

**AGIKUYU CHRISTIAN MARTYRS: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF THE FAITH
OF SELECTED AGIKUYU CHRISTIAN MARTYRS DURING THE MAU MAU
PERIOD IN KENYA (1952 – 1960)**

by

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In accordance with South African Theological Seminary policies, this thesis is
accepted in fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Theology

Committee Members

Date

The opinions expressed in this thesis do not necessarily reflect the views of the South African Theological Seminary.

DECLARATION

I hereby acknowledge that the work contained in this thesis is my own original work and has not previously in its entirety or in part been submitted to any academic institution for degree purposes.

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NAIROBI, KENYA

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May the Almighty God bless you all and your families now and always.

J.N. Mbugua,
Nairobi, Kenya.
February, 2011

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to bring to light the source of faith of Agikuyu Christians who were martyred during the Mau Mau period (1952-1960). The researcher attempted to find out why those Christians were not afraid to die when their faith was put to test. The study also sought to discover the social, political and religious background of the persecutions and to establish the relevance of such faith in Christianity today.

The Literature Review revealed that the faith of the Agikuyu Christian was in conflict with the Mau Mau procedure and thus led to martyrdom. Additionally it was revealed that it was from Christian teachings, beliefs and practices that the Agikuyu concept of martyrdom arose.

The study used the qualitative research approach. The method used was an in-depth interview of individuals, and focus group interviews. In addition secondary sources mainly from archival material, newspapers, Internet, publications and books were employed to clarify the information obtained from the respondents.

The study revealed that the source of the faith of those who were martyred was from scripture and teachings of the church but more so from the influence of the teachings of the East African Revival Movement. The movement was characterised by mass conventions with hundreds and at times thousands of attendees. The revival emphasised public confession of recent sins and restitution for them, a strict code of conduct, and a personal salvation experience with Jesus Christ.

The researcher recommends that after following the footsteps of the Christian martyrs through the centuries, including the Mau Mau martyrs, Christians should revisit their faith commitments and live in accordance with these.

DEDICATION

To all Agikuyu Christian martyrs, living and dead who were persecuted or died for their faith in our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ during the Mau Mau period of 1952-1960.

Also to all my respondents who welcomed me so warmly in their churches, vestries, offices and homes.

May God bless you all. Amen.

J.N. Mbugua

Nairobi, Kenya

February, 2011

ABBREVIATIONS

ACC&S	African Christian Churches & Schools
ACK	Anglican Church of Kenya
AICs	African Instituted (or Independent or Initiated) Churches
AIPCA	Africa Independent Pentecostal Church of Africa
CCM	Consolata Catholic Mission
CMS	Church Missionary Society
CPK	Church of the Province of Kenya
CS	Church of Scotland
DC	District Commissioner
P.C.E.A	Presbyterian Church of East Africa
RC	Roman Catholic Church
w/o	wife of

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CHAPTER ONE: BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW

1.1 Introduction

Martyrdom connotes giving up one's life because of one's faith. The Greek word *martus* ("martyr") meant "witness" and the verb form *martureo* meant, "to testify". The writings of Luke in the New Testament use the noun for one who had seen the resurrected Christ, an "eye witness", and so one who could literally bear witness to him or attest to his resurrection (Luke 24:48; Acts 1:22). Revelation 2:13 uses "martyr" of a "blood witness", one who was killed for his confession of faith, and before the end of the second century the word had become technical in this sense. The idea of "eye witness" was not lost for the martyrs were accorded a vision of Christ (Acts 7:56, 22:20; M. Carp 39;42). A distinction was made between those who confessed before the authorities and survived ("confessors") and those who died, to whom alone the name "martyrs" was given. Martyrdom involving imprisonment, torture and death taught Christians that they were to be in the world for the sake of others, as much as they were in the world for their own good (Ferguson (ed) 1990:575; McKechnie (ed) 1968:1105).

Professor William Barclay, in his *Commentary on the Fourth Gospel*, writes that with time there developed two kinds of martyrdom: the "red martyrdom" in which the martyr died for Christ, and the "white martyrdom" or confessors in which one witnessed for Christ no matter what the cost (Purcell 1983:2).

Another comprehensive definition and historical background of martyrs and martyrdom is found in *The Westminster Dictionary of Christian Theology*, which indicates that the word martyr originated from the Greek *martys* meaning 'a witness, one who bears testimony'. This term, of course, would then apply to most believers. However, in the late-Judaism period, the term was becoming 'associated with readiness to die for that truth'(Richardson and Bowden (eds) 1983:347). Later on, in the early Christian Era, the Gospel of John indicates that the word *martyria* "often has the sense of positive missionary witness to the truth of Jesus and his disciples...sealed in 'water and blood'" (Richardson and Bowden (eds) 1983:347). Even after Christ's ascent, the witness still stood, now supported by the Spirit, enabling the witness to testify even in moments of danger and persecution, even before "governors and kings". There was also a belief that as Christ had to die for

our sins to be forgiven, the true believer was then honour-bound to keep away from sin even when faced with death. The dictionary goes on to indicate that although martyrs would endure much suffering, their reward would come on the final Day of Judgment when martyrs would now be the judges of all, having the power to condemn sinners to eternal torment (Richardson and Bowden (eds) 1983:347).

In this thesis, the researcher will use the term martyr, in keeping with the definitions provided in the *New Unger Bible Dictionary* and in the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* which have become the customary definition "as one who has proved the strength and genuineness of his/her faith in Christ by undergoing a violent death" (Unger F.M 1988:822) or "made to suffer greatly because of his (especially religious) beliefs e.g. the early Christian martyrs" (Cowie 1989:764).

Sauer and Howell (eds) (2010:42) indicate that in their view, the terms martyr and martyrdom are enshrined by the following two alternative definitions:

A Christian martyr is a Christian who voluntarily suffers death as the penalty for witnessing to and refusing to renounce his faith, or a tenet, principle or practice belonging to it.

Christian martyrdom is voluntarily, but not intentionally (through unnecessary provocation), losing one's life to those hostile to the faith in proclamation or defense of Christian belief, for abstaining from actions that would constitute a denial of the faith, or in execution of a special prophetic commission by God.

Still on martyrs, *Unger Dictionary* further notes that Stephen was the first Christian martyr and the spiritual honours of his death tended in no small degree to raise to the most extravagant estimation, in the early church, of the value of the testimony of blood. The Dictionary goes on to indicate that eventually a martyr's blood was supposed, on the alleged authority of the following texts, to cancel the sins of the past life (Mark 10:39; Luke 12:50), to answer for baptism, and at once to secure admission into paradise (Matthew 5:10-12) (Unger F.M 1988:822).

But who are martyrs, what exactly is martyrdom and what leads to one being referred to as a martyr? This question is not easy to answer. King (1968:11-31) indicates that there is a mystery posed by the lives of martyrs, those heroic figures on the Christian scene who seem to have been prepared, in many cases, to die rather than betray their beliefs. One thing is plain: that martyrs do not belong only to

the past. They are also to be found in the present. The history of the church, especially church history of the first four hundred years gives a scattering of names from distant times creating an impression of antiquity, as though such persons may have lived then, but not now. However, they do live now, and their stories appear from time to time in the news of the day.

Sauer and Howell (eds) (2010:32) assert that “some of us believe that most, if not all, lessons to be learned about following Christ in persecution and martyrdom have already been learned in the first four centuries of the Christian era and during the time of the Reformation in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.” On page 34 they indicate that suffering is the result of the sin of Adam, and characteristic of the period of human history until the return of Jesus Christ.

Sauer and Howell (eds) (2010:71-72) further notes that persecution has had a consistent presence in the church’s life since its inception just as Christ foretold. The researcher agrees with this as the same is supported by numerous other sources as reflected repeatedly in this thesis. Sauer and Howell (eds) (2010:71-72) go on to say that one misconception about Christian persecution is the view generally held that persecution is only the experience of certain Christians at certain times. They view that such a historical exemption relegates persecution either to the past or the future. They note that this view includes the distorted emphasis placed upon the persecutions of the early church with the resulting notion that persecution is no longer an experience the modern church endures. As indicated above persecution will keep reappearing until the return of Jesus.

Martyrdom has taken place during the whole history of the church for example numerous Anabaptists were martyred in Europe during the Middle Ages; also very many Christians were martyred during the European Renaissance; other Christians were martyred in England during that time for example Thomas Moore. Many centuries later, we note martyrdom of many other Christians including that of Maximillian Kolbe who died in Poland in 1941 in order to save the life of a fellow prisoner; Edith Stein who was killed in the Nazi gas chambers in Poland in 1942. More Christians were killed for their faith in various corners of the world over the last few hundred years who include among them Charles de Feucauld, martyred in 1916 in Sahara desert; John and Betty Stan of the China Inland Mission beheaded in China in 1934; Alfred Sadd of the London Missionary Society and Vivian Reddich of the Bush Brotherhood, who died for their faith in Gilbert Islands in 1942; Leonard

Wilson “Confessor” who was the Bishop of Singapore was tortured by the Japanese during the second World War, however the Bishop did not die; Martin Luther King, who was assassinated in Memphis in USA in 1968 for his attempt to promote Civil Rights; Oscar Romero, Archbishop of San Salvador who was martyred on 24th March 1980, inside a chapel while celebrating mass (Purcell 1983:1-160). There have also been numerous cases of African martyrdom as depicted subsequently which include among others the Baganda martyrs in the Kingdom of Buganda in current day Uganda.

1.2 African Martyrs

Mercy Amba Oduyoye, of Ghana, one of Africa’s leading women theologians, observes that it is no wonder that the first time the North African church appears in the written records of Christianity is to name its martyrs: twelve Berber Christians in North Africa who had refused to swear by the “Lord our Emperor” were dispatched to meet their Lord. In the theology of the North African church, to reject these Roman rites meant execution and to gain instant admission to heaven (Acts Scilli 5). From the same North African church come the stories of two African women, Perpetua and Felicitas and the account of the martyrdom of Cyprian. Again, from the North African church come statements of faith such as “a good purpose which knows God cannot be altered”, and “when the right is so clear there is nothing to consider” (Oduyoye 1991:20-21; Stevenson 1975:42).

These Christians were sure that it was better to die than to act contrary to their faith. However, the choice was not always so clear. Cyprian (Stevenson 1975:235-236), during the Decian persecution, used Scripture to explain a different response to persecution. He went into hiding in order to be available to guide the church: “If they persecute you in one town, take refuge in the next; and if they persecute you in that, take refuge in another. I tell you solemnly, you will not have gone round the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes [Matthew 10:23]”.

Oduyoye further observes that in addition to Cyprian, there were others who did not follow the line of absolute loyalty but simply complied with the authorities in order to save their own lives. (During Diocletian’s persecution of Christians, a state official did report that “all Africans had sacrificed”) (Frend 1952:501). One could argue that running away is better than staying to perjure oneself. Nevertheless,

Cyprian incurred the anger of those who stayed. He escaped death only because the persecution came to an end with the death of the Roman emperor Decius (AD. 251) (Oduyoye 1991:20-21).

The debate among Christians that followed the period of persecution by Decius resulted in Cyprian's ecclesiology, which held that outside the church there is no salvation. Cyprian also brought to the North African Christians the insights that no one should be excluded from the sacrament of penance and that the church was empowered to forgive any sin, including the sin of apostasy (Oduyoye 1991:20-21).

It is worth noting that all this was no armchair preaching; it was theology - a struggle to understand what obedience to Christ meant in particular circumstances. Oduyoye stresses that we should note also that the theological task was the struggle of the entire Christian community and not simply that of Christian leaders like Cyprian, Fortunatus, and Maximus (Oduyoye 1991:20-21).

Oduyoye further observes that faced with persecution, the Northern Africa early Christian Church chose martyrdom. Martyrdom's theological base was absolute loyalty to God, which made participation in the imperial cult unthinkable. Traditional rigorous attitudes relating to remaining steadfast and not backsliding¹ were reinforced by many biblical statements:

As for those people who were once brought into the light, and tasted the gift from heaven, and received a share of the Holy Spirit, and appreciated the good message of God and the powers of the world to come, and yet in spite of this have fallen away – it is impossible for them to be renewed a second time. They cannot be repentant if they have wilfully crucified the Son of God and openly mocked him [Hebrews 6:4-6].

If, after we have been given knowledge of the truth, we should deliberately commit any sins, then there is no

¹ M.A. Oduyoye 1991. *Hearing and Knowing: Theological Reflection on Christianity in Africa*. New York: Orbis Books, 23; Many Kikuyu Christians during the Mau Mau persecution (1952-1960) lapsed. After Mau Mau persecutions were over, many Kikuyu Christians repented and applied to be re-admitted to church. The Kenyan church had to seek precedents that had occurred in such situations during the Christian history. The Kenya church sought advice from academicians and clergy based in the United Kingdom. This is evidenced by numerous articles found by the researcher in the Kenya National Archives, chief among them are memoranda written in 1952 by notable persons including Professor S.L. Greenslad, the Archbishop of York and of great interest is a detailed memorandum dated 27th November, 1952 written by Dr. William Freud - the author of *"The Donatist Church."* (Mau Mau Memoranda and the Church (1952-1964) - MSS/129/9, Kenya National Archives, Nairobi).

longer any sacrifice for them [Hebrews 10:26; see also 12:17].

You will be hated by all men on account of my name; but the man who stands firm to the end will be saved [Mark 13:13].

Do not be afraid of those who kill the body...but the man who disowns me in the presence of men will be disowned in the presence of God's angels [Luke 12:4,9] (Oduyoye 1991:20-21).

In the early centuries of Christianity, to fail to remain steadfast in one's faith and to backslide was tantamount to having wilfully crucified Christ and openly mocking him. Facing persecution, the faithful were thereafter being encouraged with uplifting words and warnings as evidenced by the above New Testament statements and many more especially with the writings of leading apologists such as Tertullian and Origen, among others, to be firm (see Fig. 1 (page 28), Column 2) in their faith to the end and not to be afraid of facing persecution and even martyrdom.

It is not just the Christian Church in North Africa that faced martyrdom. Reports of martyrdom were reported in the early Christian churches in Ethiopia, Sudan and along the Nile especially in Egypt.

Numerous instances of martyrdom have also taken place in Africa south of the Sahara. Among the earliest and one of the most notable African martyrs was that of the remarkable Congolese prophetess Kimpa Vita (1684-1706), also known by her baptismal name of Dora Beatrice. Kimpa Vita was born into Congo aristocracy and was well educated. She was arrested, tried and burnt (see Fig. 1 (page 28), Column 4) to death as a heretic in 1706 at the age of 22 together with her assistant at the command of King Pedro at the request of the Catholic Capuchin missionaries (Anderson 2001:49-50).

Another martyrdom from Congo was that of Simon Kimbangu the founder of the Kimbanguist Church who was imprisoned in 1921 by the Belgian Government and died in prison in 1951 (Anderson 2001:127). In Uganda one example of recorded Christian martyrdom was the execution of 31 Baganda martyrs at Namugongo on Ascension Thursday, 3 June 1886. The Christians were martyred for their faith under the order of Baganda Kabaka Mwanga (Faupel 1969:198; Marsh and Kingsworth 1996:123-124). These Baganda martyrs were killed largely for their

Christian faith (see Fig. 1 (page 28), column 2) and for their refusal to engage in sodomy as demanded of them by Kabaka Mwanga.

Faupel (1969:190) notes that the Uganda martyrs were resigned to die for Jesus Christ. Those who were executed on June 3, 1886 were not the first Uganda martyrs to be executed and tortured for being Christians.

There are very many cases of Uganda martyrs narrated by Faupel and strangely enough, they occurred virtually in the whole of Uganda. For example, the death of two Basogas who were martyred on 27th May, 1886 for their faith (Faupel 1969:173).

More recently in Uganda, when the country was under the tyranny of the Presidency of Idi Amin, very many Christians lost their lives for their faith. One of those who died was the courageous leader Janani Luwum, the Anglican Archbishop of Uganda and Boga Zaire, whose death on 17 February 1977 added another name to the long roll of Uganda martyrs (Purcell 1983:119-129).

In South Africa, Christians also suffered martyrdom. They are too many to recount but one of them was Steve Biko, whose name is one of the most recent additions to the Book of Martyrs in St. Paul's Cathedral (city, country of this cathedral not given) (Purcell 1983:131). Steve Biko, it is noted, was not avowedly a practising Christian in his life. His name among the company of martyrs is warranted by his death for the cause of his fellow black South Africans in their struggle for justice.

However, in this thesis, martyrdom of Biko does not fit in the researcher's concept of Christian martyrdom as according to the researcher Biko did not die because of his faith, neither did Martin Luther King in USA. The two died for their attempt to liberate their people from oppression. The two examples indicate that there might be other forms of martyrdom other than Christian martyrdom.

Other African martyrs include those African Christians who were massacred in the 17th Century in the Kingdom of Monomotapa (in Shona, spelled Mwene Metapa) (Wills 1967:34-35) in the present day Mozambique when that area of East Africa was under Portuguese domination. They were killed because they could not denounce their faith as demanded by their king. Other African countries that have had martyrdom include Zimbabwe where thirteen mission workers of the Elim Pentecostal Church in Zimbabwe died on the night of 23rd June 1978 as they had lived for their faith (Purcell 1983:141-142).

1.3 Background to the Study

The history of the church in Kenya has its own experiences of martyrdom. A good example of such experiences is found within the history of Christianity in Gikuyuland, and especially in the period of the struggle for Kenya's independence. During this period, the Christian faith was put to the test by the Mau Mau. The Mau Mau was an amorphous organization whose members were primarily from the Agikuyu community and who sought independence for Kenyans from British colonial rule (Duiker and Spielvogel 1994:1196-1197; Oliver and Atmore 2005:254-257; and Maloba 1993:1-4). For fear of betrayal, the Mau Mau developed means of ensuring loyalty amongst their followers as well as from the general Agikuyu populace. To this end, they developed oaths, which they administered in secretly conducted rituals. The Mau Mau oath contained a number of conditions, most of which were considered controversial or sacrilegious to the Christian faith and ethos. These conditions varied from place to place and from ceremony to ceremony (Roberts 1954:48).

Most of the Mau Mau requirements posed great difficulties to those members of the community who had converted to Christianity. Amongst others, the people were required to kill non-Mau Mau's (especially Europeans), to steal property to enrich the community and the movement, and to keep away from mission schools or church services as well as "to denounce the Christian faith" (Frost 1978:149; see Fig. 1 (page 28), column 1). These requirements posed a big challenge to the committed Agikuyu Christians. These staunch faithfuls thus refused to take the oath even when threatened with death, choosing to die rather than to give up their newfound faith. Another reason for their refusal to take the oath was the manner in which it was administered, as the rituals seemed demonic to most Christians. The Agikuyu Christians faced a cruel dilemma when the Mau Mau oath administrator demanded an answer to the question, "Are you a true Kikuyu and so one of us or are you a European in a black skin?" Those who replied that, although they were true Agikuyu, they were Christians first, were martyred in their hundreds or even thousands - martyred often with great cruelty - because their faith meant more to them than life (Roberts 1954:15-33). Bethwell A. Ogot has aptly compared them to the famous Uganda martyrs, the court pages and others "who willingly embraced death at the

hands of Kabaka Mwanga rather than give up their newly acquired faith” (Ogot and Ochieng (eds) 1995).

Frost further indicates that the Agikuyu elders keenly opposed the Mau Mau because its methods and its oaths were perversions of the traditional Agikuyu oaths, and violated Agikuyu traditions and history. Under Literature Review (Chapter Two) distinction will be made between traditional oaths and Mau Mau oaths.

Others who were opposed to the Mau Mau were those who used the opportunity to settle old scores against fellow Agikuyu. For example the Kikuyu Home Guards (Maloba 1993:84,88-91,108) were opposed to the Mau Mau largely because they were, in the eyes of the Mau Mau, collaborators with the British. These and others such as the chiefs were loyalists (Maloba 1993:121-176) because they felt that cooperation with the Government paid a good dividend. The complex motivations behind the loyalist elements needs much further study and research, but one thing is certain: Mau Mau did not secure the willing allegiance of the whole tribe and many of its supporters were forced to take the first oath, which then propelled them through fear of the oath itself further and further into the oath-dominated movement (Frost 1978:149).

As given at considerable length in the Literature Review (Chapter Two), there were other oaths administered by the Mau Mau. Those other oaths followed the first oath and were more severe. Maloba (1993:102) among other authors indicate that the administration of Mau Mau oaths can be divided into three stages. The first stage consisted of the unity oath administered throughout Central Province and among the Agikuyu in Nairobi and the Rift Valley Province after the crucial meeting in 1950 of Agikuyu leaders at ex-Senior Chief Koinange’s home. The second stage involved a modified form of the original unity oath and, more crucially, the introduction of the warrior oath, the *Batuni* oath, from about the middle of 1952. The pace of administration of this oath to many young would-be warriors increased tremendously after the declaration of the state of emergency in October 1952. The third stage consisted of what came to be known as the “advanced oaths” which referred to oaths beyond the *Batuni* oath. On the whole it would appear that these “advanced oaths” were introduced after 1953 and were generally administered to the forest fighters. The unity oath was the general oath, administered extensively to as many Agikuyu as possible with the obvious intention of secretly uniting, disciplining, and fostering political consciousness among them (Rev. Bostock’s papers: Kenya National

Archives PCB/134/80). It was a recruitment drive, secretly extending political consciousness and commitment to the nationalist struggle. It was executed secretly for fear of government reprisals. As a general rule, those who had taken the oath were expected to induce their friends to also take it (Njama and Barnell 1966:58; Maloba 1993:102).

1.4 Statement of the Problem

In view of the above, and especially on the plight of Christianity in Gikuyuland, many works have been written on the political outlook of the Agikuyu people during this period, the Mau Mau movement and the growth of the Christian faith among the Agikuyu. However, none have been done to expose the source of such faith. This thesis therefore aimed at exploring this source and socio-political and religious background of the persecution and eventual martyrdom during the Mau Mau period.

1.5 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to:

- 1) bring to light the source of the faith of Agikuyu Christians who were martyred during the Mau Mau war. In other words, the researcher attempted to find out why these Christians were not afraid to die when their faith was put to test.
- 2) discover the socio-political and religious background of the persecution.

1.6 Objectives of the Study

Specifically, the study was guided by the following objectives:

- 1) To discover what really led to the faith portrayed by the Agikuyu Christians who were not afraid to die when their faith was put to test.
- 2) To identify social, political and religious factors that precipitated the persecution of Christians among the Agikuyu.

1.7 Research Questions

The study sought to answer the following research questions:

- 1) What made the Agikuyu Christians become so strong in their faith to the point of not fearing to die when put to test?
- 2) What were the political, social and religious factors that led to the persecution of the Agikuyu Christians?
- 3) What justification did the Mau Mau fighters give for persecuting Christians among the Agikuyu?
- 4) What role did the Christian martyrs among the Agikuyu play in the growth of Christianity especially in Kenya?
- 5) Can Christians in Kenya and Africa today apply the same principles portrayed by Agikuyu Christian martyrs and other Christian martyrs throughout history?

1.8 Significance of the Study

Christian martyrdom is an issue dealing with one's faith; it is based on complete loyalty to God. However, with the emergence of various issues today related to modernity, materialism, technological advancement and globalisation, matters of faith are increasingly becoming very controversial and are at times compromised. The researcher in this study was motivated by awareness of Christians who, throughout history, were ready to die rather than act contrary to what they believed (see Fig. 1 (page 28), column 2). Using experiences of martyrdom in Kenya during the Mau Mau struggle would be closer home and thus easier for Africans to understand the implications. That is why the researcher deliberately discussed at length (especially in Chapter Two) almost similar experiences faced by Christian martyrs in the history of Christianity in various parts of the world. It would be interesting to find out what really contributed to such a strong faith among the Agikuyu Christians and made them remain committed to this faith even to the point of death when put to the test (see Fig. 1 (page 28), column 2).

As noted in the Literature Review, there has not been any comprehensive study on martyrdom in Kenya. Studies on Mau Mau are of a general nature. The approach used in this study was therefore unique. The qualitative approach that was used involving in-depth interviews and document analysis was intended to give the

researcher opportunity to go deeper into the issue. Information gathered, findings, discussions and recommendations in relation to Christian commitment to the point of death, were significant in various ways.

First, it was hoped that Christians in general will be motivated to reflect and understand what Jesus meant when he talked about suffering on different occasions. For example:

- Matthew 10:38 “He who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me”.
- Mark 13:13 “You will be hated by all men on account of my name but the man who stands firm to the end will be saved”.
- Luke 12:4 “Do not be afraid of those who kill the body...”.

Suffering experienced by Christians during the Mau Mau period was seen in this study as one of the revelations of how Christian faith can be put to test.

The study also posed a challenge to committed Christians to reflect on how they would personally respond if faced with threats of death or persecution in regard to their faith.

Thirdly, Christians should be challenged by this study to reflect more seriously on what is right or wrong before making decisions that might affect one’s faith. Deciding whether certain rituals are unchristian or not often poses a dilemma. Christians faced this during the Mau Mau period. One who was a true African (or Mũgĩkuyu) and a patriot was expected to take the oath(s); if not, one was seen as a loyalist or supporter of the colonial government. Though Christians saw themselves as true Africans, they also believed taking the oath was unchristian. Today Christians are faced with many issues that pose dilemmas in decision making; to avoid compromise, informed decision making is crucial.

In summary, the benefits of this study are many. Beneficiaries include the Christian church, all Christians, teachers/lecturers of theology, the youth who should be inspired to look at Christian martyrs as role models in their search for meaning of true Christian faith and even non-Christians might be motivated to find out what Christianity is all about. Witnesses of Christian martyrdom discussed in this study, including those used as participants, should also have their morale boosted after seeing that the strong faith portrayed during that period was worthwhile. It is therefore hoped that this study will make some significant contribution towards the

virtues indicated above especially reminding Christians in Kenya, Africa and the whole world that they should live for Christ in total compliance with biblical teachings and should not compromise their faith for whatever reason.

1.9 Assumptions of the Study

The study assumed that some Agikuyu Christians were persecuted and killed during the Mau Mau period in Kenya because they could not compromise their faith. Findings confirmed this assumption. It was also assumed that the sources of information required, both material and human, would be available; to a large extent these were and became helpful. The researcher assumes that the respondents gave their honest opinions on what happened.

1.10 Scope of the Study

The study was carried out in the area occupied by the Agikuyu during the emergency period. This included the districts of Kiambu, Muranga, Nyeri, Kirinyaga, Embu and Nairobi. The researcher identified and made use of both men and women as respondents in addition to documentary evidence in those districts to obtain the information required.

1.11 Limitations and Delimitations

Although the area covered by the research was wide, finding respondents who lived and were impacted by the Mau Mau with regard to their Christian faith was not an easy task. This is because most of those directly affected are dead. With this limitation in mind, the researcher made a deliberate effort to identify and use different sources in various localities in order to gather reliable data. Additionally, the researcher was able to use various representatives who happened to be eye-witnesses to the events at the time. This enabled the researcher to confirm information given by others. This became a significant delimitation to the study. Another delimitation to the study was sourcing data by the process of meta analysis of relevant documents produced during that period. These are available in different archives in the districts, especially the Kenya National Archives in Nairobi.

1.12 Definition of Terms

Brethren: the word in the Christian sense denotes a member of the same family (Mark 1:16); a neighbour (Matt. 7:3), a fellow countryman (Rom. 9:3). However, the most significant use assigns it to men who are called brethren because of their membership in the Christian group. The requirement is not the tie of blood or acquaintance or of nationality; it is purely spiritual. It is clear from the book of Acts and from the Epistles that 'Brethren' was the common mode of designation for fellow believers. The word 'Brethren' has been adopted as the name of several groups in the modern church such as was the case throughout Christian history (Harrison, Bromiley and Henry (eds) 1975:105-106). According to Websters Dictionary of English, the word 'Brethren' is now used chiefly in formal or solemn address in referring to the members of a profession, society or sect, or in the names of certain sects (McKechnie (ed) 1968:275).

Revival: is new life. It is God working in a sovereign way on man's behalf. Revival always involves the preaching of divine judgement, confession of sin, repentance, acceptance of salvation as a free gift, the authority of the Scriptures and the joy and discipline of the Christian life. While revivals do not last the effects of revival always endure (Harrison, Bromiley and Henry (eds) 1975:460).

Revivalism: a spontaneous spiritual awakening by the Holy Spirit among professing Christians in the churches, which results in deepened religious experience, holy living, evangelism and missions, the founding of educational and philanthropic institutions, and social reform. Revival should not be confused with evangelism, which is the result of revival (Douglas (ed) 1978:844). Further, it is a movement within the Christian tradition which emphasizes the appeal of religion to the emotional and affectional nature of individuals as well as to their intellectual and rational nature. It believes that vital Christianity begins with a response of the whole being to the gospel's call for repentance and spiritual rebirth by faith in Jesus Christ. This experience results in a personal relationship with God (Elwell (ed) 1984:948).

Revival, Theology of: Revival, as Protestant theology has used the word for 250 years, means God's quickening visitation of his people, touching their

hearts and deepening his work of grace in their lives. It is essentially a corporate occurrence, an enlivening of individuals not in isolation but together. 'Revive' is the AV(KJV) word for this process of spiritual reanimation (Ps. 85:6; Hab. 3:2); 'revivedness' would be the appropriate term to describe its result. The Reformation, the Evangelical Revival in Britain, the first and second Great Awakenings in America, the Welsh Revival of 1904-05, and the East African Revival still continuing after half a century, are seen as instances (Wright and Ferguson 1988:588).

Salvation: Salvation in the teaching of Jesus denotes deliverance from sin, to be experienced now, although its complete fulfilment is eschatological. He taught that salvation is only through Him, the incarnate Son of God (John 3:16). In the apostolic age salvation is through the death of Christ (Eph. 2:13-18) and includes all the redemptive blessings which believers have in Christ, chief of which are conversion, regeneration, justification, adoption, sanctification, and glorification. It is God's solution to the whole problem of sin, in all its aspects. It brings deliverance not only from the guilt of sin, but also from its power, and ultimately from its presence. Although provided through Christ's sufferings, death and resurrection, salvation becomes realizable in experience through the Holy Spirit, on the condition of faith. Its effects will someday embrace the whole universe. The curse will be removed from nature and all history will find its consummation and completion in Christ (Rom. 8:21,22; Eph. 1:10) (Douglas (ed) 2nd Ed 1978:874-875; Richardson and Bowden (eds) 1983:519-521; Wright and Ferguson 1988:610). Almost all the above characteristics of one who is saved were realised in the lives of Agikuyu followers of the Revival movement.

Salvation – Meaning of Christian life: *The Dictionary of Biblical Theology* provides one of the best descriptions from which we learn that "once the gospel is proposed to men by the preaching of the apostles, the former have a choice which will determine their lot: salvation or doom (2 Thess. 2, 10; 2 Cor. 2,15), life or death. Those who believe and confess their faith are saved (Rom. 10,9f.13); their faith having been sealed, besides, by baptism, an actual experience of salvation (1 Pet. 3,21). God saves them purely out of mercy without considering their works (2 Tim. 1,9; Titus 3,5), by means of

grace (Eph. 2,5.8), giving them the Holy Spirit (2 Thess. 2,13; Eph. 1,13; Titus 3,5f). From this moment, the Christian must guard faithfully the Word which can save his soul (James 1,21); he must nourish his faith through acquaintance with the Scriptures (2 Tim. 3,15) and he must make it bear fruit in good works (James 2,14); he must labour with fear and trembling 'to accomplish his salvation' (Phil. 2,12). This supposes a constant exercise of salutary virtues (1 Thess. 5,8), thanks to which he will grow with regard to his salvation (1 Pet. 2,2). No negligence is permitted; salvation offers itself at every moment of life (Heb. 2,3); 'now is the day of salvation' (2 Cor. 6,2)" (Leon-Dufour, 2nd Ed, 1973:522). This has a lot of relevance to Christianity as applied in the lives of the Agikuyu martyrs which they had learned from the Scriptures and teachings of the revival movement and also what they had been taught by the missionaries.

Soteriology, the doctrine of salvation: As indicated in *Basic Theology*, soteriology is the grandest theme in the Scriptures. It embraces all of time as well as eternity past and future. It relates in one way or another to all of mankind, without exception. It even has ramifications in the sphere of the angels. It is the theme of both the Old and New Testaments. It is personal, national, and cosmic. And it centres on the greatest Person, our Lord Jesus Christ. From God's perspective salvation includes the total work of God in bringing people from condemnation to justification, from death to eternal life, from alienation to filiation. From the human perspective it incorporates all of the blessings that being in Christ brings both in this life and the life to come. The inclusive sweep of salvation is underscored by observing the three tenses of salvation. (1) The moment one believed he was saved from the condemnation of sin (Eph. 2:8; Titus 3:5). (2) That believer is also being saved from the dominion of sin and is being sanctified and preserved (Heb. 7:25). (3) And he will be saved from the very presence of sin in heaven forever (Rom. 5:9-10) (Ryrie 1986:277). This type of deep salvation was reflected in the lives of the Agikuyu martyrs who were ready to die for their faith.

Several categories and terms were used by early Christians to describe the differing reactions to persecutions:

Confessors: were those who survived great punishments and remained true to the faith (Austin 1983:61).

Lapsed: were those who renounced Christ, some permanently and some temporarily, to escape torture (Austin 1983:61).

Libellatici: were those who bribed officers or purchased certificates stating they had sacrificed to gods (Austin 1983:61).

Martyr: is one who has proved the strength and genuineness of his/her faith in Christ by undergoing a violent death or has undergone great persecution because of his/her faith (Unger F.M 1988:822 and Cowie (ed) 1989:764).

Traditores: some were scornfully named *traditores*. They are the ones who delivered up copies of Scriptures to be burned or destroyed. They were doing so to escape persecution (Austin 1983:61).

1.13 The Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework which was designed by the researcher and was the one applied to this study was based on martyrology, which is a branch of ecclesiological history dealing with the lives of martyrs. The researcher was interested in a framework that at a glance would show all aspects of martyrology from the Old Testament times to the present. Such a framework would assist readers and scholars to comprehend the complexities of martyrology, show what Christian martyrs over the ages have undergone and would reflect other issues touching on martyrology.

It is principally to provide such an aid or instrument that the researcher designed the conceptual framework appearing below as Fig. 1.

COLUMN 1 Socio-Political Environment	COLUMN 2 Characteristics of Christian Martyrs	COLUMN 3 Types of persecution before being put to death	COLUMN 4 Kind of Death	COLUMN 5 Contributions of martyrology and martyrdom to Christianity				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Idolatrous worship ▪ Emperor worship ▪ No freedom of worship ▪ Misunderstanding of Christian belief ▪ Demands to deny faith in Christ ▪ Christians blamed for calamities ▪ Demand to take oaths ▪ Forced homosexuality ▪ Infanticide ▪ To eat food offered to idols ▪ Surrendering or burning of Scripture 	→	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Belief that they were citizens of both earth and heaven ▪ Desire to be like Christ ▪ Refusal to deny their faith even in the face of death ▪ Portrayal of great courage and confidence ▪ People with a difference ▪ Belief in the scripture 	→	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Social ostracism ▪ Literary attacks ▪ Confiscation of property ▪ Banishment ▪ Imprisonment ▪ Forced labour in mines ▪ Torture ▪ Confinement ▪ Object to amuse the persecutors and unbelievers ▪ Being enslaved 	→	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ By crucifixion ▪ By fire ▪ By wild beasts ▪ Execution by the sword or by other instruments ▪ Buried alive ▪ By boiling oil ▪ Strangulation ▪ Drowning ▪ Mutilation ▪ As human torches ▪ By freezing ▪ By being shot with a gun ▪ By poison ▪ Thrown over cliffs ▪ Thrown into pits 	→	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Participation in Christ's suffering and death ▪ Martyrs looked upon as heroes of faith ▪ They are also heroes of the Christian Church ▪ Significance in the growth of the Christian Church

Fig 1: Conceptual Framework of Martyrology and its Significance in Christian faith (designed by the researcher – Johnson N Mbugua)

The areas outlined in the conceptual framework above were obtained from the works of numerous authors and were extremely useful in the construction of the framework. In particular, Sauer and Howell (eds), 2010 give valuable views on suffering and martyrdom. On page 40 they indicate that suffering for Christ's sake is a fundamental characteristic of the church that remains true to the faith (1 Thes 3:3; 2 Thes 3:12).

Other relevant comments by Sauer and Howell (eds), 2010 includes:

“...participating in his suffering but also in his glory” (Col 1:24) (pg. 57) “...in some places persecution has led to the multiplication of the church...” (pg. 60) “...there will be no more death, or mourning, no crying or pain...” (pg. 63) “...those who remain faithful, await the Crown of Life... (Re 2:10b, cf Jes 1.12) (pg. 63). Also they observe that “Jesus the Messiah who humbled himself to a criminal's death on the cross...” (pg. 65).

Other additional assertions by Sauer and Howell (eds), (2010: 64) which provided valuable insight were:

God is honoured both by the life and by the death of his witnesses. "If we live, it is to honor the Lord. And if we die, it is to honor the Lord. So whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord" (Rom 14:8). Our bodies are our instruments to honor God. We are to offer them to God as living sacrifices, as a spiritual worship (Rom 12:1) of a life committed to serving him, even to the ultimate point of literally laying down our lives for him. Just like Paul who trusts that his life will bring honor to Christ, whether he lives or dies (Phil 1:20; Acts 20:24, 21:13). Paul is the prime example for honouring God in weakness, insults, hardships, persecution and difficulties. For in the midst of all the weakness of his messenger, God has space to show the strength of his grace and power (2 Cor 12:9-10).

Austin (1983:60) provides numerous and valuable aspects on this issue as follows: Chief among the charges was that the Christians refused emperor worship, which undermined the religious foundations of the state and was therefore treasonous. Of course, they also renounced and opposed all heathen worship. Since they had no images, and did not believe in the Roman gods, they were charged with being atheists. They preached "foolish and unreasonable" doctrines, such as the incarnation, resurrection, and worship of a crucified Jew. Thus they injured certain trades that were dependent on idolatry. In addition, they earned dislike and mistrust by their aloofness from society. Because of a misunderstanding among non-Christians about *Agape* they were accused of promiscuous immorality. Because of a similar misunderstanding about the Lord's Supper, they were accused of cannibalism. They were often blamed for natural disasters such as earthquakes, floods, famines, and pestilence. They were criticized for professing to know more of life and reality than the learned philosophers.

Austin (1983:60-61) goes on to assert that non-Christian society expressed its opposition to the Christians through social ostracism, oral discussions, injury to position and business, literary attacks, and personal persecution. The persecutions, carried out by various officers of the Roman government, involved confiscation of property, banishment, imprisonment, labour in the mines, torture, execution by crucifixion, fire and wild beasts. Those who were Roman citizens were executed by the sword.

Another author whose contributions were very useful included Wiseman (1958) who indicates that some Agikuyu martyrs were killed by the sword and

strangulation (page 16, 34 and 46). Other Christians were shot with a gun (page 20, 22 and 30). Wiseman (1958) also advises that some Christians were drowned (page 43 and 44).

A most useful source was J.L González (1984) who gives a comprehensive report on martyrdom. González (1984:26) advises that, "Peter was in Rome during Nero's persecutions and that he suffered martyrdom in that city". González goes on to say "we are told that he was crucified according to one version upside-down and this seems to agree with the otherwise obscure words in John 21:18-19."

Making reference to a first century pagan historian by name Tacitus, González (1984:35) narrates the chilling persecution of the Christians by Emperor Nero:

Before killing the Christians Nero used them to amuse people. Some were dressed in furs, to be killed by dogs. Others were crucified; still others were set on fire in the night, so that they might illumine it. Nero opened his own gardens for these shows, and in the circus he himself became a spectacle for he mingled with the people dressed as a charioteer or he rode around in his chariot.

González (1984:44) narrates how Polycarp was burnt alive. On page 47 of his book there appears a mosaic (picture) depicting the legend of forty martyrs who froze to death. The pagan historian Tacitus (Annals 15:44) mentioned above is also mentioned to by Ferguson (ed) (1990:713).

Ferguson (ed) (1990:712-719) provides another comprehensive coverage of persecution and resulting martyrdom of the early Christians. On page 712 he depicts the martyrdom of Perpetua and Felicitas. On page 714-716 we note the betrayal of Christians by insiders. Also to the arrest, torturing, killing, dying in prison of Christians. Additionally loss of property, refusal to sacrifice, blame on Christianity for deterioration of the economy, requirement for all to sacrifice on pain of death or forced labour, surrendering of the Scriptures and mutilation.

All the above were useful in the designing of the framework. Other useful sources that were used as they had relevant valuable information include Irvin and Sunquist (2005); Boer (1976); Spivey and Smith (1974); Langley and Kiggins (1974). Others include Harrison (ed) (1975); Leon-Dufour (1978); Richardson (1969); Ferguson (1988); Douglas (ed) (1978) and Eiselen (1929:pgs 1295, 1338, 1366, 1388).

The main aim of this study was to discover what really led to the faith portrayed by the Agikuyu Christians who became martyrs during the Mau Mau period in Kenya. The above conceptual framework was useful in guiding this study. This is because history has revealed that various Christian martyrs in all ages have freely faced death as outlined in the framework. Misunderstanding of Christian beliefs led to failure to understand why the Agikuyu Christians could not take the oath. As a result, the Agikuyu Christians stand to remain firm in their faith during the Mau Mau period led to torture and death mostly by execution by the sword and strangulation.

In this study, note was taken of the importance of martyrdom throughout the Christian era which is emphasised by the theological concepts used to interpret it (Ferguson (ed) 1990:413).

Additionally, it was established that martyrdom is part of the Church's nature even in Kenya, since it manifests Christian death in its pure form as the death of uncompromised faith, which otherwise is hidden in the ambivalence of all human events. Also, this study showed and confirmed that vast numbers of martyrs have freely undergone this death in the Church in all ages and thus attests to the supernatural origin of the Church (Rahner and Vorgrimer 1965:275-276).

1.14 Research Methodology

A qualitative research approach was used in this study. The qualitative or interpretive research approach is the most appropriate when the principal aim of research is to expose hidden realities, knowledge, and experiences (Patton 1980:9-15). The main method used was to conduct interviews with the families of known martyrs as well as with those Christians who lived through the Mau Mau period especially in areas where the Mau Mau were particularly active. Surviving pastors and elders especially those who are well versed in the relevant church history, particularly pertaining to the Mau Mau period, were interviewed. A thorough literature analysis of books, church records, as well as government records from this time-period was conducted in addition to other relevant documents such as material from the Kenya National Archives.

1.15 Thesis Overview

Chapter One primarily sets the research topic in context. It introduces the concept of Christian martyrdom, looking at its earliest beginnings and paying special attention to African martyrdom. The topic under consideration, *Agikuyu Christian Martyrs: An Exploratory Study of the Faith of Selected Agikuyu Christian Martyrs During the Mau Mau Period in Kenya (1952 – 1960)*, is then introduced by assessing the objectives of the study as well as delineating the specific areas to be considered when investigating the faith of selected Agikuyu Christian martyrs. This topic was guided by the specified research questions and the research methodology which focuses on the qualitative approach.

Chapter Two represents literature review, which is organised as shown under introduction of Chapter Two.

Chapter Three discusses research methodology. It focuses on important theoretical dimensions of qualitative study generally, the case study and the in-depth individual interviews as utilized in this study. This chapter also provides the schema for data collection and analysis.

Chapter Four represents the findings of the study and analysis of the data obtained.

Chapter Five includes a summary and conclusion of the study with the aim of showing how the study relates to the research questions and objectives.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

In order to understand the faith of selected Christian martyrs among the Agikuyu during the period 1952 to 1960, it was necessary to revisit the whole history of martyrdom within the Christian faith. On the other hand due to the historical structures involved, matters of faith cannot be handled in isolation; this is because there are other factors that contributed to the phenomenon. Therefore, the researcher was convinced that issues to do with the integration of each specific historical event, and the social, economic and political climate of that time, together with the church's teaching concerning the subject involved, should be addressed. It was from Christian teachings, beliefs and practices that the Agikuyu concept of martyrdom arose. In view of the above argument, various categories of relevant and related literature were examined in this chapter. These are:-

a) History of martyrdom in relation to Christianity

- Martyrdom among the Jews.
- Christian martyrdom in the Roman Empire.
- Nature and aspects of martyrdom.
- The place of faith in Martyrdom Theology.

b) Christianity and martyrdom among the Africans

- Africa south of the Sahara.

c) Christianity and martyrdom in Gikuyuland

- The Agikuyu people.
- The Agikuyu, colonial politics and Christianity.
- Origin of Mau Mau.
- Declaration of a State of Emergency (1952-1960).
- Significant socio-political and religious factors in Gikuyuland during this period.
- A brief discussion of the Mau Mau movement.
- The Mau Mau oathing and Agikuyu Christian martyrs.

2.2 History of Martyrdom in Relation to Christianity

2.2.1 *Martyrdom among the Jews*

The first Christians were conditioned to expect persecution even before they experienced it. Among the Jews, the prophets such as Isaiah had proclaimed that the faithful would suffer at the hands of the unrighteous, even as the atonement for their sins (Isa. 53). Even within Judaism, there were a number of events such as the Maccabean revolt of 167 BC, where Jews were persecuted due to their faith in God. Suffering in persecution was the willing sacrifice made by the righteous for the sins of the unrighteous (2 Macc. 7:32-37) (Ferguson (ed) 1990:712).

Isaiah himself was martyred. According to tradition dating from the second century AD., Isaiah was martyred by King Manasseh. Justin Martyr (ca. AD 100-165) wrote that Isaiah was sawed (see Fig. 1 (page 28), column 4) asunder with a saw (cf. Hebrews 11:37) (Walvoord and Zuck (eds) 1985:1029).

Such acceptance and expectation of persecution had become entrenched in Jewish tradition by the time Jesus began his ministry (Ferguson (ed) 1990:712).

Seeing himself as a servant reminiscent of the figure in Isaiah 53 (Matthew 20:26-28), Jesus Christ predicted persecution as indicated by King:

Christ, in the Gospel of St. Matthew (chap xvi.), on hearing the confession of Simon Peter, who first openly acknowledged him to be the Son of God, and perceiving the secret hand of his Father therein, answered again; and alluding to his name, called him a rock, upon which rock he would build his church so strong, that the gates of hell should not prevail against it. In these words three things are to be noted: first, that Christ will have a Church in this world; secondly, that the same Church should be mightily impugned, not only by the world, but also by the powers of hell; and, thirdly, that the same Church, notwithstanding the efforts of the devil, should continue (King (ed) 1968:11).

Jesus himself died a martyr's death (see Fig. 1 (page 28), column 4) at the instigation of the Jewish establishment, led by the High Priest Caiaphas, with the cooperation of the Roman governor Pontius Pilate (Ferguson (ed) 1990:712-717).

The first Christians should therefore not have been surprised that they were persecuted, if they remembered the words of Christ: "The servant is not greater than his Lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you" (John 15:20).

2.2.2 Christian Martyrdom in the Roman Empire

For the first three hundred years of its existence, Christianity was bathed in the blood of martyrs.

The Roman Empire era saw an intensification of Christian persecution (see Fig. 1 (page 28), column 3) and martyrdom. Christian persecutions in the Roman Empire can be divided into three periods namely: Jewish persecution of Christians from Jesus' death to the Great fire in Rome A.D. 64; the second period being the Roman persecution instigated by society, (A.D. 64-250), and the third period being the Roman persecution initiated by the Government (A.D. 250-313) (Austin 1983:60-66).

In the first period of persecution, Christianity appeared as a sect within Judaism which was a legal religion in the Roman Empire. Jewish religious authorities considered the new group to be their responsibility, a view with which the Roman authorities generally agreed. Christians lived with the ambiguity of toleration by Rome and persecution by Jewish authorities. The Jewish persecution consisted of considerable harassments (Acts 4-5) and a few deaths (Acts 6-8) for example that of Stephen (Austin 1983:60-66).

We learn from Ferguson (ed) (1990), Irvin and Sunquist, Vol. 1 (2005), Boer (1976), González (1969), Spivey and Smith (1974), Austin (1983), Langley and Kiggins (1974) and numerous other Christian historians about early Christianity that the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, instigated by Jewish authorities and ratified by the Roman governor, was a foretaste of the double-edged sword Jews and Romans lifted against the Christians. The New Testament records the violent reaction of Judaism toward those they perceived as the blasphemous defectors of the Jesus sect, but by the close of the New Testament the persecutions were taken over entirely by the Roman Empire (Austin 1983:59-60).

The Roman government generally tolerated foreign religions that were no danger to morality and discipline. Since national religions were respected, Christianity at first received shelter under Jewish privileges, but after the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70, it became clear that Christianity was a distinct religion from Judaism and was judged by Rome on its own merits or demerits (Austin 1983:60).

Chief among the charges was that the Christians refused emperor worship (see Fig. 1 (page 28), column 1), which undermined the religious foundations of the state and was therefore treasonous (see Fig. 1 (page 28), column 1). Of course, they

also renounced and opposed all heathen worship. Since they had no images, and did not believe in the Roman gods, they were charged with being atheists (see Fig. 1 (page 28), column 1). They preached “foolish and unreasonable” doctrines, such as the incarnation, resurrection, and worship of a crucified Jew. Thus they injured certain trades that were dependent on idolatry. They earned dislike and mistrust by their aloofness from society. Because of a misunderstanding (see Fig. 1 (page 28), column 1) among non-Christians about *Agape* they were accused of promiscuous immorality. Because of a similar misunderstanding about the Lord’s Supper, they were accused of cannibalism. They were often blamed for natural disasters such as earthquakes, floods, famines, and pestilence. They were criticized for professing to know more of life and reality than the learned philosophers (Austin 1983:60; see Fig. 1 (page 28), column 1).

Non-Christian society expressed its opposition to the Christians through social ostracism, oral discussions, injury to position and business, literary attacks, and personal persecution (see Fig. 1 (page 28), column 3). The persecutions, carried out by various officers of the Roman government, involved confiscation of property, banishment, imprisonment, labour in the mines, torture (see Fig. 1 (page 28), column 3), execution by crucifixion, fire and wild beasts (see Fig. 1 (page 28), column 4). Those who were Roman citizens were executed by the sword (Austin 1983:60-61).

Thus as shown above, Christian martyrs were persecuted not so much for their faith or religion but for being different from other members of the empire and also from being regarded as indifferent and withdrawn from the mainstream structure. The Agikuyu Christians were viewed with suspicion on almost similar grounds. However, there were differences especially as Christianity to the Mau Mau was the religion of the colonialists and adherents of Christianity were regarded by the Mau Mau as collaborators of the colonialists. Ironically, Christians during the Roman Empire were persecuted for not adhering to religions condoned by the state. As already explained, one of the objectives of the study was to discover the truth behind the Christian martyrdom during the emergency period (1952-1960) among the Agikuyu (see Fig. 1 (page 28), column 4).

The persecutions during the Roman era began almost accidentally, at least spontaneously, but soon became a planned and legal policy of the state. From local situations, the persecutions spread out to include the vast territory of the empire, affecting Christians wherever they were found.

During those early centuries of Christianity in the Roman Empire some of the persecuting emperors, such as Nero, Domitian, and Galerius, were tyrants, and others, like Trajan, Marcus Aurelius, Decius, and Diocletian, were not motivated by hatred of Christianity but rather by a determination to maintain law and the power of the government. Some of the ineffective and inconspicuous emperors of this period, Commodus, Caracalla, and Heligabalus, were relatively favourable to the Christians. One thing that all the emperors had in common was a basic ignorance of the true nature and character of the new religion (see Fig. 1 (page 28), column 1).

During these dark and bloody days, (Austin 1983:61-70; Langley and Kiggins 1974:253-275; Irvin and Sunquist, Vol 1, 2005:69-71; González, Vol 1 1984:80,81&97) the persecuted Christians had reason again and again to recall the words of their Lord: "Behold, I send you forth as lambs among wolves" (Matthew 10:16); Jesus also said:

they shall deliver you up to councils; and in the synagogues ye shall be beaten: and ye shall be brought before rulers and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them...brother shall betray the brother to death, and the father the son; and children shall rise up against their parents, and shall cause them to be put to death. And, ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake; but he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved (Mark 13:9-13)

The predictions or prophecy were being proven correct by the events that Christians were witnessing during this era of Christianity. This is especially proven true by the history of Christian martyrdom during the first four hundred years of Christianity. Many Christians were persecuted during this period and oftentimes by or with the knowledge of their friends, neighbours, relatives, those of their faith, tribes or races. Similarly, during the Mau Mau persecution most of the Christians are said to have been killed or tortured with the knowledge of or by their friends, neighbours or relatives.

Christian reactions to the persecutions fell into several categories. Those who suffered death were called *martyrs*. Those who survived great punishments and remained true to the faith were called *confessors*. Many, however, renounced Christ, some permanently and some temporarily, to escape torture; they were known as the *lapsed*. Those who bribed officers or purchased certificates stating they had

sacrificed to gods were called *libellatici*. Some delivered up copies of Scriptures and came to be scornfully identified as *traditores* (Austin 1983:61).

On April 30, 311, the ailing Emperor Galerius issued his famous Edict of Toleration, admitting failure in the restoration of Roman religion and allowing Christians freedom 'to live as Christians.' Emperor Maxentius followed suit in Italy. Taking charge in the east after Galerius' death, Emperor Maximinus Daia [311-313] made attempts at counteracting Emperor Galerius' edict. His attempts were however ineffectual. Ultimately, Maximinus gave up and issued notices declaring toleration of Christians (Ferguson (ed) 1990:716).

Persecution of Christians by the Roman Emperors came to an end after "conversion" to Christianity of Emperor Constantine (312-337) who had identified his cause with the Christian God, jointly with his ally in the east Licinius (308-324), drew up on June 13, 313, a notice of toleration similar to that of Galerius, *The Edict of Milan*. This notice stipulated freedom of religion, meaning that there were no restrictions on religion, and the return of church property to Christians. Christianity became a religion supported by the imperial treasury and by a converted emperor, Constantine.

Finally, Emperor Theodosius I (379-395) proclaimed Christianity the official religion of the empire, considered heresies legal offences, proscribed sacrifices and, for all practical purposes, suppressed paganism (Austin 1983:59-60).

Persecution (see Fig. 1 (page 28), column 3) became thereafter the prerogative of the victorious church against those deemed heretics and schematics. This included the martyrdom of hundreds of Christians in Europe who did not follow the form of Christianity prescribed by the church or by the State especially during the Renaissance and subsequent years and even in the Americas, Africa and Asia.

It should be noted that throughout Christian history, there have been periodic instances of persecution (see Fig. 1 (page 28), column 3) and martyrdom. The Reformation in Europe had its share of martyrdom. Also in Africa, for example, the martyrdom of twenty African Christians and their Portuguese Jesuit priest, Don Gonçalo da Silveira, during the occupation by the Portuguese in the sixteenth century in Monomotapa area which was an African kingdom in present day Mozambique (Davidson 1964:147-173; Wills 1967:33-35).

2.3 Nature and Aspects of Martyrdom

Martyrdom and martyrs have several distinguishing characteristics. According to the *Encyclopaedia of Early Christian History* (Ferguson (ed) 1990:578) martyrdom was a grace not given by God to everyone. Since martyrdom was a bit capricious as to whom it came, there was a strong sense that one was chosen by God for this experience (A. cyp. 2.1; Ps.-cyprian, Laud, mart. 23; Hippolytus, Dan. 3.26). To be a martyr was to be counted worthy by God (M. Polyc. 14; 20; M. Iren. 5.2). For this reason, Christians were not to rush into martyrdom (M. Polyc. 4).

Ferguson (ed) (1990:578) goes on to state that martyrdom was an imitation and participation in the sufferings of Christ (M. Polyc.1; 6ff.; Origen, Mart. 42), who was present with the martyr, strengthening him or her (M. Polyc. 2; Eusebius, H. E. 5.1.22). The Holy Spirit filled the martyrs (M. Agap. 1) and inspired them with eloquence (Hippolytus, Dan. 2.21). Martyrdom was a fight with the devil and his demons (Pass. Perp. 10.14), in which victory was won by the martyr (Eusebius, H. E. 5.1.23, 27; Origen, Mart. 42). Athletic imagery was common. The martyr was assured of an eternal reward, whereas denial brought eternal punishment (M. Polyc. 2;11; Tertullian, Mart. 2; M. Pion. 20.5). Martyrdom was described in Eucharistic (M. Polyc. 14) and baptismal (Pass. Marian. Et Jac. 11.10) language. As a baptism of blood, it brought forgiveness of sins (Tertullian, Bapt. 16; Origen, Mart. 30). Martyrdom was a witness to the state of its subordination to the God of heaven (Pass. Jul. 2.5f.; 3.3; A. Max. 2.1) and to unbelievers of the truth of the gospel (Pass. Perp. 1; Pass. Fruct. 6.3).

Ferguson (ed) (1990:578) also delineates commonly held beliefs among the Christians about martyrs and confessors: because those who confessed Christ before the authorities were viewed as possessing the Holy Spirit (on the basis of Luke 12:11f.), the martyrs-to-be and confessors were believed to have the power to forgive sins and reconcile penitents to the church (Tertullian, Mart. 1; Pud.22; Cyprian, Ep. 26; Eusebius, H. E 5.2.5). This created problems in discipline and organisation, so that Cyprian and other bishops had to insist on the prerogatives of the bishop in determining reconciliation with the church. The confessor was considered to belong to the rank of the presbyters without benefit of ordination (Hippolytus, Trad. ap. 10).

All the above beliefs and characteristics seems to have been held and applied in the lives of the Agikuyu Christian martyrs.

The belief that Christian martyrdom was holy and ordained by God led to many people desiring to die as martyrs. The spirit of seeking martyrdom, of glorifying suffering, and the understanding of what is meant by attaining to the presence of Christ were adopted by many Christians during persecutions and caused much unnecessary suffering. For example, in the letter of Ignatius to the Romans, he begs them to do nothing that will prevent him from being thrown to the lions when he reaches Rome. When he is thrown to the beasts and the lions refuse to attack him he indicates that he will force them to do so, saying “May nothing visible or invisible prevents my reaching the presence of Jesus Christ. Fire and cross and struggles with wild beasts, crushing of bones, mangling of limbs, grinding of my whole body, wicked torments of the devil (see Fig. 1 (page 28), column 4) Let them come upon me, only let me reach the presence of Christ” (Boer 1976:82; Placher 1983:48).

The most famous of early Christian martyrdom was that of Bishop Polycarp whose account is recorded in the now famous *Martyrdom of Polycarp* (Ca. 155/6?). That letter was the first documentation of the use of ‘martyr’ in a technical sense. The document is important also because the parallels to the death of Jesus (see Fig. 1 (page 28), column 2) and the Biblical language and imagery (e.g the “cup of Christ” for death) influenced the theology of martyrdom. Polycarp’s death was set forth as an example of “martyrdom according to the gospel”: he did not volunteer for martyrdom but when arrested, he faced his accusers and death with dignity and firmness (Ferguson (ed) 1990:580).

Narrating in detail the martyrdom of Polycarp, González (1984:44) explains that when Germanicus, an elderly Christian was brought to trial, he was told that he should take into account his old age and recant, rather than submit to torture and death. To this he responded that he had no desire to continue living in a world where the injustices that he had just seen took place. And, to show how deeply he meant his words, he called the beasts to come to him and kill him. This act of courage further aroused the anger of the mob, who began to shout: “Death to the atheists!” (that is, those who had no visible gods) and “Bring Polycarp!”

González goes on to indicate that when the old bishop learned that he was being sought, he followed the advice of the flock, and hid for several days. But after having changed to another hiding place, and still having been discovered, he

decided that his arrest was the will of God, refused to flee any further, and calmly awaited those who came after him.

It is noted further from González that when the proconsul who presided at his trial tried to persuade him, urging him to think about his advanced age and agree to worship the emperor. When Polycarp refused, the judge ordered him to cry: “Out with the atheists!” To this Polycarp responded by pointing at the crowd around him and saying: “Yes. Out with the atheists!” Again the judge insisted, promising that if he would swear by the emperor and curse Christ he would be free to go. But Polycarp replied: “For eighty-six years I have served him, and he has done me no evil. How could I curse my king, who saved me?”

González indicates that when the judge threatened him with burning him alive, Polycarp simply answered that the fire that the judge could light would last only a moment, whereas the eternal fire would never go out. Finally, we are told that after he was tied to the post in the pyre, he looked up and prayed out loud: “Lord Sovereign God...I thank you that you have deemed me worthy of this moment, so that, jointly with your martyrs, I may have a share in the cup of Christ...For this...I bless and glorify you. Amen.”

González (1984:44) advises that many years earlier, Ignatius of Antioch had advised young bishop Polycarp regarding his duties as bishop and the need to be firm in his faith. Now Polycarp showed himself a worthy hearer of Ignatius’ advice, and a follower of his example. González asserts that one significant note in this entire account is that Polycarp fled and hid when he learned that he was being sought. We are also told in the same account that a certain Quintus, who offered himself as a martyr, weakened at the last moment and abandoned the faith. This was important for those early Christians, who believed that martyrdom was not something that one chose, but something for which one was chosen by God. Those who were so chosen were strengthened by Christ, who suffered with them, and for that reason were able to stand firm. Their firmness was not of their own doing, but of God. On the other hand, those who ran forward and offered themselves for martyrdom – the “spontaneous” – were false martyrs, and Christ would desert them.

The above account of the martyrdom of Polycarp is reproduced in full as it portrays the manner of persecution that early Christians endured, their courage, their total faith and trust in Jesus Christ. Also their desire and eagerness to be with Christ. Just as the Agikuyu Christian martyrs during the Mau Mau episode (1952-1960).

Ferguson (ed) (1990:577-579) goes on to indicate that the martyrs were the heroes of the church (see Fig. 1 (page 28), column 5). The greatest number of Christian martyrs was during the persecution under Decius and Diocletian in the third and fourth centuries. In the third century, the cultic (see Fig. 1 (page 28), column 5) veneration of martyrs spread throughout the church. With the coming of peace to the church in the fourth and fifth centuries, honour for the martyrs knew no bounds and the cult of the martyrs was fully established. Similarly, since martyrs were no longer being made by persecution, cultic veneration began to be freed from its original limitation to martyrs and extended to monks and bishops as spiritual martyrs. The Theology of Origen fashioned the ideal of interior martyrdom, which was influenced by the ascetic piety of the late antiquity and which became the spiritual basis of Christian monasticism. Origen's idea of interior martyrdom was principally for the faithful to live only for God, living a simple life of self-denial, an ascetic life. The faithful were advised to live a very holy life, devoid of any sin or earthly temptation. Origen practised what he preached. It is worth noting that he castrated himself to avoid being tempted by women or anything to do with sex! Literal martyrdom continued to be experienced by Christians in Persia during the fourth and fifth centuries but within the Roman Empire, heretics now experienced persecution from the Christian rulers (Ferguson (ed) 1990:576-579).

The authentic accounts of martyrdom come in two literary forms: the *passions* or *martyria* and the *acta* or *gesta*. The passions are accounts of the last days and of the death of the martyr. The earliest two are letters from the home churches of the martyrs, setting forth their conduct and death as models for others: The martyrdom of Polycarp, depicting a "*martyrdom according to the gospel*," that is, according to the will of God. Also, quite notable is *the Passion of Perpetua and Felicitas*, because it incorporates the diary of Perpetua and the account of the *vision of Saturus* written by himself. The acts of the martyrs recount their trials before the authorities. One of the earliest documents of Christianity written in Latin is the *Acts of the Scillitan Martyrs* from North Africa (Ferguson (ed) 1990:577).

The reality of Christian martyrdom and the difficulty of facing it led to the writing of exhortations to martyrdom: Tertullian, *To the Martyrs*; Origen, *Exhortation to Martyrdom*; Cyprian, *To Fortunatus*; Pseudo-Cyprian, *Glory of Martyrdom*. These were written to encourage Christians facing persecutions (Ferguson (ed) 1990:577).

In his *Apologeticum*, Tertullian wrote to those who were persecuting the Christians, "We multiply whenever we are mown down by you; the blood of Christians is seed." This affirmation of ultimate victory is often rendered as: The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church. Jerome wrote that "the church of Christ has been founded by shedding its own blood, not that of others; by enduring outrage, not by inflicting it. Persecutions have made it grow (see Fig. 1 (page 28), column 5); martyrdoms have crowned it." (Ferguson (ed) 1990:577).

Therefore, through the ages it has been consistently recognized that rather than being extinguished by persecution, faith has often been strengthened and established in martyrdom. The "firm foundation" which Peter envisions is to follow a time of suffering (1 Peter 5:10). Thus it is appropriate that the dark night of the persecutions be linked together with the dawning of new strength and hope for survival (Ferguson (ed) 1990:577). It would be of great benefit to the church in Kenya if it could be proved that faith in Kenyan churches would be rekindled (see Fig. 1 (page 28), column 5) by the martyrdom that took place against Agikuyu Christians during the Mau Mau period.

The annual commemoration of the death of a Christian martyr included from the fourth century the preaching of a panegyric on his or her life. The eulogies delivered by the great bishops and preachers of the fourth and fifth centuries established a new branch of classical epideictic literature. Basil, Gregory of Nazianzus, Gregory of Nyssa, Ephraem the Syrian, John Chrysostom, and Asterius of Amasea were among the great panegyrists. Drawing on the fragments of tradition available, they used hyperbole to enhance the virtues of the martyrs. Since the goal was edification, they exhorted the hearers to the imitation of the martyrs (Ferguson (ed) 1990:577).

History became even more subordinate to "edification" in the legends and lives of the saints that came to be written. Jerome's *Life of Paul the Hermit*, for example, may not have had much more than the name of the hero as its historical core. The panegyrists had extended the honours originally reserved for martyrs to bishops, ascetics, and virgins, and this was continued in the hagiographical texts (Ferguson (ed) 1990:577).

2.4 The Place of Faith in Martyrdom Theology

The most well-known definition of faith is found in the epistle to the Hebrews 11. Hebrew 11:1 states that 'Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see'. It was for this that the ancients were commended. Walvoord and Zuck in their *Bible Knowledge Commentary - New Testament* note that the writer of the epistle to the Hebrews 11: 35-38 moves from faith's obvious triumphs to what seemed to be its defeats. But those defeats were only apparent not real. Those who were tortured (see Fig. 1 (page 28), column 3) and refused to be released did so because their sufferings would lead to a richer and better resurrection experience. So the readers might also endure suffering staunchly and expect reward in the physical world. Indeed all manner of physical suffering (vv. 36-37, 38b cite about a dozen kinds of persecution) has been endured by people of faith, as well as ostracism (see Fig. 1 (page 28), column 3) from their homes and countries, treatment that the readers might also have to endure (Walvoord and Zuck (eds) 1985:809), as did the Agikuyu martyrs during the Mau Mau period.

The chapter ends with verses 39-40 where the writer points out that the Old Testament faithful he had spoken of had not yet realized their eschatological hopes by the time of their death. This fact shows that God had planned something better for them and us. It is indeed "better for us" that the future hopes they strove towards be delayed, since only thus could believers enjoy the recent experience of becoming companions of the Messiah who leads them to glory. As a result, the perfecting (cf. 10:14; 12:23) of the Old Testament worthies – that is the realization of their hopes – awaits all believers (Walvoord and Zuck (eds) 1985:809).

On faith, Christians facing martyrdom might also have believed and applied in their lives the message of Luke 9:23: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it".

The researcher hopes that those Christians also believed and applied in their lives Luke 12:8- 9: "I tell you, whoever acknowledges me before men, the Son of Man will also acknowledge Him before the angels of God, but he who disowns me before men will be disowned before the angels of God".

It is to be hoped that the Agikuyu martyrs applied the above in their lives and that they will be rewarded at the resurrection.

2.5 Christianity and Martyrdom among the Africans South of the Sahara

Martyrdom was not confined to only early Christianity, neither to the Mediterranean basin, Europe or Asia. For example when Christianity reached Africa south of the Sahara, a lot of persecution against Christians took place as John Mbiti (1969:239) observes that “Already modern Africa has contributed, as did the ancient church, in Africa its share of Christian martyrs, particularly among the Baganda and Gikuyu, as well as isolated individuals all over Africa, who have found a faith for which they died or are prepared to die if need be...”

A practical example that can explain the claims made by Mbiti that Africa had a significant number of martyrs, is set forth by J.F. Faupel in *African Holocaust* where he describes the nature of the Ugandan Martyrdom. Faupel (1969:1), for example, notes that “between 1885 and 1887, within ten years of their first knowledge of the Catholic Faith, twenty-two boys and men of Uganda laid down their lives for their religion....all were victims of Mwanga the King of Buganda and majority were natives of that country.”

Regarding the Baganda martyrs it is interesting to note that Mwanga had a few years earlier converted to being a Muslim. He then introduced foreign practices in his palace, chief among them was the practice of homosexuality. Mwanga had those 22 boys martyred for their refusal to have anything to do with the immorality being practised in Mwanga’s palace especially indulgence in sodomy. The killing of these 22 boys and the more than 200 other Christians who were killed within a space of a few days after the said boys’ martyrdom was due to the fact that majority of Baganda Christians would not compromise their faith (see Fig. 1 (page 28), column 2) and indulge in immorality especially homosexuality (Marsh and Kingsworth 1996:124-125; Were and Wilson 1969:152). It would be of great help if note of this could be made by the Anglican Church worldwide.

In general, Christianity has grown through challenges in every society throughout the history of its existence, and Africa is not an exception. The blood of its faithful has become the seed of its growth (see Fig. 1 (page 28), column 3). Christianity has not only shaped African religions and theology but more so, it has

had a great impact on African education, politics, economics and civilisation in almost all its aspects (Were and Wilson 1969:152).

Kenya has also had its share of martyrdom. W. B. Anderson indicates that Rabai produced East Africa's first Christian martyr in modern times. Anderson narrates how one Christian teacher was martyred. In 1882, some Arabs dragged the Christian teacher, David Koi and placed him in a hole they had just dug. They then buried Koi up to his neck. One of the Arabs then cut off David Koi's head (see Fig. 1 (page 28), column 4). Anderson notes that David Koi died almost two years before the Buganda martyrs (Anderson W.B 1977:16).

Another example of martyrdom in Kenya occurred in 1934, in Musanda village, Western Kenya where Mango, the founder of *Dini ya Roho* (Religion of the Spirit) Church, was murdered in his house together with his deputy, Lawi, and seven of their followers. Mango's house in Musanda was set alight by a mob of several hundred (Anderson A. 2001:154-155). Mango's death has been viewed by his followers as martyrdom. It is to be noted that Mango had in 1917 been appointed a deacon of the Anglican Church by Archdeacon Owen of the Church Missionary Society (CMS). However, Mango fell out with Owen when in 1933 Mango founded a prophetic ministry and began to prophesy the end of colonial rule. The land on which Mango's house was built, was claimed by the Luos who wanted Mango (a Luhya) to vacate. Interestingly on 17th January 1934 Owen reported at the local church that Mango had broken from the Anglican Church. Five days later, Mango was burnt (see Fig. 1 (page 28), column 4) to death inside his house by a mob (Anderson A. 2001:153-155).

2.6 Christianity and Martyrdom in Gikuyuland

In Gikuyuland, there have also been several martyrs even long before the period of emergency (1952-1960). For example at Gatundu, one Joseph Ng'ang'a, founder of the Arathi Church (*Watu wa Mungu* Church) later named Akūrinū (Kenyatta 1938:277-278) church was shot dead (see Fig. 1 (page 28), column 4) with his two aides in 1934 by the British – when, according to reliable sources, Ng'ang'a was conducting prayers. Ng'ang'a was killed partly because, according to Karanja, the Akūrinū had by 1930 adopted and carried bows and arrows as a symbol of their fight against evil and the devil. The colonial government's attempt to disarm

the Akūrinū led to serious confrontations which eventually ended up with the government having Ng'ang'a hunted down and killed (Anderson 2001 157-158; Rosberg Jr. And Nottingham 1966:327; Karanja 1999: 155).

The largest number of Agikuyu Christian martyrs was witnessed during the state of emergency (1952-1960) when several hundreds of Christians throughout Gikuyuland were persecuted and oftentimes executed for their faith.

2.7 The Agikuyu People

Who are the Agikuyu and what is known about them? According to Kenyatta, Karanja, Leakey, the Anglican Church Diocese of Mt. Kenya South, Macpherson and other writers and sources, the Agikuyu before the Emergency Period (1952-1960) and indeed before colonisation (1900) and earlier, were like many African societies, a dynamic and mobile people. The society consisted of immigrant groups who first settled in Muranga, Kenya in the sixteenth century and later spread northwards into Nyeri and southwards into Kiambu. The southward movement was still in progress at the time of the British occupation of Kenya. As they sought to come to terms with their new environment, the immigrants evolved a highly innovative and adaptive culture.

Agikuyu social organisation was based on two fundamental principles: those of kinship and age-grading. The principle of kinship found its direct expression in *mbarĩ*. This was a descent group extending to six or seven known generations, mostly named after its founder and jointly owning a piece of land (Karanja 1999:1-3; Kenyatta 1938:1-19).

Agikuyu before occupation by the Europeans were deeply religious. Their religious beliefs may be classified into two separate but related areas. The first was belief in *Ngai*, the High God, who was regarded as omnipotent and omniscient. The other Agikuyu religious belief was that of ancestral spirits (Leakey Vol 3 1979:1076-1078; Mbiti 1969:239; Kenyatta 1938:232-238,266-267).

This brief résumé of Agikuyu traditional religion is given to indicate what the Agikuyu believed in before Christianity was introduced to them especially in reference to the following sections.

2.8 The Agikuyu, Colonial Politics and Christianity

The history of Christian missionary work to the Agikuyu has it that in 1900 Sir Arthur Hardinge, the first Consul General of British East Africa, implored the Church Missionary Society (CMS) to commence missionary work among the Agikuyu . As Hardinge puts it: “the natives are troublesome and the Consul-General thinks that the missionary work would help to pacify them!” (ACK 2001:10-11)

Shortly after reaching Fort Smith (Kikuyu), McGregor, who was sent by the CMS to Gikuyuland in 1900, reported to the London office that he thought that the Africans before the encounter with the missionaries had no concept of God. This was the popular predominant notion of the day. The Africans were regarded by some foreigners as barbarians, ignorant and a people without history and culture. Europeans ignored the African perspective on the universe and their religious orientation. Thus, to the missionaries the Africans were an open field with nothing and only the Europeans could ‘positively’ introduce culture to them. This notion was later proved wrong as it was discovered that most Africans had their religion and worshipped the true God. However, it is notable that the qualities, attributes and the nature of the Agikuyu that McGregor negatively reported about later helped the missionaries in the process of evangelization (ACK 2001:10-11; Karanja 1999:3-12).

Within a given period of about 30 to 40 years, other mission stations organized by various denominations, including various Protestant Evangelicals and Roman Catholics, were established in various parts of Kenya and in this case, Gikuyuland. Christians, together with the Christian churches, grew in numbers. However, there was a lot of racial tension within the church as the Whites dominated all senior positions, while at the same time, their White brothers were obtaining by force land that belonged to some of their African Christian followers (Karanja 1999:3-12).

Karanja contends that by 1945, which was a few years before the outbreak of the Mau Mau revolt, most of Gikuyuland had made contact with Christianity while a lot of Agikuyu tribal customs and values had been affected and in extreme cases altered or done away with altogether by the teachings of Christianity (Karanja 1999:10-11). Meanwhile, Kenyatta had earlier in 1938 written his famous book, *Facing Mount Kenya*, where he indicated that in the early days of European colonisation, the White missionaries brushed off and ignored African religion and

culture. The missionaries demanded from the Africans among other things that the followers of Christian faith must accept monogamy as the foundation of the true Christian religion, and give up dances, ceremonies, and feasts, which were fundamental principles of the African social structure. Faced with this acute problem, the African, whose social organisation was based on polygamy, which harmonised his communal activities in tribal affairs, set about to look for the evidence in the Bible. In the Bible, the African failed to find evidence to convince him about the sacredness of monogamy. On the contrary, he found that many of the respected characters in the Book of God, *Ibuku ria Ngai* (as the Bible is translated in Gikuyu), are those who have practised polygamy. On this evidence, the African asked for further enlightenment from his missionary teacher, but the missionary ignored all these queries, with the assumption that the African was only suited to receive what was chosen for his simple mind, and not ask questions (Kenya 1938:271; Karanja 1999:1-12).

The African, faced with these problems and seeing how his institutions had been shattered, looked again in the Bible. There he found polygamy sanctioned by the personal practice of great Biblical characters. Thereupon, he decided that in order to please his Creator, he would select his Christian names for baptism from among those characters who had practised polygamy. Thus, names like Solomon, David and Jacob became popular, for the African believed that with names such as these, he could follow the examples of these ancient teachers without committing any sin. However, he was shocked to find the missionary again condemning him as a sinner for fulfilling that which is sanctioned and condoned in the Bible (Kenya 1938:271; Karanja 1999:1-12).

Additionally, in Kenya, and as pertained to almost the whole of the then colonised Africa, conditions provided by White dominance led to the feeling among Africans of dispossession. The lack of other outlets for leadership, the effect of being dispossessed of their land, leading to being rendered squatters in lands that were originally theirs; the effect of the migrant labour system in separating men from their families; and the strict controls on black residence and movement produced the commonwealth of the likes of Isaiah Shembe (in South Africa), Ignatius Legkanyane, Joseph Nganga and Harry Thuku (in Kenya) and other numerous attempts to build 'Zion which is our home' (Dowley 1977:626).

The first and second World Wars had tremendous effect on the socio-religious political outlook of the African and in this case the Agikuyu. For example, Karanja indicates that the boundaries, which formerly insulated the Agikuyu from the wider world, were weakened through increased interaction with other communities. He indicates that World War I took thousands of Agikuyu men beyond their boundaries. Karanja also indicates that out of the 150,000 Africans recruited in Kenya to fight in the war, nearly 24,000 lost their lives (Karanja 1999:88-89).

The two World Wars opened as it were the eyes of the Africans and made them realise that the White man was as human as themselves. After the wars, the Africans could not comprehend why the White man should be treated differently and given privileges denied to the Africans. Worse, the Agikuyu ex-service men could not entertain any more the fact that the White ex-servicemen were rewarded with land which ironically was obtained by dispossessing the Africans including the traditional land of some of the African servicemen. Africans demanded for their rights and this eventually culminated in the Mau Mau uprising. Moreover, this wartime experience led Africans to question the state of race relations in Kenya and the basis of European privileges (Frost 1978:68-69). The questions and the demands Africans were raising proved unstoppable.

2.9 Origin and Cause of Mau Mau

According to Kenyatta in his book *Suffering Without Bitterness*, the fundamental origin of Mau Mau were reflectively summarised by Tom Mboya in his book *Freedom and After*. Kenyatta notes that Tom Mboya in that book observes that the Mau Mau was a result of the Africans' economic disempowerment by the colonial powers, exacerbated by their lack of representation in government. He notes in particular the sensitive issue of land. The Europeans formed a very small minority of Kenya population and yet had acquired huge tracks of the productive land through ignorance, deliberate or otherwise of land ownership system of Africans which usually did not involve fencing or even occupation, let alone formal documentation. As a result the Africans had been squeezed out of their ancestral land. Kenyatta goes on to note Mboya's observation that social inequalities as a result of racial discrimination was also another reason for the rise of the Mau Mau (Kenyatta 1968:102-104).

Discrimination and ill-treatment of the Africans by the Europeans resulted in bottled anger and frustration, which culminated in the Mau Mau uprising. Additionally, it is not surprising that this dissatisfaction with the state of affairs would spread to distrust and even hatred of Christianity which to the Mau Mau was firmly associated with the Europeans as they had been the ones who brought Christianity to Kenya (Kenyatta 1968:102-104).

In a nutshell, the Mau Mau war was mainly caused by: economic and social inequalities brought about by racial discrimination in employment, education, health sectors, in government and grabbing of African productive land.

2.10 Declaration of a State of Emergency (1952-1960)

Tension in Kenya between the colonial government and their African subjects had been rising but it is not clear what triggered the declaration of emergency in Kenya on 20th October 1952. The State of Emergency lasted longer than expected as it was not lifted until 10th January 1960. When the colonial government declared a State of Emergency, it presumed then like most Europeans and some African Kenyans that Mau Mau was a seditious movement which through its oaths had made adherents morally unfit to live in society until they confessed and were rehabilitated (Rosberg Jr. And Nottingham 1966:83; Kershaw 1997:1; Were and Wilson 1969:270-271; Furedi 1990:118-119).

During the State of Emergency, the Kikuyu peasantry were rounded up from their scattered homesteads and made to live in villages which could be defended and policed. People suspected of collaborating with the insurgents were roughly interrogated in an attempt to get information. Those in charge of the detention camps for captured insurgents used brutal methods to break the psychological resistance of their inmates – that is, their clinging to ideas that the government considered dangerous. Such was the nature of the secret warfare. By the end of 1955 the back of the revolt had been broken, at a cost to Britain of more than £20 million and some hundred British lives. The casualties of the civil war between insurgents and collaborators among the Agikuyu were officially estimated at 3000 but were reckoned by some reputable observers at ten times that number (Oliver and Atmore 2005:227).

Isichei gives the official figures of those killed during the war as 12,590 Mau Mau and 58 Europeans. Isichei further notes that the Agikuyu were profoundly divided, and some fought on the government side. The loyalists have been variously identified as Christians (to whom traditional oaths were unacceptable), and the more prosperous (these were often the same people, and 'Chiefs' tended to be educated Christians). Sandgren points out that Christians themselves were divided: the Independents supported Mau Mau, the adherents of mission churches, the government (Isichei 1995:259). It would be worthwhile to establish the truth of this statement whether or not the independent supported Mau Mau while the adherents of mission churches supported the Government.

One theory as to what triggered declaration of emergency was the killing by the Mau Mau in October 1952, in Kiambu, of Chief Waruhiu Kungu (Rosberg Jr. And Nottingham 1966:83; Kershaw 1997:1; Were and Wilson 1969:270-271; Furedi 1990:118-119). Frost notes that Chief Waruhiu was not only an advocate of a constitutional progress towards the attainment of African aims but he was a devout Christian. Frost goes on to say that Waruhiu and his family could not partake of the oath which would have been abhorrent to him. He further indicates that Waruhiu's Christian faith was the dominant factor in his life and that there were great numbers of Agikuyu peasants who were no less devout and loyal to the precepts of their religion (Frost 1978:148). Interestingly Mau Mau regarded Waruhiu as a collaborator of the colonialists. The issue of who among the Agikuyu Christians killed by the Mau Mau and worth being regarded as a martyr thus proves difficult.

Were and Wilson (1969:274-275) note that "mopping-up" operations continued until early in 1960, when the Emergency was declared to be over. What were the results of over seven years of violence and bloodshed? A protest had been made - a protest which left absolutely no doubt in the minds of the constitution-planners that Kenya would tolerate nothing but majority rule. The fact that the British Government had to intervene with money and troops to suppress Mau Mau had shown that the Europeans of Kenya were unable to control the internal situation; the responsibility for a permanent settlement now rested squarely with Britain. Whether independence would have come as soon as it did without Mau Mau or whether the principle of multi-racial government might have triumphed, are matters over which people still disagree. The cost was enormous. In terms of money the cost of the conflict to both Britain and Kenya was fifty million pounds. In terms of human life, ten

thousand Mau Mau, two thousand innocent Kikuyu, one thousand Government troops and fifty-eight European and Asian civilians perished. In terms of human suffering the cost cannot be measured; tens of thousands of Africans herded into reserves and detention camps, thousands of prisoners suffering harsh treatment and evil conditions, countless individuals living for years in fear of their lives, villages, clans and families divided into loyalist and Mau Mau factions. In addition to this one may add hundreds of Christians who were persecuted by the Mau Mau because of their faith. Yet, on the positive side, it can be said that all this suffering helped to make the Kenyan Nation what it is today.

2.11 The Socio-Political and Religious Scene in Gikuyuland (1952-1960)

The process of westernization in East Africa which was characterized by the introduction of Christianity, a new monetary system, new political structures, literacy and other elements of Western culture, created social and religious change in the African society (Muga 1975:9). There was also social inequality and classes among the people. According to sociologists, social classes result from ethical dissimilarities and the subjugation of one group of people by an alien one, especially by means of military conquest. Thus by blending the two groups of people together, the powerful forms the dominant class, while the overpowered becomes the subjugated class (Muga 1975:7). The African people, to whom the Agikuyu belong, did not escape this kind of racial disparity. Writing on the plight of the Kenyan people in the face of British colonial rule, Richard Frost captures the racial disparity at that time. He comments: "racial tensions were caused above all by the European sense of superiority and by the desire of the better educated Africans to be accepted by Europeans as 'civilized' rather than backward tribal people and by a similar feeling of social slight on the part of the Asians" (Frost 1978:40). Such social inequalities and the struggle for the Africans to impress the Europeans, as well as to obtain favours, further divided the Africans. However, it was the quest to obtain independence that highly influenced the social-political and religious arena in most of the Kenyan communities.

This is so as evidenced by the close working relationships of leaders of the various tribes and countries of Africa. In Kenya leaders such as Gichuru, Oginga

Odinga, Ole Tameno, Sagini, Muliro and others worked in unison in urging for independence. African leaders as a whole worked for independence for the whole of Africa as indicated by Ogot and Ochieng who note that African nationalism in the fifties and sixties had one overriding aim: to obtain political independence. Kwame Nkrumah, correctly regarded as premier Pan-Africanist, impressed this point on young nationalists by urging them to seek the political kingdom and all else would be added unto them (Ogot and Ochieng (eds) 1995:7-8).

The Agikuyu response to the impending quest for independence was two-fold as Purcell (1983:89) observes: "There were those who believed that advance was best achieved by close cooperation with the government in order to learn the Whiteman's knowledge as a step to independence, and those who thought that subversion and acts of violence would best free them from the rule of the Europeans." Among those who believed that the best way to attain independence was through peaceful means that also included learning the Westerners' ways were some Agikuyu Christians. It was also observed that many Agikuyu Christians were afraid of getting involved in politics (Frost 1978:181), a fact that angered the rest of the political-religious minded African movements. However, the leading advocates for deviance and force was the Mau Mau group (Purcell 1983:89). The tension between these two groups resulted in many deaths (see Fig. 1 (page 28), column 4), especially of the Christians.

2.12 A Brief Discussion of the Mau Mau Movement

Mystery still shrouds the Mau Mau Revolt. As indicated by Furedi (1990:3-4), existing literature on the subject has a provisional character and cautiously stresses, "that more work needs to be done". In this vein, R. Buijtenhuijs (1982:1), the author of an essay on Mau Mau historiography argues, "it is my impression that although we *know* much more about Mau Mau today than we did ten years ago, we do not *understand* the phenomenon any better; indeed, perhaps we understand it less well." Furedi further argues that this problem of "understanding" is in small part due to the fact that students of Mau Mau are often looking for something that is not there (Furedi 1990:3-4).

There are a number of other reasons for the mystery that still surrounds Mau Mau. Unlike other liberation movements, such as those in Algeria or Zimbabwe, it

was “quelled” almost a decade before the formal transfer of power to an African government. By the end of 1954, the British colonial authorities had the situation more or less under control – nine years before Kenya achieved formal independence. During the interregnum, the colonial administration was able to construct what it considered a legitimate African leadership. The British administration and its moderate African allies, Furedi further notes, had a common interest in mystifying the Mau Mau revolt (Furedi 1990:3-4).

The colonial regime had every reason to make the issue obscure. Although the Declaration of Emergency in Kenya occurred in October 1952, the colonial government had been on the offensive for some time before. Throughout 1952, it had used exceptional measures to provoke and crush its militant opponents. Parallel to this police offensive was the public relations campaign aimed at presenting Mau Mau as a criminal organization. The colonial government went to great lengths to portray Mau Mau as an irrational force of evil, dominated by bestial impulses and influenced by world communism (Furedi 1990:3-4).

An illustration of this ideological campaign can be seen in the response of the colonial state machinery to an attempt by Granville Roberts to publish in Kenya an article on Mau Mau, just a few weeks before the Declaration of Emergency. Counter-insurgency experts were disturbed by his economic analysis of the roots of the Mau Mau (Kenya National Archives KNA (PO 3/129 ‘Unrest General’ Nos. 12-21). One argued that an emphasis on economic causes would “mislead” readers and complained that Roberts made “no mention of the main cause i.e. perverted tribalism” (Kenya National Archives KNA (PO 3/129 ‘Unrest General’ Nos. 12-21).

The colonial administration was very sensitive to any publications that made even a minimal attempt to investigate the social causes of the Mau Mau revolt. This from the colonialist point of view is understandable; as far as it was concerned, the world had to see Mau Mau as an illegitimate, perverted force. It is a testimony to the effectiveness of this campaign of criminalization that the irrational image of Mau Mau still endures.

Even when the Europeans who were generally inclined to support anti-imperialist movements left Kenya, they still looked upon Mau Mau as an unfortunate distorted product of colonialism. The post-independence governments of Kenya have also sought to bury Mau Mau. The Kenyatta regime, composed of politicians and civil servants, not to mention the educated African elite hostile to Mau Mau, tried to

portray the revolt as a relatively minor episode. Kenyatta himself took the lead by emphasizing the theme “forgive and forget”. This historical amnesia is entirely understandable: if the issues surrounding Mau Mau are clarified, then the nationalist claims of the present Kenyan establishment stand open to question (Furedi 1990:3-4).

Failure by the British to encourage the social investigation of the causes of the Mau Mau is understandable given the colonial mentality prevailing in the whole of colonised Africa. However, it is baffling why, after Kenya attained independence, very little study on Mau Mau has since been undertaken or encouraged. There seems to be a suppression of the memory of Mau Mau. Kenyatta himself in his speech on the Kenyatta Day of 1963 said:

There have been murmurs here in Kenya about the part played by one set of people (here he was referring to the Mau Mau), or another set of people, in the struggle for Uhuru. There has been talk of the contribution made, or refused, by this group or that. There has been – at times – vindictive comment, and a finger of scorn has been pointed at some selected race, or group, or tribe. All this is unworthy of our future here (Atieno-Odhiambo and Lonsdale 2003:271).

Kenyatta’s regime wished for the memory of the Mau Mau uprising to be suppressed. However, Kenyatta did not fully succeed as evidenced by literature on the Mau Mau that ensued. Odhiambo and Lonsdale support this contention in their book where they indicate that Kenyatta’s plea notwithstanding, most Kenyan writers during this period and after, committed themselves to preserving the memories of “hatreds and difficulties” that Kenyatta had implored them to underrate, ignore and forget. Novels such as Meja Mwangi’s *Carcase for Hounds* (1974) and *Taste of Death* (1975), Goodwin Wachira’s *Ordeal in the Forest* (1968) and Charles Mangua’s *A Tail in the Mouth* (1972) proved a major contrast to the colonial settler fiction in the heroic manner in which they depict the forest fighters, and in the way they “set out to enlist the reader’s sympathy for the fighters by projecting a very different image of them”. Far from what the colonial settler writers give us in their narratives – the Mau Mau as barbaric murderers - the Kenyan writers have no doubt in their minds that, in spite of the fact that the Mau Mau were defeated militarily, they won the moral battle and displayed great fortitude to free their country (Atieno-Odhiambo and Lonsdale 2003:271). Other notable Kenya writers on Mau Mau include: Furedi 1990;

Kanogo 1987; Wanjau 1988; Maloba 1993 and Kershaw 1997. Others including the distinguished writer Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1964, 1966, 1976, 1987) who has written several books, some touching on the Mau Mau episode.

2.13 The Mau Mau, Oathing and Agikuyu Martyrs

A few books have been written on the Mau Mau but extremely little on Agikuyu Christian martyrs during the period of Emergency [1952 – 1960]. As earlier indicated, not much has been written or studied on the Agikuyu people, on the Mau Mau, and in the case of the focus of this study, on the Agikuyu martyrs. Among the few writers who have mentioned the fate of the Mau Mau martyrs is Frost (1978:181) who says, "...the strength of Christianity was being shown at that time by the innumerable Kikuyus who suffered martyrdom for their refusal to take the Mau Mau oaths."

As much as the Mau Mau revealed itself as signs of a peasant revolt fuelled by European discriminations, its course was more political than social. Frost (1978:136) observes this clearly when he states: "Mau Mau was not a peasant revolt in its inspiration and leadership, but was an attempt by a section of the Agikuyu politicians to seize back their land and power, for which they needed the militant help of the peasants." Nevertheless, the Mau Mau war had a religious side of reverting back to traditional religion, but the political ideology was a strong incentive. Frost (1978:136), citing Professor Sorrenson in his valuable book on Gikuyuland says, "The conflict over land lay at the bottom of much of the unrest in the Kikuyu reserve during the post-war years and which was to develop into the Mau Mau revolt – as much a civil war between the Kikuyu as a revolt against the colonial government." There might be some truth in this contention that the Mau Mau revolt was much a civil war as indicated in *The Hutchinson Popular Encyclopedia*, "attacks on other Kikuyu (about 1000 killed by the Mau Mau), were far more common than on Whites (about 100 killed)..." (Upshall (ed) 1990:512).

Since Christianity was a religion introduced by the Europeans, all Christians were seen as tools of colonial administration by the Mau Mau activists. Thus, as Kingsley Martin (cited Frost 1978:141) reports, the Mau Mau war became a civil war mainly fought between those who were determined to maintain the ancient religion of Mount Kenya and those few Agikuyu who had embraced Christianity and were seen

to be Western minded (Frost 1978:141). The only way they could prove this wrong was by renouncing their Christian faith (see Fig. 1 (page 28), column 1) and joining up with the Mau Mau civil warriors and fighting against the White man's rule. Maloba indicates that the Mau Mau warriors cannot be said to have had baseless accusations or suspicions about Agikuyu Christians. This is because according to him most Christians were opposed to the Mau Mau and were used by the White colonial government against the movement. Maloba (1993:71-72) explains:

Although violence and intimidation had greatly aided the spread of the oath by silencing overt resistance, nonetheless small pockets of resistance to the movement and its tactics were starting to emerge in Central Province by August 1952. To be sure, such pockets of resistance in these emotionally charged times were few. They were formed initially by orthodox Christians heavily supported by White missionaries....this group proved to be a stubborn and resilient opponent to Mau Mau.

The Christians' opposition to the Mau Mau was heightened by what was famously called the "joint action" reached by all orthodox Christians, both Protestant and Catholics, at Kiambu (Maloba 1993:71-72). In this meeting, all Christians who attended agreed to oppose the activities of the Mau Mau because they felt that the activities of the Mau Mau were anti-Christ and against the government which is ordained by God to maintain law and order. The Church also agreed to expel all those who had joined the movement together with their families from the Church lest they influence others. The Church also, as Maloba (1993:71-72) observes, was even ready to fight (physically) against the Mau Mau if the Government failed. However, reflecting on John Karanja's observations, the refusal of the Agikuyu Christians to support the Mau Mau movement could have been masterminded by the European missionaries. Karanja observes that European missionaries did not want their adherents to get involved in political movements, especially those the missionaries did not support. Karanja (1999:179) indicates that "missionaries were against their adherent's participation in movements which they did not sponsor mainly because of two reasons. First, such movements challenged missionary claims to speak for Africans. Secondly, the movements were often critical of missionary activity."

Furedi (1990:141) sees the religious side of the Mau Mau as only an ideology that was aimed at reaching the desired political end-result rather than a form of religious devotion. Furedi's argument lies in the statement that the central religious

practice of the Mau Mau was the oathing system. He argues that even though the oathing was done according to the typical Mount Kenya religious practices, there was a cultural dislocation between the traditional Agikuyu religious adherence and the Mau Mau. He further claims that “the significance of oathing lay not in the ritual but in the existence of a widespread social consensus. As long as this consensus prevailed the oath could symbolize unity of purpose” (Furedi 1990:141).

The researcher differs with Furedi on this as the Mau Mau oathing system as will be shown later differed considerably with the traditional Kikuyu oathing system. Again as indicated by Kenyatta (1938:225) and others, according to tradition, women were not to take any oaths; yet the Mau Mau forced even the women to take the oath.

Thus, as much as the Mau Mau oaths made the movement look religious, the same oath was a tool for driving a secular purpose. With this in mind, it can be said that the Agikuyu Christians who were killed, as in the early Christian martyrdom, were not killed because they were merely Christians but because their Christian faith and ethic was seen to defy a unity of purpose. Furedi’s views, as observed above, show that the main aim of the Mau Mau movement was not to revive the Mount Kenya religious and cultural practices, but to bring the whole of the Agikuyu community together for one political cause, and its leaders were not willing to be deterred by any religious conviction, not even Christianity.

Frost observes that the Mau Mau was not the only “revolt” group that clothed itself in a religious garment. He notes that there was a close affinity in ideological make up between the Mau Mau and the *Dini ya Musambwa* founded within the Bukusu community in Western Kenya. However, he maintains that unlike the Mau Mau, the *Dini ya Musambwa* adherents were not violent to African Christians (Frost 1978:151). The underlying factor, therefore, is that colonial frustrations led to religious discontent and new political masterminded religious movements sprouted up with the aim of leading the people to liberation whatever the cost.

During the Mau Mau uprising, Frost (1978:151) observes that “the strength of Christianity was being shown at that time by the innumerable Kikuyus who suffered martyrdom (see Fig. 1 (page 28), column 2) for their refusal to take Mau Mau oaths.” At this juncture, the parallels and contrasts between the traditional Gikuyu and Mau Mau oaths must be made clear. According to Kenyatta, among the traditional Agikuyu there were three important forms of oaths which were most feared, morally

and religiously, that no one dared to take them unless he was perfectly sure and beyond any doubt that he was innocent or that his claim was genuine. One kind of oath was called *Muma*. This was taken generally on minor disputes. The symbol of the oath consisted of a lamb which was killed and the contents of the stomach mixed with herbs, water, and a little of the blood of the animal. The compound was put into a wild banana leaf (*icoya rea ihendu*) and then placed in a small hole dug into the ground; the medicine man (*mun-do mugo*) tied a brush of twigs and leaves from a ceremonial shrub called *mugere*. Then the party concerned in the case knelt down towards the hole. The *mun-do mugo* dipped the brush into the mixture and lifted it to the mouth of the kneeling man, who took the oath by licking the brush, saying: "If I tell a lie, let this symbol of truth kill me. If I falsely accuse anyone, let this symbol of truth kill me. If the property I am now claiming is not mine, let this symbol of truth kill me" (Ken-yatta 1938:223-224).

There were two other forms of traditional oath and which according to Ken-yatta were more serious. The second form of oath was termed *koringa thenge* (to swear by killing a male goat). This form of oath was administered in a big case with a lot of property, involving more than one or two persons. A small male goat was brought before the *kiama* (council of elders) and the parties concerned were asked to take an oath by breaking all the limbs of the animal. The male goat was spread on a rock in a lonely and uncultivated field, then a ceremonial stone (*ngangae*) was handed in turn to each individual who proceeded to break the bones of the male goat saying: "if the property I am now claiming is not mine, let my limbs be smashed to smithereens like the bones of this male goat. If I am claiming more than what is due to me, let my family group be crushed like the bones of this male goat" (Ken-yatta 1938:223-224).

The third form of traditional oath termed *gethathi*; this was mostly in criminal cases such as murder or stealing. The symbol of this oath consisted of a small red stone with seven natural holes on it. The stone was put on a small stick which was planted on the ground. The elders stood at a small distance facing the spot where the oathing ceremony was being prepared. The place had to be a barren ground not likely to be cultivated, for no one would allow the ceremony to be performed on or near his cultivation. It was feared that the evil of the oath symbol might spread to a cultivated crop and destroy it. When the preparation was done, the accused persons were asked to pass several grass stalks (*ngoonda*) through each hole seven times,

at the same time swearing to the truthfulness of their statement which they had made or were about to make. While this was taking place all the elders present put a piece of creeper (*mokengeria*) on their ears to protect themselves against the evil of the symbol of the oath.

Women were excluded from taking any of these oaths. Their husbands or sons took their place, for the women were not considered fit mentally and bodily to stand the ordeal which involved not only the individual going through it but the whole family group (Kenyatta 1938:223-225).

The Mau Mau oathing was generally adopted from such traditional Gikuyu oaths, which governed the moral and religious aspects of the Agikuyu. However, the practice of oathing by the Mau Mau was different and a distortion of the real purpose of traditional oathing. As briefly narrated in Chapter One there were three modes of oathing administered by the Mau Mau. According to Roberts, the first form consisted of a lamb which was killed and the contents of the stomach mixed with herbs, water, and a little of the blood of the animal; the administrator of the oath then placed a loop made of grass over the head of the initiate and over the hands of the initiate; the mixture described above was then placed in the hand of the initiate and a banana leaf containing the mixture was circulated round the head of the initiate seven times; the administrator then held the banana leaf before the initiate and described the oath they were about to take. The initiates repeated the oath; after the initiate had repeated the terms of the oath, the banana leaf was rotated seven times around his head and he was made to put his tongue to the blood and earth on the banana leaf seven times; the initiates were then explained what would happen to them and their families should they abandon or betray the course. There was only one punishment for doing so – death to such a person and his entire family (Roberts (ed) 1954:15-33).

There were two other types of Mau Mau oaths which were more advanced and serious than the one just described. Those two oaths namely the *Batuni* oath and the advanced oath have been mentioned and their importance given in Chapter One of this thesis.

From the above it is thus clear that those who administered the oath to the Mau Mau initiates did not adhere to the traditional way of administering the oath (Frost 1978:149).

Most Christians could not go through what they considered to be anti-Christian and especially the swearing. Nor could they forsake Christianity, kill, steal, betray their employers, lie and cover up for murderers as required by the Mau Mau. They were thus viewed as being in opposition to the political agenda of the Mau Mau and declared enemies of the movement (Maloba 1993:60-72). The refusal to denounce their Christian faith and join the Mau Mau movement led to martyrdom of many of the Agikuyu Christians.

Numerous Christian faithful were persecuted during the Mau Mau uprising for their uncompromising stand (see Fig. 1 (page 28), column 2) against taking the Mau Mau oaths. One of the literature available on such martyrdom include the book *Kikuyu Martyrs* by E.M. Wiseman, which gives stories of many Agikuyu who were executed or persecuted for their faith and for their refusal to take the oath or obey Mau Mau biddings. Among the stories given includes that of Andrew Kaguru who was martyred in the presence of his wife. His wife – Alice – was slashed severally and became unconscious but survived. Another chilling story was of another Christian Agikuyu woman called Rahab Ngendo. She was tortured but adamantly refused to take the oath, telling the Mau Mau that “‘I am not afraid to die and go to God,’ said she (Rahab Ngendo), even with the spade and things for digging a secret grave near. ‘I have drunk the Blood of Christ and how can I return to drink your goat’s blood?’” (Wiseman 1958:45).

All the three had very young children but they were willing to die and leave their children as orphans rather than take the Mau Mau oath. St. Paul said, “I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus” (Galatians 6:17) just like Perpetua and Felicitas in the third century in Carthage who died for their faith and left infant children. As indicated in the case of Kaguru, his wife and Rahab Ngendo, three humble Agikuyu Christian adherents can also make similar claim to that of St. Paul (Wiseman 1958:45-46).

2.14 Summary

This Chapter in essence set into context the area of research. The history of Christian martyrdom from the earliest times was explored. Literature on the Agikuyu social, religious and political aspects during the Emergency period in Kenya was examined. Under particular consideration is the faith of the Agikuyu Christian which

seemed to conflict with the Mau Mau oathing procedure and thus led to martyrdom. The main focus of this study was to establish the source of the faith of such staunch Agikuyu Christians and attempt to solve the mystery as to what is it that constituted their faith such that they were not willing to give it up? (See Fig. 1 (page 28), column 2)

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the schema used for data collection and analysis in order to answer the research questions presented in chapter one. A detailed description of the design of the study and the methodology utilized is reflected. The samples studied as well as the sampling strategies are defended. The data collection methods and tools used are also explained, and a data analysis plan included. Ethical issues were also considered, so as to uphold the integrity of this research.

3.2 Research Method and Design

The research utilized a qualitative research approach. This research paradigm was chosen as it best suits the nature of this research, which was concerned with naturalistic phenomenon of human understanding, experiences and perspectives. This is because the qualitative approach to research is concerned with subjective assessment of human attitudes, opinions, beliefs and behaviour (Kothari 2004:5). The naturalistic phenomenon that was under study in this research was selected Agikuyu Christians' deep-rooted faith to the extent that even at the price of unbearable torture and loss of life itself, they were not willing to betray their faith.

The research strategy that was employed when carrying out this research was that of the case study method. This strategy was chosen because as Colin Robson (1993:179) says, "the study of individual cases has always been the major strategy in the advancement of knowledge about human beings." This method is also suitable to this research as it is an approach that is capable of examining the phenomenon under study in detail. It is also flexible, in the sense that it can be narrowed to focus on a specific aspect of the larger phenomenon under study, while at the same time its focus can be broadened to the whole of the phenomenon in this case numerous martyrdom during the Mau Mau war.

Qualitative research was also appropriate, as the data gathered was narrative and descriptive in nature since the study sought to explore how Christians, with specific reference to Mau Mau Agikuyu martyrs faced persecution; what martyrdom

meant to Christians then and now in Gikuyuland. The scope of the research had a descriptive and non-numerical way of collecting and interpreting information.

3.3 Population of Study

Since the approach of this research was that of a case study, and the case to be studied was that of the Agikuyu martyrs, it follows then that the population studied consisted of the Agikuyu Christians who faced persecution during the Mau Mau era. The exact number of those who were persecuted or martyred is unknown. However, as observed in the Literature Review, over ten thousand Mau Mau fighters, two thousand Agikuyu Christians, one thousand government troops and fifty eight Europeans and Asians perished during the Mau Mau uprising (Were and Wilson 1969:274).

The samples selected were based on the geographic structure of the areas in Kenya that were occupied by the Agikuyu during the Emergency Period from 1952 to 1960. This formed the 'universe' to be studied. From this total area of Kenya, sampling units were formulated. These units were based on the geographic structure of the areas that were affected. Thus, the units, from which the samples were obtained, included such areas.

3.4 Sampling Methods

Due mainly to the time that has lapsed since the Mau Mau persecutions and also the fact that many Agikuyu have since moved to new locations such as Nyandarua, Laikipia and Subukia, it was not easy to trace the families of those who were persecuted or trace where they were martyred as most witnesses have since died. It was affirmed that most of those who witnessed martyrdom are now deceased or very old and difficult to trace. This posed a challenge to the researcher in obtaining views and data from the few who are still alive or available. However, the researcher filled this gap by relying more on meta-analysis which is a research on documents or other writings available on this matter (Babbie 5th Ed 1989:204).

The researcher also utilized both purposive and snowball sampling, to strengthen the accuracy of his data. Under the purposive sampling, the researcher identified respondents who were thought to possess relevant information. Under snowball sampling strategy, the researcher identified seven people who had

information about the data that the researcher needed for this research. The researcher then interviewed these people, and after the interview, asked them names of other people in the target population who were likely to possess the same or deeper knowledge or information on the subject.

Categories of those interviewed:

Individuals	Focus Group 1	Focus Group 2	Total
34	15	3	52

Table showing those interviewed

3.5 Ethical Considerations

This research intruded to a great extent into the social lives of people and as a result, ethical obligations had to be considered. The researcher at all times endeavoured to seek informed consent from the target individuals and groups to participate in the research as an exercise of their own choice, taking care to eliminate or minimize elements of fraud, deceit, duress or similar unfair inducement or manipulation (Berg 2007:78). The researcher did this by attempting to seek consent in writing from some of those targeted for study, having explained to them the risks and benefits involved. However, none of the respondents signed the consent letter as all indicated verbally that there was no need for it as they were willing to be interviewed. Where the respondents were willing to take part in an interview session or filling up a lengthy questionnaire or schedule, their consent was then implied.

In a research of this nature, it is important to provide the subjects with a high degree of confidentiality. To provide confidentiality, some subject's real names have been changed to a pseudonym or case number when reporting data. However, where the respondents or subjects agreed to be quoted and their real names to be used, this has been done.

All human subjects participating in the research had a right to be informed about the research, and were made to understand the general nature of the investigation and, within reasonable limits, of their role in it. The researcher sought their voluntary participation, and were informed of the measures that the researcher would take to ensure confidentiality of data. The researcher sought and obtained their verbal consent to have their input used in the writing of this thesis. The

researcher also promised to give them the opportunity to review the write-up if they so chose, in order to minimize misrepresentation. At all times the researcher cautioned all respondents to bear in mind that what they told the researcher might be reproduced word for word in the thesis. They were therefore very careful and truthful of what they told the researcher.

Out of the 52 respondents interviewed, 23 of them were interviewed in English language while the rest numbering 29 were interviewed in Kikuyu language.

3.6 Data Collection

Data collection was carried out using two methods of data collection. These were in-depth interviews and content analysis.

3.6.1 *In-Depth Interviews*

It is clear that the nature of the topic under study and the study questions required a tailor-made instrument of data collection. There were many investigative requirements in this study for the proper information to be collected and interpreted. One of the best ways to gather the necessary data is through interviews. An interview is a carefully planned face-to-face discussion designed to obtain perception on a defined area of interest in a permissive non-threatening environment. The use of interviews is particularly appropriate to obtain relevant information from selected people regarding a specific experience, idea or event (Kumar 2000:124). The interview method was chosen because it enabled the researcher to obtain ideas and comments from the participants, who had first-hand information on the persecution of Agikuyu Christians during the Emergency period (Chandran 2004:114). It was also chosen on the basis that it allowed the researcher to ask for clarity on points that he deemed unclear, as well as giving the respondents an opportunity to seek clarifications from the researcher on questions that were not clear to them (Kumar 2000:124).

The best way to obtain information on those who were persecuted was to investigate the victim's living legacy, which is still alive within the society in the present day. Additionally, the researcher interviewed 36 people who were either part of the Christian movement then and were spared by the persecution, or the people

who witnessed those phenomena or have relevant and reliable information on the matter. Also interviewed were 16 people who were then with the Mau Mau.

The interviews were also a suitable way of engaging the people since the Agikuyu community gives value to oral literature more than it does to written literature. It is also a common thing for people within this community to come together and discuss certain issues. Conducting interviews with these respondents gave the researcher more information, than say, if respondents had been asked to fill out a questionnaire or writing out a response. Due to the value and practice of oral conversations within the community, the idea of face-to-face discussion led to less resistance from members of the community.

The researcher planned to have all the interviews tape-recorded. However, only one respondent agreed to be tape-recorded. The rest declined for reasons that the researcher did not pursue. In the process of interviewing, the researcher was also taking notes. The format of the research instrument that was used is shown under Appendix I.

The researcher conducted the interviews on familiar ground for them, either at the premises of the respondents, or at a place of their choosing.

At first, the researcher had no idea how many people he would interview. Eventually he was able to interview 34 individuals and 18 people in the focus group discussions, making a total of 52 persons. The researcher also studied thirty-five (35) martyrs based on the information from the Kenya National Archives, St. Paul's University Library in Limuru, Kenya and the All Martyrs (St. James) ACK Cathedral, Murang'a, Kenya.

3.6.2 Content Analysis

Content analysis involves systematically describing the form and content of written and spoken material. It covers both the content matter and formation (the structure and type of the material) (Sommer and Sommer 1997:169). In the case of this research, there were numerous articles and books written by academicians, theologians, social scientists, political scientists and other authorities, on a whole range of issues particularly on Mau Mau and subsequent persecutions. In addition, extensive data is available on Mau Mau in the local universities and the Kenya National Archives. All these materials formed the basis for content analysis.

To obtain the necessary or pertinent information on Agikuyu martyrs, the researcher visited the Kenya National Archives; the All Martyrs Cathedral, Murang'a; St. Paul's University, Limuru as well as Daystar University Library. The researcher also perused and critiqued various books, journals and newspaper articles on Agikuyu martyrs, that were available both in the local libraries, on the internet, and in the archives.

3.7 Instrument Pre-testing

The researcher pre-tested the aforementioned schedule (Appendix I) on at least two of those people who claimed to recall vividly the circumstances surrounding those who were martyred. These were a born-again Christian lady aged 90 years and an ex Mau Mau freedom activist aged 70 years both of Iganjo Village, Gatanga Division of Thika District (formerly in Muranga) who were interviewed on Sunday 30th August 2009. Both witnessed persecution of Christians by the Mau Mau. The lady's home was burnt to the ground by the Mau Mau in 1952 when the Mau Mau were after her husband who was a staunch Christian and had refused to take the oath. The activist was a young boy who was used by the Mau Mau as their errand boy for ferrying food to the forest and for information. But young as he was he confirmed having taken the Mau Mau oath. It should be noted that Iganjo village is about 5 kms to the east of the Aberdare Forest which was one of the main Mau Mau activists' hide-outs.

From the findings and pre-testing, the researcher established that the schedule was appropriate for the research and that the said instrument would generate enough data and information to enable the researcher collect and analyse the data effectively.

3.8 Data Analysis

The research purpose and the research questions guided the researcher when analysing the data. The researcher also kept a database for interview schedules containing data obtained from the respondents. The researcher also kept data collection schedules containing researches on archival material as well as the one taped interview with a prominent church leader. A contact summary was made immediately after the completion of data collected. In the contact summary, the writer

reviewed the written field notes and that one taped interview. The researcher then answered each question addressed briefly to develop an overall summary of the main points in the field contacts.

After making the contact summary the researcher read again all the information gathered from all the respondents and notes on the archival research. The researcher also listened to the taped interview and made notes. The next step was to develop a coding system that put into consideration the themes emerging from the data collected. After the classification, the coded material was placed under the major themes or topics. After synthesizing the data the researcher formulated a coherent analysis of the data, hence generating meaning and understanding. Then the researcher wrote his findings in line with the themes identified and also in line with all the research questions. The data compiled was explained in light of the literature reviewed in Chapter Two. Then in the final stage the researcher dwelt at length in bringing to light from the research findings the source of the strong faith witnessed from the Agikuyu martyrs during the emergency period.

Finally the researcher double checked all the information gathered during the research and what had been written on this by the researcher and established that what had been written by the researcher matched what had been obtained from the respondents and the Archives. It was on that basis that the researcher drew his conclusions, summaries and recommendations.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present the research findings of an exploratory study of the faith of selected Agikuyu Christian martyrs during the Mau Mau period in Kenya (1952-1960). It includes an analysis of interviews conducted by the researcher either with individuals, groups as well as archival research.

The central research question was to find out what made the Agikuyu Christians become so strong in their faith to the point of not fearing to die when put to test during the Mau Mau period in Kenya (1952-1960).

The secondary research questions whose findings would be of paramount importance in understanding the circumstances that led and contributed to the strong faith of those martyrs were to find out:-

- a) How did the political, social and religious factors contribute to the strong Christian commitment among the Agikuyu?
- b) What justification did the Mau Mau fighters give for persecuting Christians among the Agikuyu?
- c) What role did the Christian martyrs among the Agikuyu play in the growth of Christianity especially in Kenya?
- d) Can Christians in Kenya and Africa today apply the same faith principles portrayed by Agikuyu Christian martyrs and other Christian martyrs throughout history?

4.2 Demographic Data

The researcher interviewed a total of 52 persons who had first-hand knowledge of the happenings during the emergency period. Those interviewed included men, women, church leaders, laity and also, those who were on the Christian side as well as those who were with the Mau Mau. At times the researcher was forced due to circumstances to interview respondents in groups. The 52 persons who were interviewed were of different Christian faiths including Presbyterian Church of East Africa (P.C.E.A), Anglican Church of Kenya (ACK), Roman Catholic (RC),

Methodist, Akūrinū (Arathii church, also called Watu wa Mungu Church) members of Independent churches such as ACC&S and even those who did not belong to a specific church. Their ages ranged between 60 and 90.

Only one person (lady) born after 1952 was interviewed because she had very relevant and reliable information relating to that period (1952-1960). This lady was Ven. Faith Njoki Irungu – Archdeacon Njumbi Parish, ACK, Diocese of Mount Kenya Central, who is the vicar in charge of the church where (3) three Agikuyu martyrs are buried. Her information and assistance was deemed of vital importance to this research because as a custodian of the church where the three martyrs are buried, she had vast knowledge on the martyrdom under whose legacy the church stands.

4.3 Evidence of Martyrdom from the Field

In carrying out this research, one assumption made was that some Agikuyu Christians were persecuted and killed during the Mau Mau period in Kenya because they could not compromise their faith. This assumption was validated through first hand information obtained from the field.

Information gathered during the research on the Agikuyu Christians martyred because of their faith during the Mau Mau period (1952-1960) includes:-

- Some (25) twenty five church members referred to in a letter dated 8th May 1953 by Rev. R.C.M Calderwood, church minister, Church of Scotland Mission (C.S.M.), Kikuyu, Kenya colony, in which he indicates:

We have names of at least 25 church members, men, women and children including one ordained minister, who have been murdered – a few of them in Kambui area, but most of them in South Nyeri and Forthall. The church recently held special services in memory of those martyrs, and made a collection for the benefit of the widows and orphans (Papers of Rev. Canon Peter Bostock (CCK/R/1/76, Kenya National Archives, Nairobi).

- On the main entrance to the ACK All Martyrs (St. James) Cathedral, Murang'a, the researcher read on 10th February, 2010, a plaque on that door that gives the names of Agikuyu Christian martyrs. Martyrdom of those named was confirmed by Bishop John Mahia-ini and Canon Muthama of ACK, Diocese of Mount Kenya Central.

The plaque presented in 1986 by the children of Ven. Canon Heshborn Mwangi to All Martyrs (St. James) Cathedral, Murang'a, Kenya reads:

<p style="text-align: center;">KIKUYU MARTYRS – MURDERED DURING THE NATIONAL LIBERATION IN KENYA</p> <p>Mr. Gadson Mwangi his wife – Waceke</p> <p>Mr. Andrew Kaguru</p> <p>Mrs. Mary Wangeci</p> <p>Mr. Ernest Maina</p> <p>Mrs. Penina Zakayo</p> <p>Mr. Absalom Maina</p> <p>Mrs. Peris</p> <p>Mr. Karume</p> <p>Mr. Muiruri</p> <p>Mr. Mbiu</p> <p>Mr. Micobio</p> <p>Mrs. Rachael Nyambura Kirugumi</p> <p>Mrs. Grace Wacoro Nduhiu</p> <p>...plus 33 others</p>
--

- Three Agikuyu Christian martyrs are buried in the cemetery of ACK St. Stephen's Church Njumbi, Muranga. Given on Appendix III is what is written on their tombstones.

The researcher visited the ACK Njumbi cemetery on Wednesday, 10th February 2010 and confirmed from witnesses the martyrdom of the three martyrs namely Genson Gacigi and his wife Rebeka Waceke Genson and Mary Wangeci Joshua.

The murder of the three named martyrs is fully described in great detail in Mrs. E. W. Wiseman's book – *Kikuyu Martyrs* in which we learn that Genson and his wife Rebeka were murdered in their home but their young son was spared. According to Wiseman, Rebeka was seven months pregnant during the martyrdom. Rebeka is claimed to have told her murderers: "I am not ready to take the oath. Even if you kill me I shall bear this child in heaven." The Mau Mau had asked her to take the oath to save her unborn child and also to save her husband. This act portrays the cruelty of the Mau Mau and also the faith of the Agikuyu Christians who were not ready to compromise their faith no matter what.

The martyrdom of 15 Agikuyu martyrs during the Mau Mau uprising of 1952-1960 is well documented by E. M. Wiseman (1958:7-46) in her book '*Kikuyu Martyrs*.' Those Agikuyu martyrs include the above three. Those martyred were opposed to traditional Mau Mau oaths and beliefs, whose practices they deemed inappropriate for a Christian. The Christians had a strong faith in the new-found religion to the point that they were ready to die for it. They saw their former religious practices as outdated and not in line with God. To them death was a quick way of going to God but not a loss of life. Wiseman narrates in her book how a white (confessor) martyr by name Rehab Ngendo, faced her persecutors with courage and demonstrated faith in God, declaring,

"I am not afraid to die and go to God," she said... "I have drunk the Blood of Christ and how can I return to drink your goat's blood?" They hoisted her up by the neck, slowly strangling her three times but she adamantly refused to take the oath. Daylight was breaking and luckily they let her go alive but very traumatised with a swollen neck.

On 12-02-2010 a respondent spoke of a Christian by the name of William Macharia who in 1954 had refused to take the Mau Mau oath because of his Christian faith. He was apprehended by the Mau Mau and buried up to the neck. Similarly his wife was told to take the oath to save her husband but she refused to take the oath telling them that she belonged to Jesus (*Gatũrume*) and no amount of intimidation would make her take the oath. Luckily, the Mau Mau spared them both. The respondent narrating this incident in Kikuyu said,

"Mwaka wa 1954, gũkũ gwitu Kiria, mũrũ wa ithe witu, William Macharia tondũ wa kũrega kũnyua muuma, nianyitirwo nĩ andũ a Mau Mau na agĩthikwo nginya ngingo. No mũtwe watigarite. Mũtumia wake, Naomi akĩrwo anyue muuma kana morage muthuri we. Naomi akimere atĩ we in wa Gatũrume (Jesus) na gũtire undũ ona umwe ungituma anyue muuma. Munyaka nĩ ati Mau Mau matoragire Macharia kana mutumia wake. Mari ho ona riũ"

(In 1954, here at Kiria, a brethren in Christ by name William Macharia, because of refusing to take the Mau Mau oath, was apprehended by the Mau Mau and buried up to the neck. Only the head was not buried. His wife Naomi was ordered to take the oath or they would kill her husband. She told them that nothing would make her take the oath. Further that she belonged to the Lamb of God

(Jesus) and was not willing to take the oath. Fortunately the Mau Mau did not kill her or her husband.)

Thus their strong faith in Jesus contributed to their courageous stand and refusal to take the Mau Mau oath. The two confessors, 'white martyrs,' William Macharia and his wife Naomi Macharia were still living at the time of this research. It was not possible to interview the two living martyrs due to the time factor. The researcher however confirmed from very reliable sources the truth and accuracy of this testimony especially from Canon Muthama and Bishop John Mahiaini, both respected elders and clergy of ACK Diocese of Mount Kenya Central.

One lady respondent could remember the martyrdom of her parish minister – Reverend Johana Gakaara. On 26/02/2010 in her own words, she told the researcher:

It was at the height of Mau Mau uprising and many people including some parishioners had taken the oath to support the movement. Rev. Johana continued to preach against the oathing and to befriend the government officers. He received many threats and warnings but stood by his faith in Jesus. The Mau Mau finally abducted him while still in his clerical garments and killed him. He was coming home from the church holding a bottle of milk he had bought on the way.

From this story by the lady respondent several observations can be made such as that the church was pro- government, whose socio-economic propositions were hated and were being opposed by the Mau Mau. This brought African Christians in a collision course with the Mau Mau. The Christians refusal to take the oath further aggravated the situation. It can also be observed that the churches' theology of non-violence was part of the main teachings that helped cement the faith of these Christians. This was not in line with the Mau Mau approach which advocated for violence in order to attain political freedom through the sword if necessary.

A church leader, on Tuesday 26th February, 2010, narrated a 1954 martyrdom of Jacob Kamamo. In his own words he said that "His friends (i.e. Kimamo's friends) and relatives took the Mau Mau oath but he chose to stand by his faith in Jesus Christ. He was a friend of all people including some government officers. He ignored all warnings from the Mau Mau youngsters and so they killed him".

A respondent born in 1925 at Kanyariri, Kiambu District, indicated that he was not aware of anyone from Kabete area who was killed, but numerous Christians were persecuted, for example a certain Mwalimu Paul Ngara and his wife were seriously beaten by the Mau Mau in 1953 at Mũthũre village. Other Christians were forced to take the oath by having their mouths opened by force and made to drink the concoction for the oath. He mentioned some Christians who were treated that way – a local leader of the revival movement and an elder of ACK Kanyariri church whose names he could not remember.

In his own words the respondent said:

“Ndiraririkana mündũ ona umwe woragirwo gũkũ Kabete. No Mwalimu Paul Ngara na mĩtumia wake nimanyamarirwo Mũthũre village, mwaka wa 1953. Ningi he ahonoku erũ ta mutongoria wa Revival ya guku na muthuri wa Kanitha wa ACK Kanyariri aria na hinya mekirorwo kanua indo cia muma.”

(I do not know of anyone who was killed by the Mau Mau here in Kabete area. However a certain teacher by the name Paul Ngara and his wife were persecuted by the Mau Mau at Mũthũre village in 1953. Secondly two born-again Christians, a leader of the Revival and a church elder of ACK Kanyariri had the Mau Mau concoctions inserted by force in their mouths.)

A staunch Roman Catholic lady of Gikambura, Thogoto, Kiambu District, indicated on 23/02/2010 that many Christians from that area were persecuted and a number killed for their faith. She could however not remember the names of those killed or persecuted.

Still on Roman Catholic faithful, the researcher came across an article that appeared on pages 8 and 9 of the Sunday Nation of 13th December, 2009. This was a well-researched article that gave some names of martyrs killed in Othaya area of Nyeri District during the emergency. The article indicates that Mariano Wachira Gichohi, his wife Natalina Gakui, his friends Domenic Nyota and Joseph Gacheru Mwaniki were killed in 1952 at Karuthi village, Othaya. They were all devout Roman Catholics and were killed because they had refused to take the Mau Mau oath because of their faith. One of them, a Mr. Nyota, was even a Catechist . It is noted that the Mau Mau chopped off the arms and legs of all the four before slitting their throats. They then burnt down their houses, erasing all records of their lives,

including their photographs. The article indicates that the four were buried at Gikondi Parish Church (Muchiri 2009 - See Appendix IV for a copy of this article).

The researcher visited the CCM Kiruthi Memorial Church on Tuesday, 18th January 2011 and confirmed from witnesses and other faithfuls the martyrdom of the four Roman Catholic church Kikuyu martyrs. (See Appendix V giving words on the monument erected in their memory at Karuthi Catholic Church, Othaya, Nyeri, Kenya).

From the statement obtained from the respondents, evidence seen by the researcher, such as tombstones of martyrs, plaques carrying names of those martyrs on the doors of All Martyrs (St.James) Cathedral, Murang'a, archival records and literature reviewed, it is evident without any iota of doubt that martyrdom of the Agikuyu Christians occurred in Kikuyuland during the Mau Mau period (1952-1960).

4.4 The Source of the Strong Faith of the Agikuyu Christians that Strengthened their Faith to the Extent that they did not Fear Death when put to the Test

Respondents who were not with the Mau Mau indicated that the source of the Christians' strong faith was from the Scriptures they had learned from missionaries and the Bible but of utmost importance was the contribution to their faith by the teachings of the East African Revival movement whose core teaching was to awaken the church and the Christians of all walks of life to a more uncompromising obedience to God's demands.

This contention is supported by statements obtained from various archival records and also the writing of various authors.

At the Kenya National Archives, the researcher found numerous documents supporting the above contention including: An interim report on the African Anglican Church in the Northern Highlands, January, 1953 which is headed, "*JUDGEMENT MUST BEGIN*" and was written at Weithaga on 10th January 1953 (Mau Mau Memoranda and the Church (1952-1964) - MSS/129/9, Kenya National Archives, Nairobi). According to this report, attacks on the people who were opposed to the Mau Mau, chief of whom were the church members, were intense but the Christian community remained strong. The report indicates that 90% of the total population in Nyeri had taken the oath. Those who had not taken it were mainly Christians and

'young intellectuals' (by this is meant young educated Kikuyu who had embraced Christianity) (Mau Mau Memoranda and the Church (1952-1964) - MSS/129/9, Kenya National Archives, Nairobi). This, as the author of the article points out, was seen as a spiritual strength to the Christian community. According to the article, the Christian community had been judged and purified by the fires of the Mau Mau movement and the strength it had demonstrated was the backbone of the existence of the Christian faith in the land as well as the basis of its future. The article observes:

Whatever may have been the case in the past, revival is not now a group or a faction in the church, it is the expression of spiritual life and fellowship of all who remain. It is the effective church. The church has been judged and purged; its members have been decimated, but the faithful remnant, tested and purified in the fire, is a body whose triumphant witness is an inspiration to all Christians and confusion to their enemies. There is here something on which to build; something on which God is in fact building now; and in this lies hope for the future. (Mau Mau Memoranda and the Church (1952-1964) - MSS/129/9, Kenya National Archives, Nairobi)

A memorandum dated July, 1954 headed *The Revival Movement in the African Churches in Kenya* and which makes reference to Dr. J. C. Caruthers gives the origin and a brief history of the East African Revival Movement. This article depicts the revival movement as the one that helped cleanse and purify the church during the Mau Mau period. It also indicates that the revival movement was not just for Christians in Gikuyuland but was also found in other parts of East Africa. The article further depicts the revival and the persecutions as the will of God. The article drew the attention of the Christians, for them to accept whatever happens to them as the will of God. It read in part:

That this is the will of God none can doubt; our joy and responsibility is then that in true apostolic fellowship and sympathetic leadership, this movement of the Spirit may grow to maturity in the church, as indeed is happening slowly now. Such a situation calls for deep thankfulness to God, humble acceptance of His work among us, recognition of the special emphasis given to certain aspects of the faith, and eagerness to grow daily in love and knowledge of our Lord and His truth. It is indeed an apostolic mission. (Mau Mau Memoranda and the Church (1952-1964) - MSS/129/9, Kenya National Archives, Nairobi)

The same sentiments were shared by Rev. Peter G. Bostock the then Archdeacon of Central Kenya in his papers dated 31st July 1954. According to Rev. Bostock, those who refused the Mau Mau oath due to their Christian faith belonged to the East Africa movement at its early stages (Papers of Rev. Canon Peter Bostock - MSS/129/9, Kenya National Archives, Nairobi). Rev. Bostock says that it was the dedication of these Christians to God that led to their support to the government. Rev. Bostock portrays the acts of the Mau Mau and other groups that were opposed to the colonial government as lawlessness and thuggery. To him, the church out of its love for Christ chose to stay away from such lawlessness and thuggery by supporting the government (Papers of Rev. Canon Peter Bostock - MSS/129/9, Kenya National Archives, Nairobi).

Rev. Bostock's sentiments are not surprising as he was a white missionary. He further indicates that:

The resistance of keen Kikuyu Christians to Mau Mau is well known. Many have died for their faith, either because they stubbornly refused to take the oath or to be intimidated, or else because they brought forward information. Many others have suffered ostracism and ridicule, have been attacked and beaten, lost their homes or their crops. Practically all these have been members of the Revival Movement. That is the key to their courageous faith (Papers of Rev. Canon Peter Bostock - CCK/R/1/76, Kenya National Archives).

A letter addressed to the then Editor, *Manchester Guardian*, dated 5th July, 1954 whose author could not be established but which makes reference to a letter written earlier by Dr. Leakey to the Editor, *Manchester Guardian*, Manchester, England, portrays the church as an accomplice of the colonial government. According to the author, the revival movement had driven the church, to "transcend the barriers of denomination, culture, social standing, and colour" (Letter addressed to the Editor, *Manchester Guardian* - MSS/129/9, Kenya National Archives, Nairobi). It was resultant upon this stand the church had acquired that led to persecution. This is mainly due to the support of the White-led colonial government whose policies the Mau Mau opposed vehemently. The author further indicates that this attitude that the church had chosen to embrace, had cost many of its members their lives (Letter addressed to the Editor, *Manchester Guardian* - MSS/129/9, Kenya National Archives, Nairobi). He states that "The Churches have accepted the challenge. First there is the Revival movement, which transcends the barriers of denomination,

culture, social standing, and colour. It is from its ranks that much of the resistance to Mau Mau sprang, and not a few of its members have laid down their lives in loyalty to their faith” (Letter addressed to the Editor, Manchester Guardian - MSS/129/9, Kenya National Archives, Nairobi).

The vital role the Revival Movement had in strengthening the Christian faith is also confirmed by various authors among them Gatu 2006:39-51; Shenk 1980:127-137,170-171; Anderson A. 2001:128-132; Anderson W.B 1977:118-121; Langley and Kiggins 1974:253-275; Kariuki 1985:57).

One respondent, a retired moderator of PCEA General Assembly on 11/02/2010 gave a brief history of the movement as well as attributes and practices of the movement. On faith, the respondent referred to the writing of John V. Taylor and F.B. Welbourn where they observed that the Revival had raised “vast numbers of men and women to an entirely new level of Christian Living” (Welbourn and Taylor 1965:146). Langley and Kiggins (1974:253-275) indicate that the revival had brought a change to the Africans’ perception on reality, and had largely contributed to their refusal to join the Mau Mau movement. Because of the change in the mind the African Christians had acquired, “their oneness and openness with one another and communal solidarity; their separation from the ‘world’ and identification with the mission churches the Brethren had been suspicious of and often opposed to African independency, both political and religious.”

On a similar note Myrtle Langley and Tom Kiggins (1974:253-275) wrote:

Among the Brethren, in the most unexpected of places, one finds people of integrity, those who have regard for truth, honesty and chastity, in a world which pays little or no attention to high ethical values. Because of the conversion experience the Brethren possess an intense personal loyalty to Jesus Christ and consequently to the historic or mission churches by whom they were evangelized.

One prominent church leader on 11/02/2010 said, “The strength and message of East African Revival Movement” was the source of the strong faith of these Christians. Another church leader on 23/02/2010 confirmed what he wrote in his book that the Christians’ strong faith was greatly influenced by the teachings of the Revival Movement. Yet another church leader on 26/02/2010 said that the teachings of the Revival Movement greatly strengthened the faith of Christians. Still another church leader on 09/02/2010 stated: “there was one secret which caused the church

to remain strong in spite of those persecutors (Mau Mau). It was East African Revival.”

A retired bishop of the Anglican Church of Kenya observed on 25/02/2010 that the East Africa revival movement had a great impact on the martyrdom. According to him, the Revival Movement greatly strengthened the Christian faith during the Mau Mau period. Mrs. Rahab Wairimu Kiambuthi of Kanyariri, Kabete area (who was persecuted seriously because of her faith during the 1969 oathing) indicated that Revival brought and taught Christians to have the strength and the type of faith that made Christians stand firm in their faith no matter the cost. Mrs. Kiambuthi further indicated that it was the Revival fellowship that came up with what salvation is. She observed on 18/02/2010 that before then, salvation as we know it today had not been clearly understood. In her own words, Mrs. Kiambuthi said:

“Revival (Ũ-Rwanda) nīwarutire a Kiristiano a gūkū būruri wa Agikuyu, kūgia kana kūiyūrwo ni hinya na kūgĩa na wĩtikio wakūmahotithia kana ũrĩa wamahotithiria kūregana na maũndũ ma Mau Mau ona angĩkorwo nimamenyaga atĩ gwĩka ũguo nĩkūkiatumire mahūrwo kaana moragũo. Ningĩ Ũ-Rwanda niguo watūrutire ũrĩa uhonokio ũria wama na mūrũmu ũhiana. Mbere iyo ũhonokio ũrĩa tũĩ rũ ndwamenyekete.”

(The Revival (Rwanda) taught Christians in Kikuyuland to have and be filled with faith that would enable them to refuse to have anything to do with the Mau Mau even though they realised that to do so might result in their being persecuted or killed. Secondly the Revival (Rwanda) taught us what salvation which is true and strong (unshakeable) was like. Before the Revival the salvation as we know it today was not known).

The same sentiments were shared by another church leader, who said on 12/02/2010 that the strong faith of the Christians during that period came mainly from teaching of missionaries as well as the teaching of the Revival Movements. Further that the revival ‘fire’ was the main reason for the Christians strong faith.

A Christian lady indicated on 12/02/2010 that the strength to desist from anything contrary to her faith came mainly from the teachings of the church, the scripture but more so from the teachings of the Revival Movement. The respondent in her own words said:

“Hinya wa kūhotithia kūregana na maũndu marĩa mangihitithia ũira na wĩtikio wakwa woimanĩre na maũndũ

marĩa me Mbuku Iria Theru (Kirikaniro), na makĩria kuuma mahunjio ma Revival (Rwanda).”

(The strength to refuse anything that might have comprised my faith came from the Bible and much more from the teachings and evangelism of the Revival).

A lay leader of St. Paul’s Mother Church, Kabete (retired senior elder and lay leader and chairman of the committee that compiled the popular New Kikuyu Hymn Book) said that “I was an eyewitness and attended the Revival of the Rwanda movement at Kabete in 1937. The source of the Christian faith was resultant upon what transpired within the Rwanda (Revival) teachings”.

The aforementioned lay leader was emphatic that the real source of faith shown by Christians who were persecuted during the Mau Mau arose from the influence of Rwanda (Revival) teachings and conventions. The characteristics and the tenets of the Rwanda (Revival) movement is best given by Shenk (1980:129-130) who indicate that in all the revivalist movements confession of sin was a prominent aspect of the conversion experience, but the revival movement quickly became a sustaining fellowship at which brethren and sisters would meet to confess their sins before one another in the presence of the Lord, to meditate on the Scriptures, to share in the happenings which have taken place among the brotherhood, and then to celebrate in praise and worship the reality of forgiveness experienced through the shed blood of Christ, the Lamb of God. Shenk further indicates that the dominant themes of fellowship meetings throughout East Africa were: confession, experiencing forgiveness through the shed blood of the Lamb, followed by celebration and joy in the experience of a redeemed peoplehood.

Shenk (1980:129-130) goes on to observe that the revivalists were a people who ‘walked in the light’ and who lived in ‘brokenness’ in their relationships with one another. They challenged one another to live in complete transparency and humility. They lived in the joy of precious fellowship. The fellowship Shenk notes is the only community in East Africa which authentically transcends ethnic, racial, denominational, economic, or national barriers. He observes that it really is a new peoplehood.

All these tenets were the ones that were observed and applied in the lives of Agikuyu members of the Rwanda (Revival) movement.

4.5 The Catholic Church in the Face of the Persecutions

When interviewing two devout Catholics, a lady and an elderly man on 23/02/2010 and 24/02/2010 respectively, the researcher learned that the Catholic Church did not condone oathing. The two respondents, who are both devout Roman Catholics, observed that the Catholic faith at that time was based on the Scriptures and teachings of the Catholic Church. They further indicated that the Catholic Church had taught its believers that they should always obey God rather than man even if it cost them their lives, and that they were not to give in to the “evil” demands of the Mau Mau. They both indicated that within the Catholic faithful, they knew that once they became Catholics and took the sacrament, they were to be prepared at all times to lay down their lives if necessary rather than deny their faith.

These testimonies contrast with the views given by William B. Anderson (1977:131) that: “Mau Mau found strong sympathizers in the Gatundu Roman Catholic Church.” According to the two respondents, the Catholics during the Mau Mau did not side with either side. Their stand was neutral. The Roman Catholic church was there to spread the gospel, treat the injuries of any who were injured (Mau Mau or those with colonialists) and educate children of all those willing to enrol in their schools. (See also Appendix IV and V which relates to Roman Catholics martyred during the Mau Mau period – 1952-1960).

4.6 Social, Political and Religious Factors

All the respondents indicated that this was a most difficult time for everyone and they pray to God that such difficult times should never be repeated in Kenya.

In the archives of St. Andrew’s (P.C.E.A) Nairobi, the researcher found a ‘newsletter’ with a title “Mau Mau and the Church” dated 1953 and distributed by the Church of Scotland Foreign Minister Committee. What it contains depicts what was happening in Gikuyuland. It starts by describing in detail the martyrdom of Rev. Johana Wanjau on 23rd December, 1952. The article also gives the feeling the African had against his White counterpart which might have contributed to the Mau Mau uprising. The article indicates that it may be said that the cause of Mau Mau activities among the Agikuyu was widespread frustrations, exploited by a group of clever, unscrupulous men (Mau Mau Memoranda and the Church (1952-1964) - MSS/129/9, Kenya National Archives, Nairobi). This view however, is written from a

White man's perspective, and cannot be taken as a representation of the whole reality. The underlying factor, however, was what brought suspicion, hatred and mistrust between the Africans and the White colonial masters. The statement also indicates that both the Government and the Mau Mau distrusted "the other Africans" who were not part of their "parties."

Other very interesting material found are numerous memoranda from the Kenya National Archives written in 1952 by very highly qualified British academicians and clergymen. One of those articles is a letter from the Rev. Noel King, Lecturer in Church History in the University of Nottingham to Dr. Warren which explains the volatile political situation that surrounded Gikuyuland at that time. The article depicts Kenya at that time as being in a state of mistrust, war and betrayal. Concerning the situation in Gikuyuland, Noel King writes that "Bewilderment among the Kikuyu has been followed by manifestations of sullen resentment. But Mau Mau outrages continue; a second senior chief has been brutally murdered" (Mau Mau Memoranda and the Church (1952-1964) - MSS/129/9, Kenya National Archives, Nairobi).

Noel King portrays the situation in Kenya then, and in particular Gikuyuland, as one that was "rooted and grounded in hate – hatred of the European, hatred of Christianity, hatred of the British Government" (Mau Mau Memoranda and the Church (1952-1964) - MSS/129/9, Kenya National Archives, Nairobi). King's observations show that the African had come to hate all that was associated with the White man including the Christian religion, government and race. This shows that the persecutions that the African Christians received were as a result of the political leadership that the colonial government had shown. The Agikuyu Christians were hated for adhering to Christianity - a religion of the Whites who oppressed Africans. King further indicated that "By murder and arson the Mau Mau had planned to overthrow and eliminate all three [Europeans, Christianity, and the British Government]" (Mau Mau Memoranda and the Church (1952-1964) - MSS/129/9, Kenya National Archives, Nairobi). The way the pro-independent movement would reach these goals was dependent on "its ability to unite first the malcontents, and then the large body of the Gikuyu tribe into an organisation." (Mau Mau Memoranda and the Church (1952-1964) - MSS/129/9, Kenya National Archives, Nairobi). The only way this was to be achieved was through the oath. Such was the situation in Gikuyuland in 1952 when the state of emergency was declared.

Respondents interviewed confirmed all that had been reviewed in Chapter Two, for example, one respondent interviewed on 16/02/2010 from Kabete, Kiambu District who took all the three oaths including the unity oath, *Batuni* oath and the advanced oath but never went to the forest indicated that his principal role was to assist in making homemade guns and stealing what was needed for this purpose from the Nairobi Railway workshop. He was subsequently betrayed to the government, apprehended and detained in various camps from 1954 to 1959. He described the situation in the country at that time as tense, always living in fear and not having any independence even of movement. Worse, his brothers and sisters were forced to harvest coffee on land owned by a Whiteman who had taken the land by force, without any compensation from his own grandfather.

Another respondent from Kabete, who also took all the three oaths, said on 16/02/2010 that his elder brother was the one assisting in administering the oaths in Kabete area. He was eventually betrayed and apprehended by the British forces. He was detained from 1953 to 1955. He described the situation in the country as very tense. He said Agikuyu were moved to villages. One could not move without a pass. Everybody lived in fear. The respondent in his own words said:

“Hindĩ iyo ya mwĩhũgo, Agikũyũ nĩmarutũrũririo kuuma mĩciĩ yao ya ndũire, magĩtwaruo icagi. Gũtiri mũndũ ũngiathire ona ha atarĩ na marũa (pass-permit). Agikuyu othe matũraga na guoya.”

(During the emergency period, the Agikuyu were moved from their traditional homesteads and moved to villages. No one would have moved anywhere without a pass (permit). All the Agikuyu lived in fear).

A respondent from Gatura, Murang’a who was interviewed on 13/02/2010 said that he took all the three oaths, went to fight in the Aberdare forest and used to persecute Christians and home guards. Ultimately he was detained after being betrayed in 1954 and released in 1955. He described the situation in Gikuyuland as miserable especially when they were herded into villages. As he was in the Rift Valley when the Emergency was declared, he was placed into a “*kiũgu*” (cattle boma) – from there he was detained in his home in Kiarutara, Murang’a in 1952. He remembered that the Agikuyu were seriously oppressed and were living in fear and a state of hopelessness. In his own words the respondent said that:

“Agikuyu nĩmanyamarirwo muno, na matũraga na guoya na ningĩ andũ matiarĩ na mwĩhoko ona ũmwe.”

(The Agikuyu were terribly harassed and persecuted. All the Agikuyu lived in fear. A state of hopelessness prevailed to all the Agikuyu).

A prominent church leader indicated on 23/02/2010 that the situation was “very tense and difficult. One could not move from one area to another without a permit. A lot of terrorism was unleashed on people by security forces. There was fear all round in case Mau Mau attacked any time.” Three church leaders interviewed on 9, 12 and 26/02/2010 felt that the then political and social climates were very serious. Leaders opposed each other. Family feuds and hatred arose due to mistrust. Brothers fought each other and clans suspected one another. Secrets and rumours as to who is with the government or with the church. They all said it was a time of great distress.

On 10/02/2010 one church leader from Murang’a who was affected during the Mau Mau era by the closure of independent schools revealed another side of the Agikuyu martyrs; these were those who were killed by the colonial government. Due to the fact that all Africans wished for independence, some African Christians began independent churches and schools. These Christians were killed by the British colonial government because they were seen as betrayers of the missionary Christianity that supported the government. The said church leader recalled that some Christians were killed by the colonialists because, the colonialists regarded independent school supporters as belonging to the Mau Mau. He observed that all independent schools and churches were closed immediately after the colonialists had executed a considerable number of members of independent Christian Churches.

A number of respondents including an ACK Bishop interviewed on 09/02/2010, a Christian lady interviewed on 26/02/2010 and a church leader interviewed on 11/02/2010, indicated that Africans were ill-treated by the Whites even in churches. Additionally, Africans faced much ill-treatment and deprivation of human rights including forced labour, low wages, unemployment, detention without trial, even being killed for no reason and without trial.

It is evident from the above that life was miserable during that period and all Agikuyu, be they men or women, loyalists or Christians, young or old, suffered greatly.

4.7 Why were Agikuyu Christians opposed to the Mau Mau Movement?

Two aspects that affected Christians during this period was the Mau Mau uprising and the demand by the Mau Mau that all take the oath. Christians interviewed indicated that the turn from traditional practices to Christianity and the theology of the blood of Christ as superior to the blood of the goats that they had offered as their traditional worship was a great motivating factor towards the cementing of the Christian faith in their lives. In the Christian faith and especially in the concept of the blood, the Kikuyu Christians had found the ultimate meaning and satisfaction of their belief. To them taking the oath that included the blood of a goat was to go back to their “fallen” traditions and hence denying Christ. “I could not mix the blood of a goat with that of Jesus” recalls one respondent on 25/02/2010. Emphasizing on the same point, another respondent also interviewed on 25/02/2010 commented:

...the Agikuyu Christians opposed the Mau Mau movement because of the oath taking with human and animal blood, and the denial that Jesus Christ was not the Son of God and the normal Christian hymns were adapted to Mau Mau wording. The East African Revival emphasised the importance of the shed blood of Jesus Christ and the power of the blood over principalities and powers. They could not mix the blood of Jesus with the blood of animals in the Mau Mau oath. The Kingdom of God was paramount - Luke 9:23-25.

Other Christians had read (or heard) about the early church martyrs who chose to die rather than deny Christ or denounce their faith. These stories provided great encouragement to them as well as good portrait of defending the faith in Christ. One such respondent on 26/02/2010 observed that “I could not take the oath. I had read and heard about the brave stand of St. Polycarp during early Christianity ... the brave bishop had told his executioners ... ‘I have served my Lord (Jesus) for 86 years and he has done me no harm. How can I deny my Lord?’”

One other reason that drove Christians to oppose and reject the Mau Mau was because of the Mau Mau practices. Christians saw the Mau Mau practices as ungodly and whose basis was opposed to the Christian ethics. Practices such as killing and forcing people to join them by taking the oath were considered by the then African Christians as morally incorrect. One respondent on 12/02/2010 observed that “the Christians were not opposed to the intentions of the Mau Mau movement. What Christians were opposed to was the manner in which the Mau Mau used to achieve their objectives, such as oathing which was against Christian beliefs.” All Africans were opposed to colonial rule and wanted to have freedom, but the manner that some groups chose to achieve that main objective was against the ethical values of others and that is why the Christians could not agree with the Mau Mau. One of the respondents on 06/02/2010, a Christian lady, described the Mau Mau as antichrist because of its practices. To her the Mau Mau “was antichrist in every way. Their deeds like murder, torture, theft and many others contradicted God’s commandments. And so Christians refused to join them.”

In the face of persecution, some of the Christians drew their inspiration from the life of Christ. They saw the death of Christ at the cross as a way of fulfilling God’s purpose through suffering. To them, if Christ had not chosen to endure hardship and death at the cross there would not have been salvation. Drawing their inspiration from the life of Christ, they saw their persecution as a way that God was using to shape the history of humanity and to advance his love to the world. They believed that like Jesus their suffering would bring salvation or presence of God in their communities. For them to die for Christ was a sure way of proving their loyalty to Him. Pointing to this fact, one respondent on 09/02/2010 observed that “Christians preferred to be persecuted or die because of their loyalty to Christ. They believed that Christ’s death on the cross was a big price to pay for us. Had Christ refused to shed His blood on Calvary we would have remained in devil’s captivity forever”.

It is evident from the above feelings expressed by the respondents that the bone of contention between the Mau Mau and the Christians was the Mau Mau oaths and practices.

4.8 Mau Mau Fighters Justification for Persecuting Christians among the Agikuyu

All the respondents who were on the Christian side as well as those who were on the Mau Mau side had a lot to say about this as all were affected by the said persecution one way or another. One church leader on 12/02/2010 said that according to the information she had gathered within the course of her ministry, the Mau Mau fighters felt that the Christians had failed them by not taking the oath. Because of this the Mau Mau fighters damned the Christians as collaborators of the British.

A respondent from Murang'a who was a forest fighter and later detained said that Christians refused to take the oath and cooperate with the Mau Mau fighters. As such the Christians were looked upon by Mau Mau as rebels, traitors (white coats) and so had to be punished and if necessary eliminated.

Another respondent also of Murang'a who was a forest fighter, a member of the local oath administering committee and later a detainee on 13/02/2010 said that Christians refused to take the oath and were therefore regarded as traitors and collaborators of the British. However, he gave credit to the Christians who were praying for the Mau Mau.

Another respondent, also from Murang'a, who was a Mau Mau freedom fighter, confirmed on 13/02/2010 that he took all the three oaths, did not fight in the forest but was used by the Mau Mau as their scout. He was later detained. He said that he knew that Christians were not opposed to the Mau Mau but rather to the methods used. However, for refusal to take the oath and unite with the other Kikuyus they had to be persecuted.

A respondent, of Murang'a who was a school boy in 1952 recalls on 13/02/2010 that the school he was attending was closed by the British because it was an independent school. He narrated the killing of his stepfather in 1953 by the Mau Mau as they suspected him of being a collaborator to the British. He said that anyone who was not with the Mau Mau was suspect and had to be persecuted.

A respondent from Kabete who was interviewed on 16/02/2010 confirmed having taken all the three oaths voluntarily. He said that his elder brother had been appointed to be administering the Mau Mau oath in Kabete area. The respondent felt that he had no choice but to take the oath. He was eventually detained. He says the

following which the researcher found interesting, unique and different from the testimonies of most others:

Christians in Kabete were not persecuted seriously. We knew that the Christians in Kabete prayed for the safe passage of Mau Mau fighters. Also Christians in Kabete had a sort of understanding with those in the Mau Mau. Mau Mau did not force those from Christianity to take the oath. On the other hand Christians did not and could not betray the Mau Mau. The Christians were not traitors and they were with us in our efforts to obtain back our lands and our freedom.

On this issue, the Late Bishop Obadiah Kariuki (1985:64-65) had this to say regarding the relationship between the Christians and the Mau Mau in Gikuyuland especially in some parts of Kiambu District:

...we asked God to protect not only believers, but all people, so that peace could return to our country. As a result of our uncompromising and well-known stand, we were harassed neither by Mau Mau nor by administration. Both sides came to realize that we were not hypocrites but were in fact true worshippers of Christ. Had we listened to that European official, we could not have survived long. I can now tender my thanks to God for his guidance during this period. I managed to steer those under me through threats from both sides. On the Mau Mau side they came to realize that we were not passing on messages about them and their movements to government, not that we had any reports of any value concerning their operations...

Finally in his book, Obadiah Kariuki (1985:64) felt that the Mau Mau did not fully understand the Christian stand towards the movement and that the persecution of the Christians was due to this misunderstanding and was uncalled for.

The late Bishop Kariuki (1985:64) further indicates the following which tells much especially his stand on the Mau Mau freedom fighters:

In those days, wherever I happened to be, especially at Sunday service, I urged my people to pray for those who had gone to the forests around us to fight, because they were our own flesh and blood and they were undergoing untold suffering. We prayed that the bombs being dropped on them might miss their targets, and that the children might come home alive from the forests. This needed real courage on my part, for there were in my congregation informers and suspicious elements always ready to report to the administration what I had said.

Such information provided in this way by informers was often quite untrue.

4.9 What Led to Mau Mau Uprising

This issue was covered at great length under Literature Review. The respondents who were interviewed by the researcher, provided a lot of information which brought to light as to what led to the Mau Mau uprising. All respondents gave uniform answers, as clearly stated by a retired moderator of PCEA:

- Cry for the land taken by white people,
- Fighting for independence and political rights,
- People returning from World War II, were more enlightened.

A retired Bishop of ACK felt that:-

the problem of land owned by the white man around Kiambu and Rift Valley was the main cause of Mau Mau uprising. Colonialists treated the black man as a third class citizen. There were hotels in Nairobi and elsewhere where a black person was forbidden to enter. There were churches for the white people only. A similar scenario was witnessed in South Africa and Rhodesia.

Another retired Bishop of ACK stated:

basically land issues, injustices, and discriminating attitudes when the mzungu (white man) portrayed himself as superior to the African. But after World War II when Africans fought alongside the mzungu (whites) and witnessed him suffer and die unveiled the fact that they were equal.

A retired lady teacher felt that:

the uprising of the Mau Mau movement was a result of the discrimination of the black man in his native land where he was treated as of no consequence. There was no hope for economic development, health, schools and denial of decision-making at national level.

A retired Archbishop of ACK observed on 11/02/2010:

there was a genuine desire to remove colonialists who had grabbed many miles of land. No respect for African personality and obvious discrimination against Africans. Africans were 3rd class citizens in their own land.

Another retired Moderator of P.C.E.A stated on 26/02/2010 that:

Land was the main issue. The form of government was mentioned but not so strongly. It only favoured the whites and not Africans. The Agikuyu wanted the white people to go back to wherever they came from. Religion which the white man brought to the country was also opposed.

These and other respondents including those who were on the Mau Mau side responded in varying words but the gist of their statement was loud and clear, the Mau Mau uprising arose from the deep desire of the Agikuyu to obtain back their land and independence no matter what it took.

4.10 Christians in Kenya and Africa Today can Apply the Same Principles Portrayed by the Agikuyu Christian Martyrs and other Christian Martyrs throughout History

Not much has been written on this and the researcher found nothing from written books or from archives. From a few respondents who could comprehend what this question sought, the researcher obtained the following responses:

A retired Moderator of the P.C.E.A had this to say:

As a Christian who suffered greatly between 1950-1960, my prayer is there will never be a time like that again in Kenya. But all Christians at any time should always be ready to suffer, die or be persecuted because of their faith. Should always pay allegiance to the Lamb of God – Jesus Christ. The church survived because of the early Christians. All Christians should show and stand by their faith in churches, government or any places of work.

A retired Bishop of ACK had this to say during the interview:

...Jesus Christ can save and preserve those who give their lives to him unreservedly ... My wife and I had made up our minds that we would rather die than become members of the Mau Mau movement. May God be given the glory. Amen.

A Canon of ACK reiterated:

...the Agikuyu Christians had strong faith in Jesus and the Bible. So just like the first disciples of Jesus the Agikuyu Christians had committed themselves to Jesus and could

not therefore enter into another commitment as they had accepted Jesus and had been born again.

This testimony is significant as it establishes the strong faith by those Christians in Jesus and the Bible and the total commitment this Christians had. They could therefore not act contrary to this commitment or do anything contrary to the Bible. They lived the Bible (Scripture).

Mrs. Rahab Kiambuthi of Kabete (She is a white martyr – confessor – in her own right of the 1969 Kikuyu oathing persecution – she was seriously persecuted and permanently maimed due to refusing to taking the oath because of her faith).

She indicated that her faith was strengthened by the revival movement

The revival brought to Christians new insight to being born again ... Revival brought and taught Christians to stand firm to faith no matter what.

According to Mrs. Rahab Kiambuthi she was shocked to witness that the majority of the so called “born-again” Christians during the 1969 Kikuyu oathing succumbed to threats and took the oath fearing persecution. She is therefore of the opinion that the faith of the present African Christian is different from that of Christians during the early centuries of Christianity who braved serious persecution. Their faith is also different from the faith portrayed by the Baganda and Agikuyu martyrs. She views the faith of most current Christians as lukewarm and wonders whether it would stand the test.

A respondent from Murang’a who had taken all the oaths and was even making knapsacks (pockets) for the Mau Mau fighters, was detained from 1953 to 1960, and is now a born again Christian had this very moving statement:

I am born again and I am now a member of the AIPCA Church. If Mau Mau comes again, I would not take the oath because I have taken the blood of Jesus.

Five of those interviewed however said that in similar circumstances to those of Mau Mau or in situations where they are required to choose whether to die or comply with whatever is required in that situation, they would not choose to die, rather they would do whatever is required.

However, all members of the Revival movement who were interviewed confirmed that they would not compromise their faith under any circumstance. They would rather die than do so.

4.11 The Role the Christian Martyrs among the Agikuyu Played to the Growth of Christianity Especially in Kenya

A respondent from Murang'a indicated that a considerable number of Christians during the emergency moved to independent churches. As a result, membership of missionary churches dropped.

Another respondent from Murang'a, an ex-freedom fighter, expressed his feelings by saying that:

Mau Mau led to the split of the church. Many people left missionary churches. Independent churches were preferred as these churches liberated the Kikuyu from influence of the missionaries. Also they led to freedom of worship and enabled the Agikuyu to continue with most of their cultural beliefs and practices.

A clergy of P.C.E.A, Nyeri observed that:

During the state of emergency, church membership dropped but afterwards it picked. The few Christians who remained in the church had their faith strengthened by the faith of those who were martyred.

Two ACK clergy at ACK Weithaga indicated:

During the emergency period, church membership dropped largely because most Christians had moved to independent churches. Also some did not turn up for services for fear of being marked by the Mau Mau. After emergency, church membership grew.

At ACK All Martyrs (St. James) Cathedral Murang'a, a senior ACK clergy indicated:

The church grew and even the few Christians who had given in to the Mau Mau demands later on recanted and turned to Christ and to the church.

A P.C.E.A church elder of Tumutumu said:

The church split into two. One group of loyalists and another group of rebels who went to the forest as Mau Mau, but they all later came to pray to one Jehovah God.

A Canon of ACK observed:

Martyrdom of the Agikuyu Christians had great effect on the church. The church after that really grew and more churches were built and more people joined the church and stuck to the faith.

Other respondents had this to say:

“The church grew stronger in faith. Though decreased numerically there was strong unity in the church.”

“The church grew even faster.”

“It actually exploded and grew numerically and in substance owing to persecution rather than yield to pressures of sin.”

“- Some people left the church
- The church was seen as though it was a government agency or informer
- Church people had to stand on their own without some of the people”

“The church first went down but came up later and spread all over the country.”

From the archival research, the researcher came across a letter dated 5th July 1954 addressed to the Editor, Manchester Guardian, England with these words:

There were also the many associated with the independent schools, some of whom were backsliders from the Christian churches, but most of whom only know the independent movements' presentation of Christ (Mau Memoranda (CCK/R/1/76, Kenya National Archives) Nairobi).

A letter also obtained from Kenya National Archives written by Bishop Leonard Beecher dated 1953 has the following paragraph:

In the church the effects have been very sad. Partly through fear, partly through weakness, many have deserted the church and have taken the Mau Mau oath. Those who have remained loyal have suffered bitter persecution. It seems that a chapter in the history of the

Kikuyu church is closing but not in defeat. For that 'little flock' that remains loyal to its lord and saviour is demonstrating a quality of living which authenticates the truth of the Gospel.

A similar letter dated October 1952 from Bishop Beecher contains the following paragraph:

But a more tangible index, and certainly no less encouraging, is the recent return to the Church of former adherents who had lapsed in face of Mau Mau pressures. In Fort Hall I found this week that well over a hundred had submitted themselves in penitence for re-admission (Mau Memoranda (CCK/R/1/76, Kenya National Archives) Nairobi).

Finally, Rev. R.C.M Calderwood of CSM, Kikuyu, in his letter dated 8th May, 1953 had this to say based on the reaction of the Agikuyu, to the Lari massacre and also the suffering and persecution that were happening in Gikuyuland.

At the present time there are encouraging signs in the churches of an increasing flow of persons who confess to having taken the oath and are asking for restoration to church membership. I think that is equally true of the Anglican church (Mau Mau Memoranda (CCK/R/1/76, Kenya National Archives) Nairobi).

Various authors have a lot to say regarding the effect the political climate during the emergency period had on the attendance and growth of the church in Gikuyuland. Macpherson (1970:136) says:

...these direct attacks on the church were reflected in the statistics of membership and liberality for this period, which shows a small but significant recession.

In one chapter of his book, Bishop Kariuki (1985:78-79) notes:

I am deeply convinced that Christians, especially those who faced death rather than take the oath, contributed to the return of peace to this country: their blood nourished the tree of freedom as much as any other. Many Christians were detained and died in detention camps. Today, we are a free people in the eyes of God because we were not afraid to shed our own blood to bring about change.

Finally in *A Century of God's Household* (ACK 2001), Bishop Peter Njenga in his forward indicates:

Socially, the church seems to be confronted with many problems that need strong, personnel to carry it in the future and politically. This Diocese does not carry the banner as it used to carry in the 50s and 60s on the witness of the church to the rapidly changing society.

By this the Bishop implies that in the 50s and 60s the church was at the prime of growth and involvement with the social aspects of the people but has since run into problems. It should be noted that the 50s and 60s he is referring to was the Mau Mau period and the immediate years that followed.

This more than anything else shows that arising from the persecution of the Christians in the 50s the church grew. What happened after the 60s is another matter.

In summary, this chapter has established the existence of the Agikuyu martyrs during the Mau Mau period in Kenya (1952 -1960). It has also shown that the Agikuyu martyrs were strongly influenced by their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as well as the teaching of the East African Revival Movement. This faith was evidenced by their refusal to take the Mau Mau oath which culminated in their persecution and death. It has been shown that there were social, political and religious factors that directly contributed to the Agikuyu martyrdom. The desire to reclaim the alienated land from the colonialists, the necessity of regaining their freedom and dignity were the key elements which contributed to the Mau Mau uprising.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this Chapter, a summary and conclusion of the study are made with the aim of showing how the study relates with the research questions stated in Chapter One. Consequently, recommendations that reflect the lessons learnt about the faith of selected Agikuyu Christian martyrs during the Mau Mau period in Kenya (1952-1960) are made.

5.1 Summary of Findings

One of the most significant findings of the research was the confirmation that during the Mau Mau period (1952-1960), there was persecution of Agikuyu Christians by the Mau Mau. Many of them suffered because of their faith. Others were killed and a considerable number of them lost their property. It was established that martyrdom of the Agikuyu Christians whether persecution or death took place in almost all the districts that were occupied by the Agikuyu and Embu.

Those martyred were from both sexes – male and female. They were young and old, illiterate and educated, poor and rich, lay people as well as ordained ministers of the church.

Martyrs were from various religious denominations including Anglicans, Presbyterians, Methodists and Roman Catholics. There were also martyrs from the African Independent Church who were killed not by Mau Mau but by the colonialists. The period of the said martyrdom was from as early as 1952 to around 1955 when the Mau Mau rebellion was defeated.

The research revealed that the strong faith of the Agikuyu Christians emanated from three sources namely the teachings of the missionaries, the Scriptures and for most of the Protestants, the influence of the Revival movement. For the Roman Catholics, it was from the teachings of the missionaries and from the Scriptures. By the time of emergency, the Scriptures for Catholics and Protestants had become well known and distributed to the Agikuyu. Adherents of the Roman Catholic faith stood by what the church had taught them. This was obtained from a number of Roman Catholic respondents. They refused to go against the Church's

teachings and Scriptures. Some chose to die rather than act contrary to those teachings in the Scripture and their faith.

The Revival movement or fellowship as observed during the interviews came to Gikuyuland in 1937 when a group of 'Rwanda' brethren came to preach in Central Kenya particularly Nairobi, Kabete and Weithaga. It was the Revival fellowship that came up with what it meant to be saved. Before then salvation and conversion as we know it today had not been understood (ACK 2003:40).

The Brethren, as members of the fellowship were known, had a strong faith and adhered to the openness of 'walking in the light' and open confession of sins. Because of their firm stand in the faith, they suffered during the struggle for independence between 1952 and 1960 for their refusal to take the oath as they believed that the blood of Jesus was enough. The significance of the blood to them and theology revolving on the blood as well as the significance of scripture is explained below.

Langley and Kiggins (1974:202) observe that:

Because of the conversion experience the Brethren possess an intense personal loyalty to Jesus Christ and consequently to the historic or mission churches by whom they were evangelized. Because of their oneness and openness with one another they possess a communal solidarity; also because of their separation from the 'world' and identification with the mission churches the Brethren have been suspicious of and often opposed to African independency, both political and religious.

The authors note that "Not that they [Brethren] did not aspire deep down to independency as such, but they could not agree with the forms taken by the movements for independence". They observe further that

...during the period of Mau Mau in Kenya (1952-5) the Brethren met with great hostility and in turn remained utterly loyal to Christianity as they understood it, often paying dearly with their blood. Similarly, when renewed oathing broke out among the Kikuyu, in 1969, it was the Brethren who brought the protest of the churches to a peak.

The above, together with statements obtained from archival records, and from various authors as well as from numerous respondents interviewed have established that the Revival movement played a pivotal role in furnishing the strength of the kind

of faith portrayed by the Agikuyu Christian martyrs during that time. It was established that the Revival movement was interdenominational and mostly accommodated the mainline Protestant churches. It was also noted that many Roman Catholics were also members of the Revival movement (Gatu 2006:40).

To the Agikuyu Christians, especially after the Revival, conversion meant turning from their wicked ways and accepting Jesus as Lord and Saviour in their lives. As indicated earlier, after the revival they learnt what true salvation meant. Examples of what conversion or salvation meant to the Agikuyu Christians has in addition to the statements of the respondents been obtained from other sources especially Wiseman (1958) where numerous statements are made by Agikuyu martyrs which includes but not limited to statements such as:

By Wiseman herself (pg. 7 and 8)

There were many converts, but most of them were nominal, and their faith did not affect their lives. The church had tried to strengthen its converts by holding 'missions' from time to time, but a small group were influenced by a movement of revival from Rwanda. This challenges people who are nominal Christians with their need to know Jesus as a personal Saviour. When, through His blood, they find this new relationship, they surrender the whole of their lives and possessions to Him. These 'brethren' as they are called...

The testimonies of faith of various martyrs in Wiseman's book include:

"...For joy of another giving herself to Christ..." (pg. 12)
"...She too, had given her heart to Christ..." (pg. 15)
"...Jesus has saved me. He is sufficient for me. I cannot carry these arms..." (pg. 22) "...It was the rush of the overwhelming power of Christ as personal Saviour that brought forgiveness, cleansing, new life and victory..." (pg. 28) "...Every man has to choose which world he wants, you have chosen this world, but I have chosen the world of Jesus and His Kingdom. Come and kill me if you like, and I will go to Him..." (pg. 30) "...I am a witness of Jesus, the only Son of God, who is my Saviour..." (pg. 37) "...Then again I was asked if I were now ready to take the oath, I said 'No,' because the oath I had already drunk, at the Lord's Table, was enough for me..." (pg. 38) "...When I go to meet Jesus who bought me out of Satan's bondage with His own blood..." (pg. 38) "...No, I have drunk the blood of Jesus, and it was sufficient for me..." (pg. 40) "...I have drunk the Blood of Christ and how can I return to drink your goat's blood?" (pg. 45)

The stand taken by the Agikuyu Christians is ably summarised by Professor John Mbiti (1986:106)

“...It is clear that African Christianity has grasped something for which many have died and are willing to die. This is faith in and through Jesus Christ. They are not dying for their belief in God as such. They suffer and die for their conviction out of a living relationship with Jesus Christ...”

Although Prof. Mbiti was referring to the Uganda martyrs, the same contention applies equally to the Agikuyu martyrs in every respect.

Theologically, salvation is as was defined in Chapter One (pg 25) under definition of terms. Additionally as indicated by Sauer and Howell (eds), (2010:53), there remains the question what the suffering and martyrdom of a Christian, and in this case of a Kikuyu Christian, can contribute to the salvation of others, and specifically how Paul’s statement in Colossians 1:24 is to be understood, when he says: “I am glad when I suffer for you in my body, for I am completing what remains of Christ’s suffering for his body, the church,” Equally he says he is “willing to endure anything if it will bring salvation and eternal glory in Christ Jesus to those God has chosen” (2 Tim 2:10) and he rejoices that his imprisonment has contributed to the spreading of the Gospel (Phil 1:12-26). Sauer and Howell (eds), (2010:53) assert that we must be careful to not teach less than Scripture teaches only because others might have used such verses in church history for claims that we the authors consider going beyond scripture.

Sauer and Howell (eds), (2010:53) are of the view that it would be of help to distinguish the three lines of martyrdom which Jesus and early Christianity have expressed. All three lines apply to Jesus, but not all apply to his followers. (1) The messianic martyr works forgiveness of sins and redemption through the sacrifice of his life. (2) The prophetic or apostolic martyr is suffering at the hands of the tyrant as the outstanding representative for his community. He is suffering vicariously for his community. (3) The community/church-martyr suffers for his confession of faith. They note that only Jesus is considered a messianic martyr, as only the sacrifice of his life works salvation for others. By contrast, Paul is suffering vicariously the antagonism encountered by that new community created through the work of Christ and later dies as an apostolic martyr.

Sauer and Howell (eds) (2010:53) feel that while the work of the messianic martyr Jesus is complete, Christ's suffering in the members of his body is not complete yet. The number of martyrs is not complete yet either (Rev 6:11). Thus Paul helps to complete the suffering of Christ. This is instrumental suffering, because it serves to bring the gospel to those who need to be saved, and to keep those faithful who have been saved. Thus Paul is not adding anything to the completed work of atonement of Christ, but there is a legitimate place for him to complete the suffering of Christ.

Turning to our time Sauer and Howell (eds) (2010:53) indicate that the continuation of such prophetic or apostolic suffering and martyrdom might fall on the shoulders of today's leaders and teachers of the church. And while different from the apostolic martyrs like Paul, the ordinary Christian only suffers and the community martyr only dies for his or her individual confessing of the faith, it also serves its part in God's plan to bring the gospel to all and benefits the church through its faithful witness to Christ and example of steadfastness. These views which, the researcher agrees with, should be observed and applied in churches and lives of the faithful in Kenya and elsewhere.

Conversion on the other hand in Christianity, is the act of turning from other religions (or no religion) to Christ (1 Th. 1:9). (Young 1984:150).

The Agikuyu Christian martyrs died entirely because of Scripture (what Scripture meant and stood for to the Agikuyu Christians is given below). This contention is supported by the fact that traditionally Agikuyu never died or killed for any religious purpose. To the Agikuyu, the nearest killing of humans to anything remotely touching on religion was the strangulation of first born twins. First born twins were regarded as bad omen and were to be strangled (Leakey (1979 Vol. 2:258). Cagnolo (2006:26, 60) indicates that the Agikuyu people never offered human sacrifices.

However, in the book by Faupel (1969:4) on Uganda martyrs (another example of martyrdom in the African continent), and another book by Langley and Kiggins (1974), the researcher noted that the Kingdom of Baganda, before Christianity had many religions and some demanded human sacrifices.

Citing Faupel (1969:4) on this: "Probably about the sixteenth Century this worship of God the creator (Katonda) was largely superseded by the cult of Lubale (a god)..."

Additionally:

...since the medium of all these deities [e.g. Lubale Walumbe, the god of death, Musoke, the rainbow, Kiwanuka, the thunder, Kawampuli, the plague etc] could with the consent of the Kabaka, demand human sacrifice...A fact clearly expressed in Luganda saying 'Katonda tatta– God the creator killeth not' ie does not demand human sacrifice.

On human sacrifices in Baganda, Langley and Kiggins (1974:61-62) indicate that one historian wrote of a tradition among the Baganda that in the mid-nineteenth century there was a great dissatisfaction with the old ways. In ancient times, the worship of God the creator, Katonda, was very prominent in the religion of Buganda. Katonda the creator was also known as Mukama the Master, and Seggulu the Lord of heaven. In the fifteenth Century the worship of ancestor heroes called Balubale became very prominent. This was the Lubale cult introduced from the Ssesse Islands. Knowledge of the Creator remained but the worship of the Balubale represented a backward step in religion, particularly as it involved human sacrifice. On certain occasions, hundreds of people were sacrificed to the Balubale. An example occurred when Mutesa fell ill in 1879. to secure his recovery, hundreds of innocent people were seized and sacrificed. It may well be that Mutesa longed for a more satisfactory form of religion and so his interest in Islam, and later in Christianity may have been more genuine than is often believed. Certainly, the gospel seems to have made some impression on the man. Human sacrifice decreased in the latter years of his reign and he ordered the customary slaughter of wives and servants should not take place.

Finally, Faupel (1969) notes in his book that 'Namugongo' was traditionally an execution site for those humans who the Kabaka wanted to get rid off or punish.

The above clearly indicates that martyrdom of the Agikuyu was in a way different from those of the Baganda martyrs as the Agikuyu had no history or precedence of dying for religion or for a ruler while the Baganda martyrs had by their cultural practice been prepared to die for their king or religion. Also as shown earlier, the Jews had a history of religious martyrdom long before the emergence of Christianity. This is given to indicate that when thinking and analysing martyrdom, the cultural background of those being martyred should be considered.

The researcher therefore feels that Agikuyu Christian martyrdom was unique in history because of the Agikuyu culture and traditional religion. The Agikuyu martyrs genuinely died for Christ and their death was not based on something similar to a past religious or cultural practice. It was purely based on Scripture. What Scripture meant and stood to the Agikuyu Christians is given below.

The research established that the religiosity of the Agikuyu Christians before the revival and Mau Mau was not very consistent – it was partly traditional religion and partly Christian. Making reference to Karanja's book *Founding an African Faith* (1999) ACK (2001:43) asserts that many Africans had become Christians not out of genuine Christian conviction but through the desire for education. Karanja asserts further that the result was a religiosity that denied the power of the gospel way of life. He observes further that before the onset of the Revival, the African church was in a flood of practises that were unchristian in nature. He notes that drinking and sexual immorality prevailed so widely that the missionaries lamented on the church's states and longed for a spiritual revival. Thus, when the Revival Movement arrived, it was a prayer answered. The revivalists stressed on prayer, reverent Bible study and practical holiness. He further notes that the manifestations of the Revival included prophecies and speaking in tongues (see also Karanja 1969:73-74).

ACK (2001:40) further observes that with a focus on Christ and the cross, the revival meant a fresh understanding about sin, repentance, salvation, Christian fellowship, evangelism, daily victorious living and meditating on the Scripture.

Agikuyu Christians be they Protestants or Catholics believed totally and lived lives based on Scripture which to them meant the Bible. As observed earlier in this thesis by the time of the Mau Mau the Scripture (Bible) had become widely distributed among the Agikuyu Christians. It had also been interpreted in Kikuyu language and made easily accessible to the Agikuyu.

The Agikuyu who by then were mostly illiterate or semi-illiterate relied more for their Bible knowledge on what they were taught by the white missionaries or by poorly educated African clergy. The Agikuyu Christians took the word of God (Scripture or Bible) literally. As obtained from numerous respondents those Agikuyu Christians who were saved or were adherents of the revival movement strictly obeyed and lived the Scripture. To the Agikuyu Christians, Scripture meant the entire Bible.

Theologically as obtained from *Young Compact Dictionary* (1984: 479-489) the name “Bible” does not appear in the book referred by that name. The most comprehensive name employed by the book itself in a comprehensive way is “Scripture” with the variations “the Scripture” and “Holy Scriptures” (2Ti 3:16; cf, 3:15; Jas 4:5; Mt 26:54) (Young 1984; 479-489).

Young goes on to indicate that it is a book of two main parts, on OT (Old Testament) of thirty nine books composed before the birth of Jesus and a NT (New Testament) of twenty-seven books composed in the first decades after the death and resurrection of Jesus. It further informs that the NT books came into existence between about the years AD 45 and as late as AD 95.

Unger (1988:1146, 1147) indicate that “every portion of the Holy Book (Bible) is inspired and form a living portion of a living and organic whole.” He observes that although the expression does not exclude verbal errors that are the result of transmission of the text over many centuries, it still does certainly assure us that these writing are individually pervaded by God’s Spirit and warrant our belief that they are (in the words of Clement of Rome, *Epistle to the Corinthians 1:45*) the true utterances of the Holy Spirit and an assertion of the full inspiration of the Bible.

Tenney (1976:554-565) in defining the Bible indicates that: “The Bible is the general name given to the sacred Scriptures of the Christian church.” Tenney goes on to say (page 563) “Except for those who adopt a radical approach to the Bible most would agree that it is an inspired book.”

Wright and Ferguson (1988:630) observes that:

Through the Spirit, however, life under the authority of the Scripture becomes what it was meant to be – namely realised communion with the Father and the Son (cf. 1 Jn. 1:3). Living under Biblical authority is a prescription not only for theological rectitude but also for spiritual life.

All the above regarding the Scripture were applied in the lives and beliefs of the Agikuyu Christians especially those who were in the revival movement as well as those who were martyred. (On Scripture see also Freedman et al (1992:1017-1056); Tenney (1976:302-313.Vol Five Q-Z); Richardson and Bowden (1983:528-531); Freedman (1992:v 1017 – v 1056.Vol Five O-Sh); Tenney et al (1982:302-313.Vol Five Q-Z); Tenney et al (1982:554-565.Vol One A-C).

The social, political and religious factors that contributed to the strong Christian commitment among the Agikuyu were given in the Literature Review and also given by respondents. All respondents without exception indicated that the Europeans, after colonising Kenya, subjected the Africans to extreme low status and regarded them as less than human. The Europeans occupied the best lands, and made Africans squatters in the lands that were previously theirs. Africans could not attend the same schools, churches, hospitals with the Europeans; trains had European carriages; there were even toilets and hotels for whites only. Africans were placed and treated as third class citizens. Racial discrimination also affected churches. Africans could not attain very senior status in church. Even the representative of Africans on the Legislative Council (LEGCO) was a European missionary, Dr. J. W. Arthur (Were and Wilson 1969:232). The statement was also confirmed by a church leader interviewed by the researcher on 06/02/2010.

These discriminatory attitude and practise towards Africans also affected the African church of all denominations be they Anglican, P.C.E.A, Roman Catholic and the rest. In narrating such practises ACK (2001: 35) indicates that in spite of the white missionary attitude toward the “incapacity” of the Africans to shoulder the church responsibilities, economic necessity forced the sharing of power. The ACK book goes on to indicate that this sharing was limited at first. In 1943, it goes to say, the Kenya Anglican Church was organised into two radically segregated ecclesiastical components; the African Church Council (ACC) and the European Church Council for Africans and Europeans respectively. It notes that the chairman of the ACC was a European. This it notes is parallel to the affairs of the political realm where Europeans in the Legco represented Africans. The two bodies it observes were under the Diocesan Synod that was regarded as a representative body. The whole of Kenya was still covered by the Diocese of Mombasa. This segregations it finally notes is sometimes referred to as the ‘Dual Policy’ (ACK 2001:35).

Socially, the Africans could not mix with whites. Missionaries also condemned most of the African cultural customs and norms such as polygamy, bride wealth, female circumcision etc. Whites also condemned African religions and tried to convince the Africans to drop all their traditional religious beliefs and practises and adopt the ‘white man’ religion i.e. Christianity.

The above issues created in Africans a sense of utter frustration which led to the uprising of the Mau Mau which as obtained from all respondents, had its chief aims as gaining back African lands that had been forcibly grabbed by the white and also to obtain independence that would enable them to regain their dignity.

In order to achieve the above, the Agikuyu had to unite for the common purpose(s). To do so they resorted to introducing taking of oath(s) to ensure that the taker did not reveal the secrets of the Mau Mau movement to anyone. This was in keeping with the traditional oath taking which culturally were taken extremely seriously by the Agikuyu. During those days no one [and this is emphasised] would have taken the traditional oaths lightly. The Mau Mau banked on this and felt that giving oath to a Mugikuyu meant total loyalty and commitment of that person to the Mau Mau movement.

Committed Christians could not take the oath because of many reasons. Among them was that having taken the blood of Jesus they could not take any other blood be it human or goat blood. The significance of this contention and meaning is given below. Secondly, the manner in which the Mau Mau oath was administered was repugnant to the Christians and looked demonic; it was not even in keeping with the traditional oath taking. The goats were strangled not slaughtered. This by itself made Christians refuse to have anything to do with an animal that had been strangled as it is condemned in the Bible to do so as is also eating/taking blood of an animal (Acts 15:20, 29; 21:25 and also Lev 3:17; 7:26; Deut 12:16, 23).

Additionally, the committed Agikuyu Christians lived the gospel and could therefore not do anything that to them is forbidden in the Bible.

From the theological point of view, we note that (Young 1984: 395) in the Old Testament oath was an appeal to God to be witness of the truth of some statement or of the bonding character of some promise or agreement. Unger (1957:931) indicates that the Christian practise in the matter of oaths was founded in great measure on the Jewish beliefs and practices. Unger further contends that oath-taking on the gospels was an imitation of the Jewish practise of placing the hands on the book of the law. Unger asserts that the meaning of our Lord's interdiction of swearing (Math 5:33-37) was that:

Christianity should know no oath at all. To the consciousness of the Christian, God should always be so vividly present that, to him and others in the Christian

community, his yea and nay are, in point of reliability equivalent to any oath. His yea and nay are oath enough.

The Agikuyu Christian refusal to take any oath was based on the above. However it is doubtful whether they were aware that neither God nor Jesus condemned judicial oaths as highlighted in the following texts. Harrison (1973: 382) asserts that the words of our divine Lord “swear not at all” (Math 5:34) are directed against all false, blasphemous and frivolous swearing as also all swearing in uncertain things. Harrison (1973:382) however states that our Lord immediately adds: “But shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths.” By this it should be noted Jesus approved all oaths in the interest of God’s glory and the truth. Leon-Dufour (ed) (1978:396) goes on to indicate that when Jesus was brought before the Sanhedrin, He accepts the challenge of the High Priest who adjures Him, that is puts Him on oath (Mt 26:63). On this solemn occasion, then, when He is announcing His mission in front of the legitimate authorities, Jesus gives implicit recognition to the value of oaths. Leon-Dufour further asserts that the New Testament hands on the thought of Jesus about the sincerity that must exist between men, about the respect owed to the honour of God and about the need to reserve oaths for serious cases.

In this occurrence, although Mau Mau oathing was a very serious matter to the Mau Mau, it cannot be justified in taking it from the Biblical point of view.

Committed Agikuyu Christians could as observed so far not drink any animal blood, eat raw meat or eat meat of an animal that had been strangled.

Blood is important theologically in both the Old and the New Testament. Young (1989:111) indicates that the picture presented is of life in the blood and the blood itself was life. It could not be eaten, and it was the blood that made the atonement (Ge 9:46; Lev 17:11, 14; Dt 12:23). The offering of blood was part of the ritual of atonement so that when the sacrifice was killed its blood had to be poured out on the altar (Ex 24:8, 29:12, 16, 20; Lev 16:15-16,27). Young further notes that in the New Testament it was the blood of Jesus Christ that made the atonement, which means that His death was considered a sacrifice, and the blood was poured out to make the atonement. Life is in the blood Young notes; there can be no remission of sin without its being shed. Therefore it required the death of a lamb without blemish or defect to make the sacrifice in Old Testament times. Young signifies that is why Christ is called both sinless and the Lamb of God (Heb 9:11-14, 22; 10:19; 1 Pe

1:19; 1 Jn. 1:7). It is worth noting that the Agikuyu Christians as recorded in the testimonies from respondents used to refer to Jesus as “Gatūrume ka Ngai” “The Lamb of God.”

Hebrew 9:11-14 states in part:

He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves but he entered the most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption...How much more, then will the blood of Christ who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God.

The Agikuyu Christians fully comprehended this and could therefore not partake the blood of a goat as they appreciated the fact that the blood of Christ was superior to that of a goat.

Eiselen (1929: 1315) in reference to Hebrew 9:11ff is of the opinion which the researcher concurs with, that where Judaism failed, Christ succeeded. Christ's success, as Eiselen indicates, was due to two things:

- (1) He entered into the Heavenly Sanctuary – not into the Holy of Holies of the tabernacle like an ordinary High Priest.
- (2) He offered the perfect sacrifice – His own blood – and not an imperfect sacrifice like that of goats and calves.

It is on a similar concept and view and indeed belief that the Agikuyu Christians felt that it was only the blood of Jesus that was enough. All other blood and sacrifices would not do as they were imperfect. Neither, to the Agikuyu Christian, would such imperfect blood such as that of a goat be mixed with the perfect blood of Jesus.

Eiselen (1929:1315) further feels that the sacrifice which Christ offered needed no repetition like the sacrifices of the Jewish law. It is noted that it was offered once for all and brought an eternal redemption. Further that the sacrifice of Christ was much more potent than any other. It cleansed the conscience from dead works to serve the living God. Eiselen (1929:1315) further indicates that the shedding of blood is essential to sacrifice (cf the statement in Heb 9:22 “apart from shedding of blood there is no remission.”)

On the assumption that these postulates are true, Eiselen (1929:1316) argues:

- 1) The value of the sacrifice of Christ rests upon the fact that he offered himself and not an external sacrifice. It was the surrender of his life that counted.
- 2) This sacrifice Eiselen (1929:1316) further argues fulfilled the condition that the offering must be without blemish. Since he was “holy, guileless, undefiled, separated from sinners.”
- 3) Further argument by Eiselen (1929:1316) is that it was offered through the Eternal Spirit. The efficacy of the sacrifice of Christ depended on the fact that He was not mortal, like an earthly priest but possessed a Spirit which was external. Finally, Eiselen (1929:1316) asserts that He belonged to an eternal order and His sacrifice therefore had eternal value.

All these standards, conditions and values could not be met or marched with the sacrifice or blood of a goat as offered by the Mau Mau to the Agikuyu Christians. Hence the choice to follow Jesus no matter what by the Agikuyu Christians and their refusal to partake the goat's blood.

Giving further insight on blood, Unger (1988:175-176) indicates that when permission was given for Noah to partake of animal food (Gen 9:14) the use of blood was strictly forbidden. It is further observed that because of the blood, the eating of bloody portions of flesh (Gen 9:4) or of flesh with blood (Lev 19:26; 1 Sam 14:32) is also forbidden. Unger further observes that this prohibition was also made by the apostles and elders in the council at Jerusalem and coupled with things offered to idols (Acts 15:29) (Unger 1988:175-176). (On blood, see also Harrison and Bromley (1975:99-100); Richardson and Bowden (1983:76); Leon Dufour (1978:52-53); Freedman (1992:I-761 – I-763. Vol 1 A-C); Tenney (1963: 127-128); Tenney (1982: 626-628. Vol 1 A-C)).

It is not surprising then that the Agikuyu Christians who as noted had a fairly good knowledge of Scripture and adhered strictly to its teachings and obeyed its demands could not partake or eat the blood of a goat or of any other animal for that matter. They believed that when they converted to Christianity and partook the blood and body of Jesus during the Holy Communion, the wine and bread represented the actual blood and flesh of Jesus. They could therefore not take the blood of animals (goat) because it is prohibited to do so in the Bible and also to do so would have

been tantamount to mixing the blood of Jesus which they had partaken with that of an animal (goat).

Further the missionaries had explained to them that they did not need to sacrifice animals and that Jesus' death at Calvary was enough sacrifice, and his blood was enough for the atonement of their sins. Additionally as commanded by Jesus at the Last Supper, they should, as often as possible, celebrate his death by taking the wine and bread which to them represented Jesus' blood and flesh. They could therefore not partake of any other blood.

Mau Mau also demanded all its adherents to steal, commit murder, forsake Christianity, deny Christ as Lord and Saviour, stop going to churches and their children to stop attending missionary and government schools.

Christians could not agree to any of the above. This led to a collision course with the Mau Mau. The result was persecution and even killing of the Christians by the Mau Mau.

As obtained from the respondents many Christians failed to stand firm and gave in to the Mau Mau. A great number stood the test, and refused to give in to the Mau Mau which led to many being persecuted, beaten up, their houses torched, their properties taken away and a number of unfortunate ones killed. It was this time and experience that taught Christians that they had to be ready to die for their faith as indicated and required of all Christians in the scripture.

Again as expounded under Literature Review and also obtained from all respondents who were with Mau Mau, the Mau Mau fighters felt fully justified in persecuting Christians. Those in the Mau Mau camp viewed Christians as stooges of the whites, as collaborators and traitors. The Mau Mau argued with justification, that Christianity was a white man's religion, as Jesus was viewed by them as having been a white man. They therefore could not understand why any African could side with anything white be it religion, school or friendship.

It was however made clear by the respondents that Christians were also unhappy about the suppression, the whites, even missionaries, were subjecting Africans. Christians also wanted to obtain back their lands that had been taken by force from Africans. They also wanted to attain independence as much as the Mau Mau. Christians were with their fellow tribesman in the Mau Mau in trying to achieve those objectives. The Christians as obtained from the respondents, used to pray for safe delivery of the Mau Mau fighters and those in detention. Bishop Kariuki in his

book confirms this; that he used to pray publicly in churches for the Mau Mau at great risk to himself as he did not know how his white bosses would take such an act.

The Mau Mau however felt that by refusing to take the oath, the Christians were not with them. They felt that Christians had refused to unite with the rest of the tribe in fighting the whites. They further felt that since Christians followed the white man's religion, they were likely to be traitors. By refusing to take the oath, the Mau Mau felt that the Christians were wrecking any chance of uniting the tribe and had therefore to be persecuted.

In some areas of Gikuyuland especially southern parts of Kiambu District, Mau Mau and Christians seemed to have come to some sort of understanding and tolerance. Something like 'live and let live' – 'you are my kinsman whether you are in Mau Mau or in church', 'you fight the whites for our lands and independence', 'we in the church will pray to God to bring us those two things peacefully and we will pray for your success and protection.' Something like that. Most Christians were in support of the struggle, all they were against was the manner that the Mau Mau were going about it.

As shown as recently as 13th December, 2009, the rift and bitterness those persecutions brought amongst the Agikuyu is still felt. In the Sunday Nation of that date, a son of one of the Agikuyu martyrs laments the killing of his parents and their friends in December, 1952 and asks: "they were not traitors, why did they kill them? Why would freedom fighters kill the people they were fighting for?" (Muchiri 2009).

To which, in the same article, the Mau Mau veterans says that they have no apologies to make. To them Christians like Mariano, his wife and his friends were enemies of the freedom struggle, and as such they deserved to die. The Christians, the article goes on to say are not giving in to such arguments. The Christians say "that the veteran ought to at least acknowledge the role Mariano (the martyr) and his band of Christians played in the struggle for independence" ((Muchiri 2009).

The article proves beyond any doubt that serious misgivings from both sides of the divide still exist among the Agikuyu and also that both sides feel that they played a role in the freedom struggle and that the other side misunderstood their role, intent, and stand in the struggle.

The respondents' views on the role Agikuyu Christian martyrs played in the growth of Christianity especially in Kenya varied. The response was not uniform.

Most of the respondents indicated that church membership dropped during the Emergency. Reason being that most church members moved to independent churches while some were killed, detained etc, while others simply did not turn up for church services for fear of being spotted by the Mau Mau which might have led to them being persecuted.

However, soon after the Mau Mau uprising was defeated by the British, a lot of 'lapsed' Christians moved back to church. Most even admitted having taken the oath and asked for pardon and forgiveness and to be re-admitted back to the church.

This view as given in Chapter 4 is supported by the results of archival research where articles on this were found. Also by numerous church leaders and writers who confirmed that the church grew immensely after the Emergency.

One of the respondents indicated that the Agikuyu Christians witnessed what the Bible says about persecution and that the Agikuyu Christians need not be told how one could carry ones' cross. The life of a Christian was seen in its reality.

All Christians interviewed and as obtained from archival research confirmed that martyrdom had tremendous effect on the church growth. The church membership went down during the years 1952 to 1955 which were the years that the Agikuyu really suffered because of Mau Mau and emergency. After 1955, the church grew in bounds and actually 'exploded', and grew numerically and in substance owing to persecution rather than yielding to pressures of sin (Mau Mau). The strength of Christians was strengthened by the examples observed of those who during the Emergency stood by their faith no matter what.

The issue of whether Christians today can stand by their faith was difficult to be comprehended by the majority of the respondents. Reason being that most of them had never given thought to the idea and also most of them were not aware and neither conversant with the theology of martyrdom. Interestingly Kikuyu language has no word for martyrdom or martyr. As said earlier martyrdom is foreign to the Kikuyu culture and traditional religion. However the respondents included some of the religious giants this country had the privilege of giving birth and being served by them. These few had sufficient knowledge of the history and theology of martyrdom and could comprehend what is entailed when one is asked whether they would undergo martyrdom.

From some of the respondents the researcher learned that, yes, future Christians could show similar strength in faith. One respondent interviewed on

09/02/2010 said that all Christians should at any time be always ready to suffer, die or be persecuted because of their faith. He further feels that all Christians should show and stand by their faith in churches, government or any place of work. Other Christians interviewed said that just as they were ready to die for their faith during the Mau Mau period, they are ready to die even today and for the rest of their lives because of their faith. This was the stand taken and stated by all the members of the Revival movement 'Brethren.'

However, a few of those interviewed, 'born again' Christians and not so devoted Christians from both the Roman Catholic, Independent and Protestant churches were not so sure what they would do in similar circumstances to those of Mau Mau or in situations where they would be required to choose whether to die or comply with whatever is required in that situation. They stated that they would not choose to die; rather they would do whatever is required (Five of the respondents said so but requested that their identity be not revealed).

On an aspect almost similar to this theme Sauer and Howell (eds) (2010:69) give a fresh insight to modern era Christians as to what is a Christian duty to the state and to the church of God. The authors firstly indicate that Christians should be loyal citizens, who should seek the welfare of their state, country and people. They are to pray for those in authority, and to seek to live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness (1 Tim 2:1-2). They feel however that whenever the authorities try to force Christians to dishonour God, they must obey God more rather than men (Acts 5:29). The loyalty of a Christian citizen only finds its limits when the state either wants to force them to do evil, wants to forbid the fulfilment of God-given commandments or forces them to choose between the state and their higher loyalty to God. Thus, when Christians are forbidden to worship their God and him alone or to witness, they should obey God more than men (Acts 4:12). The authors feel that there is therefore a requirement for a new evaluation of those who break state laws for the sake of the Gospel as such conduct should not be condoned as it is harmful to the image of the rest of God abiding Christians.

From the above, it is evident that Christians should at all times be loyal to their state and government, should the situation however warrant it, as was the case during the Mau Mau persecution (1952-1960), where, for example, the Agikuyu Christians had to choose their tribe or their commitment to God, then Christians should as indicated in Acts 4:12 obey God more than men.

This thesis established that the Revival played a vital role in strengthening the faith of Christians to the point of death. In the light of this, the researcher is of the opinion that the Revival movement might be the answer to the Christians portraying the same faith as early Christians or as portrayed in recent times by the Baganda and Agikuyu martyrs.

5.2 Conclusion

All the research questions were satisfactorily answered. In addition, the research brought to light information on very many issues that touched on the Mau Mau period including what led to the Mau Mau uprising; what made Christians stand firm in their faith, why the Mau Mau persecuted Christians; what role the Christian martyrs played in the growth of Christianity and also whether today's Christians can withstand the test of their faith if the situations warrants it.

It was established that Christians, during the Mau Mau period, were ready to die rather than act contrary to their faith. Most Christians regarded and still regard martyrdom of Christians during the early period of Christianity as myths or things that only the ancients could undergo but not people of later centuries. With the martyrdom of the Agikuyu during the Mau Mau period, it dawned on Kenyan (and African) Christians that martyrdom is a prerequisite of all followers of Christ and it can happen now and in future until our Lord comes again.

This research dealt deeper in the circumstances leading to the Agikuyu martyrdom far much more than most research on Mau Mau have produced since they have hitherto been of a general nature. This research established conclusively that the Agikuyu Christians were martyred for their faith. It also brought to light the source of the martyrs' faith and the circumstances surrounding such martyrdom.

5.3 Recommendations

In summary, the researcher recommends that all Christian churches as well as all Christians should study the life of the martyrs and model their lives after them. Thus they should live for Christ in total obedience to Him. Their lives should be based on the Scriptures.

Similarly, the Church should be in a position at all times, to teach and nurture their followers, to live in accordance with the Scriptures so as to stand firm in the face of temptations and persecutions.

5.4 Contribution to Scholarship

This research, for the first time, has conducted serious study of the Agikuyu martyrs. It shows who they were, why they were persecuted, who persecuted them and how they were persecuted. It also sought and discovered the source of their faith. By ascertaining and discovering all the above, this research will, it is hoped, be of great benefit to churches, theologians, Christians, schools, universities, as well as members of the public worldwide. It will also be of use to other researchers as it fills the gap that has been there regarding the Agikuyu martyrs' death and sufferings as well as their faith.

5.5 Area of Further Research

In the course of this research, the researcher came across very many living eye-witnesses of the Agikuyu martyrs as well as two 'confessors' (white martyrs) of the 1952-1960 persecutions who are still alive today!

Those living martyrs include: Naomi Macharia and her husband William Macharia of Kiria village, Mugoiri, Murang'a of the ACK Diocese of Mount Kenya Central, Archdeaconry of Muthiria.

The other confessor (white martyr) but this time of the 1969 oathing is Mrs. Rahab Wairimu Kiambuthi of Kanyariri, Kabete area, Kiambu District under the Archdeaconry of Kabete, ACK Diocese of Mount Kenya South.

The researcher urges the churches and researchers to make an effort of visiting such eye-witnesses, making videos and recording their statements and if possible honouring the above mentioned three living martyrs. It is ironical that people are honoured after death. This time around the churches have an opportunity of honouring its living heroes. All other eye witnesses to the Mau Mau saga are at an advanced age and should therefore be visited and interviewed/videoed as soon as possible.

The researcher when interviewing Rt. Rev. Dr. John Gatu (past Moderator of P.C.E.A General Assembly) learned from him that Bahati P.C.E.A church was built in

commemoration of the Agikuyu martyrs who died during the Mau Mau period. Rev. Calderwood of SCM, Kikuyu (now P.C.E.A Kimuri Church), in his letter of 1953 indicated that he had a list containing 25 names of those martyred during that period. The researcher's attempts to obtain that list was not successful. The researcher however is confident that the books of Kimuri church of that period as well as the minute and accounting books might have names of those martyred as another letter by Calderwood indicated that he was convening a finance committee meeting to decide how to share the money that had been collected among the relatives of those martyrs. There must therefore be a list giving names and particulars of those who were given that money and who were their martyred relatives. Archival research from St. Andrews Church archives would produce the desired results. The list according to Rt. Rev. Dr. Gatu would be of great benefit to the church as among other uses, the names would be embossed on a special plaque on the doors of churches especially the P.C.E.A Bahati Church, Nairobi.

A research almost similar to the theme of this thesis should be undertaken regarding the 1969 Agikuyu Christians martyrdom and other issues touching on the 1969 Agikuyu oath-taking.

In the course of this research, the researcher came across very interesting material at the Kenya National Archives which indicates conclusively that Mau Mau uprising was not an Agikuyu affair alone. Granted, the Agikuyu, Embu and Meru were the chief players to the Mau Mau but other tribes in small numbers were in it. These other tribes included a reasonable number of Wakambas, a few Maasai and Luos. This is evident by the detention then of the likes of Ngei and Ochieng Onoko. Why were the two detained and yet they were not Agikuyu? The Europeans downplayed the involvement of other tribes in the Mau Mau saga. The Europeans did this for fear of alerting other tribes with the likelihood of their joining the Agikuyu in their fight against the colonialists. If other tribes had joined in the Mau Mau uprising it would have resulted in total anarchy and inability of the British to rule the country. This area should be of interest to the researchers of differing disciplines, such as historians, political scientists etc. or for anyone seeking a serious area of research.

A research should be conducted to establish the role of the loyalists in the emergency period. One question that requires to be answered is why should one support the colonizers who are suppressing your own people, had taken your land,

dignity and freedom? Why be on the side of colonizers and thus frustrate the efforts of your tribesmen who are fighting your common enemy?

Finally, a research or researches should be done on the Revival Movement especially to establish what is in that movement that can be adopted by Christian churches to make its members better Christians who will live for God but not for mammon as is the case today.

APPENDIX I: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Questions for those with firsthand information on the martyrdom of the
Agikuyu (1952-1960)

Demographic Data

1. Gender: Male _____ Female _____
2. Age: Between _____ and _____
3. Marital status: Single _____ Married _____
4. Occupation: _____
5. Level of education: Below secondary school _____ Secondary _____
College _____ University and above _____
6. Church: _____
7. Address: _____
8. Telephone number: _____

Question Schedule

1. Do you know of anyone who was killed or suffered persecution during the Mau Mau period because of his or her faith?
2. What were the full names of the martyr?
3. What was his/her age?
4. What is/was your relationship to the martyr?
5. To which church did the martyr belong?
6. How long had the martyr been converted to Christianity?
7. What were the circumstances surrounding the martyrdom?
8. Why were Agikuyu Christians opposed to the Mau Mau movement?
9. What do you think made Christians prefer to be persecuted or die instead of joining the Mau Mau?
10. What effect did martyrdom have on the church?
11. What in your views led to the Mau Mau uprising?
12. What was the political and social climate in Gikuyuland like during the emergency period?
13. Additional relevant information obtained from the respondent.

Instrument for recording material in the Archives, Publications, Documents

1. Name of institution where information is sourced: _____

2. Date of the search: _____

3. Type of the document: _____

4. Brief description of the document: _____

5. Date of that document: _____

6. Each document as per Turabian style to incorporate where possible:

N = Notes

B = Bibliography

PR = Parenthetical reference

RL = Reference List

7. Relevant information on the document: _____

8. Why the document is important for the research on Mau Mau martyrdom: _____

APPENDIX II: INTERVIEWS

The following is a list of the respondents in the study. The interviews took place at respondents' residences. Only very few took place in their offices. The following respondents were interviewed individually i.e. alone and not as a group. There were only two groups that were interviewed namely the 3 (three) ACK ministers who were interviewed in the vestry of the Immanuel Church, Weithaga and the 15 Revival Brethren who were interviewed inside the St. Stephens ACK Church, Njumbi.

Those Interviewed Individually

No.	Date	Name(s)	Description
1	30-08-2009	Esther N. Muthondu (Mrs.)	A born again Christian then and now
2	30-08-2009	Johana M. Kimani	Page boy of the freedom fighters. Now a devout Christian
3	09-02-2010	Bishop Rt. Rev. John Mahiani	Retired Bishop – ACK Mount Kenya Central
4	10-02-2010	Very Rev. Burugu	Provost – All Martyrs (St. James) Cathedral – Murang'a
5	10-02-2010	Ven. J. Karanu	Archdeacon – ACK Diocese of Mt. Kenya Central
6	10-02-2010	G. N. Kamau (Mrs.)	Born again/Housewife
7	10-02-2010	Ven. Faith Irungu	Archdeacon – ACK Njumbi Archdeaconry
8	11-02-2010	Rev. P.G. Mwangi	Minister – P.C.E.A Tumutumu
9	11-02-2010	A. W. Wanjohi (Mrs.)	Member of Roman Catholic Church – Nyeri
10	11-02-2010	C. M. Weru	Elder – P.C.E.A Tumutumu
11	11-02-2010	Most Rev. Dr. Gitari	Retired Archbishop of ACK
12	12-02-2010	B.W. Muthama (Mrs.)	Born again farmer/housewife
13	12-02-2010	Canon Muthama	Canon – ACK
14	12-02-2010	J.W. Wamahiu	Retiree/Farmer/Businessman/Freedom fighter
15	13-02-2010	J. Muikia	Farmer. Former Freedom fighter. Detainee
16	13-02-2010	B. Njoroge	Farmer. Former Freedom fighter. Detainee
17	13-02-2010	E. M. Ngure	Farmer. Former Freedom fighter. Detainee
18	13-02-	J. Mwangi	Contractor/ farmer. Church elder

No.	Date	Name(s)	Description
	2010		
19	13-02-2010	I. M. Kanyatta	Freedom fighter. Detainee and now church member
20	16-02-2010	S. K. Ndegwa	Shoe repairer/farmer. Former freedom fighter and Detainee.
21	16-02-2010	G. M. Gacathi	Retiree/farmer. Freedom fighter. Detainee etc.
22	18-02-2010	R.W. Kiambuthi (Mrs.)	A 'white martyr' in her own right of the 1969 oathing. A Member of the Revival Fellowship etc.
23	18-02-2010	P.J. Kiambuthi	Retired Civil Servant/farmer and member of the Revival
24	20-02-2010	J.W. Njoroge	Retiree/Farmer. Born again
25	20-02-2010	F.C. Kagone	Retired teacher/farmer
26	23-02-2010	Rt. Rev. Dr. Gatu	Retired Moderator of P.C.E.A General Assembly etc.
27	23-02-2010	Teresia G. Gitau (Mrs.)	Member of Roman Catholic Church. Retired teacher
28	24-02-2010	P.K. Mbuti	Member of Roman Catholic Church. Retired teacher
29	25-02-2010	E.K Ndekei	Lay leader ACK. Retired teacher
30	25-02-2010	Rt. Rev. P. Njenga	Retired Bishop ACK Mt. Kenya South Diocese
31	26-02-2010	M. W. Wanjau (Mrs.)	Retired teacher
32	26-02-2010	Rt. Rev. Dr. G. Wanjau	Retired moderator of P.C.E.A General Assembly etc.
33	05-03-2010	C.N. Mwinyi (Ms)	ACK Embu
34	05-03-2010	G.I. Nyaga	ACK Embu

Group Interviews

Group Interview No. 1

Group interview that was conducted inside St. Stephens ACK Church, Njumbi on Wednesday 10th February, 2010. All those who comprise this group are members of the Revival movement. Names of those interviewed:

1. Leah Wangari
2. Moses Mwangi
3. Phillip Maina
4. Isaac Kimone
5. Emmar Waringa

6. Priscillah Njeri
7. Tabitha Wangari
8. Phyllis Wambui
9. Ziporah Nyambura
10. Sera Nyambura
11. Ziporah Nyambura John
12. Pauline Wambui
13. John K. Kinyua
14. Hesbon Mugu
15. Paterson Njema

Group Interview No. 2

Group interview in the vestry of ACK Immanuel Church Weithaga on Friday 12th February, 2010.

- (i) Ven. J. N Kariuki – Archdeacon – ACK Mount Kenya Central - Gathukeini Archdeaconry, Murang'a
- (ii) Rev. E. M. Muthomi – Vicar, ACK Immanuel Church, Weithaga, Murang'a
- (iii) Ev. Samuel K. Muturi – Evangelist, ACK Weithaga Parish

Archival Research

1. Kenya National Archives, Nairobi
2. P.C.E.A Kimuri (Church of Torch), Kikuyu, Kenya
3. St. Andrews P.C.E.A Church, Nairobi
4. All Martyrs (St. James) Cathedral, Murang'a
5. Daystar University Library, Nairobi
6. St. Paul's University Library, Limuru

Archival research took place at various dates in December, 2009 and January to March, 2010.

APPENDIX III: MARTYRS TOMBSTONES AT ACK NJUMBI CHURCH

Tombstones of three Agikuyu Christian martyrs whose graves are at ACK, St. Stephen's Church, Njumbi, Murang'a, Kenya.

- | | | | |
|----|--|---|---|
| 1) | GENSON GACIGI
ORAGIRWO UTUKU
WA MWERI
18-11-1953
NIUNDU WA UIRA WA
JESU | } | Genson Gacigi
murdered night of
18-11-1953
because of the witness of
Jesus |
| 2) | REBEKA WACEKE WA
GENSON GACIGI
ORAGIRWO UTUKU
WA MWERI
18-11-1953
NIUNDU WA UIRA WA
JESU | } | Rebeka Waceke w/o
Genson Gacigi
murdered night of
18-11-1953
because of the witness of
Jesus |
| 3) | MARY WANGECI WA
JOSHUA
ORAGIRWO UTUKU
WA MWERI
24-10-1953
TONDU WA UIRA WA
JESU | } | Mary Wangeci w/o
Joshua
murdered night of
24-10-1953
because of the witness of
Jesus |

The researcher visited the ACK Njumbi cemetery on Wednesday, 10th February 2010 and confirmed from witnesses, the martyrdom of the three martyrs.

APPENDIX IV: ON-LINE ARTICLE

On-line Article from the Daily Nation on the Web

[URL: <http://allafrica.com/stories/printable/200912140698.html>]:

Daily Nation On The Web

Kenya: Villagers Want Mau Mau Veterans to Apologise for Brutal Killings

Muchiri Karanja
12 December 2009

Nairobi — The ghosts of the Mau Mau rebellion still haunt central Kenya -- 46 years after independence.

In June this year, former Mau Mau fighters trooped to London to file a suit against the British who crushed their rebellion more than 50 years ago.

But the former rebels now have to confront their history at home and the relatives and friends of the Kenyans they killed, maimed and abused.

As the uprising reached its peak in the early 1950s, the rebels opened a new battlefield in the villages; demanding that villagers take an oath of allegiance to "freedom and the African soil".

This put them on a collision course with many of their own people who had embraced Christianity - the white man's religion - and who were chopped to pieces with machetes and axes for refusing to take the oath.

In Karuthi village, Othaya, the Sunday Nation found some of the relatives and friends of the Christians the Mau Mau killed.

Simon Waweru Mariano, the fourth-born son of Mariano Wachira Gichohi, said his father, a devout Roman Catholic, was killed for refusing to take the oath.

The rebels then tracked his mother Natalina Gakui to the mission compound where she had taken refuge with her five children and murdered her as well. They also killed Mariano's two friends - Domenic Nyota, a Catholic catechism teacher, and Joseph Gacheru Mwaniki.

The freedom fighters chopped off the arms and legs of all the four before slitting their throats. Then they burnt down their houses, erasing all records of their lives, including their photographs.

"That was how we dealt with traitors," said 84-year-old Mwangi Kaguma, an ex-Mau Mau fighter. He said refusing to take the oath of allegiance was punishable by death.

But Mariano's son says his father was never a traitor and did not deserve the brutal death. "My father was not a home guard. He was just a Christian who bought land to put up a church and school; that was why they killed him," Simon Waweru said.

The British imposed a state of emergency on Kenya on October 20, 1952. It was lifted in 1960.

Scholars estimate the African civilian dead at 50,000, victims of both the British and the Mau Mau. Thirty-two Europeans and 26 Asian civilians were killed.

Local Mau Mau fighters in Karuthi were not happy with Mariano Wachira Gichohi's Christian activism, his son said, and were incensed when he bought a piece of land in the protected colonial village on which he erected a small church made of banana leaves. The makeshift church doubled as a primary school.

And Mariano and his family refused to take the Mau Mau oath. The rebels tried several times to kill Mariano.

On December 9, 1952, they lured him out of the village with a letter allegedly written by a British district officer summoning him to Nyeri. He set off for the town about 25 km away. It was a long walk, and the preacher took along his trusted friend, Domenic Nyota, and fellow villager Joseph Gacheru Mwaniki. They never returned.

His son said the rebels attacked the three men with machetes and axes just before they crossed the River Chinga.

Mariano was the first to die. But first, his killers gave him a last chance to renounce his faith and take the oath. He refused.

"They cut him up, chopped off his fingers and toes, and then slit his throat," said his son.

The rebels dumped the bodies in the river and weighted Mariano's down with a stone so it lay on the river bed for more than a month. After the bodies were finally retrieved, they were buried at Gikondi parish church, about 35 km from Nyeri.

A local priest hid Mariano's wife Natalina and her five children inside a missionary compound, but the rebels tracked her down and killed her in a trap as well. Today, 50 years after the rebellion was crushed, a group of Christians in Nyeri have joined relatives of the slain Karuthi villagers to demand an apology from the Mau Mau veterans.

They say Mariano and his band of Christians may not have taken up arms against the colonialists, but they were not traitors and did not deserve to die in such a manner.

"They were not traitors. Why did they kill them? Why would freedom fighters kill the people they were fighting for?" asked 73-year-old Teobaldo Macharia, a retired teacher who was an altar boy when Mariano was murdered.

But the Mau Mau veterans say they have no apologies to make. Christians like Mariano, his wife and two friends were enemies of the freedom struggle and, as such, they deserved to die. The Mau Mau Veterans Association says it is ready to face the Christians in court.

"We have no apologies to make. We killed to protect ourselves," said veterans' spokesman Gitu wa Kahengeri. "Let them go to court. We will face them."

The Christians will not give up easily. They argue that the veterans ought to at least acknowledge the role Mariano and his band of Christians played in the struggle for independence.

"They should recognise them for putting up the first schools in the country," said Christine Nyambura, the chairwoman of St Joseph's Catholic Church in Karuthi, Othaya, the church Mariano helped build.

"What schools?" asked Mr Njogu, adding that many children of Mau Mau fighters were barred from attending the schools because they were said to be children of the devil.

On December 9, 1995, the then Nyeri Archbishop, the late Nicodemus Kirima, consecrated the freshly painted graves of Mariano, Natalina, Domenic and Joseph, and last year church authorities allowed St Joseph's church in Karuthi to erect a monument in their memory outside the church they helped found.

Every year on December 9, the church holds a memorial service for the four who are now revered by Catholics of Karuthi as martyrs of the faith. Some even hope they will one day be made saints.

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APPENDIX V: KARUTHI MARTYRS

Monument erected outside the St. Joseph CCM Karuthi Memorial Church in memory of the four Christian martyrs murdered at Karuthi during the Mau Mau period in Kenya.

Words on the monument:

IN LOVING MEMORY OF MARIANO WACHIRA GICHOHI
THE FOUNDER OF KARUTHI SCHOOL AND CHURCH

He worked tirelessly with Love, Devotion and died for his faith in God. Born in
1893, murdered on 09-12-1952 at Karuthi

R.I.P

IN LOVING MEMORY OF NATALINA GAKUI MARIANO

Wife and mother

Born in 1894 murdered on 16-04-1953 at Karuthi for her faith

R.I.P

IN LOVING MEMORY OF JOSEPH GACHERU MWANIKI

Born in 1882 and murdered on 09-12-1952 for his faith

R.I.P

IN LOVING MEMORY OF DOMENIC NYOTA KAMWAGA

Born in 1906 and murdered on 09-12-1952 for his faith

R.I.P

The researcher visited the CCM St. Joseph's Karuthi Memorial Church on Tuesday 18th January, 2011 and confirmed from witnesses and faithful the martyrdom of the four Roman Catholic martyrs.

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