particular act of behavior in a concrete situation. The person acquires all mass of the needed knowledge throughout his/her life. Although the level of participation is lower when a person is a child than when he/she is grown, education is always practiced, helping people to remain in touch with the tribal customs and values of the society. "It is with personal relations rather than with natural phenomena that the Gikuyu education is concerned right from the very beginning. Growing boys and girls learn that they have one thing to learn which sums up all the others, and that is the manners and development proper to their station in the community."¹⁴
Education As a Determinant Theory of Networking Crisis

The undergirding presupposition of this theory is the humanistic interconnectedness of the Gikuyu. In Rueveni’s philosophy of networking, the family members are the primary actors. They are the custodians of the methodology and resolutions. Uri Rueveni gives the dictionary definition of "network" as any pattern or system that interconnects, a linking device, a communication system, a supporting device. Basically, he says, "it conveys interdependence, flow, linkage, interactions and meshing of structures—a system. The connected people could be family, relatives, friends, neighbors, or other individuals in the community within which we interact."\(^{15}\)

In relation to the Gikuyu people, this topic is a complicated one, and it is obviously beyond the scope of what the writer can document in this dissertation. The writer’s concern in this part is the importance of the Gikuyu system’s interconnectedness. The writer will also try to relate that relationship of the family members with the concept of the systems and crisis theory for the Gikuyu.

To understand Gikuyu family and clan systems, it is necessary to return to kinship. Kinship system is like a vast network stretching laterally (horizontally) in every direction, to embrace everybody in any given local group. This means that each individual is a brother or sister, father or mother, grandfather or grandmother, or cousin or brother-in-law, uncle or aunt, or somebody else to everybody else. That means that everybody is related to everybody else, and there are many kinship terms to express the precise kind of relationship pertaining to two individuals. When two strangers meet in a village, one of the first duties is to sort out how they may be related to each other, and
having discovered how the kinship system applies to them they behave to each other according to the accepted behavior set down by society. To illustrate, if they discover that they are brothers, then they will treat each other as equals, or as an older and younger brother. If they are "uncle" and "nephew" then the nephew may be expected to give much respect to the uncle where this type of relationship of required by society. It is possible that from that moment on the individuals concerned will refer to each other by the kinship term, e.g., "brother," "nephew," "uncle," "mother," with or without using their proper names. Such being the case then, a person has literally hundreds of fathers, mothers, uncles, wives, sons, and daughters.

The kinship system also extends vertically to include the departed and those yet to be born. It is part of traditional education for children in many African societies to learn the genealogies of their descent. The genealogy gives a sense of depth, historical belongingness, a feeling of deep rootedness and a sense of sacred obligation to extend the genealogical line. Through genealogies, individuals in the sasa (present time) period are firmly linked to those who have entered into the zamani (the past period).

Genealogical relationship of the Gikuyu is an important concern as far as traditional education. There can be no "family system" unless that link is activated by teaching the young growing about it. Through kinship or genealogical relationship, the Gikuyu clan systems provide closer human cooperation, especially in times of need. In times of internal conflict, the systems come together to resolve the problem. If a person finds himself/herself in difficulties, it is not unusual for the person to call for help from his clan members and other relatives. Anything that Gikuyu find strange has always been
understood as a crisis, and for any kind of crisis Gikuyu are traditionally educated, how to unite and intervene into it. If Gikuyu systems can be categorized in the open systems, then it should be understood that way, only in the sense that it is a "steady state" and has the power to influence the environment. The systems are always changing, always multiplying and with continued interconnectedness among families and kinship members.

Gikuyu traditional education, therefore, helps to inform the purpose and the meaning of an action that needs to be taken for crisis intervention. It also helps to determine the strategies necessary for reaching the intervention goal, which includes divining the scope of the systems, methods of mobilizing systems and systems concepts.

As Edward Wimberly has appropriated C. Sager and H. Kaplan:

This theory views the individual as an open system that functions as an integral part of a larger dynamic social system. The individual as part of this larger system is viewed as operating, growing, and changing in relationship to the world around him. Moreover, the individual cannot be understood in this theory in isolation, but only in relationship to the environment in which he is part.\(^{17}\)

One of the foci for the model of crisis intervention is to help Gikuyu people, both Christians and non-Christians, to unite as one whole so that they can influence the environment and for the environmental changes.

The individual's theory of communication in this conceptual model of crisis intervention for the Gikuyu also has the presupposition foundation of bridging the gaps between divergent systems (individual groups). Gaps also presuppose differences, and differences hinder the needed communication between the parts which make up the whole. Edgar H. Auerswall in Wimberly's dissertation gives the view that "the first attempt to establish communication among the sciences was the interdisciplinary approach
which has attempted to expand the boundaries among disciplines and to borrow concepts from the disciplines involved."18

**Traditional Education of Marriage Life**

Nobody else has better written about Gikuyu marriage than Kenyatta. Orally, there are many others who can contribute in knowledge about Gikuyu marriage. Until today, many of us who have interest to know about it are dependent on Kenyatta’s views.

In the Gikuyu community marriage and its obligations occupy a position of great importance. One of the outstanding features in the Gikuyu system of marriage is the desire of every member of the tribe to build up his own family group, and by this means to extend and prolong his father’s "Mbari" (clan). This results in the strengthening of the tribe as a whole.19

The traditional education on marriage provides that on signing the matrimonial contract the marriage ceases to be merely a personal matter, for the contract binds not only the bride and bridegroom, but also their kinsfolk. Marriage contracts for the Gikuyu is a ceremonial ritual in which two families approve the marital relationships between their son and daughter. Then after that the families take over all marriage responsibilities. Marriage is a duty to produce children, and sexual intercourse between a man and his wife or wives is looked upon as an act of production and not merely as the gratification of a bodily desire.20

Gikuyu marriage is the focus of existence. The departed members of the family are re-lived through marriage much the same as those who are living. The unborn children are also to some extent included in the community, because the fathers and mothers have been educated in the manner of naming children. Every child’s name is given to re-live either a departed or a living member of the most immediate family.

In that context, therefore, marriage becomes a drama of people’s history and not only that, but also a drama in which everyone becomes an actor or actress and not just a spectator. It becomes a duty, a requirement from the corporate society, and a rhythm
of life in which everyone must participate. All the Gikuyu are expected to marry, and whoever does not participate in it is like a curse to the community.

Marriage is a unity through procreation. It is a unity which attempts to recapture in part the lost gift of immortality, a religious obligation by means of which the individual contributes the seeds of life toward man's struggle against the loss of original immortality. Both husband and wife are reproduced in the marriage of their children, thus perpetuating the family history. That perpetuation of the Gikuyu history makes marriage to be a religious ritual, for according to the Gikuyu, it is believed that the living-dead are reincarnated in part, so that aspect of their personalities or physical characteristics is re-born in their descendants. "A childless marriage in a Gikuyu community is practically a failure, for children bring joy not only to their parents, but to the 'Mbari' (clan) as a whole." To intervene into a marriage crisis it is necessary to look at it as a unity.

Barrenness is a serious crisis because it blocks the stream of life. In some cases, divorce was a must if attempts to intervene into it failed. In traditional education men and women were well informed about how to deal with problems like barrenness. If ever that occurred in the marriage life, some agreed steps by the family had to be obeyed. It could be either barrenness or impotence to test for proof. Both husband and wife had to adhere to those tests. The husband would allow his wife to have sexual intercourse with one or more of his age-grade. If that failed then "Mundu Mugo" was consulted, whom they believed could find a successful solution. Some women could at times succeed in one or the other way, and that saved her from the embarrassing situation of
being nicknamed barren. But when all efforts failed, the problem was attributed as the will of "Ngai" (God). If there were no other problems of the marriage between husband and wife, the two could continue to live a married life, but have an adopted child provided the husband was not willing to marry another wife.

Impotence was tested the same way. The husband was allowed by his wife to marry another wife. If he succeeded in having children by her, then it was said that the failure was due to the fact that his blood and the blood of his first wife did not agree. However, if impotence was real, then the man allowed his wife or wives to have sexual intercourse with friends or his brother, if one existed. That action could be taken for two reasons. First, if the man wanted to keep his homestead in harmony and second, because he had to have a continuation of procreation.

Barrenness until today poses serious problems even among Christians, and has forced some Christians to become polygamists. The writer found the work of Mbiti very helpful concerning polygamy. What Mbiti says about the Africans has some meaning for the Gikuyu.

Getting married to two or more wives is a custom found all over Africa, though in some societies it is less common than in others. The custom fits well into the social structure of traditional life, and into the thinking of the people, serving many useful purposes. If philosophical or theological attitude towards marriage and procreation is that these aid towards the partial recapture or attainment of the lost immortality, the more wives a man has the more children he is likely to have, and the more children the stronger the power of 'immortality' in that family.²²

The biblical parallelism of 1 Samuel (1:1ff) is our evidence that the crisis of barrenness existed before the Christian era. In all barrenness, the pain can only be experienced by the person, who becomes the victim of it. However, the presuppositions
are understood by many, even though never in a clear picture. First, it presupposed rejection. The person feels rejected by the community, even that of her immediate family members. One does not find a comfortable place. Second, it presents the person as a failure and causes self-denial for the person. Third, it presupposes worthlessness and mortality. Even when divorce is seen as a solution, or may be understood as an act of setting people free, there remains a stigma that continues to hurt the person. An alternative to divorce was that most Gikuyu married several wives while keeping the one who is barren.

**Traditional Education and Social Responsibilities**

Earlier in this chapter, the writer discussed the Gikuyu people’s relationships to each other and to one another. Kinship controls social relationships in a given community. It ties together all of the activities of the tribe. Traditional education as an activity is controlled by kinship system, and it is the power of the kinship that determines the education needed, according to age-grouping. Both kinship and traditional education determine the behavior of the individual towards others. It governs the marital customs and regulations and determines the responsibilities of each member of the Gikuyu society. To understand the Gikuyu kinship relational network, the writer refers the readers to the section of this chapter, "Education As a Determinant Theory of Networking Crisis." This section tells us the importance of traditional education as far as the Gikuyu relationship framework is concerned.

Personal relations is the primary emphasis that underlies the traditional education of the Gikuyu. Hence, Kenyatta talks about two very helpful views for the understanding
of the role of traditional education in the social responsibilities of the entire Gikuyu people. "In the Gikuyu community, there is no really individual affair, for everything has a moral and social reference. The habit of corporate effort is but the other side of corporate ownership; and corporate responsibility is illustrated in corporate work no less than in corporate sacrifice and prayer." He further states:

The striking thing in the Gikuyu system of education, and the feature which most sharply distinguishes it from the European (modern way of education) system is the primary place given to personal relations. Each official statement of educational policy repeats this well-worn declaration [see note 26 above] that the aim of education must be the building of character and not the mere acquisition of knowledge. But European practice falls short of this principle; knowledge is the dominating objective in the method of teaching in Africa as a whole.
NOTES

CHAPTER VII


2. Edward Wimberly, "A Conceptual Model for Pastoral Care in the Black Church Utilizing Systems and Crisis Theory" (Ph.D. diss., Boston University, 1976), 44.

3. Ibid.


5. Ibid., 99.

6. Ibid., 100.

7. Ibid., 101.

8. Ibid., 102.


14. Ibid.

15. Ibid., 158.


18. Ibid., 117.
CHAPTER VIII

SICKNESS AND INTERVENTION
FROM THE GIKUYU PERSPECTIVE

Introduction

In the traditional Gikuyu concept, causes and the cure of sickness are considered from herbal, social and religious ritualistic points of view. Kenyatta says:

The Gikuyu have clear knowledge as to the nature of diseases and the treatment required in various cases. Some diseases are due to natural causes, controllable by medicine; and a wide range of herbs is used for medical purposes. Other diseases are beyond ordinary control and call for magical treatment.¹

In respect to the diagnosis and the healing methods, the writer will pay attention to the divination processes and the sacrifices as well as the role of the family community. This emphasis will be a pivotal endeavor in the attempt to evolve or develop articulate approach toward the care for the sick of the Gikuyu. The experiences and the evaluation of the processes by the diviner or the intervener will determine both the actions and the attitude or mood in which the necessary care is provided.

There is among the Gikuyu beliefs that sickness is carried to the people by evil spirits. Kenyatta says that "these are believed to conceal themselves in the bushes round the homesteads, and when they want to launch a mass attack on the people they are carried by winds from one homestead to another."²

Following this concept, the writer concludes that Gikuyu have a contemporary medical view of sickness. That is that sickness is objective (disease) and subjective
(illness), and these two aspects are interpenetrated by physical, social and religious dimensions. In the contemporary understanding, the *Dictionary of Pastoral Care and Counseling* gives the following definition.

Sickness is a human condition involving physical or mental impairment sufficient to cause suffering. Every sickness presupposes a norm of health in respect to which it falls short. This norm of health has both objective and subjective determinants—as does sickness. Objectively, health can be defined by certain established parameters of physical, mental, and emotional functioning. Subjectively, health is usually described as a general sense of well-being or simply as 'feeling good.' When sickness is defined objectively, it is usually called 'disease,' given a diagnostic name, and rated according to severity. Illness is the way we often refer to sickness experienced subjectively.3

If a person fell sick or had an injury certain things were done. Ordinary medical (herbal) knowledge was applied. Today this observance is only for the Gikuyu who are not Christians or the Christians who honor the dual religious beliefs. This word, "dual," refers to traditional and the Christian observance. If the herbal knowledge did not succeed, the nature of the intervention method changed. At this point the ancestors were communicated with and at times a diviner could discover that one of the ancestors had been offended. In cases like that where an ancestor happened to be offended, Gikuyu with no reservations obeyed any instructions from the diviner.4

**Sickness As a Crisis**

The word crisis here refers to the physical condition of the person or mental impairment of the person, sufficient to cause suffering. When sickness befell a homestead or a member of a family group of the Gikuyu, that condition of the whole homestead or of the person was a crisis. It was only during times of major problems affecting the social, economic, and health status of the people that Gikuyu sought the
office of the mundu mugo (the magician of the cult). However, illness which was considered as minor did not need the consultation with mundu mugo. An illustration of this was an illness like a cold or the flu of which Gikuyu had knowledge of the cure. Major sicknesses like mental impairment or a child being sick for causes beyond Gikuyu understanding were crises and the only being with the ability to cure was the mundu mugo. The consultation with the mundu mugo's office was therefore evidence that the sickness was serious.

The mundu mugo's office had two roles. First, to divine the cause of illness, whether it was attributable to a supernatural power or to the agency of the ancestral evil spirits. The second role of the mundu mugo included prophecy, purification, divination and the curing of the sickness. The magician worked corporately with the Gikuyu elders of his age-grade. In all performance of the curing task he remained solely the "guardian of the ancestral cult (Ugo), and he tells the community when to sacrifice to the ancestral spirits and gives instructions for carrying out the ritual ceremonies."\(^5\)

**The Causes of Sickness**

**Sickness and Ancestral Evil Spirits**

The Gikuyu did not recognize non-ancestral divinities as responsible for particular activities in the spirit or terrestrial worlds (discussed earlier). They believed that abnormal individuals reject community sanctions and act in an anti-social manner. Consequently, the spirit family, clan or riika (age-grade) are weakened and illness and misfortune overtake them. When there was evidence of the epidemic or other widespread
distress, the people of the affected area arranged a ceremony aimed at frightening away the malevolent spirit.6

There are three types of spirits whom the Gikuyu believed were the causes of sickness or illness. First, they had (have) the living-dead who were made up of the departed members of the family and whom the parents were the most important. These were known in Gikuyu as the spirits of the parents or the spirits of forebearers (ngoma cia aciari). To these the family gave food and drink offerings as tokens of fellowship and one-ness. This religious observance was one of the many traditional cultural values of the Gikuyu that was condemned by the missionaries out of misconception about them.7 It was never an act of prayer or worship toward the living-dead in the way that God is worshipped. Gikuyu believed (until today) that individual or family behavior could please or displease the living-dead, who then would act in the situation the way they would have acted while they lived in the human form.

The second group was (is) made up of spirits of the clan (ngoma cia muhiriga) whose immediate and main concern was the welfare of the nation on the level of the clan. They acted or consulted in matters pertaining to the behavior and life of the clan members.

Thirdly, there was (is) the category of spirits concerned with age-groups and the nation as a whole known as ngoma cia riika. The Gikuyu saw (see) the spirits in the same structure as their own society. This group of the spirits was not thought of as divinities which the Gikuyu never recognized. The relation to crisis intervention is that
the spirits of ancestors are linked to the living and are therefore members of family systems.

**Sickness As a Result of Dysfunctional Family Relationship**

Gikuyu believe that good health is an indication of a healthy relationship between a person and his/her immediate family, and also being in good terms with God and his creation. Also for Gikuyu, well-being of mind, body and spirit, living in harmony with one's neighbor (in the Gikuyu a neighbor does not mean a member of immediate family, but the rest of the community), the environment and oneself, and in all levels of reality--physical, social, spiritual, natural and supernatural--constitute good health of the person. This concept carries two-sided phases. First, it has a vertical side which embraces the person, and the rest of his community members; that is, the people within his/her place of living. The second phase is that it is also horizontal. It recognizes the relationship of the person with those of other things, including his environment, and the supernatural beings or the spirits of the ancestors who remain active in the family.

Sickness, then, would mean much more than it would seem. An illustration is a complaint of having a headache, upset stomach, or pain in the chest. All of these are specific problems. However, Gikuyu's mundu mugo (diviner) would understand the problem only after his/her association with the person and the family together. The mundu mugo will seek keenly to understand the sick person from his/her relationships with the family. The mundu mugo will also seek to know what food or drinks the person ate or drank. He will also want to know who gave the food to the sick and their
relationship, whether good or bad. Either the eating behavior or the relational differences may be diagnosed as the cause of sickness.

Sociologically, this could mean a relationship is strained by an act or acts in the family, the clans or the community of the offender. Religiously, it can be interpreted as breaking or weakening the spiritual bond of protection, hence invoking the wrath of the ancestors.

Abraham Adu Berinyuu quotes Appiah-Kubi who defines health as the "well-being of mind, body and spirit, living in harmony with one’s neighbor, the environment and oneself, and in all levels of reality." Sickness then would partly mean the absence of all the above qualities.

According to the Gikuyu, sickness is both individual and communal; hence, the living and the supernatural are included. Meyer Fortes in Berinyuu’s book states, "a person cannot divest himself or be divested of the bonds created by his birth and yet remain a member of the society nor can he fully and unconditionally acquire these bonds except by birth." Furthermore, "one’s bonds with one’s lineage imply a ritual bond with one’s patrilineal ancestors and other mystical forces associated with the existence and well-being of the lineage. They are the chief mystical powers governing the life of the individual."10

The statement is true to the Gikuyu who believe that "there is no really individual affair, for everything has a moral and social reference." It is also true to the Old Testament communities for it carries affinity with the experiences found in Deuteronomy 5:9, Jeremiah 31:29, Ezekiel 18:2 and also the sin of Achan in Joshua 7:24. Because
of a sin of one group of people or a section of a people, the Lord's afflictions hit on all the people. The presupposition here is that of cleansing the whole family system. The father or the adults' sin against God affected every other people, and in one way or the other become involved. So cleansing should involve the family as a whole.

Sickness and Witchcraft or Sorcery (Urogi) Prevention Intervention Theory

This part of the document will not seek to inform how the model of crisis intervention would address the healing of the sickness caused by poisoning. Rather, the writer will focus on preventive measures to which the Gikuyu seriously adhere. In Africa, on the subject of witchcraft and sorcery, we have a great deal of literature. However, to the Gikuyu sorcery was and still is today hated and unpopular.

Gikuyu land is very rich with herbs from which poison is manufactured, but these herbal plants are popularly known to only the few people who choose to use them to harm others. Generally, a good number of the community members are well informed about these herbs, but the talk about them is treated as an issue of danger. It is very rare that anybody mentions the herbs in the daily use of the language. Kenyatta is very helpful saying that "orogi" is the most hated and unpopular magic among the Gikuyu. The possessor of such magic is looked upon as a dangerous and destructive individual. "Orogi" (Urogi) is used exclusively for nefarious purposes; and as such, its practice is against the ethical and moral laws of the community. Equally, any talk about poison in the daily life of the Gikuyu is unethical. "In the former days, before the advent of the white man, anyone guilty of the offense of practicing 'orogi' was punished by death.

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The way in which a 'morogi' was executed acted as a great warning to other members of the community.¹⁴

The advocacy in the statement goes beyond the actual sentence to the possessor of "orogi." It introduces us to the fact that healing sickness resulting from poisoning was secondary to the attempts of wiping out the activity of sorcery.

Regardless of the religious beliefs, there is until today strong fear about sorcery. Deaths of people and animals occur everyday, and when the cause cannot be diagnosed by whatever methods, that death is attributed to the act of poisoning. At times there can be suspects, but guilt had to be established especially in the old days. Before a person was arrested and executed, the suspect had to confirm by oath that he had practiced "orogi," and had killed by poisoning a man, a woman or a child. The action was brought before the Council (Kiama) by the family of the victim. After the Kiama's approval of the grounds for arrest, the "njama ya ita," namely, council of senior warriors, was given instructions to go and arrest the accused person and bring him/her before the Kiama for trial. In this respect, it was necessary to bring a "morogi" poisoner to the court with all of his magics, bad and good, to be exhibited in testifying that the man/woman was really a (proper) morogi. "Njama" Council took great care to secure good evidence for the trial, for without strong evidence against the accused a clash in the community would have been inevitable. In the first place, the murogi and his associates were spied upon, because it was important to catch him red-handed, that is, to arrest him/her while at work in his/her secret hiding places, in a cave or in a dense forest. Kenyatta says that "orogi was never kept or practiced in or near a homestead."¹⁵ Magic
of this nature is extremely feared, for not only does it cause death when it is administered to a person, but its nearness to a homestead is considered as bringing misery and suffering. Because of its anti-social character, it was and still is practiced in the most secret way, whereas other magics are performed openly and in the ways well known to the community. A magician, after handling orogi, had to go through a purifying ritual ceremony before he/she entered his/her own homestead (this was an understood behavior). It was feared that unless he/she was ceremonially clean, would be liable to bring defilement to his/her family.

**Theories of Fighting Illness Crisis**

When illness is experienced by the Gikuyu, the cause is attributed to the two types of spirit. First, in this category we have the spirits of the clan—"ngoma cia muhiriga," and then second are the age-group spirits or "ngoma cia riika." Some of these "ngoma" that Gikuyu could not specify were claimed to be the cause of illness. It seems that some of these spirits, presumably those whose links with the clan or nation become weakened, turn against people causing illness. It is an incomprehensible state of changes that may not be easily understood without an illustration. Taking very seriously what John Mbiti has said that "Gikuyu see the spirits in the same structure as their own society," the writer is influenced to the following illustration.

After the physical life human beings die. Their immediate immortality is the living-dead. The immortality then continues to evolve into many other forms as the time goes by. In the course of the spirit’s evolvement into many and immortal forms, Mbiti seems to presuppose a huge overcrowding of the spirits, which some become too old and
completely forgotten. While in that state of being, they become offended; hence, their appearance in harshness to the living community.

The following is more helpful. Such spirits are believed to hide around the homesteads and are blown by the wind from one homestead to another. For that reason, whirlwinds are thought to be spirits assembling to wage an attack on people. If there is an outbreak of a disease epidemic, the people in the affected area get together to fight against the spirits which, if defeated, take away with them the epidemic and the fear of their return. The spirits are fought in the evening when the moon comes out. On the appointed day the community sounds the horns. Following the sounds of the horns, everybody comes out of the house carrying sticks, clubs and wooden weapons. Metal weapons were not allowed to be used for this purpose in case they shed blood of the spirits which would defile the ground. The bushes are beaten, people shout and the crowds move toward the river on both banks. On arrival at the river and amidst continued blowing of the war horns, the sticks are thrown into the river or water. The people beat off dust from their clothes and feet to remove any traces of the spirits and then return home, joyfully singing and being careful not to look back. The following day mothers shave off the hair of their children who had not been able to join in the attack against the spirits. The shaving is in the form of the cross, as it is believed that the sight of such children would frighten the malicious spirits. The children are then washed and painted with red ochre. In this battle, the spirits are conceived in human terms, taking the position of the enemy which must be attacked and defeated.
There are several observations in relation to the analysis of fighting illness. First, the fear of the disease and of the evil spirits is overcome until the next temptations. However, of all other things the greatest and the most important thing is faith. Faith to the Gikuyu is inseparable from their daily life; therefore, faith is part of the Gikuyu life. It is inseparable from the person; in whatever the people do, it is totally religious. Driving away of the evil spirits is action of faith, for it is by faith, therefore, that Gikuyu believe in the total defeat of the evil spirits. In the New Testament, the parallelism can be found in the gospel of Matthew 15:21ff. In the Bible we have biblical parallelism showing that communal prayer meetings were an expression of the community’s faith in the one they believed. One of these gatherings was during the Feast of Unleavened Bread. That kind of gathering of the community, whether it was in the temple for sacrifice or in the synagogue as the assembly of the Word or in the Sabbath meals at home as Jesus did with his disciples (Mark 14:12, 14-15), was shared in common faith. The implication of the biblical reference for communal gathering to the Gikuyu gatherings for driving away the evil spirits is that of commonality. In the Old Testament are references to the renewal and also annual commemoration of the Passover (Exod. 12:1-27), in the Israelite gathering for the hearing of the word (Neh. 8:1-8), and periodic assemblies for repentance (John 12:12-18).^18

The writer understands the difficulty of correlation between the biblical reference for communal gathering and the Gikuyu gatherings for driving away the evil spirits, especially with people who believe in the Christian monotheism. This difficulty is automatic and necessary especially in periods like now when other cultures are inevitably
awake and ready to correct the church distortion of their religious values and meaning. It is intentional in this document so that a dialogue can be developed for the purpose of permitting insights and understanding.

Faith is a religious term presupposing a bond of allegiance and trust to the object (God to the Christians and the Gikuyu) of the people’s belief. Whether Christian or traditional, faith is just believing and has no proof. In effect, it is right to say that faith is not a reality. In relation to the biblical references given comparatively with the Gikuyu gatherings for driving away evil spirits, there is one common behavior which is the reason for the gatherings or the assemblies.

The commonality is their faith belief that God has approved and accepted whatever they gather for in God’s name. Gikuyu have no written creeds and their religious faith is in their hearts and expressed in the daily occurrences in their life. Moreover, the biblical term, "assemblies," and the traditional term, "communal battles" are used in this document to mean a coalition of task groups. The utilization of these terms is incongruent with the purpose of the model to be constructed which will utilize a coalition of systems for crises intervention.

This notion of the close correlation between those types of liturgical prayer meetings and the community gathered to pray them has some affinity not only with the faith gatherings of the Gikuyu, but also in the new people of God in the new covenant in Christ. It is seen in the scripture where the Lord promises to "be present" where "two or three are gathered" in his name to mean having faith in Jesus (Matthew 18:20). If two (or more) join their voices on earth to pray for anything whatever, it shall be granted
by God the Father (Matthew 18:19). As it is with the Gikuyu whose faith is inseparable with the life they live, so were the Israelites and so it is with Christians. The defeat of the powers of illness, of the evil spirits and symbolized in the human might are expressed in the communal faith. In Matthew 17:5-20, Peter and other disciples subdued to Jesus for their inability to heal the epileptic sick. Here again was the problem of faith. Jesus' comment was, "Your faith is too little." The defeat was symbolic.

For the Gikuyu the sticks partly symbolize human might, and when they are thrown into the river, they symbolize the defeated spirits who are now swept by the stream of death. Presumably, the dust stands for the epidemic and the shaking of it off their feet and clothes is a dramatization of human victory over the spirits and the epidemic. One more very important symbol is that of the shaving of the children. It further dramatized or dramatizes another "defeat" as well as being a sign of death and resurrection from the epidemic. In this the cross is central. To the Christians the cross is a symbol that the devil is defeated, and then the empowerment and protection of the Christians from the evil spirits. In this model of crisis intervention, these illustrations can be very useful to both the traditional Gikuyu and the Christians.

**The Mundu Mugo's (Diviner's) Role in Healing Intervention Theory**

The role and the character of both the mundu mugo and the spirits will continue mushrooming through this dissertation. Inevitably, the role of the mundu mugo is very much influenced by the relationship and the behavior of the Gikuyu toward one another, family members and toward the living dead. In this part the focus is not about the spirits
(even though strongly Gikuyu believe that spirits are partly the cause of illness), but the role of the mundu mugo or the diviner.

Mundu mugo is concerned with sickness, disease and misfortune. Gikuyu believe these are generally caused by evil spirits, ill-will or ill action of one person against the other, but normally through the agency of witchcraft and magic. The mundu mugo, therefore, has to discover the cause of the sickness, diagnose the nature of the disease, apply the right treatment and supply a means of preventing the misfortune from occurring again (see the preceding pages on healing magic). The task of the mundu mugo is psychological, religious and physical. Thus, mundu mugo applies both physical and spiritual (or psychological) treatment, which activates assurance to the victim of illness that all is and will be well.

To the sick person, mundu mugo is in effect as both doctor and pastor. In my case, according to the nature and purpose of the model to be constructed, he is the intervener. His strategic tools are magical objects, plants, herbs, powders, bones, leaves and bells. In dealing with a patient he directs a person to do some required rituals or verbalize some words after him.19

To the Gikuyu, diseases and misfortunes are religious experiences. Because Gikuyu do not separate secular from religious, it requires a religious mundu mugo’s approach to deal with their life experiences, and the mundu mugo is aware of this. He, therefore, makes attempts to meet their needs in a religious manner. His role has religious and psychological value and no doubt plays a great deal of good in healing the sick or helping the sufferer. To give an illustration, mundu mugo gives much attention
to the patient, which enables him/her to penetrate deep into the psychological state of the patient. Even if it is told to the patient that malaria is the problem, because a mosquito carrying malaria parasites has stung him, he still wants to know why the mosquito stung him and not another person. The only answer which people find satisfactory to the question is that someone has caused or sent the mosquito to sting (a Gikuyu strong belief) a particular individual (this has been detailed earlier) by means of magical manipulations. Suffering misfortune, disease and accident are all caused mystically, as far as Gikuyu people are concerned. To deal with the misfortune or ailment, the cause must be found and either counteracted, uprooted or punished. This is where the value of the traditional diviner (mundu mugo) comes into the picture. So long as people see sickness and misfortunes as religious experiences, the mundu mugo will continue to exist and thrive.
NOTES
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2. Ibid., 250.


5. Ibid., 280.


9. Ibid., 34.

10. Ibid.


14. Ibid.

15. Ibid., 289.

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CHAPTER IX

HOW TO ADDRESS THE ISSUE OF INTEGRATION

Introduction

The focus of this chapter is to show how it is possible to integrate African tradition, Christian faith, and social science theories. It will also serve as the point of reference for the project dissertation in which the material analysis in all other chapters of the model will find meaning.

From the Gikuyu traditional systems perspective, integration is founded upon the theory of family social ties, with organized methods of mobilizing crises networking groups and resources. The social ties of the Gikuyu family systems govern all behaviors of the Gikuyu people. Owing to the strength and number of social ties existing between members of the same family, kinship and age-groups through which the Gikuyu tribe is unified and solidified as one organic whole, systems can be easily mobilized. The action of mobilizing systems culminates into an interaction theory which attempts to relate those parts for the purpose of intervening into crises of individual persons and the family.

Moreover, mobilizing family systems helps them to draw more knowledge from each other for the purpose of developing better strategies for dealing with the problems. It serves as an action of uniting corporate efforts from all family members and other kinfolk. Furthermore, a corporate effort is impossible without pre-existing sets of transactional patterns that are repetitious in the ongoing daily life of the family. Edward
Wimberly is a great help in this conceptualization: "The transactional patterns establish how, when and with whom to relate. Moreover, transactional patterns are maintained through rules, forming a hierarchy of power as well as through family expectations."¹

Five theories are very necessary to be discussed in this chapter for the purpose of relating the model to its theories and its goal. The goal for the model is liberating people from their oppressive existential experiences, utilizing family systems and crisis theories, and the integration of Christian and traditional resources. For clarification, the five theories are: the norm of belongingness, theological foundations, the traditional family values used in the model, the systems concepts used in the model and methods of intervention to be used in the model.

**The Norm of Belongingness**

There are two ways to look into the norm of belongingness for this model. These two ways are religiously motivated. First is from the pastoral care perspective. In this perspective, the model will address Jesus’ ministry as the norm of the ministry of his disciples. Jesus’ ministry included the recruitment and the training of his disciples. In that capacity, Jesus’ disciples were expected to emulate Jesus’ methods and his obedience to the instructions of his Father. Here the words Jesus used are very important. "As you go preach this message: The kingdom of heaven is near: Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons."²

That portion of the Bible informs a system of belongingness. As messengers, disciples represented their master. Even in the evidential circumstance in which disciples confessed their inability to heal, their sense of being one with Jesus occupied their minds.
They belonged not only to Jesus, but also to one another. Hence, their use of the plural confession: "Why couldn't we drive it out?"³ That question was a proposition of a dialogue between the disciples and Jesus for the purpose of finding out what was lacking in their effort. Moreover, their ministry owed success to the power and the authority which only Jesus could offer.

In another version, the norm of belongingness is perceived in a different dimension: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you and 'surely' I will be with you always to the very end of age."⁴

The New International Version of the Bible uses the English vocabulary, "surely." That means an absolute contract of belongingness between Jesus and his disciples to the very end of their task. However, since this commitment comes at the end of his physical life and ministry, which also constituted an end of Jesus’ physical systems work with the disciples, then this commitment becomes a trinitarian assurance between God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The duration of the contract is measured by the time the task is completed—"end of age." Some versions have "end of the world"; others "end of time." The writer of this model prefers the meaning until the task is done, until all nations become part of systems, until all together belong to that body of believers in Jesus Christ.

The biblical illustrations emphasize a theory of systems and this theory has similarity to the model being constructed for the Gikuyu. Moreover, the nature of the
systems theory proposed in Matthew's Gospel has another dimension. This is the dimension in which the nature of the trinity of God provides a trinitarian fellowship that perpetuates unity between God the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit and the disciples in their work. In his capacity of the risen Lord, and in the power of the triune God, Jesus promised to continue to belong to them. "I am with you." It was a reciprocal belongingness between God and the disciples. Moreover, this reciprocity had a systemic intent in which the disciples had to bear fruits of liberating all the nations. However, the success of the liberation ministry was owed to the power of God and in which Christ incarnated the Father. In that norm of belongingness, "if a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me (the union of God), you can do nothing." The norm is not a matter of understanding that Jesus was with them in their fellowship, but also informs the way the disciples related to one another and their encounter with the work of the ministry of liberation.

The second way of looking into the norm of belongingness has a Gikuyu traditional perspective. In the proposed model of crisis intervention for the Gikuyu, the church will need to utilize the norm of belongingness related to Gikuyu family systems. The origin of the Gikuyu family systems and belongingness is traceable from the original family of Gikuyu and Mumbi (husband and wife), and their children. Chapter V gives the details of the Gikuyu legend. Although Mr. Gikuyu and Mrs. Mumbi are the origin of the Gikuyu people, the legend has a providential design and therefore very religious. The patterns of life for the Gikuyu owes its origin from that first family. As the legend goes, the family patterns and the behavior were originally the direct dictation from the
Creator God who instructed Gikuyu on some specific requirements. Therefore, the corporate living of the Gikuyu family has a traditional religious reference. Belongingness is the corporate living for the Gikuyu, handed down through generations with ceremonies and customs regulated by social and religious ethics. Before the coming of the Europeans and other Western people to Kenya, family belongingness of the Gikuyu was determined in many ways. These ways interpreted the meaning of unity among people. To illustrate, there were tasks of house building, land cultivation, planting and harvesting, raising livestock and bridge building, just to mention a few. These tasks were done by the groups collectively.

Marriage as a crisis had contracts and was (to this day) a ceremonial ritual, drawing together all the family effort, and was never viewed as only a business between a man and a girl or between a husband and a wife. Senility is another way of reliving the theory of belongingness, especially with elderly people who have no children of their own. These people are the responsibility (the care for them) of their relatives or neighbors and their children in everything. Relatives and neighbors together build their huts, prepare their gardens, collect wood and make fire for heating their residences, and provide them with food, water and many other needs including their health needs. Their economic responsibility, calculated in terms of livestock and the residual drawn from the sale of their livestock, is also a crisis and a responsibility under the care of relatives or neighbors. The old people reciprocate by means of treating especially children of relatives and their neighbors as their own children. In America, especially among Black
people, this value was part of their life. Belongingness was practiced by the Black families in America which was a heritage brought with them during times of slavery.

In the Black adoption practices, relatives and friends cared for the parentless, the homeless and the so-called 'illegitimate' children in the community. The community saw as its responsibility the care of every child, and it was customary in these practicals of adoption to incorporate orphan children into the family and treat them as part of the natural family.10

It is possible, following the same traditional values for the care of the elderly, involvement in marriage ceremonies and other tasks, for the minister of the Christian Church to show the care and the love of God incarnate in the entire life of the society. Through the church, ordained elders whose role is to oversee the community needs, the pastor can at the discretion of church council disburse some of the finances for the help of the needy outside the church. Also, in marriages the church should participate not only in the blessing of the marriages, but also in meeting some of the cost toward the ceremony. The church will need to show the society that it lives for them and belongs to them. Moreover, the pastor can train the laity to reach those members of the community who are experiencing crises of illness, poverty and displacement from their homes, regardless of their religious affiliations. (See the constructed model example on crisis of marriage.)

Theological Foundations of the Model

Since traditional Gikuyu have no Christian theology of their own, it is very difficult for the writer of this model to come out with an articulate theological foundation suitable to the nature and purpose of the model to be constructed. The writer's attempt
to construct the model is an exploration toward the theology of care for the Gikuyu, and perhaps for the Africans.

However, the theological foundation of the model will be the application of pastoral care theories for the practical resolution of the crises experienced by the Gikuyu. In the practical application of pastoral care theories, the pastor or minister can integrate pastoral care resources of the church with the Gikuyu family systems resources as already illustrated in Chapter I for crises intervention. When pastoral care resources are used together with the Gikuyu family systems resources, both perspectives are correlated for a common purpose. Moreover, correlation is again to explore a common method for the two perspectives for crisis intervention for the Gikuyu, while in the same effort pastoral care and the traditional approaches will find a dialogical premise which will be the essence of integration.

The key term used for the model is "integration." The effort of integrating Christian pastoral resources and the Gikuyu traditional family resources will result in the pastor's effort to mobilize the church support group. The pastor will have to utilize his/her trained laity to join the Gikuyu individuals and families in the effort to form a network for crises intervention. That effort will help to correlate the two perspectives and to find a common strategy for networking Gikuyu crises. That joint effort is the theological method for the integrated model; in another term, a theological method of correlation already discussed in Chapter I. (See the chapter on the developed model of crisis intervention.)
Correlating Christian resources is incarnating and contextualizing Christ into the community. This theory is well stated in Edward Wimberly's work: "It is a creation of an environment where God can restore man's essential nature."\textsuperscript{11} It is "the goal of the liberation ministry of the church. Thus, pastoral care . . . is an extension of God's liberation ministry through living services to others."\textsuperscript{12}

The Traditional Gikuyu Values Involved in the Model

The traditional values involved in the model are undergirded by one primary factor, the land tenure. "Land tenure is the most important factor in the social-political, religious and economic life of the Gikuyu tribe."\textsuperscript{13} It was the means which the Europeans used to destabilize the unity of the Gikuyu.

Gikuyu consider the earth as the 'mother' of the tribe, that the mother bears her burden for about eight 'moons' while the child is in her womb, and then for a short period of suckling. But it is the soil that feeds the child throughout life time; and again after death, it is the soil that nurses the spirit of the dead for eternity. Thus, the earth is the most sacred thing above all that dwells in it. Among the Gikuyu the soil is especially honored.\textsuperscript{14}

Land ownership is an insurance for peaceful settlement, integrity and unity (belongingness) for the Gikuyu. Land is the essence to family social systems, and we cannot talk about Gikuyu value of family belongingness without land.

Any theology purportedly manufactured for Gikuyu "must" be tailored to fit that value. In the same way this model will have to honor the Gikuyu belief in the sacredness of the land, for in that value of faith land becomes important. It unites the living members of the family with the living dead through their spirits. Also, Gikuyu believe that not only the living and the dead are united, but also includes the unborn. Gikuyu family systems, therefore, include the spirit systems and the unborn systems. Ancestors
are buried in the land which they once occupied because their spirits will have a continued direct communication with their living family network. This is an important religious value which informs the Gikuyu belief in the life after death. Not only that, but also informs a relationship between the ancestral incarnation, their link with those living family members and becoming one system. Moreover, the traditional value of ancestral incarnation in the model and their ability of uniting with the existing family systems would further have a capability to design a methodology of crises intervention for the Gikuyu. This methodology is for the purpose of facilitating the correlational task composed of the living family systems, the Christians and the living dead. In the constructed model of crisis intervention, the improper land ownership is interpreted as the primary cause of family crisis during bereavement.

Other traditional values involved in the model are the utilization of family systems of the Gikuyu for networking a crisis, friends, significant others, the use of the proper women especially for matters concerning girls, the utilization of the peace meal as part of the intervention process, traditional resources of songs in attempts to create the needed awareness to the growing adolescents, and also the use of the traditional songs’ tunes which helped in the formation of the traditional rhythm in the Christian songs.

All of these values are discussed in the various model examples provided in the model of this dissertation.

**The Systems Concepts Used in the Model**

The model uses one primary system’s concept—the general systems theory. Under the general systems theory, the model embraces the humanistic systems foundation in
which the individual persons are systems related to the whole family systems, and that all parts work for the good of the whole family. Under the family system are other systems, the age-groups, friends and the significant other groups. These group systems are the church, medical facilities, schools, and the important authors who feed us with documented information needed for better understanding how to network family crises.

From the Christian resources perspective, the pastor assumes the role of a unique system. The pastor, with the help of a few church elders and also selected elders from the Gikuyu family, can become a diagnostician or a diviner. In his position he will need to assess the nature of the crises, the resources within the family's environment, including the local church and the larger community, including the hospitals and schools.

The criteria for selecting the necessary systems needed for networking a crisis will need to consider seriously the Gikuyu family values, especially the requirements for a person who qualifies to participate in a family crisis. Moreover, the criteria will include the scope of the crisis, the depth of the problem, the degree of family desperation, previous effort (if any) made to deal with the problem, the availability of a sufficient number of resources such as family friends (where necessary), and the willingness of the family members to call on these resources for help.

In the systems intervention network, one important value common to family systems involved is that of dependency upon the power of God or "Ngai," according to Gikuyu. God is experienced by the Gikuyu from all dimensions of their life. That requires all the Gikuyu from the time before birth to be religious, and not only that
alone, but also to approach any activities from the religious point of view. Therefore, spirituality undergirds the systems operation. Throughout this dissertation, we have noted that the behaviors and the activities contained in the ways of living of the Gikuyu are controlled by the people's close relationship with God and with one another.

The work of the pastor and other leaders in the network for crisis intervention will be to lead all people into the direction of: first, their fellowship (relationship) with God; second, to create an environment where God can be the ultimate power of people's ability to resolve their own problems; where God can restore all people of the systems used into their essential nature which is the goal of the liberation work of this model that will utilize systems and crisis theories and the unique claim of the pastoral care resources. 

Methods of Intervention for the Model

Methods of intervention for this model are many. However, there are two primary approaches under which any other methods or strategies analyzed in the model should fall. Moreover, in the entire dissertation the writer has continued with illustrations of how crises have been intervened into. These illustrations will include the families' structure and relationships network and how they are used as systems for crises intervention: (1) the general systems theory that shows alternative methods of using systems and also informs the systems history; (2) the Murry Bowen family system theory, the traditional religiosity as a strategy for strengthening family systems; and (3) the traditional system of education with a lifelong developmental strategy which informs Gikuyu on better ways of crisis coping throughout the generations. Any illustrations
analyzed in the model will serve to inform different other strategies for intervening into Gikuyu crises.

The first of the two aforementioned primary methods is the mobilization of the Gikuyu family systems while utilizing systems and crisis theories. In that method, whoever is the key mobilizer of the family systems will create a collaborative family systems effort. Together with the family systems effort to be created, the pastor or any other mobilizer will not be limited from including other necessary systems which can be useful in the intervention effort. He/She/It (if it is a committee) can include friends of the family in a crisis, hospitals, schools, criminal justice systems and the significant community leaders. Since the purpose of the dissertation is to construct an integrated model that will further utilize family systems resources and the Christian resources, then a second method will be necessary.

That second method will be the theological approach to correlation. Correlation method will be the application of practical pastoral care resources into the traditional resources. The practical pastoral involvement in the care will be for the purpose of incarnating Christ in the contextual needs for the Gikuyu people. To contextualize Christ into the life of the Gikuyu, pastoral care has to be integrated with the traditional family values of unity and belongingness. When the two perspectives are integrated, then this second method of correlation becomes a Christ-centered intervention which liberates the people from all their oppressions; oppression from sin, hunger, poverty, homelessness, political and even economic oppressions.
Moreover, the purpose of correlation, which is the culmination of the integrated model, will seek for a dialogical premise on which Christian resources and the traditional Gikuyu family resources can form a positive integrated model for the Gikuyu for the purpose of facilitating better crises coping for the Gikuyu people.

*The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorder, DSM-III-R* is used in the crisis of illness case study model as criteria for divining the nature of mental illness, the needed strategies for intervention and the future care of the sick person. This is a common manual that undergirds the work of all mental health systems. It is used here as part of resourceful information needed for the construction of this model.

Briefly, to clarify this for the purpose of the model, the analysis of correlating Christian and traditional resources have been reported in Chapter I under "Christian Resources and Their Relation to Gikuyu Traditional Resources." The case study in Chapter XII also has the practical illustrations related to a crisis of illness.
NOTES

CHAPTER IX


2. Matthew 10:7-8 NIV.

3. Matthew 17:19 NIV.

4. Matthew 28:18-20 NIV.

5. Matthew 28:20 NIV.

6. John 15:5 NIV.


8. Ibid., 261.

9. Ibid., 157-178.


11. Ibid., 91.

12. Ibid.


14. Ibid.


17. Ibid.

CHAPTER X

A CRISIS INTERVENTION MODEL FOR GIKUYU PEOPLE

Definition of the Model

Here a model of crisis intervention will be developed. The term model refers to an approach which is not limited or only one directional when intervening into crises affecting Gikuyu people. The intention of the model is such that will permit insights from both the pastoral care theology and the Gikuyu traditional methods of care and resources.

Pastoral care as provided today is concerned with the contribution of theology to understand the clergy's work as well as the contribution of psychology to the understanding of the clergy's task. These two perspectives discriminate the contribution which the Gikuyu cultural values and resources would offer into the pastoral care, and at the same time rob both of them of valuable insights available from each other.

It is not the intention of this model for crisis intervention to enumerate all crisis examples. However, for the purpose of illustrating the model a few crises will be provided. Moreover, as will be seen in the model under construction, better crisis intervention will be effective for the Gikuyu through the isomorphic approach to intervention. Both of the traditions will be expected to rely upon the concept and the isomorphic theory in their dialogue with each other even when each tradition is separately
utilized for the same intervention purposed. Examples of the model will include four major crises that are important according to the writer.

Together with the four model examples provided in the dissertation there is a well-detailed case analysis given at the end of the document. The case analysis helps in the understanding of practical strategies for the purpose of intervening into a crisis of illness. These five model examples are not exhaustive, but are used to inform the quality methodology on which numerous crises of the Gikuyu can find intervention help.

**Model Example #1**

**Child Baptism As a Family Crisis**

In this model example the writer mobilized individuals, family members, and the writer as the persons of the church and also friends. The child was born in an extended family system with differing religious values. The parents of the child were Christians, but the grandparents’ family were non-Christians who therefore respected the traditional birth rites.

The child was a girl and, according to the Gikuyu naming custom, the name of the grandmother was given to the child. Following Gikuyu custom, the child was also supposed to go through other birth rites which would have included scarifying the skin of the child in an attempt to bleed out bad omen in the child, and also to wear a magic cowry chain on her waist inside her dress. These are traditional magical rites for protecting the child’s life from many misfortunes which include witchcraft and diseases.

The grandmother expected these values to be honored and observed by the child’s parents who as Christians never cared about them in the midst of demand from the
grandmother. Instead, the parents needed their child baptized following Presbyterian traditions. Before the baptism was scheduled, the grandparents intervened and objected to the decision demanding the traditional rites first. This was a difficult situation that needed immediate intervention. The intervention began after the pastor/writer was notified about this birth crisis surrounding the extended family’s relationship.

The child’s baptism in this illustration became a birth crisis. The grandmother’s attempts to delay baptism were overlooked and the child’s parents continued with arrangements turning to their pastor for intervention in the crisis.

Moreover, the pastor/writer had known from the biological parents of the child that they did not want their parents a part of the baptism at all. The traditions of the Christian churches maintain total exclusion of such people who are non-Christians from participating in the Sacraments, of which baptism is one. Therefore, for the sake of the child’s baptism, an immediate action was done. The data provided here represent the intervention process and the result of action taken.

The Intervention Process

First, the writer needed to know all of the family members involved in the problem and their relationship with the child and her family. The people mentioned included the child’s biological parents, the grandfather who played a very profound role in this difficulty, the grandmother who was the biological mother of the child’s father, the oldest sister to the grandfather of the child. She was never married and was a member of this family, the sister to the child’s father or the child’s aunt whose Christian
values differed from the child’s parents’ Christian values because she was a member of the Roman Catholic Church.

Together with family members was an elderly woman friend of the grandmother of the child. The woman was also acquainted with the pastor/writer and the church members through her personal participation in community development projects sponsored by the church. These projects were adult education, nursery and day care centers for children of working parents, and the occasional fundraising events in aid of some high school boys and girls who showed financial need for school fees.

The selection of this support team was for the purpose of better family crisis coping, the reason why family members, friends and the pastor formed that group. However, there were difficulties. The problem had difficult dynamics of which the group had to be careful. In a Gikuyu family crisis involving parents and grown sons or daughters, such matters need sensitive handling, and this case was one such. Not only family differences existed among them, but also their contradicting religious values all of which had a direct effect on the family’s life and also on the child’s baptism. It needs to be addressed here that the birth of the child was another unique excitement to the parents as well as to the grandparents because she was the first and only child.

For a constructive intervention, the pastor/writer mobilized the family relatives and friends network for help and change. The meeting was convened at the church and all persons invited were present. However, there was a difficult situation full of tension and a lot of rage among persons of the same family; therefore, intervention was very difficult. After a brief prayer from the pastor the meeting was begun.

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Each side of the family representatives was claiming their rights. The grandmother of the child, who believed her wishes were disregarded, had negative influences on all other family members except the child's aunt who was a Catholic. Two things were to be discussed—the baptism of the child and the method of integrating the traditional family values and the Christian baptism rituals. With a lot of care the church had the right to modify some of the Presbyterian requirements as deemed right and ethical. Because of the growing tension in the meeting, the writer requested a smaller intervention support group to meet for the purpose of designing a recommendation for better crisis resolution. Three names were given for the team which included the pastor as the moderator of the support group, and among the family members were the sister to the grandfather and the elderly woman who was a friend of the family and a well-known community development supporter. She claimed to have been baptized, but never affiliated herself with any known religious group. To the family, she was very close to the grandmother of the child.

At the special support group meeting a resolution was suggested. First, the group concluded that baptism had to continue as was planned. However, the exclusion of family members who were not Christians was modified to invite them to the baptism service while not allowed to take any Christian vows. The group also ruled out the demands from the grandparents since the child was born of Christian confessing parents.

Second, it was agreed to have a family ritual after the Sacraments of baptism and Holy Communion. The peace meal was the ritual at which all people, including the church members, were to be invited. The peace meal has been discussed in Chapter I,
but for the purpose of intervening into this particular crisis, the peace meal was part of the intervention resources, and was to be organized at the church.

The two ideas were reported to the entire intervention group by the pastor/writer. They were accepted with very little resistance from the grandmother who eventually accepted the decision. After the task was accomplished, the elderly woman friend of the grandmother broke into singing "Amazing Grace" in the Gikuyu language while others joined in unison. Family members, especially the parents of the child, and the grandmother shook hands. Shaking hands is a Gikuyu ritual symbolizing peace and oneness.

Two Sundays following the intervention meeting, the child's baptism was done during worship service together with many other scheduled baptisms, confirmation and the Holy Communion. During the Sacraments everybody's presence was recognized and as much as was agreed during the intervention meeting. There was a peace meal after the worship which facilitated an environment which fostered discussions and allowed comfortable time for families to relate and reconcile. The occasion was full of dramatized singing and shouting and ended with marked joy.

**Analysis of the Data**

To respond to the data, the writer's basic task was to assess and mobilize the intervention group to be utilized for this particular crisis. For better crisis intervention, the resource team mobilized included the family members, friends, Christians, non-Christian family members, close relatives and the church's resources which included the
pastor/writer, the use of the church facility, and the worship resources composed of the preaching of the Word of God, the baptism, confirmation and the Holy Communion.

The traditional resources included the participation of the rest of the family members in the baptism, worship, and the traditional meal for uniting members of the family who were estranged from each other for the purpose of oneness and peace. Those qualities were experienced and evidenced by shaking hands as people interacted and talked to each other.

For intervention purposes, the peace meal was very significant. First, it was a unique traditional ritual that is celebrated as a resource for better family crisis intervention. Second, it was a special occasion that proved the purpose of this model. In proving the purpose of the integrated model, Christians and non-Christian Gikuyu united to eat together, to discuss their differences, and to reconcile with one another. Moreover, the gathering for the worship, Sacraments and peace meal at which Christians and other Gikuyu people were mobilized affirmed the viability of this model under construction for the purpose of networking family crises.

Theological Implications

Symbolically in the Sacraments of baptism and Holy Communion, Jesus became the family’s norm for unity and a means for beginning reconciliation. The Church became the first family of God which set a model of unity when all were included in the events of Sacrament. The pastor and the congregation are the living vehicle that mobilized all who were needed to affect unity. Moreover, the Church activated Paul’s teaching in 1 Corinthians 12:12 in which Paul compares members of the church with
Christ to parts of the human body. He neatly explains two complementary truths the Corinthians had failed to comprehend. Any part of the body, as Paul expresses, such as an eye or a foot, makes a valuable contribution to the whole body. Whenever a single member suffers, the entire body suffers.

Theologically and biblically, the family on focus would be seen through the Pauline expression of division. Until all were able to unite, the baptism was not possible. However, when physical unity of the family, friends and the Christians was made possible, then the valuable and ritualistic resources were utilizable. The value is evidenced in the outcome of the Sacraments and the collective identity for all at the peace meal. The meal itself became another extension of the worship task and also served as a means where all joined together for one reconciliation in Jesus Christ.

Implications for Pastoral Crisis Intervention

The couple had been experiencing emotional, relational difficulty which was their reason to turn to the pastor for help. Until the intervention process had taken place, the real problem remained displaced and was attributed to the child’s baptism. During the intervention process it was realized that the difficulty resulted from the differing values within systems. The writer/pastor realized that there was a need to utilize both values in the intervention process by allowing the inclusion of the entire family in the baptismal ritual. All family members present were invited to surround the couple at the front of the sanctuary as the parents presented the child for baptism. During the Holy Communion fellowship, those family members who were not Christians were invited to remain and observe as Communion was celebrated. The child’s parents were joined by
other Christians who together presented a model where all acted as one family, with one head, one Lord. That notion enriched the African notion of collective identity and also the implied Christian sense of Koinonia. The peace meal after the Sacraments focused on the same purpose inactivating the African notion of collective identity again which does not discriminate. The peace meal was a common banquet for all present (Christians and non-Christians) and, like baptism and the Holy Communion brought the family together.

Through the supportive resources of the family systems, the church and its sacramental heritage, and the values of the Gikuyu social identity, and the Christian sense of Koinonia, a resolution was made possible.

The Writer's Role in the Intervention

From the systems perspective, the task of the writer during the baptism crisis was to enable the support systems to facilitate family functioning for the purpose of reconciliation and resolution of their differences. To do that, the writer/pastor helped the crisis victims not to displace the problem. The child's baptism was used as the scapegoat while the problem was that of conflicting values existing in the same family system. If all were Christians, everyone could have supported the Christian ritual of baptism and there could have been no religious values differences.

The child's baptism, however, was important because it was a means by which the writer could have been involved in the attempt to reconstruct the family's equilibrium. As a support systems enabler, the writer in his capacity as pastor, facilitated the events of the Sacraments, especially the baptism of the child. He also
facilitated the development of the needed family functioning as one organism in the midst of differences, conflicts and alienations, especially in a sanctuary situation; a thing that had never happened before. He also facilitated a common meal for all, at which interaction and reconciliation were evidenced in the final action of shaking hands as they said good-bye to each other.

The Holy Communion before the peace meal symbolized the Christ of unity and peace where all Christians are invited to commune and affirm their allegiance to unity and reconciliation. It also served as a pre-unity model for the banquet where all family members, friends and Christians were to share a common meal.

**Model Example #2**

**Bereavement As a Crisis Model**

Bereavement is another crisis to provide us with data from practical involvement of the writer in a situation of a family loss through death. As a crisis, bereavement is a sudden cessation of social interaction. It is also a sudden mental anguish which elicits negative emotions and, at times, lack of control for the grief sufferer's reactions.

As a crisis, bereavement represents a tragedy causing a problem to families and disrupting the normal functioning within family and individual systems. Dealing with bereavement calls for two considerations. First, it is an entirely individual task because the experience of death loss has an individual experience dimension. Second, in cultures such as the Gikuyu there is a family dimension when death loss is collectively experienced. However, from a crisis perspective, the individual's task or the family's task is to deal with the grief in order to achieve the needed emancipation from bondage.
to the deceased, so that it is clear how the bereaved person(s) can relive in a new world where the deceased is no longer a reality. Moreover, reliving anew will always mean to reach into new relationships. If, because of a sudden death, the grief sufferers are incapable of positive redirection, the result is very destructive to the family or the individual. In that context, therefore, there is a possibility of bereavement becoming a crisis which definitely calls for quick intervention. This intervention can be found within the system itself, according to Rueveni.³

For the purpose of the model under construction, the writer gives the experience of his personal involvement. A man died after a long illness. The bereaved included the deceased wife and four sons, ages 30, 33, 35, and 37. Except for the oldest son, all other family members were not Christians, including the deceased. The oldest son was in good relationship with the writer and because of that relationship, the writer had an opportunity to know the family. Before the father’s death from diabetes, the writer had had some association with him at his home and in the hospital. During this period of their contact, the sick man never valued to hear about Jesus.

After the father’s death, the oldest son who was a member of the writer’s church, came to see the writer/pastor. He said, "My father has died." After a long silence, the son said, "He is gone" with tearful eyes. After a brief prayer there was then a discussion. It was during discussion that the writer learned from the oldest son that his father had a younger brother who resided in a city more than 300 miles from the family. This brother was a Christian in a Pentecostal church. There existed differences on
reasons of land between the deceased and his brother, and remained unresolved agenda left behind when their father died years ago.

When the father of the deceased died, there were eighteen acres of land. At the time of their father’s death, the younger brother was very small. The older brother took advantage of the father’s death and took a greater portion of the land, leaving only three acres for his younger brother. This caused a family problem so great that when the older brother died, the younger brother was reluctant to come for his brother’s funeral.

Before the death of the older brother, another land conflict existed between the deceased and his second born son. He was married with two children and wanted the fifteen acres of property to be divided rather than remaining as family-owned property. The father never divided it before he died; therefore, leaving the land crisis agenda unfinished, just as it had happened in that family before. At the family’s meeting to arrange the funeral, the second son brought forward the issue of subdividing the land, saying he needed it done before the funeral. There were conflicts after conflicts until the oldest son met with the pastor.

In response to the oldest son’s needs, the pastor visited the home of the deceased. Out of frustration, the mother had moved in with a neighbor. Meanwhile, the local chief was contacted concerning these conflicts. There was a meeting of the mother, the oldest son, the pastor, and the chief. Before the end of the meeting, the brother of the deceased arrived along with his close friend. They were included in the meeting.

Friends, distant relatives and Christians from within the parish had come to the home to show their sympathy while waiting for the team’s decision about the funeral.
It was decided that the funeral arrangements should be completed and any other crisis should be brought to the attention of the chief, the mother, the oldest son, and the brother of the deceased. The funeral issue then became the focus.

The pastor was given time to talk to the people at the request of the oldest son and the brother of the deceased. The pastor/writer focused on the family's loss and asked the family to unite. He shared with the people his experiences and knowledge in bereavement intervention. He spoke about Gikuyu relational values in a family system, one of which was the oldest son assuming family leadership if the father dies. Where a brother or sister of a deceased survives, the family receives counsel from them helping the family to cope with a situation, while the oldest son, according to the Gikuyu custom, assumes the family's responsibility to carry out the wishes of the father concerning the surviving family.

Utilizing his presence and the presence of the many Christians who had come to express their sympathy, the pastor made it clear that the church was present with the family to facilitate the family's grief process. He valued the relationship that existed between the family and him because of the relationship he had with the oldest son. It was that same relationship that had brought him into the home after the death of the father even though the family members were not Christians.

As part of facilitating the bereavement process and making the grief process easier, persons donated food and drink. This Gikuyu traditional value was observed until the end of the funeral. Traditional beliefs about the ancestral incarnation were other
resources of hope that were unfolded according to the Gikuyu traditional beliefs and
drawn from experiences of the elderly people who were present.

During the bereavement period, the Church diakonia facilitated the grief process
through singing and testimonies. One of the writer's tasks during his ministry was
training the laity, especially the deacons and elders, preparing them in different skills of
intervening into family and individual emotional crises. Drawing from their rich
training, the diakonia was very useful. Throughout the time of bereavement and
especially at times when the family could not function together because of conflicts and
differences, songs of peace that were relevant to the situation were continuously sung.
Most of the music represented and reflected the real experiences through which the
family was going. Together with the music were testimonies of individuals' experiences
with the emancipating love of God. These Christian resources were utilized in an
attempt to relieve tension in the family of the deceased, while at the same time helping
to get a grip on the grief process. In traditional model of singing, the words in songs
are dramatized simultaneously, helping the crisis victims to be physically, spiritually, and
emotionally removed from the scene of death.

Analysis of the Crisis Data

A family was experiencing grief for the loss of their beloved father, husband and
grandfather. The family members, including the deceased, were all traditional Gikuyu.
Within the family system existed an unfinished family agenda, mushrooming at the time
of the bereavement crisis. Conflicts of land, conflicts of relational barriers, and conflicts
of religious values made the bereavement crisis more difficult for the grief sufferers.
For the sake of facilitating a health family corporation, help was needed immediately. This help was an extension of systems so that the community administration represented by the local chief had to be invited and included. The church or the Christian resources had to be provided, especially the experiences of the pastor in the bereavement process and also the diakonia participation. Other family and friends systems included that of their father’s brother which was an extended family system along with a friend who had accompanied the deceased man’s brother.

From the perspective of the family systems theory and the crisis theories, three things are very important to mention here in relation to the crisis of bereavement. First, the utilization of community systems helped through the inclusion of the local chief in the task support group to control other problems brought in by family members during the time of grief. It also helped to facilitate the bereavement process by redirecting the family to focus on the crisis of death loss. Moreover, the utilization of other systems than family for the purpose of this model helped to inform the usefulness and the value of utilizing other network systems than only the use of one traditional approach of intervening into family crisis. It also facilitated systems relationships that permit insights from each other while providing alternative and positive resolution to a family crisis. For the purpose of this model, other systems were important for use in the emergency intervention for the help of uncontrollable members of the family who had put the entire family into a point of immobilization and disorganization.

Second, the idea of Murry Bowen of differentiation of the self had a major role in the intervention of the crisis of death. The oldest son remained differentiated as a
Christian in a non-Christian family. When death hit the family he remained focused to the death loss which was a family crisis even in the midst of land confusion brought by his younger brother.

Third, from the family systems perspective, the multigenerational transmission process was exhibited at some degree as the primary source of the land dispute. For the purpose of this model under construction, multigenerational transmission process is another ideal by Murry Bowen by which crisis history, its nature and reason connects several family generations. In the case of this model example, the land problem had a generational history where land issue had become a multigenerational transmission.

In the model the father of the deceased had died leaving behind a problem of family property. Then the deceased, who was the older son, took advantage of their father’s death to take a greater fraction of the property at the expense of his younger brother. In a chain of relationships, from the great-great grandfather to the time of this last death, the land still remains another crisis. Based on the nature and purpose of the model under construction, which utilizes systems and crisis theories, the family difficulty situation needed the mobilization of the extended family systems, friends and others.

This mobilization of the other systems for the purpose of additional energies infused the dysfunctional family system with an intimate community of caring people who included the writer/pastor, the brother of the deceased and his friend, the chief, Christians, deacons and elders from the church and Gikuyu friends of the family. Moreover, the additional energies were to show concern, maintain temporary support, and activate or reactivate additional options for intervening into the crisis of death loss.
Summary

In this model a practical intervention into a crisis of bereavement has been discussed. The data contained in the discussion serve to support other illustrations provided throughout this dissertation project.

Model Example #3

Adolescence As a Crisis

The crisis in adolescence can be linked by the writer to the life’s process of emancipating oneself from the bondage of childhood, while the adolescents struggle for identity.

Traditionally, girls’ circumcision ritual was done in the early puberty period. The period was closely linked to the girls’ actual physiological pubescence which in one respect was inescapably noticeable. The ritual had two important values; first, to serve as a farewell action to childhood; and second, for a pre-womanhood intervention because a girl became a mature woman after menstruation. It was a parent’s shame if their daughter reached that stage of life before circumcision.

There were no comparably definitive changes to suggest the attainment of manhood. However, man’s circumcision, which in most cases happened during adolescence, was a ritual toward manhood. With boys it was not uncommon for the rites to take place several years before or after the onset of the physical changes leading to manhood. There were some instances when the official puberty rite occurred in intervals of several years, so that the boys of different ages and degrees of sexual development underwent initiation together.
With the coming of Christianity, circumcision rites for girls were condemned leaving the rites to happen only to the boys until today. However, the abandonment of the rites for women has for a long time been observed seriously only by some Christians. Other Christians have been practicing the rites in secret under the sponsorship of relatives. Gikuyu families who even today are attached to traditional customary values still practice the rites even though the number has drastically reduced.

To the Christian girls the church has its tradition. In confirmation the laity performs an important function of accepting the youth into the church which symbolizes the fact that the youth has gone through a period of training and is now ready to take on adult Christian responsibility.

Having been disturbed by the acute dichotomy resulting from the observance of contradictory rites of passage affecting the adolescent in the church, especially by knowing that some have gone through the rites and others have not, the writer concluded it to be a crisis that needed critical intervention. For the purpose of the model of crisis intervention which utilizes the Gikuyu traditional and Christian resources, the following data will show how the adolescence crisis has been intervened into. It will also inform the value of intervention, especially because of the integrated approach. Utilizing the opportunity of the relationship that exists between church and state which facilitates Christian religious education sponsorship of schools by the Presbyterian Church, the writer focused on two things.

First, the writer drew from the Gikuyu traditional forms of education in which developmental care of the growing young was offered through different Gikuyu systems.
These systems are very well discussed in Chapter VII on traditional education. Gikuyu had a legacy of mobilizing young people through traditional events. For example, young people were brought together to learn about songs, storytelling and dancing. Meetings of this nature were also used to benefit the adolescents in acquiring the needed education about physiological changes in their bodies and how to take care of their own problems. The young people also were taught the traditional values of social responsibilities, especially in matters of pre-marital relationships between sexes, and were educated about marital life, including other expected family duties.

For the purpose of constructing the model for adolescence crisis, the writer as a pastor of the church organized groups of experienced people who came together for the purpose of educating the adolescents in schools. These support groups were organized within school zones to avoid long trips for some participants. The formation of the groups included the pastor, school teachers, church members, parents of the children, men and women from the community surrounding the schools. The teachers were uniquely helpful, especially in their knowledge gained from educational materials concerning the rapid social change affecting adolescents in cities. At certain times during the intervention process, women in the support groups met separately with girls to discuss issues of girls' sexuality.

Second, mobilization of these groups into a school fostered integrated discussions on social, cultural and Christian religious traditional values. This was an integral part of the project which addressed the traditional legacy of family education to the adolescents. Men and women of experience shared discussions on how Gikuyu were
intervening into the physiological development of the girls and boys. The education movements of traditional teaching which utilized the resources of music, dances, or drama with meaningful messages concerning adolescents' life were used as resources for the purpose of this model.

Together with these activities we integrated Bible study, church music and concerts, which were an attempt toward the holistic being of the younger people, especially on matters of spirituality. The activities facilitated adolescents' growth from the traditional and Christian perspectives. Further, there were different games such as basketball and volleyball which stabilized participants.

The real purpose for this intervention was to help adolescents in continued learning about themselves as they also prepared for a more responsible adult life. Traditionally, this education was available through family systems; however, since the coming of Christianity, the modern system of education, and many other social changes, the Gikuyu family systems lost touch with their children. Most seriously was undermined by the Christian teaching against traditional ceremonies and ritualistic values.

For the purpose of addressing those needs, especially teaching the traditional value of music, why and for what purpose it was used, the support groups utilized traditional tools of music and drama exactly the way they were performed. They were what Gikuyu called muchungwa or ndumo, Kibuiya, Muthuu and nguitha, all representing music and dances. These activities were being revived for the purpose of uniting the young people as they grow together, develop the sense of corporate responsibility and the care for one another.
The tunes and the motions which dramatized the activities were the methods utilized for changing Christian songs into traditional tunes and motions. Although the contradictory ritualistic values mentioned before were theoretically intervened into, further intervention was addressed through the common interaction, not only of discussions but also when corporately singing, dancing, or doing drama together.

As a result of intervention endeavors which sensitively tried to cover the total adolescent life, more young people became influenced into church life because they could see that the church was also part of their life, and it had more meaning through their integrated values and resources which helped them gain the knowledge of life that lacked through family systems. The methods used are what the writer had talked about in an earlier chapter as incarnating the Word of God into Gikuyu culture, especially by interpreting the Word of God according to the daily needs of these young boys and girls, also where music is used not only for the sake of singing but as a means of therapy.

Gikuyu were very much concerned about the quality development for their adolescents because this was the period when a person acquired most of his lifelong knowledge. A Gikuyu child may be good and morally obedient, but only in the process of arriving at womanhood or manhood does a human being become of virtue; that is, the qualities of mind and body that realize the society's ideals.

Model Example #4

Marriage As a Crisis

In this model example, one marriage crisis will be observed. The crisis concerns a relationship breakup of a young couple. The couple had two children. They were
married at home according to Gikuyu customs. The husband and wife have their first
degrees and have good incomes from their jobs. While in the United States, the husband
became involved in a so-called masonic worship, a thing that the wife knew from a
family friend. His role model in the family had notably changed, affecting their marriage
and his relationship with their children. The following is the wife’s account of the
situation.

From a friend and other sources the wife claimed she had information enough to
confront her husband. In part, he was accused of having plotted to donate his wife or
a child for religious sacrifice wherein he would receive money gain. The wife also
accused her husband of neglecting the children, claiming that they were not his biological
children.

At the request of the wife, friends were asked to intervene and in the process the
wife came to see the writer, seeking more help. In scheduled meetings with the couple,
the husband denied the accusations. At that period he had quit attending church
completely and could not show any cause for the action, even though his wife insisted
that he had taken that action to join the masonic faith.

As the situation worsened the wife broke away from him and filed for separation.
The tragedy of the matter was that separation was a displacement of the real problem as
has been in the tradition of crisis of that nature where people think separation and
divorce are the resolutions, yet are nothing more than mere displacement of problems.
According to Bowen on "Nuclear Family Emotional Systems," the displacement of
problems overburden one of the spouses.
Separation can better serve to inform the critical situation in a relationship and so was this marriage. For the purpose of further intervention, the writer and the couple met once more and agreed that both of them and their children should return home to seek help from the families. Two weeks later the husband informed the writer that his wife and children were returning home. Asking him if he was also going he said, "No" with no explanation. At the airport, the writer met with the entire family and the situation seemed very uncomfortable. The children expressed rebelliousness and stressful "acting out" against their father.

According to the Gikuyu tradition where a husband sends a wife away during marriage conflict, unless the husband initiates reconciliation the wife or her family cannot, and if the necessary emancipation cannot be reached, intervention by the families and relatives is a must. In this case, if the husband does not respond to either way and fails to return home, the marriage is declared ended and the wife can remarry after at least a year or more. However, for the purpose of legitimacy in the intervention of this case, the family had to go home and seek the decision of the families as well as legal and church help.

Analysis of the Marriage Crisis

In the crisis of marriage there are two distinct intervention efforts employed. First is the attempt from the writer/pastor to network with Christian friends for helping in the marriage situation. The effort failed to achieve the needed help because the husband was not receptive to the resources utilized. For the Christian effort to succeed, both the husband and wife needed to accept Jesus as their norm of reconciliation. The
failure of this effort applied presupposed greater effort that needed family systems at home, friends and the church. This is a healthy approach because both husband and wife cannot divest themselves from the traditional heritage and requirements of their family systems.

Summary

In the crisis one model of marriage crisis intervention is reflected. In the attempts to intervene, the church draws from the Gikuyu traditional values of family unity and the people’s willingness to respond to needed help. Therefore, the church through the pastor and the Christians becomes the immediate emergency intervention strategy. This strategy helped in seeking further and greater efforts from the family systems at home where resolutions to their relationship deemed available.

General Conclusions

For all of the data provided in the model examples, the writer makes the following primary remark:

Because the Church is the community of those who in the Sacraments and worship, who share the redemption of Christ in memory and hope, it must necessarily become a community that proclaims redemption for all and not just for itself. Especially to my people, the Gikuyu, this model seeks the church’s inclusiveness in recognizing the cultural values and riches available within family systems for better emancipation of the people to the bonds of countless crises.

The sacrifice of Christ is the blood of the new and everlasting covenant, and its power needs to be acceptable to people who believe that Christianity disregarded and
abused their culture. The action taken by this model does not minimize but extends the ministry of the church in such a way that other systems will be able to inform into the church’s intervention effort. This method of crisis intervention is congruent to the idea of Hans Driesch’s (see general systems theory) principle of equifinality, which means same goal is reached from different starting points and in different ways. In this model it would mean from utilization of both Christian and traditional Gikuyu resources. (For more information about the principle of equifinality, see the chapter on the history of systems theory.)
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CHAPTER X


2. Edward Wimberly, "A Conceptual Model for Pastoral Care in the Black Church Utilizing Systems and Crisis Theories" (Ph.D. diss., Boston University, 1976), 134.

CHAPTER XI

WHY INTEGRATE GIKUYU TRADITIONAL FAMILY SOCIAL SYSTEMS
THEORY OF CRISIS INTERVENTION WITH CHRISTIAN THEOLOGICAL
RESOURCES FOR INTERVENTION INTO THE GIKUYU
FAMILY EMOTIONAL CRISES

Introduction

The general focus in the previous chapters of this model for crisis intervention attempted to provide the background information for what follows in this chapter. The attempts to answer the question of integration depend wholly on the data already discussed in those chapters. In the data provided, the writer endeavored to explore the traditional cultural praxis of the Gikuyu which informs the methodology Gikuyu utilized to intervene into family crisis. To understand why the writer seeks an integrated method of approach to crises intervention, it will be necessary first to understand the motivation of the issue. First, the writer’s experience as a minister of the gospel of Jesus Christ to the Gikuyu has informed the understanding of the difficulties confronting pastoral care and counseling to the Gikuyu. Controversial issues about many Christians seeking the traditional diviners’ help for their emotional problems serve as some of the evidence needed to affirm the need of integration. These issues are also parts of information that Christian charismatic teaching and discipline provided by the church are inadequate tools for the church to equip Gikuyu with the needed skills for dealing with their problems. Although there has been a problem of pastors or ministers not being sufficiently prepared
in pastoral care and counseling, the problem is much more than that. There is also a
problem of the church's inability to revive and to utilize the Gikuyu traditional methods
of care, which included the use of elderly people who have experience in crises
intervention, the necessary traditional resources of social activities, like music,
storytelling, and/or dances. These resources will serve to include the social aspect of the
people's life, while the method also aims at integration.

The other major problem is that seminaries are not made aware of the resources
available within the culture and the society in order to learn from them. How to get
informed is a hard enterprise which involves training of the clergy on the rich resources
available from their society. It is very sad that until now our seminaries are managed
with resources from the West, who damaged our Gikuyu cultural heritage almost beyond
correction. Even where today we have people studying the problems facing the Gikuyu
Christian Church, these scholars seem not so keen to go beyond studying and describing,
to provide new models for action.

In the dissertation, discussions have continued, showing the facts which
contributed to the failure by the Western missionaries and their pastoral care methods to
prove that Christian theological resources suffice in the crisis intervention for the Gikuyu
people. To illustrate this opinion, the writer uses other writers' points of view. "Faith
can remain faithful and relevant only when it is in constant and discriminating dialogue
with culture."¹

The missionaries' inability to grube in the root systems of the Gikuyu's cultural
life and needs is our evidence today why the propagation of the gospel to the Gikuyu was

¹
faced with so much difficulty among a people who had well defined religious beliefs and
traditional customs. As John Mbiti has put it: "Since traditional religions occupy the
whole person and the whole of his life, conversion to new religions like Christianity and
Islam must embrace his language, thought patterns, fears, social relationships, attitudes
and philosophical disposition, if that conversion is to make a lasting impact upon the
individual and his community."²

It would have helped missionaries if they first had invested time to study the
Gikuyu people; to have dug deep into the symbols of the Gikuyu culture to determine the
commonalities or differences in Christian theological methods of pastoral care, and the
traditional Gikuyu methods of crises resolution. The writer does not propose that
Christian pastoral care, with theological methods manufactured in some other cultural
milieu, should fit into the Gikuyu situation because that has already failed over the years
of Christian missionaries' church work. Neither does the writer want to suggest that
Christian theology of pastoral care already existing should give up its unique claims to
African culture. The purpose of the model is to seek reciprocal insights. The writer's
view is similar to the thoughts of Masamba Ma Mpollo. The words of Masamba Ma
Mpollo can help us to understand the writer's view: "In Africa, pastoral psychology and
pastoral care cannot be studied and developed outside the emerging African theology,
which is an attempt to interpret the biblical message using the categories, symbols and
psychological, cultural and political structures of the African peoples."³

Since the model is for the Gikuyu, the writer wants to emphasize the use of the
traditional divination. How and who becomes a diviner are not issues in this chapter.
The concern is the process of divining which, according to the Gikuyu, could be either by a group of family members or the whole family networking a crisis, or could mean the family and friends divining the causes and the solution to some problems. Divining should be looked at as an active listening phenomenon. The perception of the missionaries about the Africans (the Gikuyu included) hindered them from the true understanding that doing effective pastoral care did not mean only the application of pastoral theology principles gained from the Western world, but should have embraced other activities by which God was acknowledged, praised, and worshipped by the Gikuyu. For to praise and worship God, Gikuyu had sacrifices and libations, which were accompanied by music and simultaneous active listening of the messages contained in music and other verbalized activities. Thus, Mbiti suggests that Africans

have no creed to recite, their creeds are within them, in their blood and in their hearts, their belief about God is expressed through concrete concepts, attitudes and acts of worship. This faith is utilitarian, not purely abstractly spiritual, it is practical and not only mystical. It is mythical.4

There are many other forms of worship by which Gikuyu expressed their faith to God. Most of them were activated and verbalized, as already indicated in the use of music and testimonies in the model examples provided.

For the sake of clarification, the writer's illustration would be the introduction of the systemic schooling of children on the western model. This practice was strongly resisted by the Gikuyu parents to begin with, although later was accepted by them as the key to enlightenment and prosperity. It was a practice which was utterly incompatible with the needs of the traditional system of education which demanded the prolonged exposure of the young to the pressures of family-group life, culminating in circumcision

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and initiation into full status of personhood, the preparations for which were lengthy and the effects traumatic. Thus, as the requirements of systemic schooling grew dominant, the fundamentally important age-group principle in Gikuyu society, on which tribal unity, law and government were based, was increasingly devalued and the people had no option but to adjust themselves to the alien, supra-tribal government, law and national unification imposed by the newcomers.

Under economic and social pressures, the increasing scarcity of land, the lure of large-scale agricultural and commercial enterprises for those who had the ability to undertake them (Chapter II discussed more about this), the opportunities for professional training and the advancement for those able to benefit from them, the demands of a money system of exchange for everyone, Gikuyu society began to take on a new shape. The once integrated system based on age-group and family relationship was virtually broken up and its stratification began on a basis of economic opportunity.

One of the purposes for integration is to formulate a dialectic dialogue among the Gikuyu and the issues of their past experiences. That dialogue will be a means for finding the possible, new and valid approaches of rediscovering their lost cultural values. It will be the aim of the integrated model to utilize every possible way of enhancing the therapeutic role of the native culture, and the rich dimension which that culture can contribute for networking crisis.

Integration also will help to make the Word of God incarnate in the Gikuyu, which will be a new avenue for the Gikuyu to seek to resolve their differences existing since the time of missionaries. For the Christian ministry of pastoral care and the crisis
intervention to be relevant to the needs of the Gikuyu calls for a thoughtful and impartial approach. This nature of approach was the advocacy which was presupposed by the reaction of the Gikuyu against the missionaries’ attitudes toward their culture and religiosity, which is the writer’s focus in the next part of this chapter.

The reaction was meant for alerting the missionaries about the need to include the native culture as they propagated the gospel. It was a message of dissatisfaction by the Gikuyu that Christianity had become too negative to them. It called for a relevant, contextual and meaningful way of presenting Christ to the Gikuyu and in their situation. Integration is also an attempt to translate the gospel of Jesus into the Gikuyu cultural life that includes their social-religious thought forms, concepts and praxis, which were contained in different activated movements.
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CHAPTER XI


CHAPTER XII

A CRISIS OF ILLNESS: CASE ANALYSIS EXAMPLE OF SYSTEMS' INTERVENTION INTO CRISIS AND SHOWING PURPOSE AND THE MEANING OF THE CASE ANALYSIS FOR THE GIKUYU (The group of friends and pastor in the intervention substituted for the sick man's family.)

The focus of this chapter will be a case study and the data analysis. The writer's/diviner's use of the case study data examples is to show the practical usefulness of systems for crisis intervention and crisis solution. Some examples of the Christian resources that can be integrated and correlated for the theological method of crisis intervention will also be a major part of the analysis.

The Writer As a Diviner

In the document the word diviner will be used to mean the writer. Different systems are utilized for intervention into the crisis of illness, and the word diviner will refer to the only one person who in part or whole acts as information resourceful person for all the systems.

The focus of the document is primarily the usefulness of systems for crisis intervention. The victim of illness was a student here in Atlanta, Georgia and from Kenya and also was a Kikuyu by ethnicity. The intervention systems comprised the following: First was a group of men and women from Kenya who, too, are going to school here in Atlanta, Georgia. The affinity between the group members and the sick
person ranged from belonging to same tribe, spoke same language, being away from their relatives of origin but sharing some common social interactions. The second system was composed of the academic and administration of the school where the sick person was a student. That was an important system because they were the ones who first detected the illness and took the first initiative toward the sick person's treatment. The third group or system was the medical staff of the treatment facilities where the sick person was admitted.

The treatment facility was a key resourceful system during the hospitalization period for the necessary healing intervention. The services of the medical staff provided the positive healing intervention to the sick person while at the same time gave helpful information about the process of healing to the members of the Kenyan group and the school of the sick person. The medical intervention system, therefore, undergirded the activities of all other intervention systems. The diviner's role during intervention processes was to facilitate a positive link between all systems to be sure of continued communication. The diviner's understanding of the intervention process was that effective intervention efforts at healing emotional crisis of the sick person needed a link of all systems involved. The writer's/diviner's role, therefore, provided that needed link.

**Some Possible Factors Which Triggered His Bad Health**

The writer/diviner attempted to seek more information about the illness using divination method of discussion and cross-examination. In the process he developed an intimate relationship of trust with the sick person and he was therefore able to share the following: First that his family back in Kenya could no longer afford enough money to
support his school, living and other needs. His older brother had told him to look for a job that could subsidize for the money from the family. Second, he was living in a church-owned property where he paid very low rent, and at that time the church had decided to change the use of the property for homeless ministry; a fact that required the sick person to relocate. Third, it was at the end of his first year in the college and he was planning to visit home. One reason was to go and visit with his fiancée whom he had not seen for a year. However, his older brother knew about those plans and then wrote a letter discouraging him (the sick person) to go home since the family discontinued with any financial support. All of these experiences were shared with the writer/diviner during the process of intervention and healing. To some other Kenyan he had mentioned that his brother was manipulative against his plans, and that he had influenced their father. The sick person’s will to go home was not threatened or suppressed as before because finally he flew home.

The Role of Systems

School: While in his regular school activities, the school discovered that the sick person had some strange behaviors. As the story was told by those who took him to the hospital, the sick person was not able to concentrate on his given tasks in the class for the first day. The next day he was seen around the school talking with different people about some belief of a people who were invading him and offering him some drugs. He could not show the people, nor could he specify the kind of drugs he was offered. Also, he had carried to school some of his belongings which had nothing to do with his school work. Because of these behaviors, the school called the police who took him to the
hospital for thorough checking. Until some friends were identified, his school held the
custody of his belongings which he had brought to the school. At the first local hospital
and also at the subsequent psychiatric hospital, his school remained attached for
information concerning his health.

**Kenyan Group:** The Kenyan group used in the intervention acted as substitutes
for the family of the sick person since none of his family members were here in Atlanta.
However, his immediate family was in the picture; how the Kenyans over here were
helping their sick relative. The sick person himself had initiated the story about his
illness to the relatives back home in Kenya. At a certain period of his illness he had
called relatives on the phone and told them a story that the police wanted to arrest him.
By the time his father called one of the Kenyans here, that same story about his arrest
by police had spread to the Kenyan group. It was told that the sick person himself had
called several Kenyans and passed the same kind of information about his arrest. To
some others, he called and told them that the police wanted to arrest him on drug charges
and that if any Kenyans tried to rescue him, the police would have them arrested as well.
The spreaded story aroused anxiety among the Kenyans and it was at that time the writer
was asked to convene an intervention meeting for the Kenyan Presbyterian ministers here
in Atlanta. The writer/diviner of intervention methods was also the secretary of the same
Kenyan Presbyterian Ministers Fellowship in Atlanta. To the group he acted as the
diviner who advises on the intervention method.

Since the sick person had already been taken to the hospital by the school
officials, the first Kenyan meeting was held at the hospital. The group consulted with
the hospital and it was disclosed to them that their friend was sick. The hospital needed a relative or a guardian to release information about the illness. Since none of the Kenyans fell under those categories of relationship, the group chose the writer/diviner to act on behalf, and also was asked to act as the group adviser on any matter concerning their sick friend. The writer of this dissertation, referred to as the "diviner," had some knowledge of psychiatric treatment. He had had the opportunity to study Clinical Pastoral Education, both basic and advanced, at the Georgia Mental Health Institute. He, therefore, was deemed more qualified among the Kenyan group; the reason the group gave him the responsibility of divining the methodology of intervention for the group and advising them accordingly.

Everyday for three weeks the Kenyans visited the sick person in the hospital. The major role of the diviner was to help the participants of the group on the appropriate ways of associating with the sick friend. He also attended the relatives’ information meetings organized by the treatment facility. In every step he worked closely to the group, while at the same time became a resourceful contact between the school and the hospital while using his experience of how Gikuyu handle their problems.

After the sick person’s discharge from the hospital, the Kenyan group acted very responsibly, providing the sick person with places to live, food, and helping him in handling his hygiene. The school offered him a part-time job and the Kenyan group helped in the means of transportation from home to work, etc. Briefly, the Kenyans provided him with a very comfortable atmosphere of interacting with the community around him.
Hospital: In the hospital, the sick person was diagnosed with suffering the schizophrenia mood disorder, a mood syndrome. The criteria was a depressed mood, inhibited loss of interest which lasted for a short period, and the continued ability to concentrate on one specific thing. According to the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorder DSM-III-R*,

a mood syndrome (depressive and manic) is a group mood and associated symptoms that occur together for a minimal duration of time. Major Depressive Syndrome is a depressed mood or loss of interest of at least two weeks' duration accompanied by several associated symptoms, such as weight loss and difficulty concentrating. Mood Syndrome can occur as part of a Mood Disorder, as part of a non-mood psychotic disorder (e.g., Schizoaffective Disorder), or as part of an Organic Mental Disorder (e.g., Organic Mood Disorder).¹

The hospital (as a system) helped to diagnose the problem, to give the necessary information about the healing of the sick person, helped in the knowledge of how to deal with the sick person, and the knowledge that undergirded the activities of all other systems. The treatment facility also acted as a link between the sick person and the future treatment at the local community mental facility.

**The Convalescence Period: The Observable Changes**

The post-hospitalization period is here referred to as the convalescence period. The systems intervention had proven successful as was evidenced by the sick person’s ability to manage his own needs. He managed to keep his school job for a period of more than one month. He was able to discuss issues, especially related to his illness. For example, he disclosed that his illness had a history since he remembered, that he was severely ill when he was at home in Kenya. He was able to coordinate difficult decisions
as flying back home and managing the arrangements necessary for the journey, and
finally he flew home alone with very minimal difficulties.

**The Analysis of the Case Data**

The writer (diviner) used his knowledge of how Gikuyu family systems handle
the solution of emotional crisis of the individuals and the family as a whole. His ability
to coordinate the activities of the Kenyan group and to link its services to the sick with
the activities of other systems was guided by the knowledge of how community and
families combine their efforts to intervene into crises. Acting as an intervener/diviner,
he understood that intervention was a process that needed combined efforts of different
systems. Most important of all, the diviner understood the importance of including the
sick person's friends who substituted for his family. The diviner also recognized that
mobilizing social support systems often requires an ongoing commitment to the concept
that crisis resolution, healing and constructive changes in the life of the sick person
would occur when relationships to his friends can be based on mutual trust,
interconnectedness, and support.

The writer/diviner realized that the sick person had deliberately cancelled the truth
of his bad health which was an act of self-destruction. His association to the sick person
was therefore an attempt to motivate the sick person to the ability at which he would be
courageous to share his own problems with other people. This disclosure, the
writer/diviner, understood should not be limited only to family social systems, because
at times family members may not be available for intervention and other systems can be
of great help. In this case, the school of the sick person and the Kenyan group remained
very good examples. It is a very successful community-oriented approach for intervention into crises. It proves that when the family system is either minimal or non-existent, churches, public systems and communities can direct efforts toward the development of a substitute family system, consisting of non-family members such as friends, neighbors, and others for temporary social support systems. The Kenyan substitute group came with rich cultural experiences, their church training resources and their individual commitment, which presupposes the need to recognize what kind of support team is needed for specific crises.

**Divining and Discerning of the Sick Person’s Disentanglement Ability**

The writer/diviner realized that the sick person’s will to visit home was never suppressed by the behavior of his older brother and father, to whose decisions he was so much fused before his illness. The treatment he received helped him in two ways. First, he regained his good health. Second, his treatment helped him in developing the abilities to decide on what he needed, even in the midst of discouragement from other people. For example, his brother remained opposed to the sick person’s will to visit home. There were threats from his brother and father connected with his financial support’s discontinuation, which to him was not a threat anymore. He was therefore encouraged to go home and challenge the decision with help from the rest of his family. His ability to decide to fly home finally was evidence that his treatment helped him to develop some degree of "differentiation of self," a factor he needed to keep him in good health, while still remaining attached to the entire family systems.
The decision to fly home in the midst of confrontation from the family is very compatible with Bowen's theory discussed in Chapter IV. Bowen, in his theory, says that the differentiation of self is the extent to which a family member can discriminate his or her intellectual and emotional functioning and thus avoid fusion with whatever emotions dominate the family. Under stress, participants in a two-person relationship have a tendency to recruit or triangulate with a third member in order to lower the intensity and regain stability. In the case study for this dissertation, the sick person was fused to the family's emotions. The two—himself and his older brother and father—needed a third party with which to triangulate. The systems therefore utilized in his emotional crisis of illness substituted the needed triangulation and helped the sick person to become free of crippling entanglement from the past or present.

The Writer/Diviner As Intervener and Mobilizer of Support Resources

The writer was not only a diviner but also played the role of a mobilizer of support resources for intervention into the crisis of illness of the sick person. As a diviner together with the Kenyan group (referred to as the support system), he facilitated arrangements for future contacts with each other and the sick person, playing the role of a resource member of the team. The contacts were done through meeting with the group members at formally convened meetings for this purpose. The contacts were also done by phone calls. The purpose of these contacts was to discuss, plan, and help carry out additional alternatives available for crisis resolution. The Kenyan group was a group of activists who were willing to mobilize their own resources in a collaborative effort aiming at finding alternative living arrangements because the sick person had already lost
his place of living; finding a job for him; helping him to continue his attachments with friends and social contacts like the church; and for his community resource needs, for example, local community mental health centers for follow-up treatments.

**Implications of the Case Study for the Use of Gikuyu Family Traditional Systems in Crisis Resolutions Using Gikuyu Traditional Resources and the Christian Resources**

The case study has the implications for the task of creating new and comfortable methods of approach for intervening into Gikuyu family and individual crises. To accomplish that methodology, it would need to follow the synthesizing processes applied in the case study to form that coherent functioning of different systems. The systems have to function interdependently while focusing on achieving one common goal. Briefly, Gikuyu family social systems can be used with Christian resources for the formation of one integrated therapeutic method of crisis intervention.
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CHAPTER XII


CHAPTER XIII

CONCLUSION

The conclusion chapter of this dissertation is intended to re-introduce the purpose statement and the aim of the model already constructed, to describe how each chapter attempted to address that purpose and aim, and finally, to show the implications of the project dissertation for the writer's future work with Gikuyu people in his own country.

The Purpose Statement of the Model

The purpose of the model already constructed was to build an alternative methodology of crisis intervention for the Gikuyu people utilizing family systems and crisis theories. The model was limited for implementation to a smaller area within the Central Region of Kenya known as North Kiambu. It was limited to the Presbyterian Church within that area. Although those limitations were deliberate original reasons for the model, the writer does not close doors to other churches and areas where the model can be comfortably used. However, any attempt to use the model elsewhere must seriously adhere to the reasons which motivated its construction.

The construction for the model was necessitated by three major reasons. The first reason was the continued deterioration of the Gikuyu families system. The deterioration of the families systems was caused by the European colonizers who not only ruled Kenya, but also occupied the land suitable for agriculture. Gikuyu, among many other tribes, owned the land which, for its economic potentiality especially, attracted the
Europeans. Moreover, for the Europeans to build their economic power, they had to displace Gikuyu to own their land. Displacing Gikuyu and subsequently owning their land was a deliberate destruction of their valued lifestyle which helped families to live together and to help one another easily during crises. As a result, Gikuyu were poor, unstable and helpless, situations which forced a people who were self-dependent to live at the discretion of their masters. Many of the Gikuyu have lived squatters’ lives in the European firms. Families were disintegrated and dispersed, destroying the traditional physical unity of the Gikuyu families referred to in this model as families systems.

The second reason was Christianity. Together with the European colonizers were Christian gospel missionaries. Missionaries simultaneously scrambled Gikuyu population. Scattered as they were, Gikuyu fell easy prey to the then very divisive aims of spreading the gospel. New believers were required to denounce not only their traditional lifestyle, but also their immediate families and other relatives. They were scrambled by missionaries, who directed rage and hatred against them. The missionary work was built on same attitudes which automatically had a negative impact on the life and behaviors of the Gikuyu who became adherents of those divided denominations. Therefore, religion which, to a certain extent, included even Islam, became another force that further destroyed the unity of the Gikuyu people. Evidently, the writer’s experience as a pastor is that religious differences have maintained the differences among even members of the same families, and cannot unite even when a crisis has hit their family systems.
The third reason was the ethos of the Gikuyu people. Gikuyu ethos was destroyed. The fundamental family values of unity, which enabled the tradition "harambee" ("family joint force") for networking their crises became corrupted by the forces of religion and colonial imperialism. This third reason was a product of the first two reasons already described. It is the result of the destroyed Gikuyu ethos that Christians and traditional Gikuyu people (those who are not Christians) remain alienated until today. Gikuyu, to rediscover their family unity, will at the same time revive their traditional family value of living a social systems life. The rediscovery of that model of living is not limited to the space distance or separation of the family members caused by social-economic and political forces. Rather, the rediscovery of that value will be an attempt to perpetuate Gikuyu traditional family and kinship norm of belongingness by mobilizing family members wherever they are for the purpose of networking their problems.

The Aim of the Model

The aim of the model was to construct an integrated conceptual model of crisis intervention for the Gikuyu people which utilized Gikuyu families systems and crisis theories. The model aim to inform the usefulness of the theories utilized in the attempt to integrate the traditional Gikuyu families resources for intervening into crises with the Christian resources for pastoral care. The model attempted to explore how these two resources informed each other. The exploratory action of the aim of the model moreover informed the need for further research for the development of an articulate theological method of care for the Gikuyu people.
Although the model is exploratory by the nature of the methods and the theories utilized, it is also an action-oriented. The Gikuyu traditional method of crisis intervention is action-oriented, and the same should be the aim of the new developed approach for networking specifically the Gikuyu crises.

**How Each Chapter Has Attempted to Address the Purpose and the Aim**

The writer’s focus in this part of the dissertation conclusion is to briefly show how each chapter attempted to address the purpose and the aim of the dissertation.

In the first chapter of the dissertation, the problem, the motivation for the model and both the Gikuyu traditional resources and the Christian resources for integration were examined. The chapter also examined the definitions of main terms used in the model.

In the second chapter, the projected area for carrying out this project model was examined with the consideration of the theological stance of the church.

In the third chapter the nature and the history of the systems theory have been examined as background material for developing a model that utilizes family systems for crisis intervention.

In chapter four, an alternative model of family systems theory by Murry Bowen was examined as additional background material for constructing a model for crisis intervention for the Gikuyu people. Also examined was the usefulness of Bowen’s model to the Gikuyu and for the purpose of this model.

In the fifth chapter, the model examined who Gikuyu people are, the traditional Gikuyu family systems, and analyzed those systems to provide background meaningful materials for this model of crisis intervention for Gikuyu.
Chapter six examined the Western world's view of the Gikuyu people. These things included the beliefs, the practices especially regarding personhood in the Gikuyu, and finally Gikuyu ethnicity and its uniqueness for the construction of the model for Gikuyu people.

In chapter seven, the nature and the purpose of the Gikuyu traditional education were examined as lifelong value, showing the Gikuyu traditional strategies for intervention and the preparation for preventing crises. The information provided also contributes to the construction of the model of crisis intervention for Gikuyu.

In the eighth chapter, the theory of the practical methods of crisis intervention for the Gikuyu and by the Gikuyu was examined. This examination shows how the family systems method of crisis intervention was and is an action taking and not just a theory.

In chapter nine, the writer showed how it is possible to integrate African tradition, Christian faith and social science theories.

In chapter ten, the model of crisis intervention is developed. The chapter deals with intervention and the practical involvement of the writer as provided by the four model examples.

Chapter eleven emphasized the reason for using the integrated method of approach to crises intervention and the re-establishment of the traditional Gikuyu family systems as a functioning whole.

Chapter twelve is an actual case study of systems intervention into a crisis. The study shows the purpose and meaning of the case analysis for the Gikuyu people.
Further Research

The study of this model has implications for further action research. The conceptualization of the action research is the role played by the correlation method of the project dissertation. Moreover, the correlation method is used in an attempt to facilitate better crisis coping for the Gikuyu people. The better crisis coping is not only for the Gikuyu who, until this day, honor their traditional values of life, but should also be directed to a theological end. The theological end is the work of the Christian Church in its effort to be involved in the solving of crises affecting the Gikuyu. Action research will examined the positive impact in the relationship maintained by the various dimensions of the model. It will also examine the impact of those various dimensions upon better crisis coping by persons and families experiencing crises.

One of the key dimensions of the model is the mobilization of support groups for the purpose of better networking during a crisis. In this context, research would be done to ascertain how well support systems facilitate crisis coping. In the research the pastor’s role is to divine the criteria for mobilization of the crisis support systems according to the nature, the degree of the depth, and the scope of the crisis. He/She will be a resourceful diviner person and a key member of the intervention systems.

Precise Summary

This chapter has attempted to conclude the work of the dissertation in reporting the general development of the project, limitations of methods and the area of projection, has reported the conclusion and has shown the implications for the writer’s future work with the Gikuyu people in his country.
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