

**THE IMPACT OF CULTURAL BELIEFS ON THE UNDERSTANDING OF
SALVATION IN THE PENTECOSTAL ASSEMBLIES OF GOD CHURCH IN
VIHIGA DISTRICT, KENYA.**

**BY
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DECLARATION

I declare that the thesis hereby submitted by the researcher for the masters degree

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This thesis has been submitted in fulfillment of the requirement for the award of a Masters Degree in the Faculty of Theology, Department of Systematic Theology at The South Africa Theological Seminary under my supervision.

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Date_____

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ABSTRACT

The Impact of Cultural Beliefs in the Understanding of Salvation in the Pentecostal Assemblies of God Church in Vihiga District, Kenya, was investigated to have a clear evaluation of the theological implication of salvation as understood by the parishioners. The goal was to investigate and determine the strong effect of culture on the doctrine of salvation. The cultural and Biblical implications were determined by exegetical research of Scripture, deep study and comparison of various literature, data collection, and a case study involving interviewing an affected resident of The Pentecostal Assemblies of God Church in Vihiga District, Kenya. It was found that syncretism was the norm for many adherents. It was found that, when culture supersedes Christianity, then it becomes idol worship. This has come about because of bias and ethnocentrism. The Theological and Biblical implication involve implementing the true doctrine of salvation through training of church leaders and the Parishioners of Vihiga District on the true doctrine of salvation. This will enhance advocacy for sanctity, holiness and truthfulness.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 THE OVER VIEW AND NEED FOR THE STUDY (BACKGROUND)

There has always been a considerable growth in problem and crisis centered work concerning the understanding of salvation. This is centered in the African context and specifically Vihiga District, Western Province of Kenya. The main issue is the impact of cultural beliefs in the understanding of salvation in the Pentecostal Assemblies of God Church of Vihiga District, Kenya. The crisis concerned with is the doctrinal conflict with culture, which shall be dealt with in comparison to other areas of life affecting the understanding of salvation. The researcher is also aware that there are also wide and in-depth topics that can be researched on their own which are also conflicting with salvation. Syncretism (mixing of cultural beliefs and salvation) and misinterpretation of the Bible becomes the core of the research.

Syncretism in Vihiga District is quite high, not so much by the auspices under which these facilities are run but more through the ministers (Pastors) who serve them. The confusion arises even more when heritage, culture and traditional values become the foundation of Christianity replacing Biblical principles concerning salvation. Investigations are done concerning the truth of the matter with so much haste that

Donovan (2003:16) asserts "Many people today are attracted to both of these worlds and each understands his worldview differently that exercises a strong influence on their thinking and decisions." Problems arise out of the inevitable conflict between two such different sets of values and reference. Each culture has a very different set of values and a very different view of life itself. This then brings a great conflict that calls for spiritual treatment. As Donovan contributes, the controversies that arise are due to dissatisfaction, strive for recognition, and pride. Until the resolution is found is when the hearts of men shall be restored to their original stability. Now, in contrast to what Donovan contributes, Hunt (1987:90) argues, "Yet we must pervert the revelation that God gives. We must be very open to allow God to reveal Himself to us however we may choose to do so, but at the same time we must be very careful not to interfere in the process lest the "God" we worship be our own creation". This then can be the dangers of syncretism.

It is a fact that Kenya today and specifically Maragoli tribe in Vihiga District, experiences inner conflict and frustration in their daily life of Christian faith that needs to be taken care of and addressed seriously. At the very least, living in these two worlds almost always results in disagreement between the old Pastors and younger Pastors' approach to the gospel. The older Pastors want to practice syncretism. This is mixing their non- biblical cultures and traditions with the word of God, while the younger Pastors want to practice holiness and truth in the presentation of the gospel and doctrinal issues. These then bring a great rift between the two groups. The question that comes out as a result is: which is which and what is right to be followed? Is it Syncretism or holiness to be adopted? The answer remains concealed.

Church history shows the various forms of church governance, which have been tried out by the people of God. Denominational forms of church government have been made to maintain unity of doctrine, purity of life, this being done by strong governance. However, this has never worked. Liberalism, modernism, apostasy, heresy and spiritual death have all been manifest in the very denominations that sought by strong centralized government to keep these things out. Syncretism was to

be the only solution of church governance. In connection with syncretism,(Maina,37)in favor of African culture argues that: "Just as the early Christians faced the problem of relating faith and culture...so does Christianity in Africa today." This is an indication that we can even have an African Jesus that favors the African culture. He still agrees that "The African theology of enculturation deals with how Christianity as a religion can be expressed in an African cultural and historical context." The researcher disagrees with him in the sense that the Bible should remain the supreme, supra-culture in guiding and molding all other Christian values.

The representative form of church governance involves the congregation at the level of selecting elders and deacons who make up the church board, which then governs the church. Once the elders and deacons are selected the congregation has little to say or do about either the running of the church or the doctrines of the church.

The value of salvation which are option implicit, yet assumed ever consciously articulated by cultural beliefs in the Pentecostal Assemblies of God in Vihiga District, Kenya and specifically the Maragoli tribe pose a whole range of questions for the adherents (parishioners). The doubts that arise are "what is right and what is wrong to be followed? Taboos are the first to suffer and matters such as worshipping the spirits of the dead, attire, drinking of alcohol, remarrying of the widows, the Lord's Supper, water baptism, infant baptism or child dedications, and funeral ceremonies. It is a strong fact that presuppositions are challenged. What is authentically Christian (genuine or true) and what is wrapped up in a particular cultural attitude brings big threats to the understanding of "salvation" as Sullivan, (2004: 146) asserts, "Jesus compassion knew no class, no color, or cultural boomers. Once He encountered a young man from the ruling class who was seeking the way to salvation and eternal life ... the stumbling block between this man and the kingdom of God was his wealth. The man's possession had become his god." It's quite possible that our culture, traditions, wealth, lust, or personal endeavors can become our god and bar us from salvation acceptance and thus no access to the kingdom of God. In contrast to Sullivan, (Zinkurative, 30) argues that African tradition is not so far from what is in the

Bible. This means that Jesus is manifested in the African tradition and therefore He becomes the fulfillment of human traditions as He corrects and completes the traditional morality of Africans. This is quite controversial to the truth of the Bible as it should be. Jesus is not the fulfillment of the African traditions, but the Redeemer of the world from sin.

The interpretation of scriptures concerning salvation as from the Old to the New Testament in relation to our culture does not look promising. People are striving for recognition of salvation according to their own culture, and worldview. Through this, confusion has stricken out because the understanding of salvation varies from culture to culture, country to country, yet the same Christ is preached. This is an issue to be addressed since there is strong strife and frightening psychologically, socially and spiritually concerning salvation. Nobody has ever come with the right solution over these crises since every body wants "Salvation" to favor his/her culture (ethnocentric). However, Shappard, (1974:59) contributes that "Evangelical Christians stress the need for individual commitment to Christ and the need for individual to respond to the love of God revealed in Jesus Christ. That demand for individual responsibility towards God to be at the heart of the New Testament message and is the strength of the Christian Church," In contrast to Shappard, Kapolyo (2007:22) asserts that, "We observe a complication in surface culture when a major transition takes place as has happened at the interface between the gospel and local cultures or indeed between western cultures and local cultures .Some of the results are bewildering, while others are humorous". This is a clear indication that there has been a clear rift between the message of the Bible and culture, which then discredits the true message of salvation.

Helping people to come out of their own cultural and religious beliefs to another set of beliefs is no easy task. For example, in Western Province of Kenya (Vihiga District) you find the Maragoli tribe. To transform the Maragoli from what their ancestors taught them concerning "salvation" to the way the Bible teaches is not a simple work. People have their own beliefs and they stick to them. That's why Jennings (1995:18)

asserts that “How did the variety of present day Churches come into existence? The Church always has been made up of human individuals, susceptible to human error”. It is quite true that error exists, but it is wiser if it can be eradicated. This is also why the researcher can conclude that the church is between cultures. That people who live in between cultures are naughty. It is challenging that before the missionaries came, the Maragoli had their own way of worship, belief, understanding of God, and salvation. Thus, they could not absorb the new system of worship from the missionaries. They had a blue print of God and salvation but according to their worldview. Since to change somebody from what he has believed for many years is so cumbersome, we have syncretism taking the biggest course. People would like to mix their own culture and beliefs with salvation so as to safeguard their morals. However, Mbiti (1992:33) argues in contrast to Jennings that “for most of their lives, African people place God in a transcendental plane making it seen as if He is remote from their daily affairs. But they know that He is immanent, being manifested in natural objects and phenomena and they can turn to Him in acts of worship at any time and any place”. The distinction between these related attributes would be stated that, in theory God is transcendental but in practice He is immanent. African people think of God as self-existent and pre- immanent.

To assist Churches preach the correct doctrine, theological colleges have been set up to equip Pastors with the right doctrine. Through these colleges, Pastors are molded to be informed of what is right and what is wrong, from believes of cultural spectrum to the truth of the Bible. The problem found is that after training in Bible colleges, some pastors don't implement what they learned concerning the doctrines of the Bible. They adapt the system of the Church and culture in order to be favoured. Through this, transforming the Church into the true image of Christ becomes a big issue to solve. It should therefore be considered that after training, pastors should implement what they learned by passing the truth to the audience. It is important to recognize as Kato (1987:13) points out that: “In Africa, man is searching for personal identity and this makes the continent fertile soil for syncretism”. In contrast to Kato's argument, Chindombu (2006:52) asserts that “The church should also play a pivotal

role in the liberation of people because it is regarded as the exclusive depository of salvation.” This is a clear indication that the church should be a driving force for righteousness, holiness, justice and reconciliation to the body of Christ. It should be an agent of Christ leading Gods people to the Kingdom of God.

Most pastors also enter into the pastoral ministry and start preaching without training. Some claim that they don't preach theology but are led by the Holy Spirit. The result is always diverstating. Many a time they misinterpret scriptures for their own personal gain. It is our duty to learn from Schwarze (1995:68) argument that: “The word disciple comes from a word denoting “leaner”, so a disciple is a student or an apprentice.” In true sense, the need of teaching true doctrine of salvation is not reached at because of minimal skills that raise misconception in the understanding of the truth. People don't want to become learners including the Leaders. They think they know everything and yet they know very little. Good leaders must practice to be learners in order to grow in the things of God. Furthermore, some pastors have attended two weeks seminars, one year or two years training in theology and claim to be trained in pastoral ministry. After this training they adapt miss-conceived minds that they are well equipped and therefore further studies is of no value. The result of their ministries is always not promising since they don't have enough qualification for qualitative production on the pulpit.

People are sick in the sense that they want to side with what they know and have also practiced in their lifespan their own doctrines and not what the Bible teaches. This is also focused on the Maragoli tribe in Vihiga, Kenya. When they move even to a different culture, they always end up becoming ethnocentric (valuing their culture as more important than others around them). Through this crisis, the Pentecostal Assemblies of God church in Vihiga District has been valued to be of one tribe “the Maragoli” and not of Christ. This is just because they conduct everything in the church service in their own language forgetting other tribes (languages) around them. It is therefore very important to note that, the Church of Christ should be built on the

foundation of Jesus Christ and the true doctrine of salvation be taught without any segregation or syncretism.

This thesis will therefore focus on the average members of the Pentecostal Assemblies of God Church in Vihiga District including their leaders on the understanding of salvation in relation to the Bible. Furthermore, concerning the use of cultural beliefs in this paper, since culture is a broad subject, the researcher shall depict just a few areas of culture that is practiced in Vihiga District to compare with salvation. These areas include the understanding of salvation in Vihiga District among the Maragoli tribe according to their culture, relationship of ancestors and the living in relation to salvation, initiation in relation to salvation, Church ordinances in relation to salvation, and commemoration of the dead in relation to salvation. This is to cover the main areas concerning culture and salvation in this thesis. It shall give the researcher the ground to the Biblical understanding of salvation”

The researcher also found that people in Vihiga District Kenya among the Maragoli tribe are notoriously religious and each person has his own religious system with a set of beliefs and practices. Religion permeates all departments of humanity such that it becomes impossible always to isolate it. Therefore man was born a religious being. Concerning this, Mbiti (1992:3) observes that “A great degree of beliefs and practices are to be found in any African society. These are not however formulated in the systematic set of dogmas which a person is expected to accept”. People simply assimilate whatever religious ideas and practices are held or observed by their families and communities. These traditions have been handed down from forefathers and each generation takes them up with great modification suitable to its own historical situations and needs. Individuals hold differences in opinions on various subjects, myths, rituals and ceremonies may differ in detail from area to area but individual just need to be Metonymized from what he believes to what he ought to believe.

Besides this, at the time missionaries came to Kenya, and especially in Vihiga District, they presented the gospel that Christ had risen from the dead and they were partaking of His Life. But very early in the history of the PAG Church in Vihiga District, Satan created doubts: as in John 8:44; Jesus said, "You are of your father the devil and the desire of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning and he does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him .When he speaks lies, he speaks from his own source, for he is a liar and the father of it." Satan also raised suspicion as found in II Cor 4:3: "But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing; whose mind the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of glory of Christ who is the image of God should shine on them." Satan has also set up prejudices among the believers as we read in the book of Jude verse four: "For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long time ago were marked out of this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ."

Throughout the course of history, evil influences have often destroyed the confidence of faith and the certainty of salvation so that the Church became weaker and less effective in her witness. This happened just because teaching about salvation found in the blood of Jesus Christ was surpassed with culture and cultic teachings. Therefore God's first approach is through a universal call which involves invitation, through the Bible, preaching or the faithful witness of a believer, all are invited to accept by faith the salvation of Christ. This gift is to all who hear, repent and believe that there is a free offer of salvation.

Since much of the failure in spiritual experience is due to the absence of assurance, it is important that initial experience with Christ in the PAG) church in Vihiga District includes a definite persuasion of salvation. The resurrection of Christ in particular certifies that satisfactory atonement has been made for our sins once and for all. It is therefore certain that this thesis will contribute to the Pentecostal Assemblies of God Church rectifying the areas they have gone astray. This can be done by studying more about the doctrine of salvation and the Biblical approach to it in comparison

with the cultural understanding, then apply it precisely in the Church. Gruden (1994:710) points out that, "In order to be saved, one must decide to follow Jesus Christ and serve him fully without mixing with other traditions." In doing this, one moves from being an interested observer of salvation and the teaching of the Bible to one who enters a new relationship with Jesus Christ as a living person and a participant in the Biblical race.

Many people believe that human nature is essentially good and simply needs improvement in the process of self-cultivation. They congratulate themselves and commend their own times. Foundations of true faith are being tried severely, thus the Church of Christ has to go through tough persecutions in order to stand. Pentecostal Assemblies of God (PAG) Church in Vihiga District Kenya has gone through such critical times in her movements. Old cultural and cultic heresy, new theology, unbalanced faith and compromising confessions are gaining favour in the Church surpassing the salvaging power of the cross. Through such critical times, the conscience has been seared and the Church is condoning practices which are direct violation to the word of God. However, in spite of all these attacks and abuse placed on salvation and the Biblical truth, the Bible remains unrivalled, undestroyable literature universally.

This thesis paper will therefore deal with the present view of salvation in the Pentecostal Assemblies of God Church in Vihiga District, Kenya; the proposed solution (the world as it should be) in the Biblical view of salvation, and the practical proposal (contextualization). Therefore the purpose of this thesis is to contribute to the field of study about "salvation" as understood by the Pentecostal Assemblies of God Church in Vihiga District among the Maragoli tribe. This will also help the Church to rectify areas they have gone amiss and need correction. It will also contribute to the academic field in the areas of study that have never been researched. It will stand as an eye opener to other scholars to contribute in the same field for academic purpose.

1.2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The above overview enlightens the researcher that there is a great need of teaching about salvation among the Maragoli tribe in Vihiga District, Kenya. It seems that the Church of God in Vihiga District Kenya has not taken it seriously about the issue of salvation and thus they mix their own ways of beliefs with salvation (Syncretism). This situation can only improve if leaders in Vihiga District Kenya can take the initiative of training in Bible Colleges and implementing the right doctrine of salvation to the Church. Therefore this thesis is based on the entire community and the entire Pentecostal Assemblies of God church in Vihiga District to accomplish God's purpose in the understanding of salvation.

1.2.1 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The entire Bible comprises the message of redemption. God created man in His own image but because of his own weakness, he fell from God's glory. God was to look for a remedy over the fallen state of man. Salvation was the only solution through His only son Jesus Christ who died as a ransom (Substitute) to save mankind. Although God brought this remedy, still man has his own culture that he loves more than God's remedy. So man has mixed his own culture and rituals with salvation from God through His Son Jesus Christ in order to be contented in his heart. The church has also condoned man's desire in order to retain him in the fellowship. From this fallen state of man, the researcher comes out with a statement of the problem: "What is the impact of cultural beliefs on the understanding of salvation in the Pentecostal Assemblies of God church in Vihiga District, Kenya?" The statement is challenging in the sense that a number of pastors, church leaders and the entire church (PAG) in Vihiga District, Kenya, have mixed their own unbiblical cultures and traditions with the Biblical understanding of salvation, thus resulting in syncretism. It is therefore proposed that an exegetical research be done in this field to come out with some proposed solutions over this crisis to be proved or disproved.

1.2.2 HYPOTHESIS

Since there is a strong crisis between Biblical understanding of salvation and cultural beliefs, the Pentecostal Assemblies of God Church in Vihiga District Kenya, has mixed their own cultural beliefs and biblical doctrine of salvation resulting into syncretism because of shallow teachings, shallow doctrination of pastors and their act of compromise in order to be favoured by members. There is a strong assumption that one can never forfeit completely his cultural beliefs and follow a foreign one which is the Bible.

1.2.3 DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The research will employ both empirical and non-empirical design, which will involve literature in the Pentecostal Assemblies of God (PAG) Church understanding of salvation and other scholars' contribution to the doctrine of salvation. Observations will also be conducted, which will involve a period of time to be spent with different groups of people in the Pentecostal Assemblies of God Church in Vihiga District, Kenya, in order to get first hand information. This shall also include data collection instrument which involves gathering information from the respondents using questionnaires, in depth interview, and focus group discussions. This design shall also include observations, asking questions, and also viewing documents. Questionnaires shall be used mostly for the purpose of qualitative and quantitative data.

1.2.4 SAMPLING

Sampling will be conducted among different people groups in the Pentecostal Assemblies of God Church in the entire Vihiga District, Kenya. The sampling will assist the researcher to bring out an estimated percentage population of Vihiga District on how they believe in salvation. The sample shall be made of fifty pastors from fifty Pentecostal Assemblies of God churches in Vihiga District and a hundred

lay leaders from PAG churches in Vihiga District. Efforts shall be made to sample equal numbers from each church in order to avoid over sampling. The sample shall be spread throughout the geographical area. This method is selected because it will involve interviewing people in different churches and divisions within Vihiga District. This will be termed as clusters. The researcher will also use registers from churches to draw samples out of them.

1.2.5 INTERVIEWS

In this method the researcher will meet the respondents personally and gather information from them according to their response to the questions. The questions shall be both in the form of a formally structured interview- schedule and a list of information, and open-ended opinion questions. This will focus on norms, values, beliefs, understandings, rules and behaviors of residents of Vihiga District in relation to salvation. Critical survey shall also be done to get clear information from different churches concerning their understanding of salvation.

1.2.6 LITERATURE AND DOCUMENTATION.

Various literature will be used to assist the researcher to be informed on what other scholars have covered concerning the understanding of “salvation” in the Pentecostal assemblies of God (PAG) church in Vihiga District, Kenya, and what has not been covered that the researcher can cover. This area involves broad reading on what other scholars have written and conducting some comparisons and contrasts to what is being researched concerning salvation. Exegesis shall be done also on the major texts that deal with salvation, few in the Old Testament and plenty in the New Testament. Some Greek words and Hebrew words shall be used and interpreted to get the original meaning of the words

1.2.7 SURVEYS

Survey will be used to provide a broad overview of different Pentecostal Assemblies of God churches in Vihiga District, Kenya, and their response to the understanding of ‘Salvation’. In addition, structured questionnaires and structured mail questionnaires will be used to gather information from participants who will be mainly parishioners of churches focused on this research.

1.2.8 RESEARCH GOALS

By the end of this research project, some proposed principles will have been established to assist pastors, leaders and the entire Pentecostal Assemblies of God Church in Vihiga District (among the Maragoli tribe) understand salvation. The impact of culture on salvation will also be affected. The principles established in this research will assist the church improve in the areas of weakness concerning salvation. The church leaders and entire Christian (PAG, Kenya) church will also be able to discover the respective roles of God and man in salvation, the logical steps of salvation, the Biblical basis for the assurance of salvation, contrast the Biblical method of salvation with any non-Biblical approach, and appreciate God’s provision of salvation to all mankind. Furthermore, it is anticipated that by the end of this research, the researcher shall have found some proposed solutions about the impact of cultural beliefs on the understanding of salvation in the Pentecostal Assemblies of God church in Vihiga District, Kenya, that can be added to the academic field for further, future reference for systematic theology.

1.2.9 SCHEDULING

This thesis will have six chapters in total. Chapter one which is being dealt with now, comprises of introduction, definitions and research methodologies. It will elaborate the important terms and the base of the research. Chapter two will indicate the present situation of salvation, (the world as it is). This includes the present views of

salvation in the P.A.G church in Vihiga District, Kenya. Chapter three will deal with the empirical survey. This includes response to interviews conducted during the research process, evaluation, and charts of comparisons. Chapter four will deal with the proposed solution (the world as it should be). This includes a Biblical view of salvation, Scriptural exegesis and doctrinal survey. Chapter five shall deal with practical proposals (contextualization towards Biblical view of salvation). This includes the development of training programs / Biblical guidelines on the Biblical view of salvation for implementation in the context of the Pentecostal Assemblies of God church in Vihiga District Kenya. Chapter six will conclude the thesis by proving or disapproving the hypothesis.

1.2.10 DEFINITIONS OF KEY CONCEPTS

The researcher has defined terms in this thesis to help the reader in understanding the difficult words used in the research paper.

1.2.10.1 BELIEFS

Beliefs can be understood as cognitive. This means they can be acquired, understood and inherited through experience or sense. It is found that without beliefs, no religion or society can strongly inspire and empower its followers. Customs participate in the formulation of beliefs and many people trust and believe just because of certain customs. This is a clear indication that every part of the African continent including Vihiga District of Kenya has a certain sets of customs and beliefs to follow. Most of the beliefs surround on God, supernatural spirits, birth, death and life after death. Beliefs therefore open people's minds concerning the truth, temperaments, and customs. This indicates that beliefs concerning the understanding of salvation in the Pentecostal Assemblies of God Church in Vihiga District ,Kenya, have been taught from generation to generation to follow the same trend. Concerning this, Hawthorn, (1999:95) contributes that "beliefs reflects' shared understanding." Many people follow what they have learned from their forefathers and believe to be true. Because

of such misconceptions, syncretism has taken strong roots throughout generations thus watering down the true Gospel of Jesus Christ. In contrast to Hawthorn, Hunt, (1987:84) argues that “The freedom to think for ourselves, to weigh all of our evidence carefully, to make up our own minds without being pressured, is essential to all faith.” This is an indication that people should have freedom to choose what to worship so long as it favors their culture. It then becomes a great contradiction of what the truth should be all about. The Bible should be the guiding principle of all our faith.

1.2.10.2 WORLDVIEW

This word is used in this thesis to indicate the mental map of people in Vihiga District Kenya. This includes their beliefs, which involve shared understanding concerning truth, feelings that involve shared experiences, treasures and norms. Feelings are concerned with inborn temperaments concerning understanding of certain norms in a given society. Values and allegiances are also concerned with worldview of people group. This deals with assumptions about relationships and loyalties that guide people’s evaluation and judgement of issues. This concept has also affected people in PAG Vihiga District, Kenya, on how to make right judgment on their beliefs. They observe the World around them and reflect on it both positively and negatively. All in all they believe that God is the only Creator of the universe.

1.2.10.3 SYNCRETISM

Whenever a minister brings change in meaning in order to bring a change in practice, there is a risk of syncretism. Therefore syncretism means the mixing of the true word of God with non-Biblical cultural norms. It also refers to the situation in foreign religious practices which has been adopted, but the deep level worldview has not changed. This involves accepting the gospel in one’s own culture without leaving it or changing it. The Pentecostal Assemblies of God in Vihiga District Kenya has also gone through such tough crisis of syncretism. That is why Lingefelter, (2004: 2)

asserts that “In spite of the fact that we are all unique persons, we share common beliefs, values, and ways of life with many others around *us*.” So, we not only share those beliefs but also reinforce them in one another and teach them to our children. Therefore the shared aspects of our personal culture produce the common values, priorities and standards of behavior that apply to each context. We begin to learn these things as helpless infants, and by the time we are adults, they shape much of what we are and do from childhood. If doctrination of syncretism is grounded in the church, eradicating it becomes a great threat. Besides this, God intends to bring about good changes in the cultures by the power of the gospel. Syncretism is the blending of the Christian faith and non-Christian beliefs. This means the message becomes sufficiently alien to the Biblical message. That is it becomes doubtful to the adherents following the essentials of true Biblical faith.

1.2.10.4 PARISHIONERS

This word parishioner has been used in this thesis to mean the residents of Vihiga District Kenya. The same word can mean people living in Vihiga District, residents or citizens. Now, since the great concern in this thesis is the impact of cultural beliefs in the understanding of “salvation” in Vihiga District Kenya, the researcher will define culture, salvation, and general background of the (PAG) church in Vihiga District Kenya and its residents. That will be the area of interest to do the survey.

1.2.10.5 CULTURE

In the first place, culture is a system, behavior and patterns of living that govern a society. So in every society there is a distinctive characteristic of people’s ways of life. All human behavior occurs within a particular culture and within a socially defined context. To add on, culture is the conceptual design and definitions by which people order their lives, interpret their experiences and evaluate the behavior of others. Therefore a culture is a specific signal or sign that people use to communicate the meaning of their behavior. In Perspectives, Luzbeterk (2004: 392) writes “culture is a design for living. It is a plan according to which environmental society adapts itself for

its physical, social, and ideological environment". It is a plan for coping with the physical environment matters as food production and all the technological knowledge and skills. Political systems, kingships and family organizations, and law are examples of social adaptation, a plan according to which one is to interact with his fellows. People cope with this ideational environment through knowledge, art, magic, science, philosophy and religion. In this research, culture is understood as a system of beliefs of people, their style of worship, and their behavioral patterns in relation to the Bible. The researcher will then depict few elements that have been misused in true worship that has made the gospel to be watered down concerning the understanding of salvation. So, culture can be defined as "an integrated system of beliefs, feelings, values and their associated symbols, patterns of behavior and products shared by a group of the anthropologist for the sum of the distinctive characteristics of a people's way of life. All human behavior occurs within a particular culture, within a social defined context." says Lingerfelter, (2004: 17).

1.2.10.6 SALVATION

Salvation is a broad subject to be handled separately in this thesis. The researcher will compare the understanding of salvation biblically and according to the Pentecostal Assemblies of God church in Vihiga District, Kenya. Salvation according to the researcher's definition is a complete change of direction to accomplish a new purpose towards a new destination. On the other hand, Douglas,(1974: 1126) defines salvation as "An action or result of deliverance or preservation from danger or diseases, implying safety, health and prosperity. The English word used is derived from a Latin word "Salvare" to save and Sulu "health". To help and translate in Hebrew ' / evy (*yasha'*) be saved, be delivered (*Niphal*); save, deliver, give victory, help; be safe; take vengeance, preserve (*Hiphil*); ASV, 'rescue' 'defend cause': *hewvy* (*yeshû'â*) salvation, *ewv* (*shôa'*) independent, noble, *hevwm* (*môsha'â*) only as *môsha'ôt*, saving acts ,{#Ps 68:21} *hewvt* (*teshû'â*) salvation, deliverance, *hpvy* (*yashpeh*) jasper', **Sua** and Cognates (breath, ease, safety)" and Greek definition ; 'sw,/zw sozo {sode'-zo} meaning: to save, keep safe and sound, to rescue from

danger or destruction one (from injury or peril) to save a suffering one (from perishing), i.e. one suffering from disease, to make well, heal, restore to health to deliver from the penalties of the Messianic judgment, to save from the evils which obstruct the reception of the Messianic deliverance” (From Bible WATS definition CD ROM). On the other hand it can be defined as ‘Soteria and Cognated (cure, recovery, redemption, remedy, rescue, welfare)’. Therefore the researcher shall investigate on how the Pentecostal Assemblies of God in Vihiga District has understood salvation and cultural impact on it. The researcher shall also move to the Biblical understanding and do some comparisons. Later the researcher shall depict where syncretism has been used concerning the understanding of salvation.

The Bible should be understood as the source of salvation through Jesus Christ. Douglas and Tunney (1989: 519) assert that “because of life, death and exaltation of Jesus, salvation is a presence of reality. Its deliverance from domination’s of sin and Satan, its freedom to love and serve God now...It’s a future hope”. The end in mind principle of salvation is eternal life through Christ Jesus. Paul claimed that scripture makes men wise to salvation through faith, which is in Christ Jesus. (2nd Timothy 3:15). Engaging and applying the principles of salvation, Paul also asserts that “there is no salvation by means of law since it could only indicate the presence and excite the dictionary actively of sin and stop man’s mouth from their guilt before God.” (Romans 3:19, Galatians 2:16). Salvation is therefore provided as a free gift of righteous of God acting in grace towards undeserving sinners who by faith, trust in righteousness of Christ’s death and resurrection

The church of Jesus Christ, specifically (P.A.G Kenya) in Vihiga District, ought to understand the transformation of society to be an essential part of the task. While the focal point of evangelism has been to communicate the good news of Christ, calling people to repent and be baptized into the church, Christians have always understood their mission to be fulfilled in teaching the nations to observe all things that Christ has commanded. Expectation of people obeying Christ has always fuelled hope that the culmination of this process of evangelization would bring about transformation of the

social situations, the physical condition and the spiritual lives of believers. The challenge to the pastors in Vihiga District P.A.G, Kenya) church is to encode the biblical message in the Maragoli language that is dominant in Vihiga District. The goal is to pass information as much as possible of the biblical message, with as minimal intrusion of influence as possible.

1.3 THE BACKGROUND OF PENTECOSTAL ASSEMBLIES OF GOD (PAG) CHURCH IN VIHIGA DISTRICT KENYA.

The Western Province of Kenya and specifically Vihiga District has many churches that were started on different grounds. Some churches were started through crusades that resulted into church planting, others through strive for leadership i.e.,(splinter groups), others through personal evangelism or house to house outreach and others through disagreements that resulted into one group splitting to form its own church "Church fragmentations." The Pentecostal Assemblies of God (P.A.G) Kenya is one of the old denominations found in Vihiga District, Kenya. After its foundation by the missionaries from Canada, this church has grown in the entire District through disagreements of leadership that moves to start their own church. In few cases it is through normal church planting and church growth.

Numerically, Pentecostal Assemblies of God church has around three thousand churches in the entire country of Kenya. The entire Vihiga District has around two hundred churches. The District Overseers who are chosen by church leaders and pastors govern the Districts. The District Overseers stay in leadership for a period of Five years before election is done again.

The residents of Vihiga District are the Maragoli community. Maragoli community is divided into four major ethnical groups. These are the *Vasali*, *Vamavi*, *Vakizungu* and *Vakirima*. As per this thesis, the researcher shall deal with one ethnical group of the Maragoli inhabitants called Vamavi, who are found in Vihiga District, Kenya. This

specific ethnical group resides in one area, shares same culture and is so much ethnocentric.

The Maragoli tribe in Vihiga District Kenya had their own world of living and understanding the supernatural powers of God. When the missionaries came with the gospel to their land, they did become receptive. They welcomed the missionaries with the good news of salvation, but they had also to cling to their culture since they loved and respected it. They ended up becoming syncretic since they favoured their non-Biblical culture and also wanted to adopt the gospel.

Focusing on the origin, the Pentecostal Assemblies of God P.A.G Kenya was founded in 1909 by Clauder Miller who was a missionary from America. After establishing the church, he built his mission station at Nyang'ori Kenya. Later Miller handed over the mission station to Kellers who were missionaries from U.S.A. Then Kellers did a lot of work to win people to Christ and even grow spiritually, despite unstable theological base. Later, Kellers affiliated the Pentecostal assemblies of God Kenya P.A.G-K to the Canadians for sponsorship. It was then called Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada. P.A.O.C. The name was changed to Pentecostal Assemblies of East Africa P.A.E.A since it was uniting three countries Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. Finally it was again changed to Pentecostal Assemblies of God Kenya up to date after independence.

Besides the struggle of the missionaries to achieve their purpose of evangelism, there was a strong struggle between the recipients and the missionaries. In the first step, there was a missionary culture where the missionaries wanted to present the message of the Bible in their own culture. Since the missionaries were so ethnocentric on their culture that they wanted to impose their culture to the parishioners forcefully but some cultures became so hostile to them. They thought that the missionaries were selling their culture and ways of living to the Africans. In the second place there was a indigenous culture whereby the indigenous didn't want to receive the gospel in the foreign culture but in their own. Thirdly, there was a Bible

culture, which was to be contextualized in order for the message to be clear and not to be watered down. Since the Bible is supraculture (above all cultures), it was just to be contextualized in a clear spiritual way. Because of strives that came about from the three cultures, syncretism was an outcome.

At the mission station, “Nyang’ori”, a Bible College was established to train pastors and church leaders. After training they also became syncretic in their presentation of the gospel since they wanted to be favoured by their members. Wherever they moved in the country, they advocated syncretism.

Following accusations revealed against the Pentecostals Assemblies of God church in Vihiga District Kenya, pastors should be transformed by exegetical study of scriptures in order to speak the true message of salvation to the people without compromise for the Kingdom’s growth. The church of God shouldn’t be ethnocentric in its sphere but Christocentric. This evaluation is arrived at because of the variables tasted and results found that many people have misunderstood what salvation is and thus need teachings in order to be transformed and live rightly with God. It is believed that by the end of this thesis, the researcher will have found some proposed solutions to the problem.

1.4 THE IMPORTANCE OF TEACHING THE TRUE DOCTRINE OF SALVATION TO THE PAG CHURCH (KENYA).

The approach to morality through teaching the true doctrine of salvation should be remembered. This approach should bring sharp distinctions and their redemptions. The Christian new life status is participation in the life of Christ and spiritual growth. Through life in Jesus Christ, a new element of Christian living appears. Therefore Christians live a new life, different, higher morality based on their new life. As a result, the doctrine of salvation helps the church to grow spiritually and live a transformed life.

Therefore the doctrine of salvation helps the church imitate Christ. This means that above all, Christians see morality in a different light or framework from the non-Christian. One cannot love God or follow or walk in Spirit if he is not morally upright. One must accept the salvaging power of the cross in order to live right with God. Not only does Christianity give this basic significance, it gives an added dimensions or enrichment to a particular moral trance.

The doctrine of salvation transforms bad impact of culture in the understanding of salvation. This is found and expressed in practical mores, which represents some sort of inertia, the static of values. Under this thick skin of practical mores we find traditions, which are the living memory of civilization. At a deeper level we find a collection of images and symbols by which human groups express their adaptations into the reality, to other groups and to history. Each historical group in this sense has an ethics, Ethico-mythical kernel and ethnical singularity, which is the power of creation into the tradition, to a memory, to an archaic roofing, to culture, beliefs, values and system of society. One has to deduce a particular and specific moral rule and system of a particular theological truth. The researcher will argue for some kind of immediacy of perception of culture in the understanding of salvation in Vihiga District, Kenya.

The doctrine of salvation brings people into freedom from bondage of sin and Biblical cultures. One would expect, then, that the question of content of Christian morality concerning salvation and impact of culture on it should work hand in hand. What is being suggested is to teach the true doctrine of salvation as it is found in the Bible, which by the end will eradicate false cultures in the act of worship and bring people into freedom of Jesus Christ and light of God.

The doctrine of salvation equips and molds believers into eternal hope. "What Jesus looked for beyond the cross is uncertain except He clearly did not regard his death as the end. He regarded Himself as doing on their behalf what they had been unwilling and unable to do themselves" say Neil (1957:95-96). In contrast to this, Erickson

comes out with a contradicting statement concerning the external hope. He asserts (1994:25) that “Eschatological idea was something of an after thought for Jesus. Thus, Jesus initially attempted to establish an earthly kingdom and after this attempt failed, He offered instead a future, heavenly kingdom”. This is the battle at hand in the church. The Pentecostal Assemblies of God don’t believe in this. They believe that Jesus was the son of God who came to save all humanity from the penalty of sin. He overcame the world and He has gone to prepare a place for the overcomers of the world.

The eternal hope comes through repentance and transformation into the image of Jesus Christ. It cannot be assumed as just a thought of mind that people can just develop themselves. Christ came for man to redeem him from his fallen state once and for all. That remains the key concept of salvation. Beside this, the PAG churches in Kenya have had their own way of understanding salvation thus watering down its real meaning. This misconception is going to be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER TWO.

THE PRESENT SITUATION (THE WORLD AS IT IS) THE PRESENT VIEW OF SALVATION IN THE PENTECOSTAL ASSEMBLIES OF GOD CHURCH IN VIHIGA DISTRICT, KENYA.

2.1 OVERVIEW

It is quite challenging that human beings are sensitive to minor things, and this sensitivity to minor things is surely evidence of a strange disorder of humanity and their great confusion. This involves a situation of one becoming as sensitive as to despise matters of importance that makes one to be so absurd because of the situation. It is the conviction grouped in the good news that "God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself" that makes salvation immensely more than a theory, a traditional belief or a slogan. It brings into focus as a necessity to understand. In spite of the fact that we are all unique persons, we share common beliefs, values and ways of life with many others around us. We not only share those beliefs but also reinforce them in one another and teach them to our children. The shared aspects of our personal cultures produce the common value, priorities and standards of behavior that we apply in each context. We begin to learn these things as helpless infants, and by the time we are adults, they shape much of what we are and do. It is also amusing to the author that many concepts currently labeled "Innovative" or "contemporary" are not new ideas at all.

Everything seems new if one is ignorant of history. Many methods parading under the banner of "change" have been used in the past in a slightly altered form. Some of them have worked and some of them haven't. It's a well known truth that if we are ignorant of the lessons of the past mistakes, we usually end up making the same mistakes made by the people before us. It is until the mental map of people are

transformed is when true transition in the society can be accomplished. This is why the author is to investigate the present situation of salvation as understood by the Pentecostal Assemblies of God Church in Vihiga District, Kenya, and the impact of culture on it.

2.2 AFRICAN TRADITIONAL DEFINITION OF SALVATION IN VIHIGA DISTRICT KENYA AMONG THE MARAGOLI TRIBE

Now in spite of seeing all the miseries, jeopardy and stress that human beings have gone through, and how it affects and distort their peace, than human beings have an irrepressible instinct which lifts them up in pride and sin. Human beings live in a world which claims to move beyond Christianity towards a vague notion of great and diverse spirituality. Anything new captures the interest of modern humanity. This is because human beings are nothing but subjects full of error that it can only be eradicated through grace and salvation through Jesus Christ. There is nothing to show them the truth; for everything deceives them. It is true from the author that every era has its myths. A myth is a fable which offers an imaginary explanation for a phenomenon. It is always easier to detect the myth of other cultures than it is our own. If the people (church) are under good care of pastors and are well instructed in the word of God, they will recognize what is false and eradicate it. The church must therefore be aware of beliefs which require devotion to a false doctrine and leadership and evade them. Paul says in 1st Timothy 4:1 "The spirit clearly says that in the last days, some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons." This will happen in the sense that people will refuse to believe the gospel because the truth of God illuminates the horror of their sins, spiritual subversion (following false teaching), intellectual pride, dogmatism or intolerance, contradiction in the doctrinal system, and narrow mindedness. All these leads to a great call for repentance and salvation.

The measure for all doctrines must be the word of God. "What must I do to be saved?"(Act 16:30). The Philipians Jailer's question continues to anchor throughout

the Pentecostal Assemblies of God church in Vihiga District, Kenya. But Paul also warns in 2nd Timothy 3:3-4 that:

For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn away to myth.

Salvation is not then valued by many of the kind.

The total dependence of humanity on their own mental capacity has led to all divine revelation to be denied. Human beings begin with themselves and not God, thus accumulating their own empirical data and formulating their own unbiblical principles. This is the ground of the researcher to do investigation and come out with his own hypothesis. Vihiga District comprises of the Maragoli tribe. This tribe has different views of salvation. This means that they understand salvation in their own way. In the first step, according to the result of interviews, John Keverenge from Vihiga District Kenya responded that 'salvation is believed to be rescue, protection, good omen for the day and good luck for the family'. He added that a good day was seen in the morning. This is reflected by the first person one meets in the morning. It is believed that if the first born is a girl, one has to meet with a girl in the morning as the first contact person in order to have a bright good day. If one meets with a boy, it is a bad omen. The same applies to a boy if he is one's first born. Concerning this argument, Mbiti (1986:29) says that: "African knowledge of God is expressed in the proverbs, short stories, songs, prayers, names, myths and religious ceremonies. All these are easy to remember and pass onto other people, since there are no sacred writings in traditional societies." As Mbiti indicates, the above quote is to show that when one believes on the traditions and culture of the society, then salvation is released in his life.

Therefore it can be understood that every community has its own set of beliefs and customs. Customs are not religious but may contain religious ideas. Therefore they work hand in hand to perpetuate good morals of the society. The metaphor of seeing and hearing explains the concept of God as omniscient in a concrete way, which is easy to grasp. Rituals and ceremonies are also very important just because they unite and bind communities and families together. They also communicate religious ideas, values and beliefs. To add on, Simalenga, ((2002:11) asserts that: "Africans like celebrating events in the life of individuals and the community. This includes occasions like birth of a child, the giving of names, circumcision and other initiation ceremonies, marriage, funerals, harvest festival, praying for rains and others. Some of these ceremonies were done by a family and others by a whole community."

2.2.1 The SUN AS A SOURCE OF SALVATION

The maragoli tribe in Vihiga District believes that salvation is found early in the morning. The first rise of the sun is believed as comprising blessings from God. So the old men and women can get up early before the sun rises up and get ready to see it as it rises up. Then they can spit saliva facing the sun as an expression that salvation and protection come from God in order to have a bright and happy day. Some words are spoken out as an indication of creating relationship with the Creator. The process of repentance also takes place since if they have gone astray, they can ask forgiveness from God before asking for blessings.

One of the parishioners in Vihiga District called John Amugune contributed that "It was the old men only who were allowed to stand as mediators between the living, the dead, and the world of the spirits. He added that if there was anything wrong in the family, the old men could stand early in the morning facing the sun as an act of worship and repenting of the sins of the family. They could ask for salvation and protection from the ancestral spirits as they faced the rising sun. They believed in some supernatural powers from their gods that came over through the sun. In contrast to this, Schaffer, (1973:74) contributes that "salvation is not just justification

and then blank until death; God never meant it to be so. Salvation is a unity, a flowing stream, from justification through sanctification to glorification". For whom he did foreknow he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son that He might be the first born among many brethren." Moreover whom he did predestinate them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified and whom he justified, them he also glorified." (Romans 8:28-30).

From the above, we discover that salvation should be seen as an unbroken stream which connects all people to Jesus for reconciliation

The researcher has found out that, when individuals and communities seek to follow their ways and systems of worship, their values and rules are transformed as they apply them in such a way as to honor and love others. Such a community embraces even her enemies and is characterized by forgiveness and self esteem. In contrast, communities of the flesh exclude others, promote self - seeking and self interest, and treat others with disrespect and violence. The Maragoli tribes in Vihiga did not have this expression of life. Respect was there between the old and the young since they were their spiritual mediators between the living and the spirit world.

Furthermore, when sickness fell in the community, the old men could also wake up early in the morning facing the direction of the rising sun asking for divine healing. This was done as the old men knelt down raising their heads up towards the sun. It was an act of salvation from the sickness. From investigation, this process was not just done everywhere. There was a specific place next to the mountain, hill or shrine that had been set apart as a place of worship, salvation and deliverance. Only selected old men were allowed to conduct these divine ceremonies.

2.2.2 RESPECT TO THE NAMES OF ANCESTORS AS A SOURCE OF SALVATION FOR PROTECTION.

The Maragoli tribes in Vihiga District have respected the names of the ancestors as a source of salvation. When a child was born, it was named after a certain person who died. It was believed that the names of the dead could protect the child from any attack of sickness or hinder success in life. When the child refuses the name given to him, he cries until the name is changed. One of the parishioners called Loice Andia contributed that "the Maragoli tribe believe that children are reborn from the dead ancestors. The ancestors are renamed for recognition if not; the dead ancestors come back and disturb the living." Kato (1987:40) asserts that "the belief in the life after death is full of contradictions and confusions. But nevertheless, it is there." The fact that there is a glimpse of hope for a future life is a further indication that life is more than flesh and blood. A great number of beliefs and practices are to be found in the Maragoli tribe in Vihiga District, Kenya. They are not, however, put into a systematic set of dogma which an individual is expected to accept. Many parishioners simply assimilate whatever religious ideas and practices are held or observed by their families and communities without question. These are traditions that have been handed down from forbearers and each generation takes them up with modifications suitable to their own historical situations and needs.

Through evaluation and research done, nearly all African names have a meaning. This is why the naming of children was marked by a ceremony in Vihiga District. Some names were given to children and are still given even today to indicate and remember some prominent people who died. Some indicated specific circumstances occasions, seasons among many others. Mbiti (1990:115) contributes that "there is no stop to the giving of names in African society, so that a person can acquire a sizable collection of names by the time he becomes an old man. Other names given to children may come from the living dead who might be thought to have partially re-incarnated in the child especially if the family observed certain common traits between the child and a particular living-dea." From this we find that both the birth and

childhood of a person are a religious process in which the person is constantly flooded with religious activities for protection and guidance. A child not only continues the physical line of life as thought to be a re-incarnation of the departed but becomes a real religious focus of keeping the parents in their state of personal immortality. The child was and is also tied a string at the hand and waist as a mark of protection from any evil eyes that may cause it to become sick. In general, there are many names all over Vihiga District which have religious meanings. Therefore, the researcher can say that Maragoli religious naming is found in the names of people and places. This shows the influence of religion in the life of people.

Respect to the dead for protection as salvation is also conducted by memorial ceremonies (*makumbusho* or *lovego*). This was and is still done forty days after the burial of the deceased; as an indication of protection of the community. A cow was and is still being slaughtered by the grave if the deceased is a lady and a bull if he is a man. Some words were spoken at the grave as the blood from the cow flowed down the grave. This function was conducted at night by old clan men who were respected and who had done the same ceremony to their families. The activity took place at night, then the following day a ceremonial service was conducted and some of the remainder of the meat was eaten by those who attended. If any of the clan members did not attend the ceremony, a piece of meat is kept for or taken to him/her to participate. This is done even up to date. This is why Mbiti (1994:171) asserts that "the accords with traditional African life in which the importance of the individual is recognized through ritual celebrations particularly those that mark the key moments of life like birth, initiation and puberty rites, marriage, death and funeral rites; at the same time, the community dimension of life always forms the basic setting." The ceremony is culminated by the act of appeasing the spirits of the dead so that they can not come back and haunt the living. This is why some words were spoken at the grave to appease the spirits of the dead. That was a mark of salvation from attacks that might come through the dead. One of the parishioners in Vihiga District called Mudegu 16/June/2009 contributed."It is a must for a maragoli tribe from Vihiga District to do "*lovego*" (memorial ceremony) for protection, peace and joy to be in the

family. He added that it was a taboo for a Maragoli man not to do it. "The day following the cattle drive, the hair shaving ceremony is performed. All those who came into contact with the deceased man, either in his death bed or during burial are shaved...A fowl or a goat is killed and those taking part in the ceremony share in eating the meat." says Mbiti (1994:154-155) if it was an old woman who had died, an old cow was killed to appease her spirit. If it was an old man who had died, an old bull was killed to appease his spirit. The animals are killed at night just at the grave side and the animal blood should flow going in the grave. The following day people come to share in the feasting.

2.2.3 RESPECT TO TRADITIONAL LAWS AND VALUES AS A SOURCE OF SALVATION.

Man is in vain to pay so much attention to things which do not really matter. These are the opinions that have to be refuted. People are still vain even when their opinions are sound, because they do not see the truth when it is there, but assume things to be true when they are not. The world is desperately seeking for someone to follow who is speaking and leaning on the truth. That they will follow someone is certain, but will that person be one who knows the way of Christ, or will he/she be like themselves who lead others to greater darkness? This is a decisive question of our plan of life, the relevance of all that we do waits on its verdict and in turn the destiny of the multitude. In Vihiga District, there are laws, values and regulations that govern people as a source of salvation. These laws and regulations were and are still distinguished between men and women, boys and girls, and the children. If someone went against those laws, it was a great abomination to the society. The person was subjected to a great punishment. Girls were advised to be respectful and virgin until they get married. Boys were informed not to play around with girls and women. Married men and women were instructed to respect their marriages. If unfaithfulness was discovered, then punishment was an immediate act. On the same point Nkoyoyo (2001:68) contributes that "In social setting, moral courts follow hierarchical order, starting from the head to the youngest in the community. God as Creator holds the

highest position; beneath Him are divinities and spirits, then the living dead, the human beings from rulers, specialists, elders, parents, brothers and sisters, to the youngest.” Therefore, respect was given to a group of people since the clan lived together as one body. If one of the clan members messed with another, they were both excommunicated from the community.

The traditional African life in Vihiga District was rhythmic in nature. Time was measured by seasons of events as they follow each other. Furthermore, human life had its rhythms, and these rhythms were measured by rituals and initiation ceremonies, as each person went through a different ceremony. The Maragoli tribe ritualized the changes through which each individual passed from the time of birth to death. Role structure was given to each person to know what he/she was to perform in the society. The right values to be followed and transmitted to each generation were also taught. If any one went against the rites of passage, then punishment was a result. Therefore African philosophy refers to the understanding attitude of mind, logic, and perception behind the manner in which African (Maragoli tribe) think, act, or speak in different situations of life. To be human is to belong to the whole community and to do so involve participating in the beliefs, ceremonies, rituals and festivals of the community. A person could not detach himself from the religion of his group, for to do so is to be severed from his roots, foundation, and his context of security, his kinship and entire group of those who make him aware of his own inconsistent existence. The Maragoli tribe in Vihiga District is strict with their laws and regulations. They believe that when someone keeps the laws and regulation of community so well then it is an indication of salvation “being counted right in the community”.

2.3 PRESENT PRACTICE OF ORDINANCES IN THE PENTECOSTAL ASSEMBLIES OF GOD IN VIHIGA DISTRICT IN RELATION TO THEIR UNDERSTANDING OF SALVATION

Through evaluation, the researcher has come out with a question: If man was not made for God, why is it that he is only happy in God? Conversely, if a man was made for God, why is he so opposed to God? All the more dangerous is man's error because each one follows his own truth. The mistake is not following falsehood, but in failing to follow God's truth that sets man free. At the starting point, it is found by the researcher that Christianity is more than a religion, because every religion has one basic principle and characteristic. Its followers are trying to reach God, please and attract God through their own desire and efforts. Religion is man trying to reach up towards God while Christianity is God reaching down to man. The researcher has also found that Christianity claims that man has not found God but that God has found man. In true sense, it can be depicted that with form, formalism, rituals, legalism, rules and formulas, people attempt to reduce Christianity to a religion, a system of some kind where law takes the precedence over grace and religious ordinances take the priority of Christianity. For some individuals, it is the central point of Christianity as a religion, and every thing revolves around, while the term salvation occurs frequently in much of the lessons, preaching and seminars done among the Maragoli tribe in Vihiga District, Kenya.

In Vihiga District, surprisingly, little study of salvation has actually been done. This results in very limited resources for investigation on salvation since the land is still cultic in its movement. Besides that, salvation is believed, according to the Bible, to be a transformation into a new creation, or new birth. But many churches have not understood salvation as a complete turn about. They think it is just a religious system to be seen from outside or a religious walk for personal gain. That is why Ridenour (1996:7) contributes that "The gospel is not laws and burdens. It's not a religious list of you can't do this, you can't do that, hands off mustn't touch, do this or die. Nor is the gospel manmade idea that many people have a god, but they minimize him. Nor

is the gospel anti- intellectual." The gospel is for all groups of people for transformation of lives.

From statistics made by the researcher, it has been deduced that many churches have taken Church ordinances (in Greek '*lordanhv lordanes ee-or-dan'-ace and of Hebrew origin Ndry; n pr loc*'), to be salved .New Testament Use:

In the New Testament, "ordinance" renders different Greek words, namely,

(1) Dikaioma, in #Luke 1:6 and #Heb 9:1, 10. The word means literally, "anything declared right"; but in these passages ceremonial and religious regulation;

(2) Dogma, in #Eph 2:15; Col 2:14. In the New Testament this word always means a decree or edict (#Acts17:7);

(3) Paradises, in #1Corinthians r11:2 the King James Version, the Revised Version (British and American) substitutes "traditions";

(4) Ktisis, "setting up," "institution" in #1Peter 2:13. The term is used exclusively of the action of God. Peter implies that institutions, apparently human, such as the family and the state, are of divine origin. The same doctrine is found in #Romans 13:1.

These ordinances include: baptism by emersion, child dedication, eucharist (Lord's Supper) participation, attire (white clothes), participation in church membership, and normal church attendance. An effect of such deceitful faculty which has been bestowed upon man deliberately fosters unnecessary error. But true worshippers must worship the Lord in spirit and truth. Jesus told the Samaritan woman in John 4:21-24 21 Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father.22 "You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. 23 "But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship

Him. 24 "God *is* Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.CD ROM.

2.3.1 WHAT ARE THE CHURCH ORDINANCES?

Church ordinances can be defined as the mandatory practices that are performed by the church. For one to be counted a member of a church, he should go through these practices. In Greek, they are called '*dikai,wma dikaioma (dik-ah'-yo-mah)*.signifying "That which has been deemed right so as to have force of law, what has been established, and ordained by law, an ordinance, a judicial decision of God either the favorable judgment by which He acquits man and declares them acceptable to Him, a righteous act or deed"(Bible works).

These practices include the Lord's Supper, baptism, child dedication, and attire, among others. P.A.G in Vihiga District has counted these ordinances to be salvation. This has come about just because of miss-conception about what salvation is. Let no one imagine, however, that this kind of experience with Christ could be engendered by human ingenuity. Jesus made it abundantly clear that His life was mediated only through the Holy Spirit "It is the Spirit that quickens; the flesh profits nothing" (John 3:63). That is why even to begin to live in Christ one has to be born again. (John 3:3-9). The Spirit of God must regenerate the corrupted human nature before it can be conformed to its true created purpose in the divine image. The church obviously has failed at this point, and failed tragically. There is a lot of talk in the church about salvation, evangelism and Christian nature; but there is little concern for personal association when it becomes evident 24 "God *is* Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth." that such work involves the sacrifice of personal indulgence.

The author believes that pastors and strong church leaders are the most strategic change agents to deal with the problems the society faces. People spend in the instruction manual, learning what the New Testament church really looks like from the

Lords point of view ,instead of changing, they begin to wonder how they have drifted so far from the original design. If people stay away from the instruction manual, they might think they are doing pretty well. The author has talked to a number of people who have some of the same things seen in God's word but don't want to do anything about it. The author has also talked to pastors who tend to agree with him but say, "If I made some of the changes you're talking about, the congregation would become unglued to the true vine. Our leadership will fire me so fast that it could make our lead spin." These conflicts of reason against the passions of man have made those who want the peace of mind divide into two sects.

Today in Vihiga District, in the Pentecostal Assemblies of God church, people get themselves caught up in this gift and that gift, this ability and that ability, this tradition and that tradition, this style of mask and that. People get caught up in every thing except what the church should be centered around, and that is about Jesus Christ. We see people leave a particular church and drag the family over town, not because of some minor tradition or practice; if the church is obedient to the word of God in Jesus Christ, all the peripheral matters will fall into place. It will find itself caught up in that which caught up the heart of God. That is why Hutchison (1998:85) contributed that."Therefore it is found that the church is supposed to be a place where you can come and find out what God wants you to do. It's a construction zone, where lives are being built and rebuilt to the glory of God. For that reasons, it is not a place where you're to come and expect to "feel good" all the time the church desperately need the teaching and preaching gifts of Jesus, but what else did the lord do when he was on earth? He served. Service is very essential in the ministry of the church which leads people to salvation.

On the other hand, there is no set form suggestion which man must follow in worship. However, it is natural, indeed inevitable, that he will use some form in his efforts to commune with God. It is better to use sound principles than to be careless and indifferent. God is our Lord of order and therefore man must have order in his service in order to glorify the Lord. Although it is so spontaneous, public and private, the spirit

and motive are always the same; the desire to commune with God has a new and fresh encounter with the Lord of life. Therefore, the hope of the church will depend on the genuine worship and right practice of ordinances. The effective organism will understand the relationship between function, ordinance, practices and the entire worship service. The Pentecostal Assemblies of God church in Vihiga District has to evaluate her practices in order to worship the Lord in spirit and in truth. Salvation has been subsided with the church ordinances and the pastors are on the front line. The following are ordinaries that have subsided salvation in the PAG church in Vihiga District, Kenya. These ordinances have been worshipped by the church and as a result, they have strongly substituted the place of God. This is just because people now value the ordinances more than they value the place of God and salvation in their lives.

2.3.2 PARTICIPATION IN CHURCH MEMBERSHIP TO BE SALVATION

At the initial point, the researcher found that salvation is not a lengthy list of negatives. Salvation is never whipping our spiritual selves in attempt to become humble. It is not bidding farewell to everything in life that resembles honest fun. It does not mean that people should abolish humor and ignore all pleasure. Salvation is not also church attendance or church membership. That does not credit one to the kingdom of God nor does it save one satanic pleasures.

The Pentecostal Assemblies of God in Vihiga has accredited church attendance and membership to be salvation. The process of selecting members is done by one becoming a participant in tithing and contributions. Emphasize is done on giving than transformation of hearts to Christ. What has taken place in the church is that many women whose husbands are not saved pay tithes for them and is counted as saved so long as they are found in the church records. In contrast to this Segle (1967; 136) asserts that "Early Christian worship combines both inward attitude and the outward symbols representing the gospel as revealed in Jesus Christ. Paul emphasizes both spiritual and symbolic act in his writings. Christians are in a dynamic relationship to

Christ," brought into one body by baptism in the one spirit and that one Holy Spirit was poured out for all of us to drink" (1st Corinthians 12:13, NEB). The entire body of Christians share in the blood and body of Christ.

It is also found that for one to be a member '*mem'-ber* , *yatsur*; *melos*; *shaphekhah*, "*membrum virile*" (#De 23:1): of the PAG church, one is given a certificate of recognition. This certificate qualifies one to be a true member of the church. At a time of any problem the church leaders and the pastor ask a person for a certificate of membership (Segler, 74) explains that "primitive Christians gave primary emphasis to the preaching of the gospel as a means of bringing salvation. They had a dialogue with the unbelieving world in the development of "Christian sacralism"; rites were gradually substituted for the preaching of the word." Most of the pastors in the PAG church in Vihiga have not preached salvation but have convinced people to become members in absence and giving tithes and offerings by sending either their children or wife to take for them to the church. This principle strongly disqualifies one as a Christian according to biblical principles.

2.3.3 WATER BAPTISM AS A SOURCE OF SALVATION

Focusing shortly on the Old Testament, there is no clear indication of baptism by immersion. What is revealed are some events that took place to indicate cleansing, healing, protection, or deliverance. These took place as a passage from one specific event to another specific destination. According to Murray (1977:2), asserts that: "The initial purpose of baptism was a change of life that involved destruction of evil powers. This was also concerned with healing as in the Old Testament. In John the Baptist's time, baptism comprised the believer's confession of sins as an indication of internal renewal and redemptive work of God. The Pentecostals also believe in the baptism of John but in a deeper meaning and perspective. The problem is that they have valued baptism as a certificate of membership and not as internal transformation as the initial meaning was."

In Greek, baptism means “to put in wholesomely. The Greek word is ‘*baptisma*’ from *baptizw* to dip, plunge and wash.” (Bible on line CD ROM). That is the real implication of baptism originally.

According to the Israelites, the waters had some supernatural powers for cleansing. This comprised of some supernatural power that was divine and thus could destroy unworthy man or heal a good man. Furthermore, Jewish and proselyte baptism meant complete change, purification, sanctification and crossing from one aspect of life to another. That's why Murray (1977:26) contributes that “the baptismal rites of the early church followed the pattern of those used in proselyte baptism. Before baptism was done, woman let down their hair and removed their ornaments, which reflected Jewish ordinances, designed to ensure that the baptized was completely immersed and came into contact with the water in every part of the body.” This was a tradition that was highly respected for change of life.

John the Baptist in his time (Mathew 3:2ff) preached repentance and remission of sin before baptism took place and people repented of their sins. This indicated that inward transformation took place first before the outward. According to John the Baptist, repentance, manifested in righteous living, is the fruit of baptism but it was not through Jesus Christ. Therefore repentance is turning or conversion. This conversion does not primarily refer to a moral change from evil to righteousness and righteous conduct but a change in man's relationship to God. The baptism of John thus inaugurated the new life of the converted, so assuring the baptized of forgiveness and cleansing from sin. It anticipated the messianic baptism with Spirit and fire, so giving assurance of a place in the Messiah's kingdom.

From Oeple's article Murray (1977: 45), lists four reasons for baptism of Jesus:

- 1 His sinless was not a ready made and fixed conviction at this early date.
- 2 He could not withhold Himself from John's revival movement
- 3 His baptism was His consecration as Messiah

- 4 The Messianic conception in Deutero- Isaiah included the necessity of the Messiah suffering Himself along with sinners.

The above statements simplify the submission of Christ, to whom Christians acknowledge as the Son of God who died for our sins on the cross. He then commissioned His disciples in Mark 16:15 to "Go into the entire world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved, but he who doesn't believe will be condemned." This then supports Oeple's article of baptism

In the book of Acts of apostles the researcher finds household baptism that went hand in hand with conversion of a whole family to Christianity. Cornelius was saved with his whole family after being preached to by Peter the apostle and there after he was baptized with his whole family Act 11:14. Lydia at Philippi was also baptized with her household after conversion. In Acts, salvation was to be preached first by the apostles to bring inward transformation before baptism was conducted to show outward change. We have heard men who have dared to say that baptism washes away sin. Some churches also teach that baptism is necessary for salvation. If this could be so, what could they do with the baptism of Jesus? Our Lord's baptism had a significance that only God in heaven, Christ Himself and the Holy Spirit seem to comprehend. Murk (1947:35) points out that "Christ's baptism first symbolizes the great redemption in His work at Calvary, providing the fullness of righteousness for fallen humanity through His death, burial and resurrection. Second, it identified the Lord with the lost sinners in His death and at the same time justified the Lord with the saved sinners in His resurrection. Third, as head of the new creation, the church, He has given the example to be followed by his genuine disciples."

In the Pentecostal Assemblies of God church in Vihiga District, baptism has been substituted with salvation. When one goes through baptism by immersion, then given a baptismal card, he thinks he is saved. After the ceremony, he leaves the church and does not come back again since he has a baptismal card. Many people in the PAG church have baptismal cards but in a real sense, they are not saved. Water

baptism is the condition in which the candidate is initiated into the fellowship of baptized believers. Murk (1947:53) says "baptism is not only profession of our faith, but it is also a mark of identification with the local church. In many churches, baptism by immersion has always been requisite for membership." However, such were often received into these compromising churches as associate members. When church leaders are not governed by the Holy Spirit and the word of God, they can always find good reason for convenient practice. The PAG church in vihiga has operated in contradiction to biblical principles. According to the New Testament, only believers are eligible for baptism. There are numerous instances recorded. So we do not need to be misguided.

Investigating Acts eight, Philip taught the way of eternal life to the Ethiopian Eunuch from the word of God. The implication is that he did not only teach about salvation, but thoroughly taught about salvation and significance of baptism. The Ethiopian was to believe in Jesus as the Son of God before he was baptized (Acts 8:36-38.) Furthermore, in the account of the apostle Paul and the Philippians' Jailer, the Jailer requested "what must I do to be saved?" and then Paul answered "believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shall be saved and thy house" (Acts 16:31). After confession of salvation, he was then baptized with his entire household.

In Acts 16:14, Paul preached to a group of women out of Philippi, and a woman named Lydia received Jesus Christ as her Savior. She was then baptized with her entire household. This shows that salvation comes before baptism, but the PAG church has valued water baptism to be salvation, which is contradiction to the Bible. Baptismal card cannot merit one to enter eternal life except salvation through Jesus Christ.

There has also been a great contention over the baptism of polygamous family. Some ministers say that the only thing to do when a man with two wives get saved, is that he should remain with his two wives but concerning baptism, not to be baptized by immersion but water to be sprinkled on his head. The same act to be done

to the second wife. Furthermore, it is believed that no leadership responsibility should be given to them in the church since they are sinners. The researcher's view is that, Christ died to save the sinner from sin. Therefore the polygamous family has a right to be baptized by immersion since Christ commissioned all that believe to go through baptism by water.

2.3.4 OUTWARD ADORNMENT WITH WHITE CLOTHES ON THE SABBATH DAY AS SALVATION (ATTIRE)

It can be understood that to know God without understanding man's own wretchedness only makes one the pride of iniquity. One must know God first and His power of resurrection. There is a common error in the PAG church concerning the attire. Pastors in this church fail to see that differing personal orientations can present mutual understanding on what should be done right according to the Bible. Further, they assume that their style of decision making and crisis management is the best one. A question is to be asked whether to do things in the way pastors want it to be done, or the way people wants' it to be done, thus building mutual understanding and pirating to make decisions and solve crisis in a manner acceptable and beneficial to the entire community or follow the biblical commands. The author believes that pastors and committed church leaders are the most strategic change agents to deal with the problems the community faces. Even many politicians are coming to the conclusion that "spiritual revival is the only solution to peace in the government", says Mather Karua, MP Kenya. Therefore most church members in PAG Vihiga suppose that the differences on the attire are of no importance, and the proper course to follow is to go conge molly along together, and give each group the benefit of all doubts. However, for the most part, the blind people in the church do not seem to grasp what is at stake and that Satan is actually engaged in the religious business. He has his ministers, followers, programs and churches. "Therefore it is no longer great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works" (2nd Cor. 11:15).

It is right and proper that strong believers in the PAG church should be tolerant of those who stumble by worshiping white clothes on Sunday. But if there is much tolerance, will permit the destructive work of Satan without protest. It is no longer tolerance; it is ignorance and stupidity personified that should be dealt with and the truth be spoken broadly. The problem is that the pastors in the church have supported their members to put on white clothes every Sunday and on burials day as an indication of holiness and salvation. So people have majored on the outward adornment but the inside is darkened by sin. The emphasis is made on the attire to be white and not on receiving salvation through Jesus Christ the only Savior. As much as physical attire is concerned, clergy's ethics should not prioritize on the outward. The joy should be the vibrant hope that there is in unveiling the gospel to the lost. "To refuse to hope is an act of spiritual treason because of who Christ is and what He has done," says Orera (2005:121). Therefore, the relationship of the church to the kingdom concept in scripture is of utmost importance for the perspective of the place of the church in God's historical program. The dominant concept of the ministry should be that of service and true biblical inward worship that will change the outward. When the mind is changed to worship God, the whole will changes to perfection. Therefore the researcher supports Orera that when people refuse to trust in God and in His salvation then it becomes a great abomination that needs to be acted on for amendment.

2.3.5 PARTICIPATION IN THE LORD'S TABLE (SACRAMENT) BELIEVED TO BE SALVATION

'The word "sacrament" *sak'-ra-ments* comes from the Latin *sacramentum*, which in the classical period of the language was used as a military term to designate the oath of obedience taken by newly enlisted soldiers.' (Bible on line CD ROM). Therefore it is quite evident that, what can be seen on earth is a clear indication of the totality of God and His manifest presence on His creation. At the heart of Pentecostal Assemblies of God church in Vihiga District, we find baptism and Lord's Supper as one of the vital ordinances. Although there have been some controversy and misunderstanding related to these practices, they are clearly and vividly commended

by the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus, they form a vital aspect of the life of the church and the community. The commission of Jesus Christ about the Lord's Table is found in Luke 22:15: "Then He said to them, 'with fervent desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. For I say to you, I will no longer eat of it until it is finished in the kingdom of God.' Then He took the cup and gave thanks and said take this and divide it among yourselves, for I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes. Likewise He took the cup after supper, saying 'this cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is shed for you. He also took bread, gave thanks and broke it and gave it to them saying, 'this is my body which is given to you. Do this in remembrance of me.'"

The term Lord's Supper is also known as sacrament, which means holy or sacred. This word sacrament comes from a Latin word 'sacramentum' which was signified to anything sacred or consecrated. The Lord's table was sacred since it simplified the body of Christ, his suffering and glorification. It also united all Christians to the body of Christ then to God Himself. Sausy (1972:191) contributed "the immediate connection of this term with the rites of baptism and the Lord's supper lies in the use of sacramentum in the vulgate to translate the Greek *mysterion* "mystery" Eph. 5:32. It thus comes to be used for anything that had a secret or mysterious significance." Furthermore, because of the bad connotation laid on the term sacrament and the almost magic power spoken over it, and the negative attitudes the Roman church had that the priest has power to convert the bread and cup into the actual bread and body of Christ, many prefer the term ordinance. The word ordinance means order, or rites ordained by God. Another word for Lord's supper is Holy Communion. In 1st Cor. 10:16, Paul asserts "The cup of blessing which we bless is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" Sometimes Lord's supper is also called the Eucharist which comes from the Greek word *eucharisteo*, the term used for the giving of thanks before partaking of the elements 1st Corinthians. 11:24 "And when He had given thanks, He broke it and said 'take eat; this is my body which is broken for you, do this for remembrance of me.'"

Sacraments are holy signs and seals of the covenant of grace, immediately instituted by God, to represent Christ and His benefits, and to confirm our interest in Him as also, to put a visible difference between those that belong unto the church and the rest of the world. There is, in every sacrament, a spiritual relation, or sacramental union, between the sign and the thing signified. Pradis. The Lord's supper was instituted by the direct command of Jesus Christ and He performed it himself as example. On the night before his death, Christ gathered with his disciples to eat the Passover meal. This was also conducted by the Israelites annually in remembrance of God's redemption of his people from the slavery of Egypt. Jesus also turned to the future and his strong eminent redemptive death which was to fulfill not only the Passover but all previous sacrificial rites. He was to be a perfect sacrifice once and for all. Evans (2003:63) asserts' "Jesus' promise in the context of the great commission means that when local churches are going to have his presence and power in answer to prayer that they wouldn't have otherwise. They are going to have authority in ministry than isn't available to those who actively engaged in carrying out God's program. They are going to see God show up in ways that go beyond the normal and expected." In contrast to this, the PAG church in Vihiga has not accomplished Christ's commission "do these in remembrance of me". They have given other sacrifices in behalf of Jesus Christ, to appease the spirits of the dead and have worshiped other cultural idols.

The promise is so incredible that if the church does not see this kind of authority and power being exercised, then a question should be asked why? It's the duty of Pastors in Vihiga District PAG church to emerge in true biblical teachings in order to combine information and knowledge with skills applying the truth of the word to the church. Berkhof (1941: 577) asserts: "The sacraments should never be divorced from the word, for they have no content of their own but derive their content from the word of God." They are a visible preaching of the word. They must also be administered by lawful ministers of the word, in accordance with divine institution and only to properly qualified subjects, the believers and their seed."

It is important to remember that boundaries of acceptable practices for the church must be identified. This is more possible to the church than for other entities because the Bible is there as a guide book. The Scriptures are clear and contain the Nonnegotiable values, beliefs and behaviors that can make a church to be the people of God. But in contrast, PAG, church in Vihiga District has changed Lords table to be salvation. It is believed that when one participates in the Lords table, therefore he is saved. Because of such beliefs from the altar to the entire multitude, preaching and teaching about salvation and repentance is not emphasized. That is why Barna (1998:99) says, "The struggle to revitalize the church is a spiritual battle. As fallible, fallen humans, we are in our own heads. We can certainly use the gifts, skills, experiences and resources that God provides for our efforts to fight the good fight of faith, but we must also remember that left to our own devices and capability, we will surely lose ground."

We cannot make progress without the Lordship and influence of God. Furthermore, it is just because of misconception about Lords table that people participate in ignorance. Some take because they are sick and they want to be healed, others because it's a formality, others because they are hungry and others because they are forced into it but they are not saved. They think because they are participating, therefore that's salvation. Paul says in 1 Corinthians. 10:20

Therefore, when you come together in one place, it's not to eat the Lords supper. For in eating, each one takes his own supper ahead of others and one is hungry and another drunk. What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and share with those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you in this? I do not praise you.

The body of Christ is thus lavishly supplied with all necessities for health and growth and this takes place as it holds fast to its head and accomplishes the will of the Father.

2.3.6 PARTICIPATION IN CHILD DEDICATION BELIEVED TO BE SALVATION

When a child is born, old women go to see the mother of the child with an intention of performing some sanctifying non-Biblical rituals before the child is brought in the church for dedication to the Lord. All these are for personal gain but not to edify the body of our Lord Jesus Christ and the only Savior. So the mother of the child is Sanctified by the elderly women from the church and even the child before it is brought in the church for dedication, after the sanctification, she gives those women some gifts in the form of money for coming to bless the child. The entire process ends by having fellowship of eating together with the family. It is only elderly women in the church who attend this ceremony.

Clearly, to influence the nation with the truths of Christ demands one to be vigilant in tracking the forces of change. Before one can strategically shape or adapt to the challenge, he must be aware of and sensitive to those transitions in reality. Therefore a question comes "Can a change come in the Pentecostal Assemblies of God church in Vihiga District concerning their understanding of salvation before they know the truth and accept it?" No. George (1998:51) says: "While churches continue to pursue a one – size- fits-all ministry strategy, the culture in which we live is too diverse and values customization too highly to expect that we can fulfill every need by implementing a single set of programs, events, language and symbols." To be effective, we must learn to target our effort and to contextualize what we have to offer to others so that they see our offering as relevant, beneficial and acceptable.

Now, children have been granted favor from God. That's why in Mark 10:13-15 The Bible records "Then they brought little children to him, that he might touch them, but the disciples rebuked those who brought them. But when Jesus saw it, he was greatly displeased and said to them 'Let the little children come to me and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God. Assuredly I say to you whoever does

not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it.” This is a clear indication that children have no sin and God loves them. The Pentecostal Assemblies of God in Vihiga District also conducts child dedication as Jesus did. But the problem is that they value the certificate given at a child dedication to be more important than receiving Jesus Christ as their personal Savior. If somebody dies and he was a drunkard, smoker, a bad person but he had a dedication card, he is still counted as a member of the church even though he was not saved.

Then a question comes “Are little children to be baptized?” In the scriptures, there is not explicit commandment indicating the baptism of the little children of believers.

The author can also refer to the fact that the New Testament nowhere mentions women receiving the Holy Communion at the time of the apostles; it neither enjoins nor forbids that they should partake of the Lords supper. In reality the silence of the New Testament regarding the baptism of children militates in favor of rather than against this practice. “To overthrow completely notions so vital impressed for more than two thousand years on the soul of the people to withdraw from children the sacraments of admission into the covenant the apostolic church ought to have received from the Lord an explicit prohibition so revolutionary in itself that a record of it would have been preserved in the New Testament.” Says Pierre (1959:191).

A child will also stand accountable before the Lord over his life in this world. He should therefore be baptized at the age he can distinguish between good and bad. In the Bible, we do not deduce anywhere that Jesus or apostles baptized children, but they were only dedicated to the Lord.

It was the church fathers who came out with the principle of infant baptism after the death of John the apostle. They claimed that since children were innocent, they needed also to go through washing of baptism as a covenant fulfillment. Hallesby (1947:18) contributes “When the administration of baptism to children was attacked, it was because of a view of baptism which early crept into the church, merely that it was impossible for one who had been baptized and then backslide to be converted

again. As a result, it was very common to postpone baptism as long as possible, even to the death - bed, in order to guard one's self in the best possible way against falling away after being baptized." The researcher does not agree with Hallesby view of infant baptism. There is no-where in Jesus' ministry where infants were at all baptized since baptism goes hand in hand with confession, believing and making a new covenant with God. The infants can't accomplish this. Now through the researcher's investigation, PAG church in Vihiga District needs to rediscover the power of covenanting with each other, sealing relationship, committing themselves to each other and to structures that nurture their lives. Furthermore, God expects children to be in His kingdom, His church and that He wishes thereafter to be members of the covenant. He promised that when the time has come that they have reached the age of discretion and the gospel of the covenant has been presented to them, children will have the possibility of freely, voluntarily and consciously choosing between good and evil, blessing and cursing, life and death. Then after teachings and preaching concerning salvation and redemption, they will be converted to Christ and be molded to grow in salvation. Salvation is not therefore child dedication, or child baptism, it is a transformation into the image of Jesus Christ. It is not even getting the certificate of child dedication; it is getting the certificate to enter the kingdom of God.

It is very often to the children, the kindergarten, the elementary stages of faith, where there is not the capacity to take very much strain, that God has to give quick results and manifest signs. The marks of maturity in salvation are usually the withdrawing of outward manifestation and signs, and hold on the demand to walk with God alone for God's own sake.

2.3.7 PERSPECTIVE OF INITIATION (*circumcision*) AS SALVATION

For most people in Vihiga District Pentecostal Assemblies of God, initiation rituals are the critical rites of passage by which a child and mostly boys become adults. This was done mostly to educate boys on general family life including sex and marriage. Through initiation, the young men were occupied into new age group of grown ups

since they had been connected with extended family, clan, and ancestral spirits for protection and bright future. Mbiti (1986:121) asserts, "This happened when they withdrew from other people to live in the forest or in specifically prepared huts away from the village. They go through a period of withdrawal from society, absence from home during which time they receive secret instructions before they are allowed to rejoin their relatives at home." This is a symbolic experience of the process of dying, living in the spirit world and being reborn (Resurrected). The rebirth that is in the act of rejoining their families emphasizes and dramatizes that the young people are now new, have new personalities, have lost their childhood and sometimes receive new names. In this traditional initiation that the church in Vihiga District is practicing, the rituals that are done follow a covenant commitment of loyalty to the clan and to its beliefs and practices. Therefore circumcision is a must. Anyone who is not circumcised could not be allowed to marry or would not be given any leadership position in the community. Should the man marry secretly then he dies, he could be circumcised before he was to be buried. Such covenant commitment should be made to God alone.

(hlwm: peritomh: circumcisio) was peculiarly, though not exclusively, a *Jewish* rite. It was enjoined upon Abraham, the father of the nation, by God, at the institution, and as the token of the Covenant, which assured to him and his descendants the promise of the Messiah (#Ge xvii). It was thus made a necessary condition of Jewish nationality. Every male child was to be circumcised when eight days old (#Le xii: 3) on pain of death; a penalty which, in the case of Moses, appears to have been demanded of the father, when the Lord "sought to kill him" because his son was uncircumcised (#Ex IV: 24-26).
(Online Bible)

Livingstone (2003:22) argues: "The cultural bias we share with others in our community becomes a consensus we use to protect ourselves from others." Through this consensus we regulate the believers of our members and reject those who refuse to conform. We become certain that our way of doing things is the proper way and

we are blinded to the responsibilities of doing things differently in new behavior that might be beneficial to only our community. The comfort of our community becomes bias towards others and blinded to viable relationships different from our own. Because of such biases, during circumcision period people do not go to church for worship since they feel that ritual is more vital than worshipping the true God.

In Vihiga District, there were no creeds to be cited; instead the creeds were written in the hearts of the individuals and each one is himself a living creed of his own religion. It is also found by the researcher that the PAG church in Vihiga District is not universal. They are tribal just because they are bound and limited to the people whom they have worshiped like the kinsmen. The system and way of worship in Vihiga District PAG cannot be propagated in another tribal group. Therefore people have to be born in a particular society which they belong to and practice what they know favors them. This is why initiation is valued more important than believing in Jesus Christ. It is quite true that Christian solution to the problem of traditional initiation is not likely to be accepted by many people in Vihiga District, Kenya, as a non-essential program. Perhaps unless it somehow provides a desirable substitute for the sense of tribal acceptance associated with it that can certify their cultural desires. "A Christian solution should include both substitutes for the outward ritual and a substitute for the instruction associated with initiation". says O'Donovan (1996:257.) *sur-kum-sizh'-un* (*mul*, *mulcts*; *peritome*): In Hebrew, 'The removal of the foreskin is a custom that has prevailed, and prevails, among many races in different parts of the world—in America, Africa and Australia' (Online Bible, Standard Bible Encyclopedia).

CHAPTER THREE

EMPIRICAL SURVEY.

3.0 OVERVIEW

This section will deal with empirical survey and data analysis. That is, facts that can be tested, under controlled observation. This includes personal interview outcome, charts and data evaluation.

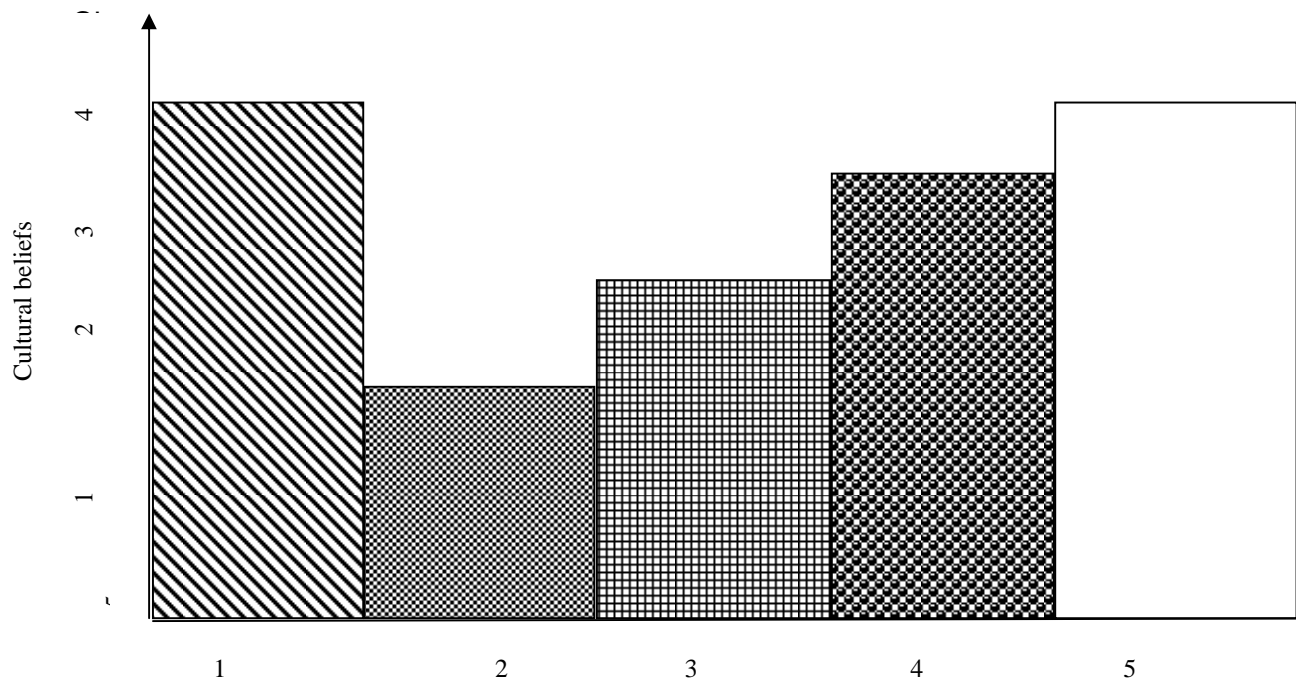
Now, the church consists of all who have believed, trusted and accepted Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour; regardless of their race, nationality, denomination or position in life. It is quite challenging to Pastors and church leaders to take bold steps to dream big dreams to take risks, to accomplish more for God's glory than they ever dreamed possible in order to come out with a church that will accommodate all classes of people and serve them precisely.

In Galatians 3:26-28 Paul writes, "You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. There is neither a Jew nor a Greek, slaves nor free, male nor female, for all are one in Christ Jesus." But in traditional African beliefs as it is taken in Vihiga District, there is usually an unspoken awareness of the sinless perfection of God. The church has strongly become ethnocentric thus missing the mark of a global mission and vision. Related to societies, general spiritual impoverishment is a second obstacle. Spiritual matters are generally thought to have a place (church) and a time (Sunday). "The rest of the world and the rest of the week are reserved for the secular. Splitting apart the spiritual and the secular is unfortunate." says Hummock (1984:53).

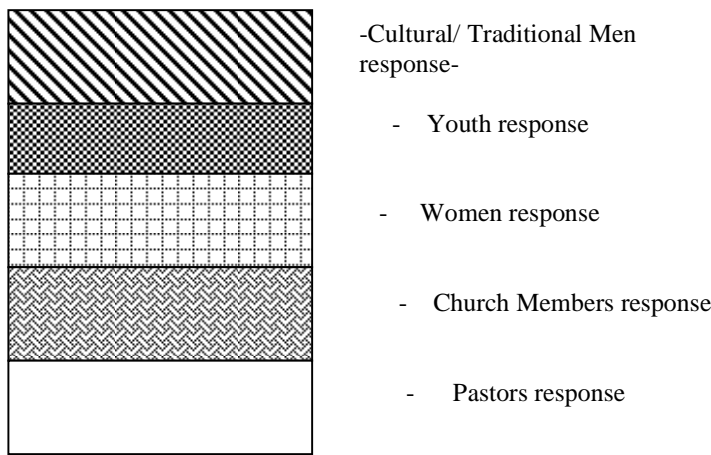
Below is a chart indicating the response to salvation of three groups of people; men, women, and youths in relation to their culture in the Pentecostal Assemblies of God

Church in Vihiga District, Kenya. This outcome came about after personal empirical survey through interviews.

Chart one



KEY



It is found out by the researcher that people in Vihiga District have such a total loyalty to their culture, clan and rules because their identity, security and meaning of life has to do with being a part of their extended family, clan, and spirits of the departed. Therefore, the extended family is so vital to the life and well-being of the individual.

3.1 MEN RESPONSE TO SALVATION AND CULTURE IN VIHIGA

According to personal interviews done to men in Vihiga District, Kenya, general response that came out on 16th June 2007 from John Keverenge is that, since from their fore fathers, people are taught to give sacrifice to the dead by slaughtering of animals to appease the spirits of the dead in order to have protection, peace and joy in the family. This was a mark of salvation. So they could not mix their beliefs with any faith that would robe them of their faith and truth including their land. Also, they could not accept foreign culture. He claimed that naming and other cultural rites were recognized in their community. It was a taboo to break any of those cultures. So, they were and are still receptive to Christianity because they want to defend and retain their culture.

3.2 YOUTH RESPONSE TO SALVATION AND CULTURE IN VIHIGA

The youth on the other hand were hostile to the gospel since they were indoctrinated with a bad doctrine of their own beliefs. One of the youth called Alex kidiga responded on 17th June 2007 that, “what we are taught with our forefathers we cannot go beyond. For us, we know that circumcision is the only right of passage that makes us men in the society and saves us from any evil so long as our blood has been shed.” He claimed that youth (men) followed strictly the rules and regulations of the family as given by their fathers and grandfathers. Therefore they were hostile to the gospel and indiscipline of salvation just because of the wrong doctrines imparted in them. Up to this moment, the youth in vihiga District don’t value salvation so much

and thus they don't go to the Church for worship and transformation. It is time that the church should realistically face the situation. Our days of trifling are running out. The evangelistic program of the church has begged down rivalry in every front, this is across the affluent western Province of Kenya and specifically Vihiga District. "In many lands the enfeebled church is not even keeping up with the exploding population. All the while satanic forces of this world are becoming more challenging and brazen in their attacks" says Coleman (2001:37)

3.3 WOMEN RESPONSE TO SALVATION AND CULTURE IN VIHIGA.

According to personal interviews given out, statistics has found out that women are very versatile to change. The Pentecostal Assemblies of God church in Vihiga District has more of women in the church than men. This is an indication that they respond to the gospel more positive than men. One of the returnees of the interviews held on 18th June 2007, Jane Magozi, contributed that although to leave our culture is hard, we are forced to respect our husbands on what they say but also go to church for worship. Therefore we must participate fully in our culture and also maintain the word of God. Syncretism is therefore practiced fully by women in this region. They mix the word of God with their own culture in order to be accepted in the society. So the church is full of women in the worship services. This is an indication that women are not so much receptive to the gospel but pressure from the society contributed to fear of responding positively to the gospel.

3.4 CHURCH MEMBERS' RESPONSE TO SALVATION AND CULTURE IN VIHIGA

Admittedly, the objective petitioner character of PAG members in Vihiga District concerning salvation is an indicative of the fulfillment of man's desires rather than accepting Jesus Christ as a personal Saviour in one's life. Many people called "Christians" mix their own culture with the word of God claiming that they are worshipping the true God. But in reality, they live an ethnocentric life. Because of this, Mbiti (1970:128) technically describes that: "African search after God's help and

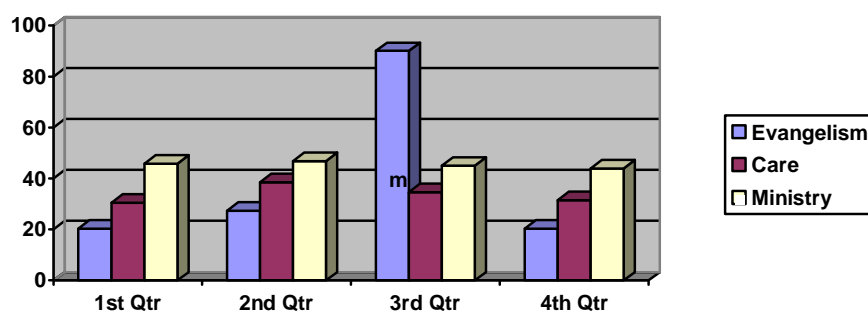
attention through prayer, invocations, sacrifices and offerings as utilitarian and not purely spiritual.” He concludes: “African search is practical and not mystical as far as our sources are concerned: African people do not thirst after God, for his own sake alone.” They seek to obtain what He gives, be it material or spiritual, they do not seek for him as the final reward or satisfactory of the human soul. Therefore members of the PAG church in Vihiga District who are the Maragoli practiced strong syncretism in the church. They believed in salvation that came from their ancestral spirit (forefathers) that was done through sacrifice and appeasing. One of PAG parishioners named George Chore on 19th June 2007 contributed that it is hard to live in the church without participating in our own *rituals*. The only solution is for one to keep himself connected to the ancestors in order to get the first salvation from the departed, and then the second salvation is found in the church through Jesus Christ. That is why Mbiti B (1970: 129 *ibid*) asserts that; “sacrifices and offerings are acts of restoring the ontological balance between God and man, the spirit and man, and the departed and the living. When this balance is upset, misfortunes and sufferings or fear comes to infect people that this and that will come upon them” Sacrifices and offerings help at least psychologically, to restore this balance. Throughout history, God has called men and women to galvanize the church’s vision at crucial times and to originate bold new strategies that made people different in their daily life.

3.5 PASTORS’ RESPONSE TO SALVATION AND CULTURE IN VIHIGA

For a positive change to take place in the church and community, the pastor must be a role model for the change who then becomes a driving force. Clinebell (1984:15) asserts, “Pastoral counseling and care can be instrumentals of healing and growth by helping us develop what is most difficult in our period of history- depth relationships. Most of us can identify with the pain of a minister who said to his psychotherapist, my life is characterized by plethora of contacts and poverty of relationships.” This is the common blight that threatens the creativity of each of us in our touch and run culture, a culture oriented towards interpersonal superficiality. It’s clear that biblical awareness of the truth concerning human attitude, sin, and brokenness can keep people in the touch with their own limitations as pastor’s leaders and group enable.

Focusing on the fact that pastors are perceived as representative of certain ethical values and religious beliefs (whether or not their perception is valid) probably prevents some guilt - and doubt- laden people from seeking their help. This is just because many pastors and specifically in the PAG church in Vihiga have become so much syncretic that they cannot speak God's word boldly. The following diagram depicts the complementary interrelationships of the major dimension of Pastoral ministry, care and evangelism.

Chart two



Very minimal time is used for the gospel that leads to salvation, but a lot of time is used for conducting non Christian rituals and the pastors are always on the front line. This is why Howard Clipebell quotes (Clipebell, 149) from Geoffrey Peter's son that "many people reject or ignore traditional systems of values, but find it difficult to replace them. We are surrounded by a cloud of frequent changing value systems that compete for our allegiance...." Confusion or uncertainty about values is thus widespread, and this tends to increase interpersonal conflict and personal insecurity. Unfortunately the church shares in this wave of confusion and even contributes to it within the church as well as within the wide community. There are major conflicts about moral issues. There is no value for pastors to minimize unduly the effect of their forthright proclamation of Christian duty that brings salvation and obligation on a controversial issue. Therefore pastoral ministry is the communication of good news

by one whose relationship to individual is that of a shepherd of souls, and not a transplanter of culture and rituals.

According to the outcome of interviews held on 29/June/2008, one of the pastors by the name Peter Chanzu contributed that “preaching about salvation alone in Vihiga District is quite impossible. We as pastors must try to keep equilibrium between the Bible message on salvation and our own culture. If we lean more on the Bible, we shall not be accepted or we shall also lose people in the church. So it is better we do as the audience wants in order to be accepted.” Medennan (1980: 30) asserts: “Pastoral preaching is the kind of preaching that will meet the test of deviancy, of reality, and of Christ-centered content. One important question may be used: Does not pastoral preaching delimit the area of your themes and types of sermons?” It’s found by the researcher that a faithful pastor, trusted and loved by his people, can and must try to expose evil in high places and law without fear. A pastor must not compromise with sin nor non-spiritual rituals. He can speak the truth in love, thereby assuring that it will be heard, received, and not infrequently acted upon. Therefore, pastors should also give a great impression of poise. The church that is Look warm, whose soul -life went out to God with its own best work, best fruits, best everything, believing that it would get through but it never did. Pastors have to get to the meaning and the nature of Son ship, in order to achieve the goal of the gospel.

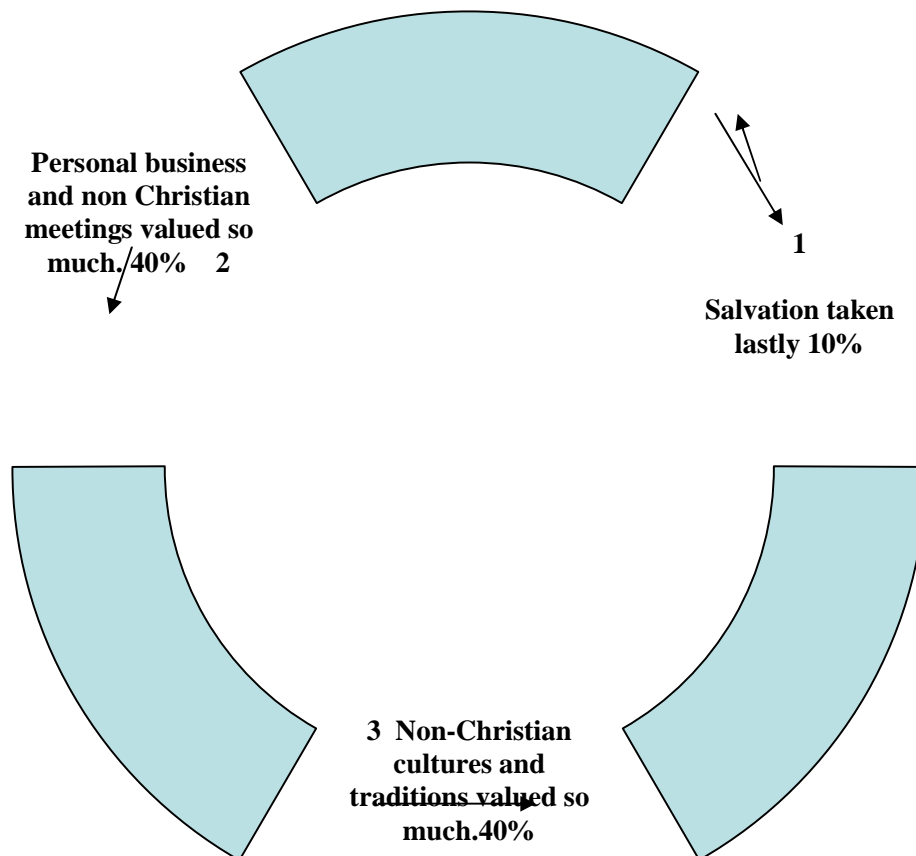
As per investigation done, many pastors in PAG church in Vihiga District spend very little time on the church issues and a lot of time on cultural and ritualistic issues. This is why Adeyemo (1997:33) argues that “Actually it is inconceivable to have a religion without a form of sacrifice, however modified or refined it may be: traditionally, sacrifices and offerings are believed to be a means of contact or communion between man and the deity.” As pointed out, the pastors in PAG church Vihiga District do not preach and teach about salvation for God’s kingdom sake. They have substituted the message of salvation to be ritualistic for their own personal gain. They also believe that substitution sacrifice, if offered according to the tradition of the

community, would save the afflicted instead of Jesus Christ. Hope is always arrived at to individuals when Christ is fully presented and not syncretism.

The radical point is "What comes first? Is it salvation or culture?" Jesus calls people into a relationship with each other and the first relationship must be built on Him as the only Father. "Do not think that I come to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, a daughter against her a mother, and a daughter against her mother in - law , and a "man's" enemies will be those of his own household. He who loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me. And he who does not take his cross and follow after me, is not worthy of me. He who finds his life will lose it and he who loses his life for my sake will find it." Matt 10:34-39.

These words of Jesus Christ should take both pastors and believers to the care of salvation. Jesus' indication is for the pastors to build a relationship towards Him first and not traditions, not friends nor any other rituals. Pastors' relationship with Culture, Christ and salvation is indicated in a concentric cycle below.

Chart three



key

- 1. Salvation is put last and also by mixing other traditions.
- 2. People accept God as a second priority.
- Value other traditions, circumcision among others.
- 3. Value other rituals first before salvation.
- It involves appeasing the spirit of the dead.

Before you can empower your followers, you must enable them. This means providing them with the resources (i.e. education, training, tools, equipment, times, experience) necessary to perform with a degree of confidence in leadership that can be delegated to them, says Sullivan (2004:130-131). It's quite challenging that pastors in the Pentecostal Assemblies of God in Vihiga District cannot believe in the sound doctrine of salvation through Jesus Christ alone. Unfortunately, they have overlooked this crucial issue and where discussed, the account has not been definitive.

Today, our churches need leaders with vision and tenacity. Then a question can be asked, "Are the PAG church content to remain comfortable spreading the ministry the way they have always done it? With some positive but limited results? Knowing in their hearts that they are not making much because they have rooted themselves in their own culture? Or will they take the risk of boldly trusting God for a fresh vision, powerful strategies and incredible results?" No! There must be a new dimension of things, new vision, and new passion for church growth and conversion in Vihiga District, or else the church is dying and soon it shall be buried. A genuine calling is a powerful antidote to the divine, to prove ourselves, the emptiness and boredom or discouragement, the unorganized and scattered activities of the PAG church in Vihiga District. This chapter is meant to challenge pastors, church leaders and the entire PAG church to follow a practical but proven pathway to make a great church. These days pastors and church leaders don't have to recreate the wheel for every age group and every need. "Good and godly organizations are dedicated to providing the finest environments and materials to assist the church by hosting faith building events." says Jackson, (2003:120). Therefore, as the hearts of people grow increasingly into salvation, and in turn with God's heart, their eyes will be opened to needs around them.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE PROPOSED SOLUTION, THE WORLD AS IT SHOULD BE, A BIBLICAL VIEW OF SALVATION

4.1 OVERVIEW

The issue of salvation has been researched and discussed by many scholars of the word as for ages. It can also be argued with great conviction that the Old Testament has a Jewish culture and the New Testament has a Greek culture. Examining these two Testaments and their authorship, it is found that the writers of the Bible were inspired men of God who did not write down their own mind, but they wrote what God dictated to them. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instructing in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete thoroughly equipped for every good work" II Tim 3:16." Since all scriptures are inspired by God, the holy bible remains a supra cultural book (Above every culture). Besides these, "dialogue with Christians of other cultures guards us from exporting vital Christianity in ways which result in "legalism" in other cultures," says Hawthorne (1988: 96). Although we cannot reach real perfection as it should be, we still can strive for lesser goal of becoming initiated in the culture of those we serve. And that is the Bible culture, which should be our driving force to our real perfection.

Focusing on the history of the Bible, it is found out by the researcher that God formed man in His own image but man sinned and the glory of God in him departed. "Then God said, let us make man in our own image, according to our likeness," Gen 1:26

imago dei). Kaufan (1968:335) asserts that “We are what we are because of unnumbered decisions of the entire human past which are stored up in the vast reservoirs not only of individual’s memory but in social structures and institutions, customs and habitism, mares and ideologies, artifacts and written records.” All these have lead man into losing the image of God in him and thus the need for salvation. From the history of the Bible, it is quite significant to note that it was the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen 2:17) which man was strongly and strictly instructed not to eat and when he disobeyed, he became a great sinner. That was an act of human rebellion, distrust and welfare against God’s will that brought pride of life. “Furthermore, new dimensions of alternation and other new evils are introduced into man’s existential situation, by the very decision to serve idols. One finds it no longer possible to be honest with himself or others; on the contrary, it becomes necessary to deceive both self and associates with the lie that this idol is what is really wanted and needed to give life meaning,” says Kaufmanns, (1968:373). Consequently, the word of God goes on to admonish the church to put on complete armor of God, so as to be able to stand firm against all the stratagems of the devil. For ours is not a conflict with mere flesh and blood but with the despotisms, the empires, the forces that control and govern this dark world, the darkness of the age, the spiritual hosts of evil arrayed against us in the heavenly warfare. Therefore, put on the full armor of God, so that you may be able to stand your ground on the evil day of battle, and having fought to the end, to remain victors on the field” (Waymonth translation KJV – Eph. 6:10 – 13). Therefore, salvation through the blood of Jesus Christ is the only key to this victory.

4.2 WHAT IS SALVATION?

According to the researcher’s definition, salvation refers specifically to the act and process of work of Christ in restoring the lost men to God. It includes its inception, its provision, its application, its acceptance, and its consequence risks of a ransom and its consummation. That work represents the supreme mission of Jesus, which involved redemption, restoration and justification by faith of the lost men. He came to seek and save the lost (Luke 13:10). This was the only divine remedy for man’s sin

and his separation from God. Through this, salvation can be summed up as the full doctrine of redemption, accomplished by Christ through His death and resurrection. To put it another way, “salvation is a relationship matter” as Erickson says (1978:13). In Greek salvation can be defined as follows ‘**sw,zw** sozo {sode'-zo}, meaning to save, keep safe and sound, to rescue from danger or destruction, from injury or peril to save a suffering one from perishing, i.e. one suffering from disease, to make well, heal, restore to health, to preserve one who is in danger of destruction, to save or rescue, to deliver from the penalties of the Messianic judgment, to save from the evils which obstruct the reception of the Messianic deliverance.(Bible works).

It is found by the researcher that men are hopelessly bound by their sin and thus unable either to save themselves or restore the broken imago dei, which can lead to reconciliation with God and men. Stackhouse,(2002:46) asserts that “the early evangelicals preached a message of salvation from sin through personal faith in Christ as the only hope of eternal life and the only way to avoid eternal damnation because they believed this is what the Bible teaches.” The foundation of the Bible gives people a clear understanding of salvation. Furthermore, Killenrger (1973:14) supports Stackhouse on the note that “... salvation is still a crucial matter to man, whether he understands the term in former ways or not. Even if one can talk about the thief on the cross is strange and distant to him, the long entanglement of Christianity and western culture has left its print on true marks of unconscious true Christianity.”

Since God is a gracious God, He has a good plan of salvation to the lost and depraved man. He did not want man to lose his identity before Him. That is why He had to provide another remedy for the fallen man, to redeem him and restore him to the former status. “The line of division here is whether in the matter of the salvation of man, God has planned simply to leave men, with more or less completeness, to save themselves or whether he has planned himself to intervene to save them,” Asserts (Warfield, 16). Therefore, the task of the Church leaders is to preach and teach the

right doctrines of salvation with the end in mind principle of inheriting the kingdom of God.

4.3 GENERAL BIBLICAL DEFINITION OF SALVATION

Salvation is one of the important themes in the Bible that many scholars have subordinated all others under them. It's found by the researcher that the doctrine of salvation is basic in the faith and theology of both the Old Testament and the New Testament. In the Old Testament, the usage of the word salvation appears less frequently than its religious significance. 'The Hebrew "*yeshā*" salvation, deliverance. Its root **Ysc** and its derivatives appear to signify primarily the precession of space and the freedom and security which is gained by the removal of constriction; 'save' frequently stands in antithesis to the root **SSR** *hewvy (yeshû'â) salvation*, which means narrowness, strait ,says McKenzie (1974:760). This salvation indicates rescue from Yahweh's punishment over his people. Furthermore, the saving power of God in the Old Testament is exercised through his dominion over nature and creation activities which is the instrument of his saving and judgment principles. Salvation also refers to deliverance from the power of sin and redemption according to the Old Testament. When God intervened in the problems of the nation, or community, then salvation was manifested. Young II. D. (1971:832) defines salvation in Greek as "yeshuah meaning ease and protection. I have waited for thy salvation oh Lord" (Genesis 49:18).

In the New Testament, salvation is brought about by Jesus Christ. This salvation comprises the past life, present life and future life in the glorified body. The word salvation as it is used in the New Testament finds its roots from the Old Testament. "The background of the Old Testament usage is the *sozein* 'save' principal factor in the creation of the New Testament of the word save, Saviour and salvation; but the use of *soter*, Saviour and *soteria* salvation in Greek and Hellenistic literature and inscription is probably not without effect on the New Testament," says McKenzie S.J

(1974:761). *sw./zw sozo* {sode'-zo} meaning: to save, keep safe and sound, to rescue from danger or destruction one from injury or peril, to save a suffering one from perishing. Therefore the *soter* means in Greek inscription of men or people who have rendered or provided public services. It also means healer or protector or diviner. "Therefore when the title does appear in the New Testament, it means that Christians now present Jesus as the one true *soter*, affecting that salvation which falsely promised in the cults. This word salvation in the New Testament is based on the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. This comes when one accepts Jesus Christ as Lord and savior. However, 'the Christian gospel thus brings the Church to a vantage point from which can be seen something of what authentic human life might be. "It would be existence in the finite freedom yet without fear, with full responsibility but without irremovable guilt in genuine creativity yet unaccompanied by the threat of losing power of destruction and evil which could not again be leashed," says Kaufmanns (1968:351).

Therefore, salvation comprises all pillars of conversion. These pillars are repentance, faith, conversion, regeneration, justification, adoption, sanctification and prayer. Taken all together, they form what is known theologically as soteriology, which simply means the doctrine of salvation. Salvation in this perspective is not so much limited to one just becoming a son of God, "yet to all who receive Him, to those who believe in His name, He gave the right to become children of God" (John 1:12). Salvation here is used in a broad perspective, which involves forgiveness of sins and the accompanying consciousness of a cleansed conscience, victory over sinful nature, which causes defeat in one's life. The various phases and results of Christ's redemptive work both for us objectively and in us subjectively and our final deliverance when our bodies are changed resurrected and glorified at the return of our Lord Jesus Christ can only be accomplished if we maintain our salvation. In addition Savary (1972:9) contributes "salvation is free gift of God's mercy and love, the work of His divine initiative and choice." We respond to this grace of salvation by allowing God loves power to transform us into the likeness of sons and daughters of God.

4.3.1 SALVATION ACCORDING TO PENTATEUCH

In the English bible, the Old Testament has four main divisions: the law which is some times called Pentateuch from the word Penta meaning five: - Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. We then have the historical books: - from Joshua to Esther. Poetic books: Job to Song of Solomon and the prophetic books: Isaiah to Malachi. The researcher will be investigating each group in order to come out with their understanding of salvation.

In this section, the researcher deals with the laws of Moses given to him by God. Although some scholars challenge strongly the authorship of the Pentateuch, many scholars strongly attribute to Moses as the author of these five books George (1994:5) asserts: "those who challenge mosaic authorship of these books attribute the writing of them to a later date in Israel's history." On the other hand, the books of Moses are variously known as "the law, the torah (Hebrew for law), the law of Moses, the laws and the Pentateuch. The word Pentateuch is derived from the Greek word Penta (five) and teuch (scroll or book). Penta teuch law or teaching," says Wilkinson and BOA (193:3). Following the chronological order, the books of law covers a period of time from the creation to the end, of mosaic era. The five books begins from creation to the fall of man, then they continues on the progressive spiritual development: including the consequences of the fall "and the Lord God commanded the man: you are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil: for when you eat of it you will surely die (Genesis 2:16-17). "Adam and Eve were entrusted with the responsibility of caring for the world about them but lost their privilege through disobedience and sin. In

subsequent generations, all mankind became so wicked that the entire human race except Noah and his family were destroyed,” says Bryant (1980:444).

Initially, man was created by God as a perfect being that was to have dominion over all other creatures. But because of the fall of Adam, human history and human creativity has become corrupted. Besides this the call of Abraham was the preparation of certain receptiveness in man for salvation. Therefore, ‘the Old Testament is a redemptive history that lays the foundation upon which the New Testament is built. "At no point in the history did God impose himself on man in such a way as to violate human freedom, creativity and personality thus destroying the progressive history of man. Rather at every point God worked out his purpose and creativity, gradually within a people, certain responsiveness to him and receptivity for him in the expectation of his final act", Asserts Kaufman (1918:333).

In the Old Testament, the covenant people were heavenly bound by trusting in God’s promise of messiah. However, they still needed to be delivered (saved) from sickness, enemies; premature death, and general problems or covenant restitution due to sin. This indicates that even in the Old Testament and Pentateuch, salvation was there although was not through Jesus Christ. It was done by accepting God’s guidance. God’s protection was through giving offerings of burnt sacrifice before God. ‘The stem of the verb save (**ya,, s, aa**) originally meant to be roomy, broad which is the opposite of the concepts of oppression or narrowness. As a result, ‘to be constricted and oppressed’ seems to be the rescue one needs by moving out into the open. This is an indication that people needed rescue from enemies, calamities, sickness and any crisis in the community.

The patriarchs believed that God was the author of salvation as Lockeryer, (1986:939) puts it, “the need for salvation goes back to man’s removal from the garden of Eden. After the fall, man’s life was marked by strife and difficulty increasingly: corruption and violence dominated this world.” The result of man’s corruptible way was to destroy the land so as to save the obedient one. Now the

earth was corrupt in God's sight and was full of violence. God saw how corrupt the earth had become for all the people on earth had corrupted their ways. So God said to Noah, "I am going to put an end to all people, for the earth is filled with violence because of them: I am surely going to destroy both them and the earth." (Genesis 6:11-13 NIV) so when God destroyed the earth with the flood, the first rescue of salvation was seen, by saving Noah and his family from destruction. That is salvation from calamity.

Another act of salvation is indicated in the book of Genesis 37:28 Joseph had been thrown into the cistern in order for him to die there. When the Midianites came on their way to Egypt, Joseph was sold to them. 'So when the Midianites merchants came by, his brothers pulled Joseph out of the cistern and sold him for twenty shekels of silver to the Ishmaelites who took him to Egypt; That was an act of salvation from death that Joseph went through; later he rescued his family from hunger because of God's grace. "The lord was with Joseph and he prospered and he lived in the house of his Egyptian master."Genesis 39:2

Salvation is also conveyed when the Israelites were captive in Egypt. They were given hard work, mistreated and even killed. So God called Moses to rescue the Israelites from bondage. That was an indication of salvation. 'The Lord said, "I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their suffering. So I have come down to rescue them from the land of the Egyptians and to bring them out of that land into a good and precious land" (Exodus 2:7-8). God and Savior are virtually identical terms in the Old Testament. "The greatest normative instance of God's saving deliverance was the exodus." says Douglas (1985:1057). Thus the act and notion of salvation emerges from exodus. It is stamped with the dimension of Jehovah's mighty act of deliverance from bondage in the nation.

It's found by the researcher that Israelites' experience of God as a Savior, redeemer and protector in the past projected her faith forward in great anticipation of full and final salvation in the future. It was a great projection. Some texts that talk about

salvation of the Lord in the Pentateuch are: I have waited for thy salvation oh lord (Genesis 49:18 ... Still and see salvation of the lord, (Exodus 14:13) and... lightly esteemed the rock of his salvation (Deuteronomy 32:15). The above text clearly indicates that salvation was used in the Pentateuch to signify different meanings as per the use.

Offerings and sacrifices were also given as an indication of salvation. When one sinned either by omission or commission, he was to be reconciled by giving offering and sacrifices. "If any one of the common people sins unintentionally by doing something against any of the commandments of the Lord in any thing which ought not to be done and is guilty or if his sin which he has committed comes to his knowledge, then he shall bring as his offering a kid of the goat, female without blemish for his sin which he has committed." Levi 4:27-28 quotes MacArthur (1997:160). These are sacrifices for the sins of an individual. Either a goat or a lamb could be sacrificed in much the same manner as the offering for a ruler. This was known as the law of sin and offering to guide and govern the Israelites. On this, Micklem (1952:24) argues, "a man is no more to be blamed for inadvertent defilement and his state has no more to do with him than if he had caught meshes unintentionally...." It's an essential part of the Leviticus law that when a man knows he sinned he must run to the cities of refuge or be ready to face the consequence of his guilt.' Micklen (1952:27). Generally, the patriarchs were not expected to tolerate any expression of seditious opinions and sin.

4.3.2 SALVATION ACCORDING TO HISTORICAL BOOKS

It's very important to understand how salvation was understood in the historical books. It can be understood that salvation starts in Genesis after the fall of man to revelation during the rapture and glorification of man in the divine state. Then a question can be asked, "What are the historical books? And is salvation portrayed in them?"

The historical books are twelve in number. They include Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings, 1 and 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther. The twelve books advance the history of Israel as from the end of Deuteronomy. The main purpose of the books is to describe the conquest and settlement of the Israelites in the Promised Land, the transition from judges to monarchy, the unfaithful rule, division and decline of the kingdom, the strong captivities of the northern and southern kingdoms the restoration and return of the remnant. "The presence of Philistines on the coastal route would have meant war. The wilderness provided a training ground on which God revealed Himself to Israel, notably at Sinai God prepared His people for entrance into Canaan.... Joshua brought the second generation into the land of promise." Argues Pfeiffer (1963:44).

The historical books are divided into three groups. The theocratic books-Joshua judges and Ruth; the monarchial books- Samuel, Kings Chronicles and the restoration books –Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther. All these books talk about the salvation of the Lord over His people. God used different means to save His people from captivity. The work of God and His love is not a mere sentimental feeling; it is redemptive power. It's a fact that nobody knows the man wise enough to have saved the world and Israelites from its and her bondage. There is always hope of salvation where shame reproaches a man to put him down. No one can be redeemed by his own power. No God and no saint is able to shield a man from consequences of his evil doing. Every one of us must become his own redeemer by trusting in God for that redemption. It's a fact that belief unto salvation is first of all a terrible sincerity, probing into every pocket of individual and social inconsistency. The Israelites were to discover what they ought to believe, to know what they ought to desire and to know what they ought to do.

After Moses delivering the Israelites from bondage of the Egyptians, he handed the mantle to Joshua to do the work of conquest and possession of the Promised Land of Canaan. "Yet this moment for which the nation had hoped for nearly forty years was here, the moment when they would finally occupy in reality the land which had been

guaranteed to their forefathers hundreds of years earlier, the promise which had only recently been reaffirmed to them,” says Merrill (1969:1655).

Salvation means crossing over from sin to eternal life through Jesus Christ. When the Israelites were to enter the Promised Land, they were to cross-over through Jordan River to the Promised Land. “At the close of the period of wandering, the Jordan River was miraculously held back in order to permit the Israelites to cross on the dry land.” Asserts Pfeiffer (1963:49). It is indicated that Joshua told the people to prepare themselves before crossing the Jordan. “And Joshua said to the people, sanctify yourselves for tomorrow the Lord will do wonders among you.... Take up the Ark of the Covenant and cross over before the people.” (Joshua 3:5 Macarthur Study Bible). The Israelites were to forget the former life in bondage in Egypt and also in the wilderness after crossing the Jordan. They were to have a new beginning of life with joy and peace. God also commended Joshua to circumcise all men less than 40 years as an indication of abiding in a new covenant. It was also a mark of salvation. At that time the Lord said to Joshua, “make flint knives for yourself and circumcise the sons of Israel again the second time.” (Joshua 5:2NIV).

In the process of possessing the land, God fought for the Israelites and they conquered all the cities. “....the Lord said to Joshua: do not be afraid, or be dismayed; take all the people of war with you and arise, go up to Ai” (Josh 8:1 N.I.V.) That was an indication of salvation from defeat by the enemy.’ No king is saved by the multitude of an army; almighty man is not delivered **[ya;s,aa]** by great strength. All nations that go to war trust in their mighty skills men and weapon to save them from defeat [Ps 33:16-17] on line [<http://www.faith alone. Org /journal/2003//Lopez. html>.] It’s God who provides salvation even in times of trouble, times of enemies and even in times of battle.” However, those that fear and trust in the Lord’s mercy (33:18), although lacking military, will be saved from defeat (Ps. 44:6, 60:7). Actually, the Lord is the weapon that saves His people in the battle. Salvation here means corporate deliverance or victory in battle (on line ibid.).

The term salvation in the historical books sounds paradoxical since salvation is through Jesus Christ in the New Testament. In the historical books, salvation is manifested through the acts of God in redemption following God's governance, it is depicted that man's freedom in history is not destroyed nor even momentarily overpowered; rather, it is utilized and protected by God. On the same, Kaufmanns (1988:330) asserts that "...Event of salvation history, which we must not forget, is the exodus. Covenant complex through which the people of Israel bound themselves in a personal compact to the God of Yahweh... it was in personal character and freedom that the covenant was made by both parties and it would be sustained only through personal loyalty and faithfulness, a continuous determination to fulfill covenant obligation and strengthen the bond." This clearly indicates that salvation brought a strong bond between the Israelites in history with the acts of God done to them in covenant fulfillment. This was seen through conquest of their enemies in the battle, provision of food, protection from diseases and possession of the Promised Land.

Thus, the Lord's triumph over the Canaanites testified to the world, powerful God, whose plan and claim to the world is absolute. In the historical books, the battle for Canaanites was the Lord's Holy war, undertaken at a particular time in the program of redemption. The conquered land itself would not become Israel's national possession by right of conquest, but it belonged to the Lord. The Israelites were to conduct themselves as per the commands of God and establish a common wealth, faithful to the righteous rule of God. That's why Anderson (1984:31) argues that "redemption is not first an easy way of salvation for the sinner and a display of the character of God. God must be supreme." Therefore God was supreme to Israelites in the battle and He wanted those who reject His value and will to know that He was the only God to be worshiped. "Now fear the Lord and serve him with all faithfulness. Throw away the gods your forefathers worshiped beyond the river and in Egypt and serve the Lord. But if serving the lord seems undesirable to you, then choose of yourself this day whom to serve" (Joshua 24:13-15). This was also a declaration of salvation from serving and worshipping other gods. Israelites were to be transformed from other gods to true God Jehovah.

Therefore the main area of concern about salvation in the historical books is deliverance and conquest of the Lord. Judges were raised to deliver people from rebellious and idolatrous living and also attack from their enemies; salvation here indicates clearly national independence from the governing authority of other nations against God's governance.

Some of the texts that talk about salvation in the historical books are like:

1Sa 2:1 Then Hannah prayed and said, "My heart exults in the Lord; my horn is exalted in the Lord, My mouth speaks boldly against my enemies, because I rejoice in Thy salvation.

2Sa 22:3 My God, my rock, in whom I take refuge; My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold and my refuge; My savior, Thou dost save me from violence.

2Sa 22:36 "Thou hast also given me the shield of Thy salvation, and Thy help makes me great.

2Sa 22:47 "The Lord lives, and blessed be my rock; and exalted be God, the rock of my salvation,

2Sa 23:5 "Truly is not my house so with God? For He has made an everlasting covenant with me, Ordered in all things, and secured; for all my salvation and all *my* desire, Will He not indeed make *it* grow?

1Ch 16:23 Sing to the Lord, all the earth; Proclaim good tidings of His salvation from day to day.

1Ch 16:35 Then say, "Save us, O God of our *salvation*, and gather us and deliver us from the nations, to give thanks to Thy holy name, and glory in Thy praise."

2Ch 6:41 "Now therefore arise, O Lord God, to Thy resting place, Thou and the ark of Thy might; let Thy priests, O Lord God, be clothed with salvation, and let Thy godly ones rejoice in what is good.

2Ch 20:17 'You *need* not fight in this *battle*; station yourselves, stand and see the salvation of the Lord on your behalf, O Judah and Jerusalem.' Do not fear or be dismayed; tomorrow go out to face them, for the Lord is with you."

Esther 4:14 For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance, for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father's family will perish. That was a clear indication of salvation of the Jews from human bad plan of destruction. God had good plans concerning salvation for his people in the historical books.

1.3.3 SALVATION ACCORDING TO PROPHETIC BOOKS

This section introduces the prophetic books and their approach, to salvation. The prophetic books are seventeen in number. They include Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentation, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi. The prophetic books are also divided, into two, the Major and Minor prophets. Major Prophets are five while the Minor Prophets are twelve, in number. All these prophets were asked by God to serve and face the difficulties in their ministry. They spoke about judgment and salvation.

God's message is for all His people and also for those who are not His people. His purpose is that all should hear the gospel of salvation and become His children. Thus the message describes who God is and the relationship He desires to have with His people. The message clearly states that judgment comes to all those who rebel against God, determined to go their own way. More importantly, the message tells of Christ's sacrifice for the world's sin to provide salvation for everyone who will accept Him as personal Savior. Furthermore the message of the prophets has been fulfilled in the New Testament or is yet to be fulfilled when Christ returns. It describes the glorious kingdom of God, which has entered into part but will experience fully in heaven.

The prophets were servants of God, interpreters of God's message to the people, seers, and messengers of the Lord and men of God. The word prophet simply means one who speaks on behalf of another. "The Lord said to Moses see I have made you like God to pharaoh and your brother Aaron will be your prophet. You are to say

everything I command you and your brother Aaron is to tell Pharaoh to let the Israelites go out of his country.”(Exodus 7:1-2)

Surveying the Levitical and historical rituals to the prophetic teachings, we enter into a new approach of things in the Levitical and historical. Culture was the chief vehicle of God’s redemptive work and grace to man and specifically forgiving of sin was mediated through sacrifice. This period is termed as period of the law. During this period, everything was purified with the shedding of blood. The prophets didn’t value the shedding of blood for purification but good morals and conduct before God was respected on the same: Stevens (1905:17) asserts that “the prophets recognized no such necessity. They never imply or even admit that the divine favor or forgiveness is inseparably linked with sacrifice or any other ceremony. Rituals have no place in the prophetic teaching; that which is moral alone has any meaning. This indicates that the prophets valued a change in behavior, attitude and moral living than just giving sacrifices without moral change. Speaking on behalf of God, Hosea 5:6 NIV says “I desire mercy and not sacrifice and the knowledge of God is more than the burnt offering.” On the same issue, Amos 5:21-22NIV contributes: “I hate, I despise your feast and I will take no delight in your solemn Assemblies. Yea, though ye offer Me your burnt offering and meat offering, I will not accept them; neither will I regard the peace offering of your fat beasts”. The word of God spoken to (Isaiah 1:11) has the same effect. To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifice into me? I delight not in the blood of bullocks and of lambs and of he-goats.” So the prophets regarded sacrifice, if unaccompanied by a righteous life as an abomination to God the Creator. “When the rituals are formal and unreal, it inevitably usurps the place of reality in worship” says Stevens (1905:18).

Then the researcher asked himself a question: “Was their salvation in the prophetic period?” Salvation in the Old Testament was a long-term process in the Israelites history. It was deliverance of the nation of Israel from bondage in Egypt. Furthermore, salvation was deliverance from victory over enemies and the achievement of security from God and prosperity. God’s objective here was to save His people in all aspects

of their lives. "The days of his flesh were but the unfolding in time of the plan of God from the beginning. It was always before his mind. He intended to save out of the world a people for himself and to build a church of the spirit which would never perish," says Coleman (2000:23).

The prophets spoke the message of God to the people concerning the judgment of God to come and salvation through believing in God. They also predicted about the coming of the Messiah to save the world from all bondage, who is Jesus Christ. This basic hope finds expression in Jeremiah xvi: 27: "fear not thou, oh Jacob my servant, neither be dismayed oh Israel, for I will save thee from afar and thy seed from the land of thy captivity and Jacob shall return and be quiet and at ease, and none shall make him afraid. "This is a great indication that the prophets believed salvation that is found in God and in the promised messiah. Isaiah 12:2 comments "behold God is my salvation, I will trust and not be afraid; for Jehovah is my strength and song; and He has become my salvation." He also predicted the coming king should be a just as well as a tender shepherd. This involves the salvation of the nation comprising both truth and righteousness.

The prophets taught and emphasized righteousness, which indicated salvation from all iniquity. They considered all righteousness of God as the perfect harmony of life with nature. Concerning this, Moyondor (1992:32) asserts that "the Christian life is never inert and static; it is a life lived, a life of perpetual growth in which we are being changed into the same image the Lord's from one degree of glory to another." Therefore, righteousness to humanity comprises conformity to the true will of God or having God's likeness and character. That was the expectation of the prophets to the Israelites. They condemned all types of sin and professed God's judgment to make people transform their ways and admit the salvation of God.

The prophets also taught about personal salvation. That everyone will be judged according to his sins. "The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father; neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son. The righteousness shall be upon him (Ezek

17:20). This is a clear indication that the prophets know very well about the existence of God and the kingdom to come. That's why they strongly prepared the people for the kingdom. According to the prophets, salvation is accomplished in the divine grace of God, repentance of one's sins and forgiveness of sins, inward renewal by becoming a renewed child of God who is born of the Spirit of God. They also express that God saves men for their own sake" (Isaiah xiii: 25)

Where is salvation depicted in the prophetic book? The only conditions of salvation which the prophets prescribe are expressed in scripture words like repentance, faith, sacrifice, sanctification and obedience to offering sacrifices, to forsake their sins, which though they are as secret, shall be made white as snow (Isaiah 1:11-18). The prophets believed that the messiah was coming to accomplish the plan of salvation among the Jews.

Stevens (1905:34) gives five elements of prophetic teaching close to the Christian doctrine of salvation.

1. Salvation is not primarily a national or collective but an individual affair.
2. It's above all, an ethical process, the recovery of life from sin to harmony with God through moral likeness to Him.
3. The conditions on which this salvation must be realized are, accordingly, moral. Man cannot be set right before God by any ceremony or transaction performed on his behalf. He must personally repent of his sin and forsake it.
4. But in so doing man can never anticipate the grace of God, nor does he achieve his salvation without the divine aid.
5. The experience of salvation then suggests the thought of a divine vicarious suffering which is greater than human love upon itself.

Therefore the prophets stood as mediators between God and man to accomplish the assignment God had called them to do concerning salvation and deliverance. The

assignment was done as they focus on the coming messiah, to bring complete salvation to the Jews first then to the Gentiles and the whole world.

4.2 SALVATION ACCORDING TO THE NEW TESTAMENT

Salvation in the New Testament is based on the birth, ministry and death of Jesus Christ. It involves the accomplishment of the prophetic message concerning the coming Messiah to save the entire world from its oppressions. When the Greek translation of the Old Testament is considered along with the common meaning of the word ,“salvation” in the Greek Bible which refers to God’s deliverance of his people from their hardship, comes by believing in the works, ministry and suffering of Christ. (On line [http// www.he.net/~z_hedges/ pand/.nt.html](http://www.he.net/~z_hedges/pand/.nt.html)). 9/7/2007. Nothing was needed to win back God’s favor. It wanted eagerly for man’s return. This involved transformation of man from his rebellion to childlike trust and willingness to obey. It also includes all the privilege of sonship with the divine family.

Concerning salvation in the New Testament, a question can be asked, “What does salvation mean in the teaching of Jesus? The real purpose of Jesus coming was to seek and save the lost. He comes into the world to win the lost man to the kingdom and have fellowship with God in his likeness. Salvation therefore means to effect successfully the full delivery of some one or something from out of impending danger says [Wilmington]. Further more, the Germans speak of “Heilsanneignusg”, the ditch of “Hellsweg” and “orde des Heils” and the English of the “way of salvation.” The orde salutis describes the process by which the work of salvation, brought by Christ, is subjecting realized in the hearts and lives of sinners” says Berkhof (1965: 415).

What is the meaning of the name Jesus? And what was his purpose? The name Jesus is derived from a Hebrew word Jehoshua, or Joshua, which means to save. This expresses the idea of redemption of man from any type of bondage to freedom. So Jesus Christ was the anointed Savior who was sent by God to redeem the fallen man from his state of sin and to have access to the kingdom of God. “The death and

resurrection of the Son of God, if accomplished in a manner which men would deem worthy of the Son of God, might have satisfied the one, as it did in fact as soon as the cross was lost sight of, satisfy and charm the other.” asserts Anderson (1984:27).

4.2.10 SALVATION ACCORDING TO SYNOPTIC GOSPEL

What are the gospels? The word Gospel in English is derived from Anglo-Saxon godspell, which means “good tiding”. The way it is used in the gospel books, it indicates good news about Jesus Christ and Christians who brings redemption. The gospel books are four in number. They are Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. These four books agree on the virgin birth of Jesus Christ. His career, supernatural character of His life and the high quality of His moral precepts indicate that He was God and had power to redeem man from sin. The main purpose of the gospel is to create faith in Christ among the believers, His followers and the entire World. Mathew, Mark and Luke are called synoptic from the Greek word synoptikos, which indicates “to see the whole together, to take a comprehensive view.” They resemble in the teachings of Jesus Christ, content, and in phraseology. Communicating the gospel is tough and complex. Douglas and Tenney (1989:227) assert “The Gospels were among the first writings to be quoted as a creed and authoritative... were the chief source of information concerning the life and the works of Jesus in the first half of the second century.”

Man is to be saved and redeemed. But from what is man to be saved and redeemed as per the Gospel? This is what should be dealt with in the gospel. Men ought to be saved just because they are lost in sin and thus they need a savior. “But he was expected to obey God. Disobedience to God proved to be man’s downfall,” says Erickson (1978:13). This involves salvation by God through Jesus Christ from an evil life. “Sin is a corrupt state of the heart, a perversion of the will and the affections, a radical disharmony with God. More concretely, it is loveliness that is selfishness, with evils,” Argues Stevens (1905:36). It’s only the lost according to the gospels that are found forfeiting their lives in selfishness and mostly in the form of pride, hypocrisy,

sexuality, cruelty, hatred, worldly lust, neglect of Jesus as savior and blasphemy. All these are because of self will of man which leads him lose his true image before God. The gospel also illustrates the true elements, which constitute righteousness and salvation. They include peace making, purity, goodness, mercifulness, humility, love to God, sanctification and self-control.

Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the Earth.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness for they will be filled.

Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

Blessed are the poor in heart, for they will see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God.

Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.

All the above creeds are found in Matthew 5:4 – 11 NIV, which indicates the act of righteousness meriting person to the kingdom of God. Jesus gave this beatitude to the people in preparation for the kingdom to come. “it is also seen in hardness, the cruelty, intoralance of the rich and ruling classes of the age; in the points of priests and Levites who put social distillations above humanity and in people who carefully observe their inherited traditions and to the merit and rise and coming to the neglect of judgment, mercy and the love of God,” contributes Stevens (1905: 36).

Surveying the scriptures, the researcher has found out that salvation involves complete change. In Luke 9:36-37 the first and the greatest commandment which summarizes whole principles of the prophets are “the law of love of God”. This is the principle of God’s moral perfection, which involves repentance and transformation. Through this the principle of salvation comprises repentance of sins as found in Mark 1:15 “the time has come... the kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news” To add on Duncan (1996: 38) asserts “repentance also includes the idea of falling pity, suffering grief (sorrow) and comforting one self... to repent means to turn back, change a course of action. Change of mind and purpose.” Therefore, in the

gospels, people are reminded to change their course of action to God. Those were the true and real principles of Jesus Christ. He taught that all men should live as God's true sons, obedient to His will, trustful in His care, morally like Him in motive and purpose.

It is found that the gospel is the backbone of salvation. It represented a life of sonship of God, humility and service. Jesus' ministry is truly illustrated up to the cross when he dies as a ransom and his blood shed for all sinners to be redeemed. That was an act of true salvation. He was to be the last sacrifice to be offered for all sinners and no more. Jesus was the only source of salvation to those that believe in him according to the gospels. "The whole world stands guilty before God, those born in so called Christian nations are lost because they have had the good news of the gospel but have rejected me." Argues Seamance (1964: 36). Therefore the death of Jesus Christ was regarded as substitution sacrifice which satisfied the divine hermatiological plan of God by forgiveness.

In Luke 2:30NIV, Simon cried in the temple and said, "For my eyes have seen thy salvation." That is an indication that Christ was the source of salvation to all mankind, and all flesh was to see the salvation of the Lord Ezekiel 3:6 and in John 3:16NIV "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." Salvation is of the Lord.

4.2.11 SALVATION ACCORDING TO THE ACTS OF APOSTLES

Acts of the Apostles is generally the work of the apostles after the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. They were to fulfill the commission and commands that Jesus had given them. "Jesus came to them and said, all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. And teach them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always to the very end of the age." (Matt 28:18-20). The disciples were to accomplish the great

commission of God by preaching about salvation found in Christ Jesus. Before they accomplished this mission, they were to wait for the power, “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and will be my witnesses in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth” (Acts 1:8 NIV).

After Pentecost, the apostles preached salvation of Jesus through repentance of sins. “Peter replied, repent and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sin, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38). He also preached to the Sanhedrin that salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved. That was a clear indication that the apostles preached the message of salvation for the forgiveness of sin. They also preached to the Pisidian Antioch and told them that “this message of salvation has been sent to us” (Acts 13:26). Saul’s conversion also climaxes the great works of God in saving His people without segregation. So Acts of apostles is just an extension of Jesus ministry to the world but through his apostles. They did exactly what Jesus had commanded and commissioned them to do.

4.4.3. PAULINE UNDERSTANDING OF SALVATION

Paul’s calling is quite unique among other apostles. He had a great zeal for the Jewish law, which made him persecute Christians. On the way to Damascus, to persecute the Christians, he met Christ in a vision. He was not then just converted but called to be the apostle to the Gentiles. After instruction by other believers, he started his missionary work. He moved in all cities preaching the good news and planting churches. He later died in Rome after a period in prison during Nero’s persecution about 65 AD.

Paul was born in Greek culture, Roman citizenship and Hebrew religion. He learned the trade of tent making, as seen in Acts 18:3. So, because he was of the same trade, he stayed with them and worked; for by occupation they were tentmaker. Becoming a Christian meant a lot to Paul. Departure from what he loved Jewish

culture, and following Christ whom he once persecuted. Before conversion, he was convinced greatly that Christians were heretical in their faith and teaching, that they needed extermination. Because of his bad impression of the Christians, after his conversion he was not welcomed to preach. Believers doubted his conversion and thought he was still pretending.

Physically, Paul did not present himself as an imposing person. He went through hardships and sufferings and was also afflicted by a thorn in the flesh. He was humble, sincere and sympathetic in his work. He many a time sacrificed to use his own hands to support the mission work. He was a scholar in nature and wrote fourteen epistles to different churches. His messages are so doctrinal and theological that they challenge the minds of many.

Pauline understanding of salvation is the same as that of Jesus although more reflecting of the future. He indicates that salvation is conversion, deliverance from sin and is confirmed in the life of holiness by the believer. He claims that the initial condition of salvation is repentance, renunciation of sin and trust in the guidance and grace of God, which is manifested in Jesus Christ. "That if you confess with your mouth "Jesus is Lord" and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved" Romans 10:9. Furthermore, Ziester (1990:77) asserts that "deliverance from sin is also deliverance from curse." This indicates that salvation comprises complete deliverance from sin.

According to Pauline epistles, justification was needed through reconciliation of man to God. Since man became hostile and disappointed the plan of God, it is now God's part to change his attitude and forgive man in his sinful state through providing a substitute for man's punishment. "One possible solution might be for God to wipe the slate clean. He would comply, out of the compassion of his heart, cancel man's sin and treat him as if nothing has ever happened. He would overlook man's sins," says Erickson (1978: 15). So salvation is not alone from the guilt but also from the curse and power of sin that people have ever lived in. It should be understood that the real

purpose of Christ's death was to atone for the sins of the world through His love. Man therefore is to respond to the atonement of God through Jesus Christ by repenting of his sins and taking a step of faith in order to be justified.

4.4.4. SALVATION UNDERSTOOD AS REGENERATION

According to the researcher, regeneration refers to a change of something to start a fresh. It can be referred to transformation into a new image. "This indicates a spiritual change of a person enabled by the actions of the indwelling Holy Spirit in that person... This extends to the whole nature of the person affecting his/her disposition, illuminating the mind freeing the will and renewing the nature." (On line [http: mb-soft. Com/believed/tart/salvation. Htm](http://mb-soft.com/believed/tart/salvation.htm)). It is also understood that regeneration mostly occurs when a person understands and believes that faith in our Lord Jesus Christ is the only correct and important way to follow. Regeneration is also a beginning of a new walk with God. When one changes his former life and begins living a transformed, cleansed life, therefore he/she is regenerated. It can be defined as a genesis in Christian walk. The Greek word for regeneration (*palingenesia*) is found only in Matthew 19:28 and Titus 3:5 Berhof (1965: 465). This indicates that regeneration involves a change of intellect. It can also mean to be reborn. In the Bible we read: "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, *even* to them that believe on His name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." John 1:12-13. Regeneration means: (*Kainos anthropos in Greek*). "I content that to be saved is to be renewed in the true image of God as women and men in Christ, to have our relationship restored to that of our sinful selves, hopelessly incurious are set free to be new creature in the divine and human coinoma". Argues Stackhouse, Jr (2002:97).

Regeneration can be defined as the work of God to transform man. It is the creative work of God and therefore man is purely passive concerning this change. "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us by the washing of regeneration, renewing of the Holy Spirit" Titus 3:5. It is also that

process in salvation whereby God himself through a second birth imparts to the believing sinner a new nature that makes him/her belong to God alone. The creative work of God is important to a believer since it produces a new life and resurrected power. Horn (1980:50) explains God's work and mans work in regeneration. "It is God the father who as we observed, calls his own out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light; but the sinner must do the coming."

The truth of regeneration is found and referred to in different ways and words. In John 3:3 Jesus said to Nicodemus, "Truly I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God," (Born again is the challenge). This indicates that there is the first birth, which is corruptible, and the second birth, which is incorruptible. The second birth (incorruptible) is referred to as regeneration. Horn (1980:51) gives a chart indicating first birth and a second birth, which is regeneration.

Chart four

THE FIRST BIRTH	THE SECOND BIRTH
a. of sinful parents	a. of God
b. of corruptible seed	b. of incorruptible seed
c. of the flesh- carnal	c. of the spirit-spiritual
d. Satan's slave	d. Christ free man
e. an object of divine wrath	d. an object of divine love

Learning from Nicodemus man is then to seek the redemptive rule and power of God through Jesus Christ. Nicodemus was to be regenerated by the divine power of the Holy Spirit in order to enter the kingdom of God. Therefore regeneration involves the removal of our old sin by the Holy Spirit into a new creation in God. Titus 3:5 contributes that "... not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit." In the early church and in the Roman Catholic theology, regeneration was denoted as an act of just washing away of sins. It meant the remission of sin.

They did not distinguish between justification and regeneration. In the reformers and Protestants, regeneration includes the change of intellect and will into God's purpose. It is: "To be converted, to be regenerated, to receive grace and to experience divine assurance." as says Berkhef (1965:467). Therefore to be regenerated means to receive a new life, a new religion, a new birth, a new relationship and a new authority.

Regeneration involves God awakening the spiritual life of an individual in order to receive salvation. People who were once lost in sin and darkness and were dead are awakened to spiritual life in Christ Jesus. Therefore Gruden (2006:702) contributes that "it is natural to understand that regeneration comes before saving faith."

The inward act of regeneration is seen in action (Acts 16:14) "Now a certain woman named Lydia heard *us*. She was a seller of purple from the city of Thyatira, who worshiped God. The Lord opened her heart to heed the things spoken by Paul. And when she and her household were baptized, she begged *us*, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay." So she persuaded *us*. After God opening her heart, she was able to listen to God's teaching and respond to it by faith."

Genuine regeneration has good results. For example, there is no sinning again since there is an eternal rebirth and transformation. 1 John 3:9 says "whoever has been born of God does not sin, and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God". Genuine Christian love will also be seen in his life since he has the fruit of God. 1 John 4:7 John says "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God, and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God." Therefore regenerated must also be in the position of overcoming the world and its pleasures. 1 John 5:4 asserts that "... For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world- our faith." Regeneration brings protection from satanic attacks and the powers of darkness. 1 John 5:18 John says: "We know that whoever is born of God does not sin: but he who has been born of God keeps himself, and the wicked one does not touch him." Therefore the result of the regenerated person is the fruit of the spirit as found in (Galatians 5:22). "Love, joy, peace....," This person will

also have love for others, will love Jesus, will live a separated life, will love the word of God, will also love prayer, enemies will be under his feet and the glory of God will be upon him. Therefore, in regeneration, people experience spiritual renewal, restoration and recreation. All this takes place by the quickening of the Holy Spirit to those who are spiritually dead.

4.4.5.1 MISCONCEPTION ABOUT REGENERATION

Many people have come with wrong ideas about regeneration. This is because of wrong motives and having unclear knowledge of what it is.

Some believe that when they are baptized in water, they are regenerated. Then after baptism, cleansing of sin is done through partaking of sacraments (Lord's Supper). These people believe that water baptism is a means to salvation. In contrast, John the Baptist preached that repentance comes before baptism. "Repent for the kingdom of God is near." (Matt 3:2). In a true sense baptism is an outward witness to the world of change of nature inwardly. It signifies the death, burial and resurrection of the sinful nature." Christ here becomes the key figure since He died, was buried and rose again. He is alive preparing a place for the saints in the new kingdom to come Romans 6:4 NIV.

Some also believe that regeneration makes people perfect. Christians are not yet perfect but their sins are just forgiven and perfection is a continuous process till Christ comes. "Whoever abides in him sins not: whoever sins has not seen Him neither known Him" 1 John 3:6.

Some people also believe that regeneration comes by living a good life and doing good works. In reality, good works do not merit one to salvation and to the kingdom of God. John contributes, "And this is the record that God has given to us eternal life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" 1 John 5:11-12 KJV.

There is a trust from other believers that education will cure the problem of the world and regenerate people. People believe in themselves and their achievements forgetting the salvaging power of the cross. In spite of people's increase in technology, knowledge and old types of learning, the problem in men still remains. The problems are corruption, death, sin, crisis, all remain in humanity. Education is therefore not the means of regeneration since God made it available to all people. In 1 Cor. 8:1 Paul asserts that, "Now touching things offered to idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffs-up but charity edifies."

Mistakably, some think that church membership equals regeneration. In true fact, membership identifies one with an institution of fellowship and worship. It does not solve the problem of man spiritually. To be a member of an institution is good but it is better to be born again and be transformed into eternal nature. This includes participating in church ceremonies, rituals, observances and prayers which cannot regenerate one and merit him to salvation and thus to the kingdom of God. Regeneration through the eternal transformation by the blood of Jesus is the key to salvation and thus to eternal life. Thus Henderson (1960:15) asserts that, "The salvation of God is in three great sections which deal with our guilty past, our needy present, and our glorious future." The past tense of salvation is connected with the work which the savior accomplished on the cross; its present is connected with Christ interceding for us in the throne of mercies; its future tense is bound up with the Second Coming. Therefore, "regeneration (re-jen-en-er-a shun. Greek...) is the spiritual change in peoples hearts in which their inherently sinful nature is changed and by which they are enabled to respond to God by faith," says Douglas & Tony (1989:499).

4.4.5.2 THE MEANS OF REGENERATION

Some people think that regeneration comes through man-made methods. "Even after the believer exercises true repentance over sin, sincerely asks the Lord to forgive him, the accuser will attack with condemnation and guilt" asserts Alsobrook

(1999:11). It is true that God alone regenerates, imparts a new life and transforms souls.

In regeneration, believing in God's word (logos) takes the first priority for transformation. "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

". (1 John 5:13) Him that believes in the word of God also believes in Jesus Christ and thus is regenerated.

Teaching, preaching and evangelism are also a means to regeneration. The word of God becomes a great agent concerning the work and process of regeneration. "Being born again, not of corruptible seed but of incorruptible by the word of God, which lives and abides forever" (1 Peter 1:23). This becomes the means God uses to draw the lost (regeneration) to salvation through Jesus Christ.

God also uses the principle of will and faith to regenerate His people to Himself.¹² But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name" (John 1:12). It's God through the power of the Holy Spirit who convicts to salvation through regeneration. But man also has a free will to decide and act by faith. The fulfillment of regeneration will take place when Christ Will come to take the church in a glorified body. Therefore salvation and regeneration Work hand in hand, since in regeneration God makes a new creation and new birth, And salvation involves deliverance from bondage through Jesus Christ. This process works by the power of the Holy Spirit and the end result is to enter the kingdom of God.

4.5 SALVATION UNDERSTOOD AS CONVERSION

From the researcher's definition, conversion means to change from one nature to another. The word is derived from another word "convert" meaning to change the

nature. Advancing on the same, Douglas & Tenney (1989:30) assert that (Heb. **Shuv**, **Greek** Epistrophe). A turning, literal or figurative, ethical or religious, either from less or more frequently, to God. It implies both a turning from and a turning to something” In the Bible, it involves repentance from sin to Jesus Christ by faith. “Repent therefore and be converted that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord” Acts 3:19 KJV. This is *from* ‘*epistpefw*, Greek word ‘to turn to.’ It is in Scripture the real effect that accompanies the new birth, a turning to God. It is beautifully expressed in the case of the Thessalonians, showing how they "turned to [the same word] God from idols, to serve the living and true God" 1Th 1:9. (Online Bible. Concise Bible Dictionary).

On the other hand Berley (1965:480) depicts the word conversion differently. He says that the “Old Testament employs especially two words for conversion namely: nacham... Deep feeling, either of sorrow (niphal) or of relief (piel). Niphal means to repent and this repentance is often accompanied with a change of plan and of action.” Therefore in the Old Testament, conversion stood for repentance and change of action. “Shubh” also is the most common word for conversion: It means to turn, to turn about and to return.

In the New Testament, the word *metanoia* (verb form mentioned is the most common word for conversion. ‘**evpistrofh**, *epistrophe* {*ep-is-trof-ay*} meaning: conversion (of the Gentiles from idolatry to the true God)’. The noun "conversion" (*epistrophe*) occurs in only one passage in the Bible; "They passed through both Phoenicia and Samaria, declaring the conversion of the Gentiles" (Acts 15:3). Derived forms of the verb "convert" “stands for the conscious life of man. This also involves transformation of heart from sin to salvation. The turning of a sinner to God (Acts 15:3) In a general sense, the heathen are said to be "converted" when they abandon heathenism and embrace the Christian faith; and in a more special sense men are converted when, by the influence of divine grace in their souls, their whole life is changed, old things pass away, and all things become new (Acts 26:18). Thus we speak of the conversion of the Philippian Jailer (Acts 16:19-34) of Paul (Acts 9:1-22) of the Ethiopian treasurer (Acts 8:26-40) of Cornelius (Acts 10:1ff). Of Lydia (Acts 16:13-15) and others. This is

from epistefw, 'to turn to.' It is in scripture the real effect that accompanies the new birth, a turning to God. It is beautifully expressed in the case of the Thessalonians, showing how they "turned to [the same word] God from idols, to serve the living and true God." (1Thessalonians 1:9). Paul and Barnabas were able to make known to the saints the 'conversion of the Gentiles.' (Acts 15:3). In Peter's address to the Jews he said, "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out." (Acts 3:19). Without being converted they could not enter the kingdom of heaven (Mt 18:3). The word is used in a somewhat different sense in respect to Peter himself. The Lord, knowing that he would fall under the sifting of Satan, said, "When thou art converted strengthen thy brethren;" that is, when he had returned in contrition, or been restored. In the O.T. the Hebrew words signify the same, 'to be turned' to turn back.' (Ps 51:13) (Isa 6:10 60:5).cf (Isa 1:27), margin.

Trenah points out that in the classics, the word conversion means;

1. To know after, after-knowledge
2. To change the mind as a result of this after- knowledge
3. In consequence of this change of mind, to accept the course of change that persuades the mind for positive transformation.
4. A change of conduct for the future, springing from all the preceding (ibid.)

4.5.1 TYPES OF CONVERSION

According to the researcher, we can depict four main types of conversion. In the first stage, we have the national conversion, which is corporate like that of the Israelites when they sinned, they were led by their leaders to repentance corporately before God; after a while, they could go back to their former habits since it was a communal thing "And God saw their works that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of their evil that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did not" (Jonah 3:10). Secondly we have temporal conversion that someone claims he has repented of his sins but there is no change of heart. When trials and temptations come the person is drawn back to his former title and finally he falls. Jesus spoke of this in (Matthew 13:20-21)" "yet hath he not roots in himself, but birth for a while for

when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, by and by is offended.” On the same Alsobrook (1999:53) contributes that “there are some who are weaker in the faith than others who have obvious spots in their garments.”

There is true conversion, which emanates from the heart. This conversion comprises godly sorrow and ushers in a life of complete devotion to the almighty God. In 2 Cor, 7:10, Paul says “for godly sorrow works repentance to salvation not to be repent of but the sorrow of the world works death.”

Repeated conversion on the other hand involves a converted person falling away from the glory of God and then repenting and coming back again (reconverted). In (Luke 22:32). Jesus told Peter, “but I have prayed for you that thy faith may not fail” and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.” This indicates that sometimes trials come and shake up the believers and even cause them to fall. But there is always a second chance of re-conversion. When one returns to God with a penitent heart, God forgives and empowers him again. “Therefore conversion marks the conscious beginning not only on the putting away of the old man, a fleeing of sin but also of the putting on of new life.” (David Alsobrook 1999:53).

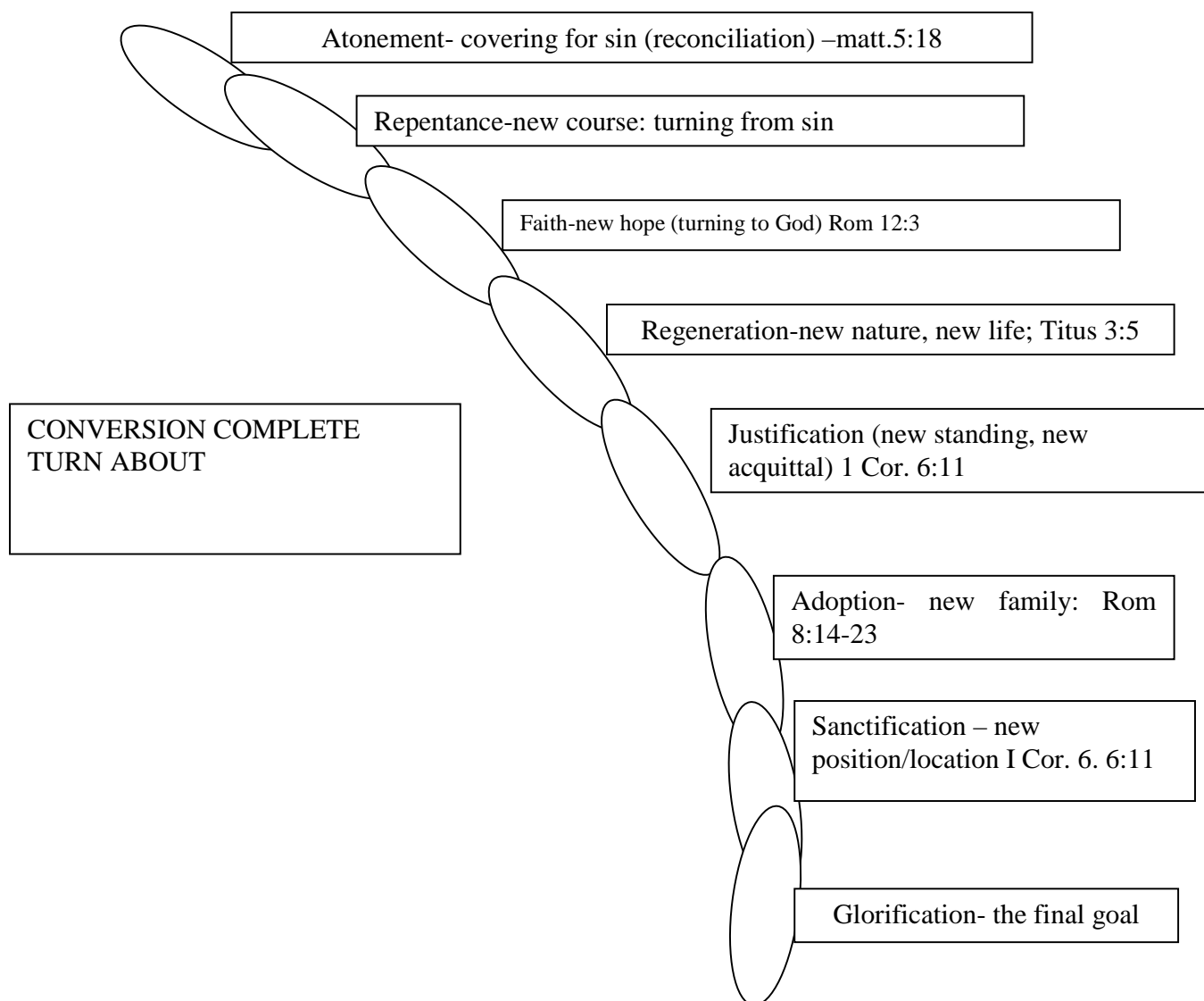
Since conversion involves a complete change, the three elements that are found in repentance are also found in conversion. They are an intellectual element which is a change of view; recognition of sin as involving personal guilt, an emotional element which is a change of feeling manifested itself in sorrow committed against God, and a volitional element which is change of purpose, an inward turning away from sin and request for pardon. Therefore God is the only author of conversion and not man himself.

4.5.2 THE RELATIONSHIP OF CONVERSION TO OTHER STAGES OF SALVATION

It's quite clear that when an individual repents of his sins and he is forgiven, then all other chain of conversion follows. Conversion is a process and a continuous process that a believer goes through till Christ comes back and he is glorified to be with him. However, without accepting the death and resurrection of Christ, he cannot go through the chain of conversion. It is not enough just to surrender. Faith must be exercised; obedience, repentance, sanctification, justification and finally we enter into glorification. In (Romans 8:18) Paul asserts "for I reckon that the suffering of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed to us"

The following chart indicates the chain of conversion, which is comprised in salvation and the definition of each as it participates in the conversion process.

Chart five



The researcher shall be evaluating each part in the chain of conversion in relation to salvation briefly. From the diagram above, the researcher discovered that each part of the chain depends on another. There is no part that works independently from

another. As the chain is linked to each other, so believers are linked to one another through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. “For the son of man... Came not to be served but to serve and give his life as a ransom for many” (Mark 10:45).

4.5.3 SALVATION AS ATONEMENT

Man was born a sinner who needed a savior. This bondage involves suffering and continual frustration for man and salvation from it can be purchased only at the cost of further suffering on the cross. Thus man's suffering will continue until victory is fully won and God's kingdom comes. It's only God to give a sacrifice of his only Son to die on the cross as a ransom in order for man to be saved if he believes. “For we know that the whole creation groaned and travailed in pain together until now... even we ourselves groan within, waiting for the adoption and the redemption of our body” says Paul in (Romans 8:22-23 KJV). Hebrews definition is as follows:

rpk (*kapar*) to make an atonement, make reconciliation, purge. (Denominative verb.) This root should probably be distinguished from *kapar* II ‘to smear with pitch.’ rpk (*kaper*) ransom, gift to secure favor. rpk (*kippur*) (used in the plural *kippurîm*) atonement, used especially in the expression ‘day of atonement.’ trpk (*kapporet*) place of atonement; KJV, ‘mercy seat.’ (Bible on line.)

Atonement according to the researcher means cover, reconcile, join together, a peace or substitute for. On the other hand Douglas & cottony (1989:58), say that “atonement” (atonement)... meaning... Separation, Reconciliation... The bringing together harmony of those who have been separated, “enemies”. To cover... By making an equivalent paid” the fore atonement is an act of coming together to make peace. When man sinned he became an enemy to God since the glory of God has departed. In Greek Atonement can be defined as follows: ‘**katallagh**, *katallage* {*kat-al-lag-ay*}’ **Meaning:** 1) *exchange* 1a) *of the business of money changers, exchanging equivalent values* 2) *adjustment of a difference, reconciliation, restoration*

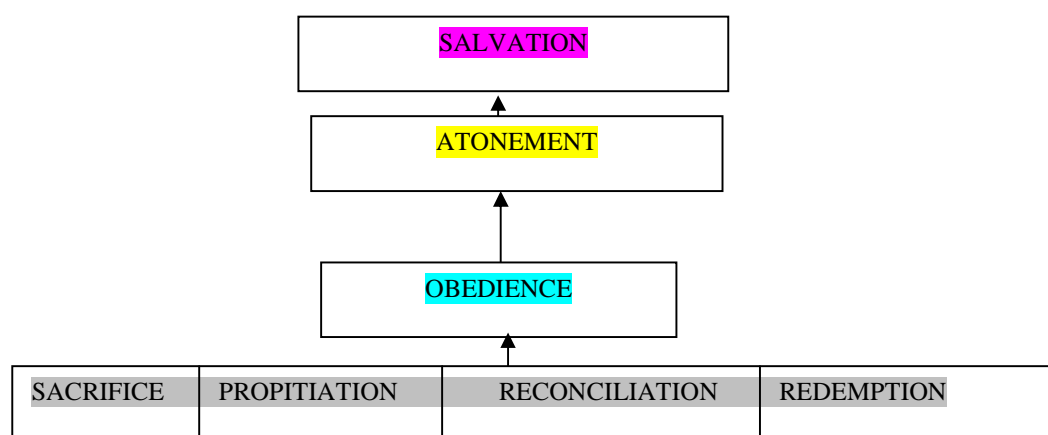
to favour 2a) in the NT of the restoration of the favour of God to sinners that repent and put their trust in the expiatory death of Christ' (Bible works).

So, for salvation to take place, God was to send his only begotten son to come and die a shameful death in order to redeem man. It means also to cover or cancel what was done against God. Duncan (1996:21) contributes that "In salvation it speaks by the action by which the sinner is reconciled or brought back to God." Another meaning of atonement is to conceal or cover. This indicates that through the death of Jesus Christ on the cross, the sinners of the whole world are forgiven. "As a result of Christ's sacrificial suffering and death, people's sins are covered over by his blood and the penalty for their sins is cancelled," says Duncan (1996:21). It is quite rue that people grow up learning how to assess and judge in the natural and it's hard for them to learn how to judge spiritually. If people will judge in the spiritual they will not sin.

Why was atonement necessary? God had power and authority to abandon people in their sinful state just because they had disobeyed him. "It was no longer possible to neatly divide life into the sacred and secular. God could be sensed working out his will for men and nation," says Cobmbee and Hall (1985:27). In order to restore the lost humanity to himself, God had to provide a prompt solution through atonement. In atonement the purpose of perfect justice and divine love was accomplished. "People were set free from the power and guilt of sin and restored to fellowship with God," says Dankan (1996:23). It is quite clear that great atonement that was brought by God was necessary since God would not have required giving out his only son in the Godhead to die a shameful death on the cross as a substitute (ransom) for the sinners. "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things and to enter to his glory? (Luke 24:26). It is discovered by the researcher that the sinless man was to die a shameful death as a sinner but just because of the grace of God on humanity, He saved us. "For even the son of man did not come to be served but to serve and give his life a ransom for many." (Mark 10:45 NIV). So in providing salvation for the lost humanity, Christ had to become an obedient sacrifice. He obeyed the substitute of God the father to offer him as a substitute for our curse, punishment and shame.

For salvation to be accomplished, it is found also that Christ had to become a propitiator (reducing God's anger over man) a sacrifice, dying on the cross on behalf of the sinner, a reconciler reconciling the lost man with God and a redemptory redeeming man from all bondage of sin. "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God: Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus Whom God hath set forth *to be* a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; " (Romans 3:23 KJV). Therefore salvation works hand in hand with atonement since to atone is to reconcile or cover. The following chart illustrates the relationship between atonement and salvation.

Chart six



Through atonement salvation is attained.

4.5.4 SALVATION AS JUSTIFICATION

What is justification? And how is it related to salvation? Justification is an act of counting a sinner right though he is on the fault. When God by his grace of love regenerates and transforms a person, He also justifies him. Thus declaring righteous and free from the penalty for his broken relationship with God. His sins are forgiven and is thus treated as if there is not any fault on him. "Lutherus describes justification

as the imputation to sinners of righteousness which is that of Christ himself (*iustitia aliena*) received by faith.... Is the forensic act whereby God declares the sinner just; it is an act performed outside of us (*extranos*) by which faith is counted as righteous," says Anderson, Murphy, Burgess (1985:50). The word *dikaiwsiv* occurs but twice in the N.T., namely, Ro 4:25 and 5:18. In the former passage it appears to be the equivalent in meaning of faith being imputed to the believer for righteousness, that is, of the believer being accounted righteous. Hence the word 'justification' may be said to be the estimation formed in God's mind of the believer in view of that order of things of which Christ risen is the Head.

As from Genesis 3, the researcher found out that result of the fall of man was guilt, condemnation and separation. Therefore in justification, the lost man gets a new position, new relationship, new standing, new peace and new acceptance. "Justification is the restoration of this true relation to God, and it includes removal of guilt by the imputation of Christ' righteousness" Assert Horne, (1980:70). In Roman chapter 8:33 KJV Paul asserts that "who shall lay anything to the church of God's elect? It is God that justifies." Furthermore Douglas and Tenny (1989:826) contribute that "justification (Heb. ***Tsedheq***; Gr *dikaioo* is to make valid to absolve, to vindicate, and to set right). Justification may be defined as "that judicial act of God by which, on the basis of the meritorious work of Christ, imputed to the sinner and received through faith, God declares the sinner absolved from sin, released from its penalty, and restored as righteous. It involves creating a new relationship between God and the sinner who repents. As a result for the sinner is forgiven and declared free, Christ becomes a substitute to atone sins of the sinner. God then forgives the sinner and restoration takes place. "Justification is strictly acceptance, restoration to fellowship and transformation of character (though that will follow)" says Ziesher (1990:88).

It is found that justification works together with salvation since justification is a strong legal act whereby man's sinful status before God is changed for the good. This process takes place by faith in order for the sinner to be saved and counted right, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus

Christ (Romans 5:1 KJV). When there is peace with God, then salvation prevails and assurance of eternal life is expected highly. “The goal of salvation was nothing less than that holiness without which no-one will see the Lord” says Stackhousejr (2002:62).

Since justification is a process leading to salvation, Douglas and Tenny (1989:326) provide four essentials, thoughts in scripture that involve justification “Remission of punishment in which the justified believer is declared to be free of the demands of the law since they have been sanctified in Christ and is no longer exposed to the penalty of the law (Romans 6:7).

- a) Restoration is to favor in which the justified believer is declared to be personally righteous in Christ... justification implies that Gods treatment of the sinner is now regarded as being personally righteous in Christ (Gal. 3:5).
- b) New legal standing before God in which, instead of being under the condemnation of sin, the justified believer stands before God in Christ. Christ takes the place of a sinner, the place of a curse (Gal. 3:15), being made sin (2 Cor. 5:21) and being judged for sin, the believer now stands in Christ’s righteousness (Rom. 3:25) and viewed as a son (Gal. 4:5).
- c) Imputed righteousness of God, which is granted the justified believer through Christ’s presence, imparts the quality and character of Christ righteousness to the believer (Rom 3:22-26, Philippians 3:9). Christ’s made the justifier through whom a new life is inaugurated in the believer (1 Cor 1:30).

Therefore the ground on which justification rests is the redeemed work of Christ’s suffering, death and resurrection.”

The nature and characteristics of justification are manifested in the sinner when his guilt of sin is removed and the sinner is restored and recounted right as a son of the living God. This takes place outside the sinner in the tribunal of God, and does not change his inner life, although on the other hand the sentence is brought home to him subjectively. It is not a repeated process but it’s computed once and for all times. Therefore in justification we have the remission of sin by the atoning

work of Christ on the cross in order to bring salvation and we have the active obedience of Christ who offered himself for the task. Gal 5:4 KJV says that “Christ has become of no effect unto you, whosoever you are justified by the law. Ye are fallen from grace.” It is the heart of the sinner which is transformed to allow the sinner to be justified. The result of justification is identified in many ways in the life of a believer. The sinner is freed from all guilt of sin and walks in freedom that is found in Jesus Christ...” Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven and whose sins are covered, “says Paul in Romans 5:10, “For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his son much more, being reconciled we shall be saved by his life.” The imputation of Christ’s righteousness to the sinner is another advantageous result. Paul asserts in 1 Cor 4:30 KJV that “but of him are ye in Christ Jesus who of God is made unto us wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption.” So no one is justified by good works or personal merit but it’s done by faith.” For evil of sin to be completely rectified repentance and love must penetrate all those dimensions of reality that were affected by the sinful decision,” argues Anderson, Murphy and Burges (1985:271). Therefore when one is saved he is then justified in the eyes of God as a true son and heir.

4.5.5. SALVATION AS REPENTANCE

In the researcher’s definition, repentance is a complete turn about. It implies leaving the former life of sin and cleaving to a new transformed life in Jesus Christ. Now Duncan (1996:38) defines repentance as “the act in which one recognizes and turns from sin confessing it to God. It is more than just turning away from sin- it means to leave them completely.” This indicates that repentance is an act of having a new direction that has hope and future. It includes the idea of feeling pity, suffering grief (sorrow), and comforting one self... To repent means “to turn back, change a course of action. It indicates a change of mind or purpose” (Duncan 1935:35). Douglas & Tenny (1989:501) assert by supporting Duncan that “repentance (Heb *Nathan*, *Subh* and *Grmutanoia*) is the process of changing the mind. O.T **terms Mxn (naham)** be

sorry, repent, regret, be comforted, comfort. Not used in the Qal, *naham* occurs chiefly in the Niphal and Piel." to pant," "to sigh", " to turn" or "Return. Mxn (noham) sorrow, repentance.Hoseah13:14, only} Mwxn (nihûm) comfort, {Isa 57:18} compassion. { Hoseah 11:8} hmxn (nehamâ) comfort. {Psalms 119:50 Job 6:10} Mwxnt (tanhûm) consolation. New Testament terms can also be compared to get the real meaning.1. Repent—" to Care," "Be concerned", to Change the Mind"," to turn over," "to turn upon," "to turn unto". There are three Greek words used in the New Testament to denote repentance:

1. The verb *_metamelomai_* is used of a change of mind, such as to produce regret or even remorse on account of sin, but not necessarily a change of heart. This word is used with reference to the repentance of Judas #Mt 27:3
 2. *Metanoeo*, meaning to change one's mind and purpose, as the result of knowledge.
 3. The cognate noun *_metanoia_*, is used of true repentance, a change of mind and purpose and life, to which remission of sin is promised.
- Evangelical repentance consists of (Bible on line)

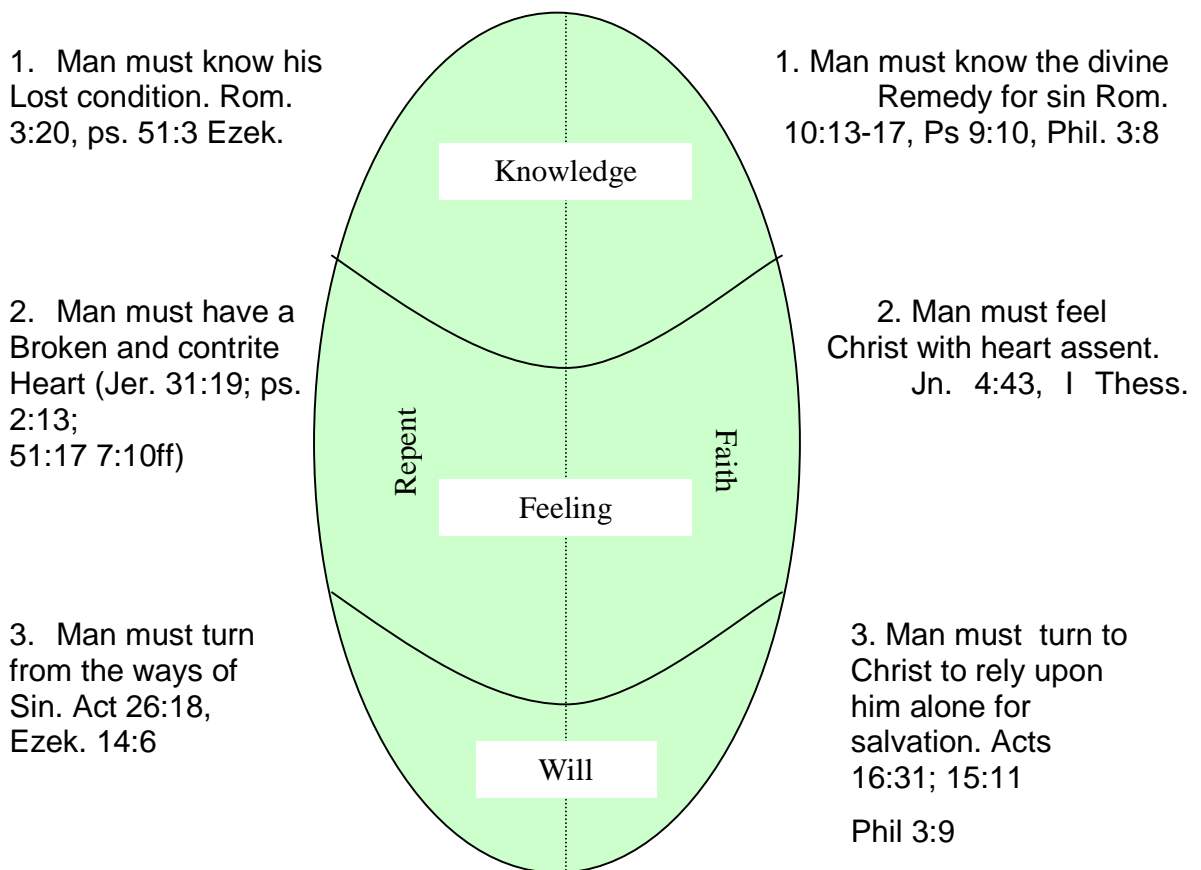
Repentance does not come by man's own human mind. It's the gift God granted to those who desire new life in Christ Jesus. "When they heard these things, they held their peace and glorified God, saying, then hath God also to the gentiles granted repentance unto life" (Acts 11:18 KJV). This shows that repentance brings new life in Christ Jesus. Him that repents of his sins and is forgiven, he becomes a new creation since the old is gone. "Repentance includes godly sorrow for sins. The remorse of truly penitent involves deep condition of heart, not so much for the punishment to which is exposed for indignity he has done to a holy and gracious God." argues Horne, (1980:56). The Pentecostal Assemblies of God also believes salvation to be a change of life from sin to Christ beside syncretism.

Repentance involves a complete turn from idols, from vail things and satanic power. In Acts 26:18 Paul asserts that "To open the eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive

forgiveness of sin” Repentance and faith work together and lead to conversion and thus salvation. Horne quotes from Williamson (1964:97) that “repentance and faith are two aspects of these full-orbed transformation of the soul. Repentance denotes the aspect of change whereby the soul turns to Christ and experience supreme attachment to him. The circle of complete turning involves the personality, reason and affection.

The following diagram shows conversion as a process of salvation derived from Horne (1980:59)

Chart seven



Repentance must emanate from the heart, which is godly sorrow that leads to salvation. It involves both change of mind, heart and will. Repentance also helps an individual discover his fallen state and focus to the cross of Christ to attain freedom

and victory. In 2 Cor. 7:10 Paul asserts that “Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death.” Therefore repentance comprises the intellectual aspect where a person recognizes his fallen state through the word of God, the emotional aspect which is genuine sorrow for one’s sins against God, and volitional aspect which involve the will and making a complete transformation to have a new beginning. All these lead to salvation through the blood of Jesus Christ. The entire Bible comprises the message of salvation and the kingdom of God to come.

4.5.6 FAITH AS A MEANS TO SALVATION

The basic element in the experience of conversion and salvation is faith. When one repents of his sins, he then must put his full trust in the atoning work of Jesus Christ for renewal. John asserts that “To all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God” (John 1:12). Therefore, every thing that takes place in the entire life of man is determined by faith. Concerning this, Ziester (1990:73) asserts “according to Rom 1:16 the gospel is the power of salvation to every one who has faith.” If we ask what salvation is, the answer is not always, but is generally to do with life and freedom; life because the goal is life under God now and in the future. Life involves faith in action. What is faith then?

pi,stij pistis {pis'-tis} : conviction of the truth of anything, belief of a conviction or belief respecting man's relationship to God and divine things, generally with the included idea of trust and holy fervor born of faith and joined with it , the conviction that God exists and is the Creator and ruler of all things, the provider and bestower of eternal salvation through Christ. Relating to Christ, a strong and welcome conviction or belief that Jesus is the Messiah, through whom we obtain eternal salvation in the kingdom of God. The religious beliefs of Christians, belief with the predominate idea of trust (or confidence) whether in God or in Christ, springing from faith, fidelity and faithfulness. (Bible works)

What is faith then? In Heb. 11:1 we find that: "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." It is an assurance of our future expectations, our desire and hope. Douglas and Tenny (1989:195) define faith as follows: Faith has twofold sense in the bible 1) trust, reliance (Rom 3:3 and 2) fidelity, trustworthiness. Faith therefore includes believe. One has to include a radical and total commitment to Christ as Lord and king of kings of one's life. He then becomes a great deliverer. "...If faith is trusting God to provide all our needs, then this attitude will never cease, not even in the age to come, but in any case the point is clearly made that faith continues throughout this life." Says Gruden (2006:77). Faith involves trusting in the redemptive work of Jesus Christ on the cross for the remission of the world's sin. It is in Paul's letters that the meaning of faith is most clearly and fully set forth. "Faith is trust in the person of Jesus, the truth of his teaching and the redemptive work he accomplished at Calvary and as a result a total submission to him and message which are accepted as from God." Argues Douglas (1987:342). The death and resurrection of Jesus bring redemption to all who believe in this aspect by faith. It can also be termed as putting on a new garment of belief and righteousness for protection and governing. "For faith is a putting on of Christ and complete confidence in his blood for justification" (Gal 3:26) contributes Pfeiffer (1976:169).

People have different types of faith that makes them to exist. We have non-religious faith where people believe in the natural things like bank, vehicles and building, among others. There is an intellectual faith where people believe something about Jesus but they do not believe in him. They are like scholars, philosophers and educated group. In James 2:18, the bible indicates, "but someone will say, you have faith I have deeds, show me your faith without deeds and I will show you my faith by what I do." This is not a saving faith but a carnal faith to justify self.

A question was asked, 'where is the source of faith? God himself is the source of faith. This is because faith is gifts of God for all that believe. In Hebrews 12:2 we find that, "Jesus is the author and perfecter of our faith". It's also the Holy Spirit who produces the fruit from every believer. Then faith is one of the fruit of the spirit. "The

way of righteousness is entered by faith, not by the religious works with which these leaders toiled night and day when the religionist witnessed their amazing turn to God and the incredible changes in their lives, they still do not repent and believe,” argues Lindsey (1985:24). Therefore faith is produced by the word of God and as one continues to study and pray, faith begins to grow in our hearts up to maturity. “It is the righteous who will live by faith.” (Romans 1:17).

Salvation comes when people believe in the atoning work of Christ on the cross. Therefore without faith there is no salvation. That is why Jesus said in Matthew 17:20 “If you have faith ...nothing will be impossible for you.” It is faith that graces the lives of people regardless of their jeopardy and imparts unto them a peacefulness that passes all understanding. The joy of God is found through faith.

4.5.7 ADOPTION AS A MEANS TO SALVATION

Adoption is the work of God in a believer who turns to God for renewal. “It deals with a person’s position in the family of God and concerns with privileges as one of God’s sons.” Says Duncan (1996:186). The main purpose of God is to make believers sons and daughters after accepting him as their Savior. In Ephesians 1:4-5 Paul tells the Ephesian church, “For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ...”

According to the researcher’s definition of adoption, it is an act of becoming a son or an heir in the family. One who was not belonging becomes a be-longer and has access to many privileges in the family. In accordance to this, Bryant (1993:21) asserts that adoption (**a-dop shun**) is to get privileges of son-ship. An adopted son was considering like a son born in the family. He could no longer be liable of old debts so far as his former family was concerned, he was dead.” When one is adopted to Christ’s Son-ship, he is dead to sin and alive in Jesus Christ. He must forget his former family members. He must cling to the new family of God, where he becomes

an heir. In Galatians 4:6, Paul asserts...Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his son into our hearts...so you are no longer a slave, but a son and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir.” When God adopts us, we become subject to his control since his Spirit works in the believer hearts. Full adoption shall also be accomplished at Christ’s Second Coming. Believers are just struggling with perfection that by the end they may be adopted as full sons of God. Romans 8:23 “...who have the first fruits of the spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.” The struggle of believers is to be accepted in son-ship. Our solemn obligation as adopted sons of our adopting parent: the newness of the family relationship is established. It’s climate of intimate trust, love and the immensity of the inheritance which eternity alone reveals to us. Leaving and belonging are vital characteristics of adoption. One leaves his sinful state and belongs to the new family of God. Douglas (1987:18) contributes that, “...we are not merely children who needed to grow up; we had become slaves of sin and as such needed to grow up; we had become slaves of sin and as such needed to be redeemed, brought out of bondage, that we might enter the new family that Christ brought onto being by his death and resurrection.”

Adoption permits believers to have access directly to the Father (God). Rom 8:15NIV “For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received a spirit of son-ship and by him we cry abba “Father”.” The Spirit of God guarantees all benefits that have been spared for the true sons (heirs). In 2 Cor. 1:22, Paul asserts that “He anointed us, set His seal of ownership on us and put His Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is saved, He then becomes a Son and heir in the kingdom of the Father.” “Adoption is implicit as a relationship of grace in John’s teaching about becoming a son in the prodigal’s acceptance into full family rights and in Jesus ‘often repeated title of God as father.” Says Douglas, (1984:17).

A positive experience of adoption is arrived at when one sinner receives Jesus Christ as his personal Savior. This takes places as a result of total transformation of the will, emotion and intellect. “To all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he

gave the right to become children of God.” Says John 1:12. When one accepts salvation, God adopts him as His son. He forgives His sins, imparts a new life and a new nature, he grants a new standing and accords (provides) a new status in his family. It is only through God’s grace that we have access into this son-ship.

Here comes a story of James and Jane a young childless couple. They had been married for over ten years without a child. A time came when they desired to have a child by adoption. They identified a girl who was pregnant and was coming from a poor family that could not take care of the child. They eagerly shared the information with the friends and the doctor informed the couple that the child born had complication of a cleft plate-deformity in the roof of the mouth. He then asked the young couple if they could still take the child. The couple accepted to take the child in the state it was in and went to the attorney general. They immediately took the baby to their home. They later took the child for surgery to correct the cleft plate. The operation was successful and the little child became perfectly normal, healthy and happy in the family. We were also sinners but Christ adopted us in our state, cleansed us through Christ’s death on the cross and His resurrection, and He has brought us in His family that we may rejoice with Him for ever. That is what adoption is to believers.

4.5.8. *SANCTIFICATION AS A MEANS TO SALVATION*

According to the authors’ definition, sanctification is the process whereby a sinner is cleansed by the blood of Jesus Christ, thus leading him to be more like Christ himself. It takes place through the new birth and conversion experience. A sinner is transformed into the image of God through the Holy Spirit allowing Him to control his nature. “Sanctification is something more thorough and crucial. It is supernatural because human nature can neither produce it nor explain it. It is more than education, counsel or behavioral modification. No human technique can produce its results. It is special work of the Holy Spirit,” asserts Millard Erickson (1918:93).

Sanctification is the internal transformation done by God himself through the Holy Spirit. In Thess 5:23 Paul says, “May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely.”

Sanctification also means the power of becoming holy. J. Douglas and Merrill (ibid) argue that, “Sanctification (*Gr. Hagiasmos from the verb hagiaze*) is the process or result of being made holy...Consecrated and set apart for use of God... scarified and set apart for the use of God... sanctified in Christ.” Therefore it is a process of cleansing and being made holy for God’s use. In 1 Cor. 1: 2 Paul says: “ To the Church of God in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be holy, with all those everywhere who call on the Name of our Lord Jesus...” Sanctification is a process of setting apart for Gods use, separation, consecration and complete dedication. While justification deals with standing, action of God for us, an act, a means making us safe and declaring the sinner good, It is the work of God, focuses at the end result and making the believer good.

Sanctification involves rebirth. In rebirth the believer puts off the old corruptible nature of sin and puts on the new incorruptible nature that is sinless and is completely regenerated. In Ephesians 4:22-23 Paul argues that “you were taught with regard to your former way of life to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires, to be made new in the attitude of your minds and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.”Therefore sanctification is the end result of the entire process and doctrine of salvation, since it’s what God does in a believer’s life by sanctifying him into holiness. It’s full dedication to accomplish the purpose of God as a result of God’s separation, purification and dedication.

Sanctification also involves one becoming like Christ-like. Melton (1980:78) contributes that “sanctification has to do with the progressive outworking of the new life implanted by the Holy Spirit in regeneration; it consists respecting and responding to the things of the spirit.” This means the spirit guides one not to sin and impressing the fruit of the spirit which is love, joy, peace, long suffering, kindness, goodness,

faithfulness, meekness and self control. These spiritual fruit of the Holy Spirit can only take action where one is sanctified by the blood of Jesus Christ. It can be clearly understood from the researcher that God is the only cause of sanctification and the instrument cause in the word of God and the progressive power (force) is the good loving will of God. In 1 Thess. 4:3 Paul says “It is God’s will that you should be sanctified...”

Believers are warned to live a holy life. Holiness leads to the transformation of the mind and Christian character, which is an act of sanctification. One is set apart positional unto God by virtue of his new life with high hope of future joy with the Lord. The Holy Spirit becomes the driving force in control. Because God is a Holy God, He commands His people also to be Holy. In 1 Peter 1:15-16, Peter asserts, “but just as He who called you is Holy, so be ye Holy in all you do; for it is written: be Holy because I am Holy.” Therefore, when one has a new standing, he has a new position in the eyes of God as a separated Son, Holy and acceptable.

After one is saved through justification, he sends the reminder of the physical life refining and improving a Christian walk, progressively conforming more and more to the ideal image of Christ. Gradually, a life becomes more morally holy as a result of sanctification. Sanctification proceeds through the redemptive work of Christ and the work of the indwelling Holy Spirit. The process of sanctification actually begins at the moment of conversion and becomes more obvious and pronounced at regeneration and even more so at justification. It continues until we see Christ. [Online <http://mb-soft.com/believetext/salvation.htm>].

4.5.9 SALVATION AS AN ASSURANCE OF ETERNAL LIFE [GLORIFICATION]

From creation, man has been striving by his own effort to accomplish his own desires. Adam and Eve had their own constraints, trying to equate with God by eating the forbidden fruit. In the prophetic times, men tried to create their own gods that could sanctify their own human nature but all was void. Technologies have come in

the modern world to sanctify human mind, but all without Christ, it is still void. After all the toiling of the mind, there is judgment Heb. 9:27] “Just as man is destined to die once and after that to face judgment, so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people and he will appear a second time not to bear sin but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him [Nib]” Heb 9:27. Those who accept salvation to their accomplishment through glorification have hope of eternal life in Christ Jesus.

Paul asserts in Philippians 1:6 that, “...being confident of this that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.” Glorification sums up the redemptive work of God in the entire planet. 1 Thess. 16-2 gives an assurance of the glorification day: “For the Lord Himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up with them in the cloud to meet the Lord in the air so we will be with the Lord forever.”

Glorification in the other hand may be defined as the work that God will perform by which He will complete our salvation, making us morally perfect for eternity and bringing us into His presence in a body like Christ's glorious body.” Says Duncan (1996:244). It involves the perfection of our bodies. “Glorification is ...the perfecting of our manhood into perfect human nature of Jesus Christ.” Argues Horne (1980:105). At this point the believers will have full bestowal of eternal life. Their relationship with God will be an everlasting one and they will have full participation in the godly activities. Jesus says in John 5:24 “I tell you the truth; whosoever hears my word and believes Him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.” Therefore glorification will usher in full eternal salvation, freedom from all types of sin and bondage, freedom from man laws, freedom from suffering and total freedom from death. The bodies of believers shall be perfected into God's glory.

The following Greek words from Duncan (1996: 248) illustrate the meaning of believers' glorification.

-Amomos: indicated that we shall be without spot or moral blemish (Eph. 1:4, 5:27)

-Hagios: suggests that glorification consists in our being made holy in Christ to such a degree that we will perfectly satisfy the holiness of God (Col. 1:22).

-Aproskopos: implies the absence in us of any cause of stumbling so that we arrive at our destination morally uninjured and unworthy of any blame. Phil. 1:10.

-Eiliknines: gives the idea of being pure without spot and therefore immaculate.

-Anegkletos: Speaks of that which is free from any incriminating charge. Because of this, on the day of Christ Jesus shall all people stand in God's presence free from all moral objections? (1 Cor. 1:8).

-Amemptos: indicates that we shall stand in the rescue of the Father faultless in every part of our being- spirit, soul, and body. (1 Thes. 3:13).

-Spilos and rhutis: Teaches that the church shall be without spot or wrinkle or any other ...

At glorification, all tears shall be wiped away and there shall be no more grieving or decaying of the body. No imperfection. That is the accomplishment of believer's salvation. In Romans 8:19 NIV. Paul explains "the creation waits in eager expectations for the Son of God to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God."

CHAPER FIVE

PRACTICAL PROPOSALS (CONTEXIUALIZATION) “TOWARDS BIBLICAL VIEW OF SALVATION”

5.0 OVERVIEW

Salvation involves internal transformation into the image of God. It does not involve a pair of new breeches, nor attaining university education. All these involve the outside of a man but if the inside (the heart) remains unchanged, therefore everything becomes void. Man must be grafted into new eternal nature, which is divine. This eternal nature gives man an assurance of becoming a heir in the kingdom of God. The Pentecostal Assemblies of God Church in Vihiga District, Kenya must be rooted in the true doctrines of the Bible in order to have a clear distinction between the cultural cultic teachings and the true biblical teachings that lead to eternal life.

How can the Pentecostal Assemblies of God Church in Vihiga District accomplish the purpose of teaching a true biblical doctrine? That is a question to be asked and responded to in this chapter. The researcher has discovered that true doctrines can be taught to the church P.A.G in Vihiga District through training programmes and Biblical guidelines on the Biblical view of “salvation” for the implementation. The training will involve pastors training, leaders training through seminars to the youth,

women, men and conference print out distributions with true doctrines and provision of teachings through the media, i.e. radio, TVs and CD's. All these shall be discussed individually in order to be understood clearly.

5.1 VALUE OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION TO THE CHURCH

The core of this chapter points out that Christian education on the doctrine of soteriology is more than simply an education program. It consists of a strong demand of clear understanding on the basic biblical ministry that challenges and moulds people's minds to the eternal inheritance. A purposeful Christian should seek to build his life and his service on teachings of the word of God in order to avoid the heretical teaching that leads to destruction. "The educational process that each of us comes through in life and shapes what we believe, what we value and what we are able to accomplish. Where that process is haphazard, weak, or aborted, it is usually reflected in the quality of life" Asserts Graendorf (1981:11). It can be understood that biblical education itself without practical application in one's life has no guarantee of effectiveness or success. What matters a lot is the spiritual transformation, spiritual empowerment of a clear understanding, exegesis of scriptures and application in life for change.

A clear biblical Christian education on soteriology provides authoritative principles on which to build our salvation and spiritual growth. If there are no clear teachings and understanding of salvation by the church, heresies are the result and thus leading people into destruction. Graendatory (Ibid 12) gives five principles on Christian education to the church for spiritual transformation.

- ❖ *"The biblical understanding of our Christian faith really knows what we believe.*
- ❖ *The experiential development of life as a Christian – Christian living as an everyday experience must be practiced.*
- ❖ *The intergenerational growth of the Christian family – is having a truly Christian home.*

- ❖ *The moral development of our children – is preparation for living in an increasingly a moral culture.*
- ❖ *Our meaningful impact of Christians on contemporary society – is touching people for Christ”*

The Pentecostal Assemblies of God church in Vihiga District has not taken seriously the principle of equipping Pastors and leaders in order to teach the right doctrine in the church. This is why heresies are taking the first front in the church. Pastors and leaders in their ignorance teach what they know favours them and not what the Bible commands. Pastors have worried and churches have prayed about the question of personnel to equip the church for its many tasks in carrying out the work of Christ's Kingdom here on earth. Most Christian leaders verbalize concerning this problem and possible solutions to it, but relatively few have been able to satisfactorily alleviate the shortage of labourers for the harvest. "Our framework is defined as the context of the educational program of the local church." Says Gangel (1970:11).

It becomes so much devastating when you find some Christians eager for change but their leaders suppress them. A strong drop to the old forms of beliefs with a new dress hinders Christian education and growth in salvation. It needs the Holy Spirit to inhere in order for practical teaching in the word of God to be accomplished.

Training the church about biblical doctrines (soteriology) is not a one-day function. It must be an on-going process. The training should base on the age level, maturity level and educational level. Although the principles of learning are equally the same for all ages, it is difficult to meet the needs of all people unless you leave a clear distinction of each age understanding. Early childhood must be taught at their level of understanding, on the children and youth. The focus on each training must be to build the character of the learners (believers) to understand the Bible and doctrine of salvation and be transformed to apply the lesson practically in their lives. Graendorf (1981:277) contributes that "all teachers need opportunity to participate in extensive

training workshops in which their total teaching ministry can be evaluated and enriched.”

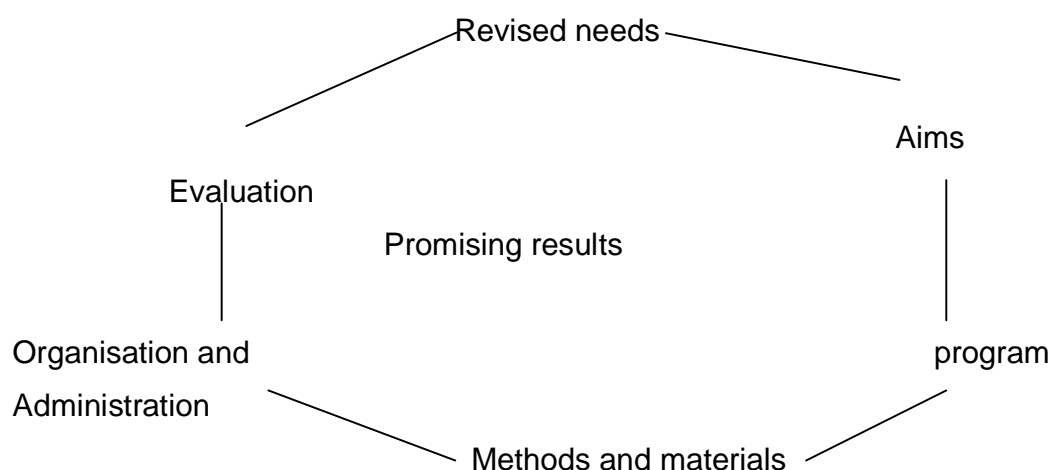
It is quite ashaming that Pastors in the Pentecostal Assemblies of God (P.A.G) in Vihiga District, Kenya, fear to join other non- PAG Churches in seminars or workshops. They go to the extent of refusing their members to mix with believers from other churches. This bars them from growing spiritually. There is also a notion that after training in a Pentecostal Bible College for about three years Diploma or two years certificate, then that is the end of everything. The researcher has found out that there is a need for Pastors going for seminars and refresher causes to get them started on the right foot. Experienced pastors and leaders also need seminars to equip them and assist them learn new skills, correct their former mistakes and marry a new vision for a new world of technology and advanced education.

The problem in Vihiga District P.A.G Church is that they organize workshops for only their denomination by the name Pastor Conference and invite untrained old men and women (women directors) who teach heresies by attacking other people on the pulpit. By the end of the conference, there is nothing gained, no spiritual growth, and no prayer break through avenue and no internal transformation. The meeting is planned as a formality and not a transformation conference. “Christian education is doing the Lords work in the Lords way, therefore being assured of the Lord's supply”. Graendorf Ibid (1981:277) we do not naturally use divine methods any more than we naturally discover God's plan of salvation. Christian salvation is discovering how the Spirit of God, the divine teacher, works and working with Him. It's allowing the word of God to transform every area of life.” It is making discipleship of all nations, argues Lebar (1968:21).

It is impossible for one to know God's will until he is in the centre (heart) of God Himself. “only when we keep ourselves clean from the contamination of evil shall we be vessels fit for the Masters use ready for any good purpose 11Timothy 2:2 Niv. “Most of us in church are following tradition rather than scriptural principles. We have

never studied God's way of working "asserts Lebar, (1968:26). Thus, the church as a whole is always weakened by uninvolved, unstable, and immature Christians who provide an impression that God should be grateful if they tread his courts once a week or once a month. The Pastors and Church leaders must try to evaluate their work frequently to see if they are progressing positively or negatively. Lebar (1968: 27) gives us a chart of evaluation.

Chart eight



Evaluation of Christian leadership circle in planning.

Any education starts with the felt need. The right changes in the church start where change is needed and amongst people who are ready for change. In Vihiga District Kenya, change is needed in understanding more about the doctrine of salvation. Meeting the felt needs of an individual is the core to any transformation. The need in Vihiga District P.A.G is that people have mixed their own non-Biblical cultures with Christianity thus resulting in syncretism. Therefore the pastors and church leaders must look for ways of meeting this need. It's only by providing education on soteriology and Christian values.

The pastors should now have an aim of meeting these needs. This will help in the methods and programs to be followed. This aim must be concise to focus, specific to be achieved and personal for transforming lives, attitude and conduct, it is quite hard for transformation of lives to take place without clear planning and commitment. It is a fact that gradual teaching on the truth results in a great transformation.

Pastors in P.A.G Vihiga District must also have a program to follow everyday in order to accomplish their purpose of training. The program must involve God as a guide. "Woe to the rebellious children," says the Lord "who carry out a plan, but not mine" Isaiah 30:1 RSV. A clear productive program will have good expressions that people admire, focused fellowship that involves other people and the pastor himself, Biblical instructions that Withdraw people from all bondage to sin and idols to freedom in Jesus Christ; and godly worship that comprises the power of the Holy Spirit for transformation and exhortation.

5.2 RECRUITING CHURCH WORKERS

What emanates from the pulpit must have influence in the transformation of souls. The Pentecostal Assemblies of God church in Vihiga District, Kenya has recruited church workers who are not saved on the pulpit thus defiling the work of God. The selection of leaders has always been done through elections and appointments. In the first step, when a member is seen as rich in the church, he is given the position of leadership even though he is not saved. It's an urge to the pastors to follow God's command in order to accomplish God's purpose. In 2nd Timothy 3:2 KJV Paul says, "a Bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober minded, of good behaviour, hospitable, able to teach, not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, but gentle, not quarrelsome, not covetous; one submission with all reverence... not a novice ...and have a good testimony among those who are outside."

The first priority to be considered in recruiting church workers in the Pentecostal Assemblies of God church is salvation, then transformation into the image of Jesus Christ. Concerned with this Flattery (1968:9) argues that “the growth of every person is influenced by heredity, environment, and his will,” therefore, when one is influential in the church, he is recognized to be saved even though he is not. Such misconception has led the church to be controlled by non-believers and thus making it to be heretical, cultic, with carnal leadership. The result of such leadership is that by the end, the church is driven by finances, traditions and personalities instead of being driven by Jesus Christ. Thus, Christian education is needed to transform the church from this notion. While Christian education recognizes that there are sources of spiritual inspiration and guidance outside the nail page of the Bible, it gives Biblical scriptures the supreme plane to lead people into truth.” Christian teaching is the introduction of control into experience in terms of the teaching of Jesus the Saviour of man. Man is dead in trespasses and sins. No systems of nature can bring him to life. Only the power of God brought into effectiveness through faith in the atoning merits of a redeemer, who God has set forth as a propitiator for sin can impart spiritual life to man. Until he is born again, there is no possibility of growth in spiritual life, for growth is an experience that begins only when life begins ...is to present Christ as Saviour that he who is taught may believe, accept, and pass from death to life “Argues Eavey (1961:12).

In recruiting workers, the P.A.G church must try to value salvation and spiritual growth into maturity as a vital element in Christianity. All leaders selected must then go through continuous training in the things of God to make them mature in order to lead the church of God. “Sow in act and will reap a habit; sow a habit and will reap a character, Christian habit results from Christian’s instruction” says Eavey (1961:65). It is clear that learning and transformation into the image of Christ requires the hardest kind of effort. It is not an easy task. The Holy Spirit is the only guide in leading people to a fuller, richer and clear understanding of the word of God. On some occasions the Pentecostal Assemblies of God in Vihiga District, Kenya, recruit leaders who are young in Christian faith (immature). This then leads the church to be infant in her

movement just because the leader is an infant. To be a leader is not an easy thing. What is demanding is not “glorious” leader who draw those lesser persons who are his followers to him in a personal devotion which may obscurer the real purpose of the group,” says little (1960:79). Spiritual maturity and spiritual performance is what matters a lot.

5.3 CHURCH FRAGMENTATION AND ETHROCENTRISM

The root of the Pentecostal Assemblies of God is believed to have been in Nyang'ori (Maragoli land). This has been resulting to the notion that the P.A.G church is for the Maragoli tribe. In Vihiga District, P.A.G churches conduct their services in one language (Maragoli). They practice their own cultures (ethnocentric) and conduct everything according to their own system. Because of this notion, it has barred other tribes to join their church. “.. How the church is to be roused to that deeper and fuller life in Christ, without which there is no possibility of Christ being made known to all the world in this generation,” asserts Murey, (1985:15).

It's the responsibility of pastors in Vihiga District (P.A.G) church to have a new revolution over the governance of the church in order to accomplish the purpose of God. The worst of all is that even when one transfers to the city, the Pentecostal Assemblies of God church still carries her system to the city that it becomes a Maragoli Church in the city. Murey (1985:57) argues “That power as it manifested itself in the early church is most surely available for the Church of our day. How inconceivable that the church does not know and act upon the blessed truth, that the Holy Spirit will work in her all that she needs of the divine strength for winning the world.”

The pastors in the P.A.G church in Vihiga District should recognize that the church is for all people, all tribes, and all cultures and thus it should become a global church. They should use a balanced approach to all people groups in order for them to have a balanced church. It should not be a matter of fragmenting a church to continue

advocating for one's culture. It should be a principle of enhancing the kingdom of God globally. It is therefore found that the P.A.G church has remained with few members just because of their poor mode of evangelism. "Church growth does not just happen anywhere. It is not the happy coincidence of finding a suitable people and reaping a rich harvest. Church growth occurs when Christians work hard among a suitable responsive people" says McGravan (1973:122). Pastors of P.A.G church without either bias or tribalism should present the word of God to all people groups with the aim of leading them to the kingdom of God. Equilibrium must be maintained in order to achieve the purpose of the existence of the church.

5.4 REVOLUTION OF SYNCRETIC WORSHIP

The Pentecostal Assemblies of God has been involved in syncretic worship for long period. (Mixing their own traditions and culture that are unbiblical with the word of God). This is because people want to retain their own culture and ways of life with the word of God. This syncretic worship involves appeasing the spirits of the dead by sacrificing bulls and cows at the graves of the diseased, worshipping attire (white clothes), wife inheritance, practicing polygamy, misconception of circumcision, misconception of the Lords supper, baptism, among others. What is a resolution of this crisis over salvation? That is a question to be asked in this thesis and derive a hypothesis over it.

The only alternative in the crisis of syncretism is for the pastors of P.A.G church in Vihiga District to use the word of God in speaking the truth about salvation and true worship. They must talk vividly about the dangers of syncretism and how one can be transformed into the image of Jesus Christ. watterott (1964:143) argues that "like blind men we walk in a road we have already taken often; we work in order to work, we pray in order to pray, in short, we act in order to act." If only the day's work is being done, we are satisfied.

A clear survey indicates that people go to church as a routine and not for transformation. They come in the church with adornments outside, but leave the church worse spiritually than they came. The P.A.G church in Vihiga District must be taught to come out of what they are accustomed to and accept the transformation of Jesus Christ. "The gospel, however, not only uses cultural forms, it also judges all the human meanings and motivations channelled through them. When, therefore, a cultural form is used to convey a meaning that is opposed to the gospel, it must be rejected, unless with the passage of time the meaning changes," argues Kraph (1989:224).

Syncretism can be handled by the pastors themselves reducing their love for unbiblical cultures and increasing their intimacy with God. That will magnify His love, greatness and majesty. God is not manifested in the Pentecostal Assemblies of God's church just because they are serving and worshiping a second hand god. Their first god to be worshiped is their own culture, traditions and gods of this world and then the second one is the true God whom they don't accredit so much. In contrast, the true God of Israel cannot be compared to any other god, or culture, or traditions or power, or authority. He is a God who has assurance of pardon. He is infinitely powerful, omniscient, omnipotent, self -sufficient, sovereign, transcendent, eternal, immutable and incomparable to any other gods, "To whom then can you liken God? The prophet? Or what likeness will you compare with Him? He is solitary and unique in every aspect of His nature." Argues Kraph (1989:33). This indicates that God can never be compared to anything else since He is all in all.

Intimacy with God is also determined by discipline. Hebrews 5:8-9 NIV challenges the researcher that "Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered; and having been made perfect, He became to all those who obey him the source of eternal salvation." Genuine discipline leads to genuine worship. The author has found out that the Pentecostal Assemblies of God in Vihiga District Kenya has disturbed God by not worshiping Him and Him alone. They have mixed their love of God with their love of their own traditions and culture. This has made the

church to become a traditional church and not a Christo-centric church. By not demarcating a clear distinction of what God's vision and love is, people end up in darkness of unbiblical, cultic cultures that leads to doom. This is what is termed as syncretism.

While Christians in general face different challenges in a world of poverty and need, the Pastors in particular are caught between the standards and requirements of scripture and the strong traditions of men. But we are called to be in the world and not of the world. While physically and geographically in the world, a pastor is no longer controlled by the world systems. As a new creation in Christ, he has a new citizenship and lives in a new state that is ruled by the sovereign Christ our lord. Therefore, a pastor should stand as an ambassador of Christ. As a royal and faithful ambassador, he must communicate the master's message truthfully and remain selfless in his approach (1st Cor. 5:20 NIV).

The Pastor has a tremendous work in the community and is also a public figure, given that he represents the interests of the kingdom of God on earth. His life must portray a Christian modelled home in all areas of life, as he is considered to be the light, salt and ambassador of Christ in the world. He must be sure of his call and be prepared to face in a godly manner all the challenges he meets in the ministry. He should be assured that the One who called him will also give him the necessary tools for the task ahead of him.

For the church of Christ to become deeply syncretistic, it's the pastors to be blamed. It's very vital that a pastor understands his role and responsibilities. In fact the pastor deals with people of all social classes, different jobs, learned and unlearned, of all ages, and of different cultures. But how can he go about them? He must first of all be prepared in order to meet all needs of the church. With his colleagues, superior and subordinates, the pastor must be ready to adjust accordingly and be ready to humbly participate in any peaceful conflict resolutions which is biblically based. As the Bible states in 1Tim. 3:1:

Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departure, savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also among you, men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves. Therefore watch, and remember that the three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears.

However, there is always a price to pay. Many pastors are faced with a lot of challenges and hindrances in their roles and responsibilities. That is why some have given up, others have manipulated the ministry and conformed to the world's way of ruling, but still others endure to the end.

5.5 THE GOAL OF GOD IN REDEPTIVE WORK OF THE P.A.G CHURCH

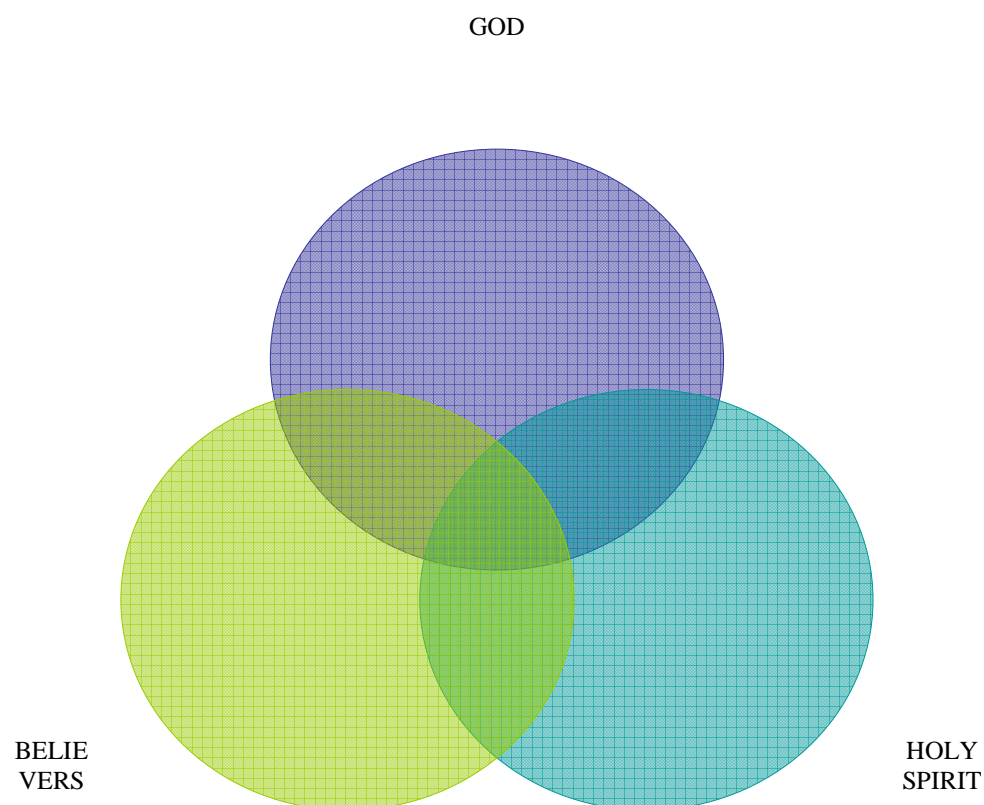
Focusing on the history, the real goal and purpose of God is to redeem humanity from bondage to sin in this world of darkness. Redemption has involved visible splendour or moral beauty of God's manifold perfection manifested in His people as a church. From Old Testament to the New Testament, God redemptive work is in action. The main purpose of God is to bring humanity back to Him that they may share eternal glory together. Piper (1986:228) argues "But since God made man like Himself, man's dominion over the world and his filling the world is a display – an imaging forth – of God. God's aim, therefore, was that man would so act that he mirrors forth God, who has ultimate dominion. Man is given the exalted status of image – bearer not so he would become arrogant and autonomous (as he tried to do in the fall), but so he would reflect the glory of his maker whose image he bears."

The Pentecostal Assemblies of God ought to be taught clearly about the redemptive work of God which is for all mankind. The church has ventured into looking

redemption from other places. When a P.A.G church member in Vihiga District, Kenya, gets a problem, instead of resorting to God through Jesus Christ, many times they run to witchdoctors for help, others sacrifice to snakes, to the living animals and others sacrifice to the dead, requesting for protection and redemption. If the church shall be enlightened that it's only God who redeems through His Son Jesus Christ, it shall be in the safe side. "For my name's sake I differ my anger, for the sake of my praise I restrain it for you, that I may not cut you off. Behold, I have refined you, but not silver; I have tried you in the furnace of affliction. For my own sake, for my own sake, I do it, for how my name should be profaned? My glory I will not give to another" God says in Isaiah 48:9- 11 NIV.

This is a clear indication that God is a jealous God who does not want any other gods to take His glory. But the P.A.G church in Vihiga has substituted the glory of God with the glory of other gods. It's only through seminars, conferences, and church teachings on the true doctrines of the Bible that the church shall be redeemed and glorify God. It's time for God's truth to be spoken with boldness from true servants without fear. This is to be done for the Kingdom's gain in order to redeem the church from this evil pervasive world. If fear of speaking the truth shall be accommodated, then freedom and redemption shall never be accomplished at all. The following chart illustrates the unity of God, believers, the Holy Spirit and the Bible.

Chart
nine



POINT OF FOCUS CHART

5.6 MAKING DISTINCTIONS

What is all about making distinctions? The church ought to be taught to distinguish on what is right (biblical) and what is wrong (unbiblical). At this point, people are educated and they come out with their own ways of understanding scriptures. In the current world and especially in P.A.G Vihiga District, we have different religions and some are cultic, different scholars and theologians who understand scriptures in their

own perspectives. There are also different cultures where people want to present the gospel in their own culture. Without a clear distinction of which is which, therefore the church will fall into a pit. Contributing on this Tournier (1975:105) asserts: "Behind men's ideas lie experiences. Instead of arguing about their ideas and getting one up against another, it is more valuable to try to understand them by finding out what those experiences are. And then one sees that, although on the level of dogmatic debate there is nothing but antagonisms, the living experience brings men together..... Men are infinitely diverse. They travel along many different roads. There is always something new to be learned from each one, so long as one retains the spirit of seeking the truth from the Bible."

The author has found out that modern philosophers and theologians have diluted the word of God with their own philosophy thus leading the church astray and watering the gospel with their own philosophy. They have accommodated the spirit of dogmatism, which simplifies, opposes and systematizes the truth from the bible. It's the duty of pastors and church leaders in Vihiga District PAG church to sieve and distinguish between the true doctrine and the wrong doctrine. "Also many people are torn into two by the dichotomy between the doctrines of some sect or religious movement to which they have been attracted by its favour and those of the traditional church which denounces its errors but lacks its zeal. So many people are torn in two by the arguments of the theologian" argues (Paul: 109). Clear distinctions must be made in order for the truth to be accomplished in the lives of people in the Pentecostal Assemblies of God church in Vihiga District, Kenya.

From the research, the author has deduced that the world is strongly evolving in an irreversible direction that might destroy the real image of God in mankind. Cultic teachings have evolved in Vihiga District leading people astray for personal gain. People are moved by emotional waves that are not doctrinal and non-biblical prophecies that are for personal gain. People are told to give unworthy sacrifices "red hen, black cow, candles and money" that are used by witchdoctors for their own immoral acts. The true image of God is destroyed in man that he needs to have a

clear distinction over what is to be done. Solomon contributed over this crisis in ECC 6:12 NIV: “For who knows what is good for man during his lifetime, during the few years of his futile life? He will spend them like a shadow: for who can tell a man what will be after him under the sun?” This is a clear indication that life here on earth is short but with many problems. What man does must focus on the end in mind (the future). After one has done all that he wants, there is judgement over the same Swindoll (1985:186) asserts. “Whatever you are, Jesus Christ (the rock) is ready to take over the foundation of your house. He will personally remove all the sand and replace it with Himself. He will take you just as you are – finite, troubled, argumentative, broken, fragmented, and disillusioned conforused and sinful and he will make you like you ought to be.”

God has His own good plan for the church. His plan is to mould His church into a vessel of honour pleasing and acceptable to Him. If distinction of the will of God and the will of man in redemption, then God is ready to mould the Pentecostal Assemblies of God PAG in to a holy, pleasing church. The pastors should teach the right doctrine and show the church what should be worshiped in order to have a clear distinction over the Leviticus teachings that are erupting and confusing the church.

5.7 RESHAPING THE P.A.G CHURCH INTO A NEW NATURE

There might be some arguments about the word reshaping. This word indicates that there was a time of a good shape then it was destroyed. After destruction, a new shape starts to be mended again so that the former nature is rehabilitated. Formerly, the Pentecostal Assemblies of God church in Vihiga District had a good shape after accepting the gospel. But as time went by some people who joined the church carried with them their way of living, their sins, their lusts and their unbiblical cultures. The parishioners who carried with them their own styles and culture influenced other people in the church, thus leading it to destroy its original nature and become cultic and syncretism. The shape of the church was to be dismantled because of some personalities.

Church attendance, baptism, the Lord's Table and child dedication alone are inadequate; if someone comes with fear of sin or crisis and get saved then we give him a book to read or just pray for him, it makes no sense to God. Shoemaker in Raines (1964:23) asserts "Putting an eager seeker after Christ into a conventional church is like putting a live chicken under a dead hen. We are not prepared to handle radical doubts or commitment." This indicates that when a church is not well shaped, then it becomes a conventional church that has no purpose of existence. The Pentecostal Assemblies of God in Vihiga should kill the mentality of conventionalism and become a family of Christ belonging to one another and serving one another in love.

When the church is reshaped, it impacts the community. In Vihiga District the P.A.G church ought to be reshaped in order to reach all groups with the gospel. Traditions and cultures that are unbiblical should cease and Jesus Christ elevated. "Ministry is the fruit of belonging to Christ and learning His core values .Shoemaker (1964: 32). It is time for the P.A.G church in Vihiga District to realize their mess and challenge all other cults that are misleading the body of Christ.

Pastors in Vihiga District P.A.G church should also be reshaped by going through training in theology before they are posted as pastors in various churches. Many pastors are not trained and claim that theology destroys the anointing of God. Because of this, they end up preaching and teaching heresies because they misinterpret scriptures. Training equips one to be a qualitative presenter. Hesse Grave (1980:66) argues that: "The most important centre of Christian education is the local church itself. After all, only a small percentage of its local church members are privileged to go on to Christian institutions of higher learning.... The average is woefully deficient when it comes to education, training and deploying its membership in a really viable program of church extension evangelism."

Here is a clear indication that Christians must be trained, leaders must be trained through seminars and workshops and pastors must go for formal education which is beyond seminars in order to be equipped well. In (2Tim 2:15 NIV) Paul tells Timothy “*Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a work man who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.*” He that is trained is the one that can handle the word of God in truth. This is because he speaks what he knows with boldness since he knows it well. The Holy Spirit must be used as the key factor to help the believer’s and non-believers discover where God has already been at work in the believer life. Through the work of the holy spirit, the P.A.G church in Vihiga District ought to be reshaped from ancestral worship which is believed to promote respect for elders and unity in the society, spirit worship which is an attempt to experience their gods in the spiritual world, and return to the worship of the true unchanging omnipotent, omnipresent and immutable God.

5.8 BECOMING A UNIVERSAL CHURCH

A universal church is a church for all people for the Pentecostal Assemblies of God church in Vihiga District to accomplish its goal and purpose, it should transform its vision and mission to all people groups. What people believe about the church in Vihiga District is determined by their heritage. The most controversy that is found is that people are grounded cultural and denominational teaching rather than Biblical scriptural truth that can set people free from bondage to sin.

“Principles take precedents over a sense of inner peace. God does not want us to be slaves to vacillating feelings. He is far more practical than that. If you will keep God’s moral will and constantly renew your mind to what is true, then as the decisions come along, you will be able to sort out the options and discern what the will of God is for you. How practical, and wonderful,” argues Stanley (1996:230).

Becoming universal involves killing every tribal mentality, all racial discriminations, disconnecting every gap and discrimination between the poor and the rich and enhancing into unison worship. The glory of God departed from the P.A.G church in

Vihiga District, Kenya, because of ethnocentrism and tribal mentality. They thought that the P.A.G church is for only the Luhya tribe, and specifically the Maragoli tribe. The church is ethnocentrised, i.e. they conduct everything in their own culture. Charles (1996:221) gives us four principles of drifting the church from being universal:

1. They are robbing the body of Christ.
2. They are forcing other members of the body to carry their load.
3. They are dead weight on the body, dysfunctional limbs.
4. They are out of step with the Spirit of God.

When the church is not accomplishing its original purpose and mission, it becomes a destructive pit. The church P.A.G in Vihiga District must change its purpose, mission and vision to reach people of all groups, all tribes and classes in order to glorify God.

“However, the stuck reality is that every church has limited resources and has been called to accomplish specific mission. The successful churches resisted that impulse to be the answer to everyone’s every problem by focusing on their vision for ministry by reaffirming their commitment to quality and by recognizing their limitation,” says Mains (1996:119).

A Church without vision and mission is like a dead dog at the gate of the owners. The P A G in Vihiga District should arise and be in mission of spreading the gospel in the entire world without either discrimination or segregation. The pastors serving in this church should also be global. Not from one tribe (Maragoli) but from all other tribes in the world. There must be empathy which is the process in which one imaginatively puts himself in the place of the other rescuing him from every humiliation of sins, and derogation. When a church becomes a good body, then it symbolizes a local assembly of baptized believers in one place who have voluntarily united together in organization with elected leaders and officers for the purpose of glorifying God according to the teaching of the Bible.

The P.A.G church in Vihiga District must also evaluate themselves and learn from the past mistakes. This evaluation will assist in bringing revolution and restoration of the real mark of the church. "We balance the damage of sin by not remaining vulnerable to that same sin," argues Time Riter (2004: 72). It involves a great transformation in the mind, heart, spirit, and vision. Paul wrote to the Philippian church in (Philippians 3:10-14 NASB).

"I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his suffering, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me....Forgetting what is behind and straining towards what is ahead I press on towards the goal to win the prize for which God has called me,"

The church has not attained its goal and purpose, if it cannot accomplish the global or universal purpose of winning souls to Christ, "expectations that cannot be met breed frustration" asserts (Tim ibid 47). Therefore, for a church to become global, it must be recognized in the world. One cannot win another person to himself if there is no reconciliation. Stedman (1976:164) argues that "God gave us the ministry of reconciliation that is God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself." The church ought to reconcile the sinful world back to Christ through the ministry of evangelism. The only undeniable reality in the church should be a change, which cannot be explained in any other terms than God who is a powerful God at work.

8.9 DISPLACEMENT IN GOD'S CALL TO BOLD ACTION

It's God who calls a minister in the ministry. This calling comes from God and is costly; it needs surrender in order for God to supply. The Pentecostal Assemblies of God in Vihiga District has not accomplished much in the ministry because of their own faults. They have good called Pastors but they have misused, humiliated, and frustrated them to the extent of killing their vision and calling. "We distinguish two types of humiliation, those freely chosen by us; those that befall us without any of our

doing, sent by God or at least permitted by Him,” asserts Watteroff (1964:195). The humiliation talked about is the humiliation caused by men for their personal gain and pride.

Concerning the pastors and the ministry, it is found by the researcher that pastors are transferred from one church to the other before they even accomplish their plan of action in a particular church. A pastor stays in one church for a period of one month, six months, one year up to four years. This unplanned transfer has resulted into the church becoming static in its growth. “I want to challenge pastors and leaders to take bold step, to dream big dreams, to take risks to accomplish more for God’s glory than they ever dreamed possible,” asserts Jackson (20003:18). It’s time for pastors to have a new direction in order for this organization to grow both numerically and spiritually. When a church is not nurtured so well, people run away to look for green pastures somewhere else... Jackson (2003:92) argues that, “....Effective ministry takes place within relationship through the power of Jesus Christ in existing organization, entrenchment and inertia are normal. Change becomes hard, the pastors have to earn the right to gather the key leaders to determine a dear, and perhaps new, identity. A visionary leader is wise to take time to build relationships and win respect and trust before he attempts to change and win a course.”

In order for the P.A.G church in Vihiga District to stand a better change in evangelism, the administrators must understand that the ministry is not a matter of pastors moving from one church to another without accomplishing the vision and mission. The ministry involves developing and equipping leaders to work and be focused to accomplish the purpose of God. The pastors, church, District leaders and church leaders should not abdicate their original role in organizing and originating some productive events and programs to expand people’s vision and meet their needs. If this is not done, then the reputation, role, relation and authority of the church are weakened. Pastors in P.A.G must be given enough time for the church to have good plans to put in action before they are transferred. They ought to create a culture in which challenging the status quo is not undermined but is embraced

because people are first committed to their mission to be accomplished, visions and risks ought to go hand in hand.

Corruption has entered the Pentecostal Assemblies of God church in Vihiga District, Kenya. When a called, humbled pastor grows his church to maturity in its sphere, another pastor becomes very envious. He goes to the District Overseer with good money to pay the leader so that the pastor in that church can be displaced and another one brought in. This leaves a visionary pastor in the wilderness and he that has no vision takes his position... "This embarrassingly primordial foe of all abstraction, rationalization, and self interest, keeps inviting us to venture forth from the safe confines of life ..."says Willion (1984:93). A wrong pastor is then brought in the church to destroy for his personal gain and the good pastor left without posting or sometimes posted to wrong place to kill his vision.

To stand a better chance, the P.A.G church in Vihiga District must avoid unplanned transfers that kill the visions of the pastors and give pastors enough time to serve and mature the church to maturity. Perhaps if there is emergency of a problem before due time, then transfers can be done. Jackson (2003:209) argues:

Some of us suffer because we expected great and glorious things to come from the ministry, but it has been a lot harder work than we ever imagined. We have been ambushed by criticism, betrayal, and failure Life and ministry is hard. Unrealistic expectations of painfree success always lead to bitter disappointments.

It's better for a pastor to work in the limits of his calling and gifting and God will be glorified. Corruption must be eradicated and trustworthiness maintained, and the church shall grow into a quality church.

5.10 PRACTICAL CONTEXTUALIZATION OF ORDINANCES

The Pentecostal Assemblies of God had adopted a miss-conceived mind about ordinances and their real significance: Every ordinance is applied physically in the literal form to signify the internal spiritual meaning without a clear spiritual interpretation; it can be miss-used. What is then the real significance of ordinances?

Baptism by water as a church ordinance signifies the suffering, death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore one that is to be baptized is to believe first in Jesus Christ before the action. Mark 16:16 (NIV) indicates that he who believes and is baptized will be saved. According to Benard Bro (1960:80) "Baptism gives salvation." But the researcher criticizes by saying that baptism does not save. It is an outward symbol of internal transformation. In Matt 28:19 (NIV) the Bible indicates, 'Go therefore and make disciples of all nations; baptize them in the Name of the Father and the son and of the Holy Spirit.' From this scripture, the author has deduced that salvation comes first, then baptism follows and then spiritual growth should continue till when Christ will come again.

Baptism by water ushers the church into full fellowship in the body of Christ. In Acts 2:38 (NIV) Peter says:

Peter replied, repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins... Is for all whom the Lord our God will call ...Those who accepted his message were baptized ... They continued (devoted) themselves to the Apostles' teaching and to the fellowship ... To the breaking of bread and to prayer.

Baptism by water is done to one after teaching and accepting Jesus Christ as one's personal Saviour.

Circumcision on the other hand is not to be taken literally as it is in the Pentecostal Assemblies of God in Vihiga District. When one is circumcised, then he takes it to be mature in the literal sense. Biblically, it is partaking of a new heavenly covenant as

given to Abraham? Paul writes to the Colossian church in Colossians 2:12 (NIV) “In him you were also circumcised in the putting off the sinful nature, not with circumcision done by the hands of men but the circumcision done by Christ, having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him through faith in the power of God who raised him from the dead.”

Circumcision in this perspective means internal transformation. This is an act of removing sin and throwing away, then living a holy cleansed life. In Genesis (17:11-12 NIV) it indicates, “You are to undergo circumcision and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and you.” The shading of blood through circumcision indicated a permanent covenant between the Israelites and God. The author therefore deduces that eternal circumcision without internal transformation has no value before God.

The Pentecostal Assemblies of God in Vihiga also believe that partaking of the Lord’s Table is salvation. Salvation on the other hand believes in the suffering, death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. We have many people who partake of the sacrament but are not saved. It can’t save one since it is just a symbol of the process of salvation that he went through. Cooke (1965: 153) argues that “many symbols are blemished, either because they close us in ourselves and have no other purpose than to nourish our excitement or because they only distract us by keeping us in a perpetual state of aeration.” Symbols are just a representation of something else of the original meaning. In Luke 22:19-20 (NIV) Jesus said “... this is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me ... took the cup, saying. “This cup is the new covenant in my blood which is poured out for you.”

The sacrament does not save but it is an act of having communion with God. Salvation comes by believing in Jesus Christ as one’s personal Saviour before having communion with Him. In Romans 10:9 (NIV) Paul said, “that if you confess with your mouth Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead you will be saved, for it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.”

Partaking of the sacrament does not save one but involves one to enter into a new covenant in which Christ himself officiated. "In the offering the sacrifice of Eucharist, the church continues both to place the covenant action for Christ and to enter more deeply into this covenant herself," says Cooke (1965:137). The promise that Jesus Christ himself gave "do these in remembrances of me" is the one being accomplished.

Concerning commemorations and appeasing the spirits of the dead, the P.A.G in Vihiga District ought to be transformed from this act. Christ is the only living sacrifice offered once and for all. Shelley (1970:92-93) argues that: "Paul knows that at the cross the ground is level; there are no social or class distinctions, together is to have the privilege of being extension of Christ's death by our living through His resurrected life."

Christ's sacrifice was to set humanity free from the bondage of sin, suffering, sickness, curses and law. He has united all humanity with God the Father through His death as a ransom to the cross. The P.A.G church in Vihiga District should be informed that no other sacrifice should be offered at the grave to appease the spirits of the dead since Christ finished all on the cross. He was the last sacrifice. Hebrews 10:12 (NIV) indicates that: "And by that will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all," that there is no other sacrifice needed. And in Hebrews 10:26 (NIV) we find that: "If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left, but only a fearful expectation of judgement and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God."

It is now important to realize that although the thoughts and feelings of people are powerful, they don't always tell the truth. The Church ought to do a clear evaluation of her thoughts and beliefs about what is true to be worshiped and what is not true to be

worshiped. People often find it easier to blame others than to look into one's own heart for the cause.

God does not need excuses but He holds each person accountable for his or her sinful response to the situation. For all this period, the P.A.G church in Vihiga District has been hurt, betrayed, angered, segregated and abused. This is just because of some few individuals who have refused change and therefore they are influencing others to follow their trends. "In order to understand ourselves better we must start by taking total responsibility for our feelings, our thoughts and our actions... But if we do not, we will not mature," argues Vertnick (2003:76). It is deduced that a potter cannot shape hardened clay. The clay must be moulded to become soft and viable. If the P.A.G church in Vihiga will remain hard and rigid in her traditions, culture, and way of worship that is not biblical, then it will not be shaped to the nature that God wants His church to be. Flexibility and adjustment brings productive change. People deceive themselves when they rest securely in their own beliefs and selves instead of in God.

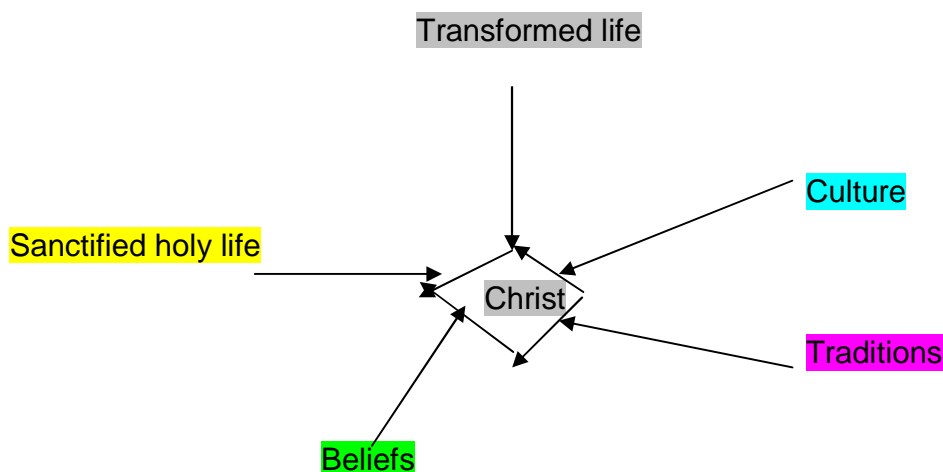
The ministry is a demanding call. Nothing less than the specific call of God could qualify a person for this high and worthy vacation. With God's call, one can expect to see God sustain him in every situation. Without this call one should not presume to become involved in the work of the ministry, unless he wants to see himself stranded either in this life or at the Second Advent of Christ. When God calls someone to do the work, He endows that person with the abilities that are necessary to accomplish the work. Change of the worst situation of the church can only by loving God and doing according to God's command. When we love God, He is infinitely patient with people's awkwardness and mistakes. He is ready to rehabilitate the lost man and change his situation. Swindoll (1999:9) asserts."In a similar fashion, God scrutinizes our path. From where we are, tunnelling along, all we see is the sand immediately behind and beside us. But from His vantage point, He can see exactly where we have been and precisely where we are going. He is intimately acquainted with all my ways."

God knows the path, way and struggles that the church is going through. God's word, prayer, acceptance of salvation and love to God provide all the light, protection and guidance the church needs in order to grow spiritually. The outward does not change the inward, but the inward transforms the outward.

The Pentecostal Assemblies of God values the outward (attire) than the inward transformation. The outward involves putting on white clothes on a Sunday, during funeral services and special church functions. Salvation does not come by outward adornment but by inward renewal to the image of God. Paul writes to the Roman church in Roman 12:2 (N.I.V). "Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind." This involves the change of mind from carnality to spirituality. Through this change, the will of God can be tested and proven to be pleasing and perfect. Everything that exists and is done must be evaluated if it is doctrinal or not. If it is not doctrinal, then it is not biblical and has no breath of God and therefore must be eradicated.

The following diagram illustrates that everything done in the church must focus on Christ. ***Christ the centre of everything.***

Chart ten

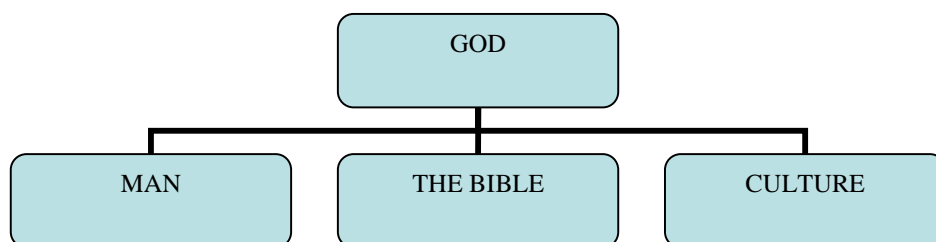


God is a supra-culture God. He is above all cultures, all traditions, all beliefs and all sanctified and transformed life. Everything that is done to glorify God must centre on Him and all other unbiblical beliefs should be subsided. Ordinances are some of the

elements in salvation that have been worshiped and believed to be a source of salvation. Ordinances are just representative of the original meaning that should always be remembered.

Sometimes a leader believes that he is infallible and working on behalf of God, virtually any action and attitude can be justified due to the righteous cause. This sense of rightness, based upon pride in a leader's heart, often means he is accountable to no one; Pastors who have fallen in this pit of pride have often begun with pure motives but over time, they begin to believe that their success was due to their own ability and not due to God's grace. Indeed, one of the most formidable tests a leader must face is success, which makes the person turn from the blessed to the blessing. ***When God is given the first priority then victory is the result*** as we see in the table below.

Chart eleven



Therefore when God is involved in our culture, the Bible becomes the driving force of life on earth.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

In the entire research, the main issue was to investigate the impact of cultural beliefs in the understanding of salvation in the Pentecostal Assemblies of God church in Vihiga District, Kenya. Chapters two and three are the main backbone of the research. The researcher investigated broadly the cultural impacts preceding the understanding of salvation in the P.A.G Church and what has made the church fail to accomplish her main purpose and vision. It is found by the author that cultures are powerful and have very great influence over the Biblical principles. People want to retain their own non-biblical cultures and also claim that they are saved. They want to be ethnocentric instead of becoming Christocentric. For people to be connected with God, they must minimize non-biblical doctrines, cultures and beliefs, and maximize salvation that is found through Jesus Christ. There is no segregation according to age, tribe, culture, race or religion. God intends all people, all races, all nations and cultures to be saved through the transformation and renewal of their mind.

Pastors in the Pentecostal Assemblies of God church in Vihiga District, Kenya, have a big role to play concerning the transformation of the church spiritually. They have to transform their ways of living first by exhibiting exemplary life. Salvation must be implied in their family, their daily walk, in their communication and even in their relationship with non-believers. They must put to death thirst of hedonism and impress thirst for the word of God. The church is thirsty for truth and the truth shall guide her all the way to freedom through Christ Jesus. But who will expound and uncover the truth about salvation to them? Who shall give a clear demarcation of what is to be done and what is not to be done? “I looked for a man among them who

would build up the wall and stand before me in the gap on behalf of the land so I would not have to destroy it, but I found none...,” declares the sovereign Lord in Ezekiel 22:30 (NIV). God is looking for one pastor, one leader, one Christian who can rebuild the broken walls of the church. There is a cry for salvation all over the world and all over P.A.G church in Vihiga District, Kenya. This cry will only be met by faithful leaders, pastors and believers who will accept to stand in the gap and teach the right doctrine.

Pastors, leaders and believers who do not proclaim the word of God in truthfulness have no eternal destiny and have no eternal foundation. This eternal foundation cannot be attained except through believing in Jesus Christ as Lord and King. “Because of the life, death and exaltation of Jesus, salvation is a present reality and the gospel is the declaration that salvation is now accomplished and available in and through Jesus. It is deliverance from the dominion of sin and Satan, it is also however a future hope, for we will be saved from God’s wrath through him at the last judgment,” argue Douglas and Jenny (1987:887).

The author has gathered out some pitfalls and acceptance of salvation in the P.A.G church in Vihiga District, Kenya. It is deduced by the author that the word of God is supra-culture and therefore all cultures must bend to it in order for internal transformation to take place that will then influence the outward one. Orera (30:10:2005) quotes from Samuel and Sugden “No culture is static; all of them change though some change faster than others. This change can be any modification of the ideas, society, technology, economy and ecology of people due to factors working from within or without.” There is no leader, nor church that depends on such dynamic culture that is unbiblical, can prosper spiritually. Failure is also the outcome of such structures and organizations.

It must be put mandatory for pastors to go through theological training before being attached to any church as pastors. This is because heretical teachings and misinterpretation of the bible has been taking place in the P.A.G church in Vihiga

District just because of lack of adequate training. The pastors are to be equipped first before they equip the church on the true doctrines of the bible. Likewise, it looks odd when a trained pastor fails to apply his training in the ministry, but compromises with traditions in order to be favored. Fear has led the pastors not to speak the truth with boldness. It is clear that without speaking the truth in boldness, there will be no great accomplishment of God's work in the Church. Hybelsn (1982:16) argues that. "Nothing builds self esteem and self confidence...success breeds success. When a labor experiences results in accomplishment, it provides motivation for the next assignment. Having toiled and cried and sacrificed to see a task through to completion, the laborer experiences the joy of a job well done and that moves him to begin the cycle again. His success, his sense of accomplishment, prods him *back to his labor.*"

The task of the ministry is to work on the accomplishments that Jesus left us to do. "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations. And teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you." (Matthew.28:19-20). The main accomplishment of our salvation is to trust in God and do His will.

From the author's findings, it has been discovered that man can never bring a change and transformation in another person's life. That it is God's nature to cure and be eternally concerned about the plight of His people. Those who have the Spirit of God dominating and residing in them should also have the same emotional reaction and love for people who are without the Lord. Therefore, for salvation to take strong roots in the church, the implications of clinging to the Holy Spirit to guide and control must take the first priority.

It is found by the author that a number of churches deviate from the truth of the word by the influence of unredeemed leaders. This leads some P.A.G churches to be driven by finances. Finances are the stronghold of the church. If a leader is financially able and thus he wants to be recognized in all he says, he must manipulate the pastor, if not, he will struggle for the Pastor to be ex-communicated. Even when

people sin and go astray, the pastor keeps silent just because of fear. Some churches are also driven by traditions, some by personalities, and some by programs. All these affect the assurance of salvation because there is spiritual drift and stress. It is quite costly to transform what people have glued in their mind for long to what they should adopt to control them newly. "But the God of Israel is not interested in such emotional outlets. He wants obedience. He wants justice in the land; the merchants are answerable to him for false measures, making the ephah small and the shekel great, for dealing deceitfully with false weights" Says Dietrich (1952:90).

The research finding does not advocate for syncretism (mixing of one's nonbiblical cultures and the word of God). It does not also go for ethnocentrism (people valuing their culture to be more important than other people). The findings clarify that people must know the word of God as the power to salvation and to eternal life. Some assumptions have been deduced by some leaders that culture is bad. Not all culture is bad but from the research, it is found that non-biblical cultures are the ones to be eradicated and good biblical cultures (those that do not contradict the Bible) are advocated. The glory of God can be manifested through good cultures that transform and mold the morals and ethics of the society.

People are living in the world of technology and modern science. If things are taken literally the way they have been, then receptiveness is always the result. The message must remain but the method must change in order to suit the modern generation. If former churches were using drums as an accompaniment in the church service, nowadays they are not applicable. People are using the modern instruments, i.e. keyboards, public address systems and guitars. If the Pentecostal Assemblies of God will remain rigid to the use of drums, then they will have only one group of people in the Church (the old generation) as it is. Transformation and modernization must take its course in order to meet all people groups and lead them to salvation. This involves pastors themselves transforming their mind, their vision, their method and their target group. Where there is no vision, people perish.

More important, the author urges that the pastors, P.A.G leaders and the church at large to enhance the image of Jesus Christ by projecting the strong principles of salvation and values that they acquire by studying the word of God in truthfulness, and following the right Biblical doctrines. It is valuable for the PAG Church in Vihiga to become global vision makers and not spectators, history makers rather than witnesses to makers of history.

The ministry and vision of equipping has been sidelined by the P.A.G Church in Vihiga District, Kenya, for a very long period. It must be understood that equipping ministry is not something new, nor is it a heavy program. It is a way of doing preparing, mentoring and participating, involving and delegating duties to those who have vision and call of doing in the Church. The principles in every chapter of this thesis have warned, prepared and directed the church on some proposals that can assist the church hold on the true doctrines of the Bible concerning salvation. It's the Pastors to understand clearly on what to deliver before their audience and what to impact on the leaders in order to come out with a healthy Church doctrinally. Without a clear equipping, the result is always syncretism.

"If you are looking for a quick fix for a struggling Church, you will not find it in the equipping Church model. If you are looking for the truth and for the Church as God designed it to be, you will find the equipping Church model a biblically and historically tested and workable vision for the body of Christ in action. But getting there won't be easy." Argues Mallory (2001:22).

This is a clear indication that Pastors in Vihiga District P.A.G Church have a very big task that needs dedication and guidance of the Holy Spirit. They must equip to transform the leaders into the body of Jesus Christ in order for the church to become healthy and focused. This can only be accomplished when there is connection between the Pastor and the leaders. Connection happens when we place the right people in the right places for the right reasons at the right time and for the right purpose.

The ordinances are to be clarified by the Pastors to the members. This is because there have been a great misconception about their significance to the ministry. Ordinances have been worshiped and partaken of in ignorance. Through Christian education in the doctrines of the Bible, the Church will have a good stand before God. They will know ordinances are just an outward indication of the inner transformation. It is also an indication of the participation of the virgin birth, death on the cross, resurrection and the ascension of Jesus Christ. Therefore one is neither saved by partaking of the ordinances nor by his works. In this way, the P.A.G church has always insisted on the payments (tithes and offerings) in addition to the ordinances, rather than teaching faith as the means of obtaining salvation.

The church fragmentation and desertion of Pastors to join other ministries should be avoided. Eradication of fighting within the church can assist the PAG church be transformed into the image of God. Church maturity must also be advocated for instead of fragmenting small churches that cannot even support the Pastor and his family, thus leading to stress in the ministry. Bedsole (1967:46) contributes that: "A preacher should stay in the denomination and try to help correct the faults rather than get out and go into another which is less seaworthy. We can be constructive critics without being chronic gripes (of course, you should first of all be sure that they are not your own faults, instead of faults in your denomination). Some of the brethren bolt the faith or sour the denomination because they are not given proper recognition as they see it."

The Pastors with the church must grow to maturity, each understanding the weakness of another. Unplanned transfers suicide the church instead of growing it. The Pastors in the P.A.G church must have a period of evaluating the vision and a period of accomplishment of the vision. "It is a guaranteed prescription for significant growth in the Christian life, such confession, repentance, renewed commitment and heightened faith and expectation if they are genuine can only bring positive results in a person's life," argues Grudem (2000:779).

To help parishioners in the Pentecostal Assemblies of God P.A.G in Vihiga District understand the nature of the church, scriptures and the doctrine of salvation (soteriology), the use of a wide range of truth, metaphors, images and real examples of pitfalls to describe what the church is and what the church should be should be advocated. The wide range of metaphors referring to the church as a bride of Christ prepares people in the P.A. church not to focus exclusively on any other gods, non biblical cultures or unrealistic beliefs that bring destruction to the eternal destiny. The fact that the church is trusted as a family should increase our love to God, and fellowship to one another. The two pictures of the PAG church as Gods new temple should bring an awareness of whom to serve and should also increase the awareness of God's very presence dwelling in the church as people meet.

Certainly, if the true word of God and true doctrine of salvation is not being preached, but simply false teachings, false doctrines and minds of men, then the result is that there is no true worship in the P.A.G church. In some occasions, it might be difficult to determine how much heretical the doctrine can be tolerated before a church can no longer be considered as a true worshiping church, but there are many clear cases as the doctrines are surveyed that can lead to the conclusion that the church has gone astray and the true church does not exist. A true church will be seen through her style of worship and how their pastor feeds them. Jesus said in Matt 7:15-20 (NIV):

Be aware of false prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thorns, or figs from thistles? So every sound tree bears good fruits, but the bad tree bear evil fruits. Every tree that does not bear good fruits is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus you will know them by their fruits.

Jesus was pointing to the character traits in life of an existing church and her minister. Therefore a pastor can be performing miracles, exorcism and even

prophecy but in real sense, he is misguiding the people of God. There must be an accomplishment of the purpose of God by leading the church in truthfulness, having Christ-like character traits obedience, heartfelt and genuine love for God. This will lead the church to a promising destiny.

It is reassuring to know that all men will and must reap what they sow. If the pastors in the P.A.G church in Vihiga District, Kenya, will not admonish the true doctrine of salvation to the parishioners, then they will have to harvest one day.

The so-called true Christian church has traditionally been divided as to the best means of bringing about change on a major scale. It is clearly deduced that changed vision, changed mind, changed laws and changed institutions can only come about through changed individuals. One can never cook a good wedding cake out of bad rotten eggs. It is unrealistic for the church to wait for changed individuals to change society. The true principle is that a changed and transformed church will bring about new individuals who are transformed in their minds into the image of Jesus Christ. The P.A.G Pastors should change themselves first by believing in the true doctrines of the Bible, and then use the Biblical principles to transform the entire church into the image of our Lord Jesus Christ.

It is quite true that people fear change. There is a great resistance of people in P.A.G Vihiga District leaving their style of worship and what they believe to worship only God. Why? That is the question. The vivid memories of past failures, rejection, or admonitions provide enormous hindrances to making decisions to change one's life situation in a substantial way. The fear of change makes believers contented with what they have.

"If we are humble and obedient and just walk down the road ahead trying to be sensitive to God and other persons, we may help them find solutions to their problems and also a new kind of wholeness," Assert Keith Miker & Bruce Larson (1979:116). The joy of the Lord follows him that transforms the heart (Ibid 171). "It is

somehow the extravagant justice from passionate people that unlocks hostile hearts, closed doors, and knotty situations.” It is the Holy Spirit at work who assists in the process of transformation into the true image of God.

In focus, there is one thing that Pastors and leaders in the Pentecostal Assemblies of God P.A.G in Vihiga District should have in mind: to love God, please Him, and follow Him in response to their calling in leadership. Genuine calling is a powerful antidote to the divine to prove one’s calling. Calling is about the heart of God – nothing else and each one is provided with different gifting and different talent to serve Him (God). For leadership to take the best cause in the P.A.G church there must be a great transformation of behaviors and beliefs that are not biblical and cultic cultures. The first groups to be in this transformation are the Pastors and the leaders. For leadership demands taking the risks to change leadership style in shape and types. The leaders and Pastors must act as commanders, coaches, counselors and calculators in order to hold the P.A.G church into the expected image of Jesus Christ.

A desperate church needs change. Who is this that is going to initiate the change? People must draw closer to God as they experience God’s love and strength. Through that, true genuine believers will become secure, motives will be purified and they will be able to see others through the eyes of compassion. How do the Pastors in the P.A.G church feel with the emptiness of lives of people and the deception of the enemy? Is it their joy? Jesus should be the example of the church. Areas of need should be identified in order to serve others for Christ. Leaders are to ask God to give them a dream because change is needed in the church. They have to clarify the vision, and make adjustments. Good leadership requires a strong blend of gentle love, like a nursing mother, and toughness like a soldier. The great commission that Jesus gave His disciples compels the P.A.G church to reach the unreached with the gospel, and also transform the church and her structure to have the real image of Jesus Christ.

The real study of salvation has its limitation because of the incapacities of the Pentecostal Assemblies of God in Vihiga District, Kenya and their finite minds, yet it's very profitable and vital for all who would be filled with the knowledge of God to know their destiny and walk worthy of the Lord.

It must be understood that lay participation in leadership and in as much as they are given high posts in leadership does not merit them to salvation. Many leaders have worked with different Pastors on the pulpit for many years without salvation. By investigating their lives after the pulpit becomes quite devastating. The real need in the church is to know Jesus Christ and the power of His resurrection. "The church alone is of all institutions, concerned with the ultimate dimensions of life, its hopes and fears, its joy and sorrows, its achievements and failures. Its ministry is to be directed to the universal needs of the human heart." Asserts Brister (1977:95). The doctrine of salvation must remain the most normative activity of the P.A.G church in Vihiga District.

On the contrary, the Pastors are to be blamed for leading the people of God astray. "Reason asserts that the responsibility for the issues of God's creation must in the end rest upon the Creator. At no point are creatures permitted to trace responsibility from them back to God...The blame fell on Adam alone," says Chaffer (1978:237). Because of the fault of Adam, the entire race of the world fell and thus they became children of wrath. It's quite applicable that through the sin, and failing of the Pentecostal Assemblies of God leaders and Pastors in the entire Vihiga District ,Kenya, the entire church has humbly followed the wrong cultic teachings of their Pastors and leaders and thus falling away from the true Biblical doctrine of salvation. It may be concluded by the researcher that sin exists in the universe by the permissive will of God who hates it perfectly and who has great power to keep it from manifestation, had He decided to do so. Because of God's own plans, it is asserted that the end justifies the means. From the ministerial perspective, it should be understood that the place of a church's meeting and the symbols of its sacred life should bring order to man's chaotic existence. In reality, the elevated standard of the

P.A.G church in Vihiga District should symbolize the majesty of God and the church's highest aspirations of faith and transformation.

In this final chapter, the researcher has considered the Pastoral action and leadership intervention in the church at the time of disruptive crisis of syncretism, dissatisfaction of the worship and illness of the church spiritually. Beyond man's own skills, wisdom and understanding, those who have advocated the crisis must pray and ask God's forgiveness for the mess they have brought in the church of Christ. The ministers must now ask for the favors of God to be upon them in order to administer true doctrines of salvation to the church of Christ. Paul says in Ephesians that "As servants of Christ do the will of God from the heart, rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that whatever good anyone does, he will receive the same again from the Lord" (Ephesians 6:6 – 8 NIV). It's only God who justifies one in His work done in the body of Christ.

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MAP OF KENYA



MAP OF KENYA INDICATING VIHIGA DISTRICT IN WESTERN PROVINCE.



APENDICE TWO PICTURE ONE

YOUTH LEADERS INTERVIEWED DURING THE RESEARCH PROCES IN THE
PAG CHURCH VIHIGA DISTRICT.



. APENDICE TWO PICTURE TWO

Above is some of the church Audience interviewed of a PAG Church in Vihiga District Kenya .



APENDICE TWO PICTURE THREE

Youth responding to the questionnaires in their discussion concerning salvation.

APENDIS THREE

Questionnaires for the Pastors and Parishioners in the PAG Church in Vihiga District, Kenya.

Praise the Lord. Do you welcome me to share with you the good new that I have? I'm Julius M.Omuga a student at South African Theological Seminary {SATS}, taking Masters Degree in the faculty of Theology, department of Systematic Theology. I have come here in Vihiga District, Kenya, to carry out a research study on the "Impact of Cultural Beliefs in the Understanding of Salvation in the Pentecostal Assemblies of God {PAG} Church, among the Maragoli tribe in Vihiga District. The researcher has chosen this District and denomination specifically to assist him attain his research objectives and goals. The researcher has a strong trust that any findings which the parishioners feel is private and confidential will be treated the same. There is a strong trust that at the end of this study, the findings shall have depicted pitfalls in the PAG Church that barring it from accomplishing the purpose of God in the true worship. The researcher therefore thanks you all in advance for contributing towards the success of this thesis research.

INFORMATION BACKGROUND

Name of the particular PAG Church interviewing.

Name of the Pastor;

Name of the other leaders and parishioners being interviewed.

Type of questions;

Date of interview;

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Continent_____

Country_____

Province_____

District_____

Denomination_____

Gender of respondents_____

Male_____

Female _____

Youth _____

Q1. When did your denomination begin? And who were the founders?

Q2 Did your denomination have a theological base about salvation at the initial point?

Q3 what are some of the non- Biblical driving force cultures in your denomination?

Q4 Who are the majority members in your denomination and why? The youth,
women or

the old generation?

Q5 which method is best working for Church growth in your denomination?

A-Internal growth

B-Expansion growth

i. Biological growth

li.Transfer growth

iii. Conversion growth.

C.-Extension growth

D- Bridging growth

Q6 what are the qualifications of membership?

Q7 How are ordinances valued in your denomination?

a. Credit one for salvation.

- b. Taken as a formality
- c. Unite believers in fellowship with the suffering of Jesus Christ.

Q8 How is child dedication valued in your denomination?

- a. Leads to salvation
- b. Follow Jesus example
- c. The certificate given credits one for eternal life.

Q9 Do Pastors in your denomination go for theological training?

- a. Yes
- b. No

Q10 Do Pastors in your denomination go for refresher courses and further studies?

- a. Yes
- b. No

Q11 How do you understand the cultural approach of salvation in Vihiga District, Kenya?

Q12 Among the youth, women and men, who are vulnerable to the Gospel?

Q13 How is baptism valued in your denomination?

Q14 How is burial service conducted in your denomination?

APPENDIS TWO

Example of order of services conducted in the church in the PAG Church in Vihiga District, Kenya.

BAPTISM SERVICE

- Opening prayer
- Hymns {one or two]
- Reading of suitable scriptures i.e. mark 1:11
- Short sermon on the meaning of baptism and confessing Christ.
- Pastor should place the service in charge of an elder while he is baptizing.
- The Pastor enters the water and the candidate follows in order.

- The Pastor should ask each candidate the following questions.
 - Have you received Jesus Christ as your personal savior?
- The Pastor shall baptize them in the name of the father, son, and the Holy Spirit. Then he shall immerse the candidates in the water and raise them up again.
- The pastor shall give short advice on Christian morals.
- The pastor shall close the meeting

THE DEDICATION OF CHILDREN

- A song suitable for children
- Parents shall bring the child to the front of the church
- Suitable scripture shall be read. I.e. Mark 10:13
- The record shall be kept in the church records.
- The minister shall ask the parents if they are willing to dedicate the child.
- The minister shall take the child in his arms and dedicate to the Lord.
- A dedication card shall be given to the parents.

BURIAL

- Several suitable hymns
- The reading of scripture i.e. 1st Cor 15:20-28
- Prayer for the family
- Some people to testify about the deceased.
- Hymn
- Condolence giving.
- Preacher for the day to preach.
- Prayer to close this part and move to the grave for burial.
- No other service should be conducted at the grave after the burial.

This Thesis paper was edited by Philemon Ongole

Linguistic professional editor

Signature_____

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And

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