

# Missionary Work in Kenya: An Evaluation of the Spread of Christianity in West Pokot County

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## Abstract

The Church's missionary endeavour derives its motivation from the "Great Commission" of Jesus Christ to all his followers to go out and proclaim the Gospel to the whole world (Mark 16:15). The Gospel message is that the Kingdom (reign) of God is within reach for every person who accepts to live in accordance with the insights taught and exemplified by Jesus Christ in his ministry, death and resurrection. The new life in the Kingdom of God comes through faith and repentance on the part of the believer, and forgiving on the part of God. This paper evaluates the spread of Christianity in West Pokot County, which is the foundation of missionary work in Kenya. The paper discusses the general concept of the Christian mission; explains some of the strategies the Christian missionaries used to evangelise the African people and finally examines the strategies the sampled denominations (ACK, AIC, ACCK, FGCK, AGC and ELCK) used to evangelize the Pokot people. This study adopted a descriptive design and used purposive sampling to select the respondents (clergy). Guided by the structural functionalism theory by David Merton of 1910, we descriptively analyze qualitative data which was collected using questionnaires and oral interviews. The study established that the Pokot community is a spiritual power oriented society that believes in the existence of three gods: *Tororut* (Sky god), *Asis* (Sun god) and *Ilat* (the lightning god) of the above (*Yim*) and spiritual powers. The Pokot people believe also that all human beings exist under the authority of spiritual powers.

**Keywords:** Church, Missionary society, History, Christianity, Spirituality, West Pokot

## 1. Introduction

Totty *et al* (1981) in their book, "*Sounding the Call: 50 years of sharing the Gospel of Christ in Pokot,*" give a historical analysis of the mission of the Bible Churchman's Missionary Society (BCMS) in the "Horn of Africa" and West Pokot County from 1928 to 1937. They analyze the strategies used by BCMS to evangelize West Pokot County. Among the strategies identified were:

- a) provision of medical services to the sick in the villages,
- b) establishment of mission schools and colleges,
- c) establishment of churches, and
- d) the use of the converted and trained Pokot lay leaders to do the work of evangelism.

Totty *et al*, adopt a historical approach in their work by outlining the historical development of Christianity in West Pokot County. They use a simple, plain and straight forward language. Shingledecker *et al* (1982) in their project, "*The unreached peoples of Kenya Project Pokot Report,*" give an analytical development of Christianity in West Pokot from 1931 to 1982. They outline the historical development of the first denominations that endeavoured to evangelize the Pokot people of West Pokot County. They state that these denominations included Anglican Church of Kenya (ACK), Roman Catholic Church (RCC), Full Gospel Churches of Kenya (FGCK), Africa Gospel Church (AGC), Africa Inland Church (AIC), Associated Christian Churches of Kenya (ACCK), and Evangelical Lutheran Churches of Kenya (ELCK).

The development projects initiated by these denominations include: industrial training centers; schools and colleges; Integrated Rural Development Programs; Polytechnics; goat projects; medical clinics; and agricultural development work. The Anglican Church of Kenya under the Bible Churchman's Missionary Society (BCMS) was the first denomination to introduce Christianity in West Pokot County in 1931. However, the challenge of non-response from the Pokot people was inevitable. It was until 1962, during the time of the East African Revival that they experienced a breakthrough in mission work. According to Shingledecker *et al* (1982) there was no immediate breakthrough in the evangelization of the Pokot people because they resisted innovation and change. By 1982, however, the ACK had more churches in West Pokot County than any other denomination.

## 2. Methodology

This study used a descriptive survey design. According to Oso and Onen (2011), a descriptive survey involves studying the situation as it is with an intention to explain why the situation is the way it is. Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) state that a descriptive research determines and reports the way things are. Since it was the intention of this study to describe variables as they are, the descriptive survey design was an ideal method. The study area was West Pokot County, in North- Western Kenya. According to the Kenya Population and Housing Census (2009), West Pokot County had an estimated population of 512,690 people. There are four sub- counties in West Pokot and to ensure that the findings of the study are representative, the respondents were selected from all the four sub-counties of West Pokot County (West Pokot, North Pokot, South Pokot and Central Pokot). The respondents included the clergy who were purposively selected because they are the custodians of the Christian faith and were in a better position to provide information about the spread of Christianity in West Pokot County. The purposive sampling method was used to select thirty-two clergy from the denominations that have a big following in the whole of West Pokot County. These included the clergy from ACK, AIC, ACCK, FGCK, AGC and ELCK. Since ACK and AIC have the biggest following in West Pokot County, six clergy from each one of them were selected for interviews, while five were interviewed from the other sampled denominations (ACCK, FGCK, AGC, and ELCK). The thirty-two (32) clergy that were selected for interviews were picked from the eight selected divisions in West Pokot County. We employed instruments of questionnaires and interviews for data collection. The data for this study were analyzed using descriptive methods. According to Vyhmeister (2001), to analyze is to examine the evidence piece by piece. It is to make complicated things understandable by reducing them into their component parts and then showing how they fit together according to the rules

## 3. Results and Discussion

### 3.1 Demographics

The respondents' demographic data with regard to their denominations, age, gender and levels of education was sought.

**Table 1. Distribution of Clergy by denomination**

Denomination	Frequency	Percentage (%)
ACK	6	18.75%
AIC	6	18.75%
ACCK	5	15.62%
FGCK	5	15.62%
AGC	5	15.62%
ELCK	5	15.62%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 1 shows the distribution of the clergy from the six denominations portraying a 100% response rate. These denominations included the Anglican Church of Kenya (ACK), Africa Inland Church (AIC), Associated Christian Churches of Kenya (ACCK), Full Gospel Churches of Kenya (FGCK), Africa Gospel Church (AGC) and Evangelical Lutheran Church of Kenya (ELCK). Five clergy were interviewed from each of these denominations apart from the Anglican Church of Kenya (ACK) and the African Inland Church (AIC) where six clergy were interviewed because they have the largest number of followers in West Pokot County.

**Table 2. Distribution of the clergy by age and gender**

Age	Female	%	Male	%
19 – 30	0	0%	2	6.25%
31 – 42	3	9.38%	4	12.5%
43 – 54	2	6.25%	10	31.25%
55 and above	3	9.38%	8	25%
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>25.1%</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>75%</b>

Table 2 shows that out of the 32 clergy that were interviewed, 8 (25%) of them were females and 24 (75%) were males. The table also shows that 6.25% of the selected clergy were between ages 19-30years, 21.88% were between ages 31-42, 37.5% were between ages 43-54 and 34.38% were ages 54 and above. Therefore, majority of the clergy were between ages 43-54 years.

**Table 3. Education Level of the Clergy**

<b>Education</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>%</b>
Degree	4	12.5%	11	34.3%
Diploma	3	9.3%	7	22%
College Certificate	1	3.1%	4	12.5%
Secondary School	0	0%	2	6.3%
Primary School	0	0%	0	0%
None	0	0%	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>24.9%</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>75.1%</b>

The level of education for the clergy was categorized into: Degree, Diploma, College Certificate, Secondary School, Primary School and a representation for those who had no education at all (none). Out of the 32 selected clergy, the majority, 15 (46.8%) had degrees, 10 (31.3%) had diplomas, 5 (15.6%) had college certificates and 2 (6.3%) had secondary school certificates. None of them had a lower certification than the secondary school.

### 3.2 The Concept of Christian Mission

This study established that the New Testament mission is basically about “going out” to proclaim the Gospel to the world. Although the “Great Commission” was the main agenda of all the modern missionary movements, each missionary society developed its own policies, objectives and strategies on how to accomplish this task. More so, each denomination had its own doctrinal emphasis. Mugambi states:

Although the “Great Commission” was a basic scriptural motivation of the missionary outreach of the Church during the first three centuries, Christianity did not reach the interior of East Africa till the nineteenth century. There was a “mission lag” from the beginning of the fourth to the end of the eighteenth centuries. During that period the Church became established and integrated in the life of the continent of Europe, but its expansion in the other continents waited until the rise of modern missionary movement (2000, p. 36).

According to Mugambi (2000, p. 42), Christian missionaries had three major objectives in their mission. The first objective was to proclaim the Gospel. Both Protestant and Catholic missionaries were convinced that the only way to rescue the targeted group of people from everlasting damnation to eternal life in the next world was by converting them from “heathenism” to Christianity. They were persuaded that the primary tool for achieving this was by proclaiming the Gospel to them. They challenged the professionals working in the mission fields to use their skills as an aid to the main task of proclaiming the Gospel for the salvation of the targeted people groups. Since they were persuaded that all non-Western cultures lacked sufficient knowledge about the existence of the only one benevolent God, they were convinced that it was only Christianity that is capable of enlightening people about this by teaching the prospective converts the doctrine of God. Mugambi further states:

Towards the end of the nineteenth century there developed in Europe a great interest in the study of African religions and cultures. The previous view that African peoples did not have any religion or culture was modified in that development so that early in the twentieth century there developed a popular view that African peoples had their own religion and knew something about God. However, these religions were considered to be in primitive stages of evolution, and the objective of the Christian missionary activity would be to erase the religious understanding of those peoples and replace it with highest religion which was thought to have been attained in Christianity (2000, p.42).

The second objective was to civilize the targeted groups of people. Christian missionaries were persuaded that Christianity and the Western world represented the highest form of civilization and, therefore, they had a responsibility to extend this high civilization to the people of low culture. To them, evangelism and civilization were inseparable hence conversion to Christianity involved accepting the Gospel and the Western culture. In this regard, the prospective converts to Christianity were expected to abandon their traditional lifestyles and to pattern their new Christian existence in accordance with the norms taught by the Christian missionaries.

The third objective was to improve the economic lives of the targeted groups of people. The Christian missionaries were convinced that Christianity would only take root among the people of low culture if their economic lives are improved. They taught the people new methods of trade, agriculture and industrial skills. For example, David Livingstone strongly advocated that both commerce and Christianity be introduced to the African people as an integrated endeavour. He recommended that they be taught better principles of life such as modern farming to enable them to produce more food for consumption and for sale. He held the view that although conversion was important, the indirect result of salvation should be civilization and economic empowerment of the targeted people groups (Livingstone, 1857).

The presupposition underlying Livingstone’s view was that training the targeted groups in the new methods of trade and agriculture would make it easy for them to accept the Gospel because of the experience of being alleviated from major material handicaps (Mugambi, 2000, p. 45). Therefore, the success of the evangelization

of the targeted groups would depend on the successful introduction of the new way of life to improve the material welfare of the prospective converts. In light of the above, Christian missionaries sought to convert the targeted groups by proclaiming the Gospel to them, civilizing them (replacing their cultures with the Western cultures) and by improving their economic lives. They did these because they were persuaded that all the targeted people were suffering because they were living in pitiable conditions due to poverty. It was because of this view that the Christian missionaries requested philanthropists to contribute to missionary societies for both evangelism and philanthropic needs.

### *3.3 Strategies used by Christian missionaries to evangelize the African people*

This study presents the various strategies used by Christian missionaries to evangelize the African peoples: Gospel proclamation, instruction of the new converts, establishment of schools, industrial training, provision of medical services, addressing special needs, and placement of resident missionaries in mission stations in the society.

#### 3.3.1 Gospel proclamation

This strategy was used by the missionaries who primarily interpreted missions as the proclamation of the word of God. One of the prerequisites of this approach was the competent mastery of the language of the targeted people groups. However, this was not an easy endeavour because many Western Christian concepts and beliefs were new to African religious thought and life. To address this challenge, the Western Christian missionaries trained the first group of native converts and then sent them out to preach the Gospel to their fellow community members. In this regard, the local evangelists had the responsibility of ensuring that the prospective converts understand the Gospel. According to Mugambi (2000, p. 45), the proponents of this view were convinced that intensive and long theological training was not as important as the full acceptance of the Gospel and the willingness to respond to the “great commission.” In this mission strategy, the preaching of the Gospel was first conducted by itinerant evangelists, but later on, as the congregation of converts grew in number, a church building would be constructed where regular services would be carried out.

The proponents of this view also regarded the Bible as the basic tool for the evangelists, and therefore endeavoured first to avail scriptures in the language of the targeted people groups. However, the work of translating the scriptures in the languages of the target groups was very challenging to the Christian missionaries. This is because of the fact that to do it effectively, they had to have a thorough understanding of the background information of the target groups, their language structure and their philosophical thought patterns. The translation of the Bible was facilitated greatly by the formation and development of Bible societies. These societies worked in co – operation with the missionary societies. Their objective was to provide Bibles in the language understood by the target groups at affordable prices. Therefore, the Bible societies complimented the work of the missionary societies by translating and printing Bibles.

#### 3.3.2 Instruction of the new converts

Instruction of the new converts was done in order to help them understand the basic doctrines of the Church. However, catechetical instructions were denominational in the sense that each missionary society developed instructions for the converts according to the doctrines of its sponsoring denomination. Catechetical instructional courses were developed into handbooks to be used by the local evangelist and catechists. The catechism was the frame of reference for preparing the prospective converts for baptism and confirmation. The new converts were also taught new hymns, songs, and the order of liturgy of the respective denominations. The African catechists contributed much in this missionary approach. Having received initial instructions from the mission stations, the catechists went back to their home areas to begin instructional classes for the new converts.

#### 3.3.3 Establishment of schools

Establishment of schools was the third strategy. Missionary agencies were convinced that the prospective converts needed to be taught how to read and write in order to be able to read the catechism. The basic activities in these schools included reading, writing, arithmetic and Christian instruction. The basis for this approach was the view that since Christianity was a scriptural religion, literacy would help the prospective converts to read the scriptures for themselves. The Christian missionaries were also persuaded that the knowledge and skills the new converts would acquire from these schools would not only help them to advance the missionary agenda but would also enable the new converts to secure employment in secular organizations. The teachings in these schools were carried out mostly by African teachers who had received initial instructions in the mission stations. However, due to the increased demand for literacy from the African communities, the Western Christian missionaries started to provide training facilities for possible future teachers. This is the reason why most schools before the independence of most African countries were under the management of various missionary societies (Mugambi, 2000, p. 44).

#### 3.3.4 Industrial training

The missionaries who used the industrial training strategy linked missions to civilization. This strategy was based on the proposition that in addition to the Gospel message, the African converts needed to be equipped with

new skill that would enable them to begin new lives inspired by Christian principles. The phrase “industrial training” in the context of the early missionary activity included all the basic skills that the converts acquired at the mission stations. These skills included carpentry, masonry, painting and agriculture. In this regard, some mission stations developed farms where agricultural skills were taught and tried. The new converts were taught new methods of farming and new crops were also introduced to them. In light of this, mission stations became centres for the diffusion of the Western culture. Literacy was the basic necessity for learning new skills in the mission stations. More so, aspects of mission work were taught in these mission stations. During the process of training, the trainees were expected to contribute their labour in order to keep the mission stations running. Due to this, some of converts lived in the mission stations.

### 3.3.5 Provision of medical services

Provision of medical services became possible because of the fact that some of the missionaries were medical doctors who came to apply their knowledge and skills in Africa in the context of mission work. The importance of medical care as a strategy in mission work can be seen from both the missionary and African points of views. From the missionary perspective, missionary societies in their pioneer stages had lost several missionaries whose deaths were caused by tropical diseases, such as malaria. It was, therefore, necessary for medical precaution to be taken to reduce these losses. In this regard, medical research in tropical diseases became useful not only for missionaries coming to Africa but also for the Africans in the mission field. To the Africans’ perspective, the new methods of treatment and the drugs the missionaries used to treat them was a new experience. The effectiveness of the new treatment at the missionary dispensaries or hospitals became the means of attracting possible converts. In this regard, the provision of medical care was a very wonderful opportunity for furthering Christian witness in the areas where Christian doctors worked. Therefore, the Western Christian missionaries used medical services as a very effective tool to persuade the African people to embrace civilization in the sense that the new methods of treatment they offered was more superior to the traditional method of healing (Mugambi, 2000, p. 46).

### 3.3.6 Addressing special needs

Some missionary organizations addressed special needs by identifying these needs within the African society and then developed projects that addressed them. For example, they developed projects that took care of the physically handicapped people. The Christian missionaries who used this strategy understood Christian mission as a service for caring and providing for the needs of the destitute. Despite the fact that this strategy did not bring many converts in terms of evangelism, the dedication of the missionaries who devoted themselves to do this service in mission fields highlighted one dimension of Christianity that could not be made clear in any other ways. The implication was that the Christian religion was concerned with both the spiritual and the physical welfare of all people in the society.

### 3.3.7 Placement of resident missionaries in mission stations in the society

The purpose for placement of resident missionaries in mission stations in the society was to use the Christian missionaries as role models to impact the prospective converts. Besides teaching the converts the principles of Christianity, the presence of the Christian missionaries provided an opportunity for the new converts to observe daily how the Christian missionaries applied the Gospel in their lives. In this regard, how the missionaries, evangelists, catechists or pastors lived their lives would determine how the Gospel would be received. The presence of the missionaries at the mission stations provided cultural guidance to the new converts. Therefore, mission stations were centres for teaching Africans the Western culture and the Christian religion. The presence of the resident missionaries was used as a strategy to bring change in the social and religious lives of the African people.

## 3.4 Strategies used by Christian missionaries to evangelize the Pokot people

Thirty-two (32) respondents (Clergy) were interviewed to provide information about the spread of Christianity among the Pokot people. They were selected from the Anglican Church of Kenya (ACK), African Inland Church (AIC), Associated Christian Churches of Kenya (ACCK), African Gospel Church (AGC), Full Gospel Churches of Kenya (FGCK) and Evangelical Lutheran Churches of Kenya (ELCK).

### 3.4.1 The Anglican Church of Kenya (ACK)

According to Totty *et al* (1981), the Anglican Church of Kenya (ACK) was the first denomination to establish mission work in West Pokot County. The first missionary work that ACK established in West Pokot County was the brain child of Alfred Buxton. Buxton was the son-in-law to the great missionary and former English cricketer, C.T. Studd. Buxton was convinced in 1928 that his missionary work in the Congo was finished and he, therefore, purposed to evangelize the unreached “cattle tribes” of the “Horn of Africa.” These tribes were un-evangelized because the Church Missionary Society (CMS) and other missionary societies that would have evangelized them were busy working among the larger tribes of East Africa. Therefore, Buxton visualized a chain of Christian mission stations in Ethiopia, Sudan, Uganda and Kenya. To do this, he approached the Bible Churchman’s Missionary Society (BCMS), who sought for new areas to establish mission stations. Consequently, with the

help of the BCMS, they established two mission stations, one at Lotome in Uganda and another one at Marsabit in Kenya.

Totty *et al* (1981) further state that when Buxton came to Kenya, he requested the British Colonial Government for a site to establish a mission station in West Pokot County (which was then called West Suk District). In 1931, the Colonial Government sold to them their former headquarters at Kacheliba which they had abandoned due to the prevalence of malaria. They sold it to them at the price of \$400. Therefore, ACK in collaboration with BCMS established a mission station at Kacheliba in December 1931. After establishing the mission station, Buxton requested Lawrence Totty and Cyril Punt, who were missionaries at Lotome mission station among the Karamojong in Uganda, to come to Kacheliba mission station to assist in the evangelization of the Pokot people.

The first strategy that BCMS under Buxton and Totty used to evangelize the Pokot people was the proclamation of the Gospel. In order to effectively do this, they sought to learn the Pokot language. They implemented this by developing friendship with the natives. The second strategy they used was the provision of medical services. They went to the villages to treat the natives that were sick. This was made possible by the fact that Totty and Punt had undergone training on dentistry. The third strategy they used was the establishment of schools. They established their first school at Kacheliba in 1932. This was a boarding school for boys. This school had to be a boarding school because it was hard for boys to consistently attend school because of the nomadic lifestyle of the Pokot people. A few months later, with the help of the District Commissioner, ACK initiated a campaign to persuade Pokot elders about the importance of educating the girl child. Fortunately, this idea was embraced by the elders and therefore the Pokot community began to allow girls to go to school. Due to this breakthrough, BCMS requested Bryden, a missionary at Lotome mission station in Uganda, to come to Kacheliba mission station to assist in the girl child's work.

After serving for a long time at the Kacheliba mission station, Totty gained favour before the Pokot people of Kacheliba, and they nick-named him "Lomortom," which means, "the chief bull in the herd". According to Totty *et al* the most memorable day to the mission team at the Kacheliba mission station happened in 1933 when five young Pokot men confessed their faith in Jesus Christ as their Saviour. This happened following the preaching of Buxton on one of the weekends. These men were later trained and then given the assignment to preach the Gospel throughout West Pokot County.

Totty *et al* (1981) say that due to the prevalence of malaria in 1934, the BCMS moved their mission headquarters from Kacheliba (in North Pokot Sub-County) to Nasokol (in West Pokot Sub-County). They also established a Bible Training Centre at the Nasokol Mission Centre in the same year. This Bible Training Centre taught Bible courses, baptism classes and confirmation classes to the new converts. In 1936, ACK established schools and churches at Sigor, Tamkal, Cheptulel, Seker, Kokwatenda, Kamorow and Murkwijit. In spite of all these efforts, ACK did not experience an immediate breakthrough in getting new converts among the Pokot people. The only big breakthrough they experienced took place around the Chepareria area following the outgrowth of the East African Revival in 1962.

According to Shingledecker *et al* (1982), by 1982, ACK had only three parishes in West Pokot County. These were Karapokot, Kapenguria and Sigor Parishes. The Karapokot Parish had twenty Lay Leaders and no ordained priest. These Lay Leaders had received in-service training from the Vicarage in Makutano. They had the responsibility of carrying out evangelism and presiding over worship services on Sunday. Only four of these Lay Leaders were from the Pokot community. At this time, also, ACK had only three ordained priests, three pastors and three evangelists in the whole of West Pokot County. The three pastors stayed at Makutano, Sigor, and Kapenguria, respectively, while the three evangelists stayed at Chesogon, Chesupet, and Kabichbich, respectively. Out of all the church workers who served with ACK at this time, only two evangelists were from the Pokot community.

According to Rev Ng'aritany, ACK used various strategies to evangelize, civilize and to empower the Pokot people economically in early 1980s. They did this by establishing industrial training centres, special needs schools and several community projects in West Pokot County. They established polytechnics at Kodich, Chepareria and Sigor. They also established a school for the visually handicapped at Kapenguria. The school for the handicapped provided the students with skills on farming, sewing and weaving. ACK also initiated a project known as the "Christian Integrated Rural Development," which was focused on empowering the Pokot people on the issues to do with water, farming, livestock, education, and health care. They also administered a "Family-to-Family" child sponsorship program at Sigor, an "Adult Literacy Training Program" and a "Famine Relief Program" in Kacheliba.

According to Rev Ng'aritany, ACK had established several churches all over West Pokot County by 2016. They had one hundred and forty-seven (147) churches, four (4) Arch-deaconries and twenty-six (26) Parishes. The arch-deaconries included Kapenguria, St Peter's Kacheliba, St John's Chepareria and Emmanuel in Sigor. The arch-deaconries are presided over by arch-deacons. They also had twenty-three (23) permanent church buildings and one hundred and twenty-four (124) temporary church buildings. They had fifty-five (55) trained

clergy and one hundred (100) untrained lay leaders. They were sponsoring thirty-five (35) Primary Schools, twelve (12) Secondary Schools, four (4) Polytechnics and one (1) Special School for the blind (Primary and Secondary).

#### 3.4.2 African Inland Church (AIC)

According to Shingledecker *et al* (1982), AIC began mission work in West Pokot County in 1954 by establishing a church at Kapenguria under Rev George Kandegor. By 1982, they had two churches in North Pokot Sub-County, fifteen churches in West Pokot Sub-County and thirteen churches in East Pokot (now in Baringo County). In this year (1982), AIC in North Pokot Sub-County had two trained Pokot pastors, one missionary from the African Inland Church Mission Board (AICMB) and an expatriate couple doing agricultural development work in Alale Division. While in West Pokot Sub-County, AIC had only five trained pastors and four female church workers. AIC was sponsoring in 1982 twenty-four schools in the whole West Pokot County. Many of these schools were established in places where there were no churches, and were, therefore, used as centres for evangelism. They were also administering one feeding program for children and one water project.

According to Pastor Kaprech, the AIC used several strategies to evangelize the Pokot people. First, they used the strategy of the proclamation of the Gospel. Their objective for using this strategy was to convert the Pokot people to Christianity and also to give them instruction on Church doctrine. Secondly, they used the strategy of establishing schools. Their objective for using this strategy was to use these schools as centres for evangelism and to provide the new converts with knowledge and skills that would enable them to read the scriptures for themselves. By 2016, AIC was sponsoring several primary and secondary schools in West Pokot County. Primary schools included: Alale, Kauriong, Mbaru, Ngotut, Kodich, Cherangani, Asilong, Kakoruson, Kreswo, Nakwangamoru, Namoru, Chelokotetwo, Kanyarkwat, Chepesom, Kadokony, Kaibos, Kamariny, Kamelei, Kapsangar, Sarammu, Kapsait, and Chesupet. Secondary schools included: Kapsangar, Kapsait, Karas, Karenger, Kanyarkwat, and Alale.

Thirdly, they used the strategy of establishing industrial training centres. The objective for using this strategy was to civilize and to improve the economic lives of the Pokot people by providing them with skills that would enable them to begin new lives inspired by the Christian principles. By 2016, AIC had one goat project at Chesawach. Fourthly, they used the strategy of addressing special needs in the society. Their objective for using this strategy was to market the Christian religion as a religion that does not only address peoples' spiritual needs but also their physical needs. They also had one orphanage at Kauriong and another one at Kodich. Fifthly, they used the strategy of providing medical services. Their objective for using this strategy was both to provide medical care to the Pokot people, as well as to portray medical treatment as superior to the Pokot traditional healing methods. By 2016, AIC had seven medical clinics in West Pokot County: at Alale, Cherangan, Asilong, Mbaru, Makutano, Kadokong and Kapsangar.

Regarding churches, by 2016, AIC had 204 churches in the whole of West Pokot County with workers of various categories: twenty-four (24) trained pastors (of whom 8 were ladies), 72 trained elders and evangelists (five were ladies) and one hundred and four (104) untrained elders and evangelists. Worship places were distributed as: twenty-one (21) permanent church buildings, one hundred and forty seven (147) semi permanent church buildings and thirty-six (36) local congregations that worship in schools and under trees.

#### 3.4.3 Associated Christian Churches of Kenya (ACCK)

According to Shingledecker *et al*, (1982) the Associated Christian Churches of Kenya (ACCK) began mission work in West Pokot County in 1977. They used several strategies to evangelize the Pokot people. The first strategy they used was the proclamation of the Gospel. They established their mission centre at Kiwawa and concentrated their mission endeavours in North Pokot Sub-County, specifically in Alale Division, north of Konyao River. By 1982, ACCK had established five churches in North Pokot Sub-County. They were established at Kiwawa, Kamugeto, Kasei, Chelopei, Kamila and Kases. Due to the remoteness of North Pokot Sub-County, particularly the mountainous terrain, mission work was very difficult. Despite the challenges, ACCK was determined to reach the Pokot people of North Pokot Sub- County with Gospel. The total number of baptized Pokot converts ACCK had by 1982 was one hundred and fifty (150) people.

The second strategy they used was the establishment of schools. In 1982 they established a boarding Primary school at Kiwawa and were able to enroll two hundred and fifty children. ACCK provided food and clothing to these children. At this time, ACCK had one expatriate missionary doctor, two expatriate nurses, four none-Pokot pastors and three Pokot evangelists. The pastors and evangelists were trained on leadership weekly and monthly by the expatriate missionary doctor who was stationed at Kiwawa. The third strategy they used was the provision of medical services. They had one expatriate missionary doctor and two expatriate nurses, who operated a dispensary at Kiwawa and a mobile clinic.

According to Rev Kitale of ACCK, by 2016, ACCK had seventy (70) churches and four regions (Parishes) in North Pokot Sub- County. These regions were: Alale, Kasei, Kiwawa and Kacheliba. They had twenty (20) permanent church buildings, forty (40) temporary church buildings and ten (10) local churches that worship under trees. They also had thirty (30) trained pastors and seventy (70) untrained pastors. They were sponsoring

fifty (50) primary schools and one secondary school, all in North Pokot Sub-County. ACCK had also two dispensaries, at Kiwawa and Kamila in North Pokot Sub- County.

#### 3.4.4 The Full Gospel Churches of Kenya (FGCK)

According to Shingledecker *et al* (1982), FGCK under the Finland Free Foreign Mission (FFFM) began mission work in West Pokot County in 1971. By 1982, FGCK had twelve churches in both West Pokot County and in the East Pokot region in Baringo County. They had established one church, one dispensary and one mobile clinic at Kacheliba in North Pokot Sub- County. They had also, one pastor, two church workers, and two foreign missionaries from the FFFM doing mission work at Kacheliba in North Pokot Sub County. However, these two missionaries lived at Kapenguria and only visited Kacheliba and the entire North Pokot Sub- County (Karapokot) for special evangelistic missions. In total, FGCK had five foreign missionaries from the FFFM doing mission work in West Pokot County and the East Pokot region in Baringo County. Three of these missionaries were in charge of mission work in West Pokot Sub County and were based at Kapenguria, while the remaining two were in charge of mission work in Central Pokot County and were based at Chesegon. FGCK had five evangelists and one pastor who served in the West, Central and South Pokot Sub-Counties of West Pokot County. Three of these evangelists were from the Pokot community, while two were from the Kikuyu community. The evangelists did evangelistic work, while the missionaries were in charge of the medical, developmental and administrative departments of FGCK. The missionaries had also the responsibility of training the evangelists, church workers and the entire community on matters to do with health and development.

According to Rev Kapelo, in the 1970s and 1980s, FGCK used four strategies to evangelize the Pokot people. The first strategy was the proclamation of the Gospel. They established several churches throughout West Pokot County using this strategy. The second strategy they used was the establishment of industrial training centres. FGCK established a training centre at Kapenguria known as “Kapenguria Home Craft Centre.” This training centre provided the students with training on pottery, carpentry, spinning and tailoring.

The third strategy they used was the provision of medical services. They established dispensaries and mobile clinics at Kapenguria, Kacheliba and Sondany. Their objective was to provide health care to the Pokot people as well as to persuade the Pokot people discard the traditional healing methods for medical treatment. The fourth strategy they used was the presence of the resident missionaries in the society to model Christianity before the Pokot people. The objective of this strategy was to use the resident missionaries as role models as they applied the principles of Christianity in their daily lives. FGCK had seven foreign missionaries in West Pokot County at this time. These missionaries were from FFFM. Two of the missionaries were in charge of Kacheliba (North Pokot Sub- County), three other missionaries were in charge of West and South Pokot Sub- Counties and two other missionaries were in charge of Central Pokot Sub County.

According to Bishop Mali, by 2016, FGCK had one hundred and thirteen (113) churches and seven (7) main (local) churches in West Pokot County. The main churches (local) are presided over by ordained pastors. These local churches included: Keringet (which had fifteen churches under it), Kapenguria (sixteen churches), Chepareria (fourteen churches), Ortum (twelve churches), Kererwa (eight churches), Kacheliba (twenty churches) and Alale (twenty-eight churches). FGCK had also at this time twenty-three (23) trained pastors and ninety (90) untrained elders and evangelists. FGCK had fifteen (15) permanent church buildings, seventy (70) temporal church buildings and twenty (28) churches that worship in schools and under trees. Most of the churches that worship in schools and under trees were in Alale Division in Pokot North Sub- County. Bishop Mali further stated that, after the departure of FFFM in the late 1990s and the early 2000, most of the projects that they had initiated in West Pokot County collapsed. The projects that collapsed included the medical dispensaries and mobile clinics at Kapenguria and Sondany, and the Homecraft training centre at Kapenguria.

#### 3.4.5 The Africa Gospel Church (AGC)

According to Shingledecker *et al*, the Africa Gospel Church (AGC) began a mission work in West Pokot County in 1970, by establishing a mission station at Chepnyal in Sook Division in West Pokot Sub- County. The area AGC targeted for missions was the Sook Division in West Pokot Sub- County. After establishing a church at Chepnyal, they established another one at Ptoyo in Sook Division. By 1982, AGC had twelve churches in Sook Division of West Pokot Sub- County, two trained non-Pokot pastors, three Pokot evangelists and thirty Sunday school teachers. AGC used several strategies to evangelize the Pokot people. The strategies they used included the proclamation of the Gospel, the provision of health care and the establishment of schools. They established several churches, schools and one dispensary at Chepnyal. The wife of the pastor of AGC Chepnyal served as the nurse of Chepnyal dispensary in the 1980s.

According to Bishop Tudo, by 2016, AGC had seventy-six (76) churches in West Pokot County. However, all of these churches were in Sook Division of West Pokot Sub- County. They had four (4) permanent church buildings and seventy-two (72) temporal church buildings. They also had twenty (20) trained pastors and one hundred and thirty-two (132) untrained pastors. They were sponsoring seventeen (17) schools and one (1) medical centre at Chepnyal.

### 3.4.6 The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Kenya (ELCK)

According to Shingledecker *et al* (1982) the Evangelical Lutheran Church (ELCK) under Norwegian Lutheran Mission (NLM) established a mission centre at Chepareria in West Pokot County in 1977. By 1982, ELCK had established two other mission centres at Chesta and the Seker Hills. They had five Pokot Evangelists and several untrained elders who presided over worship services. ELCK used several strategies to evangelize the Pokot people. First, the proclamation of the Gospel. They established preaching points at Kongelai, Kaketonnying, Sirol, Cheratak, Ksauwoy, Sukuk, Kokworitit and Poito. Secondly, they established schools. They established a boarding primary school for boys at Sekerr and a boarding primary school for girls at Chesta. Third, the provision of medical care. They established a dispensary and mobile clinics at Chesta and Sekerr. Fourth, the presence of resident missionaries. They had six foreign missionaries from the NLM that were based at Sekerr and Chesta. These missionaries had a responsibility of training the elders, evangelists and the pastors. Fifthly, the establishment of industrial training centres. They established an agricultural development work at Chesta that provided training to the students and the community on agriculture.

According to Pastor Micha, by 2016, ELCK had two hundred and fifty-six (256) churches and thirty-eight (38) Parishes in West Pokot County. They had sixty-two (62) permanent church buildings and one hundred and twenty (120) temporal church buildings. They had thirty (30) trained pastors, ninety-eight (98) trained evangelists and twenty-one (21) trained deaconesses. ELCK also had three (3) dispensaries at Chesta, Korokough and Sekerr. They had a Bible school at Kapenguria and they were sponsoring sixteen (16) Secondary Schools and one hundred (100) Primary Schools in West Pokot County. ELCK was also operating a Pokot Rural Development Project in conjunction with AMREF.

## 4. Conclusion

The Western Christian Missionaries condemned the Pokot cultural practices as satanic when they were doing mission work in West Pokot County. Therefore, they failed to adapt to the situation and instead developed Christian programs that were foreign in structure and geared toward meeting Western needs and not the needs perceived by the Pokot people. For example, the failure of the Western Christian Missionaries to acknowledge the existence of spiritual powers made them not to understand life according to the Pokot worldview. In this regard, the majority of the Pokot people were convinced that the Gospel was not able to address their spiritual needs. Consequently, this perception has affected the spread of Christianity among the Pokot people of West Pokot County.

## 5. Recommendation

There is need for the Christian denominations doing mission work among the Pokot people in West Pokot County to contextualize the Christian Gospel by presenting it in light of the Pokot people's culture and worldview (way of life).

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