

EVANGELIZING THE *KARIMOJONG*:
A STUDY OF THE PASTORALISTS OF EAST AFRICA

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Abstract

EVANGELIZING THE KARIMOJONG: A STUDY OF THE PASTORALISTS OF EAST AFRICA

This study examines the evangelization of the Karamojong people, the pastoralists of East Africa. The purpose of this study is to investigate the extent of evangelization of the Karamojong people, amidst allegation that the Karamojong people are resistant to change.

Chapter one of this study, is a guide and offers definitions and the problem statement. Also the subject, the purposes, relevance and methods of investigation and presentation are explained.

Chapter two is mainly a review of the literature and other sources of information regarding: the historical, political, cultural and religious perspectives of the Karimojong society. These perspectives are investigated to establish whether there is a relationship between these forces and the Karimojong evangelization process. The narratives are important to this study because they are likely to provide us with vital information concerning the Karimojong life and practice.

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Under the historical perspectives, the historical events, which led to the present situation is discussed. In the political perspectives, the political forces and the political ramification in the political and social development of the Karimojong people are discussed. Particular reference is made on the colonial era as well as the post colonial regimes of the independent Uganda.

The negative impact created by the political forces isolated the Karamojong people. In order to achieve a solution to their survival, transhumance as a mode of existence was used. Militarisation of the region was introduced to curb tribal

conflict connected to raiding of cattle and the restocking of herds decimated by either disease or cattle raiding.

In the cultural and religious section, the Karimojong's rich cultural perspective was investigated with a view to ascertain how cultural sufluence affected the Karimojong receptivity to new ideas.

Chapter three dwells on the impact of the forces discussed in chapter two as the major causes of the Karimojong inhibitions to change. Chapter four refers to the means of evangelizing the Karimojong people. Practical methods understood and relevant to the Karimojong world-view should be used in the propagation of the gospel. Various approaches have been highlighted in this respect.

Chapter five is the conclusion and offers recommendations as well as the brief summary of this study. Evangelisation of the Karimojong is possible by using holistic approach rather than the traditional missionary method of evangelism.

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1. CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

This chapter, as a guideline for this study, will deal with the following issues:

- Preliminary Definition of Terms;
- Background and Problem Statement;
- The Aim and Objectives;
- The Hypothesis;
- The Method of Research;
- The Chapter Division.

1.1 PRELIMINARY DEFINITION OF THE TERMS USED IN THIS STUDY

1.1.1 The Term “Evangelization”

Evangelization in this study, means “Announcing that God, Creator and Lord of universe, has personally intervened in human history and has done so supremely through the person and ministry of Jesus of Nazareth who is Lord of history, Saviour and Liberator” (Bosch.1991: 412-13). That in Jesus Christ, God is establishing a new order {a new way of being human} and calling people to renounce all alternatives and embrace this reality (Clayton,1998: 42-4).

It is “Bringing men and women into a living relationship with Jesus Christ Evangelism is everything the Church is sent in the world to do, and everything it does must be pervaded by the overriding [factor] commitment to evangelism” (Kirk,1999: 56-7).

1.1.2 The Term “*Karimojong*”

In this study “*Karimojong*” refers to the people living in the region of *Karamoja*. *Karamoja* refers to a geographical location and the political name for the district in Eastern Uganda.

1.1.3 The Term “Pastoralists”

Pastoralists in this study means a group of people who have retained their pastoral modes of existence and are largely semi nomadic (Langlands,1971: 27).

1.2 BACKGROUND AND PROBLEM STATEMENT OF THIS STUDY

1.2.1 Background of this Study

For almost a century, the land of *Karimojong* has not been fully opened to the gospel. Investigation of this problem by the Church or Mission agencies seems to be lacking. The work that has been published in the recent years on the *Karimojong* is by the Verona Fathers Pazzaglia (1982). **The *Karimojong*: Some Aspects**; and Novelli (1988) **Aspects of Ethno-sociology**, are some of the few works written by the missionaries on *Karamoja*. But they are meant for social scientists audience. Father Santandrea wrote in the preface of Pazzaglia’s work “that the first point of this study, at once a preparation and a background, is the history of the *Karimojong* migration” (Pazzaglia, 1982:10) Novelli (1988) followed the same approach – his work majored on the social and cultural aspect of the *Karimojong*. However, one must admit, that the works of these writers could, if wisely applied, be a good tool in the evangelization of the *Karimojong*.

While there are visible Church activities mainly concentrating in the town centres, there are virtually no evangelistic activities in the rural communities (Novelli 1988:127).

The first catholic missionary was posted to *Karamoja* in 1933 Novelli.1988: 127; and Pazzaglia (1982:62); when Fr. Molinaro was transferred from *Karamoja*, he said: “Lord, thank you for having taken away from me this thorn!”[Ibid] The problem of fruitless ministry has made this region forgotten.

The *Karamojong*’s negative attitude to the gospel has continued to this day (Odoi.1993: 121) but if Evangelization of all people groups (Bush: 1991:14) is possible, and this includes the *Karimojong*, then we must look beyond the

negative attitude to be able to get to the root cause of the problem in evangelizing the *Karimojong*.

Evangelization has never been an easy task. Yamamori ([1993:88) proposes a new strategy if we are to overcome the difficulties of evangelizing new and difficult frontiers. He says, "Using ...indices as guides, we can classify a given nation or people group relatively accurately as to the quality of its receptivity to evangelism ." Yamamori's concern, is that knowledge of difficulty communities is necessary prerequisite to their evangelization.

1.2.2 Problem Statement of this Study

1.2.2.1 Question of Approach

World Evangelization has been the theme of Missiology since the beginning of the last decade. It is the missiological breakthrough (Johnston, 1999:217-218 in Winter & Hawthorne, ed. 1999). The Joshua project of AD 2000 and beyond movement is the largest strategic mobilization of Christians in history to disciple people of the world Statements such as "The vision is for a Church for every people" has for a long time been on the lips of mission experts [Ibid]. This means that the world Evangelization is the Church's highest agenda (Winter1999: 339). According to Winter, Africa has had its share of Evangelization. But yet there are over 40 million people who have had no chance of hearing the Gospel [Ibid]. The *Karimojong* Pastoralists are among them.

Although Uganda heard the gospel now over one hundred years ago, the region of Karimoja is still closed to the gospel. The term closed, sounds like old iron-curtain era and indeed, *Karamoja* is like iron- curtain to the Church planter. As McGavran [1990:163] has ably put it, "Human beings do build barriers around their society".

What is disturbing in the mind of the Christian witness [the writer] is that no serious investigation from the side of the Church, has been carried out. The data

available on the *Karimojong* is by social scientists or the economists. Could this condition be an indicator of the reason for the present situation in *Karamoja*? Coleman [1993:37] warns the Church, "It is time that the Church realistically face the situation. Our days of trifling are running out. The evangelistic program of the Church has bogged down on nearly every front..."

1.2.2.2 Response

Since the one hundred years of missionary action in Uganda has not yielded any meaningful results in *Karamoja*, and the situation continues to get worse, we should therefore ask ourselves these questions: What is the mission strategy for Evangelization of *Karamoja*?

Has the Church made any effort to reach the *Karimojong*? What were the problems encountered? Novelli (1988) points out that the missionary approach did not attract the *Karimojong* to Christianity because the Christians ignored the *Karimojong* traditions. Ocan (1992:10) argues that Christianity was irrelevant to *Karimojong*, because it does not provide immediate recourse to their needs unlike their traditions, which partly answers the problems immediately. This study will probe these questions to find out whether there are remedies to these problems.

1.2.2.3 Present Situation

The *Karimojong* as a people, have not shared in the evangelistic boom other parts have enjoyed since the beginning of this decade. This situation does not reflect the master plan of Evangelism. Winter and Hawthorne (1999:509) have made reference to the blessings of God, which every family on earth should enjoy. The *Karimojong* are indeed a part of this family of God. It is the purpose of this study to find out the reason why the *Karimojong* are not enjoying this blessing of God; and to suggest practical ways of reaching them with the Gospel of Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit [Coleman 1997:11].

1.2.2.4 Begging Question

Could this be another tragic reality (Winter and Hawthorne, 1999: 510) where the Church ignores her mandate to reach its community? [McGavran 1990:31] Or is it simply that *Karimojong* are not receptive to the gospel? Should the Church fold their arms in despair and leave the *Karimojong* to their damned fate? Can the Church abandon its divine appointed role to take the gospel to all nations [Mk. 16:15-17], which include *Karamoja*? This leads us to the major questions of this study.

What effort has the Church made to evangelize the *Karimojong*?

What other factors-geographical, political, cultural, social, or religious contributes to the *Karimojong* resistance to the gospel?

How can the gospel be communicated to the *Karimojong*, taking their history, culture and tradition into account?

The answer to these questions will provide us with some practical ways to deal with this situation. It is the conviction of this writer that evangelization of the *Karimojong* cannot be undertaken seriously without thoughtful consideration of these questions.

1.3. THE AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THIS STUDY

1.3.1 Aim

The aim of this study is to investigate evangelization of the *Karimojong* with a view of a better understanding of how to reach them with the gospel.

1.3.2 The Objectives of this Study

In order to reach this aim, the following objectives have to be attained:

- To establish to what extent has the *Karimojong* been evangelized;
- To identify and analyse possible factors [political, geographical, cultural, social and spiritual] and causes of the *Karimojong* resistance to the gospel;
To find practical ways of communicating the gospel to the *Karimojong*.

1.4 THE HYPOTHESIS OF THIS STUDY

The hypothesis of this study is that the *Karimojong* pastoralists can be evangelized in the power of the Holy Spirit when the major hindrances to their evangelization have been exposed; proper approach can be designed to work within or through them.

1.5.1.5 THE METHOD OF RESEARCH OF THIS STUDY

The method of research of this study use both the published and unpublished study material on *Karimojong*; Interviews and discussions with the *Karimojong* elders, the Church elders in *Karamoja*, opinion leaders and officials of the state and missionary working in *Karamoja*. This will be achieved through a designed questionnaire survey, which will be randomly administered to the target group within the research area.

This research is a study in missiology with a bias in evangelism. Thus, publications on missions, evangelism and cross-cultural communication, and other related studies shall be consulted. Case studies in missions shall be consulted to provide a paradigm and comparison to this research.

The *Karimojong* being part of a wider cultural group of pastoralists, therefore, study cases obtained from the Turkana, Pokot, Massai and Samburu can provide a typical examples and insights to this research (Gulliver, 1950:1).

1.6 CHAPTER DIVISION

This study will be divided as follows:

1.6.1 Chapter 1 will cover the background and problem statement, aims and objectives, hypothesis and research method of this study.

1.6.2 Chapter 2 will discuss the historical, political, cultural and religious perspectives in the evangelization of the *Karimojong*.

1.6.3Chapter 3 contains discussions on inhibitive factors to the evangelization of the *Karimojong*.

1.6.4 Chapter 4 offers practical ways of overcoming inhibitive factors in communicating the gospel to the *Karimojong*.

1.6.5 Chapter 5 deals with the summary conclusion.

CHAPTER TWO

HISTORICAL, POLITICAL, CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS PERSPECTIVES IN EVANGELIZATION OF THE *KARIMOJONG*

Before investigating the inhibitions in the evangelization of the *Karimojong*, it is necessary first of all that we examine the background in which the inhibition is likely to arise. For this purpose the following issues will be dealt with:

- The historical perspective;
- The political perspective;
- The cultural perspective;
- The religious perspective.

2.1 THE HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

The historical perspective of the *Karimojong* people will remain incomplete without a reference to their ancestral connection. For this purpose, a brief summary of the tribes, which share common ancestors with the *Karimojong*, shall be dealt with. Also in this summary we shall layout the contour of the discussion under the proposal above.

2.1.1 A Brief Summary

The life of the *Karimojong* people is a total sum of many aspects of their past and present history (Nida, 1954:30). Therefore, when discussing the evangelization of the *Karimojong*, we are obliged to pay closer attention to the question whether, the *Karimojong* resistance to embrace the gospel stems from their historical, political, cultural and religious influences or it originates from other sources outside these natural human forces, which, in normal circumstances influence society as a whole. An attempt to understand the *Karimojong* peoples' progress or lack of it should carefully analyse their historical, political, cultural and religious narratives (Shorter 1973: 14-7). It is assumed, that their historical past has in effect contributed to their political development. It is also equally true that the

history of human development is intertwined with cultural and religious environment [Nida 1954:29]. The two are virtually inseparable. Every form of human activity or establishment must have a foundation upon which it is built [Shorter 1954:44-46].

The foundation upon which the *Karimojong* people have built their society can be traced from their history, their politics and their culture. It has been weaved into the fabric of their political and cultural life. At the surface, the life of the *Karimojong* may pass as being simple and could mistakenly be considered plain and primitive, but behind this simplicity and innocence, there is a high calibre of cultural sophistication, which requires critical analysis.

The history of the *Karimojong* is indeed very wide and it is not the intention of this research to discuss its details.

When Investigating the *Karimojong* resistance, political, social and cultural events in *Karamoja* will be examined. We shall seek to establish the causes of resistance in spite of over one hundred years of evangelization and Missionary presence in *Karamoja*.

In the historical part, we shall discuss the larger family related to the *Karimojong* and how they came to settle to their present location. This investigation will compare and contrast between communities in terms of adapting to new changes such as Christianity. In the political narrative, we shall discuss the political situation before and after the British rule. This will help us gauge the *Karimojong* response to the new political concepts, guidance, persuasion and influence. In the cultural narrative we have made an attempt to look into some cultural aspect of the *Karimojong* in relationship to our study. Under this section, we shall investigate the ways the socio-cultural practice has contributed to their rigidity to adapt to new situations.

These narratives are important to this study because they are likely to provide us with vital information concerning the *Karimojong* life and practices. For example, we cannot discuss inhibitions, which exist among the *Karimojong* social and spiritual life without inquiring into the very causes of such inhibitions. Since inhibitions by the very sense of the term imply negative defects in the human experience, our assumption is that this human experience could be related to the history, culture, politics, and religion of the *Karimojong* people as a whole.

Our conviction is that a quick dash into the *Karimojong* society to evangelize them would be commendable in terms of mission activities, but may not succeed. This was the mistaken idea of the British government and the missionaries who first took the Gospel to *Karamoja*.

Novelli, a Catholic Church missionary resident in *Karamoja* for three decades, has made this confession concerning the British,

"The knowledge of the Karimojong culture and of the political skill to use such knowledge was needed in order to govern them. It is astonishing that the British did not know how to recognize the values of Karimojong culture, which could have given them the key to eventual success".

Concerning the Catholic missionaries he said,

"In a society such as Karimojong society in which dialogue is at the basis of every day living, it was not possible to recruit adults for any purpose what so ever, without an exhaustive exposition and discussion of the pros and cons of what was being presented. But the Fathers did not know this. They kept on doing what they had previously done with other neighbouring peoples among whom they had worked. The age of dialogue among the religious was still far off... This misunderstanding was at the basis of all the ensuing serious difficulties that missionaries encountered in the evangelization of the Karimojong (Novelli, 1982: 129 – 30)".

Novelli's study of the *Karimojong* culture gives us very useful insight into what could have been the cause of the problem in the past dealings with the *Karimojong*. Expressed simply, it was lack of cultural understanding of the *Karimojong* way of life. It is our contention therefore that a study of the *Karimojong* historical, cultural, and political past, is a vital component in the development of their resistance to change.

As we test the *Karimojong* soils (Wagner, 1989: 73) let us also, like a farm, test the soils of each section, the past and the politics, the behaviours and worship and then adjust our methodologies to the demands of each particular soil.

According to Peter Wagner, the evangelistic world is also characterized by many "soils", which are known as people groups. Every nation and every city is a mosaic of a variety of natural grouping of people. The purpose of testing the soil is to determine as much as possible, which people groups might be the most receptive to the gospel at any given time.

Conversely, it is helpful to know which of them seem to be resistant to the message of the kingdom. Once this is known, intelligent decisions as to how to deploy personnel and allocate resources can be made.

2.1.2 The Early History of The *Karimojong*

In the following discussion, we shall inquire into the early movements of the pastoralists in the East African region and how they were settled in their present habitat. We shall briefly examine the groups related to the *Karimojong* for the purpose of comparison in order to establish whether transhumance is a general trend among the pastoralists; and whether, it has contributed to the *Karimojong* resistance to the gospel.

For this purpose the following issues will be investigated:

Uganda: The home to *Karimojong*;

The Nilotes settlements;
The divisions of the Nilotes;
The Republic of Uganda.

Uganda is a small country the size of Great Britain. It borders with Kenya, to the East, Sudan to the North, and the Republic of Tanzania, to the South. Each of these three countries has a sizeable community of the people known as the pastoralists of East Africa.

2.1.2.1 The Nilotes

The *Karimojong* now spread over the Savannah plains of *Karamoja* region situated in the eastern part of Uganda, have common ancestry with the larger group widely known as the Nilotes (Niwampa, 1997:115). They are apart of the Atekering speaking people of Uganda (Novelli, 1988:27). They are grouped together with the Iteso and Langi who Novelli associates with the Tunga linguistic group. The Tunga, like the Bantu, use the root word Tunga to designate a human being. The term 'Tunganan-ayong' means 'I am a human being'.

Pazzaglia, (1982:15-17) argues that the *Karimojong* are part of a group once known as Nile-Hamites now referred to as Nilotes of the plain (Gulliver, 1951:1-3) Included in this group are the Samburu, Masai, Etesyo, Turkana of Kenya; the Jie, the Dodos and the Iteso of Uganda; and the Lotuko, and the Bari of Sudan. Pazzaglia takes this view from the linguistic similarity, which seems to have a common source.

2.1.2.2 Divisions of Nilotes

Pazzaglia, (1982) has divided the Nilotes into three categories: the River-Lake, the Highland and the Plain Nilotes. According to him, each group migrated to its present settlement according to their grouping patterns. Thus their present settlement is related to their natural inclination.

Pazzaglia, (1982:19) writes, "A population explosion compels a group to seek new land in order to survive. A land, which suits their particular way of life". The Nilotes of the plain seem to have followed the plains lying below the mountains and the riverbeds. The *Karimojong* of Uganda are part of the Nilotes of the plains.

The Highland Nilotes such as the Kalenjin ethnic group, the Nandi, the Pokot, and the Sebei moved to the Highlands of the Great Rift Valley. The River-Lake Nilotes settled in the area around the Lake Victoria, Lake Kyoga and the River Nile basin. The group, which migrated here, were mainly the Luo speaking communities found in Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and the Sudan. Pazzaglia traces the movement of the Nilotes from Lake Turkana, between 1520 and 1770.

It is believed that the main cause of their movement was the scarcity of food for their growing population and the grazing land and water for their animals (Novelli, 1988:27-29). The *Karimojong*, moved to the present region they now occupy, pushing out the local inhabitants further on to the south and the southwest. Pazzaglia, (1982) and Novelli, (1988) assert that the large group of Nilotes eventually split as each group searched for a better settlement, avoiding conflict over grazing land and watering places. (Pazzaglia, 1982:17-20; Novelli, 1988:27-30)

The large herds, which the *Karimojong* kept, could have influenced their choice of the savannah plain land where they finally settled. Kesby (1978:78) describes the area occupied by the Nilotes as "a vast expanse of plains, ... areas of non-intensive cultivation, but most of the area is used as extensive grazing.

Langlands, (1971: 27) believes that the *Karimojong* moved from the North East and pushed earlier occupants South and Southwest. Novelli (1988:27) shares this view with some reservation. He says, "The cradle of these people is, therefore a territory that is not well defined, but which must be located on the

northern portion of lake Turkana]. However, there is agreement by the writers that the Nilotes came from the direction of the north and in particular, areas around Lake Turkana (formerly Lake Rudolf).

The Nilo-Hamites (Langlands, 1971:27) are also known as the Tunga Linguistic group (Novelli, 1988:27). They include the Turkana, Pokot, Samburu, Maasai, Teso and the Toposa [ibid].

There is consensus among writers concerning the original location of the Nilo-Hamites although there is some identifiable variation from traditional historiography of the *Karimojong*. Ocan, (1992) says: "The oral tradition poses both methodological and theoretical problems". Therefore he is critical of Hudson's argument that "it is chronological dating, which distinguishes history from legend". All that the pastoralists can afford is to say "long in the past" [Hudson,1966:263; cit. in Ocan 1992:6]. Ocan argues, "*Legend gives insight into history. What is important is to distinguish myth from practical tradition. Distinguish fantasy, which relates to an idealistic past, from tales, which relate to production experiences demonstrated through various warrior periods*"

Ocan is dissatisfied with the approach of the anthropologists, which considered the realities of pastoral societies as based on tribe and therefore lacking a list of dynasties as found among the Bantu agriculturalists. The victim of Ocan's criticism is Lamphear, (1976) who, according to Ocan, (1992:7) "over generalizes and gives contradictory accounts." He echoes the concern of Dyson-Hudson that "The narratives only partially overlap, do not always agree, are not often mutually known, and so in the end cannot be satisfactorily resolved into one connected account. Ocan, (1992:221) concludes that it is fundamentally insignificant, whether the *Karimojong* moved from Koten Magos, or from the Far East Turkana escarpment, or from Lango to the present day *Karamoja*. It must be noted here that most of the Nilotes, apart from a few, have totally abandoned transhumance as a way of life, and have adopted the agricultural lifestyle.

2.1.3 The Original Inhabitants of *Karamoja*

In this section the discussion will centre on the first occupants of *Karamoja*. The major contribution of this section is to have a glimpse of how the conflict that began in this region has spread to neighbouring tribes surrounding *Karamoja* to-date. Each of the tribes mentioned here has a very rich history and it would be difficult to give details about them in the limited work of this study. I wish, therefore, to highlight some leading information, in a limited way, with regards to the inter-tribe relationships.

When the Nilotes split up into small groups, the *Karimojong* occupied the plains lying below mount Moroto. The region was formerly occupied by the Kushite speaking Teuso and the Tepes. Pazzaglia (1982:39) adds the Pokot, the Nandi, the Kitosh and the Sebei. However, it is doubtful whether the Bushmanoid or the Woropom are part of the original occupants. When the Nilotes invaded them, the Kushite group moved to the mountains. This view is supported by the presence of the mountain people scattered and living in the mountains of *Karamoja*. The Tepezes and Teusos have maintained a separate language from the *Karimojong* but are ethnically known as *Karimojong*. The Woropom have been integrated into small pockets and absorbed into the *Karimojong* tribes.

These Nilotes groups and Sub-groups not only have language in common but also traditions, concepts, religious rights, occupations, social and family organization. Considerable similarity, in fact, extends through sections of Southern Sudan, Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania (Novelli,1988:24). These tribes have suffered sustained conflicts caused by limited water resources and pasture for their animals. In the following section, we shall examine how this conflict has been extended to include other problems thus making life in *Karamoja* difficult.

2.1.4 The Climate

"*Karamoja* is Uganda's driest district and in this regard. Langlands (1971) refers to it as the most predominantly given over to traditional pastoralism." More detail on this discussion is given in the following section on the rainfall.

2.1.4.1 The Rain Fall

According to Novelli (1988:23), *Karamoja* is a region characterized by thorny plants and grasses; a savannah, which becomes green at the first rainfall in April, but dries up again in November when the rain stops. During the dry season the wind reigns supreme, vehemently sweeping the dazzling whiteness of the undulating Savannah. There is no surface water, except puddles, which are formed in rainy season, only to disappear later when the rains end. Riverbeds fill up in a few hours during storms, and dry up again when these are over. The only available water is that which filters up in a kind of well dug by the shepherds in the riverbeds or in their immediate vicinity.

Langlands (1971) reports, "The natural vegetation is one of dry savannah, but this rapidly deteriorates under over grazing and perennial grasses are replaced by annual grasses and thorny scrub. Annual rainfall amounts decrease from 45 inches [1125mm] in the South to less than 25 inches in the eastern centre". In Mamdan, Kasoma and Katende, (1992:4) it was reported that, "the concentration of rainfall leads to uncertainty. The significance of total rainfall figures is qualified not just by its period of concentration, but also by a third factor that is itself the direct outcome of ecological decline.

The problem of the long dry spell causes shortages of water. Although there are river courses that, during the rainy season become floods overflowing their banks, they remain dry for most of the year. The only source of water is by digging from the riverbeds at certain points for much of the dry season. (Lamphear, 1976:3) More detailed discussion on this subject will be handled in the cultural narratives under transhumance.

2.1.5 The *Karimojong*'s Encounter with the Outsiders

The *Karimojong* encounter with outsiders is being discussed here, so that the reader may be introduced to the fact that the *Karimojong* have had contact with other tribes long enough. At least we know that the *Karimojong* have not lived in isolation as far as human physical contact is concerned. At this stage legitimate questions arise: What did the *Karimojong* achieve from this exposure? Is there anything we can learn concerning their resistance to change from this situation? We intend to use this information in chapter three to investigate the question whether the *Karimojong* are resistant to change.

It is not fully known who were the first foreigners to visit *Karamoja*, but by the close of the 18th century, *Karamoja* was already trading with outsiders. It is also clear to us that this encounter provided room for enough interactions between the *Karimojong* and their trading partners. However, no good explanation is available for their total indifference or any visible change of behaviour. As we shall see later, The *Karimojong* do not need to change, if their harsh conditions can change without affecting the change of their culture.

2.1.5.1 The Hunters and Traders

The first traders from Zanzibar reached *Karamoja* at the end of the 18th century (Novelli, 1988:34). Pazzaglia (1982:49) says that Ethiopians were the first to come to *Karamoja*, and then followed by Arabs from Zanzibar.

Long before an effective colonial presence was established in *Karamoja*, merchant interests were active in the region (Mamdani, Kasoma and Katende, 1992: 25-48)

The presence of large Ethiopian soldiers prompted the colonial administration in Entebbe to establish the northern garrison to pacify the area. The British soldiers under Major General J.R.S. MacDonald, and Captain Kirk Patrick arrived in 1898. *Karamoja* was very rich with elephants and at this time ivory trade was at its peak

Ethiopians had wanted to take control of this region and their bases were scattered throughout the land of *Karamoja*. Hunting expeditions in *Karamoja* continued, until the British outlawed the practice.

While the hunters were depleting the game from the region, the *Karimojong* were gaining from them firearms. The hunters employed *Karimojong* young men to serve as guides and to transport the ivory to their collection centres. The young *Karimojong* later started to take part in hunting and acquired their own hunting guns for both hunting and raiding cattle.

Pazzaglia (1982: 51) writes that Ethiopians rewarded Toposa for their hospitality, by offering them guns and ammunition. In order to strengthen their ties with them, they married their women for whom they paid the regular bride price of two guns with forty rounds of ammunition or fifty cows. In this way the “Abaci” (Ethiopians) plundered the *Karimojong* and introduced them to the culture of gunpowder.

According to Lamphear (1976:222), Acumba and Habaci (Arabs and Ethiopians) made a very real effort to establish cordial relationships with the Jie (*Karimojong*). They received Ox names (nicknames) and even composed their own Ox praise songs; much to the delight of their Jie hosts. Lamphear suggests that there could have been conflict between the Acumbas, the Habaci and the Jie. “After the initial misunderstanding and friction with the Habaci, the Jie realized that they had nothing to fear from the strangers.”

The Acumba and Habaci introduced beads and wire [Lamphear: 223], which they traded with the *Karimojong*. It is common even today to see a male *Karimojong* adorned with these beads and/or metal wire for beauty. This is one of the striking things one encounters on reaching *Karamoja*. The *Karimojong* go to great lengths in beautifying themselves – both men and women [Odoi 1993:4].

According to the Jie tradition (Lamphear 1976:223) the hunters were regarded as peaceful and almost comical characters. The *Karimojong* (Jie) described them as elephant shooters, with many donkeys to carry their goods, and herds of goats, which they ate. They wore loose dark clothes on their bodies. They loved eating meat and ate great quantities of it. Then they would wipe oil off their hands, and mouth onto their clothes after eating.

The Acumba and Habaci helped the *Karimojong* after the great disaster known as Lopid, killed all the cattle. Lamphear (1976: 225) says that the first relief to the shattered communities was provided by the elephant hunting strangers. They brought cattle from other places not infected by the epidemic and traded them in exchange for ivory and food. This gesture did not only improve the relationship between the *Karimojong* and the traders, but also opened the *Karimojong* up. The Jie who had been merely indifferent to the hunting activities of the Acumba and Habaci before the great disasters, began to take a very active role in elephant hunting.

Here Lamphear does not agree with Gulliver (1955:8, 9) who said that the *Karimojong* tribe submitted to British occupation with little opposition, possibly because their country had for several years been overrun by ivory hunters and traders who had with some success established themselves in control there and as elephant and ivory became scarce, coercion of the native became necessary for this purpose. Gulliver suggests that there was some kind of conflict between the Acumba, the Habaci and the *Karimojong*, while Lamphear shows the opposite of this view held by Gulliver.

However, the purpose of this study, both writers show that the *Karimojong* have had contact with outsiders and were able to maintain cordial relationships with them. Another important point we must keep in mind is that while the *Karimojong* describe the Acumbas and Habaci as the "clothed" they did not copy their

behaviour and style. The *Karimojong* are still naked after over one century of encounter with the rest of the clothed society.

The *Karamoja* region was once populated by a high number of elephants from the Kidepo valley to mount Moroto. "Despite rigours of climate and sparseness of vegetation, the bush was home to many animals, all known and named by the *Karimojong* according to their characteristics. Foremost among these was the elephant at the beginning of the century. Huge herds wandered the length and breadth of *Karamoja* territory (Bell, 1923:1949). Today, however, "apart from a small resident heard in the Kidepo and a few wandering from Acholi and the Sudan, there are virtually no elephants in *Karamoja*" (Martin and Robson, 1966:15).

The Italians, Ethiopians and Arabs from the coast of Mombasa opened the floodgates of economic and imperialistic competition (Ocan 1992:21).

This was the period when the ivory trade was at its peak. Arabs were the first foreigners to put a foot on the *Karimojong* soil. We have no report however, whether Arabs took some slaves from their region, as was the case from other regions (Ocan 1992). They traded in ivory and probably other commodities such as guns. Lamphear (1996) refers to the Belgian from Congo in their first group, but this is in connection with the Jie state that was the dominant force in this region –The Jie state had acquired guns from the Belgians and was providing leadership under the warlord named Loriang. This shows that the region was already involved in international matters. The Jie used these foreigners to demand tribute from other *Karimojong* groups (1992:25).

By the time the British appeared on the scene, the *Karimojong* were already in contact with foreigners. So it is possible that the British Army got interested in *Karamoja* in order to drive out the Arab and Italian traders whose presence was being felt. Ocan argues that the British Army targeted the Jie State that was emerging as the military power in *Karamoja*. (1992:25). They first attacked

Bokora in Matany but their real aim was to destroy the Jie state which was the most organized of all *Karimojong* groups.

According to Lamphear (1976) "The British realized that if they were to maintain the North- Eastern part of their sphere of influence, a discernable presence must be maintained in the area and from 1911, *Karimojong* and the Jie were under the military administration, with regular patrols, initially by the Kings African Rifles and then after the First World War, by the Uganda police operating throughout the district

From this point of view, the *Karimojong* have not been living in isolation.

However, the level of exploitation from the contact they have had ever since seems to have driven them against the wall so that they acquired their own means of survival, as we shall see in the latter chapters. Exploitation in the past has taught the *Karimojong* that a stranger is never to be trusted (Novelli[1988:16] states, it is good to know that for the *Karimojong*, there are three kinds of people: friends, who live with *Karimojong* and are considered equals, enemies who live like the *Karimojong* and thus vie with them for the resources which guarantee life for both man and beast, and others who just because they are neither friends nor enemies are neither considered equal nor are they fought. They are strangers, good perhaps to be exploited when useful to the *Karimojong*.

Summary

Judging from the foreground discussions, it is absolutely clear, the *Karimojong* have not been living in isolation from contact with other tribes/cultures. In this encounter, it is observable that the *Karimojong* have experienced some level of change when it was in their interest to make the change. Although this change was significantly small, it shows that the *Karimojong* can accept change, if it is deemed profitable to them. For example, they changed their weaponry when they realized that gun possession gave them firepower advantage during raids for

cattle. Since then a *Karimojong* will pay any price to get a gun. This seems to suggest that the *Karimojong* will choose what they consider necessary to adopt and resist whatever they deem unimportant for their survival? It is also possible they are afraid of losing their long cherished culture to some foreign lifestyle?

2.2 POLITICAL PERSPECTIVE

Political leadership among the pastoralists was not a well-structured system. In this type of society, decisions affecting the community were taken collectively by the clan guided by the clan leaders. It was the British colonial masters who introduced leadership based on the Buganda Kingdom style of governance. In the following section we shall investigate effects of the colonial leadership on the *Karimojong* resistance to change.

The following issues will be investigated in this section:

- The British control;
- British administration;
- The effects of the British approach to *Karimojong* crisis;
- An attempt to change the *Karimojong* life style;
- Negative attitude toward civil and political administration;
- Indirect rule in *Karamoja* leadership;
- The role of the chiefs.

2.2.1 British Control

During the scramble for Africa by European powers, Uganda was “marked” out as a British colony (Odoi 1993:2). A military station was established in Northern *Karamoja*, in Dodothland, the function of which was to establish *Pax Britannica*. The *Karimojong* tribes submitted to British occupation with little opposition.

Langlands (1971:35) explains why the *Karimojong* did not put up strong resistance. He says, their country had for several years been overrun and despoiled by Ivory hunters and traders which had with some success,

established themselves in control there and as elephant hunting became scarce, coercion of the natives became more necessary for their purposes. A military expedition was dispatched under the command of Macdonald, a British army officer in 1897-1899. In 1911-1917 *Karamoja* was brought into the orbit of the northern garrisons. British rule in *Karamoja* was never acceptable. The use of force was the order of the day until Independence.

For example, Langlands does not feel sympathetic with the plight of the *Karimojong*. After rinderpest destroyed all the animals and the people were forced to move from their homes to seek refuge elsewhere he says that the rinder-pest epidemic hit *Karimojong* in the early 1890's and as a pastoralist people, they were badly affected. Turpin, a military agent in *Karamoja* in 1916, reckoned that the rinder-pest and the famine that followed had reduced the population to a third of its former size". In spite of this rather sad story, Langlands adds: "The rinder-pest had been a fair achievement. The Kidepo valley was sufficiently empty to become a National Park".

Since colonial administration took root in *Karamoja*, there had been outstanding conflicts between the pastoralists and agriculturalists over land (Langlands, 1971: 34-35). But even among the pastoralists themselves existed conflicts over livestock, grazing areas and water points. So the problem of conflict had existed before colonialism and was only exacerbated to a high degree.

The British made *Karamoja* a military Garrison. Langlands (1971 : 35] does not explain why the British used force to administer *Karamoja* or why the tribes, which lived together before British rule, were forced to separate.

He says that administrative procedures were completed by 1914 by the military forces, stabilising the bulk of the population in the settled areas and strictly demarcating tribal pasture areas.

This led to the separation of the Dodoth, Jie, Bokora, and Matheniko etc. into their respective areas and the creation of empty areas between them. This empty space, a stretch of about 8 kilometres has been the battle ground for these clans [Bokora and Matheniko are not separate tribes but separate clans]. (LangLands1971: 35)] There is no mention of any strife between the tribes but pasture and water has always been the cause of strife and even serious wars. Separating the different groups could have exacerbated the problem and heightened the suspicion over each other. Ocan (1992:3) agrees with this view. He remarks that historically the Karamajong were consolidated into one people until the colonialists disorganized them. But Ocan is quick to point out that before the colonialists came, the *Karimojong* were one people.

Ocan also has made reference to power struggle between various social forces, elders and warrior leaders as part of their problem. "Colonial intervention had its toll on the social organization of the *Karimojong*". Ocan argues that by closing off *Karamoja* to the outside world and drawing arbitrary borders and boundaries not in agreement with the social reality of the time, the colonialists heightened the social tensions that existed in the area. The other problem, Ocan points out is the restructuring of the social organization with the intention of creating a capitalistic state, which the colonial masters represented. This state of affairs resulted into two problems. The first problem is related to the alteration of the lifestyle entrenched in the *Karimojong* society which was now forcefully altered. The alteration of people's way of life using force cannot easily take root even where there are good intentions. This was bound to fail.

The second problem is that the new approach was not sustainable economically and politically so it became volatile and anti people. The conflict was between the people and the state so the people rejected it. And the state had to apply force to implement it.

The *Karimojong* vocabulary has no word 'leader' or 'chief.' Therefore, imposition of chiefs upon them by the British Administrators was the greatest insult. British control, as we have already seen, did not yield any positive result in the social development or political growth. Instead the *Karimojong* were hardened.

In this section the British Administration and control is now investigated.

2.2.2 British Administration

British administration of Uganda began in Buganda kingdom. The Buganda kingdom had an established civil service, which governed the counties, sub-counties up to parish level. Their rule in Uganda was indirect: therefore it left the existing leadership in place.

In the case of Buganda, the 1900 agreement gave Buganda Federal Governance status. (Gee, 1958:143) This meant that the Kabaka's government was legitimate but answerable to the central government ultimately. The system of chiefs, which still exists but under the redefined local government act, was very effective, especially in the collection of government revenue, and hut tax. Hut taxation, was introduced by the British Government, as a source of Central Government Revenue. Later, the British used the Baganda to administer the same administrative set up within the protectorate.

Mazrui (1972:174) says that the Bantu peoples of the south, led by the Baganda, had captured administrative and political influence under the British. The Baganda provided the ruling elite, holding administrative positions not only in Buganda but also in other districts of the country.

As Mazrui eloquently argues, the Baganda exported their system of leadership throughout the country. So when the British took control of *Karamoja*, chiefs were introduced to them. But this system of leadership was as foreign to them as the chiefs themselves.

Gulliver (1951:158) reports similar conditions among the Turkana of Kenya, where the British were also governing. The chiefs were appointed in Turkana, but Gulliver mentions that this system was foreign, “there are no native courts, tribunals or councils such as operate almost everywhere else in the Kenya colony. There was of course, no system of chieftainship or even a general council of important men in the old days”.

The same situation was found among the Samburu who are of the same stock with the *Karimojong* and the Turkana. Spencer (1965:xx-xxi) says the Samburu are under an imposed system of administration which, though lacks the means of being highly effective, has nevertheless altered the responsibility for what might otherwise be a serious and recurrent problem for the Samburu themselves.

Under the new administration of British officers, cattle raids had been controlled (Pazzaglia 1992:67-8). The chiefs doubled as tax collectors as well as advisors to the British officers.

The administration of *Karamoja* by these Lango and Acholi chiefs was oppressive to the populace – they did this in order to please their masters. Pazzaglia reports, the chief by the name of Aciya, wanting to prove his loyalty to the protectorate, “forced on the people a scrupulous payment of taxes and sometimes made them act as porters of Government officials or work on road construction”. If his orders were resisted, he would confiscate their cattle. This caused bitterness to the Ngitungoi generation-set, who were the elders (senior) of that period. Aciya’s actions caused bitter resistance, which ended with his death at the hand of warriors (Ibid)

Ocan (1992:7) points out that the worst administrative action, which hurt the *Karimojong* most, was the drawing of colonial boundaries. This, he says, interfered with the *Karimojong* social system and ecology. It disrupted transhumance, which the *Karimojong* had adopted. Ocan sees this act as an act

of oppression because it limited the warriors' access to grazing fields and watering places. He accused them of disregarding the differing nutritional qualities of the grasses at different times of the year and in different locations as well as varying climate conditions from place to place that were suited to transhumance patterns. Because this was understood as an act of aggression, it made the people more resentful to the outsiders. The outcome of this action is the subject of our discussion below.

2.2.3 The Effects of the British Approach to the *Karimojong* Crisis

The implementation of the administrative procedures introduced by the British colonial agents in *Karimojong* was hard and oppressive. The impact of colonial occupation policies was so devastating for the productive life of the *Karimojong* that the dialectic of pacification and resistance continued to intensify. Law and order for effective stabilization became an almost unending quest of the colonial state (Mamdan, Kasoma and Katende 1992: 25)

Langlands admits that the British attempted to depopulate *Karimojong* by introducing non-*Karimojong* tribes. Colonies of Naperes, Tepese, and Teusos and as far away as Southern Sudan were brought to *Karamoja*. Mamdan and others have confirmed: *"In later years that the colonial government showed marked preference for recruiting chiefs from peasant communities in Sudan, or in Acholi and Teso. The chiefs exemplified a form of authority that was total"* [Ibid.]. They even chaired the clan courts, which had the powers to impose penalties of up to two months imprisonment on minor offences. The ruling customary elders who were put in such an office by virtue of their initiation in the hereditary system played this role.

Since then, the *Karimojong* have developed mistrust of the intentions of Government programs. Grunlan and Mayers says, "When people leave their own culture and move into new cultures they can move in one of the directions- either toward empathy, acceptance, and identification, or towards culture shock and

rejection" (1979:25). When this change is forced, rejection and hostility to those who want to introduce that change or new culture should be expected. The colonialists might have hoped that the *Karimojong* would later on change and accept the imposed change just as other groups did in the British Empire elsewhere.

There was a common bond between the colonial rulers and the Missionaries. This was the case where there was a tribal chief to coordinate religious as well as civic activities and this was an advantage in missionary work. However, in places such as *Karamoja* where the colonial administrators were not popular, the missionaries were negatively affected.

Ocan([1992:17) sees the separation of the *Karimojong* tribes along ethnic lines and prohibiting interaction between them; as one of the evils committed against the *Karimojong* by the British . This divide and rule method pitted the *Karimojong* tribes against one another and with no chance left to resolve their differences as was the case in the past. Ocan recalls. During pre-colonial times, although there were differences between the various people who made up *Karimojong*, most of them traced themselves to a common origin and shared or participated in similar rituals. After the colonial boundaries were drawn, and restriction of movements introduced, the gap between the *Karimojong* was made wide.

Ocan (1862:17,18) argues that interpretation of the *Karimojong* as one unit with different sections rather than a purely distinctive group is the only healthy and acceptable interpretation. He is critical of the Anthropologists' approach that is bent on dividing the people into distinctive groups. He says that peace can not be achieved in this region when the people are divided thus positive social interaction must be re-emphasized while taking into account their changing nature.

An unknown author blames the white man (British) for dividing the *Karimojong* tribe. He claims that the white men did this in order to weaken the *Karimojong*.

This was successfully achieved by restricting the movement of people and their cattle.

Certainly one would imagine that the restriction of movement of cattle was intended to reduce epidemics such as rinder-pest, but restriction of people's movements and social interaction resulted in people's demoralization and economic destruction, since no one was allowed to move his cattle into the cattle market for sale or for barter trade. This writer believes that the tribal conflicts, now existing among the *Karimojong* tribes, were heightened at this point because contacts between the tribes were reduced and suspicion increased. It was at this time that the Jie tribe crossed into *Karimojong* and raided their cattle.

2.2.4 An Attempt to Change The *Karimojong* Life Style

The British hoped that if the *Karimojong* changed their life style they would be manageable. Ocan (1992:2) again attacks the British by saying that there is also a clear-cut conflict between the pastoralists and the Government centering on the different conceptualisations of patterns of production.

The pastoralists insist on mobility (transhumance) as a basic and sustainable pattern of production, while the Government agents see permanent settlement symbolized in agriculture as the solution to the *Karimojong* crisis. on the other hand attacks the belief that the pastoralists are conservative which is seen in terms of stock accumulation rather than stock quality, pastoral mobility and cattle raiding. To judge the *Karimojong* by applying the criteria is rather unfair since it hinges on the assumed ignorance of the pastoralists. And matters are not helped by the approach of the Government of the day or the NGO agencies in *Karamoja* (Ocan 1982:2, 4).

2.2.5 Negative Attitude Toward Civil and Political Administrators

The consistent mistreatment of the people of this region has, as a consequence resulted in negative response to the Administrators be they *Karimojong* or non-*Karimojong*. Alexander Gourlay (1971:93) rightly says,

The District Administration, with its headquarters at Moroto, appointed a chief for each county, within which are a number of sub-county chiefs. The administration is still, after more than thirty years and replacement of nearly all Europeans by Africans since Independence in 1962, regarded by the indigenous population as an alien, generally hostile factor.

This, he believes, was caused by the policy laid down by the Government (1921) that the *Karimojong* should be left in peace to tend their herds in the manners to which they had been accustomed in the past (Berber, 1968:208). To the *Karimojong*, the Government agents were tax collectors, which to a *Karimojong* meant the sale of his bull or being enlisted for road building, a state which denied him the long tradition of cattle trading and raiding. These conditions not only affected the civil and political administrators, but also the traders and the missionaries. Anyone from outside the territory was regarded as part of the oppressive machinery and therefore could not be trusted.

2.2.6. Indirect Rule in *Karamoja* Leadership

The British history of colonialism in East Africa and particularly in Uganda is everywhere plastered with indirect rule. This was practically used throughout the protectorate, as Uganda was known then. For instance, the colonial government used Kakungulu, a Muganda, in Bukedi, Lango and Mbale to administer those areas for the British, while the Banyoro were used to govern the North and North Western region (Wright, 1971:ix). This type of colonialism had been successful though it was being imposed upon the people of those regions. This same method was tried in *Karamoja*, where the *Karimojong* structure of leadership is in sharp contrast with the regions above. This of course was bound to fail.

As we have mentioned earlier in this study, the colonial government recruited chiefs from peasant communities in Sudan or Acholi and Teso. These chiefs were given powers to chair clan courts; punish offenders, and to oblige the *Karimojong* to provide food for government officials as well as providing free labour as porters for the government officials in Moroto (Mamdan, Kasoma and Katende, 1992:30)

The colonial rulers could not find any one willing to co-operate with them in *Karamoja* whom they could employ to lead the fellow *Karimojong*. The main work for the local leaders under the protectorate was to collect taxes and mobilize the citizen, to build roads, bridges, schools and other community utilities. This was to be enforced whether the communities wanted the services or not.

Thus in *Karamoja* the chiefs (as they were titled) were unpopular. It was worsened by the fact that those chiefs were from other tribes and were being imposed on them by the British agents. Sometimes many of them acted ruthlessly with the intention to vex those they led or simply despised them as second-class citizens, whom the British masters could not trust or consider capable of leading themselves. This condition has left its ugly trail in our politics up to today, although it is a long time since this happened.

In the case of the *Karimojong*, the colonial Government appointed the Iteso as chiefs. Historically, the *Karimojong* consider the Iteso as their permanent enemies who must be fought and whose cattle must be raided. Others who were employed in this way were Acholis and Langis (Pazzaglia, 1982:67-72)⁷. Both considered enemies of the *Karimojong*.

Gourlay (1971:93). makes a reference to a song composed to protest the harshness of the protectorate appointed chief. "Singer C relates how the 'clothed one' are keeping an eye on both him and his ox and how the county chief of Bokora is demanding his ox, and how disgusted he is with the Administration

both at Kangole and Moroto after several of his oxen are confiscated". Novelli (1988:120), adds:

"The confiscation of livestock did not have the threatening effect that the British had hoped for, but the Karimojong became further aggravated with regards to their need for livestock".

Constant confiscation of cattle by the British appointed chiefs made indirect rule very undesirable and oppressive to the *Karimojong*. Again Novell (1988:121) asserts:

"And even those who, for one reason or another were willing to obey orders, they had to suffer indiscriminate punishments indirectly; since for them, the possession of cattle is the only means of survival as a people, both from the economic and social point of view. In the British system they were too many elements that the Karimojong did not understand. The British system, even if dictated by the very best Intentions, made the effort of the Government seem ridiculous in the eyes of the Karimojong .

2.2.7 The Chiefs

The *Karimojong* language has no word chief Novelli[(1988:123). has this to say:

"The Karimojong could not accept the administration centred on a 'chief' given that in their language there is not even the word "chief" and this is due to their concept of democracy".

Novelli further wonders how the British did not know how to recognize the value of *Karimojong* culture, which could have given them, the key to eventual success . The western culture has always claimed superiority over the cultures of the vanquished people. If this was the British attitude then, one cannot be astonished by their approach to the *Karimojong* culture. The British appointed chiefs took over the role of elders who should have first been initiated into that office by the out-going ruling elders.

By the end of 18th century, *Karamoja* was organized into age-sets. The people were divided along age groups (Ocan, 1992:36). The most important aspect of the age groups centred on the adults and evolved around generation sets.

Leadership (Niwampa, 1997:122-3) was vested in the elders and the clan was the basic unit of political power and administration. The heads of the different clans constituted the council of elders, which was responsible for administration of justice, settling disputes, maintaining law and order, and punishing offenders. All elders occupied a position of political importance in society.

Thus according to Mamdan (et al.) [1992:30-1] the institution of chiefs stood opposed to the authority of the clans personified in the position of elders. This was a break from an existing authority and a sharp break from an entire way of life of the *Karimojong* people. Berber considered the action of the district commissioner to order men not to leave the settled area without the order of the chiefs, as a challenge both to the authority of elders and to the way of life of herdsman. For it was imperative for herders to move to wetter areas at the beginning of the dry season, and it was the elders who decided the timing of this move. The timing, in turn, was crucial to ensure both maximum exploitation and optimum preservation of grazing lands. The ability of the elders to do this was a matter of pride to the elders and the *Karimojong* as a whole. The ceremony to free the cattle on the date set for this move was also a great social occasion.

The *Karimojong* leadership concept could not bend to the will of the British belief that what is good for the goose is good for the gander. Novell (1982) and Odoi (1993) have pointed out that the indirect rule introduced to Iteso by the British was met with resistance. The Iteso share a similar concept of leadership, which is by age- sets, and the figure of a chief was a foreign idea. The British had been successful where it was introduced just before they moved to *Karamoja*. We must understand however that the Bunyoro, Buganda, Busoga etc concept of

leadership was hierarchical and chiefdom was not foreign to them (Barber, 1968-1947: Odoi< 1993:11).

The British rule in *Karamoja* was considered aggressive and repressive in nature. From the time Bwana Bell, a European hunter appeared in *Karamoja*, the *Karimojong* had already been known earlier beyond their borders. Emin Pasha had also made a report concerning the Jie of Northern *Karamoja* in 1881 from his base in Acoli (Lamphear, 1976:248). In order to deny the French and the Belgians access to upper Nile without a direct clash with them, the British marched rapidly to the North, on the order of Salisbury. Treaties were concluded with the *Karimojong* at the Omanimani River after which illegal ivory hunting was stopped and the British took over the control of *Karamoja*.

However, the British did not put their station into *Karamoja* until a year later when P.H.S. Tanner and Capt. T. Grant moved to *Karamoja* to start the patrol of the region, which was now under their control.

The political scene we have just concluded seems to me to have created a more resistant Karimajong, determined to fight off intruders his affairs. The new culture of leadership was already interfering with their only hope for survival, the cattle. Can we hope for a change of attitude? Was the approach used flawed or are the *Karimojong* simply resistant for the sake of it?

In the next section of this chapter we shall investigate the *Karimojong* resistance from the perspective of their culture with the aim of establishing whether or how it might have contributed to the present condition. And shall enquire whether we can find a remedy in order to take to them the Gospel.

2.3 THE CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES

When discussing the political perspectives, we noticed that the British rulers committed many political errors. Many of these errors also had cultural undertones. In the cultural perspective we shall investigate further whether matters were made any better. An investigation into the cultural perspective will examine the leadership formation and the influence of the ruling elders in the *Karimojong* culture.

2.3.1 The Generation Age-Set

The initiation ceremonies, which determine leadership in *Karimojong* society, are being investigated in the following issues:

- Age-set rituals and groves;
- The ritual and ceremony of initiation;
- The power of elders;
- The elder as the society's mentor.

The pastoral people in general, have got a rich culture. Gulliver [1955:1] says: "Primitive pastoralists have perhaps attracted the attention of the European observers more than other types of native economies and culture patterns. The independent character of the warrior herdsmen raises greater admiration than the less exotic agriculturalists". In addition, these pastoralists have tended to be the slowest in adopting the white man's ideas and techniques. They have very often come to represent the romance of an Africa, which is now fast disappearing.

2.3.1.1 Age-Set Rituals and Groves

The *Karimojong* political system knows neither king nor rain-maker (Pazzaglia, 1982:95). Power is exercised collectively by the elders- that generation set which, in the ceremony of transfer of power at Nakadenya, has been invested with the tribal authority. Every *Karimojong* cluster has their own sacred place where generation age-set rituals of initiation are performed. The Jie *Karimojong*

perform their initiations at Nayan ritual grove of Lokorwakol, followed by the inauguration of the parallel Rengen generation set at their own ritual grove (Lamphear, 1976:39).

All the pastoralists of East Africa have the generation age set leadership structure system. However, they differ in the rituals they perform and in their operation of their generation sets.

The Samburu of Kenya, have age set and age grades. An age set is composed of all the men who have been circumcised together in their youth during a specific period. A new age set is generally formed every 12 to 14 years.

An age grade is a stage through which every male passes at the same period of his life together with others of his age set. Each man, although, belongs to only one age set, from his youth on ward, passes through a number of age grades. [Spencer 1965:80] Odoi (1993:72) has pointed out that there are three stages in the *Karimojong* life.

The difference between Odoi's and Spencer's' is that Odoi here is discussing the process of maturation leading to Eldership. While Spencer is describing a situation where at each stage there is initiation taking place. The Bantu - Gisu who are known to perform this rite, could have influenced the Samburu's initiation by circumcision. The Samburu man must go through initiation of one kind to another until he becomes a senior elder. The other marked difference between the Samburu and the *Karimojong* is that, a Samburu moran is considered an elder, but a *Karimojong* warrior is not yet an elder until he is initiated.

The *Karimojong* have two generation sets and each generation set has five age sets. But it is the senior generation set that makes the leadership decisions. They are known as those who "underwent initiation together" (Novelli, 1988:42-3). For the Jie – *Karimojong* "the criterion for initiation into a given age set by members

of one genealogical generation is largely of biological age (Lamphear, 1976:38) The first age-set of a given generation set to be initiated tends to be of those oldest uninitiated men who have waited a considerable time for their initiation. The proper age of initiation is early teens or early twenties. The Jie have two extremes of generation sets. The first initiation takes a long time because the previous generation initiands are still in power. The last initiation is the completion of initiation for that generation-set. They tend to have more young men than the others [ibid]. The Samburu, on the other hand, base their initiation on circumcision.

The three-principle age-grade seems to govern the timing of initiation among the Samburu. The boyhood – is from birth to adolescence and this is naturally followed by moranhood, which is from adolescence to early moranhood. According to Spencer (1976:80), to enter moranhood, one must be initiated. Since initiation is all that is needed for an adult to be allowed to get involved in adult affairs such as marriage etc; circumcision does not go beyond the twenties for both boys and girls .

For the *Karimojong*, Fisher [1987] and Fumagilli seem to suggest that a *Karimojong* warrior must go through initiation before he can take up a wife. Odoi (1993:74) states that: "... with ceremony, the warriors leave their bachelor days behind to embark on elderhood which by comparison, is subdued and serious. Only then can a man seek a wife and begin a family..." If this were the case then those who get initiated in the generation age-set or even die before they can be initiated would have no families (see Lamphear, 1976:38). Having said that, I must mention that it is the initiation into elderhood (age-set) that determines one's status in the community.

2.3.1.2 The Ritual and Ceremony of Initiation

Whereas all pastoralists must go through some kind of ritualistic ceremony of initiation, each group has a certain ritual or ceremony to perform in the initiation exercise. For the *Karimojong* the organization is centred on the male adult population. The senior elder determines when an assembly should be called together under the sacred tree. The time of initiation is the very time when power changes hands. It is the senior elders who can transfer power to the next generation set. Novelli (1988:45) highlights the process of initiation.

The general assembly must be called and each family must send a representative. The assembly gathers at the sacred tree and sits according to seniority in rank. The longer it takes after one's initiation, the higher the rank. This order must be followed strictly to avoid any misfortune happening.

The main event of the ceremony is the slaughtering of oxen which each of the initiates must do for his ox and which he must slaughter alone. This is then followed by the roasting of meat and eating and drinking of alcohol follows. The titanic prayer is usually simple but meaningful to the initiation. The apportioning of meat and the smearing of the contents of the stomach forms the major part of the initiation celebration because of its prophetic significance to the initiates and their families.

Pazzaglia (1982:102-122) paints a vivid and detailed picture of this elaborate *Karimojong* ceremony. Pazzaglia suggests that there are more series of initiation than just the one being discussed here. Asapan is one of those essential ceremonies in the life of the *Karimojong* youth. It is his consecration into manhood. Pazzaglia does not confine marriage to generation set initiation because "to be admitted to initiation, a youth must belong to the generation set, which follows immediately the one in power at a given moment". But concerning marriage, he says: "In ordinary circumstances, a young man is expected to be

physically mature at 18 years of age or more. There are refinements in the rules about marriage and initiation”.

However, *Karimojong* custom decrees that when a man is officially committed to a girl, he may lead a full marriage life with her, but the girl remains in her parents village until the bride price has been given whether he has been initiated or not. The exception to this rule is when the young man is a member of the Ngimoru set (Mountain) he can contract the initial marriage before initiation, but he is not permitted to bring her to his home immediately (Pazzalia, 1982:103). This is in sharp contrast with what Odoi states about marriage and initiation. It could be that Odoi refers to the Asapan initiation rather than the generation age-set initiation. But even then it does not state clearly that uninitiated *Karimojong* young man cannot marry.

In order to be initiated, the father may suggest to his son or the son may show his desire to be initiated and then the elders will be contacted who must sanction the initiations. The granting of permission for an initiation is the prerogative of the elders [ibid: 104]. In the initiation period no witch doctor is consulted (ibid).

Pazzaglia has shown that the initiation rituals usually take more than one day. The first day, at dawn the initiand's father or the next of kin on his mother's side will rehearse the history of the generation age-set vigorously.

At sunrise the initiands, usually with assistance of his peers and relatives, selects the oxen and some additional cows to be used at the ceremony. After the young Ngigetei have made the fire, roasted, eaten and, have apportioned the remaining raw meat to the women and elderly, the initiands joins the elders 'formation for the ceremony known as Apat. This ceremony involves elaborate activities of plaiting the tendons from muscles near the spinal cord of the cow, which is attached to their hair at the back of the head. It is also worn on the nape of the neck. This symbol is one of the distinguishing marks of the initiates.

The next important ritual is the spearing of the oxen, which must be accomplished with just one blow. This ritual is the actual sacrifice the initiates perform. The meat of the slaughtered animal on the side of the ear must be given to the elders to taste, before anyone else can eat. The sacred act can cost you your life if you do something contrary to the rituals and customs and rules governing such rituals (see footnotes [ibid: 107]).

The next ceremony is the divining of entrails. Two elders who are esteemed experts in that ritual but must come from the initiate's clan do this. The purpose of this ceremony is to be able to predict what good or ill they might reveal. If it is good fortune, they will announce it. If it is not a goat or bull will be slaughtered to get intestines, he would not use the chyme of the ox to smear the initiands.

The remaining stage is rather ritualistic and takes time until they finally draw with hands the blood of the slaughtered oxen and drink it. The elders start and then the initiates come next to them. It is forbidden for those who are not yet initiated to participate in the drinking of the blood at this ceremony.

Besides the killing and skinning of the ox, the most serious part of the ceremony is the smearing ceremony. The contents of the animal's stomach are emptied upon the initiates and are smeared all over their body. While the selected elder to perform the ceremony is smearing, he says these words:

*"Be rich! Be strong!
May you acquire many wives!
May you produce many children!
May you have long life!*

Pazzaglia (1982:110) called this part of the ceremony the new birth to the initiates. After the smearing and casting out spirits from the initiates, then they are to undergo the ritual of beating.

The next ceremony is the spattering of the sacred tree with chyme to propitiate the spirit who dwells in it, so that he might favor the initiates. Pazzaglia says that this spirit is Akuj or god the creator and father of the universe. The general belief is that the same spirit can be a big snake or any other vicious creature, which may be found near the ceremonial tree.

The final prayer is said with the following words:

The Karimojong are here!
Their wives are here!
Their cows, goats and sheep are here!
Their far away kraals are here!

Then the assembly will answer in affirmative response:

There are here!
Keep your cattle!

Something also must be mentioned about the enemies of the *Karimojong* who are usually the Suk and Turkana.

"There they are our enemies!
Fight them courageously!
If we had not fought, we would not have eaten today the meat of
those oxen!
Disease among men and cattle, in water, and sorghum, has it not
disappeared?

The assembly answers:

It has! It no longer exists.
Any thing harmful to our children, our goats or donkeys in our
kraals, has it not left us?

Answer:

It has! It has gone away!

Or

Aciya is rich:

May he become richer!

Aciya has fallen in love!

Aciya has guarded his children!

He has achieved this! He is here!

Congratulations!!

The initiation feast follows this ceremony of blessing and driving away spirits. The roasted meat is now ready, but it starts with the rite of eating of the tongue. The women do not participate in the initiation ceremony unlike the Samburu who also initiate girls by circumcision. But the *Karimojong* women participate in some of the lesser ceremonies after the major ceremonies are over. These rituals and ceremonies are very significant to the *Karimojong* elders because that is the source of their power.

The elders are the Gurus and priests of the *Karimojong* ritualistic worship. Each initiand qualifies at one time or another, should he survive bullets of the raiders, or of the adversary in the course of raiding to restock his kraal; to be the next Mountain Elder or Gazelle Elder, to bless the initiands of the next generation age-set.

2.3.1.3 The Power of Elders

Elders, in pastoralist societies, played many key roles in their community. The village or *Manyatta* or clan head, whatever the case may be, closely supervised almost everything that took place there.

Each group of villages has their sacred spot. The sacred place is used first and foremost for assembly. Novelli (1988:47) has pointed out that "Each group of villages of a certain locality has its sacred place, where the problems of that zone

are discussed. The elders of these community assemblies are the judges and prosecutors at the same time. It is here that important decisions affecting the community are discussed and resolved.

The elders are not only respected, they are also feared because they are presumed to possess certain divine power to curse and bless or cleanse the victim from the curses they have pronounced. Thus, the word of an elder could not be easily challenged because in him alone was vested the power to make decisions. This may sound as if there was a central authority in the *Karimojong* leadership, but it is not the case. According to Bell (cited in Barber, 1965:32) there was no central authority in *Karimojong* leadership.

Among the Samburu the power of curse is said to follow from the fact that it is the member of the senior age-set who ceremonially brings the juniors' age-set into existence when it is first formed. By this they stand as moral guardians over their juniors. They also supervise its maturation through to the Moran age-grade. The more senior one is the more potent his curse will be.

As Spencer (1965:184) has rightly said, the ultimate power, which the elders have over the total society and in particular over the Moran rests on the unshakable belief in the curse. This view concerning the Turkana, is shared by Gulliver (1955:144).

High regard for eldership can be an instrument for the evangelization of the pastoral communities; but can also be a hindrance, since the spiritual needs of the community, though inadequately and mystic in nature, are being met. This view shall be discussed in depth in the next topic on the spiritual aspect of the *Karimojong*.

2.3.1.4 The Elder as a Society's Mentor

The elders influence all the important decisions, social or spiritual. An elder must sanction anything of value or importance to a *Karimojong*.

It is important to note here that religious and cultural activities among the *Karimojong* cannot be divided. The active involvement of the elders in all major roles of leadership including the spiritual functions left no room for separation of duties as seems to be the case in other cultures.

2.4 RELIGIOUS INFLUENCE

Under religious influence, we shall investigate whether the *Karimojong* see any difference between the cultural and religious practices. We shall also examine the relationship between the Missionaries and the British colonizers. Did the *Karimojong* know the difference between the white missionaries and the white colonialists? Could this misconnection have led to the mistrust of the missionaries? And therefore affected the advancement of the gospel in this region?

2.4.1 The Mistrust of the Missionaries

Missionaries came to *Karamoja* long after the British had established their rule in 1915 (Odoi, 1993:96). The two main Churches active in *Karamoja* are the Catholic and the Anglican Churches. They were introduced in *Karamoja* at different times and established their missions near Moroto. The Catholic missionaries settled at Kangole (Novelli, 1988:127) in 1933, and the Bible Church Missionary Society (BCMS) had their base at Lotome.

2.4.1.1 Establishment of Mission Stations

These mission stations still exist today though the Headquarters for both Churches have moved to Moroto town. Novelli admits that the Catholic Church was reluctant to send missionaries in *Karamoja* not willing to put them "in

jeopardy” [Novelli, 1988: 127]. Although the journey was long and difficult, the most difficult problem to be encountered was the people’s attitude and mentality, which was very different from what missionaries had experienced anywhere. Missionaries had enjoyed not only acceptance by the people where they went, but also the prestige given to all the white communities in the colony. It was therefore surprising to find such cold welcome by the *Karimojong* to the missionaries.

Colonial rule had hardened the people even more and the common man could not see any difference between the British white officers and the white missionaries (*ibid* :128). This problem was to even cost missionaries their lives.

Judging from the record of history so far consulted, there was enough presence of Moslem traders traversing *Karimojong* region for a long time. Lamphear (1976:221) says: “Soon after the expulsion of Ngimongos and inauguration of the next Jie generation-set, Ngikonsowa – in about 1880, brown skinned strangers appeared in *Karamoja*”. The first of these strangers, who were known to the Jie as Habaci, arrived in Najje from the north. They had come from the area to the north of Lake Rudolf, which was, by the end of the decade to be incorporated with Menelik’s expanding Ethiopian Empire. And in their baggy cloth garments, mounted on strange four-footed creatures, and carrying for weapons sticks which made a fearful noise and gave off a terrible odour, they presented an exceedingly weird spectacle to the astonished Jie.

Lamphear reports that they brought along with them interpreters to assist in communication to the people. The Jie had never seen “red people” like them before. Later other strangers called the Acumpa, Swahili from the coast also came. We know that the Swahili traders at that time were Moslem Arabs from Yemen who also brought Islam to most parts of East Africa (Wright, 1971:6)

Earlier in the 18th century, Arabs visited the Kabaka of Buganda, which resulted in the islamization of his kingdom. The question one might ask, is why Moslems who, seem to have enjoyed some amount of trust among the *Karimojong* people, could not succeed in introducing Islamic religion to them.

Religion has had influence in Uganda as Tom J. Mboya (Mboya,1969: 92-3 ed. Gulliver, 1969) states. Religions of various kinds have had a strong influence on the people of East Africa and will undoubtedly continue to be a major force in the future as well. In the main, religion is expected to make a positive contribution to development by promoting high moral standards and integrity so fundamental to the effective division of labour, specialization in production and development of an exchange economy.

Religion has had its impact on East Africa. In particular we find that some traditional attitudes and customs have changed regarding polygamy, witchcraft and even the status of women and children. However, this influence, contagious to other people within Uganda and beyond is not a visible sign in the *Karamoja* region. The impact made by the same Arab traders on other tribes in the islamization process cannot be detected in *Karamoja*.

The anthropologists who are credited for much of the information we have on *Karamoja* could not find this rather strange phenomenon. The indifference of *Karimojong* to religious matters in general seems to be broad and not limited to either Islam or Christianity.

Gulliver (1951:229-51) discusses the indifference approach to religious matters by Turkana; "It has become increasingly obvious to us that Turkana magico-religious activities and beliefs are both relatively meager, and generally vague. In all things, at all times, the Turkana, man or woman, is essentially practical – minded, unimaginative, non-speculative. He is very well aware of the limitations and difficulties imposed by a harsh environment and, thus the best social and

pastoral techniques are selected to deal with them. Gulliver has concluded that the Turkana notions of the high god are typically vague and yet he says: "Turkana are no savages living in a demon-filled world, hemmed in on all sides by vaguely or explicitly deadly beings, forces, or etc" (ibid : 230)

The statement by Stephen Neill (1979:1) is to be taken seriously here. "Whenever a culture is set loose from religion, it becomes demonic." What we see today happening in *Karamoja* could be the end results of this spiritual blackout.

Turkana believes that the family head, like all people in position of authority, respect and seniority has the automatic support of the high god, Akuj and that therefore, recalcitrant sons go in danger of supernatural retribution ... Turkana have no high regard for supernatural forces in the normal way and therefore these weapons in the Father's hands might well prove illusion (Gulliver, 1955:144).

The comparative study made by Kesby [1977:193-195] found that the Maasai-*Karimojong* group represented an extreme emphasis of the general East African knowledge that God is and that he is supreme. This was the direct opposite of the Baganda-Basoga who represented the tendency towards plural manifestations of divine power. If we take this illustration and contrast its face value, then we can conclude that the *Karimojong* tendency, though it seems orthodox, is the chief cause of their indifference to religious matters generally and to Christianity in particular.

Gulliver [1951] has made a very important contribution to the religious life of the pastoralists. His contribution provides us with insights towards understanding the pastoralists better. For example, the term "Ajuk" means "sky", "up" (kuju). This could mean that the sky is the high god or that the high god is in the sky, he is all that is above men's heads".

Gulliver excuses their lack of definite and explicit understanding of the concept of Ajuk for the reason that their nature is that they do not ponder, speculate over what they believe or do not believe (ibid : 231). They hold a belief, for example that, Ajuk owns a huge homestead somewhere up in the sky where he has a vast number of all kinds of domestic stock feeding in evergreen lush pastures.

It is not difficult to note here, that their understanding of the high god is related to their pastoral trade. God is ultimate, the greatest, and the ideal cattle owner with the ideal pastures for the cattle. Gulliver interprets this passage in relationship with god as Akuj, to them Akuj being a good influence in the human affairs but may refuse to give help. He may refuse to send rain in the dry season – even after the correct ceremony has been performed. No one knows why he refuses at such times. But at the same time, there is genuine fear that if one says something bad about Ajuk, he may kill him.

Gulliver admits that in such a situation where “ideas and beliefs” are vague, it is difficult to obtain the right information. But as we shall see in this study, the matters of religion, belief and abstract are not of much importance to the pastoralists in general. There is no time for them to speculate or philosophize. The cow is enough to ponder about. (See Section 2.3.1.2)

Ocan (1992:10) has justified their rejection of Christianity by saying: “Traditional *Karimojong* religion hangs on ritual and ceremony, which partly answers the problem immediately”.

2.4.2 Summary Conclusion

Up to this point, general aspects of the *Karimojong* resistance to evangelization have been examined and are briefly summarized here as the conclusion of this chapter.

The early history of the *Karimojong* indicates that they are part of the larger group known as Nilotes well spread throughout East Africa. Many of which have become agriculturalists, and now live in settled communities.

Several problems can be traced from the harsh conditions in which the *Karimojong* live. These aspects include climatic changes and long dry spells, which force the warriors to keep moving in search of watering points and pastures for their animals. This makes access to the warriors difficult and their life hardened by being exposed to harsh climatic conditions.

Much as the *Karimojong* have had contact with other people outside their territory, there has been very insignificant influence in their recorded behavior.

The political changes during the scramble for Africa, which gave Uganda to Britain and simply ignored the *Karimojong* way of life, worsened the already negative attitude toward foreigners by the *Karimojong*. This negative attitude affected missionary work and has retarded the evangelization of the region.

The rigid setting in which the *Karimojong* choose their leaders [the generation age set] provided no room for adjustment. This situation has always been the source of tension between the civil authority and the *Karimojong*. The present Church leadership in *Karamoja* is also brought under suspicion for the same reason.

This same problem affected the missionary activities where the *Karimojong* could not differentiate between the white missionaries and the white colonial masters.

The role of the elders in every aspect of the *Karimojong* life gives no space for independent decision-making by an individual *Karimojong* without losing credibility with the elders. This has made it difficult to raise local leaders among the *Karimojong* for various sectors including the Church.

All this led to the mistrust of the missionaries who were viewed with suspicion that they were hiding the real intention of trying to change the *Karimojong* tradition.

In Chapter three, 'Understanding the *Karimojong* inhibition to the Gospel,' we shall investigate why the *Karimojong* resist change and find ways of overcoming the inhibitions.

Chapter Three

UNDERSTANDING *KARIMOJONG* RESISTANCE TO THE GOSPEL

When discussing the *Karimojong* resistance to the gospel, a legitimate question arises as to whether they are resistant by nature or character. Or is it simply a historical assessment of how they have responded to the gospel to date. If their resistance is simply a product of the historical or contextual circumstances that they have experienced, then their receptivity would seem to be contingent upon changing those circumstances or at least overcoming the effects of their occurrence. If on the other hand, their resistance stems from a more deep-seated personality characteristic, whether defined corporately, idiosyncratically or even as a part of the human condition, then other kinds of remedies are required.

This study is dedicated to discerning and finding solutions to the obstacles presented by history, culture, and communication style, which hinder the spread of the gospel among the people of *Karamoja*. In this chapter, a close look will be taken at the cultural, social and spiritual inhibitions against change among the *Karimojong*. The purpose is to glean many profound insights from the works of anthropologists, sociologists, missionaries, historians and others. In this section of study, we will examine the question of whether the *Karimojong* are resistant to change as well as the role of culture in resistance to change, as follows:

Why *Karimojong* resist change;

The role of culture in resistance to change.

3.1 ARE *KARIMOJONG* RESISTANT TO CHANGE?

The question whether the *Karimojong* are resistant to change or not is usually received with mixed feelings among sociologists, the elite *Karimojong* and elders. No single *Karimojong* will admit that the *Karimojong* people are resistant to change. An ethnologist, and missionary in the Catholic Mission in Moroto, Father Dr. Bruno Novelli, has written convincingly in defense of the *Karimojong* resistance to change. He is of the view that the *Karimojong* are rather pragmatic,

and cannot be described as resistant. The elders and community leaders explain that the conditions prevailing in *Karamoja* contribute to their negative attitude towards change. This whitewash of the *Karimojong* people's condition however, does not agree in principle with the realities on the ground (Novelli, 1999:312).

Thus, the following section will examine facts related to the causes of resistance to change.

3.1.1 Why *Karimojong* Resist Change?

When addressing this question, several reasons have been advanced in favor of the *Karimojong*. Those in defense of the *Karimojong* include Novelli and Okudi. They argue that:

- The *Karimojong* have been living in a hostile environment since they settled in the area they occupy today. This permanent hostile situation has driven them to regard foreigners as potential enemies of the *Karimojong*.
Famine and diseases kill thousands of people and animals annually; with no assistance in sight, from anywhere else.
- *Karimojong* neighbours are always regarded as enemies and war between them is always expected.
- They also accuse the central Government of showing no interest in the development of the region, since colonial times.

Therefore, the *Karimojong* have come to understand that for them to survive in this hostile situation, they must develop a mechanism, which they consider most reliable for their security (Okudi, 1992:4) This situation has led to the conclusion by the people outside *Karamoja* that the *Karimojong* are conservative, and resistant to change. In their self-defense, they have designated all foreigners as suspected enemies and any foreign idea a ploy to destroy them and take their cattle or both. The predominant view held by the government, Churches and social workers in *Karamoja* who are mainly non-*Karimojong*, is that the *Karimojong* are resistant people (ibid)

The observation of the Government and NGO's is supported by the fact that the *Karimojong* have continued to oppose or even destroy Government program facilities. The warriors stage ambushes on the roads and many missionaries, social workers and government officers have lost their lives. To the armed *Karimojong*, this is something absolutely normal to do, even though, by so doing, people's lives may be lost. Situations of this nature occur generally as part of a restocking exercise; Novelli writes about the brutality that goes with this exercise.

There are two occasions in which the Karimojong fight for livestock; when it is necessary to secure its survival in the face of external threats, and when the decision is made to increase its number at the expense of neighboring peoples. In both cases, these operations are carried out as actions planned by the elders and executed by their warriors' sons, or decided upon by the latter with the blessing of the elders ... There is no negative moral connotation to this type of action in the mentality of the Karimojong. Quite to the contrary, since livestock is the main, and in many cases the only, means of material and spiritual support for the herder, it is understandable that the Karimojong finds the best way of realizing himself as a member of his society in defending and increasing his herds" (1982:91).

It follows therefore that, for the *Karimojong* to change, it means re-adjusting some of their cultural beliefs and convictions. This would certainly bring into question and interpretation the *Karimojong* cultural activities in line with social and legal framework of Ugandan society as a whole. However, since the *Karimojong* social and even spiritual activities are tied upon their survival, the natural inclination is to maintain distance, while they pursue their goals freely. Missionaries have often detected this standoff when it comes to issues like drinking of blood as staple food. Those I was able to interview admitted that such culturally sensitive subjects are avoided in order to minimize confrontation and alienation.

Sometimes change can be difficult and in some cases, it can produce negative effects to the people. Change may involve compromise. In the process of change some one must be willing to give up something. This of course involves negotiations, evaluations, and costs. Some form of exchange must take place. Where change is likely to threaten the tempo and the rhythm of life, and is capable of disrupting or affecting human survival, such, change is likely to be resisted. The *Karimojong* people conceive change as a threat to their existence, since in their view it does not provide immediate recourse to their human needs or offer genuine compromise or alternatives (Ocan, 1992:10)

The definition of culture given by Luzbetaks (1970:64) will contribute to a better understanding of the *Karimojong* state:

Culture, as a design for living, is a plan for coping with a particular society's physical, social and ideational environment. It is a complete and more or less successful adaptive system, which includes the content as well as the organization of the content.'

The above definition seems to suggest that, the *Karimojong* will need to acquire new sets of values by which they will interpret what is right and what is wrong as

Novelli [1999:312]

Argues:

It is understandable that the criteria used to discriminate between good and bad, right and wrong, true and false, are prevalently sociological, utilitaristic criteria."

Ocan (1992:4) says:

The adaptation of transhumance entailed the development of hostilities among Karimojong society over grazing grounds and animal wealth."

In this case the *Karimojong* will not change from transhumance, although by doing it hostility with neighbors would be avoided or even cease. The *Karimojong* have found transhumance a way of solving their problems. If this is the only

means of meeting their needs, then, to introduce another way of achieving their goals in life must be done in such a way that it compensates what might be considered a loss on their part.

This issue has been the center of conflict between the government and the
Karimojong.

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Ocan (1992:2) says:

There is a clear-cut conflict between the pastoralists and the government centering on differing conceptualizations of patterns of production. The pastoralists insist on mobility (transhumance) as a basic and sustainable pattern of production, while the government and Non-government organizations.... See permanent settlement symbolized in form of agriculture, as the solution to the Karimojong crisis.

Thus a society may not change the method of doing things if by that method they can achieve the desired goal and objective. Where there is a superior method of work, it must be measured against the existing method in order to prove its superiority over other methods. This is what change would imply.

Arguably, this approach to life situations cannot be understood as being resistant to change. The *Karimojong* are simply calling for guarantee, an assurance that the 'new' will not result into disastrous consequences at the end.

Going by our argument above, the situation in which the *Karimojong* are now, would simply be taken as "being cautious" so that a catastrophic situation is avoided.

The term "resistance," then has to be redefined to describe a situation that reflects passive, unprogressive, reluctance to accept new ways, ideas or practice. This is the situation existing among the pastoral communities. New

ideas seem to threaten their way of life and practices. The *Karimojong* behaviour and practice is tested and proved by their cultural beliefs. Thus, the *Karimojong*, have found in their culture, whether to others this culture is resistant or not; a more dependable ally. To them it seems reasonable and as such, they become over zealous in protecting both their culture and tradition. Stephen A Grunlan and Mayers (1979:56), states the following about culture:

“Culture is the integrated system of learned behavior patterns characteristic of the members of a society.”

Man uses his culture to meet his social, economic and spiritual needs and that of his society. In this context, culture becomes a vital tool applicable in determining man’s well-being and survival. Any behavior or practice, which cannot guarantee him survival, is simply rejected without further investigation.

The *Karimojong* long-held suspicion of exploitation by others is denying them to embrace change, which could prove beneficial to them. This is not to say that the *Karimojong* are incapable of knowing what can profit them or not.

While they accepted Catholicism as long as food was being distributed at the mission ground, the warriors rejected the idea of quitting cattle raiding as a method of restocking their depleted herds. If, on the other hand, the missionaries were supplying heads of cattle, the situation would have been different. To the *Karimojong*, the cattle has greater value than anything else, it is the very essence of living. It is life itself. Okudi has argued that for the *Karimojong*, their animals are the most valuable of possessions (ibid: 10).

To change their value systems, they must be sure that what is replacing the cow can also claim that near-to faith in God-kind of belief the *Karimojong* has placed in a cow. But can the *Karimojong* continue to live in isolation? Kraft (1979:57) argument regarding the role of culture in human integration, provide an opposing view.

Culture as a dynamic entity evolves and continuously interfaces with other cultures and traditions.

This is where the *Karimojong* differ from others and have failed to improve on their ways of survival. They have insisted on maintaining their crude method although it has totally failed to work adequately for them. Mc Gavran (1990:153).argues that

"The members of different cultures arrive at different conclusions concerning reality because they have started from different assumptions".

He however cautions that:

"People do not exist as discrete individuals, but as interconnected members of some society, innovation and social change, operating in particular structures, playing a significant part in determining the direction, speed and size of the move to the Christian religion " Mc Gavran (3rd ed.[1990:153).

Normal people are not isolated units but part of a whole that makes them what they are"

Certainly the *Karimojong* cannot be bundled up as a bunch of an abnormal community but we insist that to understand the *Karimojong* resistance, we must investigate their culture and determine whether by this approach we may find the solution to their evangelization. To support this argument, we refer to Mc Gavran statement:

When we comprehend the social structure of a particular segment of the total population, we know better how Churches are likely to increase and ramify through it.'

In conclusion, we therefore observe that conservatism with regard to culture is a worldwide human problem, not necessarily limited to cultural-tribal people groups. It is a human situation which affects not only social and economic issues, but also religious as well. Nida (1953:14) says:

Once we have been convinced that people all over the world are human – that they are people, just as we are, with virtues and follies, insights and limitations and that their way of life has continuity and meaning – then we will begin to look beneath the surface of actions.

With this view in mind, and since the *Karimojong* cannot make the difference between what belongs to the realm of culture from what belongs to the realm of religion, the Church will have to exercise patience for a long time, to have a breakthrough in its evangelization.

3.1.2 The Role of Culture in Resisting Change

Cultural anthropologists and Missiologists have contributed to the general understanding of the relationship between human culture and human change. Their investigation has shown that culture contributes tremendously to man's worldview. And there cannot be any escape route from this inevitable entanglement. Here we can affirm that the *Karimojong* have only been entangled much longer than others, and that their traditions have had a hand in it. Novelli's (1999:303) statement concerning *Karimojong* commitment to tradition is here cited:

"The entire life of the Karimojong is governed by the rules of tradition from birth to death. Tradition [Eta] for them is a satisfactory explanation for all the queries about their way of life, about what they do and about the particular way in which they do it"

It is an indisputable fact that the *Karimojong* have been slow to change. Also researchers have not succeeded in finding the proper cause for this problem. If we may rely on their history alone we do not fully understand how that has affected their rigidity to change. Ironically, Novelli (1994:1-5; 1999:304)]

Says:

"The Karimojong are not in principle, opposed to change. They recognize that customs are ordered to suit the needs of life...if new requirements of life need new customs, they are ready to adopt them.

Novelli's optimism is really based on a number of changes, taking place in *Karamoja* in the recent days. Some few traders and NGOs have supplemented the presence of Government offices and Christian Missions. Also, Novelli has made observation with regard to some little changes brought about by loss of cattle.

"Other ways of life are under the eyes of the Karimojong, particularly in the centers of the region, where government offices, barracks, hospitals, Christian Missions and traders are" (Ibid).

Here, human need is forcing its way for adjustment of customs and adaptation, to enhance survival. Again Novelli has observed:

In this process, not only new ways of living are communicated to the Karimojong, but also the new mentality, which is at the basis of it, new values which, inevitably, erode the old ones and tend to exercise a powerful influence leading to change. The exclusivity of the etal [customs] as a norm of life tends, in this way to crumble. Customs therefore are no more the only subject of morality; personal conscience enters into this ground.

Nida (1954:29). supports this view by saying:

We see culture only in actions of people and the objects they create.

This opportunity for "social interaction is eventually leading to "social adaptation," and could create a breakthrough to evangelization. Certainly there is a reading on the wall in the *Karimojong* history and the Church should seize such an opportunity. The Christian Church can exhibit how a positive change can be introduced within a society. John Stott argues that the Christian Church can exert a healthy influence in the world '...even though the Church may not avoid being

overwhelmed by the floodtide of evil” Stott (1978:57) sees the Church and the world as two communities which need each other, and yet this “relatedness” depends on their” distinctness”.

Christians can bring change in others because they are different. St. Paul has rightly said in his letters, *that God has given us the message of reconciliation, hope and good will; to reconcile the world to Himself (2 Cor.5: 18-19).*

If by adapting to other culture a person can be changed, similarly, by believing the gospel a person can be transformed.

In the past, *Karimojong* had not created such an environment. More time was needed until the *Karimojong* begun to understand or appreciate the role others (cultures) can play in the transformation of human development.

Novelli (1995: 2) states that ‘Actual *Karimojong* culture has arrived to us through centuries of slow change and this historical moment is going to make further steps towards new adjustments’.

Social conditions as they exist in *Karamoja* are beginning slowly to allow such adaptation of human development; largely contributed by the cultural and social dynamics.

Luzbetak (1970:60,61) has argued that political systems, kinships, and family organization and law are examples of social adaptation, a plan according to which one is to interact with his Fellow.

Novelli (1995:1), an authority in the *Karimojong* culture have affirmed that,
The key to change in a pastoral society seems to be in the assurance that not only they will loose the guarantee provided by their traditional way of life, but rather that this newness will enhance it”.

These so-called "Guarantee" have come a long way as Kraft (1979:47) admits:
Our elders have chosen to invest a considerable amount of energy in making us aware of the rules by which we are expected to conduct these aspects of our lives ".

The fear for the consequences of change, if there are such considerations, could be the very cause to resist change. Again Novelli (1995:1) is on the point by saying:

Change comes about through many factors, but mainly through contacts with people. Little contact brings with it a slow change. A more substantial contact with others normally brings a greater and faster change.

Social and spiritual change must always involve others.

Alterations of habitual behavior, especially those engaged in by influential persons, not infrequently "catch on" with others in the society, resulting in new socially accepted habitual behavior" (Kraft, 1979:72)

According to Hudson (1966:181), the elders influenced *Karimojong* culture. Foreigners are not well received by the *Karimojong* for fear of cattle raiding. Therefore the process of change is slow and almost unnoticed (Novelli 1994:28).

Cultures resist change in order to maintain their cultural identity. *People are both similar and different* [Grunlan and Mayers, 1979:43, 68]. Hesselgrave has argued rightly that *"Culture is a way of thinking, feeling, believing. Thus, the Karimojong can only think, feel and believe what they know mostly through their culture.*

The program for change, which ignores both economic and spiritual interventions, cannot bring about any meaningful impact in Karamoja. Every sector of the government and the Church should pull together and should involve the *Karimojong*. It is not enough to treat only the symptoms, in

approaching the development of pastoralists. The easily visible but often superficial, phenomena are here given attention at expense of the root causes of these phenomena. Innovations introduced to solve specific solutions of which are seen as ends in themselves, thus produce new problems, or symptoms. In relation to the above, Ocan (1982:14), observes that:

A basic approach to social problems should involve the people in problem solving and identification. The attempt to solve the Karimojong problem has usually involved the people through state encouragement. The issue is therefore, not that of involving people but which kind of people are involved.

The Churches, which operate in *Karamoja*, should take a lesson from the Government failure to attract the *Karimojong* into its programs intended to assist the *Karimojong*. Currently efforts are being made to try and provide portions of scriptures to the few *Karimojong* who can read and write. But as I have commented elsewhere in this study, the *Karimojong* are generally illiterate. Massive literacy programs should be combined with evangelism, as was the case in the early days of missionary work in Uganda. The deployment of some few educated *Karimojong* in the task of teaching and evangelizing is very vital for bringing success for this endeavor.

A group of NGO's led by Red Berners have introduced mobile schools which suit the highly mobile *Karimojong* society. This program is bearing some fruits within the short time of its existence. For the first time in the history of *Karimojong* people a big number of children have joined school. The NGOs fitted the education program into the *Karimojong* time frame rather than the *Karimojong* following programs, which were being drawn from the capital, Kampala.

The *Karimojong* can only change through cultural conditioning and not by the act of law or any other form of outside force. This has been the source of conflict between the *Karimojong* and the politicians over the decades in Uganda.

Each of us is shaped in the Non -Biblical position of our being, by the culture into which we are born (Kraft 1979:46).

In conclusion, so far, we have not been successful in determining whether, the *Karimojong* are, or not resistant to change. We have argued that their resistance could be seen as a mechanism to ensure their survival, or to protect their cherished culture. As the *Karimojong* continue to be confronted by the hard realities of life, the wind of change is slowly but surely blowing. It could be that finally in the long run, the *Karimojong* may eventually begin to see the light.

In the following section of this study we will examine whether cultural inhibition has played any significant role in the *Karimojong* resistance to the gospel.

3.2 CULTURAL INHIBITIONS

In discussing the *Karimojong* cultural inhibitions, the following issues will be evaluated:

Customs and Change;

The *Karimojong* Culture and Worldview.

Pastoralists generally have a very strong conviction about their culture.

“The customs of the Karimojong identifies with their ways of life. And this way of living is justified by them because it’s their custom” (Novelli, 1999: LXXXI).

3.2.1 Customs and Change

Change is very vital to human existence. Changes come whether we invite them or not. Planned changes come when we adopt ourselves to the conditions we deem profitable or when they are imposed on us by circumstances in which we may find ourselves Nida (1954:224) states:

No group of people, whether primitive or civilized, has a completely static culture, for everything is subject to and in the process of change... The tempo of change

may vary, but whether slow or fast, life never remains the same for succeeding generations.

Imposed change is always met with resistance. But there are other ways in which change can be imposed without being resisted. Novelli notes:

Change is sometimes imposed on people by circumstances. At times, [change] as result of a free choice made by people themselves, when they see the advantages that change brings (ibi).

A positive change is normally the result of this second possibility. For example, if the *Karimojong* will see the cattle as a commodity, which can be sold; and herding as commercial farming enterprise as is the case else where in Uganda; it would create an opportunity for interaction with other people for their own enrichment thereby transforming their livelihood.

3.2.1.1 Custom as Catalyst of Change

Customs play a key role in the ordinary life of a society and the *Karimojong* are no exception. It guides the society's actions; and as part of the wider culture, it consists of patterns, explicit and implicit of and for behavior acquired and transmitted by symbols constituting the distinctive achievements of human groups including their embodiments in artifacts. The essential core of culture consists of traditional ideas especially their attached values. Cultural customs' systems may on the one hand be considered as products of actions, and on the other as conditioning elements for further actions.

For the *Karimojong*, this is the only thing they know and see. They have come along way to appreciate the method and art of their cultural practice. As Novelli (1999: Lxxxii) puts it,

It gave rise to their social organization, their pastoral policies, their economic activities and – their particular religion”.

Since cultural customs is not an isolated case outside the normal practice of any society, the *Karimojong* are not expected to act differently. To the *Karimojong*, customs are laws, which must be respected and obeyed to the letter. As we shall see they help to predict the future and they provide a system of work for the present. When discussing *Karimojong* customs, Novelli (1999:313) said:

Conscience, for the Karimojong, is not a subject of morality, customs are. Therefore people's personality does not correspond to the opinion one has of himself {which would be built on his own conscience}, but to the one which others have of him {based mainly, on how they feel his attitudes towards tribal customs}...And the Karimojong strictly link the social status of each one to his obedience, or disobedience to the traditional customs. One of the reasons why the elders are held in high esteem is this: if they managed to survive for long years to the difficult situations of their life in Karamoja, it means that they have been favored by God, who conditions his help to obedience to the custom.

Through their customs, they are able to perceive their reality. Their worldviews apply to their existence as a society.

3.2.2 The *Karimojong* Culture and World View

Hesselgrave (1979:125) argues in reference to peoples' worldview as follows:

The way people see reality can be determined by their worldview. A worldview is the way people see or perceive the world, the way they "know" it to be.

In discussing the *Karimojong* culture and worldview, the following issues will be examined:

The cattle;

Human values;

The value of the cattle vis a vis the value of man;

The relationship between the person and his ox.

People find it much easier to keep up a routine, than trying out new inventions. It becomes even much harder when the routine gets woven into the fabric their custom. At this stage, the custom becomes law that must be obeyed and which must guide public and private behavior and practice.

To understand the *Karimojong* world-view, one must first understand the *Karimojong* life and practice. It is a harsh problem to be a pastoralist, and to be one in a habitat such as *Karamoja*. What is at stake is survival. For them the greatest problem, which needs to be addressed, is survival. For this reason, the *Karimojong* are highly pragmatic in their approach to life. They have been able to acquire the ability to exploit every source of life for their own benefit, in order to lessen, or overcome the many problems of their existence.

The known ones with methods elaborated through long and difficult experiences of their history: the unknown ones through the elaboration of a way to come to grips with them, to become familiar with their causes, in order to manipulate them to their own benefit"([Novelli, 1999: L)

Unlike the Bantu and other tribes in Uganda, the *Karimojong* do not run to consult a witchdoctor to solve their problems. The *Karimojong* life and practice is generally simple. Behind this simple life, however, is the thoroughly self-disciplined and hardened life by the harsh condition prevalent in this region. A *Karimojong* child learns very early how to survive in their condition, which is imposed on them by the unpredictable weather patterns. Children and adults alike, must rise early to find food in this area where famine is the norm. And even though many children die before their tenth birthday, some still go through it and survive.

3.2.2.1 Cattle

The *Karimojong* worldview is centered on the cow. To the *Karimojong*, the cow is more than a domesticated animal; it is part of his family and livelihood.

The whole economic and social life {of a Karimojong} center on one reality only, the cattle" (Pazzaglia 1982:15).

Novelli (1988:81). observed that, *The Karimojong are herders not only because they engage in this activity but also because all their being is involved in herding to such an extent that for them to freely change from this activity and to take up another would first involve a change in personality .*

The importance of cattle to the *Karimojong* can be seen as one enters the homestead. While people must enter the homestead on their four, through a narrow gate, the cattle enter through the wider gate into the very center of the kraal usually surrounded by the family huts to ensure maximum protection. (Pazzaglia 1982:16) For the *Karimojong*, their animals are the most valuable of their possessions. Herds are therefore the principal source and store of food. According to Okudi (1992:10), the *Karimojong* rarely kill their cows. Even in times of hard conditions save for small animals like sheep and goats.

For a person coming outside Karimoja, it is hard to understand the intimacy between the cattle and its owner.

3.2.2.2. Values

Among the *Karimojong*, the cattle determine one's values, his worth, as well as his spiritual satisfaction. As Novelli has rightly mentioned:

In fact, the vision of life and of the hereafter, the values on which their code of ethics is based, the actions and customs which incarnate it and which are jealously handed down, are all embodied in their cattle (ibid: 83).

The *Karimojong* herds- man makes his human value wrapped up into that of his herds. They must "increase" and he must "decrease" as Novelli explains.

The first characteristic, which the Karimojong finds in their livestock, is that of "individualization". The members of the herd have a certain "status" half way between that of animals and that of people (Ibid).

In the *Karimojong* culture, it is only children and the cattle that cannot be counted. Cattle are described by the color of skin or their features. Cattle are also given human duties and tasks; they inspire courage when it is needed. The herdsman knows and can describe characteristics of each cow, no matter how many herds he owns. Behavioral traits such as one in hurry to drink, the slow walker, are some of the typical features a herdsman will describe with ease.

3.2.2.3 The Value of the Cattle vis as vis the Value of Man

Gourlay (1979:75), found out in his study of the *Karimojong* cultural music that "Cattle are more than the economic response to an uncertainty environment, more even than a measure of riches or bride price. Cattle take precedence over everything and everybody. If the cattle reach the watering place first the woman who waters them will be beaten up.

It is the cattle that arouse strong feelings and make a man feel confident. On the other hand the man who dies without owning cattle does not receive a burial but is left to dogs and wild animals, because he is thought to be of no value at all.

This picture of human value vis as vis the value of cattle, is very significant in the *Karimojong* cultural and religious life. It greatly contributes to his inhibitions in regard to his social and religious or even political and economic change. Everything around him is interpreted along these lines. Life itself has no meaning without the cattle.

Kraft (1979:57), has rightly said: "*humans differ not so much in the process by means of which they reach their conclusions, as in their starting point*".

Thus any one wanting to initiate change must bear in mind this naked fact and may have to adjust his approach instead of applying any known conventional means known to him.

3.2.2.4 The Relationship between the Person and his Ox

He is both its father and the ox itself. The ox may be fierce, stubborn, unmoved, but he composes songs in its honor, singing its praises and enumerating its characteristics. He decorates the ox by winding many halters around the neck, providing it with a bell, tying the horns and knocking them so that they can grow to a desired shape, cutting the ears as a sign of victory. It is the ox name by which he is known in his community. When he kills a man or a wild animal, a mark is put on his body and on the ear of his ox, when his ox dies a memorial service is held in its honor (Gourlay, 1971:77).

The song of the Ox can probably shed some light on the *Karimojong* cow culture.

*The song is entitled, my ox.
"Lokor, my great black ox,
Black as the threatening cloud
That rolls over the mountains,
How fine your hump is!
Like a heap of sand or an anthill.
Never have I seen another ox like you.
Even my friends and rivals gather around
To stroke your powerful back and admire you.
How fine your horns are, so well shaped.
And as sharp as thorns!
And your notched ears make you happy.
Because I have killed to defend you
In the fight of Lolito I was speared,
And won you back from your enemies
As long as I live no one else will own you.*

*How proud I am of your beauty!
What great joy I feel when I hear
Your bellowing among the cows of the herd!
For you bellow strong and powerful like the roar of a lion!
Can I sit under a tree to take a snuff,
And converse with my friends without you?
O great animal of my father's cattle,
Is there another ox like you in all the (entire) world?*

The killing of the name-ox is a way of allaying the sorrow for the departure of the owner, as the presence of the beloved ox would be a continuous reminder of its owner. A *Karimojong* could commit suicide at the death of his ox (Novelli, 1988:87).

3.3 SOCIAL AND SPIRITUAL INHIBITION

Social and spiritual activities in *Karamoja* are very rare and yet they are held in high regard. In approach to this study, the following issues will be investigated:

- Inactivity: cause for inhibition;
- Isolation;
- Search for survival;
- Cattle raiding-as a social and economic activity.

3.3.1 Inactivity: Cause of Inhibition

During the rainy seasons when everyone is at the *Manyatta* grounds, and the cattle are near the settlement, the *Karimojong* find time to indulge in social activities. These activities take a very long time and may empty the little harvest gathered. The people, who have lived longer there, believe that the long social activities may contribute to the problem of famine, which strikes soon after the end of the rainy season.

During the dry season, the majority of the *Karimojong* population has nothing to occupy them. The major activity of the women and children is searching for food and engage in excessive drinking. Alcohol drinking starts at dawn and ends when there is no more alcohol to drink.

For young warriors, cattle keeping and cattle protection, or planning a raid and raiding occupy most of the social and spiritual life. There is almost no time for any thing else under the sun. Visitors to *Karamoja* always wonder when they see people in their hundreds moving aimlessly and begging for food. This situation is justified, so they say, by the long dry season during which no agricultural activities can take place.

3.3.2 Isolation: Cause of Inhibition

Novelli attributes the problem of *Karimojong* isolation to the harsh conditions prevailing in this dry and militarized region.

Karimojong society is basically a pastoral and semi – nomadic society. Men live in the grazing grounds --- in the periphery of the tribal territory during the dry season (Novelli, 1988:61, 62). The dry season could take as long as one year. This means that men spend most of their active life away from home, leaving only women, children, and the elderly in the settlements (*Manyatta*).

Commercial or trading activities in *Karamoja* is non existent except in the small trading centers away from the *Manyatta*, which could be over thirty to fifty miles away from the nearest settlement. The only markets (very few) available in *Karamoja* are cattle markets and these are located in the trading centers. Schools and Churches are also found in these trading centers. This situation therefore, makes contact with other people out side *Karamoja* almost impossible.

Children of school going age, especially girls are either forced into early marriage, or join their mothers in search for food all daylong. The boys of the

same age join the warriors to take care of cattle. In the wet seasons when the cattle are near home, the warriors spend much of their time in nearby trading centers spending whatever income they got from the sales of their old animals or from the ambushes of traders and travelers whom they rob or even kill.

Foreigners who visit *Karamoja* for the first time find it difficult to imagine that people can still survive in these harsh conditions. Novelli describes this situation at first sight as follows:

I arrived in Karamoja one afternoon in December 1972. The last part of the road stretched on a straight line for a dozen kilometers. It was a road cut into the bush, sloping up to a saddle between two mountains beyond which lay the territory of the Karimojong. I was coming from the green hills, rich in water, of the region of west Nile, which borders with Sudan. The contrast, which appeared before my eyes on arrival at the Irrir pass, could not have been more striking--- The incandescent air made its dark outline shine. The heat wave was barely cooled by a gentle breeze coming from the east. The dry grass on the edge of the road was as white as snow. The spindly trees scattered here and there in whiteness were all thorny. There was not a living soul in sight. Only a great silence. The two friends who were accompanying me did not succeed in holding back an exclamation: "where on earth have you landed?" I said nothing, but it was just what I also wanted to say where had I ended up in? Could there be people in such a place? And if there were, how could they live?" [1988: 13 – 14].

Novelli has not answered those questions over the 30 years of missionary work in *Karamoja*. Much as he says "the Karimojong helped me to find answers (*ibid*).

A situation like this makes it difficult to find a reasonable ground for change, even if change was acceptable to such a community.

3.3.3 Search for Survival

The survival of any society is the most crucial thing in life; any thing else must be subservient to this one goal. The struggle to survive, in such a difficult environment and with limited resources, has driven the *Karimojong* to where they are, but some how, they have survived, single handedly so far. However, this condition has made the *Karimojong* feel threatened and their existence hanging in balance. The only people they can trust are themselves and the only trade they know well is herding and raiding animals.

The *Karimojong* must learn how to protect this great and only resource, as well as themselves. This has become the chief duty of the warriors. But it has also created a new problem. The Culture of raiding cattle starts here.

3.3.4 Raiding as Social and Economic Activity

Raiding has been practiced in *Karamoja* for a very long time. It was used mainly to restock their herds or simply to pay bride price, when a young man wanted to marry a wife or when an elder wanted to add another wife for purposes of increasing the number of children.

Practically, there are two occasions in which the *Karimojong* fight for livestock. When it is necessary to secure its survival in the face of external threats or when the decision is made to increase its numbers at the expense of the neighboring peoples.

In both cases, these operations are carried out as actions planned by the elders and executed by their warrior's sons, or decided upon by the latter with the blessings of the elders. [Novelli 1988:91]. The ceremony to mark the start and the end of each raid is itself a testimony to the cultural value attached to raiding. (Novelli, 1999:275).

The irresistible love for cattle among the *Karimojong* gave rise to the culture of raiding as the only means they know of increasing their livestock. The intensity

and brutality of raiding has been on the increase, since the *Karimojong* people act as they do because of the fact that earlier members of the culture acted in particular way. *But the tendency to follow the antecedent culture does not mean that cultures can never change (Nida, 1954:37).*

The human tendency to maintain their status quo is manifested in every culture (ibid: 35). Others can interpret this, of course, as resistance to change. Societies and cultures keep changing as opportunity to change opens up. Nevertheless, societies change to the degree they are willing to change (Shorter, 1973:14). The Bataringaya committee which was set up by the Uganda Government on how to deal with the problem in *Karamoja*, reported:

If Karamoja is to cease to be the problem that it is now, the pace of development must be forced and forced hard... our aid is therefore to make recommendation that will not only cover the short-term policy of establishing law and order in Karamoja but will also bring about accelerated progress of the Karimojong and enable them to catch up with the rest of Uganda in the shortest possible time
(Bataringaya, 1961:15)

3.4. SOCIETY: SPIRITUAL INHIBITION AND CHANGE

The *Karimojong* society is increasingly becoming a fragmented society, as the number of cattle reduces in the region. Several groups have emerged in a descending order:

(a) The Warriors

The warriors, who can still carry out raiding expeditions in the neighboring districts, own cattle occasionally until counter raiding takes all the raided cows with interest. The warriors are the masters and warlords, the opinion leaders on matters of raiding and security. The power of gunpowder has not only changed the pastoralists' society, but also affected their leadership structure. This is something the *Karimojong* elders hardly accept. The warriors consider themselves de-facto leaders whom the rest of the inhabitants must depend on for leadership and protection.

(b) The Petty Traders

The second group, are those who have abandoned the old traditions [raiding] and have settled down to till the land or carry out petty trading. They are usually inhabitants of the small trading centers and major towns in Moroto, Kotido, and Nakapiripirit districts of *Karamoja*.

They have tested and confirmed the new style of a settled life and find it difficult to go back to nomadic experience like the Warriors. They are imitated in this new life style, by a large number of children who come to towns to look for food by way of employment. The new comers are forced by their employers to put on clothes and regularly clean them and themselves as well. Rain in *Karamoja* is very rare. For the most part of the year *Karamoja* is generally dry (See Odoi 1993:40), and yet the *Karimojong* population depend on the rainwater. For those who live in towns, however, clean water is available. The Government and Non – Governmental Organizations provide water for the town centers, schools, and hospitals making it accessible to those who live nearby these facilities. These town immigrants find life much easier and as a result, many young people have been attracted to the new lifestyle.

(c) The Elite

The third group, are the educated *Karimojong* also known as mwalimu [teachers]. This title goes for all the clothed ones who have adopted as their lifestyle, the cloth-wearing culture. The warriors consider anyone who wears clothing as a lost *Karimojong*. Such people are not to be fully trusted or even respected because they cannot raid cattle for themselves and have abandoned the *Karimojong* culture.

The clothed ones are considered poor although they may be earning a salary or income from their businesses. Strangely enough, a *Karimojong* who has a working relative, a son, or a daughter etc, could demand for the share of his or her salary at the end of the month. It is a common sight in this part of the country,

to see a relative of someone who is employed in a certain office, waiting to get his or her share of the relative's salary. It is held by their tradition that money, like food, should be shared out.

Here the dividing line is based on who owns what. Those who own cattle are truly *Karimojong*. They are fulfilled, happy and contented in need of nothing but the cow. The cattle is their identity, pride and source of respect (Novelli, 1999: LXXXVI).

(d) The Women and Children

The fourth group is the women, children and elderly. Generally they live in the village and must find their own source of survival. Their most happy moment is when the rain finally falls and the warriors move nearer home. This may take more than six to eight months of dry season, during which all cattle move to find grazing and water.

The return of the cattle to the settlement is usually a big event, which must be celebrated with feasts and dance. It means that there will be plenty of milk and blood. Also it means that shortly, there will be sorghum harvest, with lots of food and beer. To the malnourished women, children and elderly, this is a wonderful blessing. To the warrior coming back home from the hostile frontiers where the life of the cattle and the young men who look after them is constantly threatened by armed cattle thugs, it is indeed a sigh of relief.

The Anglican Church in *Karamoja* uses this time of the year to carry out evangelism. The mission department of Moroto Diocese goes to the *Manyattas* to share with the returnees the gospel and to welcome them home. This is the most practical way to share the gospel with the warriors.

The *Karimojong* society is able to survive through this fragmentation. This situation is also bringing with it new meaning and new identity unknown before by

the *Karimojong* society. The *Karimojong* have three types of society: which constitutes of The *Karimojong* society:

- Cattle, women and children who must be protected;
- The friends of the *Karimojong* who should be exploited but not fought;
- The enemies of the *Karimojong* who must be destroyed; and whose cattle, women and children must be raided?

From the on set of this discussion we have pointed out that there are many road blocks in the life of the *Karimojong*, which make it hard to penetrate the community with the intention of making a positive change in the community's life style and welfare. We shall also discuss how the *Karimojong* community interprets such intentions. However good or positive the intention or a program may be, it is always filtered through the cultural and existing traditional established laws which govern the *Karimojong* life and by which, the cultural and existing traditional established laws; must be understood.

Odoi (1993: 85), while discussing the *Karimojong* ethics has stated:

The signs of a pure man are manifested in his blessing; long life, good health numerous livestock and wives, success in raids, the killing of enemies, and by keeping the laws of the society.

Any plan or program to be carried out in *Karamoja* must be examined first. Nothing is taken for granted in this highly pragmatic society.

3.5 RELIGIOUS PASSIVITY JUSTIFIED

The *Karimojong* society is basically a pastoral and semi- nomadic society. In this kind of society very little religious practices are entertained. When there is a problem in the community, the clan head, who is also the community priest, must solve it (Odoi 1993: 37). If it requires the assembly of the community, the same elder has the power to convene the assembly at the community's holy place where the matter will be locally solved. "If by any chance it was a question or problem regarding a sub section or a whole section -- in each village one old

man is recognized as a leader, and his words are obeyed to the letter. He is also considered a religious leader” (ibid).

Thus religious leadership is considered on the basis of age, rather than the calling or even training. This leader must also be a *Karimojong* elder, for his word to be taken seriously. Not all old men in *Karamoja* are elders – Eldership is a respected office whose official is installed on an initiation ceremony of age-sets.

“Among the Karimojong the elders in the age-set system appear to have greater powers (including spiritual powers)” (ibid: 74).

Most African people’s religious leadership is usually separated from other leadership functions and sometimes has a separate office. Among the Baganda for instance, this office is under the *Omusamize* [the priest] who takes care of all religious matters while *Omukungu* or *Omwami* [chief] oversees the political office. Mutebi (2002:26) discussing the *Kiganda* culture says:

The Kiganda hierarchy in society has also affected the divine realm. Just as the Kabaka was seen to be above the society with several chiefs below him, also Katonda (god) was conceived as being on top with several beings below him. There are also divinities, spirits, priests and mediums.

For the *Karimojong* both offices are vested in one man, the elder. Among the Jie *Karimojong*, the senior elder presides over “an annual ceremony at which they sacrifice and pray to God. (Mbiti, 1970: 185). But among the Kipsigis of Kenya, communal rituals are conducted by a hereditary priest, whose duties are to invoke God at all important ceremonies. This individual is regarded as an intermediary between God and men (Ibid 186). The Mondari who were also nomads until recently have a separate office for making annual sacrifices (ibid: 187).

For the *Karimojong*, the distinction between what is social, cultural practice and religious one is difficult to determine. For example the ceremony for the coming of rain and the celebrations for harvest are both social and religious rituals (Novelli, 1999:70,71).

The pragmatism of the *Karimojong* takes the upper hand (Odoi 1993:75) even in issues of religion. This state of affairs has made the *Karimojong* the most difficult people to evangelize. Odoi (1993:77) has rightly stated that:

No adequate communication of the Gospel to the Karimojong can take place without an adequate understanding of their world, religion and language.

Novelli (1999:11). argues that: *The scarcity and unreliability of the rainfall are the reasons, which limit them –They cannot allow themselves to indulge in such ideological luxuries when survival is at stake.*

The approach to the *Karimojong* must start from where they are. Shorter, (1973:196) has commended that *Christianity must build itself up within existing, viable, human communities.*

The late Mwalimu Julius Nyerere also held this view and has stated:

Our first step therefore must be to re-educate ourselves; ---. In our traditional African society we were individuals within a community and the community took care of us" [Nyerere, 1968:6, 7).

The religious life of the *Karimojong* is communal and is related to their struggle for survival. This can be detected in their greetings (Novelli, 1999: 11), which express their ideal in life. First they wish others and indirectly themselves, long life; then abundant food i.e. plenty of animals and agricultural products; many wives and children, friendship; the basis for cooperation among themselves [another means of survival]; and Obedience to their customs, (the necessary premise to assure this survival). That these are their priorities is shown by the

fact that whatever interferes with this process is fought with all possible determination. The *Karimojong* tradition and customs are believed to be the very source of their survival and any threat to them is resisted.

Christian religion as we are going to see later is suspiciously seen as a possible threat to their tradition and customs. This is going to be the focus of the next discussion.

3.6 TRADITIONAL CUSTOMS AND RELIGIOUS BARRIERS

In the previous discussion, we have endeavored to show the relationship between the *Karimojong* society and its religious practice. We have argued that there is no split point between the social cultural function and or religious function.

The traditional and customary practices are neatly interwoven into the religious practice of the people. This can be seen in the daily practice of the *Karimojong*. As Kraft (1979:46) has eloquently put it:

We need to understand, look for and analyze the ways in which such emersion affects us.

For the *Karimojong*, traditions and cultural norms are not viewed as the practical way of expressing themselves or as simply a *Karimojong* identity; but also as the only means to survive.

3.6.1. The Concept of God

The term *Akuj* which in the *Karimojong* language, is the equivalent of the English word God, literally means the sky or "A bowl covering the earth, which is flat or a sort of immense Savannah" like it is in this region. The clouds are cows in the grazing fields and the moon is the place where the cattle gather at night. (Novelli, 1999: LVI). Other African tribes share this concept of God.

Mbiti [1970], in *the Concepts of God in Africa*, has listed tribes who relate God to the sky. The Basa of Nigeria call God *Agwatana*, which means sun. The Birifor of Ghana, call God *We* [sun]. The Chopi of Mozambique call God, *Tilo* [sky]. The Dorobo of Kenya, *Asis* [sun], or *Tururit* [above]. The Dinka of Sudan, *Nhialic* [in the above]. The Elgeyo of Kenya, *Asis* [sun]. The Grunshi of Ghana, *We* [sun]. The Gusii Kenya, *Erioba* [sun]. The Ingassana of Ethiopia, *Tel* [sun]. The Jie Uganda, *Akuj* [sky]. The Kadara of Nigeria, *Onum* [sun]. The Kufa of Ethiopia, *Yaro* [sky-God]. The Kagaro Nigeria, *Gwaza* [Universe]. The Kakwa of Sudan, *Nguleso* [God in the sky]. The Kamasya of Kenya *Asis* [Sun/sky]. The Karanga of Zimbabwe, *Nyadenga* [he who is in the sky or owns the sky]. The Kipsigis and the Kissi of Kenya, [sky, God] (ibid: 327 – 336).

To the *Karimojong*, this sky God is responsible for their problems, because if he fails to send rain; the cattle die, the sorghum dies and eventually people also will die. Yusufu Turaki (1999: 28) raises questions concerning this knowledge of God in the African tradition and religion.

He asks:

Do Africans in their traditional religion derive such knowledge of God from his personality? What is the content of this knowledge of God? In what ways do Africans respond to this knowledge of God?

Yusufu Turaki asserts that 'in the traditional religious thought, their meanings and import have to be measured by the traditional religious system itself. They cannot be interpreted by using Christian theological categories, for then they loose their traditional meaning and import. '

Novelli (1999: LVII) on his part, is positive that:

"Many of the characteristics which the Karimojong attribute to this mysterious power [Ajuk – sky] are strictly connected with those that we in the western world attribute to God".

Shorter (1973:49) does not deny that:

Traditional religion was an alienation in which man felt himself unable to dominate his environment in the grip of Ghosts and demons, under the spell of the awe – inspiring phenomena of nature, a prey to imaginary magical forces or cruel and capricious spirits” but agrees that, People in the traditional society have had a genuine view of the sacred. [ibid].

It must be clearly stated here that the *Karimojong* hardly engage in religious discussions. Some of the people I interviewed had no idea what the word salvation or sin means. Novelli has rightly said that the *Karimojong* are interested in facts, not theories (1999: LVIII). They are interested in what affects their lives, their herds, the rain, pastures for the animals. The dominant topic in *Karamoja* is the cattle; not even the health of the people. Da Ros (1975:48 cited in Novelli (1999:353) has said:

These people [pastoralists] are essentially pragmatists; they turn their attention and their efforts to daily requirements: their cattle, grass, milk, sons, good crops [for those who practice also agriculture], giving little space to reflection and intellectual creativity.

Myths are not part of the *Karimojong* folklore. For this reasons the myths of the origins and those of cultural heroes are scanty or are totally absent (Novelli1999: 355). This is one of the major differences between the pastoralist *Karimojong* and other tribes in Eastern Africa. Mbiti(1970:114 – 128) draws a long list of tribes who worship mythological heroes, but the *Karimojong* are not mentioned among them.

This perhaps, explains the reason why there are no known shrines in places I have visited in *Karamoja*. However, the absence of shrines could also be caused by the transhumance culture of the pastoralists, which demands freedom and flexibility to enable them free and quick movement without encumbrance of carrying large equipment. This kind of life does not allow them free time to reflect

or indulge in ideological or philosophical matters, which often occupy the minds of more settled agriculturists, who have more time to contemplate.

The pastoralists do not have permanent buildings, villages, or tombs with which to remember in a permanent way (Novelli 1999:353).

Stories dominated the evening activities of the pastoralists to "entertain in the long hours between sun set and the night rest." The protagonists are generally animals, which act as human beings. At times it is human beings that are the protagonists of the stories. And sometimes animals and human beings are acting together (Ibid).

3.6.2 Spiritual Matters

From this discussion we can clearly see that the spiritual matters have no big role in the actual life and experience of the *Karimojong*. This is even seen in the stories the *Karimojong* enjoy as stated above. Akol's Narrative stories collected from various parts of *Karamoja* depict the general understanding. In the *Karimojong* folklore, he argues that these stories are usually short and are narrated in the evenings in the gatherings where those present are of the same sex. The animals are represented as human beings, some are praised and some are despised. The Jackal is a liar, the elephant is stupid, the hyena is bad, the tortoise instead is gentle, and the rabbit is clever and cunning, so are human beings (Akol, 1966:v,vi).

Akol's stories are similar to many African children stories. They are plain and have a moral lesson at the end, but cannot be categorized as myths. Some of the stories are adventurous, but do not create a hero. The bad one perishes and the good one succeeds. No supernatural intervention is mentioned.

3.6.3 Total Obedience to Tradition

The entire life of the *Karimojong* is governed by the traditional rules from birth to death (Novelli 1999:303). The one who keeps tradition is praised and the one who does not is shunned and despised. Their experience tells them that, by adhering to tradition, they managed to survive during the long century of existence in their precarious habitat. Disregard for it would certainly mean to put in jeopardy their chances for survival (ibid).

3.6.4 The Taboos

Like much of African traditional society, taboos are used. In the *Karimojong* society, taboos are used to ensure the strict observances of the traditions Turaki (1999:212) was right when he said:

Taboos in an African setting can be termed as the sacred moral codes. They reflect social, customary and religious behaviors and practices. They are also codes of conduct or set rules of behavior or do's and don'ts of a given community.

Stajue (1990:140 cited in Turaki 1999:212) has defined taboos as:

The place where the spirit world meets social and religious customs. Taboos enforce the concept of the sacred. It is a prohibition against touching saying being or doing something for fear of being inflicted by the mystic dangerousness of a particular object or supernatural power. Certain objects, persons, places, and times are forbidden because they are associated with supernatural powers.

For the *Karimojong*, the motivation to maintain the taboo within the *Karimojong* tradition is not governed by fear of certain mystical power but rather the society to which the individual is accountable (Novelli, 1999:304).

3.7 THE KARIMOJONG CULTURE AND EVANGELISM

The *Karimojong* culture is in my view, a religious one as well. Novelli (1994:24) has described their concept of Akuj as 'linked with the paternal figure known by people (the *Karimojong*). Everything depends ultimately on him even if, compared with the maternal figure, he is partly absent from our every day life, and is distant.

This role model of a father as the figure of God depicts him as a very dark image of one who is generally absent from the immediate needs of his people; unlike the mother whose picture is that of "Mutual love, trust, confidence, since from the very beginning of a person's life she is the one who, for all practical purposes takes care of all your needs" (ibid: 24, 25).

To the Christians, God is called the father. The *Karimojong* term for God is Akuj, which means the sky. Considering the situation of drought in *Karamoja*, when people, and cattle die in thousands: this image of God sends a wrong signal to the *Karimojong* belief in God. They see god (Akuj – Sky) as uncaring and totally unconcerned with their needs. They ask why this God should withhold rain when we need it. Why should he cause the death of our cattle, our children and people?

They believe that the spirits associated with Akuj are responsible for sicknesses, madness, and sunstroke. So in their prayers they pray that God be confused or dazzled so that he does not pay attention to them.

3.7.1 The Elders

The *Karimojong* pay great attention and respect to the elders. They believe that the elders have a direct relationship with the supernatural and thus are considered intermediaries with God.

“Their elders, status puts them on the boarder, as it were, between the natural and the supernatural. Their proximity with the supernatural world and with God is a result, not only of their age, but also of the concrete fact. If they managed to last so long amid the harshness and hazards of life in *Karamoja*, together with their families and their herds, they knew, so to say, how to deal with God in order to obtain whatever was necessary for their life” (ibid: 25). This is an indicator of the important role the *Karimojong* elders play in the religious life of the *Karimojong*.

The introduction of the evangelization of the *Karimojong* is seen by the elders and all the warriors as imposing on them a foreign culture or calls it a new set of beliefs. To them this is to interfere with their normal life patterns by such ideas as wearing clothes, stopping cattle raiding, drinking cows' blood, marrying many wives etc.

Being a Christian is to become another type of person “the clothed one”. It means a person who has run away from the *Karimojong* way of life and is struggling to become a different person.

The *Karimojong* village folks seem to be intrigued and completely afraid of this new trend, to the extent they refuse their children from going to school. They argue that education spoils boys and denies them being men. The Girls are particularly denied school because the parents may never get cattle from their suitors. The warriors who are owners of cattle cannot marry such a girl. And the educated girls cannot go back into the *Manyatta* way of life either.

3.7.2 Can We Introduce a Neutral Gospel?

The introduction of the gospel to the *Karimojong* is being confronted with many barriers. The cultural understanding of the *Karimojong* does not seem to give room to anything new, or which may be seen as competing with it, to win the royalty of the *Karimojong*. The rejection of such an idea, in the *Karimojong* status

quo, is swift and decisive. On the other hand, the goal of the gospel message is to transform, rather than conform. Under these circumstances, it is obvious that sooner or later, confrontation between the gospel and the *Karimojong* culture will be inevitable.

This is the reason why the *Karimojong* must keep their distance from contact with new ideas. Novelli (1994 : 35) has argued that we should think twice before discarding it as superstition to be swept away in order to make room for an ordinate exposition of the truths of the catholic faith, proper of the western world, starting from Adam and Eve and ending with the last judgment . In other words, can we introduce Biblical faith to the *Karimojong* along side their cultural faith? Is it compatible? Novelli does not fully take this line of thinking. The reasons are obvious:

Cultural and religious visions, Proper of each people are part and parcel of their collective and individual identity, from which nobody is ready to part unless obliged.

He then asks, "*Have we the right to do such a thing?*"

Novelli (1994) answers this question in the affirmative.

The creation of a new humanity in Christ does not imply this, but only a process of purification which the people themselves will be able to put in motion once they have accepted Christ and his gospel (ibid).

Novelli (1994: 35) has introduced the doctrine of dialogue between the Christian faith and the *Karimojong* cultural religions. He bases his argument from the words of Jesus in Matthew 5:17:

"I did not come to abolish the law, or the prophets, but to fulfill them" and on the Catholic Church tradition "*whatever goodness or truth is found among non-Christians is looked upon by the Church as preparation to the gospel, and as given by Him who enlightens all men that they may finally have life"* ([Church Constitution No. 5).

"To evangelize is to spread the good news that Jesus Christ died for our sins and was raised from the dead according to the scriptures, and that as the reigning

Can this theology of accommodation be the answer to the evangelization of the *Karimojong*? Would this be in agreement with the Biblical evangelical approach to evangelizing?

There are more questions than answers; but one thing is for sure we cannot approach the *Karimojong* evangelization with a 'naïve realism' (Kraft, 1979:26) neither should we sacrifice the fundamentals of scriptural approach to evangelism at the cultural religious altar. This would not be the gospel. We shall adopt here three definitions of evangelism in order to make our point clear.

The one made by the Archbishop committee on evangelism 1918 says:

To evangelize is so to present Christ Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit, that men shall come to put their trust in God through him and, to accept him as their savior and serve him as their King in the fellowship of his Church.

In this definition, we have the objective of evangelization: To present Christ Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit; we have the objective outcomes of that process: *“that men shall come to put their trust in God through Him to accept him as their savior: we have the basis of evaluating our objectives: and serve him as their King in the fellowship of His Church”.*

Packer (*Watson ed. 1984:25- 26*) defines Evangelism as: *“To evangelize is to present Christ Jesus to sinful men in order that through the power of the Holy Spirit, they may come to put their trust in God through Him”.*

The international congress for the world evangelization defines evangelism in these terms:

“To evangelize is to spread the good news that Jesus Christ died for our sins and was raised from the dead according to the scriptures, and that as the reigning

Lord He now offers the forgiveness of sins and the liberating gift of the Spirit to all who repent and believe.”

The Laussane Congress endorses “*dialogue whose purpose is to listen sensitively in order to understand*”. They also assert, “*But evangelism itself is the proclamation of the historical, Biblical Christ as saviour and Lord, with view to persuading people to come to him personally and so be reconciled to God (Watson ed. 1984:25- 26).*”

Listen sensitively is what we need in the proclamation of the Gospel in *Karamoja*. But still one major problem remains unsolved. How can we have access to the *Karimojong* so that the gospel can be proclaimed to them? Because the problem is not simply lack of dialogue, but with whom to dialogue. A new method of reaching the pastoral nomads must be designed if they will ever get an opportunity of hearing the Gospel.

Wherever the gospel has gone, there has always been peoples’ culture to interact with or even contend with. The gospel has always won the battle. The Gospel will never land in virgin soil completely untouched. It has always been taken by violence and violent men take it violently. The problem in *Karamoja* is where to find people to evangelize. Pastoralists are almost invisible because of their high mobility. Adults, other than the elderly are rare to find in the settlement. And when they finally appear in the rainy season, it is hard to find an adult *Karimojong* sober and willing to listen.

3.7.3 Child Evangelism: the Only Way

The Church cannot give up on the *Karimojong*. A detailed time plan must be designed to overcome the roadblock in evangelization of the *Karimojong*. This plan must focus on the Children before they become young adults. I believe child labor in *Karamoja* is the highest, in the world. Children start to work as herdsmen very early but this is usually done during the rainy season when the herds are

near to the settlements. But in the dry seasons, children are usually at the settlement except when they are hunting for food.

Child evangelism within the *Manyatta* is the only way the *Karimojong* can be reached. But this approach is not without hazards.

In Karimoja, a stranger does not simply move in the *Manyatta* and start conversation with the people. The *Manyatta* is a miniature military barracks, where security consciousness is very high. Therefore security protocol must be observed strictly or else one can be injured or lose one's life in the process. A carefully planned strategy must be put in place along with some incentive such as food supply or medicine as part of the evangelization package.

To the *Karimojong*, words have no meaning if not accompanied with tangible actions.

3.7.4 Relief And Evangelization

Karimojong can be reached if there is something to attract them. To work among the *Karimojong* one must be doing something more than preaching or holding dialogue with the *Karimojong*. Relief work can be such a method. Many relief workers have had access to the *Karimojong* very easily and have been assured protection. The only problem has been that Christian organizations involved in relief work have not used this opportunity to share the gospel with the *Karimojong*. The reason is that the intention of going there was to provide relief and not to evangelize.

Where relief is a means to the gospel, evangelization will be possible and in the long run the mission can be achieved. This approach would not be new. The missionaries have used it before, but it was not carefully designed to meet its primary need of evangelization.

Odoi (1993:126) argues:

Given ten years of scant harvests, in Karamoja, the giving of aid in form of food is not only welcome but also very appropriate. In such years, death as result of hunger occurs more often than not. The missionaries believed that helping those adults in need and especially in periods such as this would act as a bridge to reach the adult population.

Novelli (1988:137) adds:

Charity always was one of the prerogatives of the Church, and perhaps, through this help, the barrier of mistrust that held the people back from the fathers could be reached and allow for a new relationship among them----

It began with a few sacks of maize meal and progressively went on to even more massive interventions, which peaked towards the end of the seventies and early eighties with involvement of international aid organizations which unloaded thousands of tones of food in Karamoja in times of emergency.

According to Odoi (1993:138) this intervention was abused by the *Karimojong* who thought, “*the world owed them a living*”. This however is very much in line with the *Karimojong* worldview as Novelli puts it. Foreigners, who live among the *Karimojong*, are considered as opportunity par excellence to be exploited in due time, in a way, as the *Karimojong* say, so as to milk the cows without killing.

Therefore, aid cannot be interpreted by the *Karimojong* as showing the love and mercy of God by those who provide it rather it can be a point of contact – a bridge to connect the Christian witness to the *Karimojong*. It cannot and should never be the end in itself, but the means to the preaching of the gospel.

It can be the key to the closed door to access the Christian witness to this fortified community.

Again Novelli (1993:126) makes reference to the effect of this kind of approach. The fact that the mission courtyard began to be filled with adults in connection with food distributions should have made the missionaries suspicious of the real reasons of that influx. Instead they preferred to see in this a good possibility of breaching, at last, in the wall of mistrust that had separated them in the past from the *Karimojong*. And it was in the wake of this conviction that, in the hours of waiting for food distributions the missionary began to speak of God, of Jesus Christ, of the Church... Charity opened doors which, until then, remained irrevocably closed." Odoi (1993:129) has questioned this method and has cast doubt about ascertaining the results of this approach.

It goes without saying that such intervention inevitably saved scores of human lives. The idea that the world owed them a living was conceived as a result of this massive intervention. The *Karimojong* begin to look at the missionaries for assistance whether or not the situation warranted aid. Their unceasing requests became the norm rather than the exception. The good intention of the missionaries of helping those in need in time of famine was, thus exploited by the *Karimojong* to such an extent that their requests continued even when it was not called for. An important question to ask is: "*Were the missionaries seen by the Karimojong as men of God and of his word, or as cows to be milked?*"

Nevertheless, the missionaries found a solid closed door up till then that could not be opened. A key to this door had to be found, and aid was that key.

Odoi (1993:129) proposes other methods, which could have been more effective. An example would be identifying those within the community who needed assistance but sometimes during a prolonged dry season the entire community may face starvation. This effort to improve on the method of approaching the *Karimojong* with the gospel is indeed welcome and it should be followed by a well-designed campaign to proclaim the gospel to the *Karimojong*.

Paul (1 Cor 1:21) said that *God has ordained that men be saved through preaching*. This does not mean that people everywhere are willing to receive the good news.

MC Gavran (1980:245,246) urges that:

Fluctuating receptivity is a most prominent aspect of human nature and society. Receptivity or responsiveness of individual waxes and wanes. No person is equally ready at all times to follow the way .

Aid could be one way by which evangelism of a hostile society can be reached and may be continued until the whole area is more receptive. MC Gavran (1980:55) said:

Modes of mission, which suits hostile population, should not be continued when that population turns receptive

Aid can take many forms. Since the *Karimojong* are pastoralists, provision of medicine and free treatment of their herds can be used as a way of evangelism. This is being done, by some of the NGOs in *Karamoja* and is very popular to the warriors, who often offer protection to the veterinary extension workers and doctors.

This approach should not be interpreted as a bait to hook the people, but rather, as a means to open them up to the gospel. In conclusion, our endeavor to reach the *Karimojong* with the gospel is a task that has to be approached with two major objectives in mind:

- An understanding and appreciation of the *Karimojong* customs, traditions and culture;
- An evangelization strategy that looks at the whole man, in which his spiritual as well as his physical needs are considered as one, and addressed with the same resolve and degree of commitment.

The cost of ignoring these vital components in our evangelization strategy is very high, and has played a major role in the failures of the past mission work in *Karamoja*.

In view of this situation, the next chapter will examine the practical ways of meeting our objective to evangelize the *Karimojong*. This will be done in consideration of our findings in the previous chapters. So far, our observation concerning the *Karimojong* resistance to the gospel, and to any change in general, be it social, political, or economic has had a cause; whether the cause was real, or imaginary.

We have discerned that the life-threatening situation in this region is likely to cause some kind of apprehension, especially, when the pillars, which have sustained the *Karimojong* survival over the centuries, are being shaken. In response to this threat, a defensive mechanism to ensure survival is surely expected.

Chapter Four

PRACTICAL WAYS OF EVANGELIZING THE *KARIMOJONG*

4.1 BRIEF SUMMARY

In the previous chapters, we examined the context in which the evangelization of the *Karimojong* is to be carried out. From this perspective, the following issues can be realized:

- That the *Karimojong* suffer from various inhibitions: political, cultural, social, economic and religious;
- That these inhibitions have had enormous effects on the general well being of the *Karimojong* people and their neighbourhood;
- The *Karimojong* have developed a biased position that could be understood by others as being resistant to change;
- That this condition and a host of others, has contributed to retardation in all aspects of economic, social and spiritual development of the *Karimojong* people;
- That this prevailing state has made evangelization of the *Karimojong* and other social services in general, practically difficult.

4.2 THE *KARIMOJONG* ARE “UNREACHED PEOPLE”

The social and spiritual condition of the *Karimojong*, point to a state of being un-reached. Therefore in this state, the *Karimojong* can be classified among the un-reached people or hidden people of the world.

4.2.1 The Definition of Un-reached People

The un-reached people's movement has helped us to be able to identify group of people who have not been reached with the gospel. Accordingly *Bush (1993: VII)* has described the un-reached people as:

...A people within which there is no indigenous community of believing Christians with adequate members and resources to evangelize themselves without outside assistance; they have not heard the gospel in an understandable way or form, or

responded to the gospel or do not believe that Jesus Christ is the only way to salvation, and that the Bible is the word of God, the truth and live.

4.2.2 The Features and Similarities of the Un-reached People

When analysing Bush's definition of the un-reached people of the world, a striking similarity emerges connecting the *Karimojong* people to the un-reached peoples, in the following areas:

- The *Karimojong* have not heard the Gospel proclaimed to them in an understandable way or form;
- There are few Churches in *Karamoja*, which can be found within the trading centres and only foreigners who are working or trading and some of the elite *Karimojong* attends them. But deep in the villages where the *Karimojong* warriors live, no Churches can be found there;
- The majorities of the *Karimojong* have not responded to the gospel or do not believe that Jesus Christ is the only way to salvation. Some of those I interviewed did not understand the word salvation, even though they informed me that they were once baptized in Church and considered themselves members of the Church;
- The majority of the population does not believe that the Bible is the word of God and that it is the truth according to which they should live;
- The few believers do not gather together regularly for worship, teaching or outreach;
- A Church movement has yet to emerge bearing similarity to the kind of Church movement Bush's definition describes in this study.
- The *Karimojong* did not have the word of God translated in their language.

It was only recently that the New Testament Living Bible was translated into the *Karimojong* language. But then the majority of the *Karimojong* population cannot read or write in order to benefit from the availability of the Bible in their language.

Therefore the strategy to evangelize the *Karimojong* should consider these factors with a practical plan to overcome them.

4.3 THE CHALLENGE TO EVANGELIZE THE *KARIMOJONG*

The Gospel takes place, never in a vacuum; wherever it has been presented, it has encountered various conditions of human predicaments. These conditions and circumstances may be problems to the gospel preaching or challenges we must address. Whatever the case may be, the gospel cannot stand on neutral ground. Green (1984 revised edition P.32) has rightly put it,

Whilst it is entirely fruitless to speculate on the comparative difficulty of preaching the gospel in different ages, there can be no doubt that it was an exceedingly difficult operation in the conditions and circumstances of the first century.

In this regard, the challenge of evangelization of our communities is inescapable, and the onus is on the Church to discharge its God given responsibility and to chart out practical ways of achieving its evangelistic goals.

The history of the missionary activities indicates that the Anglican and the Catholic Churches have been in *Karamoja* for over 75 years. Unlike other parts of Uganda, which have been flooded with, Churches, there are only two Christian denominations working there. These Churches have worked under very difficulty conditions to be able to continue with the work they are doing. A missionary record dating from the 1930's indicated that there were few converts won to Christ by list of names of those who were baptized and attended baptism class which was also being used as a literacy class. The record shows that the missionaries made several visits to the settlements (*Manyattas*), in attempt to introduce the gospel to the *Karimojong*.

In discussing the challenges of evangelization of the *Karimojong*, we will examine a number of issues.

4.4 AN ANALYSIS OF THE PREVIOUS CHAPTERS

In the previous chapters we have endeavoured to identify causes of the *Karimojong* resistance to change which, in our view, have erected barriers to evangelization of the *Karimojong* people.

In the historical perspective, we have discussed the historical ramifications affecting the *Karimojong* social and spiritual development. We asserted that the *Karimojong* have suffered inhibitions resulting from the political pressure arising from foreign ideas being imposed on them. The predictable consequences, of course, are many and their impact has been carried over to the new generation. Consequently, the *Karimojong* have adopted a mechanism that this researcher has identified as *resistance to change*.

The *Karimojong* history has been painted with gloomy colours of injustice that those who attempted to evangelize them were regarded as just part of the oppressive machinery. Therefore they could not be trusted. It is important to note that hitherto the *Karimojong* mistrust has gone beyond race, colour or language. It is a mistrust of any one who seems to interfere with the patterns of their cultural life, behaviour or beliefs.

Practical approach to evangelization of the *Karimojong* should aim at restoration of trust, which was the first victim in their historical development as people. With this in view, the Historical, political, cultural and religious perspectives as probable barriers to evangelization have been investigated.

This section will further discuss the findings of the investigation of the perspectives, which we have established and shall show how the historical, political, cultural and religious context have contributed, as well as the impact they have made on the *Karimojong's* present state. We shall argue that in this state the *Karimojong* have become resistant to accept innovations such as the Christian faith and as result, they erected barriers to evangelization.

4.4.1 The Historical Context

In discussing the historical context, a legitimate question was raised whether the *Karimojong* historical background impacted their present situation and in which way it has created barriers to change. In discussing these perspectives, we shall highlight the following issues:

- The historical impediments in the *Karimojong* development;
- The ecological and geographical setting.

4.4.1.1 The Historical Errors in The *Karimojong* Socio-Political Development

It has been historically established that the *Karimojong* have led a life of struggle. For example, population explosion of human and animals was the main reason for their movement to the present location. In their search for a better settlement they occupied the present savannah plain near Lake Kyoga.

Under this circumstance the *Karimojong* had to adapt a migratory life style. This choice of pastoral trade and its related ways of living made contacts with other people minimal. The major reason for this isolation is that the herders spend most of their time with the cattle, away from home.

Thus chances of interacting and learning new methods of survival from others were affected. In this way, they have developed a belief that their lifestyle is the best approach to their survival. This false conviction has affected any aspiration for any further improvement towards their well-being.

The prevailing condition in *Karamoja* is not a unique one. The historical setting of any people directly or indirectly affects their behaviour whether socially, politically, or spiritually. Their historical setting influences any development or lack of it. (Langlands 1971:34-35)

The *Karimojong* crisis is believed to trace its roots to the colonial period and postcolonial rulers. The following issues can be attributed to this historical background.

- (a) The power struggle between the various social forces i.e. Elders and the warriors;
- (b) Arbitrary division between the *Karimojong* clans, into administrative units;
- (c) The restructuring of the social organizations to create a capitalistic state.

These historical events have made a long-standing impact in the past, present and future life of the *Karimojong* people. To a large extent, this impact has been negative and have been reinforced by the nature of the pastoralists culture which does not stimulates change, even when conditions dictates it.

4.4.2 The Ecological and Geographical Setting

We have stated in this study that overgrazing is a problem, which contributes to desertification. Along with this is the problem of long dry weather, which drives the herds' men to search for water and pasture for their animals. At this period hardly any soul is found in settlements (*manyatta*) in *Karamoja*, because even the women, the children and the elderly must go to search for food. Adult males and young boys from 10 years of age and above, leave home to take care of cattle. This situation has been caused by the following factors.

4.4.2.1 Rain Season is Unreliable

Lukwiya (1971:6), in his report on Economic Policy Designed for *Karamoja*, says that the climate is semi-arid. The territory receives as little rain as 11 inches. These changes in rainfall make the *Karamojong* distinguish two seasons in a year.

4.4.2.2 Dry Climate drive Herdsmen away from Home

Barber (1968:224) says, throughout the area the rainfall pattern is sharply seasonal with a dry season from October to March but the unreliability of the

rainfall is as critical to the way of life as the total annual precipitation". He adds, "The herder's year is very strongly governed by climate and its relation to the vegetation pattern. During the dry season from September to April, the young men set off with a large part of the family herds in search of grazing and water.

It is at this time that annual grasses in the homestead zone lie back and pasture shortage is added to the growing problem of water shortage and the long dry season and low rainfall totals in the zone begin to make their mark on the landscape. The young men and their cattle move towards the perennial belt of the higher rainfall zone in the west. The number of cattle moving, the timing of the movement and the extent of the wandering all are strongly influenced by the severity of the dry season.

4.4.3 The Political Context

We find fine lines linking the historical and the political development of the *Karimojong* society. It is through this false political start that ushered in the prevailing circumstances. While the Missionaries had chances of avoiding the British Administrators mistakes, they fell into the same, by choosing to maintain status quo type of ministry. Thus evangelization process had to pay the costly price of rejection of the gospel message.

The conflict between the *Karimojong* and the British Administrators was always prompted by the *Karimojong* unwillingness to change. However the manner by which the British handled them to bring the change made them more hardened. One of the major insult the *Karimojong* accuse British of committing was the introduction of the chiefs to govern them. The other was the creation of borders between the clans. The latter denied them of grazing grounds during the dry season, while allowing their counterpart clans, exclusive use of the fertile grazing area for their cattle. To solve this imbalance between the clans, conflict between the clans has been going on.

4.4.4 Cultural Context

In discussing the cultural context, the following issues shall be analysed:

- Unfair criticism of the *Karimojong* culture;
- The leadership aspect;
- The differences in the leadership concept;
- Cultural Conservatism;
- Love for culture.

As we have observed above, very important cultural traditions that were meant to protect the interests of the entire community were overlooked, in favour of the political interests. This aggressive approach to the *Karimojong* problem solving led to mistrust of any program by the Government, the Church or Non-Governmental Organizations.

4.4.4.1 Unfair Criticism of the *Karimojong* Culture

The continued political interference in the *Karimojong* way of life kept them farther away and legitimized their suspicion and mistrust of foreigners in their land. One example is nudity, which though culturally acceptable and favourable for their hot climate was unfairly criticized. According to the *Karimojong*, those who cover their bodies must be hiding some defect. In the past the *Karimojong* girl could not accept to be married to a man whose whole body she could not see. The reason for this was the fear of venereal diseases, which had spread in the area.

The issue of *Karimojong* nudity was very insignificant to be highly politicized by the missionaries and the British colonialists. There was more grave concern in the region that deserved their critical attention, but had been rather grossly ignored.

This criticism of the *Karimojong* culture by foreigners provoked anger and hatred. For this reason, the *Karimojong* view Christianity as a ploy to change what they

believe is superior cultural practice. As in the words of Anderson (1997: 223) that:

The Gospel is confused with culture, it has been colonialized and spurious Christian culture is offered in place of a genuine and relevant Christianity.

In Willow Bank report, it was stated that because man is God's creation, some of his culture is rich in beauty and goodness; because man is fallen, all of it is tainted with sin and some of it is demonic. To bring a culture under the Lordship of Christ there must be radical change (Winter 1981:508.)

We have mentioned in our political analysis that the British committed many cultural errors that cost them dearly; and which have had long political, social and spiritual ramifications in *Karamoja*. In discussing cultural context, we shall examine the leadership aspect of the *Karimojong* in relation to the leadership type, which was introduced to them by the British government.

4.4.4.2 The Leadership Aspect

In the *Karimojong* culture there is no concept of a central figure to which all people should look to for leadership. The *Karimojong* solve their problems by consensus and if consensus fails they solve them by taking up arms against each other, the winner takes it all.

Elders are not elected to office or chosen; the outgoing elders who are the fathers and sons respectively initiate them into the Generation-Age Set. This leadership system makes them to despise civic leaders who are deployed in the Districts. This situation in the *Karimojong* cultural leadership structures is a barrier to evangelization. It is a barrier, because for the time being, *Karamoja* needs outsiders to introduce them to the gospel and this involves leadership.

4.4.4.3 Major Differences in the Leadership Concepts

The *Karimojong* type of leadership is the opposite of the traditional Church leadership for the following reasons:

- The Church maintains a hierarchy, with a strong central leadership;
The central leadership structure entails that the decision is made from the centre;
- In the *Karimojong* leadership structure, only the initiated elders can lead others. No one who is not authorized by the elders is allowed to address the *Karimojong* Assembly;
- The power of the Elders therefore is supreme. It is believed that the elders have divine authority given by God to bless and to curse.
- Decisions affecting the *Karimojong* population must seek the blessing of the elders first. It is because of this strict conservatism that the *Karimojong* have been able to maintain their culture for many years. Cultural legislation over such offences can be very tough and punishment of such offences can be painful.

If the elders can be positively influenced, many *Karimojong* can turn to God. On the other hand, if they are negatively influenced, they can become a barrier to the gospel preaching. When confronted with another kind of leadership style, the *Karimojong* tends to withdraw, confront it head on or become defensively indifferent towards it. This tendency was the cause of conflict between the Government and the *Karimojong*.

4.4.4.4 Cultural Conservatism

The *Karimojong* are culturally sensitive. When asked why they strictly keep to their culture, they say, our culture demands it. They are convinced that their culture is superior to all other cultures.

Schreiner (1959:16) writing about the Pokot pastoralists of Kenya said:

All who have come into contact with the Nilotics have remarked on the proud, individualistic and truculent behaviour that they display toward each other and

particularly toward foreigners. They consider their country the best in the world and every one inferior to themselves. For this reason, they despise clothing and scorn European and Arab cultures and are contemptuous...proud. And reserved with foreigners so that its difficult to get to know them. Their attitude toward any authority is one of touchiness, pride and reckless disobedience. Each determines to go his own way as much as possible, has hatred of submission, and ready to defend himself and his property from the in roads of others. They are brave and self-reliant... turbulent and aggressive and are extremely conservative in their evasion from innovation and interference. This attitude is attributed to the cattle complex. This intense devotion to cattle and a permeation of this value into other aspects of culture, the central, all encompassing value.

4.4.4.5 Love for Culture

The culture has a role to play in any society. *Mc Gavran (1970: 46)* says:

The truth is that every society loves its own culture and it needs it to provide order. Thus making life meaningful and possible... without compromising the truth of the gospel, evangelization should be carried out with due regard to culture. It should incorporate them into a culturally relevant Church without crossing social barriers

4.4.4.5.1 How does it affect Evangelism?

The *Karimojong* fanatic love for their culture can be exploited by approaching them through their existing channels of communication, such as the elders, the cattle related activities, cultural celebrations and rituals. These cultural activities are intended to meet social and physical needs but carry some spiritual meaning to them. In this regard *Van Gemne (1960: 1–3)* has stated:

So great is the incompatibility between the profane and the sacred worlds that a man cannot pass from one to the other without going through an intermediate stage. In such societies every change in a person involves actions and reactions between sacred and profane, actions and reactions to be regulated and guided so that society as a whole will not suffer discomfort or injury.

4.5 EVANGELISM CAN ACCOMMODATE CULTURE

- By paying respect to the *Karimojong* culture while at the same time introducing the gospel to them;
- By using some of the *Karimojong* culture, which emphasizes respect of the elders, can be a positive approach of evangelistic strategy.

4.6 DIFFICULT SOCIAL CONDITIONS

The social conditions in *Karimojong* society are imposed upon them by their rigid cultural practices. The following social conditions will be discussed:

- The condition of famine;
- The condition of drunkenness;
- The high rate of illiteracy;
- Lack of integrated means of survival;
- High mortality rate.

4.6.1 The Condition of Famine

Karamoja is prone to famine. Every year hundreds of children and adults die due to famine. Children die because of malnutrition and the adults die due to excessive drinking of alcohol. The major cause of famine is related to their belief that agriculture is not their calling. The *Karimojong* live on handouts by the world food or other NGOs in *Karamoja*. They have come to accept this and they feel that the world owes them a living. This problem has increased dependence syndrome, which in turn affect their productivity.

There are several reasons why there is always famine in *Karimoja*:

Insecurity in the Region

Security and stability is the backbone of a national economy. However this is the rarest thing in *Karamoja*. Internal conflict makes it difficulty for the traders to bring in their products for sale for those who can afford it. The thugery on the high ways stop travels from trading or working in *Karamoja*.

(b) The *Karimojong* Concept of Relationship

For the *Karimojong* there are three kinds of people;

- (i) Friends, who live with the *Karimojong*, and are considered as equals;
- (ii) Enemies who live like the *Karimojong* and thus vie with them for the resources which guarantee life for both man and beast, and who therefore must be fought; and
- (iii) All others who first because they are neither friends nor enemies are neither considered equals, nor are they fought. They are strangers, good perhaps to be exploited, when useful to the *Karimojong* (Novelli, 1988:16)

4.6.2 The Condition of Drunkenness

Drunkenness is a social as well as a cultural problem. When a child is born, is welcomed by putting alcohol at his or her mouth and says "you are welcome into the world". Thereafter, the alcohol-phenomena, becomes a permanent mark of his or her life. It is almost impossible to find a sober person in the *Manyatta* settlement after ten o'clock in the morning. This condition is likely to be a big barrier in the process of evangelization of the *Karimojong*.

4.6.3 The High Rate of Illiteracy

Karamoja has the highest illiteracy level in the country. The cause of illiteracy is cultural. The *Karimojong* believe that children should take up the trade of cattle keeping early so that they know it just as their fathers. One of the lessons they have to know is military tactics. Boys at the age of ten have become very good in it. Girls are kept for marriage so that the parents may get many cattle from the suitors. Usually girls who have received education refuse to go back into the warrior life and warriors do not want to marry "spoilt girls" as they refer to them. The parents therefore don't like to send their daughters to school so that they may not lose so many cows from the warriors for bride price.

4.6.4 Lack of Integrated Means of Survival (Monolithic Occupation)

The *Karimojong* believe that God created the cattle for the *Karimojong* and the *Karimojong* for the cattle. Therefore the *Karimojong* despise any other trade except herding. Herding, on the other hand, is becoming increasingly unreliable due to the shortage of grazing lands and animal decease'. The *Karimojong* will have to learn other ways of survival.

This cattle concept of the *Karimojong* is a cultural fallacy, which keeps them backward. The limitation of sources of livelihood to cattle products only, has got far reaching impact in the life of the *Karimojong*. One of these implications is that cattle must be restocked at any cost because it is the only means of survival available. This is a problem and a barrier to evangelism, because it perpetuates the problem of raiding in order to stock cattle. It is also a barrier because a hungry community is not easy to evangelize.

4.6.5 High Mortality Rate

These conditions discussed above depict a very sorry state of the *Karimojong* situation. The combination of famine and disease makes *Karamoja* a difficult field where the problems are simply too many and one wonders what should come first. For example, the mortality rate in *Karamoja* is many times higher than other districts because of the conditions enumerated above.

Conclusion

The *Karimojong* past and present situation has been greatly influenced by their strong cultural conservatism. This cultural condition has cost them an enormous price to maintain it. Thus this level of inhibition is counter-productive to them and creates a barrier to evangelization. Under the circumstances, the Church must be willing to re-examine its strategy so as to make evangelization models that suits such a multi-problematic field.

4.7 PREVIOUS ATTEMPT TO EVANGELIZE THE *KARIMOJONG*

There is scant information concerning the evangelization development in *Karamoja* region. The little information available is from the Anthropologists who concentrated on their field rather than actual evangelization. In this section we will discuss the previous attempt to evangelize the *Karimojong* by focusing on the following issues:

- The work of the early missionaries;
- The traditional model;
- Evaluation of the traditional model.

The development of evangelization strategy and models, which are made outside the field, may not be practical when it comes to implementation. It is the contention of this researcher that the field should determine which model or strategy is suitable to a given field. Every field has its own peculiarities and characteristics. These peculiarities act as indicators, which should govern the considerations of the strategies needed.

In the past, programmers were drawn and based on the experience acquired from other previous cultures. These programs had been successful indeed, but were they universally acceptable? Were they applicable to pastoralists' kind of lifestyle? This kind of needs assessment of the field to determine the approach to evangelization of that community which seems to have been ignored by the protestant missionaries, but was successfully utilized by their counter parts the Verona fathers of the catholic mission.

In discussing evangelization of *Karamoja*, we shall first take a stock of the previous models used in an attempt to evangelize *Karamoja*.

4.7.1 The Work of the Early Missionaries

The foundation of the missionary work in *Karamoja* was based on the traditional established method of Church planting which was in use on the continent. This

paragraph will discuss the two major factors in the early missionary work as follows:

- The mission stations;
- Recruitment of workers.

4.7.1.1 The Mission Stations

Establishment of mission stations was one of the major tasks in evangelization of Uganda. This was being done at the time known in history as the scramble for Africa. The two Christian denominations of the Anglican Church based in England, and the Catholic Church based in Rome competed for converts for their denominations.

Therefore mission stations did not only serve, as evangelization springboard but were to an extent a miniature representation of the European powers. Struggles between these powers sometimes would also be felt in the Churches and passed on to the members as well. This scenario was very detrimental to evangelization because people became partisans rather than Christians. Novelli (1988: 127-8) give an account of their problems, which they faced after settling in Kangole:

The difficulties, which the missionaries had to face, must have been many. Already the fact that the apostolic prefect waited for more than three years before sending the missionaries, in spite of pressure from many sides indicated his reluctance to put his men in jeopardy. Once this was done, it did not take long to realize that the real difficulty was not so much the fierce dryness of the climate, or the lack of communication, nor the enormous distances, as much as the attitudes of the people and their mentality which was so different from all that the missionaries had experienced .

In *Karamoja* nothing new was introduced. Missionaries continued with their work as they had done before in other districts of Uganda. Soon, however, they realized that *Karamoja* was a different field. The gospel was being put to test and

the missionary's programs were being rejected. But the missionaries continued with the same strategy and system of Church ministry, even though it was not consonant with the *Karimojong* way of life and practice discussed in the previous chapters.

This situation and setting was "the prevailing mission ethos at the turn of 20th century Christianity. Cox (1996:259) discussing the major success of the Pentecostals in mission field states that:

Many older missionary Churches arose in western contexts of set liturgies, theologies, highly educated and professional clergy, and patterns of Church structures and leadership, with strong centralized leadership. This often contributed to the feeling that these Churches were foreign and that people had to first become 'westerners' before becoming Christians .

4.7.1.2 Recruitment of Workers

During colonial days recruitment of workers was by force. Like Turner before him, Turpin asked much of his subordinates, recruiting porters and other labourers compulsorily, fining those who resisted, demanding large numbers of cattle, and even setting villages on fire and ordering the execution of particular individuals." (Pazzaglia 1982:61).

4.7.1.3 The Catechists

The Catholic Church trained some few young men who came to the mission for various reasons. Some were running away from famine in the villages, others were running away from the parent's child abuse and others simply wanted to study and the parents send them away as a punishment.

After acquiring some reading and writing skills, the missionaries send them as Catechists to the small trading centres near the mission station to teach others the Catholic faith.

The problem with this method is that the young men themselves did not know the faith they were to teach others. Also the Catechism class was going on along side relief supply. So it was difficult to control what was going on and to determine the success or the failure of the program (Novelli 1994: 34-35).

Father Novelli explains the problems they have encountered and which perhaps have led to the existing situation. *“From what the father said and did in his visits, the Karimojong had the impression that the God about whom he spoke was not very different from the one whom they called Akuj. The only difference was the number of prayers and religious practices that the father insisted on teaching them in order to honour this God, and the Karimojong felt no interest in these, since they had their own which expressed adequately their own relationship with him. The Karimojong, according to their own way of thinking, expected that the missionary would eventually explain to them how it was possible to know more. But these explanations were not forthcoming, neither from the priests nor from the catechists whose role was not so much to explain but to make possible recruits learn by heart the present prayers, songs and catechism answers”* [Novelli, 1988:129]. *How could the catechists defend and overcome the objectives of the adult Karimojong in presenting a new perspective of life, if all they could offer was mere formulas, obscure even to them? (130–131). The missionaries thought that it would be easier to make themselves accepted through a local intermediary. However, this good intention did not meet with the expected success ... the Karimojong ... did not understand the newness of Christianity, nor the usefulness of embracing this religion.*

Green (1984; 32) has made similar remarks concerning the difficulties missionaries find in evangelization of various societies.

Those who have never lived in a society which has never been won over from paganism by Christianity find it hard to imagine how extensive the obstacles presented to the Christian faith by religion, vice, custom and sheer laissez-faire are .

4.7.1.4 The Priests

The Church recruited some educated *Karimojong* to provide professional service to its members. Their major assignment involved the worship life of the Church and the offering of the sacraments.

In this approach, the work is done professionally. Every one does his part of the work. This is the concept of the Church operating in *Karamoja*. Schleiermacher (cited in Bosch 1980: 17) defines it as “something done by a professional for the sake of the believing community.” In this concept of Church planting, and in relation to *Karamoja*, the pastor is “a professional on a par with ... other professionals” As such, his role of maintaining and representing his institution is the most important task the Church leadership require from him. Evangelism is expected to be done by experts and through the projects, which may not be under the responsibility of the pastor.

4.8 THE TRADITIONAL MODEL

4.8.1 Definitions of Terms

The Traditional Church planting was developed from the perspective of the western missionary concept of Missions. In this concept, mission refers to the work done among the non-western world while evangelism refers to re-conversion work in the west (Bosch 1991:295). Such interpretation of terms could be the cause of ineffective approach the missionaries used in evangelization of *Karimojong*. They hold the view that the presence of the Church in *Karamoja* as a sign of God’s kingdom is enough witness to the *Karimojong* and therefore facilitates evangelization process. In this section therefore we will discuss:

- The Establishment of the Churches;
- Establishment of Schools;
- Establishment of the Health Units;
- Relief and Development.

4.8.2 Establishment of Churches

One of the major tasks of the missionaries was to establish Churches. The Churches started as a small discipleship class where people gathered primarily, to learn the magic of reading and writing.

The New Testament was the main textbook for the learners. The early Christians were first known as the *basomi* (reader or learners). Thus the group of *basomi* turned into a Church once there was a priest or a missionary/priest to lead it. The *basomi* Churches became popular in the south and southwest where there was a major concentration of missionaries. Novelli (1988) commenting on this situation said, one of the reasons why missionaries failed to gain popularity in *Karamoja* is that the *Karimojong* were not enthusiastic about learning.

They have something to occupy themselves with, which seemed more practical than the senseless religious practices that they did not understand. They continued to take care of their cattle, in which they found not only daily nourishment, but also the fulfilment of all their psychological and to a certain extent, spiritual needs. The approach was not properly assessed, but rather transplanted from other familiar fields whose context and peoples' orientation was quite the opposite of those of the *Karimojong*.

4.8.3 Establishment of Schools

As we have already mentioned above, schools produced Churches. Therefore the relationship between the schools and the Churches was neatly close. Education strategy was always linked to evangelization. For example, among the Baganda in the south, the phrase "to go to read" (*kusoma*) was synonymous with "to go to Church, to worship".

Two vital needs were being met simultaneously, religion and education. On the other hand, one had to suffer being relegated to the secondary position and sometimes totally neglected by both the leaders and the *basomi*/Christians. The

basomi considered religion as an irrelevant component of their major objective, which was in their view, the mastery of the learning reading magic. Thus vacillation between the traditional religion and the Christian faith continued unabated. But to the *Karimojong*, there was no value in the magic of reading. To them there was nothing magical about it, so the Schools as a strategy for planting Churches did not succeed in *Karamoja*.

4.8.4 Establishment of Health Units

Medical services and education has been part of the missionary engagement in Africa for a long time. In Uganda, nearly all the major medical facilities are owned or have been established by the missionaries. This service was extended to *Karamoja* as well, as part of the Church's presence as regards evangelism. The medical units ran by the Churches have continued to provide much needed health services, in the absence of the government facilitation and care of its citizens.

4.8.5 Establishment of Relief and Development Services

The missionaries were forced to choose social action as one way of evangelizing the *Karimojong*. The question of how to deal with poverty, Hunger, disease and tribal conflicts, had to be answered. This bizarre condition has brought about series of life hazards visible as one enters *Karamoja*. It is not uncommon to be greeted with a begging open arms by both Adults and children alike. This is a common sight in this region. The missionaries had to offer relief supplies in order to avert human catastrophe. Relief was also used to attract the *Karimojong* to the gospel, as need for food brought them to the mission compound where they would hear the word of God.

4.9 EVALUATION OF THE TRADITIONAL STRATEGY

In this paragraph we shall evaluate the traditional strategy of Church planting, and will assess the positive and negative impact they have made to the *Karimojong* evangelization.

4.9.1 The Negative Impact

The idea of Christianity as a monolithic block of truth and practices certainly did not facilitate understanding. It had no roots in local cultures, neither did it facilitate acceptance on the part of a people forced by the hardships of daily living to hang on that which by experience they knew guaranteed security, and to accept only what had provide itself useful.

The question of barriers was, unfortunately underestimated. Programmes were drawn and based on the experience acquired from other previous cultures. These programmes had been successful indeed, but they were not universally applicable. "They kept on doing what they had previously done with other neighbouring people among whom they had worked" (Novelli, 1988:129-10).

4.9.2 A Clean Slate Approach

The missionary goal started on the wrong premise of making "a clean slate". This is how, they thought, they would win the people to the Christian faith. Novelli (1988:131) has endeavoured to help us understand the missionaries' frustration as follows:

"The life of every individual among the Karimojong is punctuated with precise duties which each must fulfil according to his age and sex in order to cope with the needs of daily life. He asks, "How could they abandon these duties in favour of other activities whose usefulness they could not understand?"

The missionaries were convinced that it would be easier to make contact with the people through the local intermediaries. However, this good intention did not meet with the expected success. The *Karimojong* did not understand the newness of Christianity neither the usefulness of embracing this religion.

So the "*Karimojong* remained indifferent, with nothing else to care or think other than his livestock". Novelli (1988:129) made an assessment of the evangelization

activities by his Church. We can safely take it as a representative assessment of the missionary works, as follows:

The new religion was not offering them anything new than what they knew just numerous prayers, and unnecessary and boring religious practices. They have something to occupy themselves, which, that seemed more practical than the senseless religious practices that they did not understand. They continued to take care of their cattle, in which they found not only daily nourishment, but also the fulfilment of all their psychological and to a certain extent, spiritual needs.

4.9.3 The Impact of Relief in Evangelization

The *Karimojong* had avoided the missionaries, probably because they could not tell the difference between the white missionaries and the white British Administrators. The supply of relief food during the famine and thereafter created some level of trust between the *Karimojong* and the missionaries. This trust however, cannot be interpreted to mean that the *Karimojong* ended their resistance to be more receptive to the gospel. The positive results of this model can be evaluated as follows:

- Missionaries intervened to stop the catastrophe the famine was causing to the *Karimojong* community;
- The people were mobilized and could be reached more easily than before;
- People could now tell the difference between the British Administrators and the missionaries;
- To some extent, people had a chance to hear the word of God and the missionaries had the opportunity to make contact with the people in a more intimate way;
- Through this strategy, some remnants *Karimojong* have accepted the gospel and now can reach their fellow *Karimojong* for Christ;
- The method of approach was not properly assessed, but rather transplanted from other familiar fields whose context and peoples' orientation was quite the opposite of those of the *Karimojong*. The missionaries entered the *Karimojong* context with their own "coloured glasses".

“Moreover since the vast majority of people are used to one pair of glasses from the time of their earliest recollection, Hesselgrave (1978: 125) contends, they are not predisposed – even were they able – to lay those glasses aside (even temporarily) in order to look at the world through another pair of glasses.

- Formal education had been used and accepted with enthusiasm else where, but was rejected in *Karamoja*. Novelli (1988:131) says:
“The very activity of formal teaching was basically foreign to the Karimojong, who learn directly from life all that is necessary and useful in order to become full members of their society.
- The older generation of the *Karimojong* could still be difficult to win because of their attitude about education. The *Karimojong* are not very enthusiastic about education, as Novelli rightly mentioned, *There was not in the Karimojong the kind of curiosity that could attract them to some thing new like schools, writing, reading; things which had been so successful among other groups. [Ibid]*

According to Novelli (1988:61,63), there are four negative impacts in the education strategy:

- (a) The inability of children to dialogue about the fundamental problems of life because of their age;
- (b) The isolation from their villages and their people, the fact that their every day life had to be put aside completely in the mission in order to make a “clean state” of all that they had learned so that it could be replaced by the new education;
- (c) The new form of education seen as something new to be imported rather than an already living seed already existing and ready to be developed in the soil of *Karimojong* culture;
- (d) The idea of withdrawing people from their community was itself suspicious and dangerous, especially when the people who were being withdrawn are women and children. In the *Karimojong* division of labour, women and Children

are the major food producers, while men attend most of the time, to the animals. Any outside interference to this life pattern would pose disastrous results in the family.

4.9.4 Positive Impact

- However, the small number of the *Karimojong* who join the catholic schools and denounce the culture of raiding and herding, have been assimilated into the new class known in *Karamoja* as Mwalimu (Teachers). Slowly, the new culture is expanding as more children join schools and taste a different type of lifestyle.
- In the past, parents would severely punish their children who attempted to join the mission schools, except to receive some relief. But now education is beginning to be appreciated especially by those whose settlements (*Manyattas*) are within walking distance from the trading centres and mission stations; and whose brothers and sisters are now reaping education harvest.

4.10 WHY A NEW STRATEGY IS NEEDED

In the just concluded discussion of the previous attempt to evangelize the *Karimojong*, we observed that the traditional model had a lot of set backs which were being caused by numerous factors arising from the *Karimojong* context. In this section we will pay attention at the following areas:

- Hostile Climate;
- Migratory Lifestyle;
- Alcoholism;
- Absence of Religious Interest.

4.10.1 The Hostile Climate

Unpredictable weather condition has been the major subject matter in *Karamoja* for a long time. Barber(1968:224)

states that, *throughout the area the rainfall pattern is sharply seasonal with a dry season from October to March but the unreliability of the rainfall is as critical to the way of life as the total annual precipitation*".

4.10.2 Migratory Lifestyle

The adult males have very little time in the *Manyatta* annually the distance and the difficult terrain plus the needed security of the cattle keep the men far away from home until the end of the dry season. Cattle camps are highly mobile moving at short intervals over a very extensive area of grazing range. At times this movement is up to 80 kilometres from the permanent homesteads, some times even out of the home (Administrative Districts) (Banks, 1981:1).

During this season even women and children who are left behind getting nearer starvation for lack of food supply, such as milk and blood: the staple food for the *Karimojong*, must move out to look for their survival by all means possible including begging. They leave their *Manyatta* in the early hours of the morning and return to sleep at night in the homestead. This high mobility of people does not allow any other activity to take place year in and year out.

4.10.3 Alcoholism

During the wet season, men come back nearer to the homestead and a series of ceremonies and merry-making involving uncontrollable consumption of alcohol starts. They do this to welcome the arrival of rainy season, by moving from the settlements to the nearby trading centres to hunt for the alcohol. Finding a sober person during the day in this season is near to impossible.

4.10.4 Absence of Any Religious Interest

The *Karimojong* are known to have no enthusiasm in religious matters. The question of the absence of any resemblance of religious practice among the

Karimojong similar to that of other cultures in Uganda make them unique and difficult to reach with the gospel.

Among the Bantu culture, for example, there existed some elements of religion called ancestral worship. This religious awareness has been a starting point in witnessing to non-Christians among the Bantu Linguistic group in Uganda's society. The absence of religious interest among the *Karimojong* people makes it hard to introduce a religious subject for discussion.

4.11 NEW STRATEGY

We have been discussing the challenges missionaries faced in initial stages of *Karimojong* evangelization. Our focus was mainly investigation of the models, which missionaries used to achieve their mission objectives. This section will discuss the application of the new strategies as follows:

- Brief summary
- Ministry of the Laity;
- Involvement of the Worldwide Church;
- Funding;
- Deakonia;
- Cultural Sensitivity.

4.11.1 Brief Summary

We advocate for proper understanding of the society in *Karamoja* and for a holistic approach to the *Karimojong* situation. This understanding was noticeably absent among the missionaries and the successive governments of Uganda from the British era to the present time.

A new strategy that is directed to social, physical, spiritual and cultural needs of the *Karimojong* is necessary. This strategy must be designed in such a way that it is culturally relevant to the *Karimojong*. A cultural relevant strategy must consider the physical and the social setting of the *Karimojong* people, as well as

their heritage, and must involve them in the implementation process. This involvement will lead to internalization and appreciation of what is being done.

Odoi (1993) whose research thesis draws much of its resource from Novelli (1993: 217, 219), has proposed going beyond presence evangelism to proclamation and love for our neighbours. "The planting of indigenous Churches and the development of communities.

His twenty point outline objectives spells out various intervention plans with a specific timeline to achieve it. Odoi's planned strategy includes:

- Establishment of a vibrant community of believers in central *Karamoja* involved in word and deed to be achieved in ten years;
- Raise fifty worship centres in fifty *Manyattas* before the end of the century;
- Development of mature Churches;
- Development of groups of potential people for the role of evangelism and Church management;
- Raising literacy levels in *Manyattas*;
- Involve the *Karimojong* in their affairs;
- Improve water supply;
- Improve communication with the rest of the country;
- Provide medical services;
- Assess the root cause of medical problems in cattle camps;
- Educate warriors toward a better health;
- Train the *Karimojong* in appropriate veterinary work;
- Incorporate traditional medicine with the scientific veterinary one [219-226].

4.11.2 Ministry of the Laity

A large portion of this study has concentrated on the problems facing the *Karimojong* evangelization. Emphasis has been laid on new strategies, which addresses the spiritual as well as the social and physical needs of the field. In

this section we will dwell on the kind of manpower that fits into our strategy of evangelizing the *Karimojong*.

These days, we should consider a new kind of missionaries who should be able to fit into any situation in their indigenous setting. At least this was the feeling in the world mission and evangelization meeting in Mexico in 1963. They declared as follows:

"We therefore affirm that this missionary movement now involves Christians in all six continents and in all lands. It must be the common witness of the whole church, bringing the whole gospel to the whole world" (Orchard, 1964:175).

Mc Govran has called this situation the comfortable dogma:

"Which so cheerfully disregarded the fact that in most places the Church in the third world was only a tiny part of the total population and confined to one place or two sections of it – gave most western Christians a comfortable feeling that the main task of world evangelization was now finished? The great new fact of our time was that, the Church was in every land of earth. From now on, it would grow naturally as devoted Christians of each nation evangelized their neighbours. They would be so much more effective than foreign missionaries. Such was the wisdom of the time (Mc Gravran 1990).

The ministry of the laity should involve all the members of the Church irrespective of age or sex. In this respect, the following groups will be considered:

- The teachers;
All members of the Church;
The Target groups.

4.11.2.1 Teachers

The teachers can be a better option for school evangelism. The services of the scripture unions and the Students Christian Fellowship groups have made a major contribution in the students' evangelism countrywide. Their work is made

easy by the fact that, as teachers, they have the respect of the students, which, any one else from outside may not enjoy. It gives the teachers a great opportunity to share the gospel with the students on a daily basis without seeking permission from the head teachers of the schools, who are not obliged to grant such permissions to any one who may want it. It may even be unpractical, if the school is a boarding one.

4.11.2.2 All Members of the Church

The Orthodox Advisory Group to WCC-CWME, on the Theme "Go Forth in Peace" (Orthodox Perspectives on Mission 1986), discussed the involvement of the Laity in evangelism and stated:

We have just discovered the theology of the laity in the Orthodox Church. They are part of the royal priesthood of the Church. We are all - clergy and laity - called to be a holy priesthood to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. [1 Pet.2: 5]. As such, we are all a chosen race, royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people. Thus the Laity shares in the whole work of the Church, including that of evangelistic witness [Scherer and Bevans eds. 1974-1991:223]

The laity is not only part of the society in which they live but are also involved in the community's activities. Once such lay Christians are found, they can be trained to reach their communities much easier than someone from outside of that community. Such community however, should be found and targeted. Paul exemplified this lay ministry well in his mission work wherever he went. Sweazey [1953:72] says that:

It is futile to dream of evangelizing people in general. There is no such thing, as a person in general evangelism never begins until definite people are identified and kept in view.

The work of lay evangelists is not a new thing in the evangelization of the world. Sweazey argues that one of the brightest of these is the rise of a new sense of

lay vocation. Some thing fresh and powerful is stirring among lay Christians [88]. Giving the example of the Hebrews before the coming of Christ, Sweazey pointed out that:

In the Hebrew temple only the high priest was allowed to go behind the veil into the symbolic presence of God, and only the priest could come back from the holy of holies, bearing God's mercy to those who waited outside. But at the moment of Jesus' death "behold". The veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom. [Matt. 27:51] in that instant the priestly monopoly was ended. The barrier, which shut the unordained from the holiest place, was torn away. Because of Christ, the humble, blessed believer can go into the very presence of God, and can come from there to minister to needy world.

Jerome adds "*Sacerdotium Laici, id est baptismum*" echoing Jesus own words "You shall be my witnesses". [Acts: 1:8]

We need to de-professionalise the Christian service to give room for the lay people's full participation, at least for the sake of the pastoralists. Professional priests or missionaries are not the kind who can fit into the *Karimojong* way of life, not even when the professional Christian workers are from the *Karimojong* tribes.

4.11.2.3 The Target Group

The Church should find a target group and concentrate on them and finally use them to win their own people. In case of *Karamoja*, it would imply targeting the warriors, because they have access to the rest of the *Karimojong*.

In the Church's endeavour to reach out to the members of its community, the following target groups should be utilized in its service and ministry. Namely: the youth, the children, the music groups, the women and the traders.

(a) The Youth

Youth activities have become part of our political programs. In *Karamoja* the youth are being mobilized to raid cows. This trend can be reversed if the Church can put in place programs, which benefit them. Evangelistic programs to be designed must involve gainful activities to enable the youth to have an income to live on. Since the *Karimojong* are highly selective of which activities they can do, they must draw such programs themselves.

(b) The Children

Children can serve as a bridge to contact the adults for the work of evangelism. This was the case recently when a mission group opened a children's feeding and literacy centre in Moroto. The children were attracted to food first, but later they found that they also needed to learn and interact with other children. Through the children, teachers and other workers were able to meet the parents as well.

(c) Musical Groups

Music and other social activities have not been prominent in mission strategy. Music has remained simply part of the Church service and worship, but hardly used as an evangelistic strategy. The *Karimojong* naturally love music, they spend long hours singing and dancing, especially, during the harvest period. Music festivals are an annual event, which draw every one from far and near to either participate or just to be entertained. Christian youth who are well prepared and equipped can make use of such occasions to evangelize their fellow youth and the population through music.

(d) The Women

The role of women in evangelization has been highlighted prominently in the Biblical narratives. However, in the evangelization of the *Karimojong*, women have been neglected. This could be related to the *Karimojong* culture, which

does not give them prominence in social activities. In this respect we still have problems on the question of women and children's participation in evangelism.

Also in the *Karimojong* culture women are considered as objects which can even be sold to the highest bidder, or just like any other piece of merchandise. Therefore, dealing with women and children would be taken negatively and would be avoided by the male society or even be totally rejected as of no value to the community. However, the Church cannot dismiss the impact women have over their children whose transformation has got far reaching implications in the society as a whole.

(e) Traders

This new approach was used among the Pokot pastoralists when traders from Pokot started Christian outreach among their clan members (Kimwele 1995:14-15). The Church leaders in the nearby town heard about the work, and went there to recognize the Church, but left it in the hands of the lay men until a leader from among them was trained to take over leadership. To achieve this goal, we may have to abandon our cherished traditions and over- definition of ministry. Our own traditions may hinder us as Sweazey (1993:73) has stated: "*We may not see the fields white into the harvest until we get rid of the blinders which convention has fixed upon us*".

Mobilization of teachers cum Missionaries should be accompanied by vigorous and thorough training in discipleship techniques to be able to maximize the intended objectives.

This approach is not new to the Christian Church. Green [1984: 247) reports that:

It was well known he (Justin) would give instructions in the faith to any one who wished, while maintaining himself by lecturing in philosophy, as he had done in his pre-Christian days.

Coleman (1997:13) Said concerning Jesus' strategy for the great commission that:

His strategy was to prepare a nucleus of labourers for the harvest. These followers in turn would reach others and train them with the same vision. In time through the process of reproduction, He saw the day when every person would have opportunity to intelligently respond to the gospel of God's redeeming love.

4.12 NEW LEADERSHIP APPROACH

The hope of the *Karimojong* people lies not in the hands of the Government but in the hands of the bold Christian witnesses who can cross the barriers of Christian rigid traditions and enter into the *Karimojong* cultural life situation to win them for Christ. Sweazey (1993:73) argues using military terms thus:

*When the Church moves into an area for the first time, it must attack rather than defend. The target area is under Satan's domain, and he must be evicted. The only way to evict an entrenched enemy is by moving in and taking over his
Foxholes...*

4.12.1 The Use of Elders

Church leadership should consider the existing leadership structure in the *Karimojong* culture and use it for the sake of the gospel contextualization. In the *Karimojong*'s cultural understanding, only elders are the defacto leaders of the society. Since the Church cannot change a *Karimojong* overnight, then the Church must adjust its method for the sake of the *Karimojong*.

4.12.2 Involvement of the Worldwide Church

The sole aim of evangelization is, in the final analysis "*the maximum reconciliation of men and women to God in the Church of Jesus Christ*" (Mc Gavran, 1990:317). The task is not setting membership Goals but laboriously and lovingly forming the kind of Christian community that is thoroughly Christian and that feels at home in its culture (Mc Gavran, 1990: 267-8).

In this way the objective of the AD 2000 movement to have a Church within easy and understandable access of all people on this planet earth would be achievable (McClung, 1989:30). Mobilization of all types of resources available to the Church is needed if the unreached peoples of the world will be finally evangelized.

Henrique (1989:91) argues that in order to evangelize the unreached people, all Christians should work together toward the common goal of world evangelization. Such resources should include the spoken word (proclamation), schools evangelism, broadcasting (or media evangelism) and printed materials. In the case of the *Karimojong*, we shall have to be selective as to what kind of resources we can use effectively. In a region where 99% of the population cannot read or write, printed materials are not appropriate to the task. On the other hand broadcasting could be more effective since the only barrier would be lack of FM Radio sets. As Bush has rightly stated that:

At the end of this century, many groups within the wide body of Christ see the year 2000 as a symbolic milestone for human kind. This perception has been growing over the past 200 years, but only in recent years has it become a primary focus of many in the Church. As of July 1990, researchers reported that more than 2000 evangelization plans are focused on the year 2000 and the number is increasing weekly. One third of these programs originate from two-thirds of the world. This is truly a global evangelization movement... There is a felt need among most leaders for greater natural awareness of their efforts to mobilize the worldwide body of Christ, for world evangelization by AD 2000. Never has the need been greater to see the Church around the world co-ordinate its efforts for world evangelization. [Bush 1991:1].

The co-operation and coordination of the body of Christ in evangelization is the key to the involvement of the disadvantaged Church in world evangelization. We need to pull together all resources the Church can afford to evangelize the

Karimojong. John Stott has counselled, "Unless the Church is mobilized, the whole world is not likely to be reached" (Stott 1989: 177). In this section we will discuss involvement of the worldwide Church in a number of areas.

4.12.3 Partnership Relationship

To evangelize the *Karimojong* single handedly is near to impossible. We need to co-corporately combine resources and various programs all targeting the transformation of the *Karimojong* people Henriques (1989) has rightly advised:

"Unless we hold our hands and go at the job together, we may not make it" .

St. Paul recommends (1 Cor 3: 6-8) that there should be some who "plant the seeds", and some others who "water the seeds", and still others who "harvest the seeds". Some should be willing "to send", while others should be willing "to be sent". The *Karimojong* evangelization needs a holistic approach. They need the gospel in "words" and in "deeds." Frankly, this is not the kind of field where the struggling Church in *Karamoja* can do the work alone.

4.12.4 Working with the Local Community

The complex situation, obtaining in *Karamoja*, need not to be approached in simplistic way. The evangelization of the *Karimojong* must be taken more seriously than it has been especially among the evangelical Churches.

It is only recently, for example, that a resident Baptist missionary managed to stay in *Karamoja* for more than one year, and working inside the *Manyattas* in the mountains. The Reverend Larry has established contacts with the Tepeth *Karimojong* living in the mountains of Moroto. The Tepeth are a more stable community because of the better security provided by the mountain ranges which make it difficult for the plain land tribes of Matheniko and Bokora etc. to raid them.

Because of this situation however, no stranger is able to get access to them without the help of one of their trusted members.

Larry is working in partnership with some *Karimojong* Christians from Tipeth who are working in the Town of Moroto, and is using various methods of evangelism to be able to reach them. When I accompanied missionary Larry to the Tepeth, I was overwhelmed to see the level of support he enjoyed and the zealously the community have in participating in his meetings. This fact is confirmed by the eagerness and enthusiastic response I have witnessed in the story telling approach Rev Larry employs.

4.12.5 The Impact of Local Community Participation Strategy

In this venture, everybody who participates considers himself a stakeholder and an equal partner. Rev Larry believes that many people, whether in *Karamoja* or elsewhere are not keen on being called someone's disciples, but may feel more comfortable with a partnership relationship.

This approach has worked well for Rev. Larry's missionary work in *Karamoja*. As part of his preparation for the next visit, Rev. Larry meets his small staff of *Karimojong* local community, to study scriptures in preparation for interpretation or translation. He uses this time to learn from them, the *Karimojong* language and culture. This means that both parties are contributing towards each other; a contribution missionary Larry is quick to acknowledge in the presence of his *Karimojong* co-workers.

This relationship has increased trust and friendship between the missionaries and the people. It may take Larry some time to get many converts, but there is no doubt that he has achieved more than his predecessors who always left *Karamoja* as soon as they arrived.

4.12.6 Definition of Partnership

Bush has defined biblical partnership as an association of two or more autonomous bodies who have formed a trusting relationship and fulfilled agreed upon expectations by sharing complementary strengths and resources to reach their mutual goal (Bush, 1991:4).

Partnership of this kind (Discipleship Partnership), removes the barriers or even suspicion of paternalism, which has given a bad name to the missionary enterprise in the Third World mission field. Partnership should not be treated as another option. It should be embraced, especially among the cultures, which are resistant to new ideas. The scripture underscores the value of partnership in advancing the Gospel around the world: a changing world requires it ... The Christian community increasingly demands it [Ibid].

4.12.7 The Participation of the World Wide Church and Partnership

The commitment of the world wide Church to evangelization is likely to remove major obstacles, paternalism in the body of Christ, and promotes a new movement of partnership and co-operation in evangelization. It produces a ray of hope to look beyond the local Church's limitations, to reach out to a "world without hope" (Bush, 1993: xii-iii).

The vision to evangelize the world cannot be fulfilled without total commitment of the body of Christ at large. Wang has warned that:

"Down through Church history, there have been many great movements initiated by great people. But for some reason, each one fizzled out and failed to reach its final goal and destination. When we look at the complete record, we come to one conclusion. In each case, the failure was not because God was unwilling. The problem was always with man. In each situation there was some human hindrances or drawback or loss of vision... Wang (1989:9).

Under the dreaming of countdown, O'Brien (1989:22) has reminded the Church that: *"the Church has the continued responsibility to know the mind of its Lord and to translate sovereign on-going purpose into action"*.

Clung (1989:23) adds: *"We are called and motivated to make Jesus Christ known on this planet. We want every people to have an opportunity to have a Church in his or her language and culture where they can freely worship Jesus and can propagate the gospel."*

For the *Karimojong* to have a Church for every *Manyatta*, the Christian witness needs a lot of support. To this end O. Brian has commented: *"we stand in a moment in history where there are so many resources, so many opportunities and still we have not yet fulfilled the great commission"* [Ibid]. If the body of Christ, through the power of the Holy Spirit, can determine to pull together, there will be no part of our world left out of God's program.

4.12.8 The Participation of the Local Church in Partnership

A Church in Lira District, north of *Karamoja*, is engaged in discipleship partnership with Moroto diocese to reach the nearby *Karimojong* villages. Acur-Okodi states that some members of the Anglican Church cross over to the next village to work with the *Karimojong* parishioners. The Bishop of *Karamoja* has asked this parish in Lira, to assist his dioceses to evangelize the area.

Okodi does not think that just establishing a Church by erecting a place of worship was good enough for *Karamoja*. He suggests that Christian teachers can do more through school children as a link to parents and members of the community. He advocates for lay ministry by the businessmen and teachers who could use their trade or skills to access the *Karimojong* (Okodi 1996:15)

4.12.9 The Local Missionaries for the *Karamoja* Field

The traditional missionary work among some cultures such, as the *Karimojong* can prove difficult. In fact, there is a general consensus that there should be a shift from the traditional method in missions today Verkuy (1978:309-100) has stated that:

European Churches are gradually being shaken out of the ideological intoxication of the Corpus Christianum and into the stark and humble awareness that they have become groups within a society which no longer determines its course in the light of God's demands and promises.' So he confesses that, 'new patterns of relationships were the order of the day.

4.13 FUNDING

Affirmative action by the Church and mission agencies involved in evangelism, is needed to give the region of *Karamoja* an equal opportunity to be evangelized. This affirmative action should keep in mind the obstacles and limitations discussed in this work so far. Therefore the collective responsibility of the body of Christ is necessary; if the work of evangelization is to be accomplished Mc Clung (1989:23) has rightly put it:

We stand in a moment in history when there is so much in terms of resources, so much opportunity and still we have not yet fulfilled the great commission in our generation.

The worldwide Church of Christ has got resources, which can be put to use for the sake of the unreached such as the *Karimojong*. It was St. Paul who asked: *"How then shall they call upon Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent?"* [Romans 10:14]

4.14 DEAKONIA

The Deakonia ministry is a part of the Church's responsibility to the needy. God calls the Church to be planted among the people who may be destitute, lacking the basic necessities of life for their survival. The *Karimojong* are in this category. The Lausanne Covenant of the international Congress on Evangelization affirms our Deakonia responsibility:

"We affirm that God is both the creator and the judge of all men.

We therefore should share his concern for justice and reconciliation

Throughout human society and for the liberation of men from every

kind of oppression. Because mankind is created in the image of God,

every person, regardless of race, religion, colour culture, class, sex or

age, has an intrinsic dignity because of which he should be respected

and served, not exploited. Here too we express our penitence both for

our neglect and for having sometimes regarded

evangelism and social concern as mutually exclusive.

Although reconciliation with man is not reconciliation with

God, no is social action evangelism, nor is political

liberation salvation, nevertheless, "we affirm that

evangelism and social-political involvements are both part

of our Christian duty. For both are necessary expressions

of our doctrines of God and man, our love for our

neighbor and our obedience to Jesus Christ. The

message of salvation implies also a message of judgment

upon every form of alienation, oppression and

discrimination, and we should not be afraid to denounce

evil and injustice wherever they exist. When people

receive Christ they are born again into his kingdom and

must seek not only to exhibit but also to spread its

righteousness in the midst of an unrighteous world. The

salvation we claim should be transforming us in the

totality of our personal and social responsibilities. Faith without works is dead" (Stott, 1982:22).

We must discern which approach is appropriate as good news of the kingdom cannot be limited to a verbal message. "The good news of the kingdom is about God's rule over every aspect of life" (Vinay & Sugden, 1987: 115). In fact, in difficult unreceptive areas, proclamation of the Gospel must go hand in hand with action. The early Church did not engage in proclamation as if it were separate from action Acts 2:43-47; Acts 4: 32-37; 6:1-6 [Ibid].

4.14.1 The Whole Gospel for the Whole Man

"True evangelism that brings the Gospel to the whole person means making the good news of Jesus Christ real to the entire person, to all people, to the community as a whole, and relating it to the whole creation." [Vinay & Sugden 1987:115] This is the bridging approach, and this is what God did in Christ when he made him in the likeness of man [Phil 2:6]

4.14.2 The Demonstration of the Gospel

Diaconal service to the needy is not to be considered as an additional service outside of evangelism. It is the expression of the love of Christ to the poor and the needy. Jesus demonstrated the gospel in his words and deeds [Isaiah 61:1-2; Luke 4:18; Matt.25: 31-46; 5:3;]

To go to the *Karimojong* with a predetermined, "soul winning" approach without a clearly identified "souls needs" approach, is like the fisherman who calls the fish into his nets rather than trapping it with hooks and baits.

4.14.3 The Condition of Poverty is a Challenge to Evangelism

The situation of poverty is a widespread phenomenon on our continent; but is even worse, where the meagre services provided by the state and NGOs cannot

reach at all. As Larbi (1990:13) has pointed out *"The poverty in Africa has assumed alarming proportions"*.

There would be no better story to describe the *Karimojong* situation than the one stated in Mohamed Amin story:

"Where people lie dying not from war, or from diseases but from simply hunger. They lie in the open: In Freezing rains, in heating sun. If they had strengths to look for shelter, they would find none. If they had strengths to look for food, they would find none (Brian, 1988:511).

In Jerry John Rawlings Speech, the situation of our context is painted even darker still:

"Today's reality for the African people is severe, very severe indeed. Millions of our children will be dead before we turn speeches into concrete realities for them: Millions of their people on this continent are caught between the relentless cycles of natural disasters on one hand, and war and other social dislocations on the other. For the vast majority of us on this rich continent, poverty and despair are our lot with no end in sight as food production declines, relative to population growth, as many able bodied persons especially the youth are unable to find vocation"([Rawlings 1988)

Stott (1977:162-3) complements this by saying:

"... The needy nations and underdeveloped parts of the third world beg at our gates like Lazarus. Is their need on our conscience? It will be, if we are filled with the Spirit."

The context of the Good News is itself filled with bad news of human disasters, difficult to brush aside while we proclaim our Good News. Under the circumstance, it is not difficult to predict that the Good News is likely to fall on deaf ears of those who are engulfed with nothing but bad News.

“While it’s true that man cannot live by bread alone, it is equally true that without bread man cannot live at all.” The Director General of FAO (16th October 1988) has accused *“the affluent, richer nations or individuals for ignoring their less fortunate fellows, as long as those who can act to relieve this suffering fail to do so. If we must arm for war, let it be against hunger and poverty”*.

The spiritual state of humanity needs to be aided by the intervening power of the saving grace; the physical state of humanity is equally in need of being aided especially in those areas where economic enslavement has cast its shadows.

Tokunbow, responding to this state of human predicament, wrote:

Absolute poverty implies a complete economic destitution that imposes real physical suffering. This condition is marked by a complete or partial absence of the basic means of human survival – food, clothing and shelter. This state is variously manifested in socio-economic aspects, which may include, lack of financial resources, lack of means of creating wealth ... absence of opportunity for development ... poor provision of education, lack of health facilities, lack of civil rights including the right of Choice (Tokunbow, 1988:4).

Schaeffer(1981:63-71) in his Christian manifest also argues that true spirituality covers all of reality and that the Lordship of Christ covers all of life and all of life equally.

Tokunbow (1980:105) adds that:

“The Church cannot be silent when it sees men, women, and children in bondage and slavery spiritually, socially, economically, politically, etc. either by their own sins or those of others” (61)

The *Karimojong* evangelization that does not address all aspects of their life is a departure from the Christian Agape, which should motivate our desire to evangelize.

4.15 THE KARIMOJONG ARE PRAGMATIC

The *Karimojong* do not merely hear words spoken, they see words demonstrated. If some one claimed to be a brave warrior, he must demonstrate it. Body marks on his chest, arms and back will suggest how many enemies this warrior has killed. Each side where those marks are, indicates what kind of enemy was killed, whether man, woman or child.

4.16 LOVE FOR THE NEIGHBOR

A dehumanized society is not adequately equipped to respond genuinely to the divine calling without being aided. Therefore the *Karimojong* will need a Church that transforms them into human beings with the capacity to respond truly and meaningfully to the divine call of the Gospel of Christ.

Jesus Christ gave us an example of love and compassion for humanity. As Rauschenbusch (1913:414f) has indicated,

“The first apostolate of Christianity was born from a deep feeling for social misery and from the consciousness of a great historical opportunity. Jesus saw the peasantry of Galilee following him about with their poverty and their diseases, like shepherdless sheep that have been scattered and harried by beasts of prey, and his heart had compassion on them. He felt that the harvest was ripe, but there were few to reap it. Past history had come to its culmination, but there were few who understood the situation and were prepared to cope with it.”

In the process of evangelization of our communities, we should mind the social responsibility of the Church towards those communities (Sider, 1979:17) argues that:

“The gospel provides no indication either theoretically or by the space devoted to each, that Jesus considered preaching the Good News more important than healing the sick people. He commanded us both to feed the hungry and to preach the Gospel without adding that the latter was primary and the former could be done when and if space and money were available”.

Jesus incarnated his message as the bread of life when he supplied the natural bread to the five thousand hungry men, women and children. The bearers of the Good News therefore, are commanded to “do the same” and even “greater works”.

The *Karimojong* will accept an incarnate Christ, brought to them in an incarnate Gospel. This is where faith with works is alive. The text in James supports this view (James 2: 15-20)

4.16.1 Our Love for Humanity is rooted in God’s Love

Bavinck (1956:21–22) is right to caution that:

...If the life of service for humanity, of love for the neighbour, is not rooted in the law of God, it loses its force and its character. After all, the love for one’s neighbour is not a self-vindicating thing, which comes up quite spontaneously and naturally out of the human heart. It is a feeling, rather, and an action, and a service which require tremendous will power and which must be constantly maintained against the formidable forces of self-concerns, of self-interest – more over, such love of the neighbour frequently gets little support from the neighbour himself. People generally are not so loveable that we should naturally, without exertion and struggle, cherish and love them as we do ourselves. Indeed the love for the neighbour can maintain itself only if on the one hand it is based on and laid upon us, by the law of God, and only if that same God grants us the desire to live uprightly according to all his commandments.

“Thus the only limit to the Christian generosity will be a limit which love itself may improve” (Stott 1978:107).

4.17 CULTURAL SENSITIVITY

Evangelical communicators have often underestimated the importance of cultural factors in communication. Some have been so concerned to preserve the purity

of the Gospel and its doctrinal formulation that they have got insensitive to the cultural thought patterns of those to whom they proclaim the gospel.

4.17.1 Cultural Factors Affect Communication

Communicating the Gospel with intended positive results must approach it from a culturally relevant position. Robert Park has put it beautifully:

“One transports words across cultural boundaries (Like bricks) but interpretation will depend on the context which their different interpreters bring them. And that context will depend more on past experience and present tempers of the people to whom the words are addressed than on the good will of the person who reports them” (1966:165)

Religion is an integral part of culture, since it is a vision of the unseen world, which dominates, in many ways, human life. Human thought, feelings, ethical codes, social life, political and economic activities are all geared, in one way or another around it.

For this reason the Catholic Church has inculcated the *Karimojong* culture and somehow they feel comfortable with the *Karimojong* remaining in their “original habitat” with all their cultural traditions intact provided they are “confessed Catholics”. This approach is part of the understanding that the Church ought to dialogue with the *Karimojong* culture in order to accommodate it in the Church life and practice, as Novelli (1988) has stated:

The age of dialogue among religion was still far off and religious policy of the day was based on the opposite principle of “tabula rasa”, on which the newness of the Gospel was to be written just as it was known throughout the catholic world. This misunderstanding was at the basis of all the ensuing serious difficulties that the missionaries encountered in the evangelization of the Karimojong. But the fathers did not yet know this. This fact only came to light much too late, when matters were irrevocably gone along the path of mutual incomprehension. This did not prevent the spread of Christianity, but it did cloud it with ambiguity.

4.17.2 Values and Moral Ethics

The *Karimojong* interpret ideas in accordance with their cultural world-view. For example, conscience, is not a subject of morality, customs are. Therefore, a person's personality does not correspond with the opinion he has of himself (which would be built on his own conscience) but with one, which others have of him (based, mainly, on how they rate his attitude towards tribal customs). And the *Karimojong* strictly link social status of an individual to his obedience, or disobedience of traditional customs (Novelli, 1999:313)

4.17.3 The Christian Message

The Christian message was for a long time unintelligible and absurd to the Greeks and the Romans because the message was conflicting with their known ideas (1. Cor.1: 18) and cultural concepts. One Christian historian has complained: "*We glimpse African response to Christianity through a glass, darkly, because we have access to them, for the most part, only in the writings of Europeans*"(Isichei 1995: 132)]... *unfamiliar meanings were glimpsed through the medium of unknown or largely unfamiliar languages* (Ibid: 133).

Conflicting ideas can affect the delivery of the gospel message wherever man is found. While missionaries selected a traditional divinity to be "Satan," Africans perceived missionaries as magicians and diviners, workers of wonders; an image they deliberately reinforced with magic lanterns and fireworks. [Ibid] It has taken a long time to understand each other, though still with some limitations as has rightly been argued, about the struggle of knowing the real facts by missionaries.

"The more one knows of the natives, the more one finds consistently they keep on concealing from strangers what they reach to know: Bishop Knight Bruce quoted in from antiquity to the present a history of Christian"([1995: 132).

The *Karimojong* Pastoralists are likely to misinterpret the passages on the Lords' Supper, when Jesus speaks about "drinking his blood and eating his body". The

Karimojong drinks blood as part of their daily meals. But also when they raid and an enemy is killed, the warrior will lick some of his blood on a spear or a knife they have used to slay the enemy. Interpretation of such passages is likely to be misunderstood by the communicators of the Gospel if proper understanding of the culture is ignored.

4.17.4 The Death of Christ to the *Karimojong*

Another difficult passage is about the death of Christ. A *Karimojong* would rather die defending himself or others than give in to his enemies. This, to them is a sign of weakness not heroism. Those I interviewed found this idea strange. They asked, "If he was God, why did he not kill all his enemies?" This is not a question of unbelief; it is a question of conflicting cultural ideas.

This is the reason why Novelli has suggested that dialogue should be used rather than simply proclaiming the good news. But dialogue takes longer and requires patience.

4.17.5 Story Telling Techniques

Larry uses story telling, a popular method of communication in *Karimojong* culture. According to Da Ros (1975:48) stories and myths are the two popular narratives enjoyed by the *Karimojong*. They are used to communicate important truth, which must be passed on to the next generation by the elders. Stories are also used to entertain after the cattle are brought back in the camp.

"Immediately after myths we can put stories as next in importance. Without appearing as such, they are the greatest fun for primitive people" Their aim is to entertain, to admonish, and to teach (Novelli 1999: 355).

Larry has exploited this desire for stories by telling them the story of creation. This story suits well the pastoralists' mentality as Novelli has explained:

“It is evident that the more lively the fantasy is, and the more extravagant the adventures are, the better it is for people’s entertainment and evasion from the dullness of everyday life” (: 354)

4.17.6 Karimojong Concept of Human Relationship

The *Karimojongs*’ concept of human relationship is based on the social and economic factors. According to Novelli (1988:16), to the *Karimojong* there are three kinds of people:

Friends, who live with the *Karimojong*, and are considered as equals;

Enemies who live like the *Karimojong* and thus vie with them for the resources which guarantee life for both man and beast; and who therefore must be fought;

And all others, who first because they are neither friends nor enemies, are neither considered equals, nor are they fought. They are strangers, good perhaps to be exploited, when useful to the *Karimojong*.

4.18 THE CULTURAL RELEVANT GOSPEL

Evangelization of any people should be done in careful consideration of various factors on the ground. Cultural differences between people will always create some barriers to communication (Nida 1983: 221). This calls for sensitive approach in the evangelization of other cultures, whether or not those cultures are receptive to the gospel.

Virgil (1997:96) has commented in support of this argument that, *“we must allow other cultures to truly express themselves.”* To this, Winter (1997:86) comments *“a new breakthrough will come from within indigenous cultures”*.

4.18.1 Incarnated Gospel Message

The Church must go to the *Karimojong* before the *Karimojong* comes to Church. The body of Christ in each of its national expressions is to incarnate the Gospel in that context.

We have argued that the context in which we proclaim the Good News can and will affect our presentation of Good News or else will become insensitive, uncompassionate and completely impersonal in our evangelization. Now we shall proceed to look at the example of Christ in his coming. Christ approached humanity from their own context, as “one of us”. Prophet Isaiah indicates that He did this to identify himself with our human situation. “The miserable character of the external circumstance in the midst of which the birth and growth of the servant had taken place” (Keil and Delitzsch, 1982: 312).

Vinay Samuel and Chris Sugden have argued, and I have adopted the preposition that the incarnation of the Gospel is specific to the context. They contend that Jesus did not come as a universal man: He came as a Jew to Jews. Thus, they say:

- Incarnation is limited to a context; it is not general and universal;
- Incarnation is involved in a context. Jesus did not just speak to the Jews; he became a Jew. He identified himself with all aspects of being a Jew;
- Incarnation takes the cultural context seriously. Jesus did not become a Jew as a convenient illustration of general truths;
- He came into real problems, debates, issues, and conflicts, which concerned the Jewish people;
- He entered into relationship debates with the Pharisees and Sadducees about how to be obedient to God;
- He took the side of the total outcasts; the women, the Samaritans, the lepers, within that real Jewish culture, its economic social and political relationships; he was incarnate;
- Incarnation takes humanity seriously;
- Jesus did not address the Jews impersonally, as one abstract from their cultural context;
- He came to his own, and spelt out his claims that spoke uniquely to the Jews – their social, economic and political relationship, not just their personal rights

and religious beliefs. The holistic view of life of the Jews as ordered under God admitted no such division;

- Jesus addressed himself to economic questions, to the political groupings in Israel and the relationship of injustice that prevailed; [62]
- The incarnation of the Gospel cannot take place in one international model, which is valid for all cultures. Paul rebuked Peter for trying to import the Jewish culture to the gentiles.

Evangelization, which does not take these patterns, does not address itself to what Jesus has come to fulfil. *"In his incarnation Jesus was concerned for authentic expression of the life of the kingdom of God in his ministry, not for a large involvement of members"* (Ibid)

The church should bring to the Karimijong, both the work and deeds of Christ, His love and His compassion. Incarnated his message as Jesus the bread of life when supplied He supplied the natural bread to the five thousand hungry men, women and children. The bearers of the good news are therefore obliged to do the same and even "much more than this" Dearborn (1999:13) in his book *Beyond Duty States*. The king seeks to restore the well being and wholeness of His creation... Church is to be consciously and explicitly Christ's regardless of the activity. Therefore, we extend both hands of the Gospel: The hand inviting people to repentance, faith and eternal reconciliation with God through Christ and the hand manifesting deeds of mercy and compassion, extending the goodness of God's kingdom on earth. One hand is not a means to the other; both hands equally significant to life in the external kingdom as described by scriptures.

The Church's proclamation must be both progressive and patient, keeping pace with those who bear the message respecting their freedom and even their slowness to believe [EN in new directions in mission and evangelization 1974 – 1991: 194].

4.19 CONCLUSION

Karamoja, as a mission field, has been a big challenge to Evangelization. Cultural barriers and inhibitions have played a major role in defeating the process of Evangelization attempt by the church's mission agencies.

Therefore, the strategy to evangelize the *Karimojong* should re-examine the traditional method in order to formulate a homogeneous and contextualised approach to Evangelism.

I have proposed a holistic view of mission in *Karimoja*, which will embrace a wide range of Diakonia ministry. This new approach to *Karimojong* Evangelization should be utilized sensitively considering the fragile nature of the *Karimojong* society. I am inclined to believe that through the leading of the Holy Spirit, Evangelization of the *Karimojong* can be possible.

CHAPTER FIVE

Conclusion

This study aimed at tracing the problem behind the little success achieved in the evangelization of the *Karimojong* in spite of many years of the church establishment in the region.

Our approach has been to examine various factors, which could have led to the *Karimojong* resistance to the Gospel. We have established in our investigation that the *Karimojong* are not resistant to the Gospel because they are anti-religion but because the condition under which they live plus their cultural and political disposition culminates into resistance to anything which may threaten their mode of existence.

Firstly, the historical positioning of the *Karimojong* peated them against a hostile climate, which did not augur well with their cultural calling as cattle keepers. Politically, they were abused by a situation, which hardened them and distanced them from adopting innovations from other cultures bordering them. This political interference by the colonial state was to be used as precedence after independence to maintain their cultural status quo.

Secondly, the transhumance as means of survival has made the *Karimojong* resort to military means to restock their diminishing herds by cattle diseases or lack of water and pastures or by being raided by the neighbouring warriors. As a result the region has become a no go zone and isolated.

Since *Karamoja* is always in the state of war, strangers are not welcome without suspicion. On the other hand, the situation of famine compels them to partially open up to those who can provide food and medicine for the people and their animals. This open-window has been the only access to the *Karimojong* by missionaries.

We have recommended therefore, that our approach to *Karimojong* Evangelization must re-examine the pitfalls of the past Gospel workers, which used traditional method a field that was unique and hostile to such method.

Diakonia, in its various form, should be used to serve Evangelization purposes rather than being a social need of the *Karimojong*. This approach existed before but was misinterpreted and abused and did not achieve its intended objectives.

Finally, the cultural heritage of the *Karimojong* should be used as the acceptable approach to evangelization of the *Karimojong*. This sensitivity to their cultural perspective should be carefully selective to avoid weakening scriptural principles. Lastly, involvement of the *Karimojong* in evangelization is paramount.

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