

**Towards an Approach for Ministry to Church Members
involved in Mortuary Rituals in Kejom Ketingu (North West
Cameroon).**

By

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A Thesis submitted for the Degree of

Master of Theology
in
Practical Theology

at the South African Theological Seminary

April 2013

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I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this thesis is my own original work and has not previously in its entirety or in part been submitted to any institution.

Signed: Truus Babila-Boer Date: January 29, 2013

Acknowledgements

I wish to thank Mr. John Tontuh and Mr. Andrew Bumenang from Kejom Ketingu in helping me to collect the field data that was needed for this thesis. I also wish to thank all the people I interviewed in Kejom Ketingu for their willingness to answer my many questions.

I wish to thank my two supervisors: Dr. Kevin Smith and especially Rev. Vernon Light for their help and encouragement throughout the time I have been working on this thesis.

I want to thank my colleagues Jannelle Lonbeck and Julie Anderson for proofreading.

I thank my husband Stephen Babila Tita and our daughters for their support, encouragement and prayers.

Above all I thank God for the strength and the guidance he has given me to complete this research.

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Chapter 1:

Introduction

1.1 Need for the study

The need for this thesis became apparent while interacting with students during training courses organized by SIL (the field branch of Wycliffe Global Alliance) and CABTAL (the Cameroonian Association for Bible Translation and Literacy) in the North West region of Cameroon. Quite often during these courses the topic of traditional practices would come up and discussions could go on for hours. These traditional practices are inspired by African Traditional Religion (ATR). By then I had already lived and worked for many years in Cameroon (twenty-five at the date of this thesis). These discussions helped me gain much insight into the cultural background of the people with whom I work. It also helped me understand that although they were Christians and involved in the work of Bible translation either as translators, linguists or literacy workers, it did not necessarily mean that ATR had no influence on them any longer. Some of them admitted they were still involved in some of the traditional practices that take place in their communities. Others had distanced themselves from these practices, but were not able to give a clear biblical perspective as to why they no longer wanted to be involved. I discovered that especially the mortuary rituals play an important role in their communities. In fact, the coordinator of one of the projects told me that these rituals are at the heart of the culture and are inspired by ATR, and particularly the ancestral cult. In addition, through my marriage to a Cameroonian from one of the language groups in the North West region, I had gained further insight into the deeply-rooted beliefs about the ancestors and their perceived role in the lives of the living. I had experienced close-at-hand the fear this instills in people and how much money they will spend to perform rituals and consult diviners in order to determine the cause of problems and to satisfy the perceived demands of the ancestors.

Through my contacts with project workers from the translation projects in the North West region (and beyond) it seemed that Christians in most or all the communities of the North West region were involved in traditional religious practices. Cameroonian colleagues would generally confirm this to be true; however, no studies had been undertaken (as far as I was aware) to actually determine the extent.

Due to my evangelical position I felt the ATR influence among Christians constituted syncretism. Van Rheenen (2006:6) explains that 'syncretism is the blending of Christian beliefs and practices with those of the dominant culture [in this case African Traditional Religion] so that Christianity loses its distinctiveness and speaks with a voice reflective of its culture.' This syncretism undermines the Gospel. The leaders in the different denominations were apparently not concerned enough to help their church members overcome the influence of ATR and the various rituals resulting from its influence. It thus appeared that, to varying degrees, some of the denominations were not successful in teaching biblical principles concerning these practices.

My interest became focused on mortuary rituals. If Christians were involved in the mortuary rituals, it seemed to me that this would mean that there is syncretism in the churches. Anderson (1997:§3) states that the question of 'syncretism' often has negative connotations resulting from hasty western generalisations. He emphasizes that 'we must take the utmost care when evaluating movements in Africa according to western criteria.' I did not want to be one of those who would draw hasty conclusions and condemn practices without first attempting to understand the underlying beliefs. The only criteria I wanted to apply in my evaluation were biblical criteria. I was clearly launched on the research road that would involve exploring both mortuary rituals and what the Bible has to say about them.

1.2 The background

Underlying the mortuary rituals is the ancestral cult. This clearly was the driving force behind the many rituals and ceremonies associated with death. It was this feature of ATR that made mortuary rites so prominent in the North West region of Cameroon. The entrenched nature of ancestral belief system was a key factor in how the people related

to their deceased. The rootedness of the mortuary rituals in the society is reflected in the length, mystery and intensity of these rituals.

The first phase of the mortuary rituals is the three-day mourning period that almost every person in the North West region observes after the death of a relative. Various sacrifices, libations and cleansing rituals take place during this period. They are believed to send the soul of the deceased out of the compound so that the living would not be troubled. Some of the rituals are believed to be so important that even if a relative of the deceased was not present during the actual mourning period, he will still perform them if he comes to the village months later.

In addition to, and some time after, the mourning period, there is the next phase of mortuary rituals in the form of a death celebration. This plays such an important role in the community that people will save money for years in order to hold this event. Generally people take great pride in spending large sums of money on it. Initially I thought I could also use the term 'death celebration' to refer to the mortuary rituals immediately following the funeral during the mourning period. However, I discovered that although the pidgin word 'cry die' is used, death celebration is not the correct term. Death celebrations take place several months or a year or even years after the person has died. It is an event that can take up to three days. Relatives and other villagers are expected to contribute sums of money or food to make possible the invitation to various dance groups like the kwifon, juju dancers and manjong groups, and to provide large amounts of food and drink during the celebrations. Jindra (1997:16) states that it is believed that the ancestors can see what is going on. The family has organised the death celebration 'to remember the ancestor' and he is invited to witness 'how the family has come together.'

As far as I could observe in the North West region of Cameroon, the churches, with the exception of the Full Gospel Church, do not seem to take the problem of syncretism seriously enough. It appears that when church members take part in the rituals, the leaders in the churches do not consider this a serious problem.

Eventually I chose the community of Kejom Ketingu for this research on mortuary rituals that take place during the mourning period and then some time later during the death celebration. The Kejom language is spoken in two communities (Kejom Keku and Kejom Ketingu). Since there are some differences between the two communities, I decided to concentrate on one of them. I could have chosen any language group in the North West region because the rituals are fairly similar throughout the region. However, Kejom Ketingu had two advantages: firstly, there is a Bible translation project in progress so it would be fairly easy to get help from some of the project personnel to gather the information I needed, and secondly, Kejom Ketingu is fairly easily accessible from the main town where I live.

1.3 Research problem and research questions

The problem I have observed is that Christians in Kejom Ketingu are involved to different degrees in unacceptable (negative) syncretism in mortuary rituals and death celebrations and the churches are therefore either ignoring this or not ministering to them effectively. The problem, therefore, that this research will tackle is syncretism among Christians in Kejom Ketingu in the areas of mortuary rites.

This study attempts to answer the following research questions:

- What are the core beliefs of African Traditional Religion - the beliefs about God, spirit beings and the role of ancestors in particular?
- What are the mortuary rituals in Kejom Ketingu, and the underlying beliefs about death, God and the ancestors in ATR that motivate people to organise and take part in them?
- How do the different denominations in Kejom Ketingu (Baptist, Full Gospel, Presbyterian and Roman Catholic) presently minister to members who participate in mortuary rites?
- What is the biblical view of God, death and life after death, the ancestral cult and syncretism?
- What are some models of good practice in addressing syncretism in the church,

and what practical steps should these churches in Kejom Ketingu take to enhance their ministry to members that take part in mortuary rituals?

1.4 Purpose

Through this research I desired, firstly, to fill in an information gap concerning the extent to which Christians are involved in mortuary rituals in Kejom Ketingu and also concerning the degree of influence ATR has on their view of God, the ancestors, death and the afterlife. I also wanted to find out how church leaders minister to their members and new believers in the light of the above and how effective their ministry has been. Through this study I hope to raise the Christian church's awareness of the problem of syncretism in Africa.

Secondly, in presenting the biblical background I hope to raise African Christians' awareness of what the Bible says concerning the issues surrounding mortuary rituals and the related ancestral cult. Thirdly, my desire is that the recommendations I propose will help church leaders to minister more effectively and in a culturally relevant way in the context of the deeply ingrained cultural practice of mortuary rituals.

I believe that the conclusions of this research will not be limited to the churches in Kejom Ketingu, but could be applied to churches in other language groups with similar or identical practices that threaten the integrity of the Gospel and hinder spiritual development.

1.5 Research design and methodology

1.5.1 Research design

The proposed study falls within the field of practical theology. I believe the most suitable design for this study is the LIM model (the model is summarised in Smith 2008:203-212). The LIM model was crafted by Cowan of the Institute for Ministry at Loyola University for use at this university. It covers the aspects I want to research and includes the step of proposing how to overcome the problem. The LIM model requires four steps. First of all it identifies a real-life problem, in this case the involvement of Christians in mortuary rituals and the underlying forces precipitating them. Secondly, the

situation is investigated by using literary and empirical methods. This involves describing the real situation and the history behind the situation. It seeks to discover the forces at work and thus why the situation is the way it is? Thirdly, an overview of scriptural teachings is provided that are relevant to directly address the situation. The last step climaxes in a recommendation on how to bring the 'world as it is' to 'the world as it should be' (Smith 2008:205-210).

Mortuary rituals are based on beliefs in ATR, particularly those relating to the ancestors. Since there were few resources about mortuary rituals in Kejom Ketingu, I had to gather most of this information through empirical methods. I surveyed members of the community using a questionnaire to gain a clear understanding of the various rituals (who performs them, what happens, and what is the meaning of the different rituals).

Part of describing 'the world as it is' entailed researching the four denominations in Kejom Ketingu in regard to mortuary rituals and related underlying beliefs. The information I gathered in the different denominations was through empirical research. This research was both qualitative and quantitative in nature. I have used an adapted form of the IMRAD model (Smith 2010:22,40) for reporting on the empirical research on the denominations. According to Smith this model is a standard way of presenting the empirical portion of a thesis in practical theology. It has (i) an introduction, (ii) a literature review (in this thesis of the history of the four denominations in general and in Kejom Ketingu in particular), (iii) a description of the methods used for the research, and (iv) a presentation and discussion of the results.

I then interpret the 'world as it should be.' The biblical perspective on God, death, afterlife, the ancestral cult and syncretism are presented through a critical study of the Scriptures, commentaries and other literary resources. My perspective here is evangelical and my exegetical approach is the grammatical-historical method. This part of the thesis also establishes that my concern about syncretism taking place with reference to the mortuary rituals was justified.

In the final step in the LIM model I present recommendations which offer a solution to the problem, i.e. I come up with a ministry approach that helps bring the 'world as it is'

to 'the world as it should be' in the context of syncretism regarding mortuary rituals in the denominations in Kejom Ketingu.

1.5.2 Methodology: data, tools and steps

Chapter 1: Introduction

The introduction presents the research problem and research plan and methodology.

Chapter 2: The core beliefs of African Traditional Religion with special reference to the ancestors

This chapter discusses the core beliefs of African Traditional Religion and the ancestral cult in particular. It is a literary study.

Chapter 3: Mortuary Rites in Kejom Ketingu (North West Cameroon)

This chapter provides some general background information about Kejom Ketingu and its history. It also describes the role of the fon, kwifon, juju and manjong societies. The fon (traditional chief) plays an important role in the ancestral cult. The kwifon is the executive arm of the fon and plays an important role during death celebrations, as do juju and manjong societies. The chapter includes a description of the mortuary rituals in this region. Since there were few resources about these rituals, I gathered some of the information by using two empirical methods:

(1) *Participant observation*: I attended the mortuary rituals during the mourning periods and death celebrations and observed and recorded what took place.

(2) *Personal interviews*: I conducted twenty interviews, using a questionnaire, with some members of the community and found out more details about the practices that take place on these occasions. The interviews were set up through contacts in the community.

Chapter 4: How do the four denominations in Kejom Ketingu presently handle mortuary rites?

An empirical survey was conducted in the four denominations (Baptist, Full Gospel, Presbyterian and Roman Catholic) in Kejom Ketingu concerning their relation to

mortuary rites. It included qualitative research through personal interviews (using a questionnaire) with the leaders of these four denominations. I interviewed a total of eleven church leaders. I found out how they presently minister to members who take part in mortuary rituals and learned from them the denominational beliefs about these practices. I also got their permission to hand out questionnaires to members of their churches. These were designed to find out what their personal beliefs were regarding the issues and practices surrounding mortuary rituals and their perception of how their denomination had ministered to them concerning these practices. The questionnaires included multi-choice questions and open-ended questions (quantitative and qualitative research).

I handed out a hundred questionnaires. The majority was handed out in the Baptist denomination which has a total of twelve assemblies. The Full Gospel Church has two congregations, as does the Presbyterian and Catholic churches. About half of the Baptist churches are located in Upper Ketingu and the other half in Lower Ketingu. I applied cluster sampling and selected some of the Baptist churches from both parts of Ketingu. In each of the other denominations I handed out questionnaires in one assembly only. As much as possible I handed out the questionnaires to a representative sample according to age, gender, long-time members and new converts, then waited and provided clarity while they answered the questions. I visited each church accompanied by a member of the Kejom Bible Translation team to ensure a willingness to participate and to help in the case of a language barrier.

As noted above, the questionnaires requested both qualitative and quantitative information. In analysing the quantitative information I group the answers into clusters that address the same issue or related issues. I analyse the qualitative information and discuss patterns and trends.

Chapter 5: The biblical view of God, death, the afterlife, and the ancestral cult

In using Scripture, Bible commentaries and other literary resources I explore the biblical view of God, death, the afterlife, and syncretism and also present a biblical critique of the ancestral cult.

(1) *The biblical view of God:* I present the following aspects which I considered important in comparing the view of God in African Traditional Religion with the biblical view of God: God as creator, law giver, redeemer, sustainer, and protector, as well as his omnipresence, omnipotence, omniscience, holiness, transcendence, sovereignty, and thus his hatred of polytheism-idolatry, and his Trinity. I conduct a diachronic survey of relevant passages and also include an exegesis of Isaiah 40:27-31 which is a key passage on the doctrine of God.

(2) *The biblical view of death, life after death and the ancestral cult:* I present a diachronic survey of passages focusing on the hope of a believer, the interim state, resurrection of the body of all believers, and the reality of heaven and the new earth and hell. I also present a diachronic survey of what the Bible says about the practices related to the ancestral cult (communication between the dead and the living and mediation by the dead). I include an exegesis of Luke 16:19-31 and Philippians 1:21-26 because of their marked relevance to this section.

Chapter 6: Syncretism and the challenge it presents

Here I present an overview of syncretism in the Bible and the extent to which the Bible permits or does not permit syncretism. I also include an exegesis of Deuteronomy 18:9-13 and Acts 19:18-20 which are two key relevant passages. Further, I describe how syncretism has developed in the African Church.

Chapter 7: Towards a biblical approach for countering syncretism in Kejom Ketingu

I present some models of good practice in addressing the reality of the death of a loved-one and related syncretism in the church. Based on my research of the African traditional background of ancestral beliefs and mortuary rituals and my conclusions drawn from the biblical research (including relevant literature), I propose a ministry approach to help the different denominations to minister to members that participate in mortuary rituals.

I present eight practical steps to move these four churches from their present situation regarding mortuary rituals (and other areas where there might be syncretism) to the

preferred scenario in the light of my investigation of the traditional context and relevant biblical material.

Chapter 8: Summary and Conclusion

This chapter summarises the research and suggests possible areas for further research.

Chapter 2:

The core beliefs of African Traditional Religion

2.1 Introduction

In following the first stage of the LIM model (Smith 2008:203-207) this chapter will present the core beliefs of African Traditional Religion (ATR) that inspire the mortuary rites in Kejom Ketingu, especially the ancestral cult. In this chapter I look at the following core beliefs of ATR: belief in a Supreme God, divinities, spirit beings, the ancestors, and the beliefs about death and the importance of mortuary rituals. It needs stressing that this information is crucial to understanding the rituals that take place during the mourning period and the later death celebrations in Kejom Ketingu when the mortuary rites take place.

2.2. Survey of African Traditional Religion

In this section I discuss the most basic or core beliefs of African Traditional Religion. I firstly introduce them and then discuss them in more detail in 2.2.1 to 2.2.7.

In trying to define religion, Idowu (quoted in Steyne 1990:24) says, 'Religion may be defined as essentially a search for a relationship to and with the supernatural.' This certainly is the case with ATR. These core beliefs in ATR are belief in a Supreme God, belief in lesser divinities and superior spirits, belief in ancestors who are immediately available to man, and the existence of the realm of the evil evidenced primarily through evil spirits and the practice of witchcraft and sorcery (Gehman 2005:29; Steyne 1990:73). Turaki (2008(a):149; also Tempels quoted in Magesa 1997:39) says the following concerning the spirit world of ATR:

Traditional Africans believe in a hierarchy of spirit beings and powers. The Supreme Being enjoys the highest and greatest position. The gods (or divinities) occupy a lesser position. Next come spirit beings, whose authority, power, influence and legitimacy depend upon their position within the ontological order of being. However, it is important to note that this hierarchy is a fluid one, where the distinction between spirits may be vague and their powers diffused.

The universe thus includes the visible and the invisible. The lowest levels of the hierarchical universe are humans, then the animals and finally the inanimate world at the bottom. The visible and the invisible worlds are directly related and are always interacting with one another. Van Rheenen (1991:20) states that all of life is being controlled by spiritual beings and supernatural forces. Reality thus lies in the spirit and supernatural worlds. 'The inter-connection between the physical and spiritual world means that every event has a metaphysical etiology – there is nothing accidental' (Imasogie quoted in Light 2010:107).

Man lives in fear of the spiritual and other supernatural powers. He searches for information and rituals to avoid evil and manipulate the powers (van Rheenen 1991:21-22) by rituals, offerings, sacrifices, etc. (Steyne 1990:60). Turaki (2008(a):134) thus notes that Africans have a utilitarian approach to religion, being more interested in what they can get than in what they can contribute. Magesa (1997:69) similarly refers to how man-centred ATR is 'man's primary purpose in acts of worship and reverence is neither for God nor for the ancestors, but the well-being of the person or the community. ATR is human-centered and overtly utilitarian.'

2.2.1 The importance of the community

Relationships are all important in Africa. The family is extended: a person has many fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters (Gehman 2005:58). This is often reflected in the language which usually doesn't distinguish between brothers of the same parents and sons of the extended family (Fon and Grebe 1995:12). Apart from the extended family, there is also the larger community of the clan and the tribe (Gehman 2005:58).

All members have affinity, loyalty and obligations to the blood-community. People's behaviour, attitudes and social interaction are controlled by religious and social norms and codes of behaviour. Social institutions unite and coordinate the various sectors of kinship-based communities. These institutions are in charge of communal festivals, religious rites that accompany births, initiations, marriages and deaths. These festivals are usually accompanied by much eating, drinking, singing and dancing and strengthen the communal ties. (Turaki 2008(a):161-162.)

Generally, Africans will try to conform to custom and thus avoid offending the spirit world. It is considered sin to break relationships or not conform to custom. 'Individuals only have rights by virtue of the obligations they fulfill to the community' (Stejne 1990: 66-67). When someone commits a sin against the community the result is shame, suspicion, envy, resentment, and hostility. These undermine the health and prosperity of the offender and also of the community. Certain rituals may need to be performed to counteract the evil effects and to reconcile the offender and the offended, the living community and the deceased (Nürnbergger 2006:28).

Gehman (2005:55) says that a 'person interacts with his community, both living and dead, and has access to both natural and supernatural resources to achieve his full potential in life.' Clearly the ancestors play a crucial role in the African concept of community.

2.2.2 ATR affects all aspects of life

For Africans, religion is a 'way of life;' there is no distinction or separation between religion and other aspects of life (Magesa 1997:25). Mbiti (quoted in Gehman 2005:55) says [African Traditional] 'Religion permeates into all the departments of life.' 'It affects the whole of life from birth to death.' It influences the way the African eats, plants his field, celebrates feasts and festivals, deals with social contacts etc; every action is determined by his traditional worldview (Udeani quoted in Bartelt 2006:25). There is always a religious consciousness present, whether explicitly or implicitly. The visible world is not separated from the invisible spiritual realm. 'Religious reverence must be accorded to the world and what is in it and around it' (Magesa1997: 58).

2.2.3 The belief in a Supreme Being (God)

Generally people in Africa believe that the Supreme Being (God) created the heavens and the earth. 'Heaven is the counter part of the earth' (Adeyemo 1997:19). God is respected but people cannot think of him in a personal way as they believe that God exists but is remote. God is not involved in people's everyday affairs. 'He is aloof, "wholly other," unapproachable' (Turaki 2008(a):189). People can accept him as creator, sustainer and even judge, but they cannot accept him as Father; not as one who is personal, and who is intimately involved in man's daily life (Steyne 1990:74). He is too great to be a personal God (Nürnberg 2006: 33).

Though Africans have a belief in a Supreme Being, 'this Being is not worshiped exclusively and directly' (Turaki 2008(a):148). God is respected and honoured as the exalted One; he is high above all creation and above all other divinities, spirits and men. It is partly due to this that he seems to be removed from the every day lives of people. He must be approached through intermediaries (O'Donovan 1992:41). It is widely believed that this role is filled by the ancestors who are seen as personal mediators between God and humanity (Nürnberg 2006:34). In his own village a person has to get permission from intermediaries to approach a king. How much less can one approach the King of heaven directly? In times of crisis Africans sometimes pray directly to God, especially when spirit intermediaries seem powerless to change the situation. God, however, should not be troubled with the ordinary business of life (O'Donovan 1992:41-42). Turaki (2008(1):148) concludes that this leads people to turn to impersonal powers, divinities, ancestors and spirit beings for help. God is only mentioned or approached occasionally.

2.2.4 The belief in divinities and other spirit beings

In Africa the belief in divinities is common, especially in West Africa. Most scholars divide divinities or deities into two groups: (1) non-human spirits, and (2) human spirits of the dead who were heroes of the distant past (Chike and Emeka 2010:213-14). African divinities are many and each one has its specific area of influence and control (Steyne 1990:76; Turaki 2008(a):146). Divinities are usually associated with different

aspects of life, society, and community (Turaki 2008(a):146). Different offerings and sacrifices are presented to them on particular occasions (Steyne 1990:75). In addition to the deities, the spirit world has other non-human spirits and also spirits of the dead (Oji quoted in Turaki 2000:§2) (see 2.2.5 and 2.3 on the ancestors).

Most people in Africa believe that spirits dwell in the woods, bush, forest, rivers, mountains, hills, valleys or just around the village and at road junctions, also in carved or moulded objects, charms, amulets, etc (Chike and Emeka 2010:217; Oji quoted in Turaki 2008 (a):142). Spirits are in the same environment with men. Man will try to protect himself from the activities of the spirits knowing that they are stronger than him. He will use means such as magical powers, sacrifices, and offerings to manipulate the course of their action (Chike and Emeka 2010:217). Spirits are thought to have human appetites which must be fed. They are placated with different kind of offerings and sacrifices (Steyne 1990: 76).

Turaki (2000:§II.1,2) says the spirit world is, in a sense, a 'battleground of spirits and powers that use their mystical powers to influence the course of human life. These mystical powers can be positive or negative, good or evil, and may bring blessings or curses.' Therefore if one wishes to be successful or enjoy well-being, it is important to consult human specialists like medicine men, mediums, diviners, sorcerers, witches etc – all those who have the ability to manipulate spirit beings (Turaki 2008(a):142).

2.2.5 The belief in ancestors

In ATR there is an ongoing relationship between the living and those who have died (O' Donovan 1992:218). After death the bodies of the deceased decay, but their spirits continue to live on in the spirit world and they continue to interact with the living (Gehman 1999:3). Almost every belief, ritual and custom in ATR is influenced by the role of the ancestors (Light 2010:99). The family includes the living, the unborn and the ancestral spirits. The living are occupied with life on earth, while the ancestors are supposed to keep the family within the stipulations and rules which were established when they were still alive. The head of the family strives to keep the family united. He needs to correct family members who fail to contribute their part; otherwise the ancestors will become

offended and send trouble (Gehman 2005:58-9). The beliefs of the ancestral cult will be further discussed in 2.3.

2.2.6 The belief in mystical powers

African Traditional Religion is a religion of powers and mystery. These powers lie behind what is material, physical and visible. Since these powers are invisible it means they can be supernatural, spiritual or mystical. This impersonal power, which has been given various names (mana, life force, vital force, life essence and dynamism), infuses everything (Turaki 2008 (a):140). Turaki (2000:§II.2) says that the belief in this impersonal (mystical) power is dominant in the thoughts of adherents of African Traditional religion. 'In African beliefs, the source of this impersonal or (mystical) mysterious power is not always known, but it is usually attributed to the activities of higher "mysterious" powers, whether personal or impersonal that either generates or deposits such powers in things or objects' (2000:§II.2). Van Rheenen (2011:§6) says that *beings* and *forces* [powers] are thought to exist side-by-side in animistic contexts such as African Traditional Religion. He also states that the '*forces* are impersonal powers' which include the power behind the use of magic, witchcraft, evil eye and other related phenomena.

Medicine men and women, diviners, etc., use this power associated with natural objects, plants, and animals for medicine, magic, charms and amulets. These powers can be used for both good and evil (Turaki 2008 (a):139). Witches and sorcerers are believed to use mystical means to harm other persons or their property. A witch does not use rites or spells. A witch can perform evil just because her nature is evil and because she/he is thought to be able to do things beyond human abilities. In contrast, sorcery uses black magic, rituals and incantations against others (Ferdinando 1999:87-105; Gehman 2005:94-100).

Van Rheenen (2011:§6) notes that the African 'lives in fear of the spiritual powers that might bring evil upon his life. He believes that only by use of the powers can he be successful. He desperately searches for information to ward off evil and manipulate the powers to do his bidding.' Steyne (1990:39, 60) puts it this way: man looks for power

from outside himself to control his environment. He further observes that in this search for power any commitment to ethics and morality is put aside as whatever is empowering is right.

Power is needed to make rain, obtain good crops, find a job, heal diseases, guarantee fertility or pass school exams. It is also needed for protection from disease, evil spells, various catastrophes, sorcery and witchcraft etc. Clearly man needs this life force to achieve his objectives in life. People will thus contact religious specialists, perform rituals, take part in ceremonies, use medicine, and contact spirit beings or ancestors, all with the goal to secure power (Steayne 1990:38).

2.2.7 The importance of rituals

In ATR man believes he can master his own destiny with the right power, and the goal of religion is man's happiness and good. Hence the importance in ATR of religious rituals, ceremonies, techniques and methods considered the means of obtaining the power needed to attain a happy and good life (Turaki 2008(a):145). Man will use whatever rituals are necessary to deal with the challenges in the spirit world, the physical world and the world of human relationships in order to ensure success in his life (Steayne 1990:60).

Adeyemo (1996:54) says, 'African ontology is basically anthropocentric. Man is at the very centre of existence and everything else is seen in its relation to the central position of man.' It is no wonder then, as Nyamiti (quoted in Magesa 1997:51) notes, that African people use religion for the power to acquire earthly goods and achievement (life, health, fecundity, wealth, power etc.) – that 'Life's essential quest is to secure power and use it.'

It should come as no surprise that the acquisition of power is more important than any commitment to ethics or morality. Whatever is empowering is right (Steayne 1990:60).

2.3 The ancestral cult

2.3.1 Introduction

The belief in the role of the ancestors in the life of the living provides an explanation why the mortuary rituals occupy such an important place in the society of Kejom Ketingu. It is therefore important to have an understanding of the general beliefs about death, the roles of the ancestors, the importance of correct burial rites, and the fear that inspires people to continue to invest a lot of money in these practices.

2.3.2 The beliefs about death and the afterlife

Death is the greatest threat to life and it is deeply feared in Africa. Whenever it occurs it causes a painful isolation for the family concerned which is the reason for extensive mourning. Normal social activities are disrupted (Nürnbergger 2006:24). Unless a person is old, death is never explained in Africa by natural means alone. People believe that death is caused by somebody, either living or dead. There must be an external cause, either natural or unnatural. People will often visit a diviner to find out the external cause of death. (Gehman 2005:9-10.)

It is thought that the commonest cause of death is magic, sorcery and witchcraft. Someone may intentionally approach a witch or a sorcerer to harm or kill an enemy. Another cause of death can be angry ancestors who are unhappy with something that was or was not done (Gehman 2005:9-10). If a family feels that the ancestors are dissatisfied, it will take measures to deal with the situation to avoid further deaths. If people cannot give a satisfactory explanation, they may believe it is God who caused the death. Even if people believe death is caused by God they may still look for a scapegoat to satisfy people's suspicion (Mbiti1990:155-156).

When a person dies it does not end his existence. He/she continues to live on as an ancestral spirit and relates to the living, bringing either benefits or trouble (Gehman 2005:68). African philosophy believes that 'life doesn't move in a straight line; rather, it is compared to the circumference of a circle,' i.e. death doesn't bring an end to it; rather, 'life continues after death' (Tempels quoted in Adeyemo 1997:59). However, death is the

conclusion to man's earthly existence. The living are separated from the dead by the grave. 'The dead constitute the invisible part of the family, clan or tribe, *and this invisible part is the most important*' (emphasis mine) (Adeyemo 1997:60-62).

Most people believe in life after death. Gehman (1999:5) adds that in ATR death is a transition into another form of life. A human being is more than a physical body. There is a spiritual part of a person which continues to live on after a person's body has died. Mbiti (1990:25) introduced the term 'living-dead'. He states, 'Since the departed is remembered by name, he is not really dead; he is alive. So long as the living-dead is remembered, he is in the state of personal immortality.'

According to Adeyemo (1996:66), African peoples believe that the deceased are never really in the grave. Although the body decomposes, the soul goes on its journey home. There is no doctrine of the resurrection of the body as stated in the Bible; but in many African societies there is a 'concept of partial reincarnation in the sense that some human features or characteristics of the dead are said to be "reborn" in some children' (p. 66). Mfonyam (2010:101) confirms that this belief also exists in the North West of Cameroon.

The majority of African peoples do not expect any form of judgement or reward in the hereafter. God punishes in this life (Mfonyam 2010:101; Mbiti 1990:161). The community deals with sin as an act, not as part of our nature. When somebody has committed a sin a penalty will be prescribed; once that has been fulfilled the person is forgiven (Adeyemo 1996:53).

According to Nyamiti (2011:§2.2), ancestors are believed to possess a 'sacred super-human status.' They are ascribed with bodily and spiritual qualities, can be both invisible or visible in human, but unusual, form, have the ability to enter into human individuals, are near to the Supreme Being, and can exist anywhere. Magesa (1997:69-70) confirms that the ancestors have a stronger vital force than the living and thus possess power over humanity and creation. 'But ancestors are neither absolute nor omnipotent'; there are other forces around that can cause calamities like witches or sorcerers (Nürnberg 2006: 29).

A person can only attain ancestral status when he/she has led a morally good life. An ancestor is regarded as somebody of good conduct, and a source of tribal tradition and stability (Nyamiti 2011:§2.2). When there is no longer anyone alive who remembers the living-dead personally by name, the process of dying is completed, which can take up to four or five generations; and then the living-dead will continue to exist as a spirit when dropped from the memory of the living (Mbiti 1990:163).

Steyne (1990:80) states that 'life has no meaning apart from ancestral presence and the ancestral power.' This statement shows the extent of the influence of the ancestral cult in the lives of Africans.

2.3.3 The ancestors are guardians of family affairs

The living dead become the senior elders of the living. As such they should be obeyed by their children. This obedience comes out of fear of and desire to honour the ancestors. Any correction or rebuke from them is acted upon as a duty (Gehman 1999:37-44).

The ancestors are expected to take responsibility for the welfare of the living and be active in their affairs. Communication with them is indirect. Such communications through dreams, visions, divination, whirlwinds, hail etc. are believed to offer advice (Mbiti 1990:207). When the ancestors communicate they enquire about family affairs and may even warn of impending danger. They may give instructions or make requests to be given something, and may even threaten to punish members of the family for not carrying out particular instructions or for not caring sufficiently for them (the ancestors) (Mbiti 1990:162). Everything is important to them: birth, marriage, sickness, relationships, reunion, family needs and numerous other family concerns (Steyne 1990:83).

They are the guardians of family affairs, traditions, ethics and activities. While they were still alive they introduced or passed on many of the laws and customs (Mbiti 1990: 207; Fon and Grebe 1995:12). The traditions that are transmitted from generation to generation become the 'Scriptures' of the people (Kunyahop 2008:9). The ancestors are watching the moral behaviour of the individual, the family, the clan, and the entire society.

Nothing escapes their attention, and therefore when norms of social action are not obeyed they will cause trouble (Kuukure quoted in Magesa 1997:48). When the living fail to follow the customs the ancestors will punish them so that they will go back to the traditional way things were done (Gehman 1999:38). When a person faces misfortunes it is seen as an indication that the person has broken some 'moral or ritual conduct against God, the spirits, the elders or other members of the society' (Mbiti 1990:162, 210).

The ancestors are believed to give blessings, like good health, protection from sickness, danger and unjust neighbours, rain, a good harvest, the birth of children and guidance in finding a wife (Gehman 1999:38; Gehman 2005:237-8). The ancestors can use their power to bless or to inflict punishment. It depends on how they are treated by their living descendants. If the living experience goodness and harmony, it is a sign that they have fulfilled all their obligations to the ancestors (Magesa 1997:69).

The living commune with the ancestors through the pouring of drink offerings and the giving of food. The ancestors can demand certain gifts when communicating, for instance, through the witchdoctor (Gehman 1999:44). The food and libation given to the living-dead are acts of hospitality and welcoming of them and at the same time a way to tell them to move away (Mbiti 1990:84). Since the ancestors can be as benevolent and strict as parents are expected to be, their continued presence is not necessarily appreciated by the living. They can, therefore, be loved and respected and also feared, resented, or scolded for their jealousy, injustice, neglect, meddling etc. (Nürnberg 2006:28). When there is evidence of jealousy or any unjustified behaviour by the ancestors, the living will reprimand them (Magesa 1997:49).

2.3.4 Ancestors as intermediaries between the living and God

The living relatives continue to hold that the living-dead are near to them and can be approached through prayer, libation and offerings. Because they are still people, the living-dead are considered the best group of intermediaries between men and God; they know the needs of men, they have 'recently' been there with men, and at the same time they have full access to the channels of communicating with God directly (Mbiti 1990: 83). They act as intermediaries between men and God, or between men and more

distant forefathers (Mbiti 1990:157-161). Prayers are made to the ancestors for the birth of a child, the healing of the sick and deliverance from evil powers. People pray to them for rain or a good harvest. When people call upon the living-dead, they assume they are present, and that they know, hear and see, and are able to respond with answers to their prayers (Gehman 1999:99). People will offer sacrifices so that the ancestors will intercede on their behalf before God (Steyne 1990:84).

2.3.5 The importance of correct burial rites

One of the ways the living need to show respect for deceased is through correct burial rites. Wherever people believe that the dead continue to interact with the living, a proper burial is most important. The dead 'need a fitting ceremony to enter the world of the spirits' (Gehman 1999:16, Nyamiti 2011:§2.2). In some tribes a proper burial with appropriate funeral rites is necessary to become an ancestor (Nyamiti 2011:§2.2). This is definitely the case among the language groups in the North West region of Cameroon and the Kejom in particular.

The funeral, therefore, must be 'correct,' accompanied by the relevant religious ceremonies. If this is not done, the deceased will usually not be able to 'live' properly after death and become a danger to the living (Anderson 2011:§ 2); and if this is done the dead will become benevolent ancestors. The dangers of improperly performed burial and mortuary customs are that the deceased will continue to roam around and 'haunt the family, take revenge on enemies, and generally make life miserable for the living' (Steyne 1990: 82). Nürnberger (2006:38) notes that the spirits of the deceased who have not been buried, or 'brought home' properly after the time of mourning, are dangerous because they are denied 'recognition and belonging and therefore cannot find peace.'

Because of the role of ancestors in relation to the living, Africans are under a lot of pressure to make sure the deceased achieve ancestorhood. 'The benefits for the living-dead and the living are so great that no African can be expected to be neutral on this matter' (Nyamiti quoted in Light 2010:107).

2.3.6 The role of the ancestors in the cycle of life

The influence of the ancestors is also felt in other areas. They play a role throughout the life-time of a family and their influence is particularly felt at important moments in life. Magesa (1997:81-3) states that the expectations and the demands of the ancestors are satisfied in the rhythm and cycles of human life: birth, puberty, marriage and death. Although these are not the focus of this thesis I will briefly comment on them since they show how pervading the influence of the ancestors is in African life.

The moment of conception is an important step towards validating the marriage contract. It gives the parents some assurance of their own possibility of living after death as ancestors themselves. Conception is understood to be a blessing from God and the ancestors. When the birth is uncomplicated and a healthy child is born, it is another sign of the pleasure of the ancestors (Magesa 1997:81-3). In some African societies it is believed that twins bring bad luck and should be murdered. This is also the case with babies that have Down's Syndrome and deformities (Kunhiyop 2008:9). Among the Kejom, twins are both feared and ritually celebrated. The parents get a special title: tanyi and manyi (father and mother of twins). The joy of their birth is mixed with an awareness that they are different. They are believed to have powers which can make them act anti-socially and that they can cause serious illness to family members (Diduk 1993:552-559).

It is believed in African society that whatever names the child gets, the child will take on the moral characteristics of the ancestor after whom it was named. The most important name is the ancestral name, which is sometimes referred to as 'the name of the stomach,' the name of the umbilical cord (Magesa 1997:89-92).

Then comes the rites of passage. Initiation is almost universal in traditional Africa for young boys and indicates death to the previous state of childhood and rebirth into adulthood (Ferdinando 1999:24). The initiation process turns a youth from a boy or girl into a man or woman (Magesa 1997:104). Rites of passage, however, hardly occur in the Kejom area, except when someone becomes a member of a juju or a secret society (see 3.4).

The next important stage in life is marriage. Marriage has eternal consequences. When a person doesn't marry it means he/she ceases to live now and in the hereafter. 'Begetting children guarantees eternal life' (Steyne 1990:66). When a marriage takes place the head of the family represents God and the ancestors and blesses or sanctions the marriage. The bride price is part of the marriage process; no man can claim children that will be born as his own, until he and his family have transferred the bride price. If it is not paid, which of the ancestors do the children invoke – those of the father or of the mother (Magesa 1997: 115-130)?

A couple without children are looked upon with great concern. Magesa (1997:63-4) even states that people consider it a crime if a person is the cause of the life of a lineage to cease due to barrenness. Children assure the continuation of life for the individual, the clan and the lineage. Mugabe (quoted in Light 2010:104) describes the life after death of childless parents: it is 'hell in the afterlife when there are no children to commemorate you when you are gone.' Mbiti (1990:141-142) adds that when a woman is barren the husband may take another wife, or it can be the cause for divorce.

2.3 Conclusion

Several beliefs of ATR discussed in this chapter play an important role in the society of Kejom Ketingu. They believe in a Supreme God, divinities and spirit beings, the ancestors, mystical powers and the importance of rituals. The next chapter will discuss what the Kejom people believe about the Supreme Being and the role of the ancestors and that the ancestral cult inspires the performance of the rituals before, during and after a funeral, the latter being the focus of this thesis.

It is challenging for Christians to not organise or take part in the various entrenched rituals of ATR, including those related to the death of a person, that are irreconcilable with Christianity. Among the Kejom, for instance, this is because people are mocked when they don't take part; and family members can pressurize and even threaten relatives that refuse to participate. Although the fon (the traditional ruler) decided a while ago that non-participation in any of the rituals should be allowed, in reality this is not always put into practice.

This chapter has provided the necessary background to appreciate the beliefs and customs of the Kejom people, especially their mortuary rites, and why it can be expected that Kejom Christians will not find it easy to lay aside traditional beliefs, rituals and practices that cannot be harmonized with Christianity. The empirical research conducted among the Kejom into their beliefs and practices relevant to mortuary rites is presented in the next chapter.

Chapter 3:

Mortuary Rituals in Kejom Ketingu (North West Cameroon)

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the real life situation with reference to mortuary rites during the mourning period and the death celebration in Kejom Ketingu. In the more than sixty ethnic groups in the North West region of Cameroon, these practices are very similar, although there may be some differences between each group. Kejom Ketingu was chosen for two reasons: it is easily accessible from Bamenda, the main town in the North West region, and because a Bible translation project is currently being undertaken there.

The chapter commences with a description of the research methods used to gain an understanding of mortuary rituals in Kejom Ketingu. It continues with some general information about Kejom Ketingu, its history, the fon (traditional chief) who plays an important role in the ancestral cult, and the role of several societies whose members also feature during the mortuary rituals and death celebrations (3.3). This information is based on a literary study. This provides important background information to the empirical study, the results of which take up the rest and major part of the chapter. The results of the empirical study are presented with additional information from written sources.

I would like to point out that the funeral is not the focus of this thesis. My initial interest was in what is called in Pidgin English 'cry die.' There are two such cry-dies: the first one is the mourning period and the later second one is the death celebration. In this thesis I will not use the Pidgin terms.

In a Western context the burial proceedings really come to an end after the funeral ceremony and refreshments immediately afterwards, i.e. it all happens in less than a full

day. In Kejom Ketingu the funeral day is only the beginning. Several days of mourning are set aside after the funeral during which various rituals take place, and this is followed after some time has passed with a death celebration, again with more rituals.

3.2 Research methods

Not much information is available about the different rituals that take place during the mourning period and death celebration. In order to determine what different rituals are performed during these occasions, I interviewed (using a questionnaire with mostly open-ended questions) twenty Kejom speakers and also personally observed several of the rituals. All the people I interviewed were men as performing rituals is a men's affair; their ages ranged from twenty-five to around seventy-five; and most of them were villagers while the others were more educated people with jobs in the nearby town of Bamenda. Fifteen of the informants were non-Christians and five were Christians. Two of the five Christians had been members of a society: one from a manjong group (see 3.4.4) and one from the red feather society (see 3.7.1). Some of the five Christians had grown up in families where these practices were performed in their families, but were not practicing the rituals anymore. I included some Christians in my group of interviewees (the majority of the group was non-Christian) because I felt this would ensure I got a more accurate picture and understanding of the ceremonies. The number of respondents, the fact that they were all males, the wide age range, the inclusion of a few Christians and educated people, and my firsthand experiences of the rituals ensured that the results of my empirical research provide a reliable portrait of the mortuary rituals during the mourning period and death celebration in Kejom Ketingu.

The questionnaire covered the following aspects: (i) *the mourning period*: general information, sacrifices, libations, special groups, shooting of guns, other rituals and what determines a successful mourning period; (ii) *the death celebration*: the same categories were used, but with a few additions, namely, preparations for the death celebration, family meetings related to it, attitudes of family members when people refuse to take part, and the death celebration of a fon (see 3.3.3); and (iii) *beliefs about the ancestors and God* which provide the *raisons d'être* for the mortuary rituals as noted in chapter 2. I used the first visit

to Kejom Ketingu to test the questionnaire, which resulted in some improvements to it (see *Appendix 2* for the questionnaire).

In order to get the information that I needed I decided that I would administer the questionnaires myself. I secured the help of a Kejom speaker, Mr. John Tontuh, who is part of the Kejom language development and Bible translation team. Since it is an oral society, the people were usually approached personally one or two days beforehand to inquire if they would be willing to answer the questions. If they accepted we arranged to visit them on the next country Sunday, which is a traditional day of rest because it is believed that on this day the gods of the land are working. Most people are involved in agricultural activities and therefore this would be the only day (other than a normal Sunday) in the week that they would not be on their farms.

I made a total of nine visits to the village on country Sundays to conduct the interviews. Initially I thought that I would come and stay for a couple of days. It, however, worked out better to come on the country Sundays because people would have the time to sit down and answer all the questions. We moved around on foot and interviewed between one to four people during a day. Often people would be waiting for us; but it also happened a number of times that they had left by the time we arrived. Usually I gave the interviewees a brief introduction to what kind of information the questionnaire was looking for, and then worked through the questionnaire. If they did not understand my questions well I sometimes either tried to reword them in Pidgin English or Mr. Tontuh translated them into Kejom. It was largely due to his presence that the people we interviewed were willing to answer my questions. If I had attempted this without his help it would have been difficult to find willing informants and people might not have been open at all. In a few cases people were still reluctant to go into much detail concerning the rituals practiced. I got more details from the group of people that were no longer practicing the rituals than from the people still practicing them. Overall it would take an hour or more to go through all the questions, depending on whether or not people were giving a lot of details.

After conducting most interviews I decided to drop the questions concerning the death celebration of the fon which had taken place earlier in the year. The rituals that are performed at a fon's mourning period and death celebration are performed by the kwifon, a

secret society. No other villagers are present when they perform their rituals. When I come to this section people would therefore not be clear on what had happened. Unless I would approach the kwifon for information, which most likely wouldn't work since it is a secret society, I would not get confirmed information.

Generally after a visit I would keyboard the information I had gathered. I used different colours for the different informants using the categories of the questionnaire and would enter their answers. Since I did the interviews myself I did get answers to most of the questions in the questionnaire. Sometimes the interviewees did not give a clear answer or did not answer the question at all. In some cases a respondent would add a new aspect that had not been mentioned by the others so that the total number of respondents with reference to some events is not always 20. The results from the questionnaires were in harmony and many interviewees providing identical or similar answers. Where the details varied they were clearly depicting the same event. I remember for instance after about eight interviews the person I interviewed mentioned a cleansing ritual that none of the others had mentioned. After that more people mentioned it because I asked about it. Being non-Cameroonian might partly explain the apparent reluctance to share this ritual. It also needs to be noted that the questionnaire was extensive, ensuring probably that only little of what takes place during the mourning and death celebration was not covered. One needs to also take into account that even within the same clan rituals may differ slightly.

A summary of the results of the answers in the questionnaire is available in *Appendix 3*. In this chapter I decided to present a picture which results not only from a combination and co-ordination of the answers to the questionnaire but also from my own observations (see below). In the light of the previous paragraph and the above comments on the twenty people interviewed, I feel such a picture provides a reliable one on the situation in Kejom Ketingu regarding mortuary rites and the underlying explanations.

The information about the respondents' beliefs in God and the ancestors is presented before the mortuary rituals unlike in the questionnaire. It seemed more logical to start with them, especially as the results dealing with the mourning period and death celebration make more sense if they are presented after these sections.

The second method in gathering information was through participant observation. I made several additional trips specifically for this purpose. Once I spent several consecutive days in the village in order to observe the rituals that happen during the mourning period and death celebration. I was able to observe the following events during the mourning period: sacrifices – *tsunjə mbvəsə* (tying a fowl – see 3.7.1) and *tsuntə' mbvəsə* (plucking a fowl – see 3.7.2); gun shooting by individuals (see 3.7.4); some of the practices concerning widows (see 3.7.5); and shaving during the mourning period (see 3.7.6.3). I also observed the gift giving (*cho* – see 3.8.2) for a death celebration, dances of juju groups (see 3.4.3) and manjong groups (see 3.4.4). Again it was mostly due to the help and presence of Mr. Tontuh that I was able to attend these events. The sacrifices are not supposed to be witnessed by women, but because of his presence I was allowed to observe proceedings.

3.3 The Kejom people in Kejom Ketingu

3.3.1 General information

Kejom Ketingu is located in the rugged mountain area of North West Cameroon, an area unique to West Africa. This high plateau land in the North West region, referred to as the Highlands or the Grassfields, is mostly covered with savannah-type grass (Kwast 1971:18-19). The altitudes in the North West region range from approximately three thousand to eight thousand feet above sea level. Temperatures are pleasantly cool. There are two distinct seasons in the North West: the rainy season, lasting about seven months, and the dry season, lasting about five months. Unlike many African societies, the language groups in the North West of Cameroon have so far been able to maintain a balance between their traditional belief system and the influences of modern society (Bartelt 2006:119). There is a strong tribal cohesion and a high degree of family and clan loyalty among nearly all the tribes of the North West region. Families live together in a 'compound,' houses grouped closely together in which a family or extended family group lives (Kwast 1971:23-25).

The North West is a fertile region. The economy is basically agrarian. Women plant the seed, cultivate and harvest the crop, and prepare the food for the family. The men occasionally help their wives to clear the bush for a new farm or assist in the harvesting

of crops (Kwast 1971:25-6; Nkwi 1986:2). The men are engaged in carving, weaving, palm wine tapping, house building, carpentry and masonry. Each household grows enough maize, root-crops, plantains, groundnuts and beans to satisfy domestic needs (Nkwi 1986:2,108).

The North West of Cameroon is recognized as one of the 'most fragmented and ethnically heterogeneous areas on earth' (Kwast 1971:18-20). In this mountainous area live more than sixty ethnic groups; the Kejom people is one of them (Breton and Fohitung 2012:131). The Kejom language is spoken in the two villages of Kejom-Ketingu (also referred to as 'Small Babanki' in English) and Kejom-Keku (which is referred to as 'Big Babanki' in English). The two villages are about 20 kilometres apart. The entire Kejom speech community claims approximately a total population of 39,000. A neighbouring language group, the Bali people, gave them the name Kejom-Ketingu, which means 'under the stone' while Kejom-Keku means 'in the forest' (Brye 2001:4).

3.3.2 History of the Kejom people

About three hundred years ago the numerous ethnic groupings began to take form as migrations of various tribes pushed into the rugged mountainous terrain of North West Cameroon. They settled in the mountains to escape slave raids and wars with stronger tribes (Kwast 1971:21). The Kejom people migrated from the Tikar group in north-eastern Cameroon (Akumbu and Asonganyi 2010:174). The Kejom people settled in their present location, though they continued wandering due to defense needs (Ngwa and Vubo 2001:167). They later moved and settled around Lake Oku. After a dispute over the ownership of the lake, the Oku forced the Kejom to leave the territory. They subsequently lived alongside the Kom; later they separated from this group as well due to disputes related to familial succession (Akumbu and Asonganyi 2010:174).

The two Kejom groups were later formed when a prince died shortly before the Kejom annual dance. The fon ordered the dance to begin which was contrary to the custom demanding that royal funerals be completed before the annual dance. Forty disgruntled people decided to separate from the others, and eventually settled where they are today (Akumbu and Asonganyi 2010:174). The designation 'Small Babanki' originates from

this time. Eventually, Ketingu's population became larger than 'Big Babanki.' The people of Kejom Ketingu prefer that others refer to their village by the name 'Ketingu' rather than 'Small Babanki' (Brye 2001:5).

3.3.3 The role of the fon

The kinship systems of most of the groups in the North West are patrilineal. Their political systems are characterized by centralized structures under the rule of a powerful king called a fon (Bartelt 2006:66). In ATR the chief is considered God's representative on earth; he has the responsibility of overseeing the use of the earth (Magesa 1997:61). Historically, the fon is believed to occupy a mediating role between God and the ancestors. Before his installation, a fon is considered an ordinary person, subject to all the laws of the state. The rites of installation transform him into a spiritual leader. These rights include seclusion for eight days in the grave shrine next to the deceased fons' graves (Nkwi quoted in Bartelt 2006:67-68). The fon symbolises unity and represents the link with the past (the ancestors). Since the fon is believed to have mythic qualities, his authority is not contested (Fisiy 1995:51-54). Specific areas of his palace are considered sacred where most of the sacred rituals concerning the 'gods of the land' begin and end. Strict rules and set gestures regulate access to the palace and to the fon (Bartelt 2006:68). Leopard skins are spread on the ground in front of his throne, flanked by carved and uncarved ivory tusks (Brain and Pollock 1971:104, 68).

In Kejom ideology the chiefs never die, but only 'go missing,' and are found in their successors. One can not overtly say that the fon has died, as it would mean that all what he incarnates has died. The fon disappears and reappears in his successors (Bartelt 2006:95). According to Maynard (quoted in Bartelt 2006:96) he is 'thus honored as a divinity more so than an ancestor.' Diduk (1993:560) confirms this in saying that 'fons in Kejom society and throughout the Grassfields are sometimes addressed as God which attests to their spiritual powers.'

The priestly functions of the fon are his greatest obligations and responsibilities to his subjects. As the chief priest of the royal ancestors and gods associated with the earth, a fon presides at the annual dance and renewal celebrations (Diduk 1993:560). He is

expected to pour a ritual libation at least once a year at the kingdom's shrine, invoking the ancestors and gods of the land to protect the land and bestow blessings on it (Fisiy 1995:55).

Historically, the fon is also the judicial head of the highest court of appeal. No decision is taken without his prior knowledge. Aided by councilors he hears cases in the meeting-house at the palace. When there is no obvious solution to a case they will use various methods of divination (Bartelt 2006:68-69 and Brain and Pollock 1971:14).

3.4 The role of societies

3.4.1 Introduction

Associations and (secret) societies in Kejom Ketingu play an important role in preserving traditions. They maintain order in the community in overseeing political and economic well-being (Magesa 1997:113-114). The membership of these associations is necessary for a rise in social status and rank. There are several types of societies. I will mention the three that play an important role during the mourning rituals and death celebrations: the kwifon in charge of the government, the manjong in charge of the military, and the masquerades or jujus. Each society has its own house or meeting place (Bartelt 2006: 145-146).

3.4.2 The role of the kwifon

The kwifon is the executive arm of the fon, and operates independently from the government, including the police. It carries out decrees issued by the fon's court, by providing the fon with a police force, emissaries, and economists. The fon's court also operates independently from the government's courts (Nkwi 1976:64). One of the kwifon's most important functions is the selection of a new fon from among the deceased fon's sons. He will be selected on the basis of sound morals and evidence of leadership (Bartelt 2006:70).

The kwifon are believed to have mystical powers 'which help its members in the exercise of their duties' (Nkwi quoted by Bartelt 2006:71). Mfonyam (2010:75-6) says that their mystical power is above that of any other person in the village. It is a secret

society and its activities are unknown to outsiders. When it is on its way to a function or celebration a masked juju goes ahead of them to warn people to hide so that they will not see them. One of their spiritual responsibilities is to ward off evil forces and protect the village from negative influences. They are responsible for the protection and welfare of the entire fendom.

When people violate tradition the kwifon will use its authority by imposing social sanctions. People may need to make restitution for offenses through paying fines. In more serious cases people can be banished from public ceremonies or even from the area itself (Bartelt 2006:149).

Modern administration has contributed to a decline of some of the powers of the fon and kwifon. However, both continue to exercise their power over the institution which they still control: the religious (Bartelt 2006: 71-72).

3.4.3 The role of juju societies

Juju societies (or secret societies) are in charge of law enforcement. Juju refers to the particular masquerade associated with a secret society (Bartelt 2006:146). The word juju originates from the French word *joujou* or *toy*. The colonial powers used it to refer to the charms and fetishes which were associated with traditional African religions. Nowadays it is a Pidgin English word used for the 'entire complex of medicine in Central and West Africa, with special reference to its magical properties' (Bartelt 2006:146).

The masks the jujus wear can represent spirits, legendary animals and mythological beings. Masks are considered to carry spiritual powers. The shape of a mask is traditional and the carver will follow a design that evidently pleased the spirits in the past. The desired spirit will recognize the similarity and come to dwell in the mask. The identity of the wearer is concealed when he wears it and a new identity is created - one from the spirit world. (Finley 1999:13-15.)

The jujus generally serve to maintain political and social order. Their ability to control the course of daily life is attributed to the absolute secrecy in which juju societies operate:

The secretive and threatening authority of the jujus is the power which supports and sanctions all decisions, it enhances the secret society's distance to outsiders and thereby strengthens the entire political system itself (Koloss quoted in Bartelt 2006:146).

Jujus are able to maintain social order mostly because people believe that the 'medicine, masks and moral tradition of the juju society originate from God and the ancestors' (Bartelt 2006:146). Some have initiation rites consisting of cleansing, symbolic death, resurrection and entrance into a spiritual realm (Kwast 1971:29).

Mask societies do not meet regularly, but perform usually only during death celebrations, initiations and in secret medicine rituals. As soon as a member puts on the mask, 'he loses his identity as an ordinary person' and even other members of the society are careful of him. Masks must be obeyed without question, and are usually shown respect, distance, and even awe (Bartelt 2006:152-55).

3.4.4 The role of manjong groups

The manjong society is a military association based on citizenship. In Kejom each age group has its own manjong. If the security of the fondom is threatened a fon can order a specific age group to defend its borders. There are ten different social groups, varying from the oldest age group to the youth.

The manjong societies have no masquerade attached to them, and they are also not so secretive. The members openly meet usually once a week to discuss issues and problems concerning the community, and 'above all to socialize and drink palm wine' (Bartelt 2006:150). They mostly perform during death celebrations. Apart from dancing they will shoot their old Danish flint guns in the air, which often leads to injuries and even death when they are not properly fired (Jindra 1997:361).

3.5 Beliefs related to God and the ancestors

3.5.1 Introduction

In chapter two the beliefs of ATR concerning the Supreme God (2.2.3) and the ancestors (2.2.5 and 2.3) were discussed. In this section I discuss the beliefs concerning the Supreme God and the ancestors in Kejom Ketingu. It is important to know what people believe about the Supreme God in order to know in what way their views differ from the biblical view of God. It is also important to know what they believe about the ancestors and what the Bible teaches about them. In chapter 5 the views in Kejom Ketingu will be compared with the biblical perspectives.

3.5.2 The belief in *Nyìngòṅ* (Supreme Being) and *vənyìngòṅ* (gods)

The Kejom people use two names for God: *Mbwom*, which means builder, and *Nyìngòṅ*, which is the most frequently used word. He is the almighty creator of the universe; he is over all. He is untouchable. One cannot see him. He knows what we are doing. One informant called him the Fon of heaven and earth. He is frightful and far away, and people cannot go to him. He has great powers. Although the Kejom people respect *Nyìngòṅ*, they believe that he can only intervene through the ancestors. Their loyalty is thus to the ancestors. People don't have faith that God will help them, and they believe they can only go through the ancestors to him. He is believed to be distant, while the ancestors and the gods (*vənyìngòṅ*) are the ones close by. Maynard (quoted in Bartelt 2006:96) says, 'Most of the Grassfields cultures [including Kejom], are far more connected with the earth and the corresponding earth-bound world of gods and ancestors than with the heavens; indeed the sky holds little interest for them.'

It is not possible to have a personal relationship with *Nyìngòṅ*. He can only be approached through an intermediary – either the ancestors or the priests that are in charge of the shrines in the village. When people pray (their prayer is more like talking) they address their 'prayers' to the ancestors who are intermediaries that take them to *Nyìngòṅ*. The ancestors are the ones who are thought to provide, heal, bless and protect. Therefore only when there are very serious problems will the people pray directly to *Nyìngòṅ* or only when there is real happiness will they thank *Nyìngòṅ*. In very

difficult situations a 'warfare prayer' will be offered to *Nyìngòng*. One informant narrated how a diviner performed a ritual called *məkayn* in which he used a piece of black wood, which he scraped while praying. The diviner's prayer was addressed to *Nyìngòṅ*, although his name was not used; instead he was addressed as 'The one who roars and who passes and nothing survives.' The diviner explained the difficult situation and 'prayed,' 'Come in your vigour and snatch away this evil.' During this ritual the person involved can make a confession that he/she has not done anything wrong, so that it will not be held against him/her. In the end the diviner stood at the door and blew off the wood dust and declared that as the dust was blown away, the evil would go.

Apart from *Nyìngòṅ* and the ancestors, the people believe in gods, the *vənyìngòṅ*, that live in streams, under trees, under stones and in caves. People believe God created the *vənyìngòṅ* to take care of their problems. People will pass through the *vənyìngòṅ* to go to God. The sites are marked by shrines of a large flat stone of 18-24 inches in length (Diduk 1993:556).

In some compounds there are two clay pots with eyes painted on it. These are the family gods. They keep 'medicine' in the pots. When there is a problem with their children they will leave an offering of a mixture of fish, egusi (seeds of a type of cucumber) and cam wood (the inner part of bar wood that is ground and used for anointing) at these pots to feed the gods.

Diduk (1993:556) states that in the neighbouring village Kejom Keku there are about fifty male and female gods of varying importance. Since the two villages have a common history it is likely that the number of gods in Kejom Ketingu is similar. Turaki (2000:§ II.3) says that divinities have a specific area of influence and control. They cover different aspects of life, such as water, rain, thunder, fertility, health or sickness, planting or harvesting, tribal, clan or family. The divinities have varying powers, influence, hierarchical position, and territoriality. This seems to be the case in Kejom Ketingu. The gods are especially called on at the beginning of the year. Once a year the priests in Kejom go to all the entrances of the village to perform rituals to the gods of the land. During planting season people call on the gods. The gods seem to operate more on the

level of the whole village, while the ancestors watch over particular families. People fear the ancestors more than the *vənyìngòḥ*.

3.5.3 The beliefs about the *tí'vəvəti'* (the ancestors)

The beliefs about the ancestors described previously in 2.3 are also true for the Kejom people:

(1) *They are believed to be the guardians of the family.* The ancestors can cause problems when rites during a mourning period have not been properly performed or when the death celebration has not taken place. The ancestors also can become disgruntled when somebody in the family causes disunity.

(2) *They are benefactors and can bring blessings to the family.* People believe that the ancestors can bless with children, provide wealth and a good harvest. They believe the ancestors will work hard for them if the living follow in the footsteps of their fathers?

(3) *The ancestors can be mediators between the living and their gods.* They have lived on earth and know how difficult things can be. They can mediate between the living and the gods (*vənyìngòḥ*) and God (*Nyìngòḥ*). *Nyìngòḥ* passes blessings through the *tí'vəvəti'* and the *vənyìngòḥ* to the living.

3.5.4 The beliefs about mortuary rituals and the ancestor connection

As already mentioned in the section on ATR (2.3.5), mortuary rituals play an important role in the sending off of the ancestors. Without them, or if they are not properly performed, it is believed that the disgruntled ancestors will come and trouble the family. Great effort and substantial finances are necessary to achieve the proper performances of the mourning rituals and the death celebration. The latter is held after an undetermined amount of time, which can be months, a year or even years, after the mourning period.

Mortuary rituals are held for every adult person in Kejom who dies. Mfonyam (2010:113) who comes from a neighbouring language group says that people in the North West region (including the Kejom people) celebrate death as a traditional religious ceremony.

It seems that people live their whole life in view of the day they will die. A person will leave instructions for his family on how he wants to be buried and how the death celebration should be performed. It is very important for the family to meticulously follow these instructions. People believe that the ancestors require it. If a death celebration is not held, 'bad luck' may befall the children until it is held (Jindra 1997:361). According to Mfonyam (2010:134) the death celebration is a demand of the ancestors. What the living do for the dead influences the dead's well-being in the world of the dead. Ancestors are said to 'come back' and attend death celebrations, witnessing them and in some ways participating in the food, drink and entertainment. A death celebration is an occasion to thank the ancestors and send them away happy (Jindra 1997: 254,366-7).

3.6 The funeral

In order to have a complete picture of what happens when somebody dies in Kejom Ketingu, I will also provide a brief description of how people prepare for the funeral and the funeral itself, although this is not the focus of this research. Once a person has died, relatives, friends and the community show their sorrow. People cry and wail and some of the women roll on the ground. All the relatives are informed, and all the in-laws and male children gather to plan and prepare for the funeral. People come to the compound of the dead person to show their sympathy to the family (Mfonyam 2010:92,115). Sometimes the corpse will be taken to the mortuary in one of the nearby towns until all the relatives that live outside the village have arrived.

If the corpse stays in the house, the funeral takes place within one or two days after the person has died. All the children contribute money towards the expenses of the funeral (coffin, food and drinks) (Mfonyam 2010:117). All the relatives bring a piece of white cloth that will be put on the corpse in the coffin. The departed needs to be dressed for his journey to eternity. Part of the white cloth is kept aside and torn into pieces, which are tied on the arm and waist of the males and females respectively as a sign that they belong to the family.

Preparations for the funeral can be elaborate. The house where the deceased is going to 'lie in state' is decorated. The family may decide to buy material for the whole family

to sow a 'uniform' so that at the funeral the whole family will wear a dress or shirt of the same material (Mfonyam 2010:117).

The family prepares a lot of food for the funeral. A cow, goat or fowls are sometimes cooked so that the deceased's family can prove to the people attending the funeral that they have wealth. People who attend the funeral generally also bring cooked food, crates of drinks and jugs of palm wine. If someone dies in town the corpse will be taken to the village on the day the funeral takes place. It is extremely important for people to be buried in the home area so that the deceased can join the ancestors. The family may have to spend a lot of money to transport the corpse to the village. Relatives that live in town and friends will accompany the corpse on the journey to the village.

The moment of burial is an emotional time. People cry and wail. Immediately after the burial there is firing of guns and then the feasting begins (Mfonyam 2010:119). Each relative hosts a group of people in one of the houses in the compound or even in houses of neighbours. Eating and drinking can go on for hours. Groups dance during this time.

If people suspect something is wrong they will ask a medicine man to perform a postmortem to find out the cause of death. He will cut the stomach open and after he has determined the cause, jujus will put the person in the coffin. They are the ones who bury the corpse. They spray the graveside with medicine and pronounce a curse over whoever has caused the death and declare that the person will also die. After the burial has taken place it will be quiet for a certain time before the people start firing their guns.

3.7 Mourning period – *pfu bighə* (bad death)

3.7.1 First sacrifice: *tsunjə mbvuse*- tying a fowl

It has already been mentioned that rituals play an important role in ATR. Turaki (2008 (1):180) states that spirit beings, whether they are ancestors or gods, respond to correct ritual. The effectiveness of the rituals depends upon the correct performance.

In Kejom Ketingu there are several sacrifices that are offered and libations poured during the mourning period. Adeyemo (1997:33) gives a definition of sacrifice and offering: a sacrifice 'is an act of worship where animal life is destroyed.' An offering

refers to all other cases in which no animals are killed. Van Rheezen (1991:291) adds that animal sacrifices are considered more powerful because blood, 'the vehicle of life,' is shed. Sacrifices are believed to be a means of contact or communion between man and, in Kejom Ketingu, the ancestors (Adeyemo 1997:33). The rituals that are performed in Kejom Ketingu are meant to ward off danger. Mbiti (quoted in Adeyemo 1997:33) says when the ontological balance between man and the departed is upset, or people fear it is upset, the sacrifices help, at least psychologically, to restore this balance.

The beginning of the mourning period starts after the funeral has taken place. People get fed first and there is a lot of gun shooting that can go on for some time. The first ritual which is held in the evening after the funeral is a sacrifice called *tsunə mbvʉsə*. All the children of the deceased and the deceased's nephews and nieces bring a fowl and tie them upside down on a bamboo stick which has been hung in front of the bed of the deceased. If the person was somebody with a large family there can be up to a hundred fowls. It is believed that if any family member does not bring his/her own chicken, he/she cannot be successful in anything. Each person 'gives the fowl to the deceased in order to let him go with it in peace.' Members of a red feather society called *vi'inshyè* (members of this society are people who have killed somebody while defending the village) strangulate the fowls. They are then divided among the members of this society who alone eat them.

In the past this sacrifice was done on the eve of the funeral. It had a divinatory purpose: if there were people who had wronged the deceased, for instance through committing immorality with his wife, the fowl would indicate it. A diviner would interpret the behaviour of the fowls and the person believed to have wronged the deceased would die. Moral standards dropped and quite a number of people were dying, and to avoid further deaths it was decided that the sacrifice would take place after the burial.

If relatives were not around during this sacrifice and they arrive later, this sacrifice will still be performed by them.

3.7.2 Second sacrifice: *tsintə mbvəsə* - plucking a fowl

On the morning of the third day each child of the family and the children of the in-laws bring another fowl and a jug with five litres of palm wine, some palm oil and a cup of salt. Several activities then take place: (i) a special pot of fufu is cooked (fufu is the staple food in Ketingu and it is made out of corn flour which is boiled into a thick paste), (ii) a sacrifice is performed, (iii) libations are poured (see 3.7.3), and (iv) several cleansing rituals take place (see 3.7.6).

The women cook fufu in a big pot and then remove it and the pot is left dirty. The first fufu that is prepared is meant for special people who have performed particular traditional rites during the mourning period. After that the pot is taken outside and put on three stones. Then the second sacrifice takes place. All the men gather in a circle. An elderly person then inspects the oil, palm wine and salt that each one has brought. After this they all move together as a group to the kitchen house, which is most of the time a separate building, where the oil and salt is left behind which will be used once the fowls are slaughtered. They then walk back to where the pot is standing and pour the palm wine inside it. They gather again with the fowls, which will also be inspected. Once again the men walk as a group to the kitchen. They take the fowls, which are still alive, and stand by the door while they remove the feathers one by one and throw them inside the house. Each one says, "This is ... (the person's name). I have given a fowl." They call the name of the deceased and other ancestors or they say, "This is your fowl, go with hot hands (leave us in peace)" or "As you go, give us blessing." After this the neck of the chicken is cut. The fowls are now roasted and cut in pieces, and the legs thrown into the crowd where the people fight over them. The heads are given to small children. Palm oil is mixed with salt and this is given with the fowl, which is then shared by all the men who are present. They receive it with their left hand which is unusual since the left hand is considered unclean and is normally not used for eating. The fowl is eaten with fufu and vegetables. All the gizzards, legs and wings are given to the person organising the *pfu bighə*. He will share this mostly with elderly people and people coming from different neighbourhoods. The blood may be thrown on the shrine in the centre of the

compound. The women do not eat this fowl (or any fowl that has been sacrificed). They either eat some fish or a bought fowl that has not been involved in the sacrifice.

This sacrifice is done to satisfy the person who has died, and also to make sure the ancestors will remember them well. If a member of the family was absent during the *pfu bighə* and came later, he will still take a fowl and follow the same procedure to avoid trouble. This shows again that correct ritual is important.

During the *pfu mughə* there are no sacrifices (see below). It is a time of celebration.

3.7.3 Libations

The libations of palm wine are part of the same ritual described in 3.7.2. The palm wine is provided by each member of the family. The family head, or if he has died, his brother or a son, performs the libations. He will take the wine to the kitchen and pour it into the big pot in which the fufu was cooked (see 3.7.2). An elderly man from the quarter takes the pot and puts it outside where they have put three stones. An elderly woman then comes with a bowl which will be partly tipped. A widower pours wine from the pot into this bowl – since it is tipped it pours on the ground. After this each man pours his jug of wine in the pot. Women will be represented by their husbands. While they pour out the wine they call their own name and the names of the deceased and other ancestors. After calling out these names, they will say, “We take this cup with one single heart so that you may give us blessings.” They will request specific blessings and protection while pouring out the palm wine. Somebody who has lost a relative in the past sits next to the pot and dishes out the wine and everyone present drinks from the pot. After this the pot is removed. An elderly person then takes the three stones on which the pot was resting and throws them far in three different directions – they are throwing the spirit of death and misfortune out of the compound.

3.7.4 Groups that will come and visit

During the *pfu bighə* groups of people visit to sympathize with the bereaved family. These are mostly social groups like njangi groups (a saving society) or church groups. They bring food to share with the family and other people that are there and sing and

dance. Although the family will be providing food during the *pfu bighə*, quite a lot of food will be brought by people who come to sympathize with the bereaved.

The only manjong group that will come to visit is the group to which the deceased belonged, to commemorate the death of their age mate. During one of the nights (or sometime after the *pfu bighə*) they observe a waking either at the compound of the deceased or nearby. Early in the morning throughout the three days other people, friends, people from the quarter and family members fire guns while standing on the grave. It is their own way of expressing their grief. In 2012, after a number of deadly accidents with gun shooting, the Cameroonian government has forbidden any gun shooting in the country.

Juju groups do not come during this period. If there is a juju in the compound they will dance in the night and the women are not supposed to see them. People believe they are 'burying the person.'

3.7.5 Practices concerning the widow or widower

When a person dies the widow or widower has to pass through a period of serious restrictions in what she/he can do and with whom she/he can talk. Jindra (1997:359) says, 'mourning, especially for widows, is severe and lengthy, lest the spirit of the dead person be upset and harm the health and fertility of the living and their crops.'

When a person has died plantain leaves are spread out on the ground in all the houses of the compound. A room is kept for the widower or widow. He/she will be isolated from people that come. The widow or widower is not supposed to shake hands or communicate with anybody during these three days, except with other widows or widowers. The food for the widow/widower is put on a broken plate, and nobody else will use it. People believe that if they use that plate they will also die.

The widow/widower will sit and sleep on the ground during the three days (and sometimes even up to one month after the spouse has died). Formerly they would sleep on the plantain leaves; nowadays a mattress is given to them. They cannot go anywhere and they cannot do anything. Wherever the surviving spouse goes he/she will be

accompanied by other widowers/widows. Other women will go to the widow's farm during this period and harvest food for her and cook. She is not supposed to go out to harvest food and she is not supposed to cook.

3.7.6 Cleansing rituals

3.7.6.1 Washing off death

During the last day of the *pfu bighə* a series of purification rituals takes place aimed at reducing the bad influence caused by the death. The people, burial tools and the compound were polluted by death. The goals of the purification rituals are threefold: (i) to eliminate the pollution caused by the death, (ii) to 'forget' the deceased which is part of the grieving process, and (iii) to prevent the spirit of the deceased from coming back (Jindra 1997: 359).

At the end of the three days the close relatives all go and wash in the stream in order to wash death from their bodies. They will rub palm oil on their hands, face, feet or the whole body. This is seen as a cleansing rite. Any curse on the family is washed with the flowing stream. Death is regarded as a curse (Mfonyam 2010:123). The widow or widower is also washed. If it is a woman, other widows will bathe her. She will then remain in the house for a month.

3.7.6.2 Throwing death out of the compound

Another cleansing ritual is done by all the in-laws. They gather all the plantain leaves that were put on the floor in the different houses. The leaves are thrown out and the floor in the houses is swept as a sign that they are throwing out death. They may burn some incense to drive the spirit of the dead person away.

3.7.6.3 Shaving of hair – cleaning off the death

All the people will shave their heads. Every memory of the dead person is cleaned off and people start a new phase without this person. It is also a sign of sympathy; the relatives are showing they are mourning the deceased. After shaving, all the razorblades that were used and the hair are thrown into the toilet. If somebody refuses to shave,

people believe he/she does not show respect or knows something about the cause of the death.

Although several informants told me this custom is dying out, I observed a whole family (maybe more than a 100 people) shave all their hair off. Sometimes only a small part at the front of the head is shaved.

3.7.6.4 Driving the hands of death away

Another cleansing ritual is done 'to drive away the hands of death.' A herbalist is called 'to wash everybody.' He will use some traditional leaves mixed with water. This mixture is put into a pot, two spears are planted within some space, and elephant stalk (a type of grass) is put next to it. Each person then passes through the opening of the spears and the elephant stalks. The people open their hands, the herbalist squeezes the herbs with water from the pot, they throw it over themselves three times, and then also wash their faces.

This ritual will be repeated after one month. After it has been performed again a group of women take the widow to the farm and 'show her how to farm.' She will then be allowed to go and work in the farm again and use her own pots to cook food. When she can finally go out she has 'washed the hands of her deceased husband' so that she will have peace. In some families they may shave their heads again.

If it is a woman who has lost her husband, her children may have bought her a mourning dress. Nowadays it is mostly white, although black is also possible. She will wear the dress for a full year. It is a sign of recognition that this person has lost her husband.

3.7.7 Family meeting at the end of the *pfu bighə*.

The last activity that takes place is a family meeting at the end of the mourning period. The family meets to take stock and seek the blessing of the ancestors, and this is called 'making the house, family sleep in peace' (Mfonyam 2010:124). This meeting is led by the family head, or, if he has died, his brother or his son. The family evaluates the *pfu bighə*. The members discuss, share property and money of the deceased, and

sometimes if there is a need will decide who will take care of children that remain. They will also plan for the death celebration and decide when it will be held.

The possible cause of the death is discussed during the meeting. Any confessions needed to be made or any complaints are addressed. At the end of the meeting wine is drunk from a cup – the cup of the father of the compound. The family head first pours out some of the wine on the ground as a libation to the ancestors. He then fills up the cup and gives it to the members of the family and they drink in turn as the cup is passed around. The head of the family invokes the blessing of the ancestors on the family (Mfonyam 2010:124).

3.8 Death celebration – *pfu mughə* (old death)

3.8.1 Introduction

No period of time is laid down before the death celebration can be held. As already noted, it can be conducted within weeks, months, a year and sometimes years after the mourning period. In some cases the family keeps postponing it because of lack of means. It can also be delayed because the children of the deceased are too young to organise it. It cannot be postponed indefinitely when it has been found out through diviners that the ancestors are not happy with the delay (Mfonyam 2010:127). Sooner or later it will be celebrated, and the more important the deceased, the grander the death celebration must be (Knöpfli 2002:93). Jindra (1997:361) states that the 'death celebration brings the mortuary cycle to its culmination.' Death celebrations are an entire 'social jamboree.' Drums, xylophones or other instruments provide rhythm for the dancing, which can alternate between general public dancing and the organized performances of dance groups. Jindra (1997:361) calls it 'an exuberant atmosphere of colour, sound and smell.' Food and drink are ever present, and big pots of fufu, rice etc., can be found cooking in the back of houses.

There is a serious purpose underlying all the activities. The future prosperity of the family depends on blessings from the ancestors (Jindra 1997:361). The death celebration is held because it is believed that ill luck will befall the family if it is not

organised, or because the family has already experienced problems and a diviner has told them that they need to organise the death celebration.

It is believed that the ancestors can see what is going on. The family organises the death celebration 'to remember the ancestor' and he is invited to witness 'how the family has come together' (Jindra 1997:16).

3.8.2 Preparation for a death celebration

The date of the death celebration is often determined by divination. Relatives will pull a stick from a pile and take it to a different diviner. If people come back with information that is similar, they will decide on that date. They will then inform the kwifon and the fon. The kwifon will find out if there are any misunderstandings between them, and if so call them together to advise them. The kwifon can ask them to change the date.

Once they have agreed on a date the whole family decides what each one needs to provide. Each family member has to contribute money and certain things. All the women pay a *ton tə pftu* (a contribution for the celebration). The men pay a *ton tə pftu* and provide a goat. The in-laws prepare the celebration. If there is an in-law that has not completed paying the dowry, he will have to contribute some of it now. If he doesn't pay, he will not be allowed to attend the death celebration. Every son and daughter will look for a place to conduct a *cho* – a day of raising money for the death celebration. It will be held on a 'country Sunday,' a traditional day of rest. A pig will be killed and prepared. People will be invited to come to the compound where the *cho* is held. Each of the invitees will bring a contribution, either money or in kind, which will be recorded. This keeping of records is very important as in subsequent death celebrations each surviving spouse and the family will be expecting the same contribution or more than he had made. The contribution is obligatory. The things received are in effect debts to be paid back with interest (Mfonyam 2010:235). Women will prepare fufu; each one who has contributed food or money for the death celebration will get some fufu and pork and bitter herbs. The herbs indicate that the bitterness of death is over.

3.8.3 Opening of the death celebration

On the day that the celebration is supposed to start the kwifon will arrive around 4 p.m. to open the death celebration when it is for a man. A juju goes ahead of them to announce their coming. Men will be waiting for them with guns. When they hear them approaching they will start firing their guns. Part of the compound will be fenced off from where they will enter. Only people that are initiated may follow them. When the death celebration is for a woman, a juju group called *Agə* will come. The members of the kwifon are not masked, but women are not supposed to see them. They use gongs, dance, fire guns and make a lot of noise. According to one informant, it is a frightful event.

The family provides food and palm wine for the kwifon (or for the *Agə* when they open the death celebration). After they have danced they are awarded with a money gift. Some of the family will take them back to the palace. The next morning at 6 o'clock the family still have to bring the members of the kwifon more food items: a pig, fowls, palm wine, oil and salt. It will be taken to the palace where it will be prepared for the kwifon.

3.8.4 Visiting Groups

After the kwifon has opened the death celebration, groups may come and perform. The next day dancing starts proper. Each of the children that provided a fowl for the *tsuŋə mbvɥsə* (sacrifice) during the *pfɥ bighə* will arrange for a juju group, a manjong group, or a social group to come and dance.

If the deceased was a member of a juju group this group will come. The family always needs to give them a fowl before they start dancing. Only then they will enter the compound and start dancing.

Brian and Pollock (1971:88-90) say the following about their performance:

During performances the identity of the masker is unknown ... The personality of the dancer is entirely subordinate to that of the mask. The dancer's face is obscured, covered entirely by the mask (if it is of the helmet or face type), or by extensions made of cloth or raffia tied to holes

in the base of the mask. The performance of a [juju] society... is strictly controlled by its own officers. Masks and dancers are announced by heralds who appear in the field, leaping about in front of the spectators announcing the arrival of the masks. The drums or xylophones are manned by special teams expert at the type of music associated with each juju.

Jindra (2011:124-125) says that the dancing at the death celebration enables the deceased to go in peace and not bother the living, but instead provide them with blessings. 'The performance of the juju dancers with their synchronized dance steps at the death celebration is a visual demonstration of unity between the living and the dead. In this sense there is communication between the living and the dead.' It is believed that the dancing of a juju group sends the deceased off to his/her final destination. After the jujus have danced they will eat and drink.

The oldest son will bring his manjong group on the first day. Others come the next day. Before they start shooting guns the family will have to show them the goats they want to give them, and there may still be some negotiations before they accept the gifts. They then dance and shoot their guns. I observed how the dance itself is a mock battle. The members of the manjong group brandish their guns and, in some cases, their cutlasses at each other or the crowd. While dancing, groups of three or four members will move forward and shoot their guns as if they are shooting at an unseen enemy. Once they are done they will prepare the animals themselves, and women will bring fufu to be eaten with the prepared goat. If it is a cry-die for women no manjong will come. Instead traditional dance groups and juju groups will come and perform. The family can even invite church groups. Depending on the number of groups that are invited, the death celebration may last one to three days.

3.8.5 A successful death celebration

People view a successful death celebration as one where there was enough food and drink, no accidents/wounds during the gun shooting, and the juju groups have been well fed. When the whole family has taken part it means bad luck has been removed. Jindra

(1997:361) confirms the importance of unity in the family: 'the visible demonstration of family unity is crucial for a successful death celebration.' During a visit to one of the churches in Ketingu people reported the death of a child due to a gun that exploded. This is considered a very bad sign. The death celebration was stopped and it will be necessary to hold it again at a later time.

3.8.6 Installation of a successor

At the end of the death celebration there will be another family meeting. Jindra (1997:361-63) states that this family meeting is the 'summation of internal family relationships.' In order to receive the blessings of the ancestors there needs to be harmony and unity in the family; if it is divided there will be curses. It is crucial therefore that the family members cooperate with one another. If there is lack of cooperation the ancestors will most likely be upset with them.

In some cases the death celebration will end with the installation of a new successor if the deceased was a family head. On the third day the family members will gather around 4 p.m. in their father's house. The deceased may have left a will and appointed a successor, or he may have informed his oldest daughter whom he wants to be the successor. The daughter will be sworn to secrecy in order to avoid problems in the family. It is a highly desired position. The most senior son cannot be the successor; he is the elder of the family.

Once the family is gathered the senior son will ask the daughter in whom the father has confided, to reveal the name of the successor. After his name has been announced the women then take over, they will take the successor into their father's room. He is rubbed with cam wood and palm oil and will be dressed in a loincloth tied around his waist in a particular way and remain bare-chested. It is considered as a sort of anointing for his role as a successor. They then put their late father's cap on his head, give him his drinking cup, his beads (necklace) and his bag, and put him on the stool of their father. They will also rub the stool with cam wood. Then they present him with their late father's drinking cup (made from a cow horn). This cup is highly significant and has been used from generation to generation by family heads. Even if it breaks it is not to be thrown

away but patched with another piece of cow horn. It is used in various rituals and when libations need to be poured. The successor then puts wine in the cup and pours it while standing in the doorway and calls all the names of ancestors from as far back as he can remember to the most recent one. He is giving them their own share. He will drink from it and pass the cup around to all the brothers and sisters while they kneel before him.

When they finish a special juju (either a family juju or one from outside) will take the successor outside and lead him around the compound. This is accompanied by a lot of gun shooting and shouting, which is to welcome the new successor. After that there is serious feasting with fufu, fowls and palm wine.

The meaning of these rituals is to make clear that the man is the new father of the compound. If somebody is against him this person will have ill luck. The family head will be called by the name of their late father. He will play an important role in the family. Nothing will be done without his involvement. The family will meet regularly to decide on issues concerning the children and grandchildren. He is the priest of the family and will perform sacrifices when needed and put protective medicine around the house. In anything that concerns the family he is the one to make the decisions.

When there is a problem in the family, the family head will bring the successor's cup and call the family. He will put palm wine in the cup and call the name of the father while pouring some of it as a libation. After that the whole family drinks from that cup. If there is a family member who has caused an offence, it is the responsibility of the family head to call a family meeting with the person in question. At this meeting he makes clear that the ancestors are not happy and the offending member is admonished to change. If there is refusal, they will call on the spirits of the bad ancestors – those who bring trouble, and ask them to deal with him. If he repents the successor puts palm wine in the cup and the family members all drink. This is followed by pouring a libation with thanks to the ancestors for their interference.

If there is a need for a sacrifice, it will either be performed by the family head or by a high priest. It can be performed in the compound at the grave side or at road junctions. If it is a sacrifice to counteract problems, the family head may approach the ancestors

and ask, "What have we done wrong that this is happening to us?" Or the person who has done something wrong will confess and say, "I have cheated," and then will ask for forgiveness. The person will then address the ancestors by first stating his own name and then saying, "This is what is what I did wrong. Now this is my own" (meaning that the sacrifice is his to counteract the wrong he did). The person who has done something wrong will talk while he pours libations saying, "Open my eyes so that I will see good things again. Now that I have done this, give me children and blessings so that I prosper." "This is what you asked us to do, so accept our sacrifice and take away the trouble."

3.8.7 The importance of unity in the family

As already mentioned in 3.8.5, the visible unity of the family is crucial for a successful death celebration since people believe that the well-being of the family depends on it (Jindra (1997:361). Christians who do not participate in cry-dies 'are looked upon as those who do not respect elders since they do not venerate their recently deceased ancestors' (van Rheenen 1991:240). It causes a serious problem and repercussions when one of the relatives refuses to take part in rituals during the mourning period or a death celebration. The family will first attempt to put pressure on this member to change his/her mind. The member may be forced to take part out of fear of retaliation by the ancestors. People fear that the person refusing to participate has adopted a strange tradition, and are afraid that disease, misfortune or curses will befall the family as a result of such behaviour. While I was attending the final day of a mourning period the family threatened to beat up one of the widows who refused to shave her hair. In the end the family allowed her not to shave after the intervention of other people present.

One of the informants told me that his father first of all threatened him with impending danger. Then when he still did not give in he was disowned for refusing to take part in the death celebration. In this case his father later reconciled with him.

Other implications of not wanting to take part in death celebrations are of a financial nature. When somebody wants to stop attending (or organizing) death celebrations people will demand contributions back that they have given to the person during

previous death celebrations in his/her family (Mfonyam 2010:138). If this repayment is not carried out, it can even result in a court case.

If there is any misfortune, the family will be called together and diviners may be involved. The family members are required to attend this event. If someone is absent without an excuse the family may interpret it as 'ill will' or a proof of witchcraft toward family members. Before any eating or drinking can take place the family head will need to resolve any conflicts, for these can be the cause of the 'ill luck'. If the family meeting is successful it can bring peace and prosperity to the family (Jindra 1997:363).

3.9 Summary of activities during the *pfu bighə* (mourning period) and the *pfu mughə* (death celebration)

The summary table below enables one at a glance to see the differences between and common elements in the mourning period and death celebration. The table (vertically down) also follows the sequence of events in every day which accounts for some items being listed more than once in the first column.

	<i>Pfu bighə</i>			<i>Pfu mughə</i>		
	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3
<i>cho</i> / contribution of gifts				✓****		
kwifon opens/Agə opens				✓		
sacrifice: <i>tsuŋə mbvʉsə</i>	✓					
prayer/talking to ancestors	✓					
manjong group performs/shoots guns		✓*			✓ *****	

other gun shooting	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
juju groups perform		✓**			✓	✓
social groups dance	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
feasting	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
sacrifice: <i>tsintè mbvuse</i>			✓			
prayer/talking to ancestors			✓			
libation			✓			
prayer/talking to ancestors			✓			
throwing death out of the compound			✓			
cleansing rituals: washing off death			✓			
shaving of death			✓			
cleansing compound of death			✓			
washing the hands of death			✓			
family meeting			✓			✓
libation			✓			
installation of successor						✓ *****

libation						✓
washing the hands of death			✓***			
'showing' the widow how to farm			✓***			

* a manjong group will only come if the deceased was a member

** a juju will only come at night and perform if the compound/family has a juju

*** the repetition of the washing the hands of death ritual and showing the widow how to farm, takes place after one month

**** the contribution of gifts will take place before the actual death celebration starts before day 1

***** manjong groups will not come for the death celebration of a woman

***** the installation of a successor only takes place when the deceased was a family head.

3.10 The link between the *pfu bighə* and *pfu mughə* and the ancestral cult

The people in Kejom do not believe that the soul of the deceased is sent off to the abode of the dead when the *pfu bighə* is over. After the burial the soul of the deceased is still roaming around, and after the *pfu bighə* the spirit of the deceased is out of the compound but not far away. Until the death celebration has been completed the spirit moves around. The spirit of the deceased can come back and talk to the living. People believe that if the *pfu bighə* was not properly performed the deceased can come back and bring curses. For instance, if people were not well fed, or if people were wounded during the gun shooting, the ancestors can come and trouble them and cause ill luck.

Similarly, if the death celebration is not held or not properly performed ill luck may result: destruction of children; sickness; no children or property; deaths in the family; and

disasters like strong winds that blow off the roofs of the houses or being struck by lightning. Everybody must be involved in her death celebration. When people think the ancestors are displeased with them they go to a diviner to divine the cause of the ill luck. They may need to organise a second and better mourning period or death celebration so that the family can be free, or they may need to call jujus and feed them well to satisfy the ancestors.

After the *pfu mughə* people believe the spirit of the deceased is in the abode of the ancestors and is free from stress and work. The spirit can go and meet *Nyingonj* and come back; and is also watching the living and can give blessings or curses. It is believed that when a good person dies he will be a good spirit who will bring blessing. They will call on him and ask for blessing.

3.11 Conclusion

This chapter has not only provided some information about the history and geographical location of the Kejom people, especially in Ketingu, but demonstrated that their religious and cosmological beliefs and customs reflect essentially what is found throughout the African tribes/peoples. Many of the social activities in Kejom Ketingu have to do with death. Mfonyam (2010:113), who is a member of a neighbouring community, says that people in his community celebrate death more than they celebrate life. My research has shown this to be also true of the people in Kejom Ketingu.

This chapter has given a description of various rituals that take place during the mourning period (*pfu bighə*) and death celebration (*pfu mughə*) in Kejom Ketingu. By performing all the various rituals during the *pfu bighe* and *pfu mughə* the people in Ketingu hope to live in peace and receive only blessings from the ancestors.

In comparing their view of God with the biblical view it can be seen that their view of God is limited (see next chapter). God is far from them and they believe they cannot go to him directly. God can only work through the ancestors. People believe in their influence in their lives and thus many rituals are performed in their honour out of fear of misfortune, sickness or death if they neglected them.

The information in this chapter was gathered and co-ordinated as this paved the way for research into the churches in Kejom Ketingu to assess the members involvement in mortuary rituals and also their beliefs about the ancestor cult as the two are intricately linked. Gehman (1999:xiii) states that many African Christians, even though they are baptized, have never given up their traditional belief in the living-dead. They believe that the living-dead still have power to affect their lives. Especially when faced with difficulties, sickness and death, many Christians go to diviners to seek help from them. According to Gehman (1999:28), this is one of the greatest reasons for backsliding among Christians. The next chapter presents empirical research on the situation among the denominations in Kejom Ketingu with reference to mortuary rites.

Chapter 3 has demonstrated that the mourning period and death celebration in Kejom Ketingu are unmistakably undergirded by and steeped in the ancestral cult. Without the cult there would be far less or no mortuary rites. Clearly this will have serious ramifications for believers in Kejom Ketingu if much, or all, of the ancestral cult cannot be accommodated with Christianity without serious syncretism.

Chapter 4:

How do the four denominations in Kejom Ketingu presently handle mortuary rites?

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents my empirical research amongst the four Christian denominations in Kejom Ketingu. The aim of this study was to determine if and in what ways the Christians blend Christianity with elements of ATR that constitutes syncretism, especially with reference to the mortuary rituals. I also investigated in what way the church leaders counsel their members concerning mortuary rituals.

Firstly I present a brief history of the four main denominations in the North West of Cameroon: the Baptist Church, the Full Gospel Mission, the Presbyterian Church and the Roman Catholic Church. This is in order to gain some idea of how syncretism, if found to be present, may have developed. Some of this historical information I gathered through personal contacts and the rest through literary sources.

Secondly, I provide a description of the research methods I used in gathering the information from the different church members. Then there follows a discussion of the results and an attempt at drawing some conclusions ends the chapter.

4.2 History of Christianity in the North West of Cameroon

4.2.1 The effect of colonization on the spread of the gospel

Christianity was introduced in Cameroon towards the middle of the 19th century. In 1884 the Germans made treaties with Cameroonian chiefs which established a German protectorate that lasted 30 years. The German colonial policy played an important role in

the penetration and spread of the gospel in Cameroon. The Germans started plantations and built railway lines and roads, employing thousands of labourers. Between 1891 and 1895 there was considerable fighting between some of the tribes of the Grasslands and the Germans. Although the Germans aggressively subordinated these tribes, it opened the way for missionaries to move to the interior. The first Basel Mission station (now the Presbyterian Church) in the Grasslands was opened at the request of a German official. The First World War brought an end to the German protectorate. German troops were defeated in 1916 by French, British and Belgian troops (Kwast 1971:55-58). Cameroon was divided between France and Britain (Brain and Eyongetah quoted in Griffis 2011:40). The North West region was placed under British administration (Griffis 2011:40).

The two world wars had a serious effect on the work of missions and the Church in West Cameroon. The growth of the Church was disrupted, bringing it nearly to a standstill between 1914 and 1925 and then again between 1940 and 1945 (Kwast 1971:58).

In 1960 French Cameroon became fully independent from France and became the Cameroon Republic. In 1961 a plebiscite was held when Southern Cameroon, the South West and North West region voted to join the Cameroon Republic, thus creating the Federal Republic of Cameroon (Griffis 2011:52). The period of greatest church growth was from the Second World War to the present (Kwast 1971:58).

4.2.2 The effect of the plantations

The large plantations in the coastal area which grew bananas, oil palm, cocoa, and rubber, played a significant role in the spread of the gospel in the Cameroon Grasslands. German commercial firms had opened these plantations at the end of the nineteenth century. Many people working in the labor camps of the plantations came from the North West of Cameroon. They tended to group together according to family and tribe. The plantation workers developed their own culture and society. After the First World War when part of Cameroon came under British administration the common language used in the plantations was Pidgin English. The plantations provided an opportunity to evangelise and convert the workers. The kingdoms of the North West

region with their strict social and political structures would hardly have allowed any innovation which did not support the power of the fons and their sub chiefs. This was because Christianity challenged some of the basic beliefs and practices which supported their authority and status (Lockhart 1996:38-40). The workers in the plantations felt free enough to disregard religious taboos, rituals and social customs that the traditions back at home demanded of them (Kwast 1971:38-39). Almost all the men who worked on the plantations attended Christian services at some time during their stay in the camps (Lockhart 1996:38-40).

4.2.3 The Cameroon Baptist Convention

Joseph Merrick, a Jamaican of African ancestry, was the first Baptist missionary to begin evangelisation in Cameroon. He arrived in 1843 (Lockhart 1996:41). Merrick started to translate the Bible into Isubu, one of the many Cameroonian languages (Griffis 2011:31). The early missionaries gathered some villagers into mission compounds to teach them how to read God's Word. 'To become a Christian meant becoming literate, clothed and to some degree civilized' (Kwast 1971:146).

At the beginning of the First World War the German Baptist missionaries were interned. People from the Grasslands, who had come to the coast to find work, carried on with the work. They had found salvation in Christ and had received training to become evangelists (Kwast 1971:91; Russell 1983:221). These men shared the Gospel with their relatives and friends, who laughed at their strange message. 'Paganism arrayed itself against them ... They were beaten and stoned, made homeless and imprisoned, cursed and exiled but they returned' (Gebauer quoted in Kwast 1971:116).

The start of the Baptist church in Kejom Ketingu was mostly an indigenous effort. Lucas Ndifon, an illiterate man, was converted in the South West where he had lived for some time. He decided to go back to Kejom Ketingu in the early 1920s. He started a church in his own house as a pioneer deacon in Lower Ketingu. He got assistance later on from Gebauer, one of the Baptist missionaries. From there several new churches were planted. The church grew and eventually had to transfer to a different location in the village. For many years traditional rituals and practices took place alongside the

teaching of Scripture. A Kejom speaker told me how his father, who was a pastor, played the xylophone when juju groups were performing. The men would hold their men's meeting (an official church gathering) in church and drink palm wine on the church premises. There was no controversy between what was taught in the church and the traditional practices that took place. The Baptist Church in Lower Ketingu eventually started several churches in Upper Ketingu as well and the church gradually became the main denomination in the Kejom area. In 2006 a crusade, 'Kejom for Christ', was held. It was organized by one of the leading Kejom Baptist pastors together with all the pastors in Kejom. During this crusade a biblical perspective on the traditional practices was given and it brought a change in the whole of Kejom. People went as far as saying that the Bible these pastors were preaching from was a different Bible from the one they had been preaching from before. Differences have intensified since pastors put more emphasis on giving up certain traditions. This has resulted in a decrease in membership in recent years.

4.2.4 The Roman Catholic Church

The Roman Catholic Church opened their first mission station in the North West region in 1912 in Shishong. After the outbreak of World War I until 1922 there were no resident Catholic priests in North West Cameroon. In 1922 the Mill Hill fathers arrived from London. They opened primary schools at their main mission stations (Kwast 1971:132).

During their first years in the Grassfields the missionaries opposed traditional practices, including juju masquerades and sacrifices, in an effort to attack the religious bases of traditional authority (Bartelt 2006:109). They also opposed ancestor worship as well as the secret societies. 'This resulted in a backlash from the un-converted, who attacked and threatened [Christians] with death unless they gave up attending worship services, preaching on the roads was forbidden and Christians were to be deprived of the use of land unless they renounced being Christians' (Dah quoted in Bartelt 2006:109).

The Roman Catholic Church was established in Ketingu in the early 1920s. The first priest was stationed in Lower Ketingu before the Second World War. He started a dispensary with the help of some Kejom people; and a mission station was built. At the

start of war he had to leave, which brought the work to a halt for a number of years. After the war several expatriate priests were sent to Ketingu (Ruiz 1988:chapter 1). In the 1990s a priest was sent from Nigeria; and from 2006 onward a Cameroonian priest took over. The mission station is presently lead by a priest from a neighbouring language group. There is a school and a hospital and two small congregations in Upper Ketingu.

The attitude of the Roman Catholic Church changed. The ancestors entered Catholic ritual formally in the late 1960s when they began to be mentioned in Masses (Jindra 1997:369). The ancestral cult is the aspect of culture to which the African is most attached; the church therefore felt it needed to recognize the cult of the ancestors, otherwise people would be forced to practice it in secret (Éla 1993:14, 28). This change had a tremendous impact on notions of ancestors and made the Catholic Church significantly more attractive to Africans (Jindra 1997: 369).

However, the priest in Ketingu mentioned that various aspects of the ancestral cult are not approved in the Catechism of the Catholic Church. People are advised to stop offering sacrifices and practicing divination. The catechism used in teaching mentions that 'when we honour a creature in place of God, whether this be gods or demons, or ancestors... we commit idolatry' (The Catholic Catechism for the Bamenda Ecclesiastical Province 2008:69, 460, 461).

4.2.5 The Presbyterian Church

The Basel Mission (today the Presbyterian Church) became the most important mission during the period of German colonial control in Cameroon (Griffis 2011: 36-37). From 1903-1914 the target of the Basel Mission was to move into the interior of Cameroon. They opened their first mission station in the Grasslands in 1903 at Bali. Basel missionaries were sent home during the First World War. After the war they returned, but were interned at the outbreak of the Second World War. Since the latter war the Presbyterian Church has continued to grow rapidly. In 1957 the Basel Mission granted independence to their church and it became the Presbyterian Church (Kwast 1971:133).

Early missionaries tried to downgrade the traditions of the people because they considered that traditional dances and some practices were pagan activities in which Christians should not participate; this scared many people away from the church (Mfonyam 2011:95). Christians were forbidden to attend funerary celebrations, but this rule was not monitored very strictly (Nepomuk 2010:46). Dah (1983:205) adds that converts who wanted to be baptized had to give up 'all connection with ... heathen feasts, funerals and dances ... wearing of amulets, practices such as soothsaying, magic, questioning the dead and witchcraft.'

There was uneasiness in village communities between the Christian congregations and the remaining traditional people. Women were always the first ones to be baptized. This was because they didn't play a major role in traditional rituals and the church offered them a freedom which they did not possess in their society (Nepomuk 2010:53). Dah (1983:262-264) explains that the type of Christianity that was offered to the Cameroonian church was the type of Christianity known and practiced in the West .

Nowadays there are no official guidelines for the pastors in the Presbyterian Church on how to deal with the ancestral cult. In their Procedures and Practices manual membership of secret societies (like the kwifon) is mentioned as a cause for review of their church membership; they cannot be elected to leadership positions in the church; but nothing is said about the ancestral cult (Presbyterian Church in Cameroon, Procedure and Practice of the Church n.d:19). One of the members has written a book encouraging people to apply biblical principles. This book is recommended by the church leadership (Mfonyam 2010).

The Presbyterian Church has been established in Kejom Ketingu since the 1960s. A group of Kejom people started the church in one of their houses. Maybe due to the fact that by then both the Baptists and Roman Catholic Church were firmly established in the village, it has only one congregation in Upper Ketingu and one in Lower Ketingu. Both churches don't have a resident pastor, probably due to the lack of pastors in this denomination. A pastor from a neighbouring town visits the churches once a month. The other Sunday services and other meetings are lead by a group of lay women.

4.2.6 The Full Gospel Mission

The Full Gospel Mission was established in Cameroon in 1961 by a German missionary in the South West of Cameroon. It was one of the first Pentecostal churches in Cameroon. In the early sixties evangelistic outreaches were made to the Grasslands in the North West. The Full Gospel Mission experienced quite a bit of opposition. This resulted from some considering the Mission a sect and the church's opposition to the worship of ancestors and idols. The Bible must judge the culture, and where there is irreconcilability the cultural element must give way (Knorr 2012:275). Fongoh (2001:35), a Pentecostal, states that when Africans become Christians they remain true Africans even though they have to give up traditional beliefs and practices that conflict with the Bible. The Full Gospel Mission considers the worship of ancestors and other gods in ATR to be a violation of God's law (p. 35). The following appears in their internal regulations: 'We as Christians will abstain from such practices as memorial ceremonies for people who have died long ago ... [w ill abstain from] participating in customs that deal with ancestral sacrifices and worship' (2007:12-13). As a result, at times churches have experienced hostility, to the point where Christians have been attacked and churches destroyed (Knorr 2012:275).

The growth of Pentecostal churches has been hindered in the rural areas where most of the villages are dominated by mainline denominations. If any other group is found, it will be small (Mbe 2002:363). This is also the case in Kejom Ketingu. The Full Gospel Mission established a church in Lower Ketingu in 1992 and one in Upper Ketingu even later. They experienced serious opposition: villagers refusing them a house to rent where they could meet and the fon decreeing at some point that they should stop meeting. A small group of believers, nevertheless, continued to meet in individual homes. Eventually they were able to buy a piece of land in Lower Ketingu on which they constructed a building, which is still used for their meetings. In 2011 a resident pastor was assigned to this church for the first time.

4.3 Research methods

A questionnaire in three parts for church members was developed (see appendix 4). A number of questions had a **yes/no answer**, and the rest had **multiple-choice answers** with an option to add any answer not provided. In the first part I tried to find out the interviewee's beliefs about the ancestors and whether or not he/she normally took part in some or all of the traditional practices during the mourning period and death celebration. The second part of the questionnaire was designed to find out what the interviewee believed the Bible teaches concerning the rituals that take place during these occasions. In the third part the interviewee could express his/her perception of how the pastor or other leaders in the church (i) help church members understand the biblical perspective on traditional practices, and (ii) how they help those who are willingly involved in traditional practices or unwillingly due to pressure from family members.

Secondly a questionnaire for the pastors, priest and other church leaders was developed (see appendix 5). This was in order to establish what they and their denominations do (i) to help members understand biblical principles concerning the mourning period and death celebration, and (ii) to help their members when they practice these ceremonies or are pressured to take part in some or all of them.

I visited the pastor or priest of the church beforehand to ask his permission to hand out some of the questionnaires to church members. I would generally ask him to arrange a representative sample of the membership of his church. In the Catholic Church it was definitely a random sample as the priest had left to conduct a mass in another village and we just asked if some of those leaving the church would answer some questions. In the Presbyterian Church again it was whoever was available. Most of the time I would visit the church on a Sunday and meet with the selected people after the church service. In some cases I also went on country Sundays when at least a number of members would be meeting for what they call 'Christian meeting' in the Baptist church. We would try to interview between four and fourteen people after the service. In some cases we would not finish and certain members would be visited in their homes. In a number of cases I went back for a second time to get the number of questionnaires needed. No incomplete questionnaires were used in the data analysis.

I again worked closely with Mr. John Tontuh, and also got some help from another member of the Kejom translation project, Mr. Andrew Bumenang. Both men helped translate where necessary and also helped people fill in the questionnaire. If interviewees were literate we would ask the whole group to sit down together. We would work through the questions one by one and explain where necessary and they would fill in the questionnaire on their own if they could write well. However, there were only very few people who were able to do that and so much individual help had to be provided.

The biggest challenge we encountered was illiteracy. In some of the churches the illiteracy rate was up to 70%. This also meant that they could hardly speak English. Initially I would translate the questions into Pidgin English while going through the questionnaire. Later on I translated the questionnaire itself into Pidgin English so that it would take less effort to go through the questions. Sometimes the people who were illiterate also needed a translation into Kejom. It meant we had to sit down with every illiterate interviewee and go through the questions one by one and repeat them a number of times before they could be answered. This meant that in several churches we were only able to go through a few questionnaires after the service. When interviewees were illiterate, we felt it was important to interview privately so that they would not give biased responses after hearing other people's responses.

The multiple choice questions turned out to be challenging to most people. This was because some of the people that filled in the questionnaire by themselves were most likely semi-literate; also because in some multiple-choice questions more than one option was possible. In others where only one answer was applicable some filled in more than one, which lead to percentages for the different options totaling over 100%. In some cases people did not know what to answer and left the question unanswered resulting in totals of less than 100%.

We tried to hand out questionnaires in proportion to the number of people that attended a particular congregation, although we did not always succeed with that. We interviewed for instance a larger percentage of men (46%) than actually were present in the services. This was partly because they were available to answer the questions (there

were often other meetings going after the church and not everybody was available) and partly because more men were literate than women.

After each visit I would mark the questionnaires of each of the churches with a particular colour. I first visited all the Baptist churches and keyboarded their responses, which gave me an overview of all their answers. After I had finished with the Baptists I grouped their results according to theme/event: all the rituals during the mourning period, all the information that had to do with death celebrations, and beliefs about the ancestors and God. I counted the various responses for the Baptists and then calculated the percentages for each particular ritual or belief. I followed the same procedure for the other denominations. Once I had completed all the questionnaires I made graphs for each of the different denominations covering the rituals during the mourning period, death celebrations, and beliefs about God and the ancestors. I grouped the responses of all the denominations to each individual question in part 2 of the questionnaire (except 24-26 which fitted better with questions in section 1 of the questionnaire) in one graph. These questions covered how important it was for each of the respondents to follow biblical principles and how biblical their beliefs were about divination, sacrifices, praying to the ancestors. I made a table for the answers of questions in part 3 of the questionnaire. I did the same for the responses of the pastors and priest to each question as in section 2 of the questionnaire for the members.

I visited a total of eleven churches, eight of which were Baptist churches. The Baptists have by far the most assemblies in the area and hence the relatively high number of Baptist churches selected. I visited six Baptist churches in Upper Ketingu, the part of the village which lies higher up in the mountains, and two in Lower Ketingu, the part of the village which lies in the valley. I also visited the Full Gospel Church, one Presbyterian Church and the Roman Catholic Church, all in Lower Ketingu. I interviewed sixty-five people in the Baptist churches, fourteen in the Roman Catholic Church, eleven in the Full Gospel Church and ten in the Presbyterian Church. The interviewees were both men (46) and women (54) between 13 and approximately 75 years-of-age.

The following table presents a statistically analysis of the respondents. The significance of the percentages is discussed after the table.

Table 4.1 Statistical analysis of the interviewees by congregation and denomination

	Baptist denomination (researched in 8 of the 12 congregations)	Roman Catholic denomination (researched in 1 of the 2 congregations)	Presbyterian denomination (researched in 1 of the 2 congregations)	Full Gospel denomination (researched in 1 of the 2 congregations)
Total (approximate) membership of each denomination	1300	520	100	40
Membership (approximate) of the congregations researched	860	450	35-40	30
Total number of interviewees	65	14	10	11
Members interviewed as a percentage of the congregations where research was done	7.6%	3.1%	26.7%	36.7%
Members interviewed as a percentage of the total membership of each denomination	5%	2.7%	10%	27.5%

Since I randomly selected 65 members from 8 of the 12 Baptist congregations (i.e. 7.6% of the 8 churches or 5% of the denomination), it can be concluded the empirical research results would give a fairly accurate picture of the situation among the Baptist denomination in Kejom Ketingu. With reference to the Full Gospel denomination the percentages were much higher, namely 36.7% and 27.5%, and thus the research results would accurately depict the situation among this denomination in Kejom Ketingu. The situation with reference to the Presbyterians in Kejom Ketingu (26.7% and 10%) would indicate that the research results would quite accurately give the situation in the Presbyterian denomination. The deductions about the position among the Catholics in Kejom Ketingu from the research results (3.1% and 2.7%) would be only tentative. However, it needs to be noted from my previous research (2010) that responses from

members in the Catholic Church in Kejom Keku (the second Kejom speaking village) concerning involvement in death celebration rituals were similar to the ones presented in this research. This means the results of this research can be given weightier significance and therefore can be taken to give some idea of the situation among the Catholics in Kejom Ketingu. Even if the results of the empirical research among the only four denominations does not provide a truly solid basis for concluding most accurately the situation among the majority of the Christians in Kejom Ketingu, the results confirm that there is enough syncretism taking place to warrant some specific pastoral intervention. The results of the empirical research are summarized in graphs. The different answers to the questions are given. Every answer has the percentage of respondents in the congregations that gave it, except the eight Baptist congregations which are treated as one big congregation.

4.4 Results of the empirical research

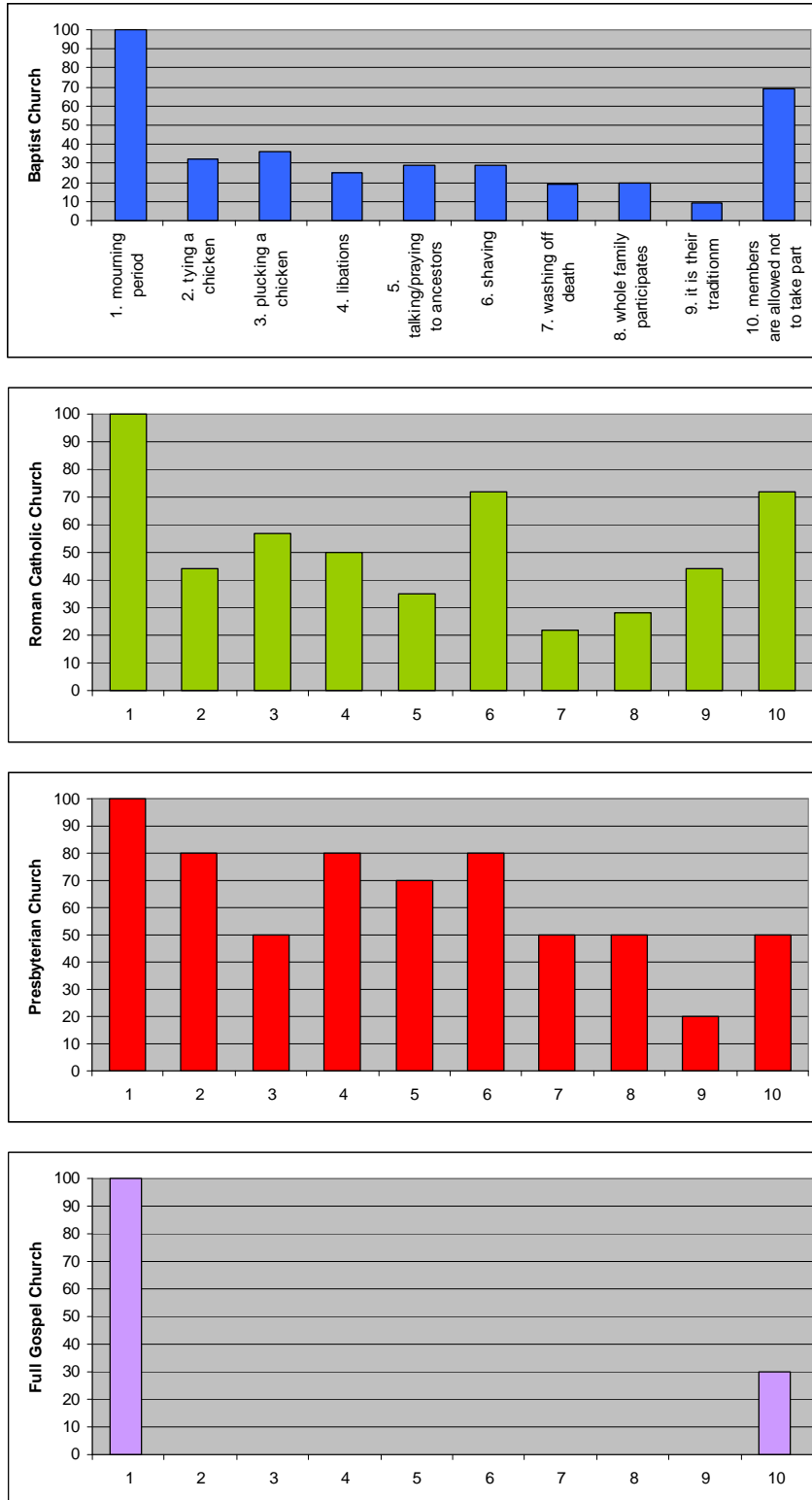
4.4.1 Rituals during the mourning period

Questions 1-8 in the members' questionnaire probe involvement in the following features of the mourning period (with explanation in brackets where necessary). The results are presented on the next page with a separate graph for each denomination in order to show the differences between the different denominations.

1. *mourning period* (i.e. whether there is a mourning period if a family member in the compound dies)
2. *tying a chicken*
3. *plucking a chicken*
4. *libations*
5. *talking/praying to ancestors*
6. *shaving*
7. *washing off death*

8. *whole family participates* (the whole family participates in all the activities/rituals to avoid the ancestor's displeasure and retribution)
9. *it is their tradition* (whole family participates in all the activities/rituals because it is the tradition)
10. *members are allowed not to take part* (every family member is allowed not to take part in the activities/rituals if he/she so wishes)

Figure 4.1: Four graphs summarising the percentage participation in the rituals during the mourning period



It is very significant that when a family member of any Christian in the four denominations dies, the family arranges a mourning period. This shows how pervasive this practice is in Ketingu. There are members of the Baptist, Roman Catholic and Presbyterian churches who are involved in the rituals that take place during the mourning period. The percentages are lower in the Baptist church than those in the Catholic and Presbyterian churches, probably due to the fact that pastors in the Baptist Church have been encouraging their members to break with these rituals (see 4.2.3). In the Baptist and Roman Catholic churches there is least pressure from family members to take part in the various rituals if the Christians choose not to. All the members of the Full Gospel Church attend the three-day mourning periods, but none of them is involved in any of the rituals that originated in African Traditional Religion. They are also experiencing the most pressure from family members to take part. The participation in the rituals is highest in the Presbyterian Church followed by the Roman Catholic Church. Although the responses of the priest of the Roman Catholic Church and the pastor of the Presbyterian Church indicate that they do not approve of organising and taking part in rituals and death celebrations (see table 4.1 below), there seems to be a discrepancy between what is taught and what is being practiced. Similar teaching in the Baptist Church and especially the Full Gospel Church (see graph 4.2 below) has been more effective as percentage-wise fewer members take part.

4.4.2 Death celebrations

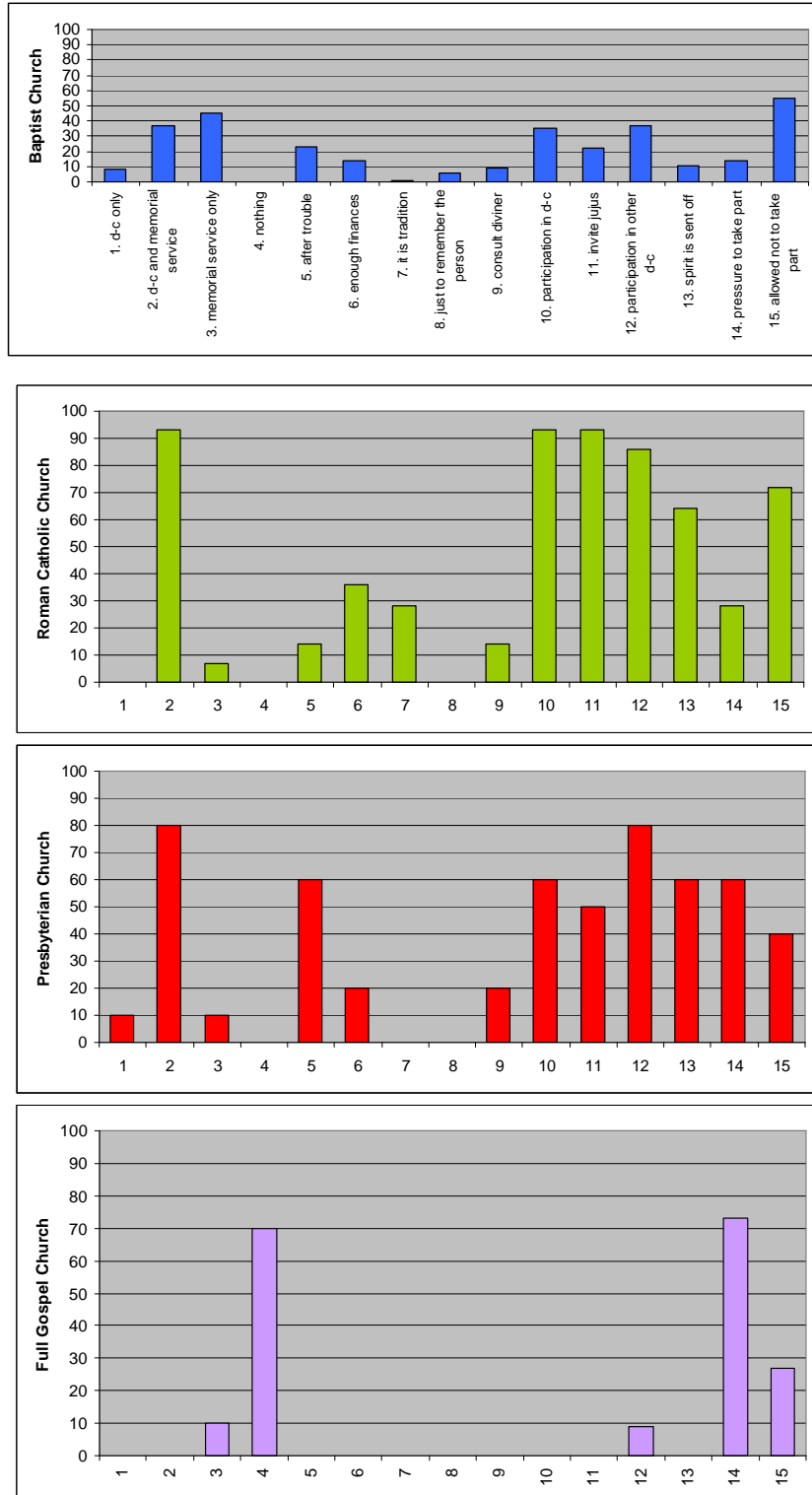
I have grouped the answers to questions 9-16 in the members' questionnaire in the next page in graphs. The questions and the answers are presented here in abbreviated form (see complete questionnaire in appendix 4) with the wording that appears in the graphs given in brackets in italics. The order of the answers of the questions as presented below differs somewhat from the original questionnaire.

9) How the family remembers a relative who has died?

- (a) Death celebration only (indicated as: *1. d-c only*)
- (b) Both a memorial service and a death celebration (*2. d-c and memorial*)
- (c) *3. Memorial service only*

- (d) Neither (*4. nothing*)
- 10) When they hold the death celebration
 - (a) *5. after trouble*
 - (b) When there is enough money (*6. enough finances*)
 - (c) Other: death celebration is a tradition (*7. it is tradition*) or a time to merely remember the dead person (*8. just to remember the person*)
- 9) Will consult a diviner (*9. consult diviner*)
- 10) Will take part (*10. participation in d-c*)
- 11) Will invite a juju group (*11. invite jujus*)
- 12) Will they attend the death celebration organised by other people? (*12. participation in other d-c*).
- 13) Believe the spirit of the deceased is sent off (*13. spirit is sent off*)
- 14) If a family member refuses to take part what will the family do?
 - (a) *14. Pressure to take part*
 - (b) Allow him/her not to take part or take part selectively (*15. Allowed not to take part*)
 - (c) Other: No other answers were given

Figure 4.2: Four graphs summarising the beliefs and practices concerning death celebrations



Members of the Baptist, Roman Catholic and Presbyterian churches were all involved in organising and taking part in a death celebration related to their family or attending those organised by others. It is difficult to not attend other families' death celebrations because of the obligations involved once one has organised one (see 3.8.2). It is interesting to note that only in the Baptist Church are there people who organise a death celebration only. In all the other denominations most people organise a memorial service and a death celebration. The Baptist Church has the highest percentage that organises only a memorial service, whereas in the Full Gospel Church most members indicated that they don't organise anything at all.

In three of the denominations there is both a memorial service in the church and the actual death celebration. People don't want to give up their involvement in death celebrations (which are inspired by the ancestral cult), but in order to comply with teaching from pastors/priest a memorial service is held in the church. This combination suggests some influence of the ancestral cult and an attempt to 'Christianise' the death celebration.

The belief that the spirit of the deceased is sent off is the strongest in the Roman Catholic and Presbyterian churches. The members of the Full Gospel Church are again facing the most pressure to take part.

4.4.3 Beliefs about God and the ancestors

The questions 17-20 in the members' questionnaire deal with the beliefs about the ancestors and questions 24-26 are about God. Though in the questionnaire they are not all together, it seemed logical to group them together when presenting and discussing the answers. The questions allowed for more than one answer.

I have summarised the questions and answers as follows with the wording that appears in the graphs below in italics:

17) Do you believe the ancestors are still involved with the family? (indicated as:

1. ancestors are involved)

18) If so, in what way?

- (a) 2. *They can give blessings/trouble*
- (b) 3. *They can give advice*
- (c) Other: No other answers were given

25) Do you believe the ancestors are close? (4. *are close*)

19) What will you do when there is trouble?

- (a) 5. *consult diviner*
- (b) The family head will pour libations and pray to the ancestors
(6. *libation/prayer by family head*)
- (c) I will pray to God to see me through (7. *pray to God*)

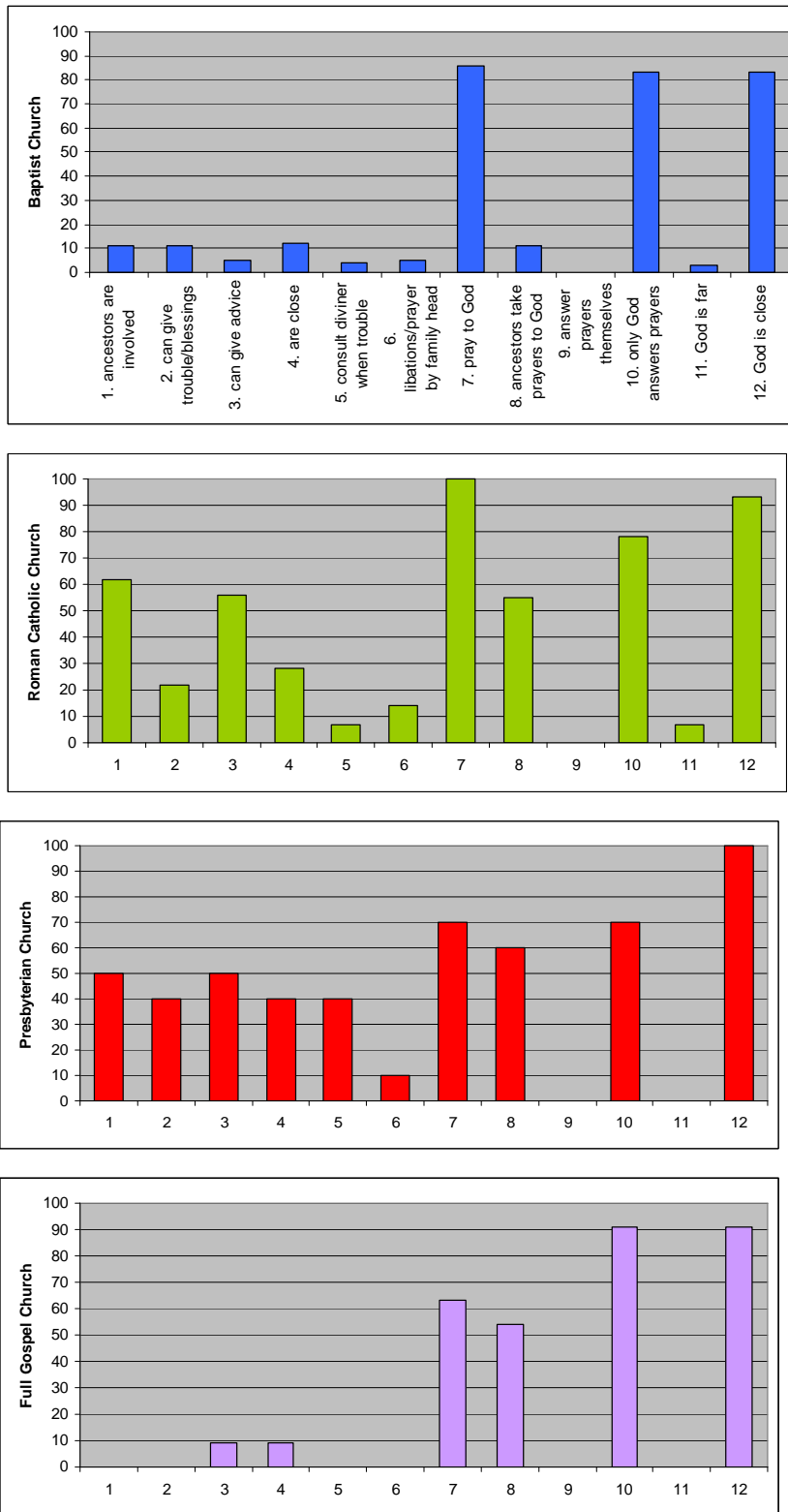
20) When people pray to the ancestors ...

- (a) they will take the prayer to God (8. *ancestors take prayers to God*)
- (b) they will answer themselves (9. *answer prayer themselves*)
- (c) 10. *only God answers prayer*

24) Do you believe God is far away? (11. *God is far*)

26) Do you believe God is close? (12. *God is close*)

Figure 4.3: Four graphs summarising the beliefs about God and the ancestors



The percentage of people in the Baptist Church who believe that the ancestors are still involved in the lives of their family members is quite low. Also, very few of their members believe that when they talk/pray to the ancestors the ancestors take their prayers to God or answer them themselves. Their beliefs about God no longer reflect the belief of ATR that God is far away. However, one has to conclude that there is an inconsistency as their involvement in the various rituals during the mourning period and death celebrations is quite high: during the mourning period at least 30% or more are involved in sacrifices, 25% in libations, 28% in talking/praying to ancestors, and almost 10% are involved in death celebrations only, and 40% are involved in death celebrations and memorial services. If people hardly or don't believe any more that the ancestors are involved in their lives one would wonder why so many people are still involving themselves in the various rituals during the mourning period and death celebration. It is possible that they take part because these are old, entrenched traditions or to avoid negative reactions from the people, and not because they really believe in the ancestral cult.

Among the interviewed members of the Roman Catholic and the Presbyterian churches a fairly high percentage holds on to beliefs that originate from ATR, especially the ancestral cult. They believe ancestors can bless them and cause trouble and can give advice in dreams. Half of the interviewed members of the Presbyterian Church will go to a diviner when there is trouble; in the Roman Catholic and Baptist church the percentage is quite low. A high percentage of members of the Roman Catholic and Presbyterian churches will also pray to God when they are facing difficulties, which shows how they mix the beliefs of ATR with Christianity. When they pray to the ancestors they believe the ancestors take their prayers to God. In all denominations most interviewed members believe only God answers prayer. The beliefs about the ancestors among the members of the Presbyterian and Roman Catholic churches are reflected in the high percentage of members involved in the rituals during the mourning period and death celebrations.

The belief in ATR that God is far away and not involved hardly exists anymore as in all denominations most members believe that God is close and that we can pray directly to him.

Although the interviewed members of the Full Gospel Church do not believe the ancestors are still involved in their lives, there are some inconsistencies in their beliefs. A small percentage believes the ancestors are close and can give advice through dreams. The majority of those who pray to the ancestors believes the ancestors take their prayers to God. These answers were given by both short term and long term members. It is interesting to note that nobody from any church who prays to ancestors believes they answer the prayer. This means that prayer to the ancestors is really prayer to God with ancestors thought to play merely an intermediary role in delivering the prayer to God and (at times?) bringing the answer.

4.4.4 Biblical knowledge

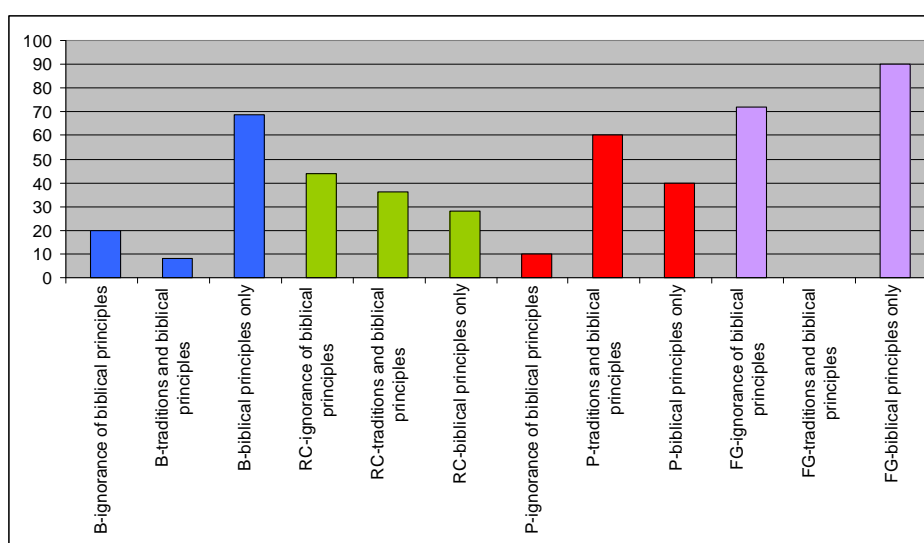
The second part of the members' questionnaire was to find out (i) how important it is for the members of the different denominations to follow biblical principles, and (ii) what they believe the Bible teaches about the various traditional practices. Several questions had some space to add biblical references. Very few people, however, were able to come up with Scriptural references, partly due to the high level of illiteracy, partly due to ignorance, and possibly also partly due to lack of time. It generally took quite a bit of time for people to fill in the questionnaire. In some cases people gave more than one answer to a multiple choice question where only one was appropriate which thus caused some inconsistencies in the graphs.

I have combined the answers of all the respondents from all denominations to the questions in this section, i.e. questions 21-23 and 27-29. I have abbreviated each denomination in order not to take up too much space: B (Baptist), RC (Roman Catholic), P (Presbyterian), and FG (Full Gospel).

21) How important is it for you to follow what the Bible says concerning sacrifices, libations, talking/praying to ancestors, and organising a death celebration?

- (a) I don't know (indicated as: *ignorance*)
- (b) It is important, but it is also important to follow our traditions (*traditions and biblical principles*)
- (c) It is very important as I would like to follow God's regulations in every aspect of my life (*biblical principles only*)

Figure 4.4: Graph summarising the importance of following biblical principles in all areas of life

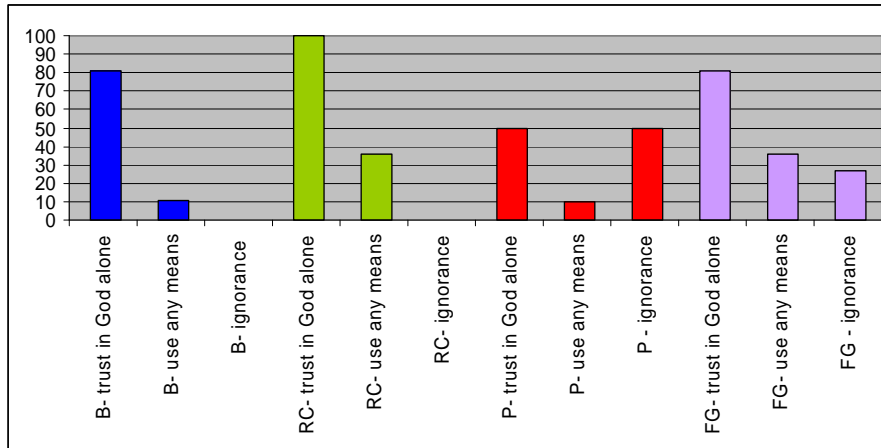


The majority of the Baptist and the Full Gospel members have a desire to follow biblical principles. The belief in the importance of following both biblical principles and traditional practices is the highest in the Presbyterian Church. The members of the Full Gospel Church indicated a high level of ignorance of biblical principles; however, they also indicated they want to follow biblical principles only.

22) What do you believe the Bible says about looking for solutions to our problems?

- (a) The Bible tells us to trust God alone (indicated as: *trust God alone*)
- (b) The Bible tells us to use any means to solve our problems (*use any means*)
- (c) I don't know (*ignorance*)
- (d) Other: There were no answers

Figure 4.5 - Graph summarising the knowledge of biblical principles when people are facing problems

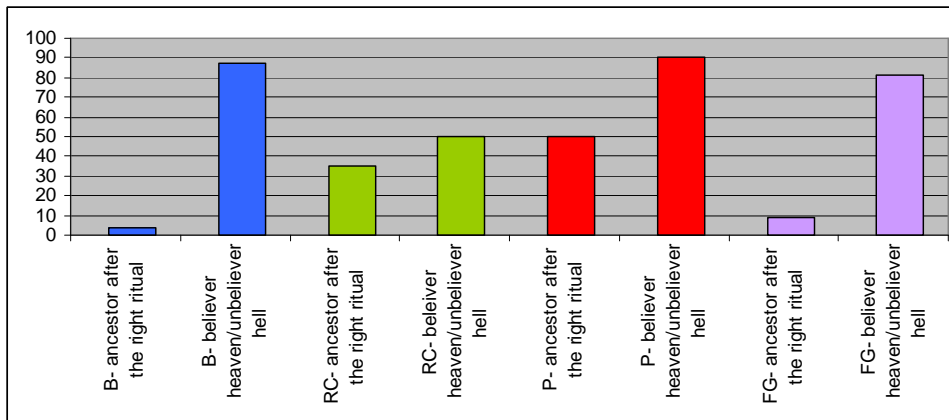


Though only one answer should have been given, members of the Roman Catholic, Presbyterian Church and Full Gospel Church indicated more than one answer. In some cases they indicated ignorance and that the Bible teaches they could use any means to solve problems. This would mean that the teaching concerning this aspect has not been properly understood and that people would use means that are not biblical. Although a high percentage of the members from all the denominations indicated that it is important to trust God only, some, especially in the Roman Catholic Church and Full Gospel Church, also use any other means to solve their problems. Members of the Presbyterian and Full Gospel churches indicated high levels of ignorance as opposed to the other two churches, which would indicate that not enough teaching about solving problems has taken place.

23) What do you believe happens when somebody dies?

- (a) A person becomes an ancestor after the right rituals have taken place (*indicated as: ancestor after the right rituals*)
- (b) A believer will go to heaven and an unbeliever will go to hell (*believer/heaven, unbeliever/hell*)

Figure 4.6: Graph summarising the beliefs about death



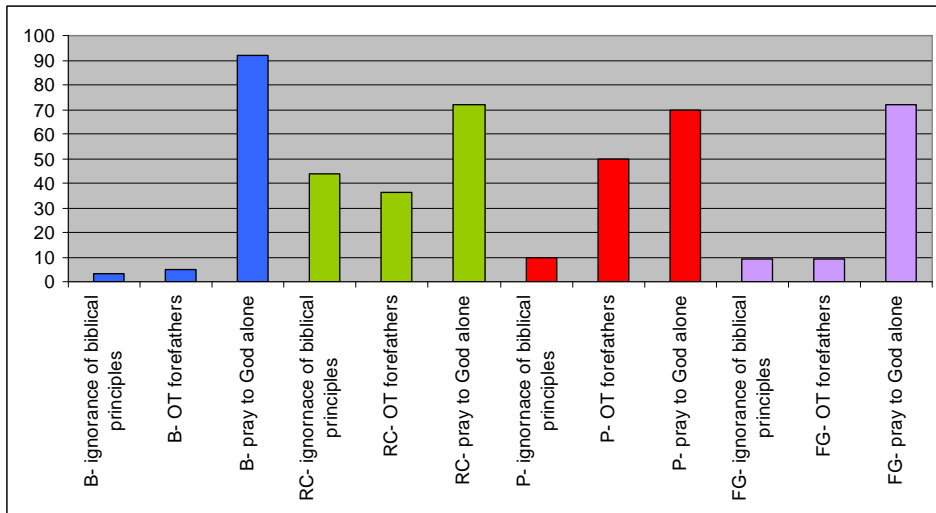
The interviewees could fill in both answers if that was what they believed, but to do so in this question would be illogical. Only members of the Presbyterian church did this. The belief originating from ATR that someone becomes an ancestor after the right rituals still exists in the Roman Catholic and the Presbyterian churches, whereas the percentages in the other two denominations are quite low.

The answers to questions 24-26 about beliefs about God and the ancestors are found in Figure 4.3.

27) Does the Bible approve of praying/talking to ancestors?

- (a) I don't know (indicated as: *ignorance*)
- (b) Yes, the Israelites referred to their forefathers (*OT forefathers*)
- (c) The Bible tells us we should pray to God alone (*pray to God alone*)
- (d) Other: No were no answers

Figure 4.7: Graph summarising the biblical knowledge about praying to ancestors

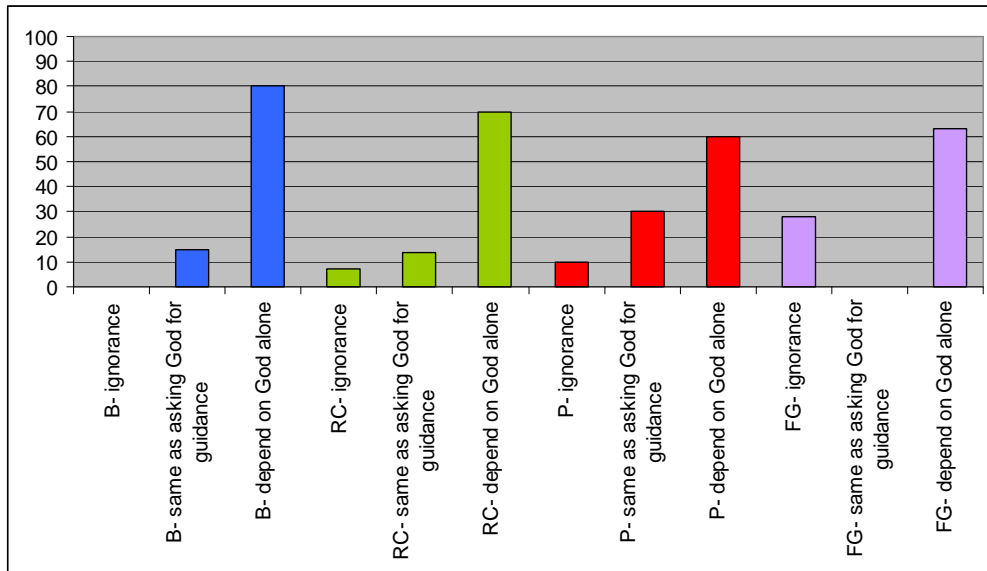


All denominations indicate a fairly high percentage of members who believe that we should pray to God alone. A number of the interviewed members of the Roman Catholic and Presbyterian churches believe that the Bible approves of praying/talking to the ancestors.

28) According to you does the Bible approve of divination?

- (a) Divination is the same as asking God for guidance (indicated as: *same as asking God for guidance*)
- (b) No, the Bible tells us we need to depend on God for guidance (*depend on God alone*)
- (c) I don't know (*ignorance*)
- (d) Other: There were no answers

Figure 4.8: Graph summarising the biblical knowledge about divination

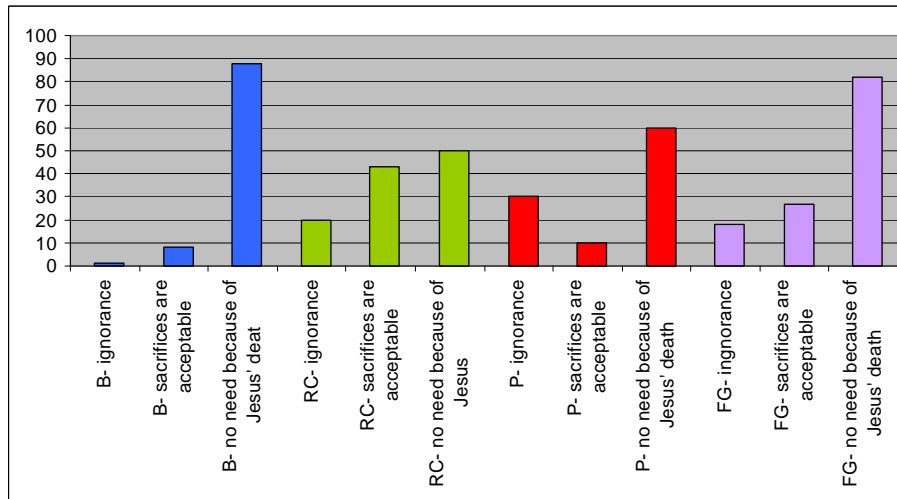


It is again surprising that members of the Full Gospel indicate a higher level of ignorance than the other denominations about what the Bible teaches concerning divination, considering the fact that they are not involved in it.

29. According to you what does the Bible tell us about sacrifices?

- (a) I don't know (indicated as: *ignorance*)
- (b) In the Old Testament sacrifices were held, so it is acceptable to perform sacrifices (*sacrifices are acceptable*)
- (c) Because of Jesus' death on the cross no sacrifices are needed anymore (*no need because of Jesus' death*)
- (d) Other: There were no answers

Figure 4.9: Graph summarising the biblical teaching about sacrifices



A number of the interviewed members of the Roman Catholic, Presbyterian and Full Gospel churches indicate a level of ignorance. In all four churches some members believe that because sacrifices took place in the Old Testament performing sacrifices today is acceptable. This would mean that these members do not understand the meaning of Jesus' sacrifice on the cross, or believe that sacrificing to the ancestors is not the same as sacrificing to God and can therefore be accommodated in Christianity.

4.4.5 Ministry of pastors/priest as perceived by the members of the churches

In the next table I have summarized the answers to questions in the third part of the members' questionnaire (questions 30-36). It summarises how the members of the different churches perceived the pastors'/priest's ministry regarding issues surrounding mourning periods and death celebrations. People sometimes filled in more than one answer when this was not appropriate which implies inconsistencies in what they are actually saying. For example, with reference to question 35 note the following: with reference to the Full Gospel Church, 81% indicated that the pastor doesn't teach concerning sacrifices, the ancestors and taking part in the traditions during the mourning period and death celebrations; and 72% state that he teaches them that Scripture doesn't allow involvement in them.

30) What do the pastor/leaders advise you when there are difficulties in your family

and you want to go to a diviner to see if he can diagnose the cause?

- 31) Are you convinced when the pastor says that God is more powerful than the ancestors?
- 32) What will the pastor advise you when the family wants you to be involved in performing sacrifices during the mourning period?
- 33) What will the pastor advise you when the family wants to organise a death celebration?
- 34) Will you listen to the advice of the pastor if he is against death celebrations?
- 35) Does the pastor teach from Scripture concerning performing sacrifices, the ancestral cult, and taking part in mourning and death celebrations?
- 36) How does the church help new believers who are still involved in unbiblical traditional practices like sacrifices and taking part in death celebrations?

Table 4.2: A summary of the ministry of pastors/priest as perceived by the members of their churches

	Baptist	Roman Catholic	Presbyterian	Full Gospel
30) Trust God to solve the problem.	77%	72%	70%	81%
He will encourage trusting God alone, but will not say anything when we go to a diviner.	20%	44%	30%	27%
31) Does not believe the pastor when he says God is more powerful than the ancestors.	1%			
Believes him.	86%	84%	70%	81%
Believes him most of the time; when problems come he/she fears and consults a diviner.	0%	16%	20%	9%
Advises not to take part in sacrifices, but doesn't say why.	5%	22%	10%	9%
No need for sacrifices because of Jesus' death on				

the cross.	74%	76%	50%	81%
Scripture doesn't tell us to sacrifice to ancestors.	20%	6%	50%	27
33) Advise not to organise a d-c as the deceased cannot harm/bless.	43%	50%	80%	81%
Will not say anything.	8%	44%	10%	9%
Advise not to organise one; it is unbiblical; will pray with person.	52%	6%	20%	81%
34) Follow advice; it is more important to please God than family.	96%	50%	70%	81%
Give in to family because of pressure.	3%	28%	30%	36%
35) Teaches Scripture doesn't allow sacrifices etc.	82%	56%	40%	72%
No, he doesn't teach us.	15%	44%	50%	81%
36) Discipleship classes organised.	80%	72%	40%	100%
Invited to church meetings.	20%	16%	50%	

A contradiction can be noted in the fact that not all the members of each church/denomination agree on what their leaders teach. Several possible reasons come to mind: (i) In the Full Gospel Church the pastor commented that people only come to church on Sunday, which means that weekly Bible studies, which normally are used for teaching, are hardly attended by the members; (ii) in the Presbyterian Church the pastor only comes once a month on Sunday so any teaching concerning this matter is done by the lay leadership that has had little education and therefore their teaching probably lacks clarity; (iii) in the Catholic Church the priest is responsible for several parishes and may not have enough time to teach the material provided by the Roman Catholic Church. Further, though this material has well developed lessons with examples from the local context, the emphasis is on doctrine and apparently not enough on traditional practices; and (iv) though various people have testified that in recent years in the Baptist churches pastors have been teaching about traditional practices, the small percentage of people indicating that the pastor doesn't teach about the practices were probably not present when this instruction was given.

The majority of people state that their pastor/priest teaches the biblical perspective of trusting God instead of going to a diviner, that God is more powerful than any ancestor, and that Jesus' sacrifice on the cross has eliminated the need for other sacrifices. Most members interviewed indicated that it is more important to please God than the family. Nevertheless, figures 4.1 and 4.2 indicate a high participation in traditional practices involving the ancestors and sacrifices of church members in the Presbyterian and Catholic Churches and a lower, but still significant, number in the Baptist Churches. It was almost zero in the Full Gospel Church. The previous paragraph would partly explain why the leaders' biblical teaching has not been very effective. Other explanations would be that many members have not applied the biblical knowledge taught by the leaders or that the pastors/priest have not taught the biblical perspective clearly enough. The beliefs of ATR also persist in spite of the biblical teaching because they are so entrenched and family pressure to participate is high.

4.4.6 Responses of pastors/priest

I handed out a total of eleven of the pastors' questionnaire, eight of which went to Baptist pastors. This questionnaire probed the pastors' ethnic/language group, views and what they believed were their members' beliefs and practices surrounding the mourning period and death celebration. Question 1 covered personal details. Among the Baptist pastors there were three pastors from the area itself and four from language groups that have similar practices. The Catholic priest, the Presbyterian pastor and the Full Gospel pastor were also from language groups with similar practices. Of the four pastors in the Baptist church that are from different language groups, three had been serving their church already for several years (between three and a half and seven years). The priest, the Presbyterian pastor and the Full Gospel pastor had all been assigned to their churches in the past year. The Full Gospel pastor is the first pastor assigned to this church in 20 years. The Presbyterian pastor, due to lack of pastors, is not resident in the area. He visits the church once a month on Sunday.

The first table deals with responses to question 2 and the second table deals with responses to the remaining questions. In the second table the percentages in the second column (Baptist Church) are the percentages of the eight pastors that held a

particular view concerning their members' involvement in the various rituals. In the other denominations I interviewed only one pastor/priest, so percentages are not mentioned. The tick indicates they are aware of the involvement of some of their members in the rituals mentioned.

Question 2: In which of the following practices are any of your church members involved?

Table 4.3: A summary of involvement of members in various rituals as perceived by the pastors/priest

	Baptist	Roman Catholic	Presbyterian	Full Gospel
Sacrifices	Yes – 5 No - 3	Yes	Yes	None
Libations	Yes - 3 No - 5	Yes	None	None
Calling the names of deceased and other ancestors asking for blessings	Yes - 7 No - 1	Yes	Yes	None
Cleansing ceremony by herbalist	Yes -3 No - 5	None	Yes	None
Shaving	Yes - 7 No - 1	Yes	Yes	None
Calling on diviners when faced with problems	Yes - 5 No - 3	Yes	Yes	None
Organising death celebration	Yes - 8	Yes	Yes	None
Attending death celebrations	Yes - 8	Yes	Yes	None

The next table gives an overview of the responses of the pastors/priest regarding their views and ministry and the four denominations' views on issues around the mourning period and death celebrations. I have summarized the questions in the first column (see Appendix 5 for the complete questionnaire). I have noted the percentage of the eight Baptist pastors that gave a particular response. In the remaining four columns the various responses of the pastors/priest are given. The letters represent one of the

options in the multi-choice questions. Where a letter appears in a row for the first time its referent is provided, and thereafter only the letter is recorded in the row.

Table 4.3: A summary of the views/ministry of pastors/priest/denomination as perceived by them

	Baptist	Roman Catholic	Presbyterian	Full Gospel
3. Teaching of denomination concerning the ancestral cult	(a) It is unbiblical, needs to be rejected – 100%; (b) Needs to recognise the ancestral cult as a stubborn reality and that some members will be involved – 25%	(c) There is life after death, but God alone can grant blessings, not ancestors.	(b)	(a)
4) Ministry to people involved	(a) Visit people and teach it is unbiblical – 75%; (b) Attend the activities to preach – 37,5%; (c) Find out their convictions about the ancestral cult – 12,5%	(a) and (b)	(a)	(a)
5) Does the denomination have written guidelines?	(a) No written guidelines – 50%; oral guidelines –25%; Scriptures – 25%	(b) There are written guide- lines, namely the Catechism of the Catholic Church.	(b) Book of orders and procedures of Presbyterian Church.	(b) Internal Regulations Full Gospel Mission.
6) Advise when church members are pressurised	(a) Encourage him/her from Scripture not to give in to the family – 50%; visit family – 12,5%; allow the person to	(a) and (c) Encourage the person to attend Christian doctrine classes and action	(a)	(a)

to take part in rituals	make his/her own decision – 37,5%	groups.		
7) Advise to church members who are facing difficulties and may be tempted to go to a diviner	(a) Encourage them with Scriptures (Rom 8;28, Deut 18:9-13) to trust God and not use a diviner – 87,5%; (d) Help him/her understand God's sovereignty – 12,5%	(a) like the first and second commandment	(a) Dan 3:17-18	(a) Deut 18:10-11
8) What does denomination ask you to do when a member is openly involved in traditional practices?	(b) Disciple and counsel them from Scripture – 100%; (c) Warn them and when they persist put them under church discipline – 50%	(d) We ask the Catechetical commission in the parish to help catechize the member.	(b), (c) and (d) Cannot be elected into leadership functions.	(b) and (c)
9) Do you teach about death and life after death?	(b) When a member has died I take time to teach people there is life after death and there is a need to take a decision to follow Christ to avoid hell and go to heaven – 62.5%; (c) Teach at other times – 37,5%	(b)	(b)	(b)
10) What do	(a) Use Scriptures (Matth	(a) Deut 4:29; 2 Sam	(a) Is 55:6;	(a) Is

you teach concerning calling on ancestors and asking for blessings?	7:7,8 etc) to make clear we need to call on God; (b) Use Scriptures (Job 7:9-10, Eccl 9:4-6,) that show ancestors cannot hear us.	22:4; (b) Deut 32:38	Ps 50:15; (b) Eccl 12:7	65:24; (b) Eccl 9:3-6
11) Teaching concerning divination	(a) Use Scriptures (Deut 18:9-13, Lev 19:26,31) to teach that divination is unbiblical –62,5%; (b) Use Scriptures (Prov 16:3, Ps 119: 105) to call on God for guidance – 50%	(a) Deut 18:9-10; Lev 19:26,31; (b) 2 Sam 22:3, 31	(a) Deut 18:10-11; (b) Is 55:6	(a) Deut 18:10
12) Teaching concerning sacrifices	(b) Because of Jesus' death on the cross no sacrifices are needed any more – 100%; (c) Sacrifices were not to be made to the ancestors in the Bible and should not be made today – 50%	(d) The only Christian sacrifice now is the Holy Mass which is the same as the sacrifice of the cross offered by Jesus himself.	(b) and (c)	(b)
13) Teaching to convince people that God is more powerful than the ancestors.	(a) Use Scriptures (1 John 4:14, 1 John 5:18 etc.) to show they don't need to fear them – 87,5%, (b) Ancestors are either in heaven or hell; demons are active in the ancestral cult and don't need to fear them as God is more powerful –	(d) Catechism classes are given for 2-3 years before Baptism; Christian doctrine classes are given to children, youths and adults in primary schools and colleges.	(b) and (c)	(b) and (c)

	75%; (c) Special discipleship classes to teach them – 50%			
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All the pastors/priest indicated that they use various Scriptures to teach people about God and whether or not Christians may take part in various rituals, perform sacrifices, talk/pray to ancestors, and use divination. From their understanding of relevant key scriptures they are making an effort to counsel and encourage their members not to take part in the various rituals associated with the mourning period and death celebrations. However, when I compare the responses of the church members concerning their practices with the leaders' teaching and counselling there are inconsistencies. It seems the reason is partly that the pastors'/priest do not object when practices they teach against are performed by their members. For example, there were interviewees from all the denominations – with the highest percentage in the Roman Catholic Church – who indicated that the pastor/priest will not say anything when they want to consult a diviner even though he indicates he teaches that divination is unbiblical. Another example was that the members interviewed, especially from the Roman Catholic and Presbyterian churches, still believe in the ancestral cult although the church leaders indicate they teach the contrary. With reference to talking/praying to ancestors, the church leaders teach people they should call on God. The interviewed members indicated a level of ignorance about what the Bible teaches; and some believe that because the Israelites in the O.T. referred to their forefathers that it is acceptable to talk/pray to the ancestors.

All the church leaders indicate that because of Jesus' death on the cross there is no need for sacrifices anymore; and that Scripture doesn't tell us that we should sacrifice to ancestors. The members of the Roman Catholic, Presbyterian and Full Gospel churches, however, indicated a level of ignorance here in that they believe that sacrifices are acceptable because they took place in the Old Testament. In the Presbyterian, Roman Catholic Church, and Baptist Church, 80%, 50% and 33% respectively of the members are still involved in performing sacrifices. The church leaders indicate that their denominations ask them to discipline members when they

persist in taking part in the rituals; however, this also doesn't seem to be applied very frequently.

The church leaders have been effective in their teaching about God. Most interviewees indicated they believe God is close, that we can pray to him directly, and that only he can answer prayer. The belief in ATR that God is distant and not concerned about us seems to have disappeared almost completely. However, prayer exclusively to him was certainly not universal revealing, once again, the presence of the ancestral cult.

In spite of the fact that the biblical principles are taught with reference to performing sacrifices, talking /praying to ancestors, going to diviners, beliefs about life after death (the deceased remaining in heaven or hell), members of the Baptist, Roman Catholic and Presbyterian churches continue to take part in rituals during the mourning period and death celebrations and other rituals linked to the ancestral cult. Although some of the interviewees know the biblical principles, the beliefs of ATR continue to influence them.

4.5 Summary and conclusion

In this chapter I have given a brief historical overview of how colonisation and the work in the plantations in the South West of Cameroon contributed to the spread of the Gospel in the North West region. The plantations, started by the Germans, provided an opportunity to evangelise and convert the workers, many of whom originated from the North West region and some who would later go back to evangelise in their home area. I also gave a brief history of each of the denominations that are established in Kejom Ketingu was given, especially to provide a background to the empirical research presented in this chapter.

The empirical study was conducted among members of the four denominations in Kejom Ketingu. The results of this field research indicate that the members of the Roman Catholic Church, the Presbyterian Church, and to a lesser extent the Baptist Church, are involved in the rituals during the mourning period and organise and take part in death celebrations. The members of the Full Gospel Church take part in the mourning period, but are not involved in the rituals that take place. They are also hardly involved in death

celebrations. Members from all four denominations face various levels of pressure from relatives when they don't want to take part in the various rituals.

The belief that the ancestors are still involved in the lives of the living still exists in the Roman Catholic and Presbyterian churches. Some of the interviewed members believe that the deceased will become an ancestor after the right rituals have been performed, that the ancestors are close, and that they can give blessings or trouble and advice in dreams. They also believe that the ancestors take prayers to God. Among the Baptist members these beliefs still exist as well, but the percentages are much lower. The percentages among the members of the Full Gospel Church are either very low or non-existent. About half the Presbyterian Church interviewees will go to a diviner when facing problems, a lower percentage in the Roman Catholic Church, and in the other denominations the practice is virtually non-existent.

In all the denominations the belief from ATR that God is far away hardly exists anymore. Half of the interviewees from the Presbyterian Church and about a third from the Roman Catholic Church believe that praying to the ancestors is acceptable. However, people also pray to God, which shows how Christianity is mixed with beliefs from ATR. In all the denominations there is professed ignorance; and the belief that people can use any means to solve their problems is combined with the belief that we should trust God alone.

In all denominations half or more of the members believe when somebody dies a believer will go to heaven and an unbeliever will go to hell. A low percentage of members in the Baptist and Roman Catholic churches believe that divination is the same as asking God for guidance, whereas among the Presbyterian Church members it is about a third. There are various percentages among the members of all the denominations who believe that performing sacrifices are acceptable because they took place in the Old Testament.

People attach various levels of importance to following biblical principles, but indicate ignorance of them. Among the members of Roman Catholic and Presbyterian churches there is more than a third and half respectively that indicate their traditions are as

important as biblical principles. The desire to follow biblical principles is the highest in the Full Gospel and Baptist churches.

The pastors and priest indicated they teach biblical principles concerning the various rituals and death celebrations, trusting God, going to a diviner, praying to ancestors, and death. They also indicated they will encourage their members when they face pressure from their relatives not to take part in the various rituals. However, the members of the various denominations indicate that this is not always the case. Even when biblical principles are taught the members don't apply them.

When evaluating the various results I could see a number of factors that may have contributed to the high involvement in the various rituals. Christianity was introduced by Western missionaries who quite often did not take the African's worldview into account resulting in the converts combining Christianity with the beliefs and practices of ATR. ATR beliefs are so deeply rooted that they still play an important role in their lives. Some of the denominations have a tolerant attitude towards taking part in and organising the various rituals. Further, although some pastors indicated members would be disciplined when they persist in participating in the rituals, this is not frequently the case.

The Roman Catholic, Presbyterian and Full Gospel churches all have, or have had, a lack of leadership at some point in their history. The priest is responsible for several congregations in different villages so it may also be difficult for him to give proper follow up. The Presbyterian pastor is not resident in the village and only visits once a month making counsel and encouragement rather rare. The Full Gospel Church got a pastor in 2011 after 20 years of operating without a resident pastor. This lack of pastoral ministry is probably also a contributory factor to the rather high participation in the mourning period and the death celebrations. Another factor is the level of illiteracy. This means that quite a number of people are not able to read the Scriptures to further educate themselves. In many cases the only Scriptures people hear are the ones read at the Sunday morning church service. At the moment only the gospel of Luke is available in Kejom, so most of the Scripture readings are in English.

The people that are illiterate generally speak very little English and this must also affect their level of understanding of what is being taught in the services. The services in the Baptist churches were mostly in Pidgin English, and sometimes the sermon is translated into Kejom; but in those churches that have a Kejom pastor, preaching is in Kejom. In the other churches Pidgin English was used. It is most likely that teaching in a language that people don't understand well plays a role in how well the members understand the biblical teaching regarding traditional practices.

Perhaps the greatest cause of the high participation in the mourning period and death celebrations is the prevalence of the beliefs about the ancestors. This is because the ancestral cult gives the *raison d'être* for these two events connected to death. This means their popularity and importance can only be effectively countered by convincingly demonstrating that the ancestral cult cannot be justified from Scripture. This would entail working hard on bringing the believers to the point where they can fully accept the biblical worldview.

Teaching of biblical principles in the Baptist Church has contributed to a drop in involvement in the various rituals. However, the teaching relative to this area has not always been handled wisely. The Baptist pastors frequently preach rather aggressively against the traditional rituals rather than teach the biblical worldview, resulting in a negative effect on the people concerned. There is also no proper discipleship. The pastors condemn the traditional practices but they don't disciple those that are involved.

In the next chapter I will look at the biblical view of God and of life, death and life after death. This will become the basis for critiquing the ancestral cult, mourning periods and death celebrations in Kejom Ketingu. This in turn will provide a vantage point from which to evaluate the situation in the four denominations in order to propose a way forward for the churches so that their Christian experience is not compromised and their spiritual growth impeded. The next chapter confirms that much in the rituals and beliefs explored in the denominations cannot be harmonized with Christianity.

Chapter 5:

The biblical view of God, death and after life, and the ancestral cult

5.1 Introduction

The analysis of the questionnaires showed that the Kejom people who belong to the four denominations hardly believe anymore that God is far away as adherents of ATR believe. However, there are still remnants of ATR in their beliefs about God that are viewed as incompatible with Christianity by evangelicals. The empirical research also revealed that the ancestral cult, the driving force behind mourning periods and death celebrations, still features quite prominently which is also viewed as syncretism by evangelicals. In this chapter, therefore, God, death and the ancestral cult are critically discussed from an evangelical perspective to assess the degree of syncretism with reference to responses to death among the Christians in Kejom Ketingu.

In this chapter I firstly compare the view of God in African Traditional Religion (as presented in chapter 2) with the biblical view of God. The following key attributes of God are covered: God as creator, law giver, redeemer and sustainer as well as his omnipresence/immanence, omnipotence, omniscience, providence, holiness, transcendence, sovereignty, and thus God's hatred of polytheism, and as three persons in one divine nature. I also include an exegesis of Isaiah 40:28-31. Finally I conclude with the implications of the biblical presentation of God for the African traditional view of God, namely which aspects constitute negative syncretism if retained in African

churches. Unless indicated otherwise all Scripture quotations are from the New International Version.

In the next section of the chapter I present a diachronic survey of the biblical view of death and the afterlife. I focus on the hope of a believer, the interim state, resurrection of the body for all believers, and the reality of heaven, the new earth and hell. In this section I include an exegesis of Philippians 1:21-26 and Luke 16:19-31. Finally I conclude with the implications for the ancestral cult, namely which aspects constitute negative syncretism if retained in African churches.

I then present a biblical critique of the ancestral cult, mourning periods and death celebrations through a diachronic survey of relevant key biblical passages on how negative syncretism was handled. Firstly, there is a diachronic survey of what the Bible says about the practices related to the ancestral cult, communication between the dead and the living, and mediation by the living-dead. Secondly, there is an exegesis of Deuteronomy 18:9-13 and Acts 19:18-20. Finally, the implications for handling any syncretism surrounding death are discussed.

5.2 The biblical view of God

5.2.1 A diachronic view of the biblical view of God

5.2.1.1 Introduction

It was noted above that in ATR that Africans are able to perceive the existence of a Creator through the creation. However, they can only discern 'the eternal power, the personality, and the wisdom of God' (Ps. 19:1-6, Acts 14:15-17 and Rom. 1:19-23) (Adeyemo 1998:140). The Bible further reveals the nature and character of God in a way not possible from nature (general revelation) (O'Donovan 1992:43). In the following diachronic survey of the biblical view of God (the fuller view through special revelation) I present those aspects which I think are important when comparing the African traditional view of God with the biblical one.

5.2.1.2 God as creator

The biblical account starts with, 'In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth' (Gen. 1:1). Genesis 1:1-2:3 describes (1) what God created, (2) how he did his work of creation (in six days), and (3) that he rested on the seventh day. Apart from Genesis, there are references to the creation by God alone in every section of Scripture: Psalms (e.g. Ps 90:2); the Prophets (e.g. Is. 40:25f; Jer. 10:12,13; Amos 4:13); the Gospels (e.g. Matt. 19:4; John 1:3); the Epistles (e.g. Rom. 1:25); and Revelation (e.g. 4:11; 10:6) (Milne 2009: 95).

God created the universe 'out of nothing' (Gen.1:1f; Ps. 33:6; Jn. 1:3; Rom. 4:17; 1 Cor. 1:28; Heb. 11:3) (Milne 2009:91). He created man from the 'dust of the ground' and made him in his own image (Gen. 1:27; 2:7; Ps. 119:73a). God made human beings for his glory and to have personal fellowship with them (Gen.1:28 where God speaks to them as person to person; 3:8-9; Ex. 20:1-17 where it is seen that the law is rooted in a relationship with God; Ps 100:3; 139:24; Jn. 14:23; 16:27) (Lewis 2000:28, 41, 167). God appointed man to maintain creation and have dominion over it (Gen. 1:28; Ps. 8:6-8); and in human history he further revealed himself (e.g. Is. 44:8, 24) (Steyne 1999:26,33-42).

Next to the physical universe God also created a spiritual world (Ps. 148:2, 5; Col. 1:16; Jn 1:3-4a). The spirit beings who inhabit this world are described in various ways: angels, spirits, demons, sons of God, principalities, powers etc. (Is. 6:2f; Rom. 8:38; Eph. 6:12f) (Milne 2009:104).

So the human race was created in God's likeness to have fellowship directly with him. Though sin has spoiled this fellowship, the Old Testament and New Testament show that God has always been making a way for this direct union between us and himself (see below). Further, everything, including every spirit being, has been created by God and therefore nothing or no-one exists independently of him. As creator of all things and life God owns everything (Gen. 1; Job 41:11; Ps. 24:1; 145:15-16; Phil. 4:19; Col.1:16-17) and dictates how all self-conscious beings – humans and all other spiritual beings – must live (see below). Only special revelation (recorded in the Bible), according to evangelicals based on the Bible's own testimony, reveals this expected behaviour.

5.2.1.3 God as Law-Giver

God gave laws and issues commands based upon his moral nature, character and attributes. The Ten Commandments summarises this law: they are to govern our relationship with God and each other (Ex. 20:1-17; Deut. 6:5,18) (Lewis 2000:148-149). The commandments protect the individual and life of the community (Lev. 19, 20). Israel was supposed to show obedience to God by keeping his commands and by knowing God and loving him with all her heart (1 Sam. 12:20; 2 Chron. 15:12) (Steyne 1999:129). Israel and the church are repeatedly called to obey God and his son (Gen. 2:16; Ex. 20:1-17; Lev. 25:18; Deut. 32:46-47; Josh. 1:8; 1 Sam. 12:24; 2 Sam. 15:22; 2 Kgs. 23:3; 1 Chr. 22:12-3; 2 Chr. 7:17; Ezra 10:11; Neh. 10:29; Job 1:18; Ps. 119:1-5; Prov. 4:20-27; Eccl. 12:13; Is. 48:17-18; Jer. 31:33-34; Lam. 3:25-26; Ez. 18:9; Dan. 3:17-18; Hos. 10:12; Amos 5:14; Jon. 2:8-9; Mic. 4:2; Nah.1:6,7; Hab. 2:4; Zeph. 2:11; Zech. 1:3-4; Mal. 3:7; Matt.19:17; Mk. 12:30-31; Lk. 14:26-27; Jn. 14:15, 23; Acts 2:37-9; Rom. 8:1-4; 1 Cor. 7:19; 2 Cor. 4:15; Gal. 5:16-21; Eph. 2:1-5; Phil. 2:12-15; 1 Thess. 4:1-8; 2 Thess. 1:8-10; 1 Tim. 4:8; 2 Tim. 1:15-16; Hebr. 3:7-10; Jam. 4:7-10; 1 Pet. 3:10-12; 2 Pet. 1:3-4; 1 Jn. 2:5; 2 Jn. 6; 3; 3 Jn.11; Jude 20-21; Rev. 3:3).

God's blessing has always depended on the commitment of his people to his commandments (Deut. 5:29; 6:18) (Steyne 1999:65), and failure to obey has always resulted in judgment and punishment (Deut. 28:15-68; Eccl. 12:14; Jer. 11:7-8; Hos. 5; Heb. 2:2) (Turaki 2008(b):21; Steyne 1999:57). When Adam and Eve sinned, not only were they severely affected, but also the rest of God's creation (Gen. 3), showing the extent of God's judgement against sinners (cf Ps. 5:5). His judgment is against sin and the sinner. The prophets consistently and repeatedly warned the people that God demanded obedience, and that if they did not obey he would bring judgment upon them (Jer. 6:6; 22:3-5; Amos 9:8-10) (Steyne 1999:67,182-183). When Christ died for us he fulfilled the law on our behalf, but that didn't leave us without law; rather we now have the indwelling Holy Spirit who works in us a power of obedience which we didn't have before (Lewis 2000:164-165).

God has issued clear commandments so that we can live in harmony with God and with each other. God has promised to bless us if we keep his commandments. The opposite

is also true: if we disobey punishment will follow. It will be shown below that obedience is key to protection from evil powers. Clearly God's laws must override human traditions when they are in contradiction of what he requires of us.

5.2.1.4 God as Redeemer

Christianity is distinguished by its view of the enormous seriousness of sin. Paul has said that we all stand condemned before God on account of our sins (Rom. 5:12, 18). Because of the universal nature of sin, in our own righteousness we cannot survive the judgement of God (Lewis 2000:264). God's righteousness demands judgement of sin (Ex. 23:7; Prov. 17:15). Jesus Christ himself paid, in his own body, the penalty of man's sin. Through his perfectly righteous life, death and resurrection, Christ bore the judgment we deserved in order that we might receive justification (Is. 53; Rom. 3:21-26; 4:4-8, 2 Cor. 5:21; Col. 1:20-22; 2:13-4) (Steyne 1999:67; Lewis 2000:81). Jesus is the saviour of sinners (Acts 4:12; 5:31; Gal. 1:4; Rev 1:5). Through him alone eternal life is given to all who believe in him (Jn. 3:16; Jn. 5:24; Jn. 6:40; Rom. 6:23). Man is reconciled to God, not by what man does, but by what God has done through the cross of Jesus (Eph. 2:8) (Turaki 2006:41).

Sin against God is real and dare not be ignored. Our sins must be faced. Further, no human efforts or performing of traditional practices or the ancestors can set man free from God's judgement. Christ paid the penalty for our sin and only through faith in him can we be reconciled to God.

5.2.1.5 God as holy

God's holiness is a description of what God is in himself. 'It is the most fundamental feature of the divine being and it is the total glory of all he is', and out of it proceeds all his deeds and decisions (Lewis 2000:238). God's holiness is central to his being, and is especially clear throughout the Old Testament (Lev. 11:44; 19:2; Jos. 24:19; 1 Sam. 6:20; Ps. 22:3; Is. 57:15) (Milne 2009:89). God is 'majestic in holiness' (Ex. 15:11); his words and promises are holy (Ps. 105:42; Jer. 23:9); his name is holy (1 Chron. 29:16); and his Spirit is the Holy Spirit (Ps. 51:11; Is. 63:10-11) (Turaki 2008(b):81-2).

God's holiness means he is pure and perfect, is without sin or evil, and 'is the outpouring of purity, truth, righteousness, justice, goodness and every moral perfection' (Deut. 32:4; Ps. 18:30; Is. 6:3; Hab. 1:13; 1Tim. 6:16; Rev. 4:8) (Milne 2009:89-90). God's holiness hates sin and iniquity. He has given his commands/laws and related ceremonies and rituals as a means to preserve a holy relationship with his creatures (cf Ex. 20:1-17; Ex. 35-40; Lev. 1-7,23; Lev. 11-15) (Turaki 2008(b): 82). At the cross God revealed his holiness in his wrath and love together: 'God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that we might become the righteousness of God' (2 Cor. 5:21) (Lewis 2000:240-241). Through the indwelling Holy Spirit the believer is empowered to live a holy life of resisting sin and consecration and devotion to God and his kingdom (Rom. 8:4,13; Gal. 5:22; 1 Cor. 6:19-20; 2 Tim. 1:7).

God's holiness is who he is. Because he is holy he hates sin and he expects from Christians a life of holiness – a turning away from sin and serving God in righteousness. The traditions and expectations of our society should therefore never be allowed to prevent us meeting God's expectations of us. He says 'be holy for I am holy' (Lev. 11:44-5; 19:2; 1 Pet. 1:16) and so we have no choice.

5.2.1.6 God as omnipotent, omnipresent/immanent, omniscient and sustainer

God is omnipresent/immanent – present everywhere in the universe at the same time (Ps. 139:7-8; Jer. 23:24) (O'Donovan 1992:47). God thus sees all things (Ps. 66:12; Is. 43:2; Acts 23:11) (Milne 2009:88). His immanence means that though he is 'wholly other' he is 'yet nearer to us than our own breath' (Rakoczy quoted in Light 2011:144).

God is also all-powerful (omnipotent) (Gen. 18:14; Jer. 32:27). He reveals himself as the God with whom 'nothing is impossible' (Mk. 10:27, Lk. 1:37) (Milne 2009:87-8). In Jesus' life we see God's power in action. Jesus showed his disciples he had power over demons (Matt. 8:28-32). Jesus changed water into wine (Jn. 2:1-11). He fed a crowd with a few pieces of bread and fish (Matt. 14:15-21). He raised a man from the dead (Jn. 11:38-44). Jesus performed every miracle with a purpose, mostly to reveal who he was (Jn. 10:38) – God's eternal Son (O' Donovan 1992: 53-54).

God knows everything and thus is omniscient (Jn. 21:17, 1 Jn. 3:20). This perfection is closely linked to his omnipresence. God sees and knows all (Milne 2009:88). He knows the number of our hairs (Lk. 12:7) and our movements and our thoughts (Ps. 139:2-4) (O'Donovan 1992:58-9). As the eternal Son of God, Jesus is the ultimate revelation, the truth 'in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge' (Jn. 14:6; Col. 2:3) (Milne 2009:89).

God's omnipresence/immanence and omnipotence make possible his providence (Light 2010:149). God acts in all things (Ps. 115:3; Matt. 10:30; Eph. 1:11) (Milne 2009:107). He provides people's need (Ps. 145:16; Matt. 6:25f) (O'Donovan 1992:55). He is with his people at all times to guide and empower (Matt. 28:20b). He is the one to whom they must turn in every situation, especially of great need, including danger (Ps. 46:1; Dan. 3:17; 2 Cor. 4:7, 8; 12:9-10; 2 Tim. 4:17).

The biblical view of God as creator includes his continuous sustenance and renewal of the world (Heb. 1:3; Col. 1:17; Acts 17:25) (Milne 2009:97; Lewis 2000:51). When God brought the creation into being and pronounced it 'good' (Gen. 1:31), he signified an approval of and a commitment to it (Lewis 2000:96). Even after Adam and Eve rebelled God was still committed to the world (cf Gen. 9:8-17), also shown clearly in his revealed a plan for its final restoration that nothing would annul (Gen. 3:15; Eph. 1:3-10). Throughout the Bible God shows he is constantly at work sustaining his creation (Job 37-38; Pss. 19; 65:5ff; 104; Hebr. 1:3) (Lewis 2000:101).

God's omnipresence, omnipotence and providence are the guarantee that he will fulfill his eternal plans. We can depend on him, no matter the difficulties we will face. He is our rock and refuge. He will watch over us and he will make all things work together for the good of those who love him (Rom. 8:28).

The world was not abandoned but 'kept' and 'reserved' for a final judgement (2 Pet. 3:7). God thus not only upholds what he has created, but also shows his sovereignty over all his creation (Lewis 2000:101) and the accountability to him of humankind and the other spirit beings.

Contrary to ATR beliefs, God is not far and has not abandoned his creation. He is personally committed to sustain it. Even though sin entered his world with catastrophic results, he will finally restore all things. Whenever we face difficulties we clearly can and should go to him instead of looking for solutions from diviners and the performance of certain rituals.

5.2.1.7 God as Sovereign

God is the supreme King and he therefore rules over all (Ps. 103:19) through his Son through the Holy Spirit (Matt. 28:18; Rev. 19:16; 1 Cor. 15:24-28; Col. 3:1; Eph. 1:18-23). At the return of Christ every knee will bow and every tongue confess that he is Lord (Phil. 2:10-11; Ps. 86:9; Is. 25:6-7). God rules over all events in the world and in the history of mankind to lead mankind to his final purpose of judgment and salvation (Lewis 2000:96). He has established purposes for all of creation which will not be thwarted (Ex. 3:14-15; Eph. 1:13b-14; Rev. 21:6). He is the Creator God who is sovereign over all circumstances and peoples (Acts 4:24-30; 17:24-26; cf Chron. 20:6) (Stejne 1999:168-169). God does not share his sovereignty with anyone (Ps. 135:6; Dan. 4:35; Is. 46:10; Rom. 9:19-21).

Since God is the sovereign Lord there is no power superior to him. His sovereignty forbids any form of polytheism and idolatry and thus the worship of any person or spirit being, except the Sovereign Lord alone (Ex. 20:4-5; Matt. 4:10) (Turaki 2008(b):25). He alone is worthy to be worshipped.

5.2.1.8 God as Protector

God protects his people by watching over them and helping them (1 Sam. 2:9; Ps. 1:6; 34:15; 37:40; Ps. 91; 121:5; 1 Cor.1:10). God's presence is always with them (Deut. 31:6; Jos. 1:5; Ps. 119:116; Is. 43:1-3; Hebr. 13:5). God is the ultimate protector but also sends his angels to protect us (Ex. 23:20; 2 Kgs. 6:16-7; Ps. 91:11; Matt.18:10-1; Hebr. 1:14). God uses people in defending the weak and needy (Is. 1:17; 58:6-7; Jer. 22:16; Lk. 10:33-35; Jas. 1:27). We can cry out to him and he will deliver us (Ps. 59:1-2; Ps. 71:12; 145:19; Jn. 17:11) (Mc Grath 1996:1596, 54-55). In all things God works for the good of those who love him (Rom 8:28), and all things includes any situation where man will be afraid (Gehman 2005:52)

No threats of ancestors or any kind of witchcraft should move us when we realise that God is with us and keeps us safe.

5.2.1.9 God as a Triune God

The Old Testament introduces God as One: 'Hear O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one' (Deut. 6:4). The Bible also presents God as one God in three persons (Father, Son and Spirit) (Milne 2009:79). In the Old Testament there are occasions where God almost certainly refers to himself in plural terms (Gen. 1:26; 3:22, Is. 6:8). Several New Testament passages imply or state God's triunity (Matt. 3:13-17; 28:19; Jn. 14:15-23; Acts 2:32f; 2 Cor. 13:14; Eph. 1:1-14) (Milne 2009:80). The New Testament presents Jesus Christ as the final revelation of God – not so much a revelation about God, but of God himself. Jesus is the Son of God who is co-eternal with God the Father (Jn. 1:1-14; Col. 1:15-20; Heb. 1:1-3). In Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form (Col. 2:9; cf 1:19).

Each person of God does a different work. God the Father rules the universe, making final decisions about all things (Acts 1:7). God the Son is the one through whom the universe was made and held together (Hebr. 1:2-3). The Spirit reveals all truth and inspires communication with all truthfulness (Jn. 14:26; 15:26). The Holy Spirit convinces the world of sin, righteousness and judgment (Jn. 16:8) (Packer 1993:77-79).

Just as there is communion between the persons of God (Matt. 11:27; 1 Cor. 2:11), so God created us to have communion with him and with one another. This stresses the importance of community, and hence the family, society and the church. The triune God is hard to understand for the human mind, but it does mean God is not a mysterious force or an impersonal power, but a personal God (Milne 2009:79) displayed in interpersonal relationships. In the trinity we see God's attributes manifested, e.g. his love, grace, mercy and hatred for sin leading to his plan of salvation for us sinners.

5.2.1.10 God as the sole object of worship

Many African Christians accept the ancestral cult as an integral part of their culture and daily life. Members in the church and even leaders participate in traditional rituals related

to the ancestors (Bae 2008:20). The most important reasons for the ancestral cult are that the relationship with the ancestors upholds the clan and helps cope with the fear of death and of the unknown (Anderson quoted in Bae 2008:32-35). Bae (2008:160), however, states that 'at the heart of the controversy of the practices of ancestor worship is the theological question whether ancestor worship is a form of idolatry [polytheism].'

God created us for himself so that we could worship and glorify him (Mfonyam 2010:45) (2 Kgs. 17:36; 1 Chron. 16:29; Ps. 29:2; 43:21; 48:1; 149; 150; Lk. 4:8; Jn. 4:24; Rom. 11:36; 12:1; Eph. 3:20; 1 Tim. 1:17; Hebr. 12:28-29; 1 Pet. 1:3; Rev. 14:7; 15:4). Worship refers to the supreme honour or veneration given either in thought or deed to a person or a thing, which is to be reserved for God alone (Turaki 2008(b):123). Gehman (1999:90) defines worship as 'responding to God with reverence, fear, adoration and obedience. Worship is our response to God's personal revelation of his glory to us.' Worship is also 'the performance of any ritual act of reverence, all prayer and all attempts to communicate any offering or sacrifice which is aimed at soliciting the help of spirit beings' (Fleming quoted in Turaki 2008(b):46).

Fleming rightly concludes that 'anyone who worships any other god, person, thing, divinity or any spirit being, is guilty of idolatry (Ex. 20:4-5; Deut. 4:19; 8:19; Acts 10:25-26; 14:11-15; Rom. 1:25; Rev. 22:8-9).' If Fleming is correct about what constitutes the worship of God, then ATR involves polytheism and idolatry.

Jewish religion was monotheistic (Is. 45:5; Is. 44:6, Deut. 6:4,5) and the worship of other gods was thus strictly forbidden (Ex. 20:1-5; Ex. 34:14; Josh. 24:14; Is. 42:8; Ez. 14:1-6; 20:7; 39:7). Adeyemo (1997:41) adds that 'explicit commands are given in the Bible not to worship any other, be it ancestors, a celestial body, or natural phenomena, except the living God' (Ex. 20:3; 23:24; 34:6; Deut. 4:15-19; 27:15; Matt. 4:10; Acts 17:29-30; Rom. 1:25; Col. 2:8,18,20-23; 1 Tim. 1:4). Gehman (2005:203-4) is more explicit: 'polytheism, idolatry and the worship of idols in thought, word or deed are all forbidden.' He notes that God's relationship with his people is compared with marriage between husband and wife (Gen. 2:24) and that therefore our relationship with God 'is a covenanted commitment of exclusive loyalty and devotion by his people.'

Bae (2008:163) states that when we honour an object or person as we would God, this constitutes a form of polytheism and idolatry. Further, when divine characteristics are ascribed to a person other than God it constitutes a form of polytheism-idolatry.

Whatever is made or treated as a substitute for God becomes a god/idol and the beliefs or practices associated with it are idolatrous. Turaki (2008(b):59) also notes that when we worship the creature in place of God it is idolatry (Rom. 1:18-25). When people deal with spirit beings and mystical powers they neglect the fact that God is their guide, provider, sustainer and protector. This effectively turns the ancestral cult into polytheism/idolatry.

Carson (2008:46-47) says that idolatry is the sin that most frequently arouses God's wrath because it dethrones him. It is a failure to love God with heart, soul, mind and strength (Deut. 6:4, 5; Mk. 12:28-34).

Scripture is clear that God alone is worthy of our worship and he is to have no rivals. In the light of this and the role of the ancestral cult, I believe the latter is a form of polytheism/idolatry and thus strongly forbidden.

5.2.2 An exegesis of a key passage on the doctrine of God (Isaiah 40:27-31)

This passage in Isaiah describes God's greatness: he is the creator, is transcendent, has no equal in the created world (cf v.25), knows his creation and the needs of his people and cares for them, and is omnipotent with his power available to his people. This passage deals with many of the attributes of God covered in 5.2.1, showing the impact they are intended to have on the believer, especially in difficult circumstances.

There are differing views on when Isaiah 40 was written. Oswalt (2003:443) states that it was written towards the end of the captivity in Babylon. Young (1972:64) sees it is a complaint by people facing difficulties. Ridderbos (1985:350) takes verse 27 as the prophet's description of a people depressed by years of oppression during the exile. They are embittered and filled with self-pity (Oswalt 2003:448). They reproach God because they think he is forgetful (v. 27) or tired and because of the distress that continually occurs (Grogan 1986:246; Baltzer 2001:82-30). Isaiah addresses the people as Jacob and Israel to call their attention to their ancestor to remind them that he will also be faithful to his

descendants, the people of the covenant. The prophet listens to their complaint that their lot is hidden from God.

The prophet responds to their accusations with a confession of faith (vv. 28-31) (Allen 1971:301). He asks with great exasperation how they could say such a thing knowing perfectly well what God is like. God knows their situation exactly, and he will surely do something about it (Oswalt 2003:448). Their concept of God is far too small; they seem to have forgotten how great God's strength and understanding are (Allen 1971:301). He is the everlasting God, so he will watch over his people from everlasting to everlasting. He is their Creator and will not abandon them (Young 1972:66). The prophet draws a couple of conclusions from God's greatness (from his eternity and creative power). God never grows tired or weary. While leading his people he has never given up because of lack of strength. As the eternal God he remains the same in the midst of changes, and as Creator of the universe he is the Almighty. He has the power and wisdom to help. His understanding is unfathomable because he is the creator of all things. For that reason he will know how to help his people. Instead of being depressed and questioning God, they should realise that man cannot understand God's ways and thoughts, and therefore they must wait patiently for him (Ridderbos 1985:350-351).

Verse 29 states that God's strength is available to those who are tired and weary. He not only has power (v. 28), but he also gives power (v. 29) (Allen 1971:302). His people receive strength from him that surpasses human power (Ridderbos 1985:351). In verse 30 it is made clear that even the strongest men and youths get weary and exhausted resulting in stumbling and falling (Young 1972:68). God knows this happens to all and has the solution.

Verse 31 makes clear that to 'wait' on God is to live in confident expectation of his action on our behalf (Oswalt 2003:448). It is an exercise of faith. The people need an attitude of waiting. God has given them his promise, and they must wait for its fulfilment (Allen 1971:302). The prophet compares them with the eagle, that, in its high soaring flight, is the picture of tireless strength (Ridderbos 1985:351). Just as the eagle flies high into the sky, so the people will mount up from their difficulties. Those who wait on the Lord will also run and walk; they will go from strength to strength (Young 1972:69).

In this passage Isaiah reminded the people of Israel that there is no one else like the Almighty God who cares of them in times of need. No matter what kind of difficulties they might be facing, including discouragement, disappointment, weariness, and fear, he is there. He is their Creator and will not abandon them and will respond to their cries for help. To resort to other gods, or to ancestors, would clearly not be acceptable to God. In fact it would be an insult to him.

5.2.3 Conclusion

Contrary to ATR beliefs in Kejom Ketingu, God is not distant. After God completed his creation, he was committed to sustaining it, thus guaranteeing his involvement. Man was created to have uninterrupted fellowship with God which in ATR is believed to be impossible. Believers can and should communicate directly with God, presenting their requests straight to him without using intermediaries such as ancestors.

God's holiness describes what God is in himself. Because he is holy he hates sin. We all stand condemned because of our sin. Jesus, through his perfect life, death and resurrection, took God's judgement on himself. Another clear difference between Christianity and ATR is the understanding of the concept of sin (Steinleiter quoted in Lewis 2000:263). In ATR sin is considered as an evil 'upsetting the equilibrium of the society and personnel relationships' (Adeyemo 1997:50). In the biblical view all sin is directed ultimately against God. Milne (2009:140) states that when people sin they withhold worship and adoring love from God and their worship is directed towards what is not God. Until sin is correctly understood and God's solution for it accepted, there can be no relationship with God, and as a result intermediaries, e.g. ancestors, will be sought.

In Deuteronomy 6:4 God is introduced as One. Milne (2009:79) states that 'this insistence on the divine unity was important because of the idolatry, the depraved polytheism of the surrounding nations.' It has been noted that Scripture repeatedly sounds the call to the exclusive worship of God and rejection of all other so-called gods. For Christians this insistence makes it clear that the triune God doesn't accept and vehemently forbids any honour or worship given to any other being, whether ancestors

or anybody else, that belongs only to him (Bae 2008:163). God hates polytheism and its idolatry.

God's omnipresence and omnipotence mean he has not abandoned us. There is thus no need for ancestors which have to be flattered to benefit man. Christians can trust God in every situation (Steyne 1999:168; Osei-Bonsu 1998:163).

God's sovereignty in the world means his purposes cannot be manipulated through rituals designed to please man. According to Ferdinando (1999:379-80), God's sovereignty is another important difference between ATR and the biblical view of the spirit world. He dominates the whole cosmos, visible and invisible. In ATR this is absent. The use of traditional practices to control one's environment clashes with God's sovereignty.

After the fall man's knowledge of God become restricted and the image he has of God became distorted (Adeyemo 1997:25). This is clearly seen in the ATR view of God. For the evangelical the conclusions to section 5.2 are (i) the ancestral cult is unnecessary, (ii) the biblical view of God has no place for the ancestral cult, (iii) polytheism (manifested practically through idolatry) is hated by God and thus anything approaching the worship and honour of beings other than God, like in the ancestral cult, has no place in Christianity. The implications are that the rituals during the mourning period and death celebrations in Kejom Ketingu, based in the ancestral cult, should be abandoned.

5.3 The biblical view of death and the afterlife

5.3.1 A diachronic view of the biblical view of death and the afterlife

5.3.1.1 Introduction

The Christian and ATR views on death and the afterlife differ significantly. In ATR death is a transition followed by an existence differing only marginally from one's existence on earth (Bae and van de Merwe 2008:1315). The fear of death and the prominent role of the living-dead are major problems in much of Africa (Gehman 1999:xiv). Gehman (pp. ix-xiv) observes that it causes Christians to backslide and return to their traditional belief in the living-dead. The belief in the ancestral spirits has led to bondage to fear as well as

a preoccupation with and relationship to the living dead that borders on, or is a form of, polytheism-idolatry.

In this section I discuss the biblical view of death and life after death by presenting a diachronic survey of passages focussing on death, the interim state, the hope of a believer, the resurrection of the body, and the reality of heaven and the new earth and hell. I address the matter of whether the Scriptures permit communication between the living and the dead and if the ancestors can be intermediaries.

5.3.1.2 Physical and spiritual death

Physical death came as a punishment for sin (Gen. 2:16,17; 3:1-23; Prov. 11:19; Ez. 18:20; Rom. 5:12-21; 6:23) (Gehman 1999:249; Milne 2009:357; Adeyemo 1997:70). Physical death is the separation of the body from the spirit which marks the end of any possible change of destiny (Hebr. 9:27) (Gehman 1999:249, 254). At death the physical body returns to the ground and becomes dust again (Bae and van de Merwe 2008:1320).

Spiritual death is the separation of man's soul from God. The day Adam and Eve sinned their relationship with God was broken (Gen. 3:8), vividly seen in their expulsion from the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3:24-25). Every descendent of Adam and Eve has inherited their sinful nature and spiritual death (Prov. 14:12; Rom. 3:10; 5:12-14; 1 Cor. 15:22; Eph 2:1; 2 Pet. 2:10, 18) (Gehman 1999:249; Alcorn 2004:33; Milne 2009:141).

Someone who is spiritually dead can be made alive spiritually through faith in Jesus Christ (Rom. 6:11-4; 2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15; Eph. 4:22-4; Col. 3:9-10; Tit. 3:5) (Gehman 1999:249-250; Milne 2009:163). When we confess our sins, God grants us forgiveness (Ps. 103:10-12, Prov. 28:13; Matt. 6:14; Lk. 15:17-20; Acts 2:38; 1 Tim. 1:15; Hebr. 8:12; 1 Jn. 1:9) (Alcorn 2004:34).

The second death is the spiritual death made permanent and is the fate of all people whose names are not found in the book of life (Matt. 10:28; Rev. 20:14-5; 21:8).

5.3.1.3 Burial rites

In this section I give a description of how funerals in biblical times took place and how the dead were honoured. I also examine whether there was evidence of giving honour or veneration to ancestors.

Ancestral roots and lineages are very important in traditional Africa. The same is true of the Jews in the Bible. The Jews attached great importance to genealogies and references to the ancestors (Expository Bible Dictionary quoted in Turaki 2008(2):63; Light 2011: 210). There is evidence in the Scriptures that honour was given to the dead in their burial and that people mourned their death (Gen. 23:1, 19; 25:9, 10; Gen. 50:1-13; Ex. 13:19; Ex. 20:28-9; 2 Sam. 18:33; 2 Chron. 35:25; Jn. 11:19-37; Acts 9:39).

The burial of Sarah, Abraham's wife, describes Israelite funeral rites (Gen. 23:11-4,19-20). Abraham 'went' to the tent where her body lay, he mourned for his wife, he wept as a demonstration of his grief, he rose from beside her and he buried her in a cave. The funeral of Abraham (Gen. 25:9) and Isaac (Gen. 35:20) led by their sons only describes the burial, but it is likely that the funeral followed a similar procedure (Kim 2003:3). The body of Jacob was embalmed and transported to Israel for burial (Gen. 50:1-12). Joseph's body was embalmed and his bones were carried by Moses when the Israelites left Egypt for burial in the Promised Land (Gen. 50:24-26; Ex. 13:19; Jos. 24:32). Embalmmnt was unique in the Old Testament and took place most likely due to Egyptian influence and also to preserve the body from decay during the long journey to Palestine (Kim 2003:4-5). Somebody who touched the dead body of someone was considered unclean for seven days (Num. 19:11; also Lev. 21:11).

In the Old Testament the preferred place for burial was a designated family burial place (Gen. 25:9,10; 50:13; Judg. 8:32; 2 Sam. 2:32; 17:23) (Simfukwe 2006:1462; Kim 2003:8). People would make considerable effort to transport the bodies back to the family grave (Cook quoted in Routledge 2008:33). This tradition was not continued in the New Testament. For instance, Jesus was buried in another man's tomb (Matt. 27:57-61) and many disciples died 'at the ends of the earth' (Simfukwe 2006:1462).

The only incident of burning happens when the mutilated bodies of Saul and his three sons were rescued by the people of Jabesh Gilead in the context of a military conflict (1

Sam. 31:11-12) (Simfukwe 2006:1462). However, the bones were buried. To be left unburied was a disgrace, a mark of judgement (Eccl. 6:3, Is. 14:19, Jer 7:33) (Mc Grath 1996:1463).

The length of the period of mourning differed. Sometimes it was seven days (1 Sam. 31:13). In the case of Aaron and Moses it was thirty days (Num. 20:29; Deut. 34:8).

Not all burial customs were allowed in Bible times (Gehman 1999:72-76). The passage in Deuteronomy 14:1, 2 can be seen as referring to certain funeral rites. It is the prohibition of certain practices (self-laceration and shaving part of the head) that were probably the result of the influence of foreign religions. These practices and mourning, a funeral meal and sympathising with the bereaved are mentioned in Jeremiah 16:5-7 (see also 2 Sam. 3:35 and Ez. 24:17) (Kim 2003:6).

In the New Testament Jesus raises several people from the dead, including a young girl (Matt. 9:23-5; Lk. 8:49; Mk. 5:38-42). In the latter case flute players and professional mourners had already begun to grieve (Kapolyo 2006:1129). In Luke 7:11-15 a large crowd followed the coffin of a dead man. John 11 gives information about what happened after the burial of Lazarus. Again there were many mourners (v.19). He was buried in a cave hewn out of a rock (v.38). The corpse was laid on a sheet of linen which enveloped the body. The feet were bound at the ankles and the arms were tied with linen strips. The face was bound with another cloth (v. 44). Jesus was apparently prepared for burial in the same way (Carson 1991:417-419). Acts 9:37 indicates that a corpse was washed before burial.

In comparing funerals in North West Cameroon with those in biblical times one can conclude that certain aspects are common: many come to express their sympathy; people openly show their grief; people contribute food; and a lot of importance is attached to being buried in one's home village. The reason for this last aspect, however, is the ancestral cult. Sections below investigate the biblical evidence regarding the activities of the deceased to see if this includes or can accommodate the ATR beliefs about the ancestors.

5.3.1.4 The intermediate state

The term 'intermediate state' has been introduced by theologians to refer to the period between death and the final resurrection of the dead. Fudge and Peterson (2000:171) state that the Bible teaches when a believer dies he/she is immediately united with Christ in heaven (Jn. 11:25; 2 Cor. 5:8; 1 Thess. 4:13-14; Rev. 14:13). Because of this death no longer has the same dread for believers – its 'sting' has been removed (1 Cor. 15:55; Hebr. 2:15) (Ferdinando 1999:371). Gehman (1999:257) uses the request of the dying thief in Luke 23:42 as evidence that the intermediate state for the believer is heaven itself in the presence of Christ. The intermediate state is clearly not the same for unbelievers. The dead are resurrected when Christ returns when all humankind will face judgement with eternal consequences (Dan. 12:2; Matt. 16:27; 25:29-30; Jn. 5:28-29; Phil. 3:20; 1 Thess. 4:16-7; 2 Thess. 1:6-10; 2 Tim. 4:1; Rev. 20:11-15).

O'Donovan (1992:221) argues that in the intermediate state believers are given a heavenly form/body, in which they can speak and relate to one another (2 Cor. 5:1-4). He (p. 221) gives the example of Moses and Elijah whose heavenly form were both seen and heard by Peter, James and John while Jesus spoke with them on the mountain (Lk. 9:28-32). Bae and van de Merwe (2008:1320) explain that during this transitional period life in heaven is 'better by far' (Lk. 23:43; Jn. 14:3; 2 Cor. 5:1-10; Phil. 1:23) because we will be in Christ's presence. However, it is a period of waiting for something greater – the resurrection of the body and the new heavens and earth (Light 2012:192).

For unbelievers death means being away from the body and absent from the Lord, experiencing conscious suffering (Fudge and Peterson 2000:172). They mention the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Lk. 16:19-31) as the clearest biblical passage on this subject (see exegesis of this passage in 5.3.2).

Can the dead communicate with the living?

Does the Bible permit or encourage any relationship between the living and the dead? God forbids the living to speak with the dead (Deut. 18:11-3; Lev. 20: 6). Isaiah says, 'When men tell you to consult mediums and spiritists, who whisper and mutter, should not a

people inquire of their God? Why consult the dead on behalf of the living?' (8:19). Any 'seeking' or 'enquiring' should be directed to God and his word (Gehman 1999:173-176).

Ecclesiastes 9:4-5 clearly rejects interaction between the living and the dead when it states that 'the dead know nothing; they have no further reward, and even their memory is forgotten. Their love, their hate, and their jealousy have long since vanished, never again will they have a part in anything that happens under the sun.'

Gehman (1999:161,178) points out when a person dies the relationship between the living and the dead is irrevocably cut off (2 Sam. 12:23; Job 7:7-10). The righteous dead are in the presence of God and cannot be called back to earth (Lk. 16:31; see 5.3.2).

Bae and van de Merwe (2008:1309) mention that the Scripture which could suggest that it is possible for a person to return to communicate with the living is 1 Samuel 28:3-19. This encounter between king Saul and the witch of Endor is often understood to indicate that the living can communicate with the dead. It is evident from this passage that God condemns any attempt to contact the dead. This passage, however, can be interpreted in numerous ways. Gehman (1999:164-171) gives the following possible interpretations: (1) Since the woman was a law breaker (Saul had expelled all the mediums and spiritists from the land of Israel) she could easily have been involved in deception as well. She saw an old man in a robe (v.14) who could have been any elderly person dressed that way. (2) The spirit that appeared was Samuel, but only by a special working of the power of God. (3) It was Satan who appeared as the dead cannot communicate with the living. If it was Samuel who appeared it did not change God's planned judgement on Saul and his family. This passage indicates that the dead cannot change things for the living through contact with them (Light 2012:196-198). Steyne (1992:185-86) argues that necromancy leads people away from fellowship with God and from obedience to the statutes of God.

After examining whether or not there is evidence of the ancestral cult in the Old Testament Nürnbergger (2006:59) comes to the conclusion that there is none. He states, 'forebears could do nothing for their offspring and their offspring could do nothing for them. Death was the end of all relationships.' In the Old Testament Abraham, Isaac and

Jacob, play a religious role after they had died. They were remembered 'because they were taken to be the 'pioneers' with whom Yahweh had entered into a covenant' (Gen. 15; Ex. 3:15, 16; 32:13; Ps. 105:9-10; Rom. 4), but they did not function as mediators (Nürnberg 2006:60-1). Turaki (2008(b):68-9) confirms that patriarchs were never designated as mediators. The priests fulfilled that role.

Nürnberg (2006:62-63) states that in the New Testament there was a call to 'abandon genealogical claims that threaten to gain priority over Christ' (Matt. 10:35-7; 10:21; 19:29; Lk. 9:59-60); however, this call was not meant to encourage a lack of respect for one's parents (p. 62-63). In Hebrews 12:1 the 'cloud of witnesses' refers to the example of the Old Testament saints mentioned in Hebrews 11. These stories are provided to inspire the readers to stand firm in the Christian faith in times of opposition, not to support the idea of contact between the living and the dead (Light 2011:210).

If it is argued that the possibility of interaction with one's ancestors is not totally denied in the Bible, the practice is clearly forbidden. Section 5.2 demonstrated that the attributes of God means the ancestral cult steals from his glory and amounts to idolatry. The ancestral cult is not only forbidden, but is also totally redundant in the light of God's character and special relationship to his people. The ancestral cult not only interferes with and undermines the believer's relationship with God and detracts from Christ's pre-eminence in his/her life, but, as the next section shows, it is also dangerous.

Can ancestors be intermediaries?

Mbiti (1990:82) says the living-dead are considered the closest link that humans have with the spirit world. This means they are viewed as the best intermediaries between man and God because they know the needs of the humans and speak their language and have access to God and speak the language of God. Gehman (2005:293-294; 1999:99) notes the belief that the ancestors know the circumstances of the living well: the ancestral spirits are assumed to be present and able to know, hear and see what is happening to their descendants. Bae (2008:29) adds that during prayer the living recite all the names of the ancestors and for many their religious experience ends with the ancestors, and not God. The ancestors are the focus of prayer rather than God.

Turaki (2008(b):64) argues that if the ancestors function as intermediaries, receiving prayers, libations and invocations, dealing with them becomes idolatry; further, it means they take the place of Christ who is the only mediator between God and men (1 Tim. 2:5,6). Isaiah 53 describes the work of a Mediator between God and man (Gehman 1999:85; O'Donovan 1992:42). Jesus himself said, 'I am the way and the truth and the life' (Jn. 14:6 also Jn. 10:10 and Jn. 11:25,26). Turaki (2008(b):61, 49) thus sees a Christian theology of the Trinity as a powerful argument against the traditional concept of intermediaries. The roles of the members of the Trinity address the heart of ATR showing why it is condemned in the Bible.

The identity of the living-dead (ancestors)

It is important to know what animates the belief in the living-dead. Adeyemo (1997:41) states, 'Any attempt to worship anyone else besides the triune God is a perversion of truth. It is Satan's effort to secure for himself what belongs properly to God alone' (Matt. 4:9). Fon and Grebe (1997:32-3) add that Satan's main method is deceiving people by leading them into false worship. Gehman (2005:281-84) concludes that according to the biblical worldview, 'demons are associated with the spiritual dynamic that animates worship of other gods' (Deut. 32:17; Ps. 106:37; 1 Cor. 10:19-20). O'Donovan (1992:224) states that demons have the power to appear in any chosen form (2 Cor. 11:3, 14; 2 Thess. 2:9; Rev. 16:13). They are able to imitate the appearances and voices of dead relatives. Light (2012:198) adds since Satan masquerades as an angel of light (2 Cor. 11:14-15) impersonation of certain people can be expected.

This all points to the ancestral cult being a smoke-screen for Satan and his demons. This would explain why the Bible is so adamant that necromancy is anathema to God and so dangerous to us.

5.3.1.5 The resurrection and beyond

During the Old Testament period the conviction about the resurrection from the dead developed (Job 19:25-27; Ps. 49:15; Is. 26:19). In the New Testament this is taught clearly (Matt. 22:29-32; Jn. 5:24-29; 1 Cor. 15; Phil. 3:20-1; 1 Thess. 4:13-18; Hebr. 11:35; 1 Pet. 1:3) (Milne 2009:361; Gehman 1999:298).

The kind of resurrection for the believer presented in the New Testament is one like the resurrected body of Christ (1 Cor. 15:48-49; Phil. 3:20-21). Lioy (2011:101-2) explains that the resurrection body will be a spiritual body adapted to the immortal spirit dwelling in it. It will be raised in glory and power and will be imperishable (1 Cor. 15:42-54). It will not become sick or die; it will not feel pain or become tired (Is. 25:8; Lk. 20:36; 1 Cor. 15:35-44; Rev. 7:17; 21:4) (Gehman 1999:298-299). This hope rests on the promises of Christ and his own resurrection from the dead (Rom. 6:5; 1 Cor. 15:21-23; 2 Cor. 4:14; 1 Thess. 4:14; Lk. 24:39; Jn. 20:27).

There will be two kinds of resurrections: (1) the resurrection of the righteous (Lk. 14:13-14), or the resurrection of life (Jn. 5:28-29), and (2) the resurrection of the wicked or the resurrection of damnation (Jn. 5:28-29) (Gehman 1999:299). Both resurrections are to make possible a day of divine judgement, the outcome of which has eternal ramifications.

The final judgement

God has 'set a day when he will judge the world with justice' (Acts 17:31; Eccl. 3:17; Rom 14:10-2; Hebr. 9:27). The day of judgement will be in 'the last day' (Jn. 12:48), at the end of the age (Matt. 13:39, 49) when Jesus comes again (Cor. 4:5; Matt. 25:31-46; 2 Thess. 1:7-10). Christ himself will be the judge (Jn. 5:22, 27; Rom. 2:16; 1 Tim 4:1) (Gehman 1999:301).

The believers will not be judged for their sins as they are declared righteous because of their faith in Christ's life and ministry (Matt. 10:32-33; Lk. 12:8-9; Jn. 3:18; Rom. 8:1, 33-39). Further, as God's children (Jn. 1:12; Jn. 3:16, 36; Jn. 5:24; Rom. 6:23; 10:9, 13) they are co-heirs with Christ of an eternal future with Christ in a new earth (see below). Christians, therefore, do not need to fear death or the final judgement.

However, they will be judged on their use of their gifts, talents and opportunities in this life (Matt. 16: 27; 25:14-30; Lk. 19:11-27; 2 Cor. 5:10) and on whether or not they have been faithful (Rom. 14:10-21; 1 Cor. 4:5) (Milne 2009:364; Gehman 1999:302; O'Donovan 1992:339-340). The judgement of his works will determine the rewards he will enjoy in heaven (Matt. 25:34; 1 Cor. 9:25; Rev. 11:18). If a believer's works are found to be unworthy, they will be 'burned up', but the believer will be saved, but only as

one escaping through the flames (1 Cor. 3:13-15) (Alcorn 2004:134). If the works are proven to be praiseworthy he/she will receive a reward (1 Cor. 3:11-14). In places they are described in terms of various crowns: an incorruptible crown (1 Cor. 9:25), a crown of righteousness (2 Tim. 4:8), a crown of life (James 1:12, Rev. 2:10) and a crown of glory (1 Pet. 5:4) (Gehman 1999:302).

The wicked will be raised from the dead to face the final judgement (Rev. 20:11-15), those whose names are not written in the book of life (Ex. 32:31-3; Ps. 69:28; Rev. 17:8; 20:12-15). They will be judged for their sins and for their rejection of God's grace (Matt.10:14-5; Lk. 10:10-2; Jn. 12:48; Hebr. 10:26-31) (Gehman 1999:302). The judgement will be based on a person's response to the revealed will of God (Matt. 11:21-24; Rom. 2:12). Those who have never heard the gospel will be judged by the light they have through his creation (Rom. 1:19-32) and moral law (Rom. 2:14-16) of which all have some awareness (Milne 2009:362-363). The wicked will pay for what they have done (Ps. 37:12-15; 2 Tim. 3:7; 2 Pet. 2:4-10; Jude 15) (O'Donovan 1992:340).

Since sin in ATR is mainly an offense against the community rather than God, there is no belief in a final judgement (Adeyemo 1997:64-66) and therefore no preparation for this day.

Heaven on earth

The Christian hope will finally be realised in heaven on the new earth (Is. 65:17; 66:22; Hebr. 13:14; Rev. 21:1-3). The throne of God and of the lamb is in the New Jerusalem brought down to earth (Hebr. 11:16; Rev. 3:12; 21:1,10) (Alcorn 2004:45). Milne (2009:368) and Alcorn (2004:78-79) describe the biblical pictures of the recreated earth: a perfect city (Hebr. 13:14), a country (Hebr. 11:16), a victorious kingdom (Hebr. 12:28), a holy temple (Ez. 40-48), and a place of perfect righteousness (Rev 21:8, 27). There we will rest from our earthly labours (2 Thess. 1:5-7; Hebr. 4:9-10; Rev. 14:13) and serve Christ, working for his glory (Rev. 22:3). Alcorn (2004:chapter 9) states that in Rev 21-22 the new earth and new Jerusalem are portrayed as actual places, with physical descriptions, where God will live (Rev. 21:3). Our primary joy will be knowing

and seeing God (Ps. 16:11; Matt. 25:11; Jn. 17:3; 1 Thess. 2:19; Hebr. 12:22) (pp. 175-176).

Many of the practices and rituals performed by adherents of ATR are inspired by the fear of death. Those who know Christ do not need to fear death. They are people that die with a secure hope to live with Christ in heaven, something not offered in ATR.

Hell

O'Donovan (1992:229) states that the most difficult truth in the Bible is the reality of hell. Jesus declared that the greatest power, position, wealth and pleasure is not worth having if it means going to hell as a result (Mk. 8:36-7).

People without Christ cannot enter the presence of a holy and just God and will be sent to a place of everlasting destruction (Matt.13:40-42; Rom. 2:8; Hebr. 10:26-9; 2 Pet. 3:7; Rev. 20:15; 21:18) (Alcorn 2004:24).

Jesus spoke about the implications for those who would fail to pass the coming judgement (Matt. 8:12; 13:30; 39-43, Mk. 9:43-49; Lk. 12:4-5) (Milne 2009:365). He spoke about eternal death and warned the wicked of a place of utter misery where there will be 'weeping and gnashing of teeth' (Matt. 13:42,50; 22:13; 25:30; Lk. 13:28) and of 'the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels, into which the wicked will be cast' (Matt. 8:8-9; 25:41; Hebr. 10:27; Jude 7) (Alcorn 2004:28; O'Donovan 1992:340-341). Jesus warned the people to avoid at any cost being cast 'into hell, where the fire never goes out' (Mk. 9:43). This punishment will be eternal (Matt. 25:46; Mk. 9:48) (Gehman 1999:250; Adeyemo 1997:71; O'Donovan 1992:229-30).

At death the destiny of somebody who has lived without Christ is sealed. Clearly the Gospel needs to be shared with traditional Africans as ATR does not prepare them to escape hell. It lacks a complete and accurate revelation of the afterlife.

5.3.2 An exegesis of two key passages on the biblical doctrine of death and after life

5.3.2.1 Luke 16:19-31

This passage in Luke's Gospel addresses the questions whether it is possible for the dead to communicate with the living and be involved in the life of the living and whether the living can improve the ancestor's state.

Jesus probably took this story from real life, just as he did with the other parables. He used illustrations that were familiar to his hearers (McGee 1983:320). This parable illustrates the theme of contrasts and reversal of them (Evans 1990:248).

In the verses 20 and 21 Jesus describes in graphic terms the different circumstances of the rich man and the poor man, Lazarus. The rich man lived in luxury every day. He was dressed in purple clothing and fine linen garments, which was a sign of great opulence. Lazarus' clothes are not mentioned. Instead, he is covered with sores, which probably made him unclean. The rich man apparently hosted a banquet every day. Lazarus longed to eat from the food that fell from his table. The rich man had a gate, which meant he possessed an estate; and Lazarus instead had to stay at the gate (Green 1997:605-606). He was never invited to sit at the rich man's table. The dogs came and licked his sores. The Lord pictures the desperate situation of Lazarus (McGee 1983:320). The poor man's name is his only claim to status. The rich man's name is not mentioned (Green 1997:606). The rich man's luxurious way of life and his implied lack of concern for Lazarus are radically changed after death (Fitzmeyer 1985:1128).

In verse 22 Lazarus finally died – maybe from starvation (Evans 1990:248). There was probably no funeral and his body may have been thrown into the valley of Gehenna, the place where the bodies of the poor were thrown (McGee 1983:321). In Jewish tradition people considered it a curse to be left exposed for scavenger animals. Lazarus received the final disgrace (Green 1997:607) seen in the way Romans and Jews valued proper burial. Romans often took part in funerary societies, whose main purpose was to make sure their members had a suitable burial. The rich man received such a burial and was honored after death (Evans 1990:248).

Lazarus was carried by angels to Abraham's side (Evans 1990:248). He, who had received no comfort, is now comforted (Green 1997:608). How his position now contrasted with that before his death. In verse 23 the rich man died and entered hell, the

world of the dead. He is in torment. Their roles are reversed and their new conditions are intensified. The comfort Lazarus now enjoyed exceeded the pleasure the rich man experienced in life (Evans 1990:248-249) and the rich man's position is completely reversed.

Certain things can be noticed from this account. The lost go to a conscious place of torment and people know each other after death. Our identities are thus preserved in the afterlife. All who die do not go to the same place. There is a division resulting in two compartments: paradise (called Abraham's bosom) and a place of torment (McGee 1983:321). This would mean that deceased non-Christians experience God's judgement, at least a foretaste of it, during the intermediate state (see 5.3.3) (Light 2011:203). Once someone dies, his fate is sealed. There is no possibility for those in Hades to eventually win their way into heaven (Bock 1996:1361).

In verse 24 the rich man has not been humbled by his present circumstances. He assumes that Abraham is still his 'father' and that Lazarus can be sent on errands on his behalf. Those whose lives reflect their repentance have the right to call Abraham 'father.' This makes the rich man's request presumptuous. During his life he never seemed to have contemplated any mercy on Lazarus' behalf, and now he requests mercy at the hand of Lazarus (Green 1997:608).

In verse 25 it is made clear that the rich man received his punishment because he had not shown any mercy to a fellow human-being. He had seen Lazarus' hunger and pain and had not done anything about it (Isaak 2006:1237).

In verse 26 it is evident that there is a clear divide between the righteous and the unrighteous dead, and that the dead do not have freedom of movement as suggested by the underlying beliefs of the ancestral cult (Bae and van de Merwe 2008:1308).

In the verses 27 and 28 the rich man becomes the beggar (McGee 1983:321). The rich man has learned his lesson too late. He wants Lazarus to warn his five brothers so that they will not suffer the same fate (Fitzmeyer 1985:1128). His concern is a bit surprising, considering his indifference to the needs of others when he was alive. However, his request is refused. The hearer of the parable learns the lesson that the rich man did not

learn during his life. Although Lazarus may have been willing to help, it is not possible. His brothers have Moses and the prophets (Evans 1990:249) and they need to hear and obey them. If they will not listen to the commandments of Scripture, they will not listen to someone who has been raised from the dead to warn them.

Clearly the passage is teaching that the dead are not able to influence the lives of the living; they cannot communicate with the living in any way. The Bible does not encourage or support a relationship between the living and the dead. This passage of Scripture also indicates that the fear of the ancestors is unfounded (Bae and van de Merwe 2008:1308).

5.3.2.2 *Philippians 1:21-26*

Paul wrote the letter to the Philippians to a church in the city of Philippi in the province of Macedonia while in prison in Rome around 54-7 A.D (Silva 2005:1). He wrote the letter at a time of opposition to the church and internal unrest of some sort. The believers were in need of spiritual help and guidance (Fee 1995:29 and Silva 2005:3-4). Verses 12-18 of the passage make it clear that Paul is not ashamed of being in prison. Further, he is concerned that he not disgrace the gospel when he stands before the Roman tribunal. Depending on the outcome of the trial, he has two options: life if released or death if given the death sentence (Fee 1999:69).

In verse 21 Paul lays bare his soul: there is tension between his personal desire to die and be with Christ and his duty towards the church requiring that he lives (Silva 2005:73). If he is condemned to die, he expresses the desire for Christ to be glorified in his death. If he is released, he would continue to pursue knowing Christ, making him known to others and conducting a fruitful ministry to the churches. Since Christ is his only passion, he feels he will win in either case, whether set free or executed (Fee 1999:70). However, if it is the latter, his goal of living will be fulfilled: he will finally have gained Christ (Fee 1995:141). This is Paul's attitude towards death, showing there is no fear of death because it will be immediate gain, namely present with his beloved Saviour and Lord in heaven (Gehman 1999:255-256; O'Brien 1991:121).

Verse 23 is sometimes quoted in the debate over 'soul sleep,' the idea that at death the soul 'sleeps' until it is reunited with the body at the final resurrection. Paul would not have said that death would have been 'better by far' if he had been aware of a period when he would not be with the Lord between his physical death and physical resurrection (Thielman 1995:5). It would be unthinkable that he would - even in death - be in a place where he would not be with Christ. For Paul death was a means to be in the Lord's immediate presence (Fee 1995:148). If being with Christ is far better than life on earth, as Paul says it is, the departed spirit must know Christ and be able to communicate with him (Light 2011:205).

In verses 24-26 Paul returns to what he began in verse 23 (to live in the body means fruitful labour for him). He expects to remain alive because the Philippians needed him (Silva 2004:75). He shows his concern for the church as he considers their needs (O'Brien 1991:131).

Although Paul did not fear death and would have preferred to be with Christ, he came to the conclusion that the people in Philippi still required his pastoral care. This implies he could not benefit them in any way if he departed from this life. This goes against beliefs about the ancestors in ATR. Paul's belief about the state of the believer after death shows Christianity offers the deceased a more glorious future than in ATR. Finally his lack of fear of death is rather striking. Most adherents of ATR fear death and will visit diviners, perform all kinds of rituals and spend large sums of money in order to avoid death.

5.3.3 Conclusion

The differences between ATR beliefs and the biblical view of life after death are clearly extensive. In Scripture there is no clear indication that communication between those who have died and those who are still on earth is possible. The few cases that seem to point otherwise are clearly the exception and not the rule. This makes the belief that the ancestors can influence the life of the living highly questionable. This means that all the rituals during the mourning period and death celebrations in Kejom Ketingu are pointless and attribute to the deceased a role that they do not play. This in turn means

that the living-dead are incorrectly honoured which can only detract from the supremacy of Christ and undermine his ministry in the life of the believer. Practising the ancestral cult as a Christian would add confusion and detract from a Christian's theological and spiritual development.

Sections 5.2 and 5.3 provide a strong biblical case against the ancestral cult. It is clearly not countenanced and is also potentially dangerous as it opens the door to possible demonic influence. The mourning periods and death celebrations in Kejom Ketingu therefore largely constitute syncretism. The next section of this chapter therefore looks at how the Bible approaches syncretism, especially the kind that threatens faithfulness to God and usurps his supreme position, authority and providential care.

This conclusion has implications for whether or not ancestor veneration is ancestor worship. Scholars differ about the question whether the ancestral cult is veneration rather than worship. Some of the African theologians (Mbiti; Nyamiti; Mosothoane quoted in Stoltz 2008:3, Magesa 2010:72) argue that ancestors are not worshipped, but just honoured. The evangelical perspective, however, in the light of section 5.3 is that the ancestor cult entails ancestor worship and is thus a contravening of the first Commandment (Daneel; Thom quoted in Stoltz 2008:3; Turaki 2008 (b):59; Gehman 1999:95-102).

In trying to evaluate whether the ancestral cult is veneration and not worship I agree with Stoltz (2008:1) that it is not easy to evaluate foreign cultural rites as the dynamics of these rites may not be fully understood by the interpreter. He (p. 1) even raises the question as to whether an outsider can address these issues. Fashole Luke (quoted in Stoltz 2008:1), an African theologian, responds by stating the writing of an African Theology 'should be looked upon as a medium by which Africans and non Africans can think together about the fundamental articles of the Christian faith in Africa.' For the evangelical, first and foremost biblical criteria should be applied.

Idowu (quoted in Gehman 1999:96) notes that 'worship and veneration are psychologically closer than next door to each other.' Gehman (1999:99) states that if worship in the Christian sense is praise, reverence, love and devotion, then we can say that

Africans do not worship their ancestors. Rather they are inspired by fear, seeking to appease them. For a definition of worship see 5.2.1.10. Many who have worked in Africa feel that 'praise, reverence, love and devotion' are directed to the ancestors.

Gehman (1999:99) explains that many requests are made to the ancestors which no living person can provide. When people call on the living-dead, they assume their presence and that they know, hear and see, and are able to answer their prayers. People offer prayers to the ancestors for the birth of a child, for healing and deliverance of evil powers. This attributes powers to the ancestors which God alone possesses. Turaki (2008(a):46) states that if the ancestors function as intermediaries, in that they receive prayers, libation and invocation, then the ancestors takes the place of Christ who is the only mediator, between God and men (1 Tim. 2:5). Hodge (quoted in Gehman 1999:99) adds that 'the homage rendered [to the ancestors] assumes that they possess the attributes of God.'

Bae (2008:165) concludes that in ATR God has been relegated to the background and has lost significance and he has been replaced by the ancestors who appear to play a very important role in their descendants' daily life. People acknowledge the existence of the Supreme Being but the nature of this being is very nebulous (p. 165). This is definitely the case in Kejom Ketingu: while asking people what they believe about *Nyìngòṅ* very few people could give clear answers and they indicated that they think rather about the *ti'vèvèti'* and the *vənyìngòṅ*. A Kejom person mentioned (using pidgin English) 'my pa and my ma de my gods.' This statement clearly indicates how important the ancestors are to him.

The fifth commandment enjoins the honouring of one's father and your mother (Ex. 20:12). The implication is that this applies while they are alive, and is done by showing respect (Lev. 19:3; 1 Tim. 5:1-2), considering their advice (Prov. 1:8) and being submissive and obedient to them (Eph. 6:1; Col. 3:20) (O'Donovan 1992:222). We can honour those who have died by living godly lives, by showing respect for their names and by honouring the good works they did (pp. 222-223), but this clearly does not imply communication with ancestors, especially in the light of the negative view the Bible takes on this activity, and still less the kind of veneration that really is worship.

Based on all the above in 5.2 and 5.3, I have to conclude that the ancestral cult is not just mere veneration but actually worship. This conclusion is not undermined by those African theologians who say that what really looks like ancestor worship is not.

5.4 Conclusion

In this chapter I have given an overview of the biblical view of God, of death and life after death and a critique of the ancestral cult and how related syncretism has been part of the African church (with exceptions), including in Kejom Ketingu.

The biblical perspective tells us that God is the creator and he is constantly at work to sustain his creation; he is committed to it. As a law-giver God makes it clear that he wants a relationship with mankind on his conditions. God is a holy God who therefore takes the violating of his law seriously – it is sin against him and not just the community as in ATR. Instead of the community deciding how a trespasser needs to be punished, it needs to be noted what God's judgement is for sin. Because of ATR's horizontal view of sin, African Christians don't have a doctrine of atonement, and thus the atonement through Christ needs to be well taught to African Christians. These truths, therefore, need to be thoroughly presented in any model designed to counter syncretism in the African church.

The omnipresence, omniscience, omnipotence, sovereignty and providence of God make the ancestral cult irrelevant and redundant. This teaching and its understanding are thus also vital to eliminating syncretism in the area of the ancestors.

Although the Scriptures give evidence of the importance of genealogies, there is no evidence for the ancestral cult. Death is the end of all relationships between the living and the dead, and the Bible vigorously prohibits attempting communication with the deceased. This too needs stressing in the ministry of the local church in Africa if syncretism is to be overcome. The Bible makes it clear that God alone should be worshipped and that polytheism and idolatry are anathema to God and bring his judgement. We saw that ATR effectively attributes divine characteristics to the ancestors, and therefore the ancestral cult constitutes a form of polytheism-idolatry. Further, the ancestral cult leads people away from fellowship with God and undermines

the exclusive mediatory role of Christ and the ministry of the Holy Spirit. However, it is biblical to honour living parents and elders and to emulate the example of the godly deceased. Again these truths need to be sounded and inculcated strongly in the discipleship of African Christians.

Chapter 6

A biblical approach to syncretism

6.1 Introduction

The problem being addressed in this thesis is a specific example of syncretism. This chapter therefore explores how syncretism is handled in the biblical revelation. It also seeks greater clarity on how syncretism developed in the African churches. Both these treatments are essential before finally working on a pastoral approach to Christians in Kejom Ketingu who have syncretistic tendencies with regards to mortuary rituals.

6.2 The biblical view of syncretism

6.2.1 A diachronic survey of relevant key biblical passages on how syncretism was handled

Syncretism, in its very nature, involves a mixing of two religions (Tiéno 2011:2). Van Rheenen (2006:8) gives the following definition: 'syncretism is the blending of Christian beliefs and practices with those of the dominant culture [ATR in Africa] so that Christianity loses its distinctiveness and speaks with a voice reflective of the culture. Often it comes forth out of a desire to make the gospel relevant.' Understandably, therefore, syncretism is recognized today by evangelicals as a major challenge to authentic Christianity worldwide (Tiéno 2011:1).

In this section I give a diachronic survey of the biblical perspective on syncretism. This is followed in the next section with an exegesis of Acts 19:18-20 and Deuteronomy 18:9-13 which are key passages on how to deal with syncretism.

Van Rheenen (2006:11-12) states that the theme of syncretism occurs frequently in the Bible. In a real sense, the first four of the Ten Commandments are injunctions against syncretism (Ex. 20:1-7). The Shema (Deut. 6:4-5) exhorts Israel to love the Lord exclusively with all their heart, soul and strength. In Deuteronomy 18:9-15 the Israelites

are exhorted not to follow the animistic practices of the Canaanites (see 5.3.9). The Israelites failed to obey the words of God and as a result were constantly influenced by the cultures around them. For instance, Jeroboam built two golden calves (1 Kgs. 12:24-33). Ahab and Jezebel introduced the cult of Baalism into Israel (1 Kgs. 16:31). Gehman (2005:210) says that Israel did not reject the worship of Yahweh; they only wanted to combine the worship of Yahweh with the worship of the Baals; but with God syncretism was unacceptable and led to punishment (2 Kgs. 21:10-15; 24:19-20; 2 Chron. 36:12-19; Jer. 16:1-13; 25:1-11; Ez. 20:30-38; 33:21-9; Hos. 2:1-13).

God used the prophets to cry out against what was happening in their time: idolatry, greed, injustice etc. They stressed that God would punish sin, while at the same time calling the people to repentance and speaking of God's love for his people, his compassion and his forgiveness (Is 54:7) (Yilpet 2006:805). Through Jeremiah (2:27) God said, 'They have turned their backs to me, but not their faces...'. Hosea's marriage symbolized Israel's relationship with the Lord (Hos. 1:2): they had turned away from the Lord and were going after false gods (Carew 2006:1013). Zephaniah (1:5) described the dual allegiance of the people of Judah (van Rheenen 2006:12).

However, several God-fearing kings took action to cleanse the land spiritually by getting rid of all that was condemned by the Book of the Covenant. In 2 Kings 18:3-4 Hezekiah removed high places and articles that had to do with Asherah worship and even the bronze snake Moses had made (Gotorn 2006:458). In Kings 23:4-16 Josiah directs the priests and doorkeepers in destroying all the articles that had to do with Asherah, Baal and the worship of the starry hosts. Everything was burned, destroyed and defiled so that the power the worshippers believed these sacred objects had was destroyed (p. 463). The same happens in 2 Chronicles 14:2-5 and 23:16-7.

Because Israel, and later Judah, continued to practice idolatry, God sent Northern Israel into Assyrian captivity (2 Kgs. 17:16-8) and exiled Judah in Babylon for 70 years (Jer. 11:9-13).

In the New Testament the history of the early Church is the history of how the Church 'opposed syncretism and articulated her identity' (Kanu 2009:3). In Colossians Paul

cautions the Christians not to return to their old ways (van Rheenen 2006:13). In Colossians 2:8 he warns them not to be captivated 'through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world and not according to Christ' (Kanu 2009:3). They were tempted to follow the *stoicheia*, which were legalistic observances of the law. They were a blend of Jewish religion and paganism, which made them return to pre-Christian animistic practices (2:16-19) (van Rheenen 2006:13). To accept this form of teaching now would be a tool in the hands of principalities and powers to seek to enslave the lives of people again (Bruce 1984:98-100; O'Brien 1982:133). Paul reminds them that they have been made alive in Christ (v. 13) and that he cancelled all the written regulations (v.14). There was no need for them to go back to those.

In Acts 15 Jewish Christians feared that the influx of so many gentile converts would cause the church's moral standards to weaken (Bruce 1988:286). The Council of Jerusalem discussed their concerns and listened to testimonies of what God was doing. In reflecting on Amos 9:11-12 (Acts 15:15-18) James concluded that what was happening was in line with the Scriptures and so they decided that the gentile converts would not need to be circumcised and follow Jewish dietary laws, meaning that one does not need to be a Jew in order to be a Christian (Kanu 2009:3; Strauss 2006:114). This decision must have been seen by conservative Jewish Christians as 'compromising and therefore a gross dilution' of their faith and a loss of the Jewish roots of Christianity (Chidili quoted in Kanu 2009:3; Schineller 1992:§2).

Van Rheenen (2006:13) concludes, 'the story line of the Bible illustrates that there is a tendency for people of God in all times and on all continents to blend their beliefs and practices with those of the dominant culture.' Clearly this is the problem in Kejom Ketingu.

The Bible never denies the spirit world, especially demons that clearly play a major role in non-Christian religions, including ATR. Avoiding syncretism here is perhaps the greatest challenge in Africa as it was in the first century. The New Testament shows that the temptation to syncretism in the spirit world is due largely to fear of evil spirits. This fear is combatted primarily through proclaiming the victory Christ's life, death and resurrection

gained over all spirit powers (1 Jn. 3:8; Eph. 1:19-21; Col. 2:15; Matt. 28:18-20). God the Father gave him supreme authority (Jn. 3:35; Lk. 10:22; Ps. 2:6-8; Rev. 11:15b) (Turaki 2008(2):134,135). Jesus also has power over death (Jn. 11:25-6; 1 Cor. 15) which shows that Satan's power over death has been broken (Hebr. 2:14, 15).

No matter what believers are facing they need to be reminded that God's triumphant power is also at work in their lives (Eph. 1:19). Their life is secure with Christ (Eph. 2:6). (Turaki 2008(2):134-135.) Although Satan is active we can and must be alert to his attempts to break down the defences God has given us (1 Pet. 5:8). We need to put on God's armour on a daily basis (Eph. 6:10-8). Christians in Kejom Ketingu will need to be helped to deal with their fears of illness and death as they are thought to be related to the ancestors and mystical and spiritual powers. Sound teaching in spiritual warfare is one of the answers to syncretism pursued as a defence against evil powers and disgruntled ancestors.

6.2.2 Exegesis of two key passages on syncretism

6.2.2.1 Deuteronomy 18:9-13

These verses in Deuteronomy address basically all the practices God forbids in the area of the spirit world, which were part of the practices of the surrounding nations. This exegesis will seek the relevance of this biblical passage to the thesis.

Verses 1-8 deal with the Levites who minister before the Lord on behalf of the people. The last section (vv. 15-22) deals with prophets and prophecy, the delivery of God's word to his people. These two legitimate types of religious offices are contrasted with the illegitimate practices of the surrounding nations (vv. 9-13). It is at the time when the Israelites would soon enter the Promised Land (v.9). In verse 9 God commands Israel to be separate from the nations as they were involved in practices strictly forbidden to Israel (Allen 1970:254).

The verses 10 and 11 constitute a list prohibiting all types of divination, sorcery, magic, witchcraft and consultation with the spirit world. These were practices typical of the Canaanites' religion. Various methods of divination are mentioned and the casting of magic spells. These activities were conducted with the purpose of finding out and perhaps determining the future. A medium or spiritist would call up and consult any

ghost/spirit. A necromancer, who is someone who would communicate with the dead in order to predict the future, is mentioned (Craigie 1976: 261). Maxwell (1987:230) states that a medium or a spiritist is actually someone who communicates with demons. Chianeque and Ngewa (2006:235) confirm that witches and mediums open themselves to manipulation by demonic powers.

All these practices are attempts to find out about the divine will or the future or hidden mysteries (Nelson 2003:233). People often desire to know the future and may use supernatural means in making decisions or in affecting what happens in the future (Chianeque and Ngewa 2006:234-235). However, God hates these practices and his judgement will come down on those involved in them. Satan deceives people into believing they are gaining power and prestige by taking part in them (Maxwell 1987: 230).

The believer should trust God in all aspects of his/her life. There is, therefore, no room for any consultation with the dead or the use of witchcraft (Chianeque and Ngewa 2006: 235). It is legitimate to desire to know the will of God, but not through any means he has prohibited (Maxwell 1987:230). God used his prophet to pass on his word and his will to the children of Israel (Allen 1970:254).

Verse 12 makes clear that these practices are part of the reason for God's coming judgment on the Canaanites when he would eject them from the land. If the Israelites would adopt such practices the same would happen to them. The essence of the covenant is being repeated here: the Lord promised them the land, but this would depend on Israel's obedience (Craigie 1976:261).

Verse 13 gives the positive command 'to be blameless before the Lord' (Deut. 4:1; 5:1). They needed to be fully committed to Yahweh (Gehman 2005:161). The verse also is as a prelude to the command to listen to the divinely chosen prophet (v 15). Israel should rely on true prophets and not on other sources of information (Nelson 2003:232).

6.2.2.2 Acts 19:18-20

The burning of the magical books in Ephesus took place after the botched exorcism of the sons of Sceva (Moreau 2006:50). They used the name of Jesus in an attempt to imitate Paul's exorcizing ministry (Bruce 1988:368). They discovered that the name of Jesus is not a magical formula; since they were not authorized to use the name of Jesus the power was absent (Wagner 1994:167-8). After they were beaten up, great fear that came on the church as a result. According to Garrett (quoted in Wagner 1994:168), the Ephesians perceived the defeat of the sons of Sceva as a defeat of magic in general.

In verse 18 it becomes clear that it is not a surprise that the converts had been involved in magical practices. Magic was a part of Ephesian culture (Polhill 1992:405). The practitioners of magic realised that the gospel proved its superior power. Many of them believed and came to Paul confessing and revealing their spells. According to magical theory, the potency of a spell is in its secrecy; if it is made public it loses its power (Bruce 1981:391).

Conversion doesn't automatically follow demonstrations of divine power. God's power had demonstrated its superiority and difference from magic. The Ephesians realised that the name of Jesus cannot be manipulated and the population was now ready to hear the good news of repentance and forgiveness of sins (Larkin 1995:277).

From verse 19 Arnold (quoted in Moreau 2006:50-51) concludes, that the Christians must have had those objects all along and only burned them when they realised that they needed to depend on God alone. It is possible Paul was not aware that the Christians kept their magical objects, or perhaps it was not a central issue of his concern in discipleship. This may imply that new believers may be given some time to grow in their faith. However, there will be a stage when they need to break with unbiblical practices. It is quite clear that the extent of intermingling is determined by biblical boundaries (p. 51). It is important for Christians who have believed for a while to make a final break with the past. The Ephesians confessed their evil deeds and their magic practices (Larkin 1995:277). They renounced their imagined power by revealing their spells, gathered their magical scrolls and made a bonfire of them (Bruce 1981:391).

The burning of the magic scrolls was a considerable sacrifice. Luke estimated the value of those burned in Ephesus at 50000 pieces of silver (drachmas), which was a considerable amount of money. The drachma was an average day's wage (Polhill 1992:405).

Verse 20 provides a summary of Paul's ministry in Ephesus, which bore fruit as more and more people responded in faith to Paul's preaching and to the witness of the Ephesian Christians through examples as the public burning of their magical books (Polhill 1992: 405). The word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power.

After the sons of Sceva were beaten up many of the believers in Ephesus confessed their practices and were ready to do away with the articles in which they had put their trust. They were finally convinced that God is all powerful and that they can trust him for all the aspects of their life. This important stage needs to be reached in African churches so that the ancestors, demons, witches, curses and occultic medicines are no longer feared. This will be tackled in the next chapter.

6.2.3 Conclusion

Syncretism occurs throughout the Bible. The Israelites were influenced by the practices of the people who lived around them. In many cases they mixed the worship of God with that of Baal and other foreign gods. Throughout the Old Testament kings and prophets warned the people of Israel to serve God alone and not any other spirit-beings. Eventually they were punished for their disobedience and sent into exile. In the New Testament there are some instances where people were convicted about occultic practices and destroyed magical books and articles facilitating these forbidden activities.

The fear related to the spirit realm is dealt with through being reminded that Jesus exercises all power in both heaven and on earth. Through him the power of the kingdom of Satan has been broken and the Christian has the necessary weapons for defence against any spirit attack. No fear of death, or ancestors or mystical power should therefore keep Christians captive

The occultic means of acquiring forbidden power and wisdom forbidden in the Bible are being used in Africa (and other parts of the world) today. What we see in the churches in Kejom Ketingu is nothing new, but centuries old. However, the command to serve God only stands. Even if ancestors are not thought of as divine, they are excessively venerated and the whole ancestral cultic system is the unspiritual manipulation of power for personal benefit.

The next section looks at how syncretism developed or why it was not countered in the African church. This is necessary to consider before a model to counteract syncretism among the churches in Kejom Ketingu can be attempted, the subject of the next chapter.

6.3 How syncretism developed in the African Church

As mentioned in 4.2.1, Africa has been influenced by two powers which changed the face of the continent: Western Christianity and European colonialism (van der Walt 1994:7). Turaki (2008(a):31) says that Western missions were closely related to Western colonialism. The Christian and social worldviews of the European and American societies shaped the theory and practice of Christian missions as well as the type of Christianity and the church structures which the missionaries planted in Africa. The Christianity which was introduced to Africa did not have an African flavour. Omulokole (1998:26-27) states that the European missionaries, sometimes unconsciously and at other times intentionally, spread Western civilization in the name of Christianity. The Africans who received their message had a completely different cultural background. Their own worldview influenced their perception and interpretation of the Gospel. Van der Walt (1994:13) notes that neither the missionaries nor those who heard their message were aware (enough) of the difference between the Gospel and Western culture.

Missionaries would generally build a house at some distance from a local village. They would make some disciples, build a church and school, and in some cases would get involved in health care and agriculture. The Africans were educated with a Western type of education. Education was one of the means through which the Christian faith was brought to them (Van der Walt 1994:7-15). He (pp.13-15) states that the Africans were pulled out of their traditional village environment and culture and were invited into the

Western context. The ways of worshipping, the music and the songs were foreign to them. Africans thus got the impression that Christianity was separate from ordinary life, and that to be a good Christian they had to abandon their customs, clothes, languages and values. Naturally there was resistance to effectively being asked to deny one's Africanness.

Many Western missionaries who came to Africa were unaware of the African worldview. They dismissed the spirit world as being nothing more than imagination or superstition. Since most African converts received no biblical teaching in the relation to the spirit realm, this left a huge gap in their faith (Salala 1998:137). Essentially they were left unprepared for the spiritual warfare into which they were being thrust as Christians (Murphy 1993:165).

Hesselgrave (2006:77) notes that while evangelism and church planting were progressing, 'the old world view that influences all else in ways not readily observable [was] ... allowed to remain more or less intact.' This contributed to syncretism. Kraft (1991:7) notes that people develop a set of worldview assumptions for church situations, but that this worldview doesn't play a role in the rest of their lives. Thus, as Van der Walt (1994:16) observes, the average African convert does not experience the Gospel as adequate for his whole life. He states that most missionaries believed that if they took the worldview and religion of the African people seriously it would weaken the Gospel. However, this point of view has had the opposite effect. When African Christians face crisis, danger, illness and death, they go back to their traditional faith because they believe these matters are related to the spirit world. Because the missionaries didn't take African cosmology seriously, the impact of Christianity on the African was weakened – 'the deepest core of African culture remained untouched.'

Syncretism also can occur when people are 'overly confident of their ability to contextualize the gospel in accord with the characteristics and workings of the respondent culture' (Hesselgrave 2006:84). One example of this was discussed in 4.2.4. Roman Catholics have been encouraged to think positively about other religions. They have promoted what is called 'inculturation,' (see 7.2) an attempt to assimilate African values or symbols within the version of Christianity received from Western missionaries.

Since there is no clear demarcation between African cultures and African religions, this process of 'inculturation' is essentially 'interreligious' (Lado 2006:7). Whiteman (2004:64) explains that the goal of contextualization is to connect the gospel to the culture so that it can bring transformation to individuals and society. If the gospel over identifies with the culture the result is syncretism and biblical integrity is sacrificed.

Pentecostal churches have been accused of syncretism as well. Anderson (2001:116) hesitates to accept arguments of 'continuity with traditional religion and negative ideas of syncretism.' He admits that it sometimes seems that Christ has been relegated to the background in an over emphasis on the power of the Holy Spirit. However, according to him (1999:5), Pentecostal churches provide answers to the fears and insecurities that are inherent to the African worldview. He concludes that the African Pentecostal churches deal with causes of sickness or afflictions more substantially than is done in any other church (Anderson 2001:100-118).

The next chapter will explore ways to develop ways to build churches in Africa that are rooted in the African soil which will include being cognizant of African cosmology, but also firmly established in the Gospel so that syncretism is avoided.

Walls (2002:127) notes that it was difficult for missionaries to give guidance on the matter of the family and kinship systems in relation to the ancestors. This is because Western society has no precise equivalent of the ancestral cult. Protestant churches considered any form of the ancestral cult as inconsistent with the worship of God. The Catholic Church reinterpreted ancestor veneration in terms of the doctrine of the communion of the saints. However, these approaches did not result in abolishing or replacing the 'religious consciousness from which the ancestral cult arose' (p. 127). He (p. 128) concludes, 'what is clear is that ancestors have not gone away; they belong at present to the penumbra of African Christianity.'

The ancestral cult in Kejom Ketingu is also clearly present in the community. One Sunday, while visiting one of the churches in Kejom Ketingu, I was told that in the whole village there were up to ten death celebrations going on that weekend. Due to a death celebration in the vicinity of the church, attendance was considerably down that Sunday.

Death celebrations take place throughout all of the dry season (December-March). According to Jindra (1997:356-357) Christianity has caused religious change through new religious concepts becoming incorporated into existing cultural practices and settings that have increased mourning periods and death celebrations. In the past only titled men (such as lineage heads and chiefs) would attain the status of ancestors since they were believed to be in touch with the ancestors while on earth. It was believed they were the only people who were assured of becoming ancestors themselves. It was accepted that others did not become ancestors. Those who were believed to become ancestors were buried in the family compound. Fons and other titled people were given marked graves, libations were poured for them, and large death celebrations were organised where masquerades and secret societies would dance. The influence of Christianity increased the number of people believed to qualify to become ancestors.

Quale (quoted in Jindra 1997:360) records that Christianity has encouraged 'egalitarian and individualizing tendencies' because it stresses an individual's relationship with God. Christianity also appeals strongly to women and youth who had no important role to play in the traditional ontology. Christianity promises life after death. As a result rituals performed during the mourning period and death celebrations are no longer organised only for title holders and fons (Jindra 1997:366-372). Christianity has thus contributed in turning the death celebrations into the huge and vital events they are today. He (p. 369) says that Christianity had an egalitarian effect on a strongly hierarchical society which led to the creation of more ancestors and thus more mourning periods and death celebrations.

Jindra (1997:369-372) concludes that Grassfields people adopted what they regarded as positive aspects of the new religion, but that they also held on to the worldview of African Traditional Religion in their belief that the ancestors have power to bless the living. They have found a way to practise both traditional religion and their perception of Christianity in the mortuary rituals and death celebrations.

Kwast (1971:29) states that similarities between the rites and ceremonial practices of traditional societies and some of those found in the Christian church have also contributed to misconceptions. He mentions among others the initiation into membership

of the Church by water baptism (which could be interpreted as ceremonial cleansing), the priestly function of the church pastor, and the various organizations within the Church grouped according to age and sex, all of which all have similar counterparts in various traditional societies.

Unfortunately many people who are involved in syncretism perceive themselves as Christians who don't need to be evangelized. Others have not responded fully to the Gospel because they consider that what they already believe is sufficient for their needs (Tiénoú 2011:3). Whatever the case may be, syncretism is a serious challenge to Christian missionizing efforts in Kejom Ketingu.

Light (2011:142) states that syncretism is not an option for evangelicals because of their belief that the Bible is final revelation, with salvation through Christ as the only way of salvation. Tiénoú (2011:3) recognizes that the presence of syncretism means that somehow the success of the communication of the Gospel is not complete. Schreiter (quoted in Tiénoú 2011:3) notes the situation and challenge: 'Christianity may be allowed into the culture, and even be tolerated, but it never becomes part of the culture. Consequently syncretism will disappear only when we intentionally develop ways of dealing with it.' The next chapter tackles this matter.

6.4 Conclusion

Syncretism is clearly presented in the Bible as something negative and to be avoided and countered when experienced among God's people. The overview of how syncretism developed and survived in the African church has prepared the way for a discipleship approach that will counter syncretism more effectively. Christianity must clearly not be presented from a Western perspective and also made fully relevant to the African context with its entrenched cosmology. It was seen too that syncretism can also occur when inculturation (see 7.2) is promoted. This means the attempt to get the Gospel to take root in African societies must be balanced by clear biblical teaching on what constitutes syncretism. Though Pentecostal churches have been accused of syncretism, they have been able to more effectively address the fears and insecurities that are part

of the African world view than has been the case in other denominations. Learning from them is therefore essential in combatting syncretism.

Over the many years of Christianity the ancestral cult has not gone away. This has been demonstrated with reference to the churches in Kejom Ketingu. Jindra (1997:369) observes that Christians in Grassfield communities in Cameroon have adopted genuine aspects of Christianity, but have also held on to the ancestral cult. The brief overview of Old and New Testament showed that syncretism is a tendency for the people of God in all times and all places. It also demonstrated that God is very patient as he warned the people of Israel over and over again before they were punished and sent into exile.

The various practices that take place during the mourning period and death celebrations are without doubt all related to the ancestral cult and therefore are reflective of syncretism. Although the pastors and priest have indicated that they are teaching people biblical principles concerning the traditional practices that take place during the mourning period and death celebrations and the underlying beliefs, it appears that this teaching has not always been effective and has in many cases not resulted in people giving up the practices. In the next chapter I will attempt to produce a ministry approach (small-scale model) that will help the church leaders more effectively address the problem of syncretism with reference to the ancestral cult in their churches.

Chapter 7:

Towards a biblically-based ministry approach for countering syncretism in Kejom Ketingu

7.1 Introduction

It has been demonstrated from the responses to the questionnaires that certain members of the churches in Kejom Ketingu, which I believe to be a fairly good representation of the overall membership, are still influenced by the ATR view of death and do not have a clear understanding of the biblical view of death and the ancestors. Their involvement in the rituals during the mourning period and death celebrations means syncretism exists in the denominations.

The pastors/priest and other leaders of the churches in Kejom Ketingu need to continue teaching the biblical perspective and help their church members overcome the fear of death and their involvement in the ancestral cult. However, this needs to be done in more effective ways. Bae (2008:195) notes that to understand traditional cultures and then devise an appropriate way of dealing with ancestor worship as part of a comprehensive strategy calls for missiological insight and practical intuition. In this chapter I endeavor to develop an approach to move these four denominations from their present situation regarding rituals during the mourning period and death celebrations to a scenario that is biblically acceptable and culturally relevant, but without syncretism. This will require 'missiological insight and practical intuition.' I realise that I am an outsider in the community, even though I have spent many years in Cameroon, and that the task of applying the ministry approach I develop belongs to the church. As Song

(2006:2) states, 'the task of communicating the gospel message in a culturally meaningful and relevant way ultimately belongs to the national church, to its national leadership and to all the members of the church.' This task can begin in the hands of missionaries; however, they need to look ahead and work towards empowering the national leaders for this task.

Based on the results of this thesis so far, it is clear which areas need attention when a suitable approach for handling syncretism over death and related ancestral beliefs is to be considered. The approach I am presenting has eight practical steps. Several of them can, and should, be implemented at the same time. Some may be more important than others.

7.2 Contextualisation or inculturation

Before presenting my approach it is necessary to cover the topic of contextualization as this greatly influences my approach. I argue for contextualization rather than inculturation (see below).

Contextualisation

People follow the patterns of their culture. However, a few old customs are often replaced by new ones or modified in a society. When we want to witness effectively we therefore need to speak and behave in a way that honours the way of life of people. The Church needs to be meaningful to the people in Ketingu and appropriate to their cultural lives (though not uncritical of unbiblical customs and assumptions) (Kraft 2005:386). The gospel thus needs to be presented in ways that are understandable to people in their particular culture and experienced largely within it. This is what is called contextualization.

Wan (quoted in van Rheenen 2006:5) defines contextualisation in this way:

Contextualisation is the effort of formulating, presenting and practicing the Christian faith in such a way that it is relevant to the cultural context of the target group in terms of conceptualisation, expression and application; yet

maintaining theological coherence, biblical integrity and theoretical consistency.

Hesselgrave (1995:115) adds that the message should be meaningful and persuasive to the respondents. Schreiter (quoted in Anderson 1997:§3) says that since contextualisation is concerned with 'getting to the very heart of the culture', Christianity that is truly contextualised will 'look very much like a product of that culture.' This is certainly implied in the New Testament churches, where Jewish and Gentile converts essentially retained their cultures.

Contextualisation explores all the dimensions of culture, including worldview, and the full significance of the Christian message with reference to these cultural dimensions. It emphasises the process of change and transformation Christianity must bring about – the kind of impact intended by God (Ashdown 2012:5).

Inculturation

Inculturation has become an important missiological model in the Roman Catholic Church (Bae 2008:195) and also in AIC's (African Instituted Churches) (Magesa 2004:9). Kurgat (2009:91-92) states the Roman Catholic Church's official teaching on inculturation is that 'all cultures have the right to exist within Christianity and that the introduction of Christian teaching in a new culture must involve an adoption that preserves the essential integrity of culture, its values, institutions and customs.'

Magesa (2004:13) quotes how members of AIC's in Kenya define inculturation: it involves understanding biblical teachings within the context of African culture. The bible must be interpreted according to the people's own cultural experience. Molobi (2005:4) confirms this 'Africans will ... interpret the bible by relating it to their worldviews and culture.'

In his research Magesa (2004:12) mentions some positive contributions of inculturation: the use of lively songs, reading the word of God in the vernacular and praying in the local languages instead of the traditional Catholic practice of using foreign languages and styles of worship. He (2004:18) also mentions the desire of the interviewees that

every ethnic group should be allowed to integrate values, customs and beliefs into Catholic celebrations: for instance, traditional aspects of naming, marriage and burial ceremonies. African rituals and ceremonies could end with blessings from a priest, who would be accompanied by the elders and ritual leaders of the group (p.18).

Kurgat (2009:96) mentions in a study about inculturation among the Luya (also in Kenya) that the belief in the ancestral cult is maintained. Jesus is seen as king who mediates between the living and the ancestors; and the ancestors also mediate between the living and God (see 5.3.1.4 where I address whether the dead can communicate with the living and whether the ancestors can be intermediaries).

Stoltz (2008:5) calls this interpreting the bible from beneath. A theology from beneath argues that the ancestral cult is a cultural practice, it is part of the worldview of the people, and it gives identity to them. It is a religious practice that has gone on in the culture for a long time and helps the people to understand death and directs them as how to deal with their dead loved ones. This would mean that the ancestral rite is socially and humanly-speaking acceptable.

Stoltz (2004:6) explains that a 'theology from above' is a process that uses the bible as the primary tool. The bible gives the main guidelines and forms the borders within which to move. The cultural practice would need to be interpreted from a biblical perspective. Any views and practices which are contrary to Scripture would be addressed and reformed by biblical principles. This is what critical contextualisation does and I will therefore advocate this approach rather than inculturation.

Kraft (1998:390) warns that any attempt to promote a Christianity that is culturally and biblically appropriate has great risks. There is always the risk of syncretism. The Cape Town commitment (2010:§IIIC6) declares that 'all phenomena of following Jesus within diverse religio-cultural traditions ... need careful biblical, theological and missiological evaluation. The dangers of syncretism are worldwide, and so are the complexities of careful, biblically faithful contextualisation.' A convert can, and should, remain essentially culturally African in his Christian walk, but with the light and truth of Scripture transforming his worldview and culture (Light 2011:253).

Although we must be cautious, there is a middle road that trusts in the Holy Spirit to guide the Christians and help them follow that guidance. We need to always point to the Holy Spirit as the guide while participating with converts in discovering his leading.

The churches in Kejom Ketingu need to present the gospel in a contextualised way. The pastors and priests need to be aware of those aspects of the ATR worldview that are influencing people and address them in such a way that those beliefs will be transformed. The approach which I am presenting emphasizes the importance of contextualisation in almost all the steps.

Critical contextualisation

Critical contextualisation can help the churches to evaluate the beliefs and practices in their churches. Hiebert, Shaw and Tiénou (1999:21-29) propose several steps in this process of critical contextualisation. They suggest church leaders and members take the beliefs and practices through a four-step process:

(1) In order to understand the beliefs and practices, a study of the culture needs to take place. Local church leaders and believers should gather information about a particular traditional belief/practice and analyse the results. If we take the case of the Christians in Kejom Ketingu, they should ask themselves whether or not they should be involved in the mortuary rituals and death celebrations. They need to analyse these rituals, describe every aspect and discuss the meaning of each in the overall ritual (Hiebert, Shaw, Tiénou 1999:22-23).

(2) The Christians then need to test the truth of different beliefs and values with the truth of Scripture. The pastor leads the church in a study of the Scripture. In the case of Kejom Ketingu the leader should teach the Christian beliefs about the rituals, death and the after-life (Hiebert *et al* 1999:25-27).

(3) In the next step the leaders and members of the church critically evaluate the existing beliefs and customs in the light of their new biblical understanding and make decisions based on that. When a change is needed the leaders should share their convictions with the members and point out the consequences of various decisions. The

members should participate in taking a decision concerning the mortuary rituals. When people take a corporate decision they will abide by it (Hiebert *et al* 1999:28).

(4) The last step leads people through a lasting change where the gospel is applied to all of their life (Hiebert *et al* 1999:29).

Ashdown (2012:7-8) summarizes the intent of critical contextualization. It is that biblical standards are used to examine the meanings and functions of cultural assumptions and the similarities and/or differences between the two views are explored. Similarities are an important means for building cultural bridges; and biblical concepts which are underdeveloped or not found in ATR need careful attention.

Any approach designed to counteract syncretism must therefore take contextualisation into account and the model of Hiebert, Shaw and Tiénou (1999).

7.3 An eight-step approach to prevent syncretism taking place at Ketingu

7.3.1 Step 1: The need for a biblical worldview

For someone to become a committed Christian a worldview change is needed as Christianity ceases to be Christianity without its worldview. Gehman (2005:28) states, as was noted in chapter 2, that ATR is an integral part to the whole African culture. Culture is a way of life of a particular group shaped by its worldview. This way of life becomes the way of viewing the world as normal and right. Every experience in life is interpreted by the culture's worldview. Kraft (1998:385) adds that the structured customs and underlying worldview assumptions govern people's lives. Culture (including worldview) is a people's way of life, their design for living, and their way of coping with the environment. People follow the patterns of their culture. However, they regularly modify some old customs and create new ones. Gehman (2005:28-29) states that culture includes patterns of learned behaviour, such as the way people greet each other, how different age groups and sexes relate to one another, etc. The patterns of learned behaviour are more resistant to change, but can change with time. The deepest level of culture (i.e. worldview) includes ideas and belief systems, 'questions of ultimate values,

ultimate destiny and ultimate explanations about life' (p. 29). The values of religion are the basis on which people decide what is true and false, righteous and evil. Since people learn their culture from early childhood, the average person is not aware of why something is right or wrong (p. 29). Van der Walt (1994:9) explains that in Africa the deepest, innermost core which determines all the other cultural layers is the belief in the spirit world. The African concept of the world, society and the human being is defined, moulded and conditioned by his faith.

Hiebert (2008:29-30) identifies five functions of a worldview: (1) It provides answers to our ultimate questions: Where are we? Who are we? What's wrong? What is the remedy? Worldviews emerge out of our interaction with the world. (2) Our worldview gives emotional security. People find comfort in their deepest cultural beliefs when they are faced with uncontrollable forces and illness and death. These beliefs are most evident at births, initiations, marriages, funerals and other rituals that people use to recognise and renew order in their life and in nature. (3) Our worldview validates our cultural norms which we use to evaluate our experiences and choose a course of action. It gives us the idea that we live in a world that makes sense to us. (4) It organizes our ideas, feelings, and values into a fairly unified view of reality. (5) Our worldview monitors culture change. It helps us to select those new ideas, etc., that fit our culture and to reject those that do not.

Contact with other cultures can bring about culture change. As people interact with peoples of other cultures they learn from them, for good or ill (Loewen 2000:19). Significant culture change is always a matter of changes in the worldview (Gehman 2005:29).

Kraft (1991:387-388) divides the surface-level culture into subsystems: social (e.g., family, education, kinship, social control), language, religion, economy, technology and language subsystems. Christianity needs to be directed at the worldview of a people so that it will influence each of these subsystems. When people are truly converted they will manifest biblical Christian attitudes and behaviour in all of their life, not only in their religious practices. When permanent culture change takes place it is always a matter of change in the worldview. When something affects the roots of a tree it will influence its

fruit, and so anything that affects a people's worldview will affect the whole culture and the people who operate in terms of that culture.

Western trained missionaries often think Christianity needs to replace a wrong belief with the right practice. This will lead to a temporary or intermittent change at the surface level because the core worldview issues have been left untouched, resulting in syncretism (Loewen in Koehler 2010:77).

Gehman (2005:29-30) points out that the African church should reflect the African culture so that the church is truly African. At the same time, in order for the church to be truly Christian it must reflect the biblical worldview. The Christian worldview and ATR contradict each other at various points. Van der Walt (1994:25-33) emphasises that the only choice for African Christianity is to return to the biblical worldview. A Christian worldview sees, understands, interprets and approaches every aspect of human life from a biblical perspective. Hiebert (1997:154) explains that no humanly constructed worldview is adequate to fully explain the Gospel. The Gospel challenges all worldviews, and calls for their transformation. If the Gospel does not deal with worldview matters it remains surface and transitory. Light (2011:253-256) adds that where the convert's worldview clashes with the biblical worldview it has to be changed. Further, certain elements in the convert's culture have to be discarded or changed. Nicholls (quoted in Ashdown 2012:6, 15) makes it clear that Christianity 'is never a guest of any culture; it is always its judge and redeemer', and to be so the Gospel must challenge the 'very core of culture - the basic assumptions of its world view.'

Van Rheenen (1991:33) emphasizes that anyone who ministers cross-culturally must become a culture learner, so that he/she understands the worldview of the people he/she is ministering to. The effective missionary/pastor must accept two presuppositions: (1) worldviews are so natural to insiders that they will feel that everyone else perceives reality their way, and (2) outsiders can perceive worldviews more easily at certain times than at others, e.g. at times of death or illness (van Rheenen 1991:33). Sire (quoted in Ashdown 2012:6) says worldview study helps to analyse various aspects of culture and provides answers to basic questions the gospel

seeks to address. Worldview analysis will provide Christian workers with a greater understanding of how to deal with questions about death, morals, existence, etc.

The ATR worldview (or the remnants of the ATR worldview) of the members of the different churches in Kejom Ketingu needs to be truly transformed by the biblical worldview. If this is not done, cultural practices incompatible with Christianity will remain, stifling Christian growth. The pastors/priest and leaders in the churches need to put more emphasis in their teaching on the biblical worldview and counsel members who are struggling with remnants of ATR beliefs and practices that cannot be harmonised with the gospel.

7.3.2 Step 2: Contextualised way of presenting the gospel

When somebody communicates the gospel to people from an ATR background, as is the case in Kejom Ketingu, there are many aspects that he/she needs to keep in mind. Basically, the presentation of the gospel needs to be contextualised.

Moreau (1998:315-316) notes that traditional Western techniques of presenting the gospel often use a strong emphasis on the future and on our eternal destiny. Future punishment or reward for present actions is stressed. Since the ATR worldview interprets time in a different way, the traditional African may not be motivated to accept Christ based on the idea of a future heaven or hell. Van der Walt (1994:93-94) says that in an African context time doesn't move forward, it moves backward. A traditional African is not really future-oriented. Moreau (1998:316) states that the gospel needs to link the past to the future for it to be relevant. If that is not done it is likely that people will misunderstand or ignore it. Wan (2004:4) notes that the primary message of the gospel (for somebody from an ATR background) should not be the hope of entering heaven and being delivered from hell in the afterlife. People want to experience the deliverance from curse, fate, fear, etc. in the 'here and now.' Moreau (1998:316) adds we might stress the 'relational aspect of being a child of the tribe of God (an eternal destiny with Him), or the consequences of being excluded from that tribe (eternal destiny separated from Him).'

Tippet (2006:§3.3) states that Christianity must deal with the basic felt needs of the society, which generally arise from the environment of the converts. Christianity can only

be effective if those needs are met. If they are neglected the new converts will seek solutions elsewhere or go back to their previous (pagan) practices. He (§3.4) also says that Christianity needs to address their beliefs about death and the life after death. If the people believe that the dead still are concerned with the living they will need to know how Christianity will 'preserve the lineage, the strength and stability of the family and the security of tribal lands.'

In the presentation of the gospel we can use points of contact with ATR as bridges. Ashdown (2012:13) mentions some of these contact points. They can include: God the Supreme Being, spiritual life after death, the spirit world, a moral code of right and wrong, the expectation of receiving punishment on earth from the supernatural for sin, etc.

Hayward (1997:156) argues that in an ATR context a combination of strategies is needed that utilises the strengths of three encounters: truth, power and love. Traditional Africans need the truth concerning God, the spirit world, and the fundamental questions of life. Van Rheezen (1991:131-141) says the message must present God who sent his son not only to bring salvation from sin (Lk. 19:10), but also to destroy the works of Satan (1 Jn. 3:8). The kingdom of God has come with power to defeat the dominion of Satan (see also 6.2.9 on contextualised spiritual warfare). Hayward (1997:158) states that when the truth of God's word is preached in love it establishes a climate by which people can embrace new information.

Cox (quoted in Anderson 1999:4) suggests that for any religion to grow it must be able 'to include and transform at least certain elements of pre-existing religions which still retain a strong grip on the cultural subconscious.' Secondly, 'it must also equip people to live in rapidly changing societies.' According to Anderson (1999:4-5), Pentecostals have found culturally and biblically acceptable alternatives and adaptations to the practices of their old religions. 'They proclaim a holistic gospel of salvation that includes deliverance from all types of oppression like sickness, sorcery, evil spirits and poverty.' This has met the needs of Africans more fundamentally. In 6.3 we noted that they have been able to more effectively address the fears and insecurities that are part of the African worldview

than has been the case in other denominations. Learning from them is therefore essential in combating syncretism.

In general the denominations in Kejom Ketingu look with a certain amount of suspicion at the one Pentecostal church that exists in Kejom. The Full Gospel Church is a newer denomination and people feel somehow threatened by its approach. Overall the churches need to be more aware of the cultural context in Kejom Ketingu if they want to be effective in ministering and helping people to overcome remaining beliefs of ATR incompatible with Christianity and in reaching others who are still adherents of ATR.

7.3.3 Step 3: Contextualised discipleship and teaching

7.3.3.1 Contextualised discipleship

Increasingly both missions and churches recognise that conversion to Christ is only the beginning of a transformation led by the work of the Holy Spirit that helps the new believer to grow towards maturity. The need for nurturing and discipling young believers has not always been addressed in missions and churches (Greer 2011:44). Although the leadership of the churches in Kejom Ketingu indicated that there is discipleship happening, at the moment it doesn't seem to be adequate. Hiebert (1997:153) notes that if we expect young believers to grow on their own in Christian knowledge and life without discipling them, they and the church will be weak. We need church leaders and other members to help them understand Scripture accurately and to grow in Christian faithfulness. Discipleship is part of the charge that Jesus gave his disciples when he left them to continue the task that he had begun (Matt. 28:18-20; Col. 1:9-12) (Greer 2011:44).

Gilliland (quoted in Song 2006:2) says contextualisation must also cover the believer's commitment and involvement in society as disciples of Jesus Christ. Contextualisation and discipleship cannot be separated. Song (2006:2-4) states that we need to be careful about how to handle the follow-up and discipleship of those who desire to grow closer to Jesus. In mission work there are often many decisions made to become a Christian, but very few to become actual disciples. Discipleship in context recognises that everyone was captive to his own spiritual or religious orientation before coming to know Christ

(Eph 2:1-3). Discipleship lessons must challenge people's beliefs and they must be transformed through obedience to the biblical teaching.

Hiebert (1997:154-156) notes that early missionaries often viewed conversion in terms of behavioral changes, such as public confessions of faith, regular church attendance, holding correct beliefs, abstinence from strong drink and immoral behavior etc. These changes after conversion are important, and should continue in Christian growth, but they are not sufficient to determine who are Christians and who are not. The most important aspect, as has been mentioned, is that the believer's worldview is transformed in the process of spiritual growth and maturity. For this to happen Turaki (2008(b):3) says the mind of an African convert needs to be renewed and transformed through biblical teachings and Christian theology. The beliefs and practices of ATR, and especially the underlying worldview, need to be addressed otherwise they will persist if Christianity doesn't deal with them (Tippet 2006:§3.2). Turaki (2008(a):137) also states that Africans do not need to abandon all their beliefs or culture or way of life when they become Christians as Christianity affirms their Africanness, renews and transforms it.

It will be helpful to have a curriculum which can be used for follow-up in the discipleship programme. It needs to teach basic biblical truths that are applicable to all cultures and contexts and which interact with the critical issues of each particular culture. It is not advisable to use straight forward translation of discipleship materials available in the West (Song 2007:8, 11-5). They are bound to miss some of the critical issues facing non-Westerners. A pedagogical approach familiar to the local context must be sought and utilized.

Wan (2004:5) emphasises that with Africans in Canada an extensive period of in-depth follow-up of converts is necessary, especially when it concerns children, wives, and unmarried young adults who are under great pressure to submit to the authority and ruling of their parents and husbands where applicable. They may face family opposition, carry-over superstition and syncretism, social ostracism, demonic entanglement, etc, and therefore discipleship must be helpful here. This is even more true back in Africa and in Kejom Ketingu in particular. In the Kejom area relatives who are unhappy with family members who no longer want to involve themselves in traditional practices have

sometimes physically removed them from church services and threatened them with a beating. The cost of discipleship (Mt. 16:24; Lk. 14:25-27) is sometimes high. Discipleship is a call to lay down one's life and thus obey Jesus no matter what the cost. Disciples are called to love God and others, commit themselves to the truth, serve with joy, walk with humility, live holy lives, and face suffering with courage. A disciple needs to make a decisive and irrevocable turn to both God and neighbor (Edwards 2010:21).

Literacy can play an important role in discipling new converts (see 6.2.13). This is because the ability to read and understand God's Word is a great benefit to growing and maturing faith. Without access to the Scriptures because of illiteracy, new believers will be limited in their ability to know the true and living God; and they will also be more likely to yield to temptation and heresy and stay trapped in bondages (Edwards 2010:23, 40).

New believers must be taught how the Christian worldview is to shape and influence all the aspects of their daily lives. Discipleship also promotes character forming habits (van Rheenen 1996:153; Edu-Bekoe and Wan 2011:24). Christians are called to live a holy life empowered by the Holy Spirit – a life separated from sin and dedicated and consecrated to God (Light 2011:185-6). Discipling should be done in the context of a community. Observing mature Christians helps new Christians visualize what God wants them to become. They will also see Christian disciplines (prayer, fasting, and Bible study) being modeled (van Rheenen 1996:154-155). Discipleship means a complete transformation. It includes maturing relationships with God and others, health, and the ability to take care of one's own personal needs and provide for others. Transformation starts with spiritual change, but it should not stop there (Edwards 2010:67, 70).

Christian discipleship must include a vision and preparation for evangelism and church-planting throughout the world. Christians should also seek to transform their society through being 'salt' and 'light.' 'Africa needs a new moral engine that can ensure morality that leads to progressive societies under any conditions' (Light 2011:190-197).

Discipleship needs to take place with the context of the new converts in mind. The churches in Kejom Ketingu need to make contextualised discipleship more of a priority, encouraging new converts and those believers who are still involved in traditional

practices, who find it difficult to trust God, especially in moments when they are passing through difficulties.

In discipleship, as already noted, teaching plays an important part. The remaining sections in 6.2.3 deal with this matter in more detail.

7.3.3.2 Contextualised teaching: A theology of God

Since the view of God in ATR is faulty it is important to give new converts a clear picture of the biblical picture of God. Fon and Grebe (1995:35-6) state that God has put the knowledge of his law into man's heart or conscience. Man's knowledge of God depends on his perception of what he sees in nature and his heart. Man's heart and senses are subject to sin and deception of Satan. ATR thus will have elements of truth and distortions of truth. It is therefore important for a minister of the gospel to be aware of both truth and error in ATR. Van Rheenen (1991:chapter 2) stresses the importance that people correctly understand the nature of God. Steyne (1999:33) specifically mentions God's exclusive sovereignty over all, stemming from him being the creator, and his distinction from his creation. Then there is also the vital truth that God created us for fellowship with him and to know him better and better.

It is the doctrine of God as creator, saviour/redeemer, sovereign over his creation and one who exercises providential care over it that can prepare the way for (i) 'discarding the ancestral cult with its polytheistic overtones, and (ii) granting only the one and only true God worship. The omnipresence, omniscience, omnipotence, sovereignty and providence of God make the ancestral cult irrelevant and redundant' (Babila-Boer 2010:53).

The overview in 5.2.1 of the attributes of God will be important to teach new converts in order to help them gain a biblical view of God and see where it differs from how ATR understands him.

7.3.3.3 Contextualised teaching: a theology of ancestors

The ancestral cult and the after-life (see also 5.3) are other aspects that need special attention during discipleship. This is because the ancestral cult is prohibited in Scripture,

undermines the doctrine of the triune God, and inspires the rituals during the mourning period and death celebrations. Light (2011:271,189) therefore states that a clear teaching is needed of who Jesus is compared to the ancestors. There is no one equal to Jesus, including none of the ancestors. Further, he is Lord over the living and the living dead. 'Christ's power is supreme and every ritual and tradition of the ancestors must come under the rules, teaching and reign of Christ.'

Believers need to learn that the Bible instructs Christians to appeal to God, and God alone, in every situation when they are in need of help (Light 2011:185). In ATR people hardly pray to God since it is believed that 'God has delegated his authority to the ancestors and gods to deal with the relatively trivial affairs of men' (Pobee quoted in Light 2011:227). When a Christian seeks guidance he/she should turn to the Bible which provides guidance for every area of life. In Christianity one can seek divine guidance, but it should come primarily from God through the Scriptures as here God's will is clearly made known (Light 2011:197).

It will also be important to point out that it is biblical to honour living parents and elders and to emulate the example of the godly deceased. These truths need to be taught clearly in the discipleship of African Christians. It will be important to teach section 5.3.1.4 – the biblical view of the ancestors – to new believers.

7.3.3.4 Contextualised teaching: a theology of suffering and death

When members in the church are confronted with death they need to have a better understanding of what transpires when a person, and especially a believer, dies. The biblical teaching on where the departed spirits go and their activities is vital if the hold of the ancestral cult is to be broken. Hiebert *et al* (1999:123-29) state that they need a theology of godly dying and funerals that show them that death and the deceased need not be feared, there is no contamination to be removed, the cause of death can be left with God (it is never outside his will), and at death Christians go into the presence of God and non-Christians enter hell where both remain. A theology of death will resolve all the questions that are raised after the death of someone and take away fear, uncertainty and confusion. There is clearly no need to pursue the state of ancestorhood, as in ATR,

as this is by far inferior to all that a Christian experiences after death, namely forever being with the Lord and a future resurrection to life in a perfect earth.

When someone dies it is generally a good opportunity to minister to people as they are often more open to the gospel. Christian funerals show to those around them that Christians have a great hope.

Larbi (2006:447) mentions that the traditional understanding of the cause of disease has survived among African Christians as is clear from the popularity of faith healers and prophets. Hiebert *et al* (1999:164) state that Christians therefore need a theology of suffering, illness, pain and so-called misfortune in general. Most African peoples do not turn to God in these situations, but rather are preoccupied with the spiritual causes of their problems. Ferdinando (1999:371) notes that in the New Testament the suffering of a believer takes on a positive value (Rom. 8:28-39; Jam.1:2-4; 1 Pet. 1:6-7), and that therefore from this perspective the source of affliction becomes less important. Hiebert *et al* (1999:165) observes that when people focus on personal well-being and prosperity, rather than on peace with God, they preach a gospel that treats the symptoms and don't understand the real cure. Christians must remember that complete deliverance will only come after death when they receive a new body. We need to face the consequences of sin (pp.164-165). The process of aging and death is at work in the life of every human being. Christians are to expect hardship, poverty, and persecution because they follow Christ (1 Cor. 4:10-13; 2 Tim. 3:12) and live in a fallen world. They are called to take up their cross (implying hardship and even death) and follow Christ (Matt 10:38-9). Further, God can use a crisis to lead people to spiritual maturity.

Section 5.3 gives a diachronic overview of death and life after death and these truths need to be taught to new converts.

7.3.3.5 Contextualised teaching: spiritual warfare

African Christians are often left unprepared for the spiritual warfare which they have to face as Christians. Fon and Grebe (1995:46) state that churches often emphasise faith in Christ as the Saviour from sin and say little about his power to deliver from

harassment by the spirit world. The lives of African believers are often more controlled by fear of the spirit world than by security in Christ and trust in him.

Kraft (2000:§8) states that Satan has duped a large section of the world's population into believing that ancestors continue to participate in their life. This is true of the people in Kejom Ketingu. Fon and Grebe (1995:43) explain that Satan has a five-fold grip on Africans through the ATR worldview: (1) on the mind – they have misconceptions about God, the spirits and man's relationship to them; (2) on the emotions – people fear the spirit world; (3) on the will – ATR adherents cannot go to God in time of need and people are thus forced to use spirit power; (4) on the society – ATR is integrated into the social structures and functions; and (5) on the desires and aspirations – people are lured into power and prestige and into using secret methods.

Kraft (2005:388) explains that when people have been involved in offering sacrifices, and have performed other acts of worship to supposed ancestors, it becomes more difficult to present Christianity to them. When people are converted to Christ they need to be set free spiritually from the satanic deception concerning the ancestors. Family and occult spirits gain their power over people when they are consciously or unconsciously dedicated to them. Demons get the right to inhabit people when dedications take place. When a newborn is dedicated to the spirits, the child inherits ancestral, family spirits from his/her parents (Kraft 2005:388). Often dedications have taken place from one generation to another (Kraft 2000:§13). Since the ancestral cult is influenced by demonic powers (see 5.3.1.4), it is important for the church to deal with this influence when somebody turns to Christ. Nkwankpa (2006:840) confirms that it is necessary that the covenants involved in trafficking with idols and spirits be verbally broken. Kraft (2000:§8, 14) notes that Christians need to carefully examine the many aspects of their lives, i.e. past and present, to see whether there are any ancestral ties.

As we can conclude from the research in Kejom, some of the churches have been rather ineffective 'to produce a shift of allegiance from the spirits to the living Christ.' However, the gospel provides for spiritual authority to confront the powers of evil and holds out the promise of miracles to those who believe (Fon and Grebe 1995:46). Wan (2003:2-3) says spiritual victory can come when someone desires sincerely to be freed and

believes in the total salvation and liberation in Christ.

Kraft (2000:§4) states that people need an approach to Christianity that combines allegiance, truth and power encounters (see 6.2.4) In Africa the fear of the spirit world is the greatest hindrance to faith in Christ and victory in the Christian life. Fon and Grebe (1995:47) believe that release from this fear often requires an encounter with the power of God where the power of God is shown to be greater than that of the power of the spirits. One way to do this is through publicly renouncing any involvement with the spirits and by destroying objects that are related to them (charms, fetishes, statues, etc.).

Wan (2003:3) explains that people need to understand who they are according to the Scriptures. We are the God's children, made in His image, redeemed by Jesus Christ. His death destroyed the power of the enemies: sin, sickness, Satan and evil spirits, self and death. Salvation is for the total person and is complete (past, present and future). Kraft (2000:§6) adds that 'Jesus gave His followers power and authority to cast out demons and cure diseases (Lk. 9:1), to do the works Jesus Himself did (Jn. 14:12), and to crush the enemy under our feet (Rom. 16:20).'

He (2005:392) also indicates that churches need to be helped to discover that the God of the Scriptures is still the same and still does powerful things. To have an impact on power oriented people we need to be presenting a Christianity with power.

Wan (2003:2) concludes that Christians should be reminded that the victory over the spirits is won by prayer (Mk. 9:29), the Word of God (Eph. 6:17, 18), the blood of Christ (Rev. 12:11), and the power of Jesus' name (Mk. 9:39; Lk. 9:49). Christians are also promised spiritual victory over demons and evil-spirits (Mk. 16:15-18; 1 Jn. 4:4 etc.).

The leaders of the churches in Kejom Ketingu need to help believers understand the implications of involvement with the ancestral cult and where necessary provide counsel and help people to be set free from ancestral covenants. Biblical teaching is needed to help people understand who they are in Christ and how to be free in Christ.

People also need to realise that God does not always heal when people are sick or solve a difficult situation. Ferdinando (1999:364-371) explains that human suffering and

death is the consequence of sin (Gen. 2:16-17; Rom. 6:23). In both the Old and New Testament Satan and his envoys are seen as agents of human adversity (Job 1, 2; Matt. 9:32; Lk. 9:37-42). Far more important, however, is God's sovereignty over all suffering. In the New Testament a believer's suffering takes on positive value (Rom. 5:3; 8:28-39; Jam. 1:2-4).

7.3.4 Step 4: Scriptures in the mother tongue

During the time I was visiting the different churches in Kejom Ketingu to gather the information from field research I realised again how important it is to have Scriptures in the mother tongue. Many people interviewed were not able to communicate in English with me. Some managed with Pidgin English but many needed a translator. Smalley (1991:2-3) says that the translation of the Bible is critical for Christians. Translation of the Bible has almost always resulted in gain for the people who wanted access to it. Bediako (quoted in Edu-Bekoe and Wan 2011:19) states 'Its deeper significance is that God speaks to men and women – always in the vernacular.' Tippet (2006:9) adds that we need the written word of God in the vernacular language for public and private use, for reading, hearing or memorizing – 'The gospel has to come through in indigenous rhythm and speak its message to the heart.' Green (2010:2) says that the Scriptures in the heart language of people play a key role in the growth of 'viable reproducing and indigenously led churches.' If the church is going to avoid syncretism, then the gospel needs to be communicated in the mother tongue of the people we are trying to reach (Claydon 2004:7). People will not understand the gospel fully when it is preached in a language they don't understand or don't understand well. This will open them to syncretism.

Mojola (2002:202-212) states that Bible translation is indispensable in Christian mission and ministry. It helps to lay the foundations for the language of the church, of liturgy, evangelism, and even of theological discourse. He (pp. 202-212) therefore calls for a commitment to translate the Scriptures and to create new Scripture products that speak to people's needs and lead them to engage with God's Word.

Fortunately a Bible translation project is currently going on in the Kejom language. Within a couple of years the New Testament will be available. Portions of the New Testament are already available in this language. The church leaders can play an important role in stimulating its use. If the pastor uses a gospel or other portions, it will motivate the church members who can read to use them as well.

7.3.5 Step 5: A focus on a ministry to men

In most of the churches in Kejom the men are either a small minority or virtually absent. In 6.3 it was mentioned that Christianity has appealed to women and youth who had no important role to play in the traditional ontology. Although all the members of the church need specific attention, including the women, children and youths, it is important to develop a strategy to reach out to the men. In the Kejom society the men play a domineering role. In several denominations in Kejom Ketingu women are the backbone of the church. On the one hand this is something positive – women are open to the gospel. On the other hand the number of men in church is limited and since the church is led mostly by women, men stay away, even if they have some interest in attending. Fon and Grebe (1995:26) state that in African societies leadership is very much the function of the men. The church does not reflect how leadership and decision-making takes place in the society and this has been partly responsible for the poor attendance of men.

Murrow (2005:13-18) states that worldwide the percentage of men who attend church is lower than that of women. Following Jesus Christ isn't usually seen as the macho thing to do. Many men intentionally reject the Christian faith. Many men are involved in other religions that preclude commitment to Christ. Tiéno (1980:§Ea) adds that men may resist Christianity because they may feel it will weaken the social and political unity if people abandon ethnic deities or ancestors in favour of Christianity. In Kejom Ketingu the pressure on men is high to participate in traditional practices such as death celebrations, e.g. they are often ridiculed if they don't.

Murrow (2005:3-25) states that while the clergy of the church is male dominated, the lay leadership is female dominated. Very few men attend church. A truly healthy church needs both. A thriving church needs a core of men who are true followers of Christ.

Fon and Grebe (1995:27) states that very few households of church members function as Christian families in which the father is the spiritual leader. Murrow (2005:182-85) adds that the practices of the father greatly influence whether children will attend church. The mother's religiosity does not have much influence over the children's future devotion. The boys may attend till they are about ten and then usually drop out if the father does not attend church. He (p. 177) says in order to have men in the church they must be recruited to lead.

Cantrell (2005:9) narrates the example of pastor Isaiaho from Kenya who planted a healthy church in a semi-slum area outside of Nairobi, Kenya. He started out with a mid-week men's evangelistic Bible study for six months. Only after a group of men were converted and disciplined, were the men urged to invite their families to come for Sunday services. He left a strong church behind led by mature biblically qualified elders and a growing membership. Tiénou (1980:§Ea) suggests that church leaders and members can devise activities which contribute to local projects and show solidarity with the group.

This may be an approach that can work also in Kejom Ketingu. The leadership of the churches in Kejom Ketingu need to realise that without targeting the men their churches are lacking an important group of the society who should play a key role in the church and in their homes. Presently many children will grow up without a Christian father for a role model who can help them become mature believers. Clearly this will perpetuate a church with few men and thus undermine the growth of the church and its influence in a male-dominated society.

7.3.6 Step 6: The importance of orality, literacy and indigenous music

7.3.6.1 The role of orality in overcoming syncretism

A serious effort needs to be made among the Kejom people to use the translated Scriptures in the mother tongue once they become available. Although presently literacy classes are going on in the area and this is a step forward in helping some of the Kejom to become literate. However, there will certainly be a percentage that will never learn to read or write. Colville (2012:§2) states that 50-70% of the world's population does not have the ability to make good use of the Bible due to lack of reading and comprehension skills. As a high level of literacy is required for reading the Bible with comfort and understanding, most of these people will remain oral communicators. Claydon (2004:11-12) explains that oral communicators often transmit their beliefs, values and other important information by means of stories, proverbs, music, dances, ceremonies, etc. Historically, and up till today, primary oral societies pass on important information without putting anything into writing (Greer 2011:10).

It will be necessary to look for other ways to help the people who may never learn to read and write to use the scriptures once they are available. Colville (2012:§2) states that for those people some kind of non-print medium is needed to help them receive and learn from the Word of God.

In 2004 a model was created for people from an oral culture by the Lausanne World Committee for Evangelization which focuses on how to make disciples of oral learners. It is presented as a model to avoid syncretism (Claydon 2004:24). In my presentation of the model I have added comments from others advocating an oral approach. There is some overlap with previously mentioned steps covered so far in this chapter.

(1) *Pastors should communicate with people in their mother tongue* – the language in which people have learned their religion, values and cultural identity. However, pastors often find it difficult to preach and express theological terms in the mother tongue. This is because they were trained in a trade or official language. If the pastor is not able to use the mother tongue, interpreters need to choose the correct terms. However, they generally have not received theological training and may use wrong words for important Christian concepts which can lead to syncretism or even heresy (Claydon 2004:24).

(2) *A worldview study is needed.* Although this point was not one of the first few mentioned, I have moved it up the list as I believe a worldview study is needed right from the beginning. Claydon (2004:22-27) says that such a study will reveal areas in which the people group's worldview is contrary to the biblical one. A ministry among oral cultures must be sensitive to their worldview in order to build bridges of understanding and confront barriers to the gospel message.

(3) *Discipleship material that is specific for a particular worldview should be developed.* Every new believer needs to learn biblical practices such as prayer, worship, witness, fellowship and ministry. Teaching these practices should be done in a culturally appropriate way. Greer (2011:30) says that there needs to be a 'massive re-education process to encourage all churches to adopt discipling strategies which will produce mature oral believers and church leaders.'

(4) *Recognise the importance of stories in transforming a person's worldview.* Claydon (2004:25) explains that every culture uses stories that tell what it means to be human, what kind of world we live in, and why there is suffering and how we can deal with it. Christianity has its own answers to these questions through its worldview. When we tell biblical stories we can influence the worldviews of new believers. Stories can change how people think, feel, and behave, and the way they see the world. A sequential, step-by-step process can lead them to a new, biblical worldview (Claydon 2004:22). Koehler (2010:102) adds that stories that address particular spiritual barriers in a society or that serve as bridges from indigenous beliefs to Christian truth can be included. Stories can also be told chronologically, in the way they appear in the Bible. A chronological track includes between 50-100 stories.

Story telling enables every church member to know the Bible. Even non-literate people can understand spiritual truths and grow spiritually through stories. It makes it possible for them to fully participate in the life of the church. Through listening to stories, believers who previously had little interest in reading the Bible begin to discuss it and read it for themselves (Koehler 2010:57-59). Techniques and procedures are used to ensure that stories are 'true to the biblical story.' Organisations involved in storying programmes attach great importance to training (Greer 2011:60).

(5) *Provide a recorded 'oral Bible' for each people group in their language.* This is a recorded set of stories, biblically accurate and told from within the worldview context. This may be the only scriptural resource available. If possible a written Bible translation should be completed later on, and which could also be recorded to provide a standard point of reference. The stories in an 'oral Bible' are told by story tellers from the people group, using culturally appropriate techniques. The Bible stories are checked to ensure biblical accuracy before recording takes place (Claydon 2004:27). Green (quoted in Greer 2011:43) notes that this recorded set of oral stories ('oral Bible') would provide an important source document that assures the accuracy and reliability of the stories.

(6) *Choose strategies that oral learners can observe and copy.* Oral communicators learn best when they follow the example of those who lead them to Christ. Reproduction in a storying approach can be ensured when the hearers themselves are able to craft and tell stories to others (Claydon 2004:28). Greer (2011:47) adds that, when disciples demonstrate in their lives that they listen to God and obey him, you have a powerful form of discipling.

In oral cultures nonprint media are needed that fit the communications patterns of the culture. Nonprint media include programs designed to foster group memorization and recitation (Brown 2002:20).

The aspects mentioned above in an oral strategy can be helpful in the churches in Kejom. If the pastors and priest can use the mother tongue in the services the church members will have a better understanding of the teaching. A worldview study will help in developing appropriate discipleship material. It can also help in the choice of particular stories to address the ATR beliefs that still persist among the church members. The recorded stories will help reinforce what they have already heard. Bible translation is under way and the Kejom New Testament will be available in a couple of years. It will also be recorded so people can continue to listen to it easily.

7.3.6.2 The role of literacy in overcoming syncretism

In addition to an oral approach it will also be important to continue to involve the population of Kejom Ketingu in literacy classes. Scholars (Finegan, Hezser and Niditch

quoted in Koehler 2010:160) have cautioned against approaches that treat orality and literacy as separate systems. An oral Bible project can interact with literacy by using the written text of the Bible as the authoritative guide to keep oral expression faithful to the original. Kilham (quoted in Greer 2011:42) too adds that literacy must not be seen to be in competition with an oral approach. When a community is involved with an oral approach, literacy and creative writing programs should be started so that a written style can develop. However, she accepts that Christian maturity is possible without literacy.

Klem (1995:59) says that most of the modern mission movement has assumed that literacy is essential to evangelism, spiritual maturity and church growth. Education has accompanied evangelism so that people may read the Word of God for themselves. Edwards (2010:1) emphasises that illiteracy stunts the growth of the church and hinders discipleship. He (pp. 48-49) is a strong supporter of helping the leadership of emerging churches (and possibly the members) to become literate. Ong (quoted in Edwards 2010:56) states that orality should not be accepted as a permanent state in a culture. Literacy opens possibilities to human existence that could not be accomplished without writing. An illiterate population is often poor and can easily be exploited or oppressed (Edwards 2010:45-46).

Klem (1995:59-60) states that in spite of the fact that missions have been oriented towards literacy for more than a hundred years, more than seventy-five percent of the population in Africa does not read well enough to manage basic Bible passages, and many of those who can read, simply do not enjoy reading. Ansre (quoted in Greer 2011:29) uses figures from 1993 which are even lower: only about eleven percent of the officially recognised literate population of almost every African country read Scriptures regularly. So, in spite of years of teaching literacy in many parts of Africa, there are still few readers.

Literacy practitioners (myself included) have observed that oral societies are slow in getting involved in literacy. Historically the transition of an oral culture to literacy has been a slow process. Many people will never become literate. Poverty is one of the barriers to achieving functional literacy (people are too busy meeting their basic needs).

Another barrier can be ambition, with people working long hours and not having the time or energy or motivation for literacy classes (Greer 2011:22-3).

Goody and Hsu (quoted in Klem 1995:61) have suggested that the introduction of literacy into a traditional society is the most fundamental cultural change possible to establish. Literacy not only changes what people think, but also how they think. Goody (quoted in Klem 1995:61) explains that traditional non-reading societies are often 'right brained, holistic, communally oriented, and are less supportive of individual critical thinking.' Literacy is the 'strongest conditioner for linear, left brained and critical thinking.' According to Tippet (quoted in Klem 1995:61), community leaders tend to accept or reject innovations based on whether they perceive the changes can contribute to the unity and well-being of the community. People can resist literacy and education because they are loyal to the group or to their traditions, which are seen to be in conflict with books and book learning.

Klem (1995:62-3) narrates how he would meet people in a community in Nigeria who at the end of their discussion would conclude that their children could go to school and become Christians, but that they themselves were too old to learn to read and become Christians. They had identified becoming a Christian with learning to read. Colville (2012:§8) confirms that oral societies may see literacy as 'foreign' and be resistant to it (sometimes interpreted as resistance to the Gospel).

Klem (1995:64) advises that when we want to use literacy to help people understand God's Word we need to use a variety of approaches based on local communication methods, using styles with which people are familiar. Okedara and Okedara (1992:92) emphasise that the mother tongue is the best language for the acquisition of literacy for psychological, educational, and sociological reasons. Psychologically, since the mind expresses and understands facts almost automatically in the mother tongue. Educationally, since one learns quicker using the mother tongue rather than in a second language. Sociologically, since the members of the community identify with it. Gudschinsky (quoted in Okedara and Okedara 1992:92-93) says that the teaching of literacy in the mother tongue facilitates the acquisition of second language literacy as well.

There are also positive accounts of what literacy has accomplished in two communities in the North West of Cameroon. Griffis (2011:142-161) in his research on the use of vernacular Scriptures in the Kom and Bafut (both are neighbouring language groups to Kejom) comes to the conclusion that literacy in the mother tongue has proven to be a key factor in the exposure to the vernacular Scriptures. People who are literate in the mother tongue read the Scriptures, but they also hear them read aloud while attending Faith Comes by Hearing (FCBH) listening groups. FCBH records the vernacular Scriptures and makes them available. People meet at least once each week to listen to the vernacular Scriptures and discuss the passage they have listened to (Griffis 2011:112).

Griffis (2011:161) also states that it is particularly important that the church leaders are able to read the Scriptures in the mother tongue. Those who are illiterate hear the vernacular Scriptures read most often at church, and the example of a literate church leadership has a positive influence on the membership. This means that church leaders need to be literate in the vernacular.

Literacy classes constitute an important tool to help the communities in Kejom Ketingu become literate. But it has not been easy to involve many believers in the churches in classes. The literacy teachers and supervisors need to understand the important role they play in the spiritual growth of the church members in helping them to overcome the beliefs of ATR and understand the truths of God's word.

7.3.6.3 The role of music in overcoming syncretism

In the churches in Ketingu I witnessed various styles of music. In some cases Western style hymns were sung. Some churches have vernacular choirs. In one of the services songs in the mother tongue were sung in a style that people are familiar with and with dancing and much enthusiasm and joy. Music plays an important role in Kejom Ketingu and it could be used to pass on the message of the gospel most effectively.

King (2005:309-12) notes that Africa is a continent where people know how to celebrate and express their thoughts and emotions through music. At every stage of life music is present and most events are accompanied by music, predominantly song. For every

major life cycle event (including funerals and death celebrations) there is usually song and music. Corbitt (1994:7-12) adds that at the root of African music is the music of the African village. Call and response singing and complex and spontaneous expression accompanied by drumming are typical of this lively music.

King (2005:310-11) states that 'contextualization through the development of appropriate meaningful music has played a major role in the response of various people to the call of Jesus Christ as Lord.' The Christian faith should be integrated into the total lifestyle of people. King (quoted in Shubin 2001:13) notes that God wants us to come into relationship with Him. Songs can clearly help people understand what God is saying and facilitate this relationship. They should be sung in the mother tongue in music that people know and respond to. King (2003:5) says that songs are often more effective tools for communicating a message than spoken words. Across Africa songs come alive by means of dancing and clapping. Through the use of songs sung to traditional accompaniments and other art forms we may be able to break through cultural barriers to lead people to God and to full maturity in Christ.

In the past Western missionaries were concerned that African religion was so closely linked with music that associations with traditional practices could not be shed. This led to a total rejection of African music (King 2005:318). Instead, Western hymns were taught. Missionaries and new converts burned their drums. This implied that African music was evil and could not be 'redeemed' (Corbitt 1994:5-6). Schragg (2007:2) states that the replacement of local music with music the missionaries were familiar with suffocated the heart, deadened the mind, and stifled creativity.

King (2005:314-19) suggests that in order to contextualise music, new forms can be developed instead of only borrowing or adapting existing forms. Christians should draw from their musical heritage and create songs that are familiar to them, in a form that 'adequately and persuasively carries the Gospel message and that is worthy of God.'

King (2001:13-4) advises the practice of commissioning instruments that are being used in worship. In many cultures instruments are related to the work of spirits. People need to understand that God can still use their music while not condoning the spirits. By

commissioning a new instrument it is given a new meaning. It makes it clear that the instrument no longer serves the things of this world and its satanic elements.

At the moment Western contemporary worship is quite often used in African churches. Although this contemporary worship is closer to non-Western cultures, not everybody responds to it. Ethno-worship can reach people who won't listen to Western style music. People will respond to what is familiar to them. Indigenous music opens up a willingness to listen (King 2001:12). In another article King (2003:7) states that it is critical for new believers to worship God in ways that help them know God better and understand how to walk with Jesus. When new believers use culturally appropriate folk media they will stay connected to their families and social units. This allows them to be a Christian witness and maintain dialogue with their family members and the community.

Although some of the churches in Kejom Ketingu are using indigenous music to some extent, it could be used much more widely to get the gospel across and experience a more meaningful relationship with God. It would make the services livelier and it would attract outsiders to come and join the church since they find a music style that they are familiar with and which plays such an important role in the Kejom culture.

7.3.7 Step 7: Developing functional substitutes for the rituals during the mourning period and death celebration

The mortuary rituals during the mourning period and the death celebration occupy an important place in the lives of the people of Kejom Ketingu. Hiebert *et al* (1999:283-9) say that the heart of ATR often appears to be rituals that take place at various events. They are important in maintaining their beliefs and bring to the surface the largely invisible foundations on which their society, culture and personalities are built. People spend large sums of money on these rituals and generally many people take part in them (p. 283; Jindra 2011:118).

Overall the churches in Kejom Ketingu have distanced themselves from the ATR rituals, but not much of a replacement has been found. Since they are such important social events the temptation for Christians to take part in them is quite high, especially for men since they are the ones who perform the rituals and who take part in juju and manjong

group dances. Malinowski (quoted in Tippet 1987:183) states that an institution like the family or chieftainship or ancestor worship, etc., has its roots in all aspects of culture. When any of these institutions are changed it has serious ramifications on every aspect of social life. However, it is possible to replace one kind of institution with another that fills a similar function.

Kraft (2005:392-4) states that missionaries would often condemn customs, but nothing would be developed to substitute for the function that these customs served. Most people in Africa consider healing, fertility and protection from misfortune as spiritual matters. These concerns, and especially the concern over the involvement of the spirit world in death, need to be taken seriously. It is important to work out Christian answers in culturally appropriate rituals that will satisfy people. Customs, like seeking the assistance of a diviner, must be replaced. While trying to determine what could substitute for a pagan custom, the church needs to realise the primary concern for the spiritual nature of the problem and replace the custom with a meaningful one. Tippet (1987:185) says if no adequate substitutes are found, a cultural void will most certainly emerge due to unmet need and result in syncretism to meet this need. When social groups become Christian, the whole community can decide on functional substitutes, which is generally effective. If indigenous forms, rites, festivals, etc., can be given a new Christian value content, there is a greater likelihood they will be accepted rather than foreign forms and rituals. Kraft (2000:§IIIC) adds that a functional substitute may be a form, a ritual, a symbol, a role, an idea, a craft, an occupation, an artefact, an economic pattern, etc.

Spiritual growth after someone has put his/her faith in Jesus may depend on whether or not other customs are developed to replace the rituals that are judged to be inappropriate for Christians (Kraft 2005:392). It is important that churches create Christian life cycles and transformation rites that mark and reinforce changes that take place in the lives of individuals and churches (Hiebert *et al* 1999:318; van Rheezen 1991:140).

In the case of the mourning rituals and death celebrations, functional substitutes need to be developed for every activity so that the felt needs of the people are met rather than ignored (Kraft 2005: 393).

7.3.8 Step 8 – Contextualised training in Bible schools and denominations

All the previous steps will need pastors/priests and other church leaders who are well equipped and have enough time to provide teaching and counseling. Unfortunately that is not the case. One of the pastors and the priest in Kejom Ketingu are responsible for several assemblies. Not all the pastors/priest originate from the area. This makes effective ministering more difficult since they don't speak the Kejom language. Griffis (2011:162) suggests that it may be helpful to persuade denominational leaders to assign new pastors to churches in their own language communities. This would facilitate preaching in the mother tongue and make mother tongue literacy for church leaders a more attainable objective.

Buys (quoted in Cantrell 2005:3) suggests that a solution to the instability of African churches is to develop more and better trained pastors. The pastors need to be prepared for the challenges they will encounter once they are in charge of an assembly. Stamoolis (quoted in Cantrell 2005:3) mentions that only a few seminaries or colleges offer integrated training of theory, practice and supervision to help build strong local churches. Studies also show that graduates who are sent to unstable churches often have to deal with inertia which makes it very difficult for them to implement change. According to Anderson (2004:4-9), a 'western, rationalistic theological education' continues to be the model used in seminaries across the globe, including Africa. Theological education should be more holistic and functional. Nürnberger (2006:47) adds that mainline theology ignores the beliefs of ATR, including ancestor veneration, witchcraft and healing to a very large extent. The problems the majority of people in Africa face are not dealt with.

Turaki (2008(1):135-37) recommends that Christians in Africa [this would include pastors/priests/church leaders] should have a thorough knowledge of African Traditional

Religion and worldview. Churches cannot address effectively the beliefs of adherents of ATR if they have a shallow understanding of what they believe.

Bible schools and seminaries need to give their students proper training concerning ATR so that they can be effective in presenting the gospel and in discipling new converts. The different denominations that are present in the Kejom area need to give that training to the pastors who are already leading a church.

In Appendix 6 I have included a discipleship model developed by Light (2012:383-388). His model has twenty-one steps and is aimed at making discipleship more effective, which is an important step in my model as well. Although his model goes beyond the influence of ATR and includes the effects of colonialism, modernism, post modernism, religious pluralism, the African Renaissance and the relationship between culture and personal and Christian identity, several of his recommendations are similar to ones I propose. His research was not limited to one particular group, although he does describe the practices of the amaXhosa. His model is an extension of the approach presented in this research.

7.4 Summary and Conclusion

In this chapter I have proposed an eightfold approach to help the churches in Kejom Ketingu, and hopefully in other parts of North West Cameroon, to deal with or prevent syncretism.

When someone from an ATR background in Kejom Ketingu becomes a believer the first aspect that needs attention is a worldview change from the ATR to the Christian worldview. ATR is an integral part of the Kejom culture. It is their way of life. The deepest levels of culture include ideas about reality and belief systems. Christianity needs to be directed at this level of the culture. Where the Christian worldview contradicts various elements of ATR, those elements need to be changed or discarded.

The second aspect to which the churches in Kejom need to pay attention to is a meaningful presentation of the gospel, appropriate and relevant to the lives of the Kejom. The gospel needs to be contextualised. This means Christianity and its practices

are presented in a relevant way to the particular culture, which with reference to this thesis is the Kejom culture. Contextualisation emphasises change and transformation – a rooting of the faith in and enriching the culture but both without syncretism. The model of critical contextualisation provides guidelines for churches on how to evaluate traditional practices in order to reduce syncretism in the churches.

Step three really develops the principles in steps one and two for the discipleship phase of converts in Ketingu. It shows that thorough and contextual discipleship is vital to produce mature Christians who have overcome syncretism. Discipleship is a call to obey Jesus in all aspects of life. New converts need help and encouragement especially when facing opposition. Discipleship needs to be done with appropriate material particularly focussing on the biblical view of God, the ancestors, death and after life. New believers need to learn to appeal to God alone. They should be taught to honour their parents and elders in a biblically acceptable way. Believers need to overcome their fear of the spirit world. People that have been involved in the ancestral cult need to be set free from demonic deception. Young believers need to learn that they have spiritual authority to confront evil powers. They need to understand the position they have in Christ.

Step four underlines the importance of Scriptures in the mother tongue. Presently the Kejom society only has the Gospel of Luke available in the Kejom language. However, Bible translation work is in progress and the entire New Testament should be available in a couple of years.

Step five encourages the church leaders to develop a strategy to reach out to the men. Presently few men are involved in the churches. The churches and families need committed men who can give spiritual leadership and be role models in their families.

Step six showed the importance of orality, literacy and music in discipleship and countering syncretism. The usefulness of the model developed in 2004 by the Lausanne World Committee for Evangelization to combat syncretism in oral societies was noted. It stresses the use of the mother tongue in preaching, discipleship material that takes the African worldview seriously, the use of stories told orally, and an oral Bible compiled of stories that are recorded. It, however, emphasised linking an oral approach to literacy as

it is important for people to become literate in the mother tongue, especially leaders in the churches, to benefit from all Scripture. Wisdom is needed to move from an oral to a literate society. Music and songs in a style that people are familiar with play an important role in helping remove barriers for people to understanding the gospel.

Step seven suggests a replacement for the rituals during the mourning period and death celebrations. Since these and other rituals not compatible with Christianity play such an important role in the society, churches should create Christian equivalents that will play a meaningful role in the lives of the believers and replace the ATR rituals.

The last step suggests that pastors should be assigned to churches in their home area so that they can minister in the mother tongue. It also shows the need for (future) pastors to get adequate training. They need to have a thorough knowledge of ATR so that they will be able to counsel and disciple their church members.

My hope is that this approach will assist the church leaders in Kejom Ketingu, and other parts of Cameroon, in dealing with the problem of syncretism, especially with reference to mortuary rituals. I realise that the many aspects of this approach may be overwhelming to Christian leaders in Ketingu. The influence of ATR has been felt for many years in the churches and it will take a major effort to help the members of the churches come to a point where they can put their trust in God fully and exclusively. Bible schools and seminaries, pastors, priests, church and denominational leaders need to be convinced of the importance of seeing syncretism resulting from a sub-biblical view of God disappear. It will take a lot of work to implement the above ministry approach and therefore more than one person will be required in each of the different churches for effective implementation. I believe SIL and CABTAL will be able to help in some of the following aspects: the completion of the translation of the New Testament, the recording of the New Testament, the implementation of listening groups, continued training of literacy personnel, and the developing of reading material in the mother tongue. However, as has already been noted, denominations themselves should take responsibility for implementing some or all the steps of the model.

It may seem like an impossible task to bring present believers and future converts in Kejom Ketingul to a mature, stable faith – a faith that does not turn back to traditional practices in times of difficulties that entails syncretism. It is my hope that the church leaders will sincerely desire to help their members achieve significant spiritual growth so that they can be free of God-dishonouring syncretism and experience the full blessings of the Gospel.

Chapter 8: Summary and conclusion

8.1 Need for the research

This thesis in practical theology was structured according to the LIM model. Anderson (2001:26) describes practical theology as ‘the means whereby the day-to-day life of the Church, in all its dimensions, is scrutinized in the light of the gospel and related to the demands and challenges of the present day.’ This thesis scrutinized in this way the rituals during the mourning period and death celebration in Kejom Ketingu .

The need for this thesis became apparent after working in Cameroon for many years with SIL and CABTAL in literacy and Scripture promotion in local languages. Through interaction during training courses with personnel of Bible translation and literacy projects it became apparent that ATR elements incompatible with Christianity and Christian growth still had a tremendous influence on their lives. Rituals motivated by beliefs about ancestors played an important role, and it became clear that mortuary rituals and death celebrations were at the centre of these beliefs. During discussions some of these Christian workers admitted that they take part in rituals after funerals and death celebrations while others did not; but they were not well informed about the biblical perspective on these rituals and the underlying beliefs. I realised from discussions with the project personnel that this situation existed in many Christian communities. This research focused on one of the language groups in which CABTAL is presently working – the community of Kejom Ketingu. The main reason for this choice

was its accessibility from where I am living and the fact that a Bible translation project is going on here.

While much has been written about how syncretism has developed in the African church and the challenges it poses to the church, little research has been done on the Church in the North West region of Cameroon. I discovered that not much had been written about how churches in the North West region handle the involvement of their church members in mortuary rituals and the influence of ATR, the ancestral cult in particular. Jindra (1997 and 2011) and Mfonyam (2010) write about the significance of death celebrations and how it has evolved over the years. Mfonyam (2010) writes from a Christian perspective and also about traditional practices in a neighboring community. Little has been written about the various societies that play a role in the death celebration: kwifon, manjong and jujus or masquerades. Bartelt (2006) and Brain and Pollock (1971) write about juju societies and the role the fon plays in the ancestral cult. Fisiy (1995), Diduk (1993) and Nkwi (1986) write about various aspects concerning the fon and his role.

Some of the churches had very little historical information available about the growth and policies of their denominations, particularly in Kejom Ketingu. As a result there were many aspects where I needed to gather information from individuals through an interview (questionnaire).

8.2 Objectives

Through this thesis I sought to establish the depth of the interviewed church members' involvement in mortuary rituals and therefore the extent of syncretism in the churches in Kejom Ketingu. I also aimed at discovering how effective the church leaders of the various denominations (Baptist, Roman Catholic, Presbyterian and Full Gospel) were in countering syncretism with reference to mortuary rituals.

In order to confirm whether my concerns about syncretism were justified another objective of the study was a fresh consideration of the biblical view of God, death, the afterlife, ancestors and syncretism.

The ultimate purpose was to present a biblically inspired ministry approach to the denominations in Kejom Ketingu, and hopefully other language areas in Cameroon, that would be able to help the church leaders overcome in their members the influence of ATR where it contradicts or undermines the Gospel, especially in the area of mortuary rituals.

8.3 Methodology and results

Chapter one presented the research problem and research plan and methodology.

In order to understand the significance of the mortuary rituals in Kejom Ketingu I presented in chapter two the core beliefs of African Traditional Religion with an emphasis on the related beliefs about God, the ancestors, death and the afterlife.

In chapter three I began with some general information about the people in Kejom Ketingu. This was necessary to explain the role of the fon (chief) and the different traditional societies as they all play an important role in the mortuary rituals. Through participant observation and through personal interviews of twenty members of the Kejom community I established the rituals that take place during the mourning period and death celebration, their significance, who performs them and who all participates during these ceremonies. I also researched their beliefs about God, the ancestors and what people believe happens after death.

Through these interviews it was clear that the people in Kejom Ketingu attach a lot of importance to the rituals during the mourning period and death celebrations. Further, a clear link was established between the rituals and the ancestral cult. The rituals all take place with the intention to satisfy the deceased and to make sure that as an ancestor will remember them beneficially and leave them in peace. Sacrifices, libation and cleansing rituals take place out of fear that the spirit of the deceased will come back and to prevent the spirit from inflicting something bad to the living. The death celebration is organised (i) because it is believed that otherwise ill luck will befall the family if not arranged, or (ii) because the family has already experienced problems relating to the death and a diviner has told them that they need to organise the death celebration to rectify the situation.

In chapter four I described the history of the spread of Christianity and the four denominations in Kejom Ketingu. This historical overview explained how colonisation and the work in the plantations in the South West of Cameroon contributed to the spread of the Gospel in the North West region. The plantations gave an opportunity to evangelise and convert the workers, many of whom originated from the North West region and who later evangelised in their home areas.

A hundred people from the different denominations responded to questions about whether, and in what way, they were involved in the mortuary rituals. Further, the interviewees were also asked to express the underlying beliefs about God, the ancestors, death and the afterlife and also how they perceived what the pastors/priest taught and counselled them in regard to the rituals and related beliefs. From their responses it became clear that the members of the Roman Catholic church, the Presbyterian church and (to a lesser extent) the Baptist churches, are involved in the mortuary rituals during the mourning period and the later death celebration. The members of the Full Gospel Church take part in the mourning period but are not involved in the rituals that take place; and they are also seldom and hardly involved in death celebrations. Members from all four denominations face various levels of pressure from relatives when they don't want to take part in the various rituals. Some pray both to God and the ancestors which illustrates how Christianity has been mixed with ATR beliefs. In all denominations half or more of the members believe that when a Christian dies he/she will go to heaven while an unbeliever will go to hell. However, there were surprising numbers who apparently hold this biblical view alongside the traditional view about the ancestors. A low percentage of members believe that divination is the same as asking God for guidance. In all the denominations people express ignorance about biblical teaching relevant to the rituals and the ancestors; and the belief that people can use any means (including traditional) to solve their problems is combined with the belief that we should trust God alone. There are varying percentages among the members of the different denominations who believe that performing sacrifices is acceptable because they took place in the Old Testament. People attach various levels of importance to following biblical principles, but some indicate ignorance of them.

Eleven pastors (including one Catholic priest) were interviewed through a questionnaire to find out from them what their members believe and practice and how they (the pastors) teach and counsel concerning the various mortuary rituals, trusting God, going to a diviner, praying to ancestors, death and the afterlife. They all indicated that their ministry is against members taking part in the various rituals. However, from the responses of the members and pastors interviewed it becomes clear that the pastors' teaching and counsel are not always effective. The beliefs and practices of ATR are deeply rooted in the members' lives and still play an important role in them.

The four denominations in the area of Kejom Ketingu thus hold different points of view about the traditional practices that take place there. In some churches the following of traditional practices entailing syncretism in spite of the teaching of relevant Scriptures has occurred for many years. In other denominations they have clearly been rejected. The history and different attitudes of the four denominations provide insight on how syncretism has developed and how the approach of church leaders has contributed to the present situation in the churches.

In chapter five I showed the biblical view of God, of death and the afterlife. God is the creator and is committed to take care of his creation. He is the Christian's sustainer, guide and protector. He is a holy God who takes the violation of his laws seriously. When a person or an object is honoured as we would God, this constitutes a form of polytheism and idolatry. It was shown that the omnipresence, omniscience, omnipotence, sovereignty and providence of God render the ancestral cult irrelevant and redundant. This teaching and its understanding is vital to eliminating syncretism in the area of the ancestors.

Death comes as ultimately a punishment of sin and its timing is determined by God. When someone dies the relationship with the living is cut off. The Bible makes it clear that any attempted interaction with ancestors is forbidden. They do not function as intermediaries. Christ is the only mediator between God and man. The Bible teaches there will be a resurrection of the righteous (the justified and sanctified) and the wicked and both will be judged. The believers will live on the new earth in the presence of Christ. The wicked will be judged for their sin and their rejection of God's grace with eternal

punishment in hell. Those who never heard the gospel will be judged by the light they had through creation and the moral law imbedded in their conscience.

In chapter six I gave an overview of how syncretism occurred among God's people as recorded in the Scriptures and how various people in the Old and New Testament responded to situations where syncretism occurred. This showed that even in biblical times syncretism was a constant threat and not to be tolerated. My research has demonstrated that syncretism is still a great challenge to the church in Africa and in Kejom Ketingu in particular. Since syncretism is not an option for Christians, the denominations in Kejom Ketingu need to intentionally seek ways to counter it. The biblical survey on how syncretism was to be handled showed that fear of the spirit realm is to be dealt with through Jesus, who has all power on heaven and earth. A believer has the necessary weapons for defence against spiritual attacks, but they need to be applied.

Finally in chapter seven I brought the various lines of research together into an approach for dealing with syncretism in the churches in Kejom Ketingu. There are numerous relevant aspects that are included. There is need for contextualisation in almost every aspect of the model. Contextualisation takes a people's culture and underlying worldview into account. There is need for a firmly understood and held biblical worldview if the Christians in Kejom Ketingu are to see, understand, interpret and approach every aspect of human life from a biblical perspective.

When the gospel is presented to a Kejom person one needs to take into account that a traditional African is not future oriented. People want to be delivered from their fears and problems in the here and now. There is thus need for a holistic gospel which includes deliverance from sickness (and how to handle it if not healed), evil spirits and fear of ancestors.

Contextualised discipleship is probably one of the most important aspects of bringing new believers to spiritual maturity. They must be taught how a Christian worldview should shape and influence all aspects of their daily life. Special attention needs to be paid to a theology of God. Since the ancestral cult inspires the rituals during the mourning period and death celebrations, new believers need to be taught who Jesus is

compared to the ancestors. They need to learn to appeal to God alone, and that suffering can have a positive value and that complete deliverance will only come after death.

A new believer needs to be prepared to conduct spiritual warfare. The lives of Kejom believers are often controlled by fear of the spirit world. New Christians need to be set free spiritually from the satanic deception concerning the ancestors (though in rare occasions we find examples in the Bible of ancestral contact with the living). The gospel provides spiritual authority to confront the powers of evil. Believers need to learn there is security in Christ and that they can trust in him and in his power.

It was also argued that the Scriptures in the mother tongue are critical to help Christians grow in their faith. It was also noted that the churches should be encouraged to focus more on ministry to men. A healthy church needs both men and women. The church should also reflect the authority structure of the society to some extent so that men don't perceive the church as something that is only for women and children. Men exercise a strong influence on the choices of their children as they grow up, hence the importance for more Christian men if Christianity is not to be viewed by children as irrelevant to men.

As the Kejom society is largely oral, it was shown that it would be helpful to focus on ways that can help people from an oral society to grow in their Christian faith. The use of biblical story telling, which should be recorded for wider use, can help the non-literate people to know the Bible. However, an oral approach should be used in conjunction with a literacy programme. It has been noted that it is a slow process to move from an oral society to a literate one. It is especially important for leaders in the church to be able to read. In addition to helping believers grow in faith, literacy can open up other possibilities to an individual to progress in life.

Since music plays such an important role in the Kejom society, it was demonstrated that the churches would need to step away from long-established traditions of using Western hymns and allow more indigenous music in the churches.

The rituals and death celebrations are very important in the life of the community. It was thus argued that these practices need to be replaced by others that will fulfil similar

functions so that believers will not be tempted to go back to them in time of need or uncertainty. Churches need to create Christian life cycle rituals.

In order to implement the approach that emerges from my research, it would be necessary that pastors are well equipped. Bible schools and seminaries need to pay more attention to the ATR background of the churches their graduates will be serving. Denominations need to follow up with pastors who have already been serving for some time, especially those who did not receive sufficient preparation in how to deal with the influence of ATR on the church.

8.4 Importance and implications of the research

The research done in the churches in Kejom Ketingu has found that ATR still has an influence on the lives of the believers, resulting in syncretism. It has also established that the teaching and counselling of the church leaders is not always effective. I am hoping the different denominations will see the relevance and importance of my approach proposed in chapter 6 and be able to use it, or aspects of it, to help the members of their churches grow to spiritual maturity that discards the influences of ATR that keep them living in fear and undermining the Gospel and spiritual growth.

The section on contextualised discipleship is fairly extensive, partly because I believe most denominations do not give discipleship enough attention, and because the material on the biblical view of God, the ancestors, death and life after death is crucial to better equip the pastors and church leaders in their teaching. The thesis has demonstrated that an approach to ministry like the one produced in this thesis must be taken seriously by the churches in Kejom Ketingu if the believers are to move from an ATR worldview to a biblical worldview and put their complete trust in God and become mature in Christ.

8.5 Limitations of the research

I do believe that the findings of my research may be valid for other language groups in the North West region of Cameroon and even other parts of the country. More research, however, needs to be done in order to actually substantiate this. Further, it needs to be

noted that my research focused on a small area where syncretism is taking place in Kejom Ketingu.

I investigated only the aspects of the ancestral cult reflected in the rituals that take place during the mourning period and death celebrations. In order to get a complete picture of the ancestral cult in Kejom Ketingu it would be necessary to research all the life cycle rituals and establish the extent to which the members of the different churches are involved in all these aspects.

I interviewed a hundred members of the four denominations. If a more extensive survey could be done a more accurate picture of syncretism in the four denominations would be gained. However, my research certainly demonstrates that in the areas investigated there is syncretism.

I was unable to get sufficient material on the role of the fon in the ancestral cult. Rituals for a fon are performed by a secret society. This means ordinary Kejom people don't know exactly what happens in the appointment of a fon and his rituals after his death. More information could be gathered about the role of the juju (masquerade) societies, manjong and kwifon. Again, because information from the interviewees covered the involvement of ordinary people, the lack of information about the fon did not have a serious impact on the value of the conclusions.

8.6 Areas for further study and research

This research has opened a vast area of possible other topics that could benefit from further investigation. As already mentioned I had to abandon research about the death celebration organised for a fon. A male (Cameroonian?) researcher with the right contacts might be able to gather this information as the societies involved are male dominated. The role and importance of juju societies, manjong and kwifon and their spiritual significance in the society are all possible topics for further research.

The history of the denominations could be a topic for further investigation. The Presbyterian Church probably has the most extensive information available and the

other denominations have far less. There is also not much information available on the history of the denominations at the local level.

In this thesis I did not delve into memorial services. In some of the denominations they take place sometimes jointly with the death celebration. Some members of the churches organise a memorial service in place of the death celebration. In some of the denominations the memorial service is controversial. It is only the Full Gospel Church that refuses to hold these services. This is an aspect that needs further investigation.

As I already mentioned in the section on limitations, not all the life cycle rituals were investigated. It would be helpful to have a complete picture, as well as a programme of proper discipleship for new believers and church members, in relation to all the other roles of the ancestral cult in the society, especially during life cycle rituals.

It would be useful to do similar research in other language areas. Although it is believed that the situation is quite similar in the different language groups in the North West region, it has not been proved that this is actually the case.

My desire is to see the steps of the ministry approach developed in this thesis implemented in the churches in Kejom Ketingu. If the leadership of only one church would be willing to implement it, this would be an important start. If the approach was used, further research would need to be done in a couple of years to establish whether this approach had proved truly effective and how to improve it.

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Map of Cameroon, Mezam Division, North West region



Map of Cameroon (Breton and Fohitung 2012:131), the area in red is the Mezam division in the North West region, Kejom (or Babanki) is in the North East of the Mezam division

Appendix 2: The questionnaire concerning mortuary rituals

(A) The mourning period – *pfu bighə*

General

1. Why is there an extended period between the burial and the mourning period?
2. How long does the mourning period last?
3. What do people prepare for it?

Sacrifices during the *pfu bighə*

4. Are there specific sacrifices at the beginning/end?
5. What animals are sacrificed?
6. Who provides the animals for the sacrifices?
7. Who performs the sacrifices?
8. Where are the sacrifices performed?
9. In what way are the sacrifices performed?
10. To whom are the sacrifices offered?
11. What is the purpose of the sacrifices?
12. Are prayers offered?
13. If yes, to whom are they offered?
14. What kind of prayers are offered?
15. What do they do with the animals after they have been killed?
16. If it is only a particular group of people, why only them?

17. Is the meat of the sacrifices eaten as part of a special celebration with special significance?

18. If yes, explain.

Libations during the *pfu bighə*

19. What libations are offered?

20. To whom are they offered?

21. Who provides them?

22. Who performs the libations?

23. Where are the libations performed?

24. Is something said when the libation is made?

25. If yes, what is said?

26. Will all the liquid be poured out?

27. Who is allowed to drink it?

28. What is the purpose of the libations?

Special groups at the *pfu bighə*

29. Are there always juju groups that come and dance?

30. Why do juju groups come and dance?

31. What are the obligations of the family towards them when they come?

32. What other groups come?

33. Do the groups come without invitation?

34. If not, who will have invited them?

Shooting of guns at the *pfu bighə*

35. When do they shoot guns?
36. Who shoots them?
37. What is the meaning of shooting guns?

Other rituals at the *pfu bighə*

38. Does a widow/widower need to wear black/white?
39. If yes, why?
40. Are there specific rituals that are performed for the widow/widower?
41. Why do the relatives shave their hair?
42. Why do people sweep the house after the mourning period?
43. What other rituals are performed?

Successful *pfu bighə*

44. What determines the success of the mourning period?

(B) Death celebration – *pfə mugə*

General

45. Why do people organise this death celebration?
46. How long after the death of the person is it held?

Preparation for the *pfə mugə*

47. Who is involved in deciding the date?
48. What does the family need to do in preparation?
49. How do other people contribute?

50. Is it an obligation for others to contribute?

51. What happens on the day before the *pfu mughə*?

Successful *pfu mughə*

52. What determines the success of the *pfu mughə*?

(C) Family meeting related to the *pfu bighə* and the *pfu mughə*

53. Why is a family meeting held at the end?

54. What do people discuss in a family meeting?

55. Who leads the meeting?

56. When will they appoint a new family head if the deceased was one?

57. Does that involve certain rituals?

58. Is this meeting at the end of the *pfu mughə* different from the one at the end of *pfu bighə*?

59. If yes, in what way?

60. What is the role of the family head after the mourning period and the death celebration are over?

(D) Attitudes of family members when people don't want to take part in the *pfu bighə* and the *pfu mughə*

61. When certain family members don't want to participate, what is the attitude of the family towards them?

62. Will the family try to convince/force these people to take part?

63. What would be the long term treatment by the family if they did not attend the death celebration?

(E) Beliefs about the ancestors

64. What are the beliefs about the deceased in the time between death and the funeral?
65. What are the beliefs about the deceased in the time between the funeral and the mourning period?
66. What are the beliefs about the deceased after the mourning period?
67. What do the people believe will happen if the *pfu bighə* is not properly performed?
68. What do the people believe will happen if the *pfu mugħə* is not properly performed?
69. In what way do people believe the ancestors are still involved in the life of the living?
70. In what ways do people believe they can cause the ancestors to be displeased with them?
71. How do people find out that the ancestors are displeased with them?
72. What do people do if they think the ancestors are displeased with them?
73. Will they offer sacrifices?
74. If they offer sacrifices, what sacrifices will be offered?
75. Who will offer the sacrifices?
76. Is there a specific place for offering sacrifices?
77. What do people say when they perform the sacrifices?
78. Do the people believe the ancestors can give blessings?
79. If yes, what kind?
80. Do people offer prayers to them?

81. If yes, what kind of prayers?
82. In what matters do people expect the ancestors to help?
83. In what matters or areas do the people believe ancestors can act?
84. Are there other important events in life where the ancestors are believed to have a role to play?
85. If yes, which ones?
86. How long are ancestors considered ancestors?
87. In what way is the father of the fon considered different from other ancestors?

(F) Beliefs about God

88. What is the name for God?
89. What do people believe about God?
90. Can we pray to God?
91. If yes, when should we pray to him?
92. If the people believe they should not pray to Him, whom should people pray to?
93. Where does God live?
94. Is God concerned about what happens to people here on earth?
95. Can ancestors be mediators between the living and God?
96. Do people believe God is close or distant to us?
97. If he is distant, why is he distant?
98. Do people relate to God in the same way they relate to the ancestors?
99. Can people have a personal relationship with God?

100. If not, why not?

101. What matters are brought to God?

102. Are some of these matters also brought to the ancestors?

Appendix 3: Results of questionnaire concerning mortuary rituals

In some cases people did not answer all the questions, or were not able to answer all the questions, or did not give clear answers, or gave more than one answer when not appropriate. Respondents gave varying amounts of details.

I gathered additional information during the course of the interviews (in addition to that requested by the questions in the questionnaire). This has been included in this presentation. I have indicated the number of respondents giving a particular answer.

The co-ordinated, orderly and more readable presentation of the results of the questionnaire in chapter 3 does not follow the order in the questionnaire. In this appendix I present the summary of the results in the order they are presented in chapter 3.

(F) Questions about beliefs about God

88. What is the name for God?
89. What do people believe about God?
90. Can we pray to God?
91. If yes, when should we pray to him?
92. If the people believe they should not pray to Him, whom should people pray to?
93. Where does God live?
94. Is God concerned about what happens to people here on earth?
95. Can ancestors be mediators between the living and God?
96. Do people believe God is close or distant to us?
97. If he is distant, why is he distant?
98. Do people relate to God in the same way they relate to the ancestors?
99. Can people have a personal relationship with God?
100. If not, why not?
101. What matters are brought to God?
102. Are some of these matters also brought to the ancestors?

Figure A 1: Table summarising the names of and beliefs about God

Name for God (question 88)	<i>Nyìngòṅ</i> (18 respondents), <i>Mbwom</i> (4 respondents)
Beliefs about <i>Nyìngòṅ</i> (q. 89)	He is the creator (8)
	Almighty (2)
	He is a spirit (3)
	We can not see him (4)
	Fon of heaven and earth (1)
	Supreme Being/God (4)
	Frightful (1)
	He is respected (1)
	He is present (1)
	He has great power (1)
	The one who roars and who passes and nothing survives (1)
	He helps/supports through the <i>ti'vèveti'</i> (ancestors) (3)
	He created the <i>vənyìngòṅ</i> to take care of people (3)
	He is supernatural, above the <i>vənyìngòṅ</i> (3)
Can we pray to him? (q. 90)	We cannot pray directly to him (4)
What matters are brought to God? (q. 91)	We can pray to him when there are serious problems (2), or when we are in serious danger (e.g. accident) (1), or thank him (2), e.g. when we have been saved from serious dangers (2)
To whom do people pray? (q. 92)	The <i>vənyìngòṅ</i> (7) and the <i>ti'vèveti'</i> (5) (see also figures A5 and A6; people talk/pray to the ancestors when they perform sacrifices and pour libations)
Where does God	He lives in heaven (3); he is far (3)

live? (q. 93, 96)	
Is God concerned about what happens to people? (q. 94)	He is not involved in the lives of people (2); <i>Nyingoŋ</i> is concerned about people and intervenes through the <i>ti'vəvəti</i> ' and the <i>vənyingòŋ</i> (3); <i>Nyingòŋ</i> passes blessings through the <i>ti'vəvəti'</i> and the <i>vənyingòŋ</i> (3)
Do people relate to God in the same way they relate to the ancestors? (q. 98)	People don't think about/go to <i>Nyingòŋ</i> (4); people's loyalty is to the ancestors (3)
Can we have a personal relationship with him? (q. 99)	We can not have a personal relationship with him (3)
What matters are brought to God? (q. 101)	In very serious problems people pray a warfare prayer referring to God but without using his name directly (1)

People did not have trouble answering the first two questions about *Nyingòŋ*. However, most of the other questions people found difficult to answer which explains the few responses. This may reflect the belief which some people expressed that people don't think about *Nyingòŋ* and that *Nyingòŋ* uses the *ti'vəvəti'* and the *vənyingòŋ* to intervene in people's lives and to give blessings. Questions 97 and 100 were not answered. Overall people had difficulty answering 'why' questions. Answers to question 95 is provided in the next table.

When asking questions about *Nyingòŋ* several people would start talking about the *vənyingòŋ* and family gods (*kəwayn*). The additional information I gathered from some of the interviewees about the *vənyingòŋ* and *kəwayn* is presented in table A2. I added the

beliefs about the ancestors to compare the three. This table also gives answers to some of the questions in the section about God (questions 92, 95).

Figure A2: Table summarising and comparing the different roles of the *vənyìngòŋ*, *tì'vəvəti'* and the *kəwayn* (family gods – pots with two eyes)

<i>Vənyìngòŋ</i>	<i>Tì'vəvəti'</i> (q. 69)	<i>Kəwayn – family gods</i>
Are on earth	Are close (1)	<i>Kəwayn</i> are two pots with eyes painted on it and kept in family compound (8)
Live in trees, forest, water (8)	The well being of people depends on them (3); they see the living while we don't see them (1)	They take care of children (5)
People pray to them (7)	People talk (pray) to them (3) (see also table A5 – sacrifices); people call the name of their father when they need help (2)	
	Are mediating between the living and the gods/God (8); they ask <i>Nyìngòŋ</i> to pass on blessings through them (1)	
They supply the needs of people (3); give blessings (4); protect (3); deliver them from	They have power to bless and cause problems (7)	

problems (2)		
	People's loyalty is to the ancestors (3)	
	They appear to people in dreams to give guidance (6)	

(E) Questions about beliefs about the ancestors (excluding q. 64-68 that are related directly to the mourning period and death celebration)

69. In what way do people believe the ancestors are still involved in the life of the living?
70. In what ways do people believe they can cause the ancestors to be displeased with them?
71. How do people find out that the ancestors are displeased with them?
72. What do people do if they think the ancestors are displeased with them?
73. Will they offer sacrifices?
74. If they offer sacrifices, what sacrifices will be offered?
75. Who will offer the sacrifices?
76. Is there a specific place for offering sacrifices?
77. What do people say when they perform the sacrifices?
78. Do the people believe the ancestors can give blessings?
79. If yes, what kind?
80. Do people offer prayers to them?
81. If yes, what kind of prayers?
82. In what matters do people expect the ancestors to help?
83. In what matters or areas do the people believe ancestors can act?
84. Are there other important events in life where the ancestors are believed to have a role to play?
85. If yes, which ones?
86. How long are ancestors considered ancestors?

Figure A 3: Table summarising answers to questions on the ancestors (column two provides additional information given by respondents)

Ancestors displeased, caused by... (q. 70)	Problems encountered that people believe are caused by the ancestors.	Revealed/ rectified by * (q. 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 77)	Blessings that people believe the ancestors give, areas they can act (q. 78, 79, 82, 83)
no (or incorrect) death celebration (15)	bad luck (4)	divination (9)	children (3)
no regular family meeting (1)	sickness (6)	ancestors will make it clear in a dream (7)	prosperity (3)
Jujus were not well fed during death celebration (1)	no finances/ no property (2)	organise a death celebration (15)	breakthrough (2)
the will of the deceased was changed (1)	death (2)	discuss problem with successor (1)	good harvest (2)
a distant relative's death celebration	barrenness (2); no success in exams (1)	successor will pour libation** (4); will talk (pray) to ancestor (see	health (3)

may not have been held (1)		table A4)	
disunity in the family (1)	accidents (1)	Successor or priest will perform sacrifice of chicken /goat*** (4) (see also table A 4)	sell things easily when going to the market (2)
	curses (1)	-	general blessings (2)
	joblessness (2)		safety when travelling (1)
	no success in business (1)		good marriage (1)
	hardship (1)		
	children are destroyed (1)		

* people gave more than one answer

To q. 70 people gave extensive examples about the kind of problems they believe the ancestors are causing.

** and ***: when people pour libations or give a sacrifice they talk/pray to the ancestors. Also see table A4 which show the results of libations and sacrifices during which people talk/pray to the ancestors.

For q. 76 see Table A4.

Q. 85: due of the length of the questionnaire I did not really go into other aspects in which the ancestors play a role.

Q. 86: few people were able to answer that question; and the few that answered said unlimitedly (3)

Apart from the sacrifices offered at the *pfu bighə*, there are other sacrifices offered to the *ti'vəvəti'* but also to *vənyìngòṅ* (cf q. 73-77 and 80, 81).

Figure A 4: Table summarising other sacrifices/offerings

To whom	Performed by	What	Where	When	Talk/prayer
<i>ti'vəvəti'</i> (ancestors) (7)	family head	mostly libations; in some cases sacrifices (chicken)	poured at the door of the house/shrine in the compound	There are problems; to keep the family united; when they are in need of blessings/protection/assistance; need to confess	“We have come with one single heart.” “Pour blessings on us.” “Take care of us.” “This is me. I have cheated. This is what is what I did wrong. Now this is my own. Open my eyes so that I will see good things again.”
father of fon has special ancestor's status (4)	fon and kwifon	libations	at the graves of late fons	guidance for the whole village once a year	not known; is done in secret
<i>vənyìngòṅ</i> (6)	fəm (kind of juju) (3);	offering of oil/palm	Left at places where they	Things are going wrong and people are in	“We put an end to what you bad gods are doing by

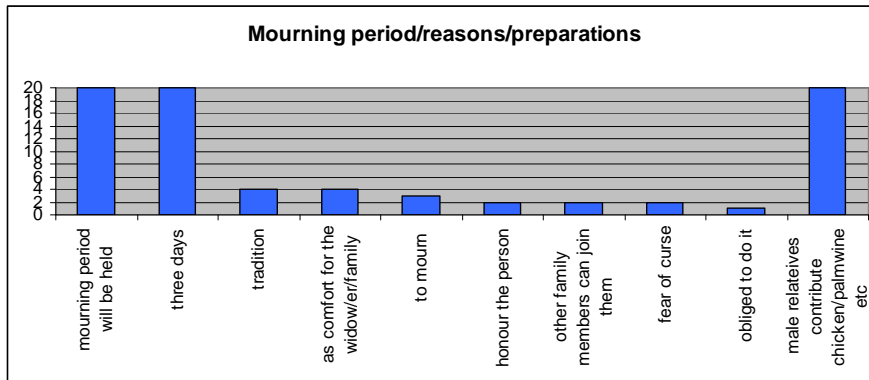
		wine/fish /egusi (seed of a cu- cumber);	believe the gods reside.	need of blessings.	putting this..."
	fəm and kwifon (3)	sacrifice of goats/chi ckens (3)	At the entrances of the village.	At the beginning of rainy season. At the end of the year.	Ask for a good harvest. Block evil from entering the village (done in secret).

(A) Questions about the mourning period – *pfu bighə*

General questions

1. Why is there an extended period between the burial and the mourning period?
2. How long does the mourning period last?
3. What do people prepare for it?

Figure A 5: Graph summarising *pfu bighə* and reasons for the *pfu bighə*



Although not specifically mentioned by people, food and drinks will be prepared and visitors will also provide them. There are no extensive preparations as for the death celebration.

Questions about sacrifices during the *pfu bighə*

4. Are there specific sacrifices at the beginning/end?
5. What animals are sacrificed?
6. Who provides the animals for the sacrifices?
7. Who performs the sacrifices?
8. Where are the sacrifices performed?
9. In what way are the sacrifices performed?
10. To whom are the sacrifices offered?
11. What is the purpose of the sacrifices?
12. Are prayers offered?
13. If yes, to whom are they offered?
14. What kind of prayers are offered?
15. What do they do with the animals after they have been killed?
16. If it is only a particular group of people, why only them?
17. Is the meat of the sacrifices eaten as part of a special celebration with special significance?
18. If yes, explain.

Figure A6: Table summarising sacrifices during the *pfu bighə*

	first sacrifice <i>tsuŋə mbvəse</i> during the <i>pfu bighə</i> (day 1)	second sacrifice <i>tsintə mbvəsə</i> during the <i>pfu bighə</i> (day 3)
what (q. 5)	chicken (20)	chicken (20)
who provides (q. 6)	male relatives/in-laws (20)	male relatives/in-laws (20)
who/where/how (q. 7,8,9)	male relatives tie it over the bed of the deceased on a bamboo pole (20)	The feathers of a life chicken are plucked at the entrance of the kitchen (20)
to whom offered (q. 10)	the deceased	the deceased
purpose (q. 11)	fear of curse/ill luck/death (9); ancestors will leave them in peace (2); inform them you have done everything you were supposed to do (6); it is tradition (2); if you don't tie the fowl you have not 'cried'/mourned his death (1)	To avoid trouble (19); fear of curse (1)
Are prayers offered? What kind, to whom (q. 12, 13, 14) The prayers are more like talking.	The person bringing the fowl calls the name of the deceased and talks (11); call their own name (2); the deceased should go in peace (he should not cause them trouble) (11)	The name of the deceased is called (10) and other ancestors /talk to the deceased and tell him 'I am the one' (3); 'Go in peace' (5); 'This is your fowl' - asks for blessings/ asks him to go in peace (11)
Who kills and eats (q. 15, 16)	Members of red feather society untie/kill and eat (20) (somebody has to be initiated	Killed by men and eaten by the men (20)

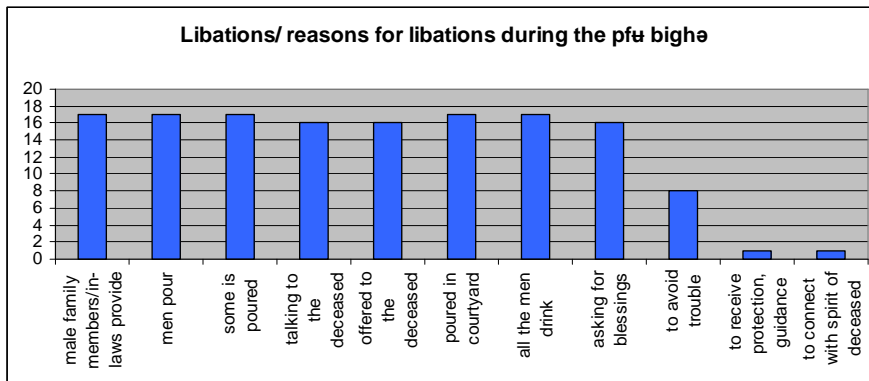
	into this society; people believe if you are not initiated you will get sick if you eat this sacrifice).	
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Q. 17, 18: The meat of the first sacrifice is eaten by a limited number of people so it is not a special celebration. The second sacrifice is part of finishing the *pfu bighə*. All the activities together (including the cleansing activities), cooking of the fufu and libations make it a special event.

Questions about libations during the *pfu bighə*

- 19. What libations are offered?
- 20. To whom are they offered?
- 21. Who provides them?
- 22. Who performs the libations?
- 23. Where are the libations performed?
- 24. Is something said when the libation is made?
- 25. If yes, what is said?
- 26. Will all the liquid be poured out?
- 27. Who is allowed to drink it?
- 28. What is the purpose of the libations?

Figure A7: Graph summarising the libations during the *pfu bighə*



Questions about special groups at the *pfu bighe*

- 29. Are there always juju groups that come and dance?
- 30. Why do juju groups come and dance?
- 31. What are the obligations of the family towards them when they come?
- 32. What other groups come?
- 33. Do the groups come without invitation?
- 34. If not, who will have invited them?

Questions about shooting of guns at the *pfu bighe*

- 35. When do they shoot guns?
- 36. Who shoots them?
- 37. What is the meaning of shooting guns?

Figure A8: Graph summarising special groups and gun firing at the pfu bighe

Visiting groups	Are they invited?	Reason for their coming
(q. 32) Social groups will always come. -11	(q. 33) Uninvited/they will bring food and food will be provided for them.	to express sympathy
Njangi groups (groups that get together to save money, if deceased was a member) (5 *)	Uninvited/they will bring food and food will be provided for them.	to express sympathy
(q. 29) Juju group – only if the family ‘owns’ a juju. They will come and dance at	(q. 31)Uninvited /food will be provided for them.	(q. 30) It is their duty; their dancing is believed to ‘bury’ the person. By dancing they avoid a

night, women are not supposed to see them (10)		curse for the family and for themselves.
(q. 35, 36) Manjong group, if deceased was a member of a manjong group. They do a wake keeping after the <i>pfu bighə</i> is finished – they will shoot their guns early in the morning (12)	Uninvited/food will be provided for them.	It is their duty since one of their members died. Express their sympathy/their mourning because of one them had died.
(q. 35, 36) General gun firing throughout the three days of the <i>pfu bighə</i> * of neighbours and family members (9)	Uninvited/food will be provided by/for them	(q. 37)To alert people around that somebody has died. To express their grief.

Not all the interviewees gave a lot of details about which groups come and visit. Overall there is a constant stream of visitors. Not every body was able to give clear information about juju or manjong groups. Towards the end of 2012 due to various accidents that resulted in deaths gunfiring has been forbidden in the whole country.

Questions about other rituals at the *pfu bighə*

38. Does a widow/widower need to wear black/white?
39. If yes, why?
40. Are there specific rituals that are performed for the widow/widower?
41. Why do the relatives shave their hair?
42. Why do people sweep the house after the cry-die?
43. What other rituals are performed?

Figure A9: Table summarising cleansing rituals during and at the end of the *pfu bighə*.

Ritual	Reason
(q. 40) days 1-3: Widow/er sits separate from everybody else. Only widows/ers communicate with him or her (20)	There is fear of contamination of death /she is saying good-bye to the deceased/she needs to rest
(q. 42) day 3: Sweep all the houses/compound (12)	The compound is purified from death.
(q. 43) day 3: Bathing (16)	The contamination of death is washed off.
(q. 41) day 3: Shaving (15) This practice is changing, some shave a small part of their hair/ or not at all -1	It is a sign of mourning, every memory is cleaned off. The family starts a new phase in life without the person. If someone does not want to shave he/she does not respect the person or knows the cause of his death.
(q. 43) day 3 Washing ritual with herbalist (11) (ritual will be repeated after one month)	Death is washed off.
(q. 38) day 3: Change dress/wear black /white (11)	It is a sign of mourning.
After about a month show widow how to farm again (11) (a female group of <i>jujus (f#nbwuin)</i> show her how to farm) (2)	The widow can farm again/no fear of contamination anymore.
Show widow how to cook again (5)	The widow can cook again/no fear of contamination anymore.

Rituals are presented in chronological order (which is different from the order of the questions in the questionnaire). Not every ritual was mentioned by everybody.

Questions about successful *pfu bighə*

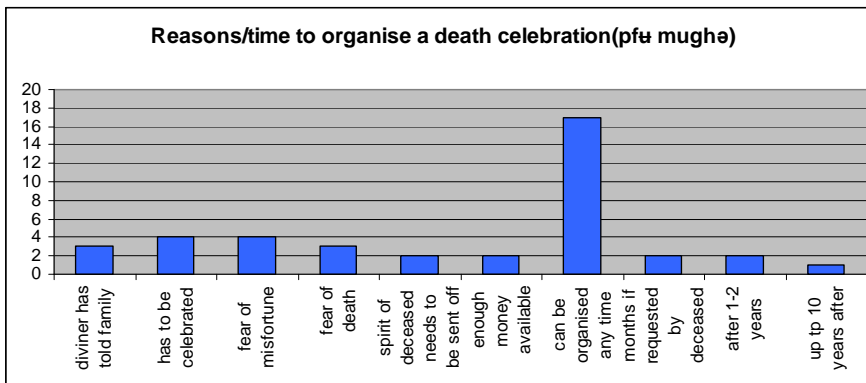
44. What is determines the success of the bad cry-die? (results combined with the *pfu mughə* - see below).

(B) Questions about death celebration – *pfu mughə*

General

- 45. Why do people organise this cry-die?
- 46. How long after the death of the person is it held?

Figure A10: Graph summarising time and reasons for organising a death celebration

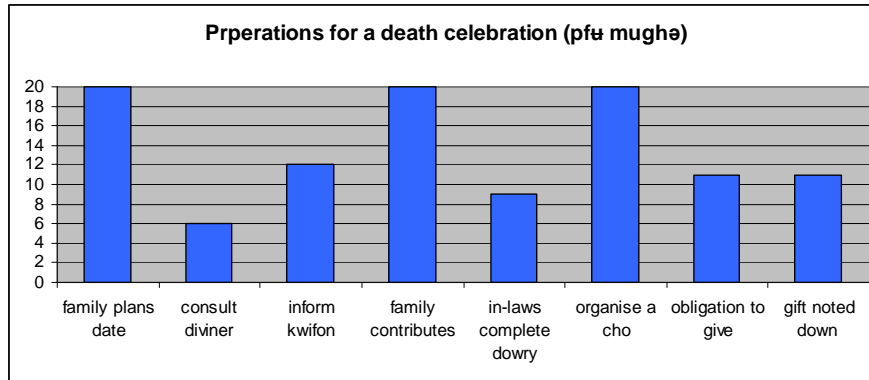


Questions about preparation for the *pfu mughə*

- 47. Who is involved in deciding the date?
- 48. What does the family need to do in preparation?
- 49. How do other people contribute?
- 50. Is it an obligation for others to contribute?

51. What happens on the day before the *pfu mughə*?

Figure A11: Graph summarising the preparations for a death celebration (*pfu mughə*)



NB Although not everybody mentioned that the people are obliged to contribute the obligation is there. If people have received gifts during death celebrations they are supposed to give back what they previously received.

Figure A12: Table summarising the visiting groups and other events of a death celebration

Events and Visiting groups during the <i>pfu mughə</i>	Invited by
Kwifon opens the <i>pfu mughə</i> when it concerns a man/accompanied with gun firing (16)	Family / Family provides food/palmwine/money. Day after they send more gifts (pigs/fowls/palmwine/oil/salt).
<i>Agə</i> opens when it concerns the celebration of a woman (9)	family
Juju dances (20)	Invited by relatives (married women can invite them through their husbands). Family needs to provide a fowl before they dance/food and

	drinks.
Manjong dances/gun firing (20)	Invited by male relatives. Goats/food are provided for them.
Installation successor (18)	

Question about successful *pfu mughə*

52. What determines the success of the *pfu mughə*?

Figure A13: Table summarising a successful *pfu bighə* and *pfu mughə*

Successful <i>pfu bighə</i> (q. 44)	Successful <i>pfu mughə</i> (q. 52)
There was enough food and drinks (7)	There was enough food and drinks (4)
No accidents during gun firing happened (4)	No accidents with gun firing (6)
Strangers were well received (1)	Successful installation of the successor (6)
No disunity in the family (3)	They have done all they were supposed to do (2)
All the family members have done what was expected of them (1)	No disunity in the family (2)

(C) Questions about family meeting related to the *pfu bighə* and the *pfu mughə*

53 Why is a family meeting held at the end?

54. What do people discuss in a family meeting?

55. Who leads the meeting?

56. When will they appoint a new family head if the deceased was one?

57. Does that involve certain rituals?

58. Is this meeting at the end of the *pfu mughe* different from the one at the end of *pfu bighe*?

59. If yes, in what way?

60. What is the role of the family head after both cry-dies are over?

Questions 56 and 57 are discussed in table A15

*Table A14: Table summarising issues taken care of during family meeting after the *pfu bighe**

Family meeting after the <i>pfu bighe</i>
(q. 55, 58) Lead by family head if deceased is his brother or son. The meetings after the <i>pfu mughe</i> is different; it is mostly used for the installation of the successor.
(q. 53, 54) To discuss the death of the person who died, the possible cause of the death is discussed (2)
Discuss when to hold the <i>pfu mughe</i> (5)
If there are orphans the family will decide who will take care of them (2)
Divide money and property of the deceased (3)
How to deal with the debts of the deceased if he had any, or if people were owing him money (1)
Discuss how people will manage the family (2)
Share expenses (1)
Make sure what things to do to avoid the deceased from coming back (1)
Share a last meal together (1)
(q. 56, 57) Discuss about a successor (1) who will be installed during the <i>pfu mughe</i> at the end where certain rituals take place.

Figure A15: Table summarising installation of successor and role of a successor

Installation of successor during family meeting at the end of <i>pfu mughe</i>	Roles of a successor (Qn 60)*
Oldest daughter of deceased may be the one to announce who the father has chosen as his successor (7)	He is involved in all family affairs, makes sure the family stays united (6); he needs to solve family problems (3)
Remove his clothes, dress him in traditional way with a loincloth (9) and anoint with camwood (18)	Gives approval when his sisters want to marry (1)
His father's cup used for libation is given to him (7)	He is responsible for performing traditions (2)
Given other possessions of his deceased father (cap/seat/bag etc) (11)	He is responsible for libations (6)
Juju presents him to people outside (6)	He is responsible for performing sacrifices (2)
Dancing, shouting, shooting of guns (7)	If relatives have financial problems he provides help (1)
Relatives will honour him, he will pour palm wine in his cup, each relative will drink. It is like a blessing (7)	He organises regular family meetings (2)
	He is responsible for any debts or loans his father had (2)
	He is responsible for selling family land if family decides to sell (2)
	If father was a polygamist, he will be responsible to provide for the widows, if there were young wives he is supposed to marry those (1)

People gave varying amount of details about the installation of the successor.

* some people gave more than one answer.

(D) Questions about attitudes of family members when people don't want to take part in the *pfu bighə* and the *pfu mughə*

61. When certain family members don't want to participate, what is the attitude of the family towards them?

62. Will the family try to convince/force these people to take part?

63. What would be the long term treatment by the family if they did not attend the cry-dies?

Figure A16: Table summarising attitudes of family members when people don't want to take part in rituals

(q. 61) Positive reactions of the family	Negative reactions
(q. 62) People will not be forced (5)	Relatives will (try to) force the person to take part (8)
The fon has told people not to force anybody to take part (4)	Family will look at the person as an outcast, family unity is very important, (so the person nothing wanting to take part causes disunity) (2)
	(q. 62) The person will be threatened (1)
	(q. 62) People want their debts paid back (the contribution during the <i>cho</i> is considered as a debt) (people can even be taken to court) (1)
	People will believe the ancestors will haunt him/her (2)
	Family is waiting to see what will happen with the person, fear of

	curse/bad luck (3)
	(q. 62-63) Family will disown the person (1)

Not many very long term treatments were mentioned. It seems that initially there is often a negative reaction which may wear off later. People may observe the person for a while to see if there is a curse following him/her.

(E) Questions about beliefs about the ancestors (related to the mourning period and death celebration)

- 64. What are the beliefs about the deceased in the time between death and the funeral?
- 65. What are the beliefs about the deceased in the time between the funeral and the mourning period?
- 66. What are the beliefs about the deceased after the mourning period?
- 67. What do the people believe will happen if the *pfu bighə* is not properly performed?
- 68. What do the people believe will happen if the *pfu mugə* is not properly performed?

Figure A17: Table summarising the beliefs where the soul of the deceased is after the funeral, the *pfu bighə* and the *pfu mugə*

(q. 65) after funeral	(q. 66) after <i>pfu bighə</i>	after <i>pfu mugə</i>
<i>Ti'vəvəti'</i> has not yet crossed the water (1)	has not crossed over (1)	has crossed over (2)
They are around (6)	still roaming around (6)	no longer around (2)
They are still living (1)	still living (1)	In the place where the dead are living (1)
They are involved in the lives of the living (1)	They are involved with the living (1)	gone (closer) to God (2)
His ghost can come	You can call your father's	Have been escorted to

back and talk and people will hear (1)	name and he will come and help or will protect you (2)	God's kingdom (1)
Has been sent out of the house but can disturb (1)	People see <i>ti'vəvəti'</i> in visions or dreams (5)	Ancestor is free from stress (1)
Is in between the living and the dead (1)	They give blessings/protect (5)	The spirit of the ancestor will not trouble people anymore, only give blessings (1)
	(q. 67, 68) If death celebration was not (properly) performed they will cause problems (16)	

The answer to q. 64 is the same as that of q. 65.

Appendix 4: Questionnaire for church members concerning mortuary rituals

Age..... Male /Female

How long have you been a member of the church?.....

Are you a Kejom speaker? If not, where do you come from?
.....

Circle a Yes or No, or in the multi-choice section circle the correct answer – you may choose more than one answer.

PART 1

1. When a family member has died in your compound will there be a three-day mourning period after the funeral? yes no

If you answered Yes to question 1, in which of the following activities (see questions 2-8) will you take part during the mourning period?

2. I/my husband will take part in tying a chicken. yes no

3. At the end of the mourning period I/my husband will take part in plucking a chicken. yes no

4. If you/your husband take(s) part in plucking the chicken will you/he call the name of the deceased and other family members and ask them for blessings? yes no

5. If you/your husband take(s) part in pouring palm wine will you/he call the name of the deceased and other family members who have died? yes no

6. I will shave my hair. yes no

7. When the herbalist brings some medicine mixed with water I will take part in washing death off myself. yes no

8. Is it considered important by your family members that you take part in all the activities (tying a chicken, pouring wine, etc.)?
- (a) Yes, because if we don't we will be afraid that the ancestors will not be happy and cause misfortune.
 - (b) Yes, because it is our tradition to do all these practices.
 - (c) No, every member of the family can decide what he/she wants to do.

9. How will your family remember a relative who has died?

- (a) They will organise a death celebration only.
- (b) There will be a memorial service and a death celebration.
- (c) There will only be a memorial service.
- (d) There will be neither.

Questions 10-15 apply if your family holds death celebrations.

10. If your family holds a death celebration, when will it be held?

- (a) When there has been trouble in the family and the diviner has told us we need to organise one.
- (b) When the family has decided that there is enough money.
- (c) Other, namely.....

11. Will you take part in the death celebration? yes no

12. Together with the family will you consult a diviner about the best date to organise the death celebration? yes no

13. Will you invite a juju groups to come and dance? yes no

14. Do you believe as a result of the death celebration that the spirit of the deceased is sent off and will not trouble the family any more? yes no

libations, talking/praying to ancestors, organising a mourning period and death celebrations?

- (a) It is very important as I would like to follow God's regulations in every aspect of my life.
- (b) I don't know what the Bible says about these things but would want to follow the Bible.
- (c) It is important, but it is also important to follow our traditions.
- (d) Other, namely.....

22. What do you believe the Bible says about looking for solutions to our problems?

- (a) The Bible tells us to trust God alone. If possible give Scripture.....
- (b) The Bible tells us to we can use whatever means to solve our problems. If possible give Scripture.....
- (c) I don't know.
- (d) Other, namely.....

23. What do you believe happens when somebody dies?

- (a) The person will become an ancestor when the right rituals have taken place.
- (b) A believer will go to heaven and an unbeliever will go to hell.

24. Do you believe God is far away? yes no

25. Do you believe the ancestors are close? yes no

26. Do you believe God is close and so we can pray directly to him? yes no

27. According to you does the Bible approve of praying/talking to ancestors?

- (a) No, the Bible tells us we should pray to God alone.
- (b) I don't know.

(c) Yes, the Israelites also referred to their forefathers.

(d) Other, namely.....

28. According to you does the Bible approve of divination?

(a) Divination is the same as asking God for guidance. If possible give Scripture.....

(b) No, the Bible tells us we need to depend on God for guidance. If possible give Scripture.....

(c) I don't know.

(d) Other, namely.....

29. According to you what does the Bible tell us about sacrifices?

(a) I don't know.

(b) In the Old Testament sacrifices were held, so it is acceptable to perform sacrifices.

(c) Because of Jesus' death on the cross no sacrifices are needed anymore.

(d) Other, namely.....

PART 3

30. What does the pastor/leaders in your church advise you when there are difficulties in your family and you want to go to a diviner to see if he can diagnose the cause?

(a) They will encourage us to trust God for a solution or the strength to endure the difficulty because God is more powerful than any ancestor and does not need or use intermediaries like ancestors.

(b) They will encourage us to trust God, but if we go to a diviner they will not say anything.

(c) Other, namely.....

31. Are you convinced when the pastor says that God is more powerful than the ancestors?

(a) Yes, I am.

(b) Most of the time I am, but when we face difficulties I am afraid and will also go to a diviner and do what he tells me.

(c) No I am not.

(d) Other, namely.....

32. What will the pastor advise you when the family wants to you to be involved in performing sacrifices during the mourning period?

(a) He will tell us not to perform sacrifices, but he does not tell us why.

(b) He will tell us that because of Jesus' death on the cross there is no need to perform sacrifices anymore.

(c) He will tell us that nowhere in Scripture are we told to sacrifice or give offerings to any ancestor.

(d) Other, namely.....

33. What will the pastor advise you when the family wants to organise a death celebration?

(a) He will tell us there is no need to organise a death celebration as the deceased cannot harm or bless us.

(b) He will not say anything.

(c) He will advise us not to organise one as it is not biblical and will pray with us and encourage us to make this decision.

(d) Other, namely.....

34. Will you listen to the advice of the pastor/leaders of the church if he is against

death celebrations ?

- (a) I usually give in to our family as they put a lot of pressure on me.
- (b) Yes, I know it is more important to please God than our family.
- (c) Other, namely.....

35. Does the pastor teach from Scripture concerning performing sacrifices, ancestral cult and taking part in mourning and death celebrations?

- (a) Yes he teaches us regularly and it is that Scripture does not allow for these.
- (b) He tells us we should not take part in them but he doesn't teach us from Scripture why.
- (c) No he doesn't teach us.
- (d) Other, namely.....

36. How does the church help new believers who are still involved in unbiblical traditional practices like sacrifices, taking part in death celebrations?

- (a) They have special discipleship meetings with in which they teach them from Scripture.
- (b) They are invited to attend the regular meetings in church, but nothing else is done to help them.
- (c) Other, namely.....

Appendix 5: Questionnaire for pastors/priest concerning mortuary rituals

Denomination.....

Location of the church.....

Are you a Kejom speaker?.....If not, where do you come from?.....

How long have you pastored this church?.....

Choose an answer (you may choose more than one answer).

1. Are you aware of the traditional practices that happen during the mourning period and death celebrations in the Kejom community?

(a) Yes, I am a Kejom speaker.

(b) More or less; although I am not a Kejom speaker the practices seem similar to those in my own community.

(c) Other, namely.....

2. In which of the following practices are any of your church members involved (as far as you are aware)?

(a) Sacrificing chickens.

(b) Pouring libations.

(c) Calling the names of the deceased and other family members and asking or blessings from them.

(d) Asking a herbalist to come and perform a cleansing ceremony at the end of a mourning period.

(e) Shaving at the end of a mourning period.

(f) Calling on diviners when there are difficulties like illness, financial problems and to determine what will be the best date to hold a death celebration etc.

(g) Organising death celebrations.

(h) Attending death celebrations.

3. What does the denomination teach concerning involvement in the ancestral cult? (The belief that ancestors are still involved in the life of the living, calling on the ancestors for intervention in times of trouble and asking for blessings).

(a) The denomination believes this is unbiblical and needs to be rejected.

(b) People should call on God; however, the church needs to recognize the cult of the ancestors, otherwise people will practice it in secret.

(c) Other, namely.....

4. When you realise that some of your members are involved in some of the above mentioned practices what do you do?

(a) I visit them and teach them from Scripture to help them understand they are not biblical.

(b) I attend the activities and use it as an opportunity to preach the gospel.

(c) I don't say anything.

(d) Other, namely.....

5. Does the denomination you represent have written guidelines on what to do when members of the church are involved in the ancestral cult?

(a) No they don't have anything written up.

(b) Yes there are written guidelines, namely.....

(c) The denominational church leaders have given us oral guidelines, namely.....

.....

(d) Other, namely.....

6. If one of your church members is pressurised by family members to take part in some of the above mentioned activities how do you advise him/her?

(a) Although it is important to be united with the family, I would encourage him/her from Scripture not to give in.

(b) I will allow the person to take his/her own decision.

(c) Other, namely.....

7. How do you advise members that are passing through difficulties and may be tempted to go to a diviner and perform sacrifices if required, etc.

(a) I will encourage the person with relevant Scriptures (like

(b) I will allow him/her to make up his/her mind and do what is thought best.

(c) Other, namely.....

8. What does your denomination ask you to do in the case where a member is openly involved in the above-mentioned practices?

(a) Nothing

(b) We are asked to take time to disciple the member and help him/her understand what Scripture teaches about these practices

(c) We are asked to warn them to not be involved in these practices, and if they persist to put them under church discipline.

(d) Other, namely.....

9. Do you regularly take time to teach your congregations concerning death and life after death?

(a) No I don't regularly do that.

(b) Yes, often after a church member dies I take time to teach people there is life after

death and that we need to take a decision to accept and follow Christ so that when we die we go to be with him and not go to hell.

(c) Other, namely.....

10. What do you teach people concerning calling on ancestors and asking for blessings like protection, healing, etc?

(a) I use relevant Scriptures (like.....) to make clear that we need to call on God as he is close and we can go to him at any time.

(b) I use relevant Scriptures (like.....) to make clear that the ancestors probably cannot hear us and certainly cannot answer prayers.

(c) Other, namely.....

11. What do you teach people concerning divination?

(a) I use relevant Scriptures (like.....) to teach them that divination is unbiblical.

(b) I use relevant Scriptures (like.....) to make clear that we should only call on God for guidance and also seek guidance from his Word.

(c) I don't give any particular teaching.

(d) Other, namely.....

12. What do you teach concerning sacrifices?

(a) Nothing

(b) Because of Jesus' death on the cross no sacrifices are needed anymore to be offered to God.

(c) Sacrifices were not be made to ancestors in the Bible and therefore should not be offered to them today.

(d) Other, namely.....

13. What do you teach to convince the members of the church that God is more powerful than the ancestors?

(a) I use relevant Scriptures (like.....) to show them that they do not need to fear them if they don't perform sacrifices, organise death celebrations etc.

(b) I teach them that the ancestors are either in heaven or hell and that it is therefore demons that are active in the ancestral cult and that they do not need to fear demons as God is more powerful than them.

(c) We have special discipleship classes for new members and teach them the difference between the beliefs of our people with the beliefs from the Bible.

(d) Other, namely.....

Appendix 6: A model of discipleship for evangelical churches in Africa (Light 2012:383-388)

The following model emerges from and builds on all the material in Chapters 2-6. It is presented in terms of a number of principles and steps that together form the heart and framework of a discipleship model aimed at producing mature, dynamic Christians in Africa resistant to syncretism.

6.1 Evangelistic methods should be compatible with a high view of Scripture, sin, the role of the Holy Spirit, the new birth in conversion, and the fact that the similarities between Christianity and ATR make profession of faith easy under pressure from the evangelist, especially as he/she is an authority figure, especially if elderly, and because he/she is the equivalent to the ATR authoritative specialist practitioners. This will help prevent pseudo conversions, the subjects of which cannot be successfully discipled as they are still unconverted, no matter how outwardly sympathetic to the Christian faith they might appear to be. Precious time is wasted and crushing disappointments are suffered when trying to disciple these people. It needs to be remembered that a supernatural new birth is what makes the acceptance of, and enculturation in, the Christian worldview and lifestyle possible. The new birth is synonymous with one's natural birth from which point one's culture is easily learnt and permanently embraced. I found that those of my students who clearly had experienced spiritual new birth, most successfully made the transition to the Christian worldview. However, I observed that this does not mean there will be no future temptation to syncretism (cf Thembani above). Every possible use of African religion, idioms, and culture (and language) should be used where necessary to facilitate understanding of the Gospel. This should apply throughout the discipleship process. However, cultural aids in explaining Christian doctrine should be illustrative helps and not defining of doctrinal meaning.

6.2 All training should, as far as possible, take into account whether the converts are literate or still at the oral or functionally illiterate stage, and be adapted accordingly.

However, the goal will always be the Bible in the convert's language and literacy where not yet present.

6.3A study of the first century church to show that conversion to Christ did not mean Gentiles had to convert to Hebrew culture. The implication should be stressed, namely that African converts need not and should not try to convert to Western or any other culture.

6.4A study to show how the new Christian identity is the overriding identity, based on the new humanity in Christ, but that it fuses with the cultural identity. Syncretism is dealt with in stages later in the discipleship process.

6.5 Demonstrate and stress that because one's identity is linked directly to one's culture, it is harmful to African identity if an African convert does not continue to live within his/her African culture. Therefore converts must not be encouraged to attempt to become Westerners.

6.6 Show that a narrower and broader definition of 'African' is necessary in order to avoid aspects of ATR incompatible with Christianity, but that this strengthens rather than weakens African identity because the Gospel purifies and enriches one's humanity and culture. It needs to be remembered that a united, unconfused and strong primary (cultural) identity means self-acceptance, self-confidence, self-respect, and self-pride (not sinful pride), which are necessary for significant personal growth (physical, mental, spiritual, psychological, and in one's career or vocation) which are prerequisites for broad-based social and economic development. It needs to be emphasized, therefore, that an African convert is to be unashamedly and proudly African.

6.7A study of key Christian doctrines, including the spirit world, and ATR in order to appreciate the similarities and differences between these Christian doctrines and equivalent or related areas in ATR. Some parts of this study are to receive more detailed coverage later in the discipleship programme. Christianity is to be presented as variously correction, continuation, fulfilment, interpretation, and advancement of ATR. Here the difference between general and special revelation needs to be

explained, including the limitations of the former, especially when handled by fallen human beings. ATR is viewed by evangelicals as falling into the former and Christianity into the latter.

6.8 A study of how the Gospel relates to all areas of life as ATR does. It needs stressing that no part of life is to be left untouched by the Christian faith – Christ is Lord of all.

6.9 Presentation of the meaning of syncretism and why it is to be avoided.

6.10 A study of worldview and culture and how they relate to each other. This study should include the role of culture (every culture serves the same purpose), why there are so many cultures (e.g. different climates, geographical regions, and worldviews), and that all cultures have good and bad elements.

6.11 A consideration of the need to change the parts of the African worldview that clashes with Christianity's worldview, as understood by evangelicals, in order to bring about the necessary long-term changes in the culture to avoid syncretism.

6.12 A study and critique of modernism, postmodernism (if relevant), and religious pluralism.

6.13 A study of how the Bible explains illness and disease (a study of so-called misfortune comes later). This should cover all possible sources/causes, reasons/purposes and treatments. This should also deal with demonic-induced illness, e.g. through curses. Failure to provide this important teaching would open the door to using ATR methods of diagnosis and treatment not permitted by Christianity.

6.14 A more detailed study of the ancestors from both an ATR and Christian perspective. In African life the ancestors are highly significant and therefore dare not be ignored in discipleship in evangelical churches. Here, perhaps more than in any other area of ATR, it needs to be shown that Christianity corrects, advances and fulfils ATR. White evangelical pastors in African churches, or white leaders who visit Africa occasionally for ministry, have generally failed in this area. This failure is the greatest cause of syncretism.

- 6.15 Sensitive handling of genuine Christians in evangelical African churches when they return (usually secretly and occasionally) to traditional beliefs and practices incompatible with Christianity. A wise, caring, and patient pastoral approach is the most helpful. This pastoral ministry should take cognition of the weak and strong Christian at the Corinthian church in connection with eating meat offered to idols, and also Philippians 3:15-16. In both these approaches ancestral beliefs are not treated as sin, but rather as immaturity to be overcome. In some cases it might be thought necessary to consider serious and repeated syncretism as sin and handled accordingly.
- 6.16 Teach and demonstrate from a Christian perspective how to deal with demonic attacks, so that resorting to traditional methods contrary to Christianity is seen as unnecessary and also as out of bounds for the evangelical. White leaders are usually inexperienced here, so the help of an African pastor in demonstrating spiritual warfare is necessary. Failure here means converts will feel compelled to resort to traditional methods of deliverance and protection. This area has been most neglected by white leaders in African churches, colleges and seminaries, which has precipitated syncretism. Much can be learned from the AICs about spiritual warfare in the African context.
- 6.17 A study of how to biblically explain so-called bad luck and misfortune (e.g. unemployment, family problems, infertility, retrenchment, liquidation, poverty, war, death and other similar problems). Since in ATR there is always an ultimate cause in the spirit world for these experiences, it is important, as with illness, to have biblical answers concerning them, otherwise there will be temptation to syncretism.
- 6.18 A presentation on how evangelicals in Africa and in the first-world can minister to each other so that both groups are spiritually edified and genuine material needs met without creating long-term dependency. It is vital to break the belief that Western Christians do not need the reciprocal ministry of African Christians which has held back the development of Christian maturity in the Church in Africa.

6.19 A study of holistic ministry. The Gospel ministers to the whole person in his/her whole context and to the whole world and therefore good discipleship should lead to such ministry, which often will involve countering unrighteousness and injustice in society or in government. This will include instilling the need for the church to provide top quality Christians for management and leadership in government and the civil service. In Africa where there are so many physical needs due to poverty, joblessness, war, no electricity, inadequate housing and medical care, crime, and many other problems, evangelicals need to discover how Christianity is to be made relevant in such situations. Evangelicals need to train converts in holistic ministry, not just in biblical knowledge and church fellowship. This training should include missions (local and worldwide).

6.20 A study and application of a theology of work and development. For instance, it would include the biblical teaching that God rebukes the sin of laziness because it undermines the value of work, takes away human dignity, and leads to poverty. Such a theology is necessary to understand work and development in relation to God's creation ordinance – what God expects one's work to achieve and where one's natural and spiritual gifts and wider personal development fit in. A theology of work and development is the only catalyst to generate hope in a context of poverty and hopelessness. A theology of development will speak to the matter of entitlement and human rights and responsibilities.

6.21 Somewhere in the discipleship process, or in different places throughout the process, the importance needs to be noted of seeing Africa's past and present with new eyes in order to plot the way to a brighter future. Steps 1-20 will, however, automatically provide a foundation for a better future for Africa.

The above twenty-one principles and action steps have emerged from the Chapters of this book. Together they constitute a model for discipleship of converts, or the framework for such a model, in African evangelical churches. The model seems formidable. The sheer size of the needs of Christians and non-Christians in Africa requires that this model and other supplementary models for the evangelical churches in Africa be taken seriously and applied, even if initially only in limited and stumbling ways.

It is my hope that some qualified, willing and visionary leaders in the evangelical community in Africa will take up the challenge of creating a five-year, graded discipleship programme built on this new model and other available models. Such a course would facilitate a more relevant and successful discipleship of converts. Africa waits and has waited too long!

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