

Influence of Luo Traditional Religion on African Israel Nineveh Church in Alego Usonga Constituency, Kenya

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Abstract: In order to adequately show the influence of African Traditional Religion in Christianity, a keen ecclesiastic history will reveal the continued interaction with each other in interesting ways since arrival of European missionaries. Some Luo Christians no longer adhere to many traditional practices like starting a home, where a cock and an axe had to be carried by the father and his first-born boy. African Israel Nineveh Church faithful adhere to this practice to date, and does not recognize a home that did not go through this ritual. Even with the introduction of Christianity, the adherence of Africans to Christian beliefs has been hard to estimate, due to syncretism with Christianity and other religious movements in Africa. Research objectives were to analyze the traditional Luo beliefs and practices found in the church, analyze the church doctrines concerning syncretism in church and to find out how church addresses the problem of syncretism among its adherents. It had questions like what were the traditional Luo beliefs and practices found in Church? What were the church doctrines concerning syncretism in church? How did church address the problem of syncretism among its adherents? The study was justified on the basis that Since a larger percentage of the indigenous population in Africa and particularly Kenya are converts to Christianity, it is the indigenous beliefs and values which mainly, served as the mediation of their religious and cultural expression. The study mainly focused on AINC of Alego Usonga region of Siaya county with 18 churches from Boro, Karemo and Uranga regions. The study was guided by Social Interaction Theory which relied on assumption that individuals in the society had different beliefs that influenced their relations of forms of social interactions, the various beliefs in societies contributed to the emergence of different forms of religious institutions defined by their beliefs and practices. . The population for this study comprised of 2,567 registered members in the region which gives a sample size of 331 according to Morgan's table. Piloting was done in three churches to confirm the reliability of the tools. Data was collected from leaders, youths and the adherents using oral interviews, focus group discussions and observation. The data collected was analyzed using thematic and content analysis. Researcher went through other challenges such as finances, use of other tools, use of Kwalitan for analysis, follow up of leaders and time management which were eventually solved. In the findings on the first objective, the study found out that as a church, one of the striking features of the Luo traditional practices at the birth of a child, which is also being practiced in the African Israel Nineveh Church, is organizing ceremonies and festivities for a new-born child. The study also found out that AINC accepted and accommodated polygamy among its members as indicated by majority of the respondents, with only a small group opposing the practice. It was also discovered that many other Luo cultural practices are embedded in and mixed with the church doctrines. The blending is harmonious and tends to guarantee a promising, meaningful, respectful spiritual destiny and a bright future to this church community. The above observations are good confirmations of our statement of the problem, justification and the theoretical framework. The study suggests that further study should be done on effects of Luo traditions on the beliefs and practices in church on the spiritual growth of the church members, similar research to be done in other ethnic settings and areas before generalization is made. Finally, the study suggests a thorough study of Luo traditions that are still useful and relevant to the modern life of the faithful and which do not go against the teachings of the gospel. Hence enculturation is a key aspect of the future and spiritual growth of AINC that requires a serious study.

Date of Submission: 26-08-2017

Date of acceptance: 27-09-2017

ACRONYMS/ABBREVIATIONS

AACC	:	All Africa Council of Churches
ACK	:	Anglican Church of Kenya
AIC	:	African Independent Churches

AINC	:	African Israel Nineveh Church.
ATR	:	African Traditional Religion
BCE	:	Before Christian era
FAM	:	Friends African Mission
FTR	:	Functionalist Theory of Religion
GoK	:	Government of Kenya
JOUST	:	Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology
NEREMO	:	New Religious Movements
NIV	:	New International Version
OAIC	:	Organization of African Instituted Church.
PAG	:	Pentecostal Assemblies of God.
RCC	:	Roman Catholic Church
SIT	:	Social Interaction Theory

I. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

A keen examination and ecclesiastic history will reveal that African Traditional Religion have a future since religion and culture are almost considered to be one. The concept of Christianity was introduced to East Africa in the 1840s, but it was the work of David Livingstone that led to intense missionary efforts. David's evangelistic program was to have the Central and East African interior penetrated along the waterways and lakes by missionaries, as well as what Europeans considered as upright and godly settlers who were to give Africans an insight into what was referred to as superior commercial, social system and Christian morality by adopting European religion (Oliver, 1965).

Evidently, it is realized that the scramble for Africa was religious as well as a political one, paralleling the imperial partition of the continent. A variety of European and American missionary groups actually competed intensely to divide and occupy Africa for their respective churches as it can be generally realized and Kenya in particular. The initial result of this religious scramble was the establishment of hundreds of mission stations which were manned by the Europeans. By the late 1890s people again saw the result of mission energies along Uganda Railway and the new colonial administration resulting in the opening up the previously inaccessible interior of Kenya (Strayer, 1978).

During the time when the British took over the administration of the Uganda Protectorate in 1894, the Eastern Province of Uganda including Luhya-land and the rest of Kavirondo came under their influence. The inception, evangelization and missionary activities of Christianity in these traditional areas in Kenya resulted in the conversions of the indigenous people mainly, from African Traditional Religion having been referred to as ATR to Christianity. The religious beliefs, practices of Christian religion are believed to have significantly impacted on the religious and cultural life of the traditional communities but the indigenous religious beliefs and cultural values served both as the mediation of expressions for indigenous Christians in local areas and also shaped, to a great extent, the forms of Christianity that developed as well as the relationships between members of the diverse religious groups in different areas (Aquah, 2011). Christianity that exists in Kenya today like in any other part of Africa, is therefore characterized by rapid multiplicity of Christian denominations commonly known as African Independent Churches (Strayer, 1978). This realization led to emergence of African Independent Churches, religious and cultural pluralism has been a prominent feature in most parts of Africa in general but Kenya in particular. The happening of such pluralistic experience has presented opportunities as well as challenges, particularly, for Christian religious traditions and cultures in Africa in general and

Kenya in particular. Evidently, Thomas stated in his book that "one of the most fascinating aspects of our history is the richness and varieties of its religious traditions". This has tremendous influence on human relations in view of the resurgence of religion and its growing role in both public and private life of Africans (Thomas, 1985). According to Gill (1997), there are some African traditional societies which could include Luo community that decided to formalize syncretism in their religious set up with reasons best known to them. These communities simply surrender their traditional beliefs in order to become Christians for different reasons: As a result, it is realized that many Africans had joined Christianity mainly for material gains other than religious purposes. It was therefore noted that the missionaries themselves reported that the adoption to the European goods imported by the missionaries had contributed to the increased number of Africans who were converted to Christianity like the Basotho community (Eldredge, 1993).

Eventually it was noted that African Traditional Religion allowed a person to practice both Christianity and its religion. Therefore one is free to be baptized, attend church services, and take part in the sacraments of the church, while still practicing African Traditional Religion. It is not necessary for an African to hold a tightly structured and logical belief system in order to function in their everyday life. Their theology is what they act

out, not what they profess to believe (Cox, 2008; Manyeli & Machobane, 2001). The study therefore investigated how the Church under study addressed the problem of Syncretism among members.

1.1.1 African Religious Beliefs and Concepts

Introduction The African traditional religious belief among many other definitions means that, human beings do not live in this world alone; there is a sense of human beings close relationship with nature. Humanity, animals and plants have their own existence and place in the universe as independent parts of a whole (Turaki, 1999).

According to Mbiti (1968), it is religion more than anything else that shapes the African worldview and participation in social life (Mbiti, 1968). There are also spiritual beings that are more powerful than humankind and this opens up the African to the divine and to seeking affinity with these spiritual powers. Religious belief is thus diffused in all spheres of life filling them with significance (Gyekye, 1996).

Evidently, in African set up, almost every form of activity such as family gathering, child-naming, funeral, fishing and trading, there is a religious observance. According to Gyekye (1996) religion has a deep presence in the life of Africans because to be born into the African society is to be born into a culture that is intensely and religious; which requires participating in the religious beliefs and rituals of the community. This understanding of the influence of religion on humanity from cradle to the grave, and the African consciousness of the divine is captured in an African Ghanaian proverb that, no one teaches the child to know God; the consciousness of God is considered inherent in the child from birth.

The fact that, African belief system was a complex polytheistic system, as some deities were believed to exist in many different manifestations, and some had multiple mythological roles, it then shows that, the traditional beliefs and practices are oral rather than documented. (Rosalie, 2002). This religious system developed experientially and has been transmitted traditionally for generations. The polytheistic nature of African Traditional religion provided for a vast and varying set of beliefs and practices, linked by their common focus on the interaction between the world of humans and the world of the divine (James, 2000).

There is clear evidence between ancestral search to connect with the divine and the physical world which is believed to be the handicraft of a great being which gave birth to African Traditional Religion. African traditional religion also developed out of experiential encounter with the vastness, complexity and orderliness of the universe. Thus the idea of Supreme Being was planted in the minds of Africans and associated with the large sea, the rising and setting sun, the rains, the high blue sky and the big high mountains (Appiah, 2010). He further noted that most of the great natural features eventually turned out to be worshipping points in the course of this development while some features simply became the names of God in certain tribes. Such encounters consequently led to the beginning of worship involving rituals which were later adopted as an instruction by succeeding generations. Rituals also began to breed superstitions and supernatural manifestations and in the long run, a complex and dynamic religious system emerged has been followed for generations.

The fact that new born could be named after the dead for memory or perceived reincarnation, it has made the future generations to come to participate fully in the religion of their fathers, due to fear of mishaps. Ancestral spirits would often strike a disobedient generation that would not go the traditional way. Fear then became a major sustaining factor in this religious system and because of its consequential dimension offences were often avoided and balancing religious and social living which was considered as a wise goal in every society. The dead therefore became part of the living and were worshipped and remembered by people because of the need for protection therefore they had to pay respect to the living dead. (Gyekye, 1996). The study investigated the church's position on supernatural beliefs.

The concept of God therefore exists in African traditional religion as the Supreme of all beings, active, creates, sustains, provides, delivers, rules and dispenses justice. Local religious expressions of Africa conceive God as creator. The Ewe people refer to God as a skilled or proficient maker who has hewed the earth in His own wisdom and impeccable ability. Among the Shona of Zimbabwe, for instance, 'Mwari is the creator of all'. Among a southeastern tribe of Nigeria God is known as Chineke which means the Creator God; He is also known as the God who fashions or upholds the world; God is person who creates (Gyekye, 1996). In Shona and Ndebele religions, God is seen as the creator and sustainer of the universe. Africans understand that the created universe runs by the wisdom of God. God is involved in making the universe hold together and continually run smoothly (Aquah, 2011).

1.1.2 African Independent Churches

With the introduction of African Independent Churches, it resulted in infusion of African beliefs with Christian worship systems thus Christians continued to sustain links with their traditional beliefs and practices in as much as they retained their identities with different Christian denominations. At the same time, there was African Christian theology which was developed in the faith and practice of the African Christians with a tendency among African peoples to understand Christianity in terms of their traditional backgrounds. It is not

unusual therefore to hear African Christians refer to Jesus as universal meaning the great ancestral spirit (Moyo, 1988).

He further observed that ATR and Christianity have always clashed in the environs of Belief with African Christians developing confidence in supernatural results of traditional beliefs. At the advent of Christianity, probably due to the manner with which the Europeans delivered their gospel, these 'reliable' beliefs began to be discarded as superstitions and primitive inclinations. While African religion does not take the activities of malevolent spirits, demons, witchcraft and ancestral obligations for granted, Christianity often engage demolition of items that indicate obedience to spirits and ancestral obligations (Moyo, 1988)

Both religions are often drawn into contest when their beliefs collide for instance some traditional African practices may not be considered harmful entirely because they are traditionally respectful to ancestral legacy while Christianity consider them un-religious. This confirms that African Christianity still finds traditional religious inclinations a contemporary challenge. In the end, some African Christians would either pay double religious allegiance or get enrolled in the blacklist of tradition (Gyekye, 1996).

This type of double religious allegiance led many Africans to live in two worlds, both psychologically and culturally. This means that at different times, the African presents different images of himself. When he is with missionaries, he is one of them, when he is with his people; he becomes one of them (Bahemuka, 1982: 135). Ndegwah (2004: 87) has referred to this practice as cultural schizophrenia because people paid allegiance to two, often incompatible cultures, (Ndegwah, 2007: 35). The study therefore investigated the traditional Luo beliefs and practices found in African Israel Nineveh Church.

1.1.3 African Israel Nineveh Church

Lipschutz (1986) wrote about African Israel Nineveh Church herein referred to as (AINC) and stated that it was found in 1942 by David Zakayo Kivuli. He further went ahead and said about his education that Kivuli schooled at the mission of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada which is today referred to as Pentecostal Assemblies of God (PAG) in western Kenya. Ten years earlier he had a conversion experience, and that is how he began to prophesy and speak in tongues and performed miraculous cures. Many signs and wonders occurred, and his confession of sins and worship in public places which contradicted the teachings of the missionaries made it clear that he was not operating under the Pentecostal Church, that is how the AINC started.

As a result of conversion Lipschutz (1986) observed that Zakayo was allowed to leave and start his own ministry known as Nineveh Ministry which today is referred to as Africa Israel Nineveh Church (AINC). Today the AINC followers are found in every large town in Kenya. Ogot (1966), supported by saying that African Israel Nineveh Church is one of the largest African Independent Churches among other movement in Kenya.

1.1.4 Luo Tradition and Christianity

According to Fatton (1996), he observed that the Luo society was patrilineal, exogamous and organized into territorial segmental lineages. Some aspects of Luo religious life were exercised based on these lineages but most of their beliefs and worldview were common among various clans in the region. They both acknowledge their Supreme Being as *Nyasaye* (Luo name for God) which in their Christian life today remains as the Christian high God. However, in their popular belief, His power has not eliminated the strength of the ancestors and spirits. Their indigenous religion has many facets and involves individuals and groups depending on circumstances.

Luo people perform rituals that reinforce the existing social order and participate in spirit-possession cults where men tend to dominate in the arena of lineage-strengthening rites and in making frequent offerings to the ancestors in small shrines located within each homestead. Luo women, too, participate in some of these lineage-based religions, such as naming of infants after ancestors and installation of a married son in his new home (Potash, 1978). It is therefore evident that religion is a force for social change in an African society Kenya in particular.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Christian beliefs and practices have evolved over time in Africa as a result of symbolic interactions and enculturation. Thus it can be argued that a new Christian theology has emerged in Africa with the exchange of cultural values. The way in which the diverse Christian denominations express their outward forms of beliefs and religiosity today has therefore been mediated by their changing socio-cultural, economic, political and technological contexts. In some cases, the former Christian forms of worship have to some extent been replaced by free expression of one's religiosity in terms of worship structures. While these conditions manifest in African Independent Churches, determining the extent to which traditions of specific African communities have influence on Christian practices has clearly been realized. In marriage, for instance, it was the pleasure and pride

of all Luo adherents to practice polygamy, and yet this is not the case in AINC. At the same time, Luo Mainstream Christians no longer adhere to many traditional practices like starting a home, where a cock and an axe had to be carried by the father and his first-born boy.

African Israel Nineveh Church's faithful adhere to this practice to date, and actually do not recognize a home that did not go through this ritual. A Scholar like Saga (2009) stated that African beliefs include belief in a supreme creator, belief in spirits, veneration of ancestors, and use of magic and traditional medicine. Thus even with the introduction of Christianity, the adherence of Africans to Christian beliefs has been hard to estimate, due to syncretism with Christianity and other religious movements in Africa. The study investigated church doctrines concerning syncretism in AINC.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The main objective for this study was to examine the influence of Luo traditions on the beliefs and practices of AINC in Alego Usonga - Kenya. The specific objectives of the study were:

- I. Analyzed the traditional Luo beliefs and practices found in AINC.
- II. Analyzed the church doctrines concerning syncretism in AINC.
- III. Found out how AINC addressed the problem of syncretism among its adherents.

1.4 Research Questions

- IV. What were the traditional Luo beliefs and practices found in AINC?
- V. What were the church doctrines concerning syncretism in AINC?
- VI. How did the AINC address the problem of syncretism among its adherents?

1.5 Justification and Significance of the study

This study is justified based on the fact that there is an attempt to examine the influence of the Luo traditional religious beliefs and cultural practices with their underlying values on an Independent Christian Church in Kenya AINC in particular.

The Bible says that God calls us to be different, to escape the downward drag and be re-made in the image of His Son. The Bible further states that true liberty comes from the Lordship of the Holy Spirit, as He makes us less like others and more like Jesus (2 Corinthians 3:17-18). Only He can give us power to be different. Regardless of culture or personal background, believers don't have to live by the standards and patterns of everyone else, because they are "born of God" and their Biblical praxis is predicated on the person and presence of His Son. With all these, the study was justified on the basis that in spite the study on the integration of Christian and African Traditional cultures, the factors that explain the influence of Luo culture on beliefs and practices of Israel Nineveh Church were realized.

Besides this quest, the need for this work become necessary in view of the emergence of religious intolerance by some Christian and Traditional African groups in the country, which, at times, could undermine some of the traditional religious and cultural values, which have fostered co-existence over the years. Through this process, the extent of changes that have resulted from the interaction of Christianity with the indigenous context was important to assess. Since a larger percentage of the indigenous population in Africa and particularly Kenya are converts to Christianity, it is the indigenous beliefs and values which mainly, served as the mediation of their religious and cultural expressions.

The indigenous influence in enhancing harmonious relationships among members of Christianity and African Indigenous communities in Kenya was important to be examined. In terms of significance, this study yielded useful information to policy makers to guide church practices in local areas and harmonize the interaction between Christian denominations and indigenous communities. It also revealed factors that explained how the Independent churches arose among local communities and it showed how indigenous institutions may influence the structural organization of independent African Churches.

1.6 Scope and Limitation of the Study

The study mainly focused on the establishment of African Israel Nineveh Church in Alego Usonga and the influence of Luo traditions on its doctrines and practices. The research work covered Alego Usonga region of Siaya County in Kenya which was chosen since it had the largest number of followers of this Church with 18 churches. Other churches that exist in this area such as Roman Catholic, Anglican Church of Kenya, Apostolic Church, Legio Maria, Roho among many others but this church under study dominated this place. The African Traditional Religion and Christianity have co-existed in this area for a long time without incidence of violence among them.

1.7 Definition of Terms

African Israel Nineveh Church: This term refers to the community of adherents who believes in the risen son of God and holds to the doctrines surrounding the holly city of Nineveh.

Holy city: This term refers to a place like Nineveh almost better than Jerusalem where the risen son of God was born.

Luo Traditional Religion: This term refers to beliefs, practices, ceremonies and festivals, religious objects and places, values and morals and finally religious leaders in a community of western Kenya staying along the lakeside and the adherents are Luos. The Luo are the people who stay near Lake Victoria in western region of Kenya and they mainly speak *dholuo*.

Syncretism: This term refers to the mixing of faith systems from Luo traditions with African Israel Nineveh Church's traditions and observing them as one. Mixing of faith further explain some practices in Luo traditional Religion such as giving presents to new born babies which at the same time takes place in African Israel Nineveh Church. Observation here means treating it as the same thing done the same way for a common purpose.

Theology: This refers to religious beliefs about God and it is used with the word doctrine to mean the same thing

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter addressed the literature concerning the influence of Luo traditional religion on African Israel Nineveh Church. Section one addressed literature related to traditional Luo beliefs and practices found in AINC, section two addressed church doctrines concerning syncretism in African Israel Nineveh Church and finally it found out how AINC addressed the problem of syncretism among its adherents in Alego Usonga Constituency.

2.2 Traditional Luo beliefs and Practices

The study was undertaken in recognition of some work that had already been done in the area of inter-religious relations among African Indigenous Religions and Christianity in Africa. Ajayi (1965) examined the aims, methods, nature and the impact of Christian missionary enterprise and the African attitude to the missionary work in Nigeria and showed that the main aim of the missionaries was the propagation of the Christian faith. The fact that Ajayi examined missionary activities which involved concentration on religion, reading, writing and arithmetic- besides recruiting apprentices for carpentry, architecture and brick- making, he did not explain why some Christian missions like the Pentecostal Church, accommodated African traditions in their worship and how it influenced their numerical expansion and deepening of the understanding of the principles of their faith in local areas.

Anyandele's work focused on the political, social, educational and economic impact of missionaries in Africa, Nigeria in particular and argues that missionaries prepared the way for economic and political exploitation of the country by the British (Anyandele, 1966). They condemned African customs and named it as heathenism and at the same time, they preached the brotherhood of men, Africans were not allowed the same status as Europeans. Anyandele, however, showed that missionaries started western formal education, built hospitals and introduced new agricultural methods. The author basically presented a case of absolute marginalization and neglect of African traditions in Christian practices and did not explain any form of African practices that influenced Christian traditions in Nigeria. The study examined the influence of Luo traditional religion in African Israel Nineveh Church of Alego Usonga-Kenya.

Anderson argued that as soon as the railway line reached Kisumu "missionaries went west". The Friends African Mission (FAM), led by Willis Hotchkiss, was the first, and they established a station at Kaimosi, because of the nearby forest and the availability of water supply. He also discussed the cooperation of various missionary societies in western Kenya and the various approaches to missionary work (Anderson, 1981). He gave reasons why the Friends African Missionaries considered setting a station at Kaimosi, mostly because of FAMs industrial approach, but the argument did not explain why other Christian faith Churches spread to different local regions and their relationship in terms of beliefs with these communities.

Mbiti (1969) also had the opinion of constructive inter-religious engagement which was to recognize and acknowledge the resilience nature of the African religious beliefs and its cultural expressions as well as some of its values. He further expressed his feelings that, in resolving the contradictory position of some scholars on this subject of inter-religious relations, the study examined the influence of Luo traditions on an African Independent Church in Kenya-African Israel Nineveh Church.

Mbula discussed the impact of Christianity on the family using the Akamba of Kenya as a case study. The study provided insights on how various communities were transformed with the coming of Christianity (Mbula, 1998). She further showed that missionary Christianity was one of the major agents of change in Ukambani. She stressed that different missionary societies in Kenya utilized different methods to evangelize

and convert Africans. More importantly, she showed how the Akamba locals participated in Christian work. It was interesting to investigate which methods and cultural aspects were applied by pioneer missionaries of AINC to enhance the spread of Christian faith and influence concentration of their churches in Alego Usonga.

Karanja (1999), attempted to identify the extent to which the Kikuyu Anglican Church was indebted to indigenous models and experiences for its impetus, dynamism and direction. The significance of his study was the light it casts on Kikuyu society's ability to negotiate and compromise over specifically Kikuyu institutions. It was this readiness to consider and, if necessary, renounce objectionable and irrelevant customs, and to modify the adoptable ones that gave the Kikuyu Anglican Church its distinctively indigenous character. The study by Karanja shaded light to this study and it investigated if the Luo society's scenario was similar to that of the Kikuyu. The study therefore examined how indigenous models and experiences of the Luo influenced practices of African Israel Nineveh Church.

The content of Mazrui's work in general, pertained to the whole Africa, while this work focused in detail on the Christian – ATR relations within a selected area in Kenya and in light of practices of specific African Independent Church. In addition, this study focused on investigating the indigenous impact, in particular of Luo traditions on Christianity. While scholars like Tylor misrepresented the African religion by describing it as "animistic" claiming, among other things that in African Traditional Religion, there was the belief that every object had its own soul. This study however intended to identify specific African objects used in worship among African Israel Nineveh Church and explain their significance in light of Christian faith and traditions.

2.3 Church Doctrines Concerning Syncretism in AINC

Church doctrines are religious beliefs and practices about God. According to Olupona (1991), he stated that, the influence of Christianity has swept away evidences of vitality, nature and scope of ATR. However, Bua (1980), critically argued that ATR was not just a house of cards that collapsed at the instance of change the way Olupona puts it, but that it has the potential to adapt on its own, in response to changes that take place around it. In this sense, the resilient nature of ATR and its cultural values and the ability to influence and be influenced in encountering other religions and cultures appear to be confirmed. This argument added to the need for the study in order to establish the extent to which the two cultures-Christian and African have interacted in light of the practices of Africa Israel Nineveh Church.

There are various forms of ATR belief systems among the different groups of people on the vast continent of Africa (Mbiti, 1969). In Kenya, diverse religious beliefs and expressions are portrayed in the celebration of religious festivals, rites of passage, funerals among various ethnic groups, clans and families. However, this does not dismiss the fact that various core expressions of Christian faith still persist among different ethnic communities in Africa. This study analyzed specific varieties of expressions of basic beliefs among the Luo of Kenya in order to explain possible differences in practices or infusion in terms of ethnic expressions in AINC in Alego Usonga Constituency.

He further emphasized the practical living as expressions of African faith instead of belief in doctrines arguing that different traditional religious systems open up, in mutual exchange, to diverse religious elements, which equip them to respond to such practical challenges of life as diseases, poverty and death (Mbiti, 1969). The study therefore analyzed how the specific cultural values of the Luo have influence on doctrinal principles of AINC.

According to Mazrui (1986), he saw contemporary Africa as a result of the encounter of the indigenous Africa culture, Western culture and Islamic culture. He referred to this as Africa's 'triple heritage'. The encounter of the three cultures has set into motion an unavoidable influence of change that has presented Africa with glimpses of hope and at the same time conflict. This study unlike the case of Mazrui intended to examine how the Luo community of Alego Usonga struggled to come to terms with the infusion of their culture in Christianity particularly through the practices of Africa Israel Nineveh Church.

Williamson (1974), discussed in his comparative study on the mutual impact of the religious and cultural life of the Akan Ethnic group of Ghana, with a particular reference to the Ashanti and the Christian faith that was introduced by the various European Christian denominations in the country. He highlighted in his work the positive impact of the church's teachings in transforming some of the negative religious and cultural practices of the Ghanaians. However, of particular interest, as far as this study was concerned, are the observations that Williamson did not make, on some of the practices bequeathed to the Church by Indigenous African traditions and why they remained relevant in different churches.

Saga (2009), on the other hand pointed out that African beliefs includes belief in a supreme creator, belief in spirits, veneration of ancestors, and use of magic and traditional medicine. Thus even with the introduction of Christianity, the adherence of Africans to Christian beliefs has been hard to estimate, due to syncretism with Christianity and other religious movements in Africa (Appiah, 2010). Van der Veer (2005) referred to syncretism as the process of borrowing, affirmation, or integration of concepts, symbols, or practices

of one religious tradition into another through selection and reconciliation. This study however investigated church doctrines concerning syncretism in AINC.

In the study by (Azumah, 2001), he called for a reconsideration of the historical role of Islam in Africa against the general notion that Christianity and its beliefs were imposed on African people. When he made this observation, he assumed the fact that Islam entered African continent in respectful recognition of its religious and cultural resources. While he posited that both Christianity and Islam marginalized ATRs and their cultural values, he did not explain the various forms of marginalization and how ATRs engaged in dialogical mutual exchange with these two mission religions.

Contrary to the argument posited by Azuma, Amoah (1998) in her paper "*African Indigenous Religions and Inter-Religious Relations*" contended that contrary to the general conception that African Indigenous Religions were passive recipients of the religious beliefs of Christianity, differing religions in Africa do encounter each other, leading to an inevitable exchange. She further argued that, despite the outward conversions of members of the indigenous religions to Christianity, the traditional religious beliefs and cultural practices still persisted in these converts and continued to inform and shape their religious experience. Even though these observations are instructive for this study, they were quite general on inter-religious relations between Christianity and ATR and lacked details on how beliefs of specific African communities influenced on particular African Independent Churches.

2.4 Problem of Syncretism among Adherents of AINC

Syncretism demanded that worship of God be shared with competing deities. This occurred constantly in the Old Testament, as the values of the Canaanites, Babylonians, Assyrians and others permeated ancient Israel. On one occasion, Prophet Elijah challenged the nation to stop dithering between two opinions and decide whether Jehovah or Baal was the deity worth following (1 Kings 18:21). However this argument added to the need for this study to analyze problems of practicing syncretism among AINC.

According to Gill (1997), Syncretism in Lesotho began in the year 1860s when the prophetess 'Mantsopa blended Christianity and Traditional religion to call on abandonment of Western civilization and Christianity and for a return to the Basotho traditions and customs. Later on, another underground movement called Secret Prayer which fused Christianity and Basotho Traditional Religion was formed and became popular with animal sacrifices for ancestors as much the indigenous religion does. This study examined how the Luo community in Alego Usonga dealt with the infusion of their culture in Christianity in the practices of AINC.

Gill (1997) further stated that with the realization of the emergence of these movements, W.C. Willoughby, an LMS missionary in Botswana had made a remark at the Third South African Missionary Conference in 1909 that: "To sneer at any form of religion, no matter how rude, is unworthy of a missionary of the Cross. We wrong the native by our sneer: but we wrong our own religion more. These primitive methods of worship should be the gateway by which we enter into the soul of the worshiper" (Gill, 1997:152). This study therefore focused on investigating how AINC found their gateway to enter into the worshippers who were the indigenous.

Negation of ATR was the reflection of colonized mind in which according to Nyuot Yoh (2004), Africans have been transformed to have negative perception of their own culture. They abandoned their knowledge of how they perceived the cause of rain; different types of crops and their growth, how diseases are cured and how babies are conceived. The study investigated problems AINC had with the Luo religious beliefs and practices.

Acts of the Apostles chapter 15 records a critical syncretism. The event of the Council of Jerusalem in which the Pristine Church decided the fate of the Gentile nation vis-à-vis the Jewish concept of the newly emerging Christian religion. In this Council, it was decided that all Gentile converts should be allowed into the church without circumcision, and other Jewish dietary laws, meaning that one does not need to be a Jew in order to be a Christian. Obviously, this permission must have been seen by conservative Jewish Christians as compromising and therefore a gross dilution of the Christian faith (Chidili, 1997). This study however analyzed conditions given to Luo of Alego Usonga to become a member of AINC.

Gelman (2001), noted that syncretism is also found among African Independent Churches, which were founded as a consequence of resentment over missionary and colonial control. These churches try to reclaim some of their traditional beliefs and practices which had been rejected by missionaries. These beliefs and practices are inserted into Christianity without any criticism; this is expressed in their songs, dance and rituals. Sometimes, these elements are placed side by side to the gospel and sometimes exalted above the Christian tradition. When traditional beliefs and practices which were not compatible with the Christian belief were included in the Christian faith, the result is syncretism. This argument adds to the need for this study in order to establish how Christianity and African belief system have interacted.

Having heavily disturbed by the problem of syncretism in Catholic, Schineller (1992) called for the abolition of the word because it had many connotations and is no longer helpful or constructive. In so suggesting, he failed to suggest an adequate word to replace syncretism as it continued to exist. As long as the

church is universal and Catholic, she must dialogue with other religions, and if she must make herself truly present among them, she must take in something of other religions, so as to make Catholicism the religion of the people. This study therefore investigated the dialogue between ATR and AINC in Alego Usonga Constituency.

In conclusion, most of the studies mentioned above submitted that in one way or the other, African religious and cultural values have been marginalized by both Christianity and Islam. However, these efforts have their limitations, in the sense that they do not, specifically examine in detail, the traditional Luo beliefs and practices found in Kenya and specifically, with selected communities. This study addressed the current need by tracing the church doctrines concerning syncretism in AINC and explaining how its engagement with indigenous Luo traditions influenced its beliefs and practices. Lastly it found out how AINC addressed the problem of syncretism among its adherents.

2.5 Theoretical Framework

The study was guided by Social Interaction Theory (SIT) propounded by Gilat Levy and Ronny Razin, 2006. It relied on assumption that individuals in the society had different beliefs that influenced their relations of forms of social interactions; the various beliefs in societies have contributed to the emergence of different forms of religious institutions defined by their beliefs and practices.

Members of specific religious groups with similar beliefs tend to cooperate with one another and face a large degree of cooperation from society than do non-members. This theory, therefore, provided a link among individual beliefs, social rituals, religious groups and social cohesion. It also provided an explanation on the link between the most observed aspects of religion, on the individual aspect and the social aspect. The individual aspect is usually referred to as beliefs of an individual about the power or abilities of some supernatural entity. The social aspect referred to the observation that most of the religions were conducted by the collective and not by the individuals and that most religions prescribed how to behave in social interaction.

The relation between these two observed religions were not immediate but individual beliefs in a supernatural being also dictated how they interacted with one another, as the traditional Luo beliefs and practices might do in AINC. An aspect of social interaction, therefore, involves the interpretation of uncertain events and their relation to actions taken by the individuals. In an organized religious system, groups partake to some observable activities and depending on the strategies of a specific religious group. Other groups chose whether to join religion or not. Within this theory there exists a cohesive and non-cohesive religious organization. A cohesive group is one in which its members behave in the same way towards one another. In non-cohesive religion, different members of the religion may behave differently but in all the two, there were distinct structures as defined by behavior.

Common behavior, beliefs and practices and rituals are based on this theory. The three characteristics were the media of religious interactions. This meant that in order for different religious groups to sustain themselves, they were to borrow from some of these practices. This theory further analyzed dynamic aspect, beliefs and organization emphasizing that institutions and beliefs evolved not due to their superior fitness but as a result of rational behavior of individuals. These individuals updated their beliefs based on their personal experiences and subsequently choose optimally whether to join a religious organization or not.

This theory best suited the study since it explained how members of specific religious groups that are ATR with their beliefs tend to cooperate with one another and face a large degree of cooperation from the society as the members did to cooperate and interact with AINC in their two beliefs. This theory as well provided a link among individual beliefs, social rituals, religious groups and social cohesion which enabled a researcher to identify how individuals cooperated to their religion as a group or as a society without any conflict as it has been since its inception. How do the adherents behave towards their beliefs as a society? It was possible to provide an explanation on the link between the most observed aspects of AINC and Luo traditional religion.

Different scholars had mixed reactions towards social interaction theory. Some like Goffman stated its weaknesses like of being difficult to quantify things in Symbolic Interactionism because the theory dealt with interpretations and was thus subjective by nature. He further stated that it overestimated the power of individuals to create their own realities, ignoring the extent to which humans inhabit a world not of their own making (Goffman, 1974: 21).

According to Manis and Meitzer, they noted that social interaction theory neglects the emotional dimension of human conduct, focusing strictly on logical behavior. They also said that SIT is not applicable to large-scale social structures (Manis and Meltzer, 1978). However, According to Blumer, he saw strengths on the theory and emphasized that it underscores the relationship between the meaning of symbols and a person's behavior. In a way, certain behaviors may be predicted. It gives insight into small-scale human interactions as well as recognizing that perceptions of reality are variable and changing. The theory sees humans as active, creative participants who construct their social world, not as passive, conforming objects of socialization (Blumer, 1969).

Therefore from the above arguments on the challenges and strengths of Social Interaction Theory, the researcher found it suitable to use it in the study since it was more relevant and its dynamic aspect of religious

beliefs in this theory emphasized that institutions and beliefs had evolved not due to their superior fitness but as a result of rational behavior and beliefs based on their experiences.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter dealt with the methodology of the study and data presentation. It aimed at giving an explanation of the procedures and methods that were used in the fieldwork. The chapter was organized as follows, description of the study area, research design, population analysis sampling procedures, data collection methods, data processing and analysis, validity and relevance of data and chapter summary.

3.2 Study Area

The study was conducted in Alego Usonga constituency which has a population of 684, 765 (GoK, 2009). The study was conducted among AINC churches in three regions of Alego Usonga, Boro, Karemo and Uranga with a total population of 2567 adherents (Parish Statistics, 2016) as shown in figure 1 in the appendix. Members from this community are engaged in different activities such as peasant farmers, self-employed persons and Government employees as well as in Non-Governmental Organizations. The researcher opted for AINC.

3.3 Research Design

The study adopted the grounded theory approach, which was originally developed by Glaser and Strauss in the 1960s. The self-defined purpose of grounded theory was to develop theory about the study of interest. The researcher explained about shared, learnt patterns of values, behaviors, beliefs shared by a group of people (Spradley, 1979). This design helped in identifying the presence or absence of attributes rather than disapprove them and provides a complete picture of the environment being studied, hence leading to new insights. It also helped to investigate little understood phenomena as it can tap into intuitive and human understanding well as the interpretations of the account of informants.

3.4 Target population

The study focus on a Church in Alego Usonga known as AINC. According to (Mugenda & Mugenda, 1999:41) target population is defined as the population to which a researcher wants to generalize the result of a study. Target population is further defined as those who can provide the required information (Peil 1995). The population for this study comprised of 61,567 registered members of the 18 Israel Nineveh Churches in Alego Usonga.

In this study, the research field becomes social scene, the population becomes social actors or the informants, respondents become informants and the research becomes the central figure around which the research revolves. During research, the researcher concentrated on cultural or social domains and carried out taxonomic or even contrast analysis. The study targeted the adherents of AINC and their leaders in Alego Usonga Constituency.

3.5 Sampling Procedures

The selection of the sample was based on leadership's gender, age, occupation and number of years in service as a church leader and general knowledge about the church and Luo religious traditions among church members as well as their beliefs and practices. Sample procedure refers to that part of the research that indicates how cases are to be selected for observation (Orodho and Kombo, 2002). The study used purposive sampling technique since the researcher decided on the type of information needed and who to include in the sample (Kathuti and Pals, 1993). The sample was 382 members from all AINC in Alego Usonga Constituency. These entailed 60 purposively selected Church leaders because of their position in their respective churches. The remaining 322 were randomly selected church members all as suggested by Krejcie and Morgan (1970) from a population of 61,567 as indicated in appendix I.

The researcher formulated a procedure of selecting the subjects in the sample immediately after deciding on a sample size (Mugenda and Mugenda, 1999; 44). The 322 church members were equally distributed among 15 churches in Alego Usonga which made every church to have a total of 21 respondents. At the same time 60 leaders were also selected from 15 churches to provide 4 leaders from every Church. For the selection of church leaders, they were systematically sampled at equal intervals of 1, 4, 7 and 10 in every church which gave a total of 60 leaders.

In order to sample Church members, they were also systematically sampled at equal intervals starting with randomly selected members seated in church. In this case every third church member, for instance (1, 3, 6, 9....) was selected for the study. Since the researcher's purpose was to draw clear conclusions on what is influencing the population as a whole, she used probability sampling in order to give every member of the

Church equal chances of participation in the study. As a result, they provided information on influence of LTR on African Israel Nineveh Church in Alego Usonga Constituency.

3.5.2 Sample size

A sample size is a small population selected to represent the salient characteristics of the accessible population (Mugenda & Mugenda, 1999:42). The ideal sample size should be large enough to serve as adequate representation of the population, which a researcher used to generalize the findings of the research (Amin, 2005). The total number of the adherents of AINC in Alego Usonga is 61,567 from the 18 churches. Thus the study settled on the sample size of 382 respondents according to (Morgan and Krejcie 1970).

3.6 Data collection instruments

3.6.1 Oral interview

Mugenda & Mugenda describes Oral Interview (OI) as a person to person verbal communication in which one person or a group of persons ask the other questions intended to elicit information in face to face encounters (Mugenda and Mugenda 1999: 83). Oral interview as an instrument is designed to source information that cannot be directly observed and confirmed as Luo traditional religious practices among Christians of African Israel Nineveh Church. Gay (1996) noted that social sciences data are usually collected using interviews because they provide a high degree of objectivity and uniformity. The reliability of the information gathered is high since each informant is subjected to similar questions asked. Oral interview are evidently flexible in that they can consist of both close and open ended questions, it can as well be used to gather in-depth information. OI was conducted to 322 adherents in 15 Churches. As a result, each Church had 21 respondents. Since researcher wanted to get a detailed understanding of the influence of Luo traditional religion on AINC from the church leaders, the researcher found it necessary to use it.

3.6.2 Participant Observation

The researcher opted to use participant Observation (PO) as an instrument it was mostly convenient. Kombo and Tromp (2006: 96) describe PO as a situation where, the investigator becomes an active functioning member of the culture under study. An investigator participates in any activity appropriate to the status which is assumed. What prompted researcher to use PO in this study was that, it makes the respondents more comfortable with the researcher which makes them provide relevant information needed from them. Apart from that, it also gives a researcher an intuitive understanding of what is happening in a given culture. The researcher prepared an observation schedule (See Appendix IV) to assist in focusing on central aspects in each worship service. For instance, Use of drum, Dressing, Church Flag, Stages/order of service Burial ceremony, Types of dances and Singing.

An observation schedule was used during Friday and Saturday's services and religious activities such as burial. The researcher was guided by the observation schedule in collecting information according to the objectives. PO gave the researcher an opportunity to assess the mentioned activities from the insider's perspective (Kothari 2004:96). During the services, both the members and the leaders reiterated the PO gave the researcher an opportunity to assess the mentioned activities from the insider's perspective. During the services, both the members and the leaders reiterated the church beliefs in the prayers they offered. This ranged from testimonies that were given, to songs sang and sermons delivered. Most of these are mentioned and discussed in the subsequent chapters. All these experiences enabled the researcher to arrive at some conclusions with regard to beliefs and practices of AINC. Some ecclesiastical ceremonies were not frequently scheduled since some, such as burial services which is dictated by unpredictable death. The researcher was also a full time Teachers Service Commission (TSC) employee. This meant squeezing the field work between the teaching schedules. Therefore, it took four months to collect adequate data for the study.

3.6.3 Focus Group Discussion

Kombo & Tromp (2006) defines FGD as a special type of group in terms of its purpose, size, composition and procedures and is usually composed of 6-8 individuals who share certain characteristics, which are relevant for the study. The discussion is carefully planned and designed to obtain information on the participants' beliefs and perceptions on a defined area of interest. The importance of using this instrument particularly for this study was that, it can produce a lot of information quickly and are good to identifying and exploring beliefs, opinions in a community. The discussions aimed at an in-depth evaluation of the beliefs and practices, opinions on the leadership profile and various views on the traditional Luo beliefs and practices found in AINC doctrines concerning syncretism in AINC and how is AINC addressing the problem of syncretism among its adherents?

During the discussions, participants were given opportunity to express their view exhaustively. Through FGDs, the researcher was able to get information, such as the beliefs and practices of AINC, which

was not possible to generate during the individual interviews. In addition, much of what came out from the PO and interviews were confirmed in the FGDs. For instance, it came out that in AINC; one of the surest sign that one is filled with the Holy Spirit is by speaking in tongues. This probably explained why majority of the members were praying in tongues in the services we attended. The FGD conducted comprised ten participants from one Church. The checklist (See Appendix VI) used comprised broad-based questions on which discussions on the history, leadership, beliefs and practices of AINC were generated.

The researcher employed Focus group discussion which is indeed, an interview (Patton, 1990) not a discussion group, problem-solving session, or decision-making group but only to arrive at the aimed objective. The researcher purposively grouped only one group consisting of 10 Church members and another Church again with 10 members. The remaining 11 members from the two Churches were interviewed. The rest of the respondents were interviewed.

3.7 Piloting

Pilot study was carried out in August 2016 in Boro one in Karemo and Uranga in order to establish the reliability and validity of the instruments that were used in collection and analysis of data. It identified the influence of Luo traditional Religion in AINC in Alego Usonga Constituency. During piloting, interview schedule was pre-tested in three churches on church leaders and FGD was used in one church for adherents. Significantly, the pilot study confirmed the influence.

3.8 Reliability of the Instrument

This referred to a measure of the degree to which research instruments yield consistent results after reported trials. In this case, one of the techniques such as test-retest which involves administering the same instrument twice to the same group of subjects was done in three pilot churches that enabled the researcher tailor the questions to the expected outcome (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003, 95).

3.9 Validity of the Instrument

Validity of the instruments referred to the accuracy of inferences, which were based on the research results which has to do with how accurately the data obtained in the study represent the variables of the study. The validity of this study instruments was determined by presenting them to two lecturers in the department of religion who did constant guidance during consultations since they have expertise judgment in this area. During the discussions, with the experts theme and sub themes capturing the topic of the study was established (Mugenda and Mugenda 2003: 99).

3.10 Ethical Considerations

Ethics is defined by Webster's dictionary as conformance to the standards of conducts of a given profession or group. The researcher was objective so as not to manipulate data collection, analysis, and interpretation procedures to advance personal agenda. In the process of collecting qualitative data the researcher adhered to the principle of voluntary participation of respondents. Participants in this study were made aware that their participation in the study was voluntary and that they had the freedom to withdraw from the study at any time without any unfavorable consequences. The researcher as well made appointments with the church leaders prior to the research day. Respondents were of diverse backgrounds. The researcher assured them of confidentiality and self-respect throughout the exercise.

The researcher got a letter of introduction from the Dean, school of education Bondo University College to proceed with the study upon the approval of the proposal. The researcher then sought permission from Siaya Sub- County office which is situated at Ugunja who gave the researcher a letter of introduction to church leaders in the entire constituency. The respondents were assured of confidentiality of the data given and guaranteed that the data is only for academic purposes.

3.11 Data Analysis

Being a qualitative study, thematic and content analysis was used to develop comprehensive description of the study. Themes refer to major subjects that come up during discussions (Kombo and Tromp, 2006: 119). It further stated that this analysis categorizes related topics and that is how major themes were identified. Content analysis on the other hand describes the spoken material; a classification is also developed to record the given information (Kombo and Tromp, 2009). The researcher placed together all the raw materials and arranged them in relation to the three objectives stipulated in chapter one and discussed each set then data was presented in tables. Due to the exploratory nature of the research, inductive coding was also used since interviews used were open ended.

3.12 Field challenges

During the process of data collection, the researcher was faced with several challenges. They included the following;

3.12.1 Finances During data collection period, the researcher under estimated what was to be used in the field. The researcher found it very rough in the field in terms of meeting the financial cost. It was during rainy season and some terrains were so poor and these results in the hiking of fare. Most places could only be accessed by use of motor bikes and this situation made it more cumbersome. However, the researcher had to convince the research assistants that she was to make good payments on top of what they had discussed earlier which made the work to continue as planned.

3.12.2 Use of other tools

The researcher sought to use oral interview and focus group discussions as well as observation which were found suitable for the study. Going for the actual data collection during piloting, the researcher realized that some questions had to be re casted and some also to be added for quality results. From piloting, the researcher had to access more relevant resources as well as to reorganize the tools and to add some more relevant questions across the tools which made the results to be more reliable and valid.

3.11.3 Use of Kwalitan for analysis

Since the study was a qualitative one, researcher planned to use, thematic and content analysis to develop comprehensive description of the study then was to be supplemented by use of kwalitan. After data collection, all the raw data were piled together for the next step which was the analysis, researcher used thematic and content analysis as stated earlier. When kwalitan was to be used since it is a computer program, it was only ready to show how the program was to be used which was a great challenge. The rest was to be availed if payment was done which was too expensive for an individual rather than an institution. Since it is dealing with word counting and word searching which help to identify how many times a particular word was used and the number of people used it, it made the researcher to seek for another relevant solution. The researcher used tallying to supplement the two for the analysis which worked successfully.

3.11.4 Follow up of leaders

During data collection, church leaders were also to respond through oral interview orally. Due to some other commitments, all church leaders were not interviewed totaling to ten. Since it was necessary to engage them since they were part of the group, the researcher had to organize for an extra time to meet them individually. The researcher therefore requested for their contacts and the most convenient time for everyone in order to be interviewed.

3.11.5 Time management

Researcher planned to do data collection within two months but due to the actual work on the ground and details required, the researcher spent four and a half months collecting data from one place to another at the same time compiling them.

IV. DATA COMPILATION, ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the research, data compilation analysis and presentation that investigated the influence of Luo Traditional Religion on African Israel Nineveh Church in Alego Usonga Constituency, which was the area of study. The chapter presents the demographic background information of church leaders as respondents who participated in the research study of the oral interviews relating to particular sub-themes. The rest of the respondents participated in the study and their responses to the items of Focus Group Discussions were captured in two churches as per the sub-themes in research and the rest oral interviews was used as well as participant observation used by the researcher and her three assistants.

4.2 Respondents' Return Rate

A Scholar like Saga (2009) pointed out that African beliefs in supernatural beings include belief in a supreme creator, belief in spirits, veneration of ancestors, and use of magic and traditional medicine among many others. Hence, even with the introduction of Christianity, the adherence of Africans to Christian beliefs has been hard to estimate, due to syncretism with Christianity and other religious movements in Africa. Thus, the study investigated the syncretic practices between Luo traditional practices and AINC.

The qualitative data was analyzed using thematic and content analysis techniques then was used to describe and summarize the data inform of tables, frequencies and tables. This qualitative analysis produced accurate information of the study based on study objectives.

The data used in this study was drawn from a target population of 60 church leaders and 322 church members totaling to 382. Only two churches had 2 Focus Group Discussions consisting of 10 members from two churches each, the rest OI was used. The respondents' return rate was summarized as shown in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Respondents Rate of Return

Source	Respondents	Number participated	Return rate
Church leaders (OI)	60	50	83.33%
Church members (FGDs)	20	20	100.0%
Church members (OI)	273	273	100.0%

Source: Field data (2016)

From this target population, 50 church leaders and the two FGDs formed by the church members participated in the study, recording a return rate of 83.33% for church leaders, 100% for church members with two FGDs from two churches consisting of 20 and the remaining respondents, Oral Interview was used. These high response return rates were achieved because the researcher organized face to face oral interviews in person and also conducted the Focus Group Discussions in person. She first organized church to church visit to arrange with the church leaders for the appropriate date for the interviews with the church leaders to ensure that all the interviewees were available in all the 15 Churches.

4.3 Demographic Information of the Respondents particularly church leaders

The demographic information of the respondents was investigated based on age, gender, education level, occupation and number of years in church leadership. This was done in order to find out the background of church leaders including what the Church consider for one to become a leader. Church leaders were involved in the study because they had more in-depth information that may not be available with other church members, especially on how Luo cultural practices influence the AINC doctrines and practices. This makes them more instrumental in providing qualitative information on influence of Luo traditional religion on African Israel Nineveh Church in Alego Usonga Constituency. The demographic information of church leaders is presented in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2: Demographic Characteristics of the Church leaders

		frequency (50)	percentages	Total %
Gender	Male	33	66	100
	Female	17	34	
Age	18-34 years	2	4	100
	35-44	10	20	
	45-54	22	44	
	Above 55	16	32	
Level of education	Primary	26	52	100
	Secondary	18	36	
	Diploma	2	4	
	University	4	8	
Occupation	Unemployed	4	8	100
	casual	9	18	
	civil servant	12	24	
	self employed	16	32	
Number of years in church leadership	below 5 years	10	20	100
	5-10 years	22	44	
	above 10 years	18	36	

Source: Field data (2016)

The study showed that out of the 50 interviewed church leaders, over two thirds of the respondents at 66% were males while 34% were females. This shows that while the African Israel Nineveh Church provided opportunities for female church members to become leaders, they were still under-represented the way it happens in African traditions. The male church leaders dominated their female counterparts because, female leadership was recognized but not so much, which could be attributed to the patriarchal nature of the society. Several socio-cultural factors may also influence female church members ascending to leadership positions. According to Genesis, God created man in his image, in the divine image he created him; male and female he created them (Genesis 1:27). Sundkler (1976:79) noted that from early times the church was like a women's liberation movement and functioned as one long therefore that term was invented. Indeed, he points out

numerous examples of churches in South Africa where women excelled as leaders an example is that of Grace Tshabala who brought great revival in her church it is therefore worth noting that this phrase in terms of provision of Church leadership, women would do as men but the Church declined towards African Traditions Based on age, the study found out that majority of the respondents (44%) were between 45-54 years, while 32% were above 55 years. Over three quarters of the church leaders were above 45 years, meaning that church leadership positions were awarded to more elderly church members. This showed us that most of the church leaders were experienced and well-informed to provide detailed qualitative information on the influence of Luo traditional religion on African Israel Nineveh Church. It is most likely that the Church elders are the custodian of the church information. Not only the custodian of information, are they as well willing to share the information through the experience they have.

On education, the study found out that many of the church leaders had primary level of education, this applied to slightly more than half of the adherents (52%). This showed that church leadership positions in African Israel Nineveh Church was not a preserve for the elite nor learned and was also not pegged on the level of education seemingly it was probably pegged on wisdom. It could also mean that the church is so much influenced by the African traditions that does not apply intellectual capability but through observation and probably by imitation. Based on this analysis, the doctrines of this Church may not have much developments and it may remain dormant in terms of development.

Based on occupation, the study established that most of the respondents (32%) were self-employed; with 24% working as civil servants remaining 44% included leaders who were casual, unemployed and others. This allowed the church leaders to spend most of their time doing church activities without combining them with personal interests in terms of occupation.

On the number of years in the church leadership, the study realized that 44% of the respondents had taken 5-10 years, while 39% indicated above 10 years, 22% had taken below 5 years. This showed that most of the respondents (83%) had taken above 5 years in their various leadership positions; hence were more experienced and informative on the influence of Luo traditional religion on AINC, more importantly it showed that one has skills as well as being articulate.

4.4 Luo beliefs and practices found in African Israel Nineveh Church

With regard to the first research question, the study sought to analyze the traditional Luo beliefs and practices found in African Israel Nineveh Church. Respondents –both church leaders and church members– organized into various FGDs were probed on these practices and provided the qualitative data. During the focus group discussions with some of the church members, some of the themes that came up were as follows:–Luo beliefs and practices during birth, during marriage and during death and beliefs in supernatural beings. How are Luo beliefs and practices incorporated into AINC?

4.4.1 Church practices during birth

Church members were asked to indicate what they do in case a member had given birth. Table 4.3 shows the response.

Table 4.3: Church practices during birth

Church practices during birth	Frequency	Percentages
Gifts/ presents	21	70.0
Pray	4	13.3
Visit	5	16.7
Total	30	100.0

Source: Field data (2016)

The study found out that as a church, one of the major practices done for the newborn was offering gifts; some call it giving of presents hence treating it as the same thing. For instance, when probed on what the church was doing when a member had given birth, majority of the respondents (70.0%) mentioned provision of gifts/presents, 13.3% indicated pray for the family at large, while 16.7% mentioned offering visitations. The practice was most likely adopted from the Bible where it is stated that the visitors from the East, after worshipping baby Jesus, they brought out their gifts of Gold, frankincense and myrrh, and presented them to him,(Matthew 2;11).

4.4.2 Luo beliefs and Practices during Birth

One of the striking features of Luo practices during birth of anew born, which is also being practiced even in the African Israel Nineveh Church, is organizing ceremonies and festivities for the newborn. The newborns were brought gifts, women sang and dances were organized for the occasion. It was also a festive

occasion because birth was seen as an occasion of joy for all the members of the community. For instance, one of the church members had this to offer;

According to Luo culture when a baby is born in a family, the relatives and friends must pay a special visit. In the olden days, many rituals were also performed during this visitation. The first visitation was done by the lady's young sisters to represent their mother. The sisters were sent with raw and cooked food. The cooked food included Meat (Sun dried), Ugali made from Millet flour, Indigenous Vegetables like African Nightshades (Osuga), Spiderplant (Dek), Crotalaria (Mitoo). After this, one sister was usually left behind to help mother and child until she was strong (Focus Group Discussion 4).

Another church member when asked to describe the practices performed during birth ceremony of Luo culture also said;

In the ceremony for the birth of a child, there was also visitation by friends and other ladies from the village, which was always arranged before the day of visiting. On the day of visitation, each lady was supposed to carry millet flour, sorghum flour, dry meat, dry fish, indigenous vegetables, fire wood and beads for both mother and child. The visiting played a big role in bringing different families together, also bringing ladies together (Focus Group Discussion 7)

The study also found out that another important practice among the Luo during the child birth was naming of the baby. This was done a few days after birth, by the parents of the child. The Luo named their children after dead relatives, the time and the season the child were born, and if a mother conceived without seeing her periods. One of the church members had this to say;

Children born at a certain time were named after that time, i.e. Otieno/Atieno, these are children born at night, Okoth/Akoth born during rainy season, Okumu/Akumu born without the mother seeing her periods. Naming children after the dead relatives is also being practiced (Focus Group Discussion 9).

Another speaker added the following:

Luo tribes seek a name for a newborn while a baby is crying, during which time different names of the living and/or dead are mentioned. If the child stops crying when a particular name is called out, family members and attendants assume that the spirit called by that name have been appeased, and the baby receives that name immediately (Focus Group Discussion 14).

Another speaker on the conflict of Luo cultural beliefs and practices during the naming of the child and church doctrines also said the following:

For many Christians, the ancestors continue to play a significant role in their lives. In traditional beliefs, the ancestors reside in the sky or underground, from where they may be reincarnated in human or animal form. Ceremonies are sometimes performed when naming a baby to determine if a particular spirit has been reincarnated. The spirits of ancestors are believed to communicate with the living in their dreams (Focus Group Discussion 10).

From these views and sentiments from the respondents, it can be concluded that choosing the name of a baby was highly important in Luo beliefs and practices. This was perhaps more so as it is believed that the actual choice of name could influence the life of both the child and the family meaning they were keenly observant on it since it can totally ruin the future of the child if not properly done.

Names reflecting the day of birth and the environment or circumstances surrounding the birth were common. However, many of the church teachings may not concur with some of these practices because of the doctrinal conflict. For instance, the church may not want a child to be named after the dead particularly the ancestors or the living dead while the belief and culture of the Luo still dictated so. Christians believes that saints also died either serving or knowing about God so if a child is named after the saint the respect and the service to the Lord will continue. The conflict is realized when a new born is named after the ancestor meaning continuity of ancestors while when a child is named after the saints it is a continuity of God's kingdom.

This position is in line with the findings of Bahemuka (1982) who also argues that European missionaries, with much courage and confidence, preached against everything African. This included African cosmology, ecology, spirituality, recreation, humanity and forms of life or existence which were collectively condemned as evil, uncivilized and harmful to the development of Africans. Prichard (1965) explains that missionary churches declared Africans as irrational and primitive beings, whose simple minds could not perceive the divine being. This study discounts such racist overtones because as humans Africans acted rationally and purposefully on many challenging situations. These included their environment, diseases, and tricky external involvement in their traditional cultural, political, economic and spiritual affairs.

4.4.3 Luo Beliefs and Practices in Marriage

The study also sought to investigate the Luo beliefs and practices during marriage, and respondents were probed on the position of the church in polygamy and other practices during marriage. Members of the church were also to indicate the place of the AINC on the practice of polygamy.

Table 4.4 shows the response.
Table 4.4 Place of church in Polygamy Marriage

	Frequency	Percentage
Accepted	21	70.0
Not accepted	9	30.0
Total	30	100.0

Source: Field data (2016)

The study found out that AINC church accepted and accommodated polygamy among its members, who were already polygamous when they joined the church. This was indicated by majority of the respondents (70.0%), while 30.0% disapproved the practice. This showed that Luo culture and practice of polygamy were mixed with the church doctrines. For example, during the FGD one of the group members who were leaders explained it as follows:

The reason why polygamy was mixed with the Church doctrines was due to different circumstances. To begin with, some members joined the Church when they were already polygamous; they were allowed in since they were already in that state. However, those who joined when single or monogamous were advised not to practice polygamy (FGD, 23).

The data gathered from interviews of the church leaders and focus group discussion showed that during marriage ceremony, an array of practices and beliefs could be witnessed. For instance, during the interview sessions with the AINC church leaders, one of the church leaders had this to say:

Marriage in Luo traditional settings shows various cultural practices of types of marriage arrangement, courtship, bride wealth payment, ceremonies, rituals, polygamy, leviratic unions and traditional motives of marriages (Church leader, 7).

Moreover, in one of the focus group discussions, one of the group members had this to say:

Most Luo still cherish polygamy, again, majority of them believe that it is a grave punishment equivalent to a curse to marry and die without a child so if the first wife is barren, the husband will try to marry a second wife to get his own children. They don't feel comfortable with children adopted from the orphanage. Because of the husband's desire for male children if a wife continues to get female children a husband may marry a second wife to get sons (Focus group discussion 12).

These sentiments show that the Luo still conduct or participate in certain marriage cultural practices that may be practiced alongside the doctrines in the African Israel Nineveh Church. However, these practices may be conflicting with the modern church and Christianity much as they are accommodated in the AINC. Bahemuka (1982) indicated that there seems to be what one can call tensional relationship between the Luo indigenous beliefs and Christianity. This is evidenced by the splitting of AINC from the Missionary based African Independent Pentecostal Church. Missionary based churches were uncomfortable with such splits which made them to describe such churches as pseudo or false cults, infidels, backslider, misguided, fallen or doomed groups.

4.4.3 Luo beliefs and practices during Death

The study also sought to examine the Luo beliefs and practices during death. From the interviews and focus group discussion with the AINC church members and church leaders, it was largely discovered that the Luo Community could do variety of practices and rituals during death that were also being accommodated in AINC. However, most of these practices are not accepted in mainstream Christian churches like Anglican and Roman Catholic. For instance, when asked to indicate some of the beliefs and practices done during the death of a community member, one of the church leaders said the following:

There is still wife inheritance upon the death of a husband. The customs of widow cleansing and widow inheritance are practiced by most of the church members. During wife inheritance, Luo widows are expected to engage in sexual intercourse with a "cleanser," without the use of a condom, in order to remove the evil that has befallen her after the death of her husband (Church Leader, 9).

Another speaker from one of the focus group discussions also reiterated the following:

Upon the death of a husband, wife inheritance is still being practiced in the church and during this practice; the widow's prospective inheritor sleeps in the widow's house, while she is visiting her natal home. When the widow returns, she cooks the meat she brought back. The widow and her inheritor eat the meat. They

engage in sexual intercourse that night, and the man must prove that he is a real inheritor (Focus Group Discuss 17).

It is clear from the views and statements of the church leaders and group discussions that wife inheritance is a common practice among the Luo beliefs and practices upon death of a husband. Similarly, Sossou (2002) reported that widowhood practices are closely tied to cultural and traditional beliefs about death, ghosts, inheritance, feminine roles, family structure and family relationships. Mbiti (2009:151) also documented that the overpowering belief in the ability of the ghost of a dead person to come back to dispute and haunt all kinds of things and relatives has reinforced and perpetuated the age-old practices of widowhood within the Luo culture.

4.4.4 Visiting the Tomb after burial

The study also sought to find out whether the church could come back to the tomb after burial. Respondents (Church leaders) were therefore, asked to indicate their answer on this question. For instance, when asked to indicate some of the beliefs and practices done during visitation of the tomb after burial, one of the church leaders said the following:

In Luo practices, the tomb was visited depending on the security of the corpse and the gender. It never had specific days for visiting except for gender and probably if they were twins they double the number of days while in Christianity, they majorly visit the tomb after three days (group 11)

Table 4.5: Visiting the Tomb after burial

Visiting the Tomb after burial	Frequency	Percentages
3 days	43	86
3 months	5	10
Over 1 year	2	4
Total	50	100

Source: Field data (2016)

The study found out that the church also believed in and practiced tomb visiting after the burial, as indicated by majority of the respondents (86%), who indicated that they could visit the tomb after 3 days, 10% indicated 3 months, while 4% indicated 1 year. This shows that tomb visiting was a practice in the AINC church, though at varied intervals for instance for male and female the visitation is done six and eight days respectively. In Luo traditions, the living was to take care of the tomb or provide security for the dead body with hopes of avoiding bad spirits and curses in future while in Church, they imitated what was done to Jesus on the third day with a hope of resurrection for eternal kingdom. Saint Luke’s Gospel states that, ‘the son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified and on the third day rise’ (Luke 24:7). Therefore some adherents practice both traditional and the Christian one by accomplishing the burial rites and belief in Jesus’ resurrection.

4.5 Analysis of the church doctrines concerning syncretism in AINC

In the second research objective, the study sought to analyze the church doctrines and find out if they are related to any of the Luo traditional beliefs and practices. In other words the analysis is based on the realization of the mixture of the doctrines for both Luo tradition and the one of the Church. Church members were, therefore, asked to indicate the key doctrinal teachings of the church, in the light of the main Luo traditional beliefs and practices. Tables 4.6, 4.7, and 4.8 respectively show their responses.

Table 4.6Key Church Doctrines in AINC

	Yes		I don’t Know		No		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Incarnation								
Dead spirit can come and live in people	27	90.0	2	6.7	1	3.3	30	100
The church believes in God to eliminate spirits of the dead in its adherents	25	83.3	3	10.0	2	6.7	30	100

Source: (field data, 2016)

Table 4.7Key Church doctrines in AINC

	Yes		I don’t Know		No		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Salvation								
AINC believes in Salvation	22	44	2	4	6	12	30	100

Jesus died for us to be saved	24	48	2	4	4	8	30	100
Salvation promotes togetherness in Christ	26	52	3	6	1	2	30	100

Source: (field data, 2016)

Table 4.8 Key Church doctrines in AINC

Resurrection	Yes		I don't Know		No		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
The AINC believes in the resurrection in Christ	24	80.0	1	3.3	5	16.7	30	100
There is life after death in the form of ancestors	23	76.7	4	13.3	3	10	30	100
AINC believes in the existence of the living dead	21	70.0	5	16.7	4	13.3	30	100

Source: (field data, 2016)

The study found out that AINC teaches the existence of holy trinity as composed of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit as indicated by over three quarters of the respondents (76.7%). Majority of the respondents (70%) also agreed that the church teaches about the Holy Spirit as being different from the Luo traditional spirits. It was also discovered that AINC taught about the belief in Jesus Christ as the son of God as indicated by 80% of the respondents. This implies that the belief in Jesus, and not any other being as a super power, was among the major teachings of the church. Another significant group of respondents (76.7%) also agreed that the Holy Spirit guided their actions, rather than the traditional spirits. African understanding of spirits among Africans is several for instance spirits create trouble and go about punishing human beings, (Bahemuka, 1982; 52). Furthermore it is stated that Africans believed that ancestral spirits are the most important, especially those still remembered and with whom the living human continue to have communion with through libations and offerings of food, blood and meat. The spirits are regarded as the invisible members of their respective families (Mugambi, 2010:63). It is evident that these Church members pay allegiance to both religions which is the infusion of different beliefs especially the matters of deeper things of life such as birth, marriage and death they have remained largely followers of African Religion adapted to suit their social environment (Mbiti, 1975: 189).

Another doctrinal teaching in AINC is incarnation, which the study found that majority of the church members (90%) believed that dead spirits could come and live with people. Another group of respondents (83.3%) agreed that God could eliminate dead spirit in them and that no other power could be capable of doing the same. On the other hand, a member admitted that in the wider Nyanza as a province, come July malevolent spirits known to the locals as Nyawawa (the dark spirits) travel the breadth and length of the region soon after the nightfall to wreak havoc. It is feared that if one encounters them, misfortune is sure to follow hence people are advised to stay indoors. He further explained that the only way to drive them away by the locals is to make noise by hitting objects like drums and anything to make Nyawawa feel totally unwelcome. therefore this one forces some Church members to drive away the malevolent spirits as a result of fear and at the same time believe in the existence of the Holy Spirit which results into a conflict between these two Religions.

The church also teaches about salvation, and majority of the respondents (73.3%) indicated that AINC believed in salvation; 20.0% did not believe in salvation, as 6.7% were neutral on this question. Proclaiming Jesus Christ as one who died to save humankind was the anchor of AINC teachings, and as such, most of the church members (86.7%) agreed with statement, while 13.3% indicated otherwise. Majority of the respondents also agreed that salvation promoted togetherness in Christ as indicated by 86.7% of the respondents. In Luo traditional beliefs, there is no existence of salvation. In Christianity, salvation is the acceptance that Jesus died for the sin of human kind therefore a Christian feel relieved from sin after salvation and they are in a position of communicating to God through prayer. In African Tradition, one is capable of being possessed by ancestral spirits which is a custom in Luo community. One of the ways of communicating to ancestors is by trance.

The study also found out that resurrection is one of the major teachings in AINC. In this regard, majority of the respondents (80.0%) reiterated that AINC believes in the resurrection of Christ. Hence more than three quarters (76.7%) of the church members believe that there is life after death in the form of ancestors, while 10.0% indicated otherwise. Another 70.0% believed in the existence of the living dead, while 13.3% were negative about this doctrine.

The church teaches clearly on the need to serve one God without competing Him with other deities, it also subscribes to the belief of the Holy trinity as God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit and oppose recognition of other demonic spirits (Church Leader, 8, November 9, 2016).

This shows that although there exist other spirits and beliefs in other supernatural beings, which could promote syncretism in the church, the AINC church was very clear on its teachings about serving and believing in one God and holy trinity. These findings were also supported by Bua (1980) who also argued that African Traditional Religion was not just a house of cards that collapsed at the instance of change, but that it has the potential to adapt on its own, in response to changes that take place around it. In this sense, the resilient nature

of ATR and its cultural values and the ability to influence and be influenced in encountering other religions and cultures appear to be confirmed

4.5.1 Church positions on Supernatural Beliefs

The study also sought to find out the church position on the supernatural beliefs that would also promote syncretism in the church. Table 4.10 shows the responses

Table 4.9 Church positions on Supernatural Beliefs

supernatural beliefs	Yes		I don't Know		No	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
There is contact of spirits through diviners	23	76.7	4	13.3	3	10.0
Demonic spirits are harmful	25	83.3	3	10.0	2	6.7
AINC believes in the existence of demons	24	80.0	3	10.0	3	10.0
AINC believes in the existence of Angels	27	90.0	1	3.3	2	6.7
Angles brings good news and also warn God's people	24	80.0	3	10	3	10.0
AINC believes in the existence of ancestors	25	83.3	4	13.3	1	3.3
There is naming of the newborns after the ancestors	25	83.3	2	6.7	3	10.0

Source: Field data (2016)

The study found that majority of the respondents (church members) at 76.7% agreed that there was contact of spirits through divines, while 10.0% indicated otherwise. Most of the respondents also believed that demonic spirits were harmful as indicated by 83.3% of the respondents. This implies that AINC believed in the existence of the demons as also confirmed by majority of the respondents at 80.0%. On the other hand, most of the respondents at 90% also agreed that their church believed in the existence of angels, and that angles could bring good news and also offer protection to God's people as indicated by 80% of the respondents. Another 83.3% indicated that AINC believes in the existence of ancestors and naming of the newborns after the ancestors.

One of the reasons for the establishment of the church was to provide a platform where Africans could express themselves with their traditions. Therefore, African Israel Nineveh Church being one of the African independent churches has its doctrines and church teachings mixed with African traditions and in this context, Luo culture and practices such as believing in the existence of demons, diviners, ancestors, and naming of the newborns after the ancestors, still find their way into the church worship (Church Leader, 15, November 9, 2016).

Another Church leader, when probed on the reaction of the church in supernatural beliefs, had this to say:

The church believes in the existence of some supernatural beings such as ancestors' spirits, diviners and angels, since the Luo community also believed in them according to their traditions and culture. In some cases, the Luo name their newborn babies after the dead people. Although, this practice is slowly diminishing (Church Leader, 12, November 9, 2016). In the same way, we Christians in AINC name our children after saints, who died a long time. The difference is that whereas Christians are supposed to imitate the saints, Africans believe in actual incarnation, so do the adherents of AINC.

From these findings, it can be concluded that the AINC church believed in the existence of supernatural beings, which were also acknowledged and recognized by the Luo traditions and culture. Similarly, Saga (2009) pointed out that African beliefs includes belief in a supreme creator, belief in spirits, veneration of ancestors, and use of magic as well as the traditional medicine. Thus, even with the introduction of Christianity, the adherence of Africans to Christian beliefs has been hard to estimate, due to syncretism with Christianity and other religious movements in Africa (Appiah, 2010)

4.6 How AINC addresses the Problem of Syncretism among it's adherents

In the third research objective, the study sought to find out how AINC deals with the problem of syncretism among its adherents. This will be shown in tables 4.8, 4.9, 4.10 and 4.11.

4.6.1 Problems facing church based on its teachings

Respondents were asked to identify the problems faced by the church based on its teachings. Table 4.11 shows the response.

Table 4.10: Problems facing church based on its teachings

Mentions	Frequency	Percentages
Strict church rules/doctrines	24	80.0
Many church doctrines and rules	22	73.3
Africanizing church teachings and doctrines	21	70.0
Incorporation of the traditions and cultures in the Christian doctrines	28	93.3
Male dominating leadership	27	90.0

Source: Field data (2016)

The study found out that different problems were mentioned as facing the church. For instance, 90.0% of the respondents mentioned male domineering in leadership positions, 80.0% indicated strict church rules and doctrines conflicting with the cultural practices and traditions. Majority of the respondents (93.3%) indicated that incorporation of the traditions and cultures in the Christian doctrines was one of the problems faced in the doctrinal teachings of AINC. Another 73.3% indicated that multiplication of church rules and doctrines had become a way of dealing with syncretism in AINC, while 70% indicated that Africanizing the church teachings, was the way forward. This included accepting into the church songs, dances and rituals that were performed in African or specifically Luo culture.

Research data obtained from the interviews with the church leaders also indicated that AINC is stained with many African cultures and traditions, which may influence the church teachings. For instance, one of the church leaders said thus:

Some of our church members believed so much in polygamy such that when teaching against polygamy in the church, they feel bad or take offense with the preacher. So, the church has no option but to accommodate them, otherwise they will feel that rules and church doctrines are too strict and hard on them (Church Leader, 18, November 9, 2016).

Another church leader also had this to say:

Mixing of the Luo traditions through songs, dances and rituals with the church doctrines is also a major challenge in the church and so the members would still practice their traditions and cultural beliefs, which in most cases contravene the church doctrines. (Church Leader, 11, November 9, 2016).

From these findings, it can be deduced that AINC faces various challenges in its teachings and doctrines, but more notably, mixing of the traditions and practices was some of the major problems. Gehman (2001) has already noted that syncretism is a serious problem primarily found among African Independent Churches. These beliefs and practices are inserted into Christianity without any critique; this is expressed in their songs, dance and rituals. Sometimes, these elements are placed side by side with the gospel and sometimes exalted above the Christian tradition.

4.6.2 Examples of Syncretism in AINC

The study also sought to know some of the examples of syncretistic practices in AINC, and table 4.12 shows the response.

Table 4.11: Examples of syncretism practices in church

Mentions	Frequency	Percentages
Practicing of polygamy	26	86.7
Naming after the dead (ancestors)	28	93.3
Belief in the existence of other spirits	27	90.0
Memorial service after burial	27	90.0
Consulting diviners	21	70.0

Source: Field data (2016)

The study found out that there were various forms and examples of syncretistic practices in AINC that had been carried over the Luo traditional practices. Majority of the respondents (90%) indicated that some of the church members believed in the existence of other spirits than the Holy Spirit, and that memorial services after

death has more overtones from Luo rather than Christian traditions. Another significant group of the respondents (93.3%) identified naming of new born babies after the dead, with another group (86.7%) identifying polygamy as a practice among the Church adherents

4.6.3 How church deals with Syncretism

The study sought to know how AINC could deal with the syncretism in the church and table 4.13 shows the response from members.

Table 4.12: How church deals with Syncretism

Mentions	Frequency	Percentages
Excommunicating members from church	18	60.0
Guidance and counseling of the proponents	28	93.3
Denying the proponents leadership positions	24	80.0
Offering prayers to the proponents and victims	28	93.3
Preaching against the practice	29	96.7

Source: Field data (2016)

The study established that the AINC deals with syncretism through various methods but notably, through guidance and counseling of those encouraging various forms of syncretism, as indicated by 93.3% of the respondents. The church could also pray for the proponents of these practices and exorcise them, or preach against them all together as indicated by 93.3% and 96.7% of the respondents. Another group of respondents (80%) also indicated that sometimes the church could deny those encouraging themselves in the practice of syncretism any leadership position in the church and in some cases, they could also be excommunicated. Similarly, during the interview with church leaders, it came out that the church could use different methods and measures to deal with syncretism among the church members. For instance, one of the church leaders said the following:

The church preaches against practices of different forms of syncretism especially those that are harmful to the spiritual development of the members such as seeking divine intervention from the diviners or sorcerers. In some cases, these church members are talked to, prayed for or counseled by the church leaders (Church Leader, 3, November 16, 2016).

Another church leader had this to say:

In extreme cases, where we are sure of the church member practicing syncretism and that it had led to death or obvious embarrassment of the church, then such member is excommunicated or suspended so that it becomes a lesson to the rest of the believers (Church Leader, 17, November 16, 2016).

This shows that AINC discourages other forms of syncretism that would be injurious to the faith of the members or the image of the church and would use different measures to curb the practice. This was also corroborated by Chidili (1997) who also indicated that extreme and harmful traditional practices in the church were best solved by preaching against those practices and praying for those who take part in these practices to change their lifestyle.

V. SUMMARY OF THE STUDY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This section provides a summary of this study in the following order; purpose of the study, objectives, methodology, major findings and conclusions. It also provides both policy and academic recommendations, based on the study findings.

5.2 Summary of Study Findings

5.2.1 Traditional Luo beliefs and practices found in African Israel Nineveh Church

The first research objective was to analyse the traditional Luo beliefs and practices found in African Israel Nineveh Church. In this objective, the study found out that as a church, one of the major practices done for the new-borns was offering gifts, praying for the new-borns, making offerings and visitations. For instance, when probed on what the church was doing when a member had given birth, majority of the respondents (70.0%) mentioned provision of gifts/presents, 13.3% indicated pray for the family at large, while 16.7% mentioned offering visitations.

One of the striking features of the Luo traditional practices at the birth of a child, which is also being practiced in the African Israel Nineveh Church, is organizing ceremonies and festivities for a new-born child. The faithful bring gifts for the child and then there are songs and dances organized for the occasion. It is also a

festive occasion because birth is seen as an occasion of joy for all the members of the community. There are also cases of naming of the newborns after the living dead members of their family tree or the clan ancestors. The study also found out that AINC accepted and accommodated polygamy among its members as indicated by majority of the respondents, with only a small group opposing the practice. This was indicated by majority of the respondents (70.0%), while 30.0% disapproved the practice. It was also discovered that many other Luo cultural practices are embedded in and mixed with the church doctrines. Interviews of the church leaders and Focus Group Discussion of church members also showed that Luo Christians could still conduct or participate in certain marriage cultural practices that may be practiced alongside the doctrines of the African Israel Nineveh Church. However, these practices may be conflicting with many modern and mainstream Christian churches, much as they are accommodated in the AINC, which also professes the Christian faith.

The study also found out that as a result of death of a husband, there were cases of wife inheritance, a practice that is common among the Luo traditional believers, but has largely died off. The study further found out that the church also believed in tomb visiting after the burial, for a period ranging from three months to three years; a practice that is still being practiced by all Luo traditional believers. The majority of the respondents (86%) indicated that they could visit the tomb after 3 days, 10% indicated 3 months, while 4% indicated 1 year. This indicates that much as people get converted and join AINC, many of their traditional cultural practices do not disappear with the mere fact of conversion.

5.2.2 Syncretism in AINC

The second objective of the study was to analyse the church doctrines in relation to syncretism in AINC. The study found out that AINC teaches the existence of holy trinity as composed of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit as indicated by over three quarters of the respondents (76.7%). Majority of the respondents (70%) also agreed that the church teaches about the Holy Spirit as being different from the Luo traditional spirits. It was also discovered that AINC taught about the belief in Jesus Christ as the son of God as indicated by 80% of the respondents. This implies that the belief in Jesus, and not any other being as a super power, was among the major teachings of the church. Another significant group of respondents (76.7%) also agreed that the Holy Spirit guided their actions, rather than the traditional spirits.

The study found out that AINC taught the existence of holy trinity as composed of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit as supreme over other spirits or traditional powers. In recognition of these traditional spirits, the church teaches about Holy Spirit is superior to, and different from these spirits. The church also believes in Jesus Christ as the son of God, but this allegiance is tainted by the Luo traditional beliefs where the first-born is regarded as equal and the same as his father on the virtue of kinship. This is in sharp contrast from the belief in mainstream Christian Churches, which teach (in the Apostles Creed) that Jesus does not merely relate to the Father as his progenitor, but that the two are consubstantial – or of the same essence. Much as they also believed in the Holy Spirit, to guide and control their lives, they also believe in other spirits and traditional powers, amounting to syncretism in the church. The same case applies to the doctrine of incarnation, where Jesus is said to have assumed the human nature and lived among men here on earth. Members of AINC firmly accept this doctrine but also believe that spirits of their dead ancestors could come and live with people, for good or bad reasons. In the event that a bad spirit visited a family, then solution was not prayers, but to carry out traditional rituals to appease this spirit and send it away, irrespective of whether you are a convert or not.

In an effort to get of syncretism in AINC, its leadership teaches that God has power over all spirits, including ancestral ones and that he could eliminate those spirits in them; and that no any other power could be capable in doing that. The church also teaches the doctrine of salvation as brought by Jesus Christ, to wash away individual and collective sins of the convert. However, a significant number of the respondents do not believe in salvation, as a result of influence from Luo traditional beliefs, which do not recognise the need for salvation, individual sins or the Day of Judgement that is to come sometime in future. Thus, the proclamation of Jesus Christ as one who died for us is not based on its efficacious grace for righteousness but on its sociological effects of promoting togetherness in the church.

The study also found that resurrection was some of the major teachings in AINC church. They also believed in the existence of the demons as also confirmed by majority of the respondents at 80.0%. On the other hand, respondents also agreed that their church believed in the existence of angels, and that angles could bring good news and also offer protection to God's people as indicated by 80% of the respondents. Others indicated that AINC believes in the existence of ancestors and naming of the new-borns after the ancestors.

5.2.3 How AINC addresses the problem of syncretism among its adherents

The third research objective was to find out how AINC addressed the problem of syncretism among its adherents. One of the major problems facing the church is practising of Luo traditions and practices by many members of the church. However, leaders are not in agreement on how to approach and deal with the problem.

Some suggest incorporation of Luo traditions and cultures into the Christian doctrines, other respondents argued that there are too much rules and regulations hence need to ward off any possible mingling of these two sets of beliefs. Finally, others are of the opinion that, all church teachings need to be Africanized by extension that songs, dances and rituals should be performed in African and more specifically Luo culture.

In dealing with the syncretism, the study established that the church uses various methods but notably the church offers guidance and counselling to those who are actively involved in and encouraging the various forms of syncretistic practices. The church could also pray for the proponents of these practices or preach against them altogether. Other times the church could deny those encouraging the practice of syncretism any leadership positions and in some cases, they could be as well excommunicated.

5.3 Conclusion

Major conclusions drawn from the first objective were that traditional Luo beliefs and practices are rife in African Israel Nineveh Church, especially the celebration of newborn babies, marriage and death. At birth there is the traditional naming of the newborns after the living dead or ancestors, naming according to particular event or season or the time of birth. Traditionally, the birth ceremony was also characterized by ceremonies, giving of gifts and traditional songs and dances, and the same applies to AINC. The church also accepts polygamous marriage, even though the practice is widely condemned and rejected by many mainstream Christian churches. Moreover marriage ceremonies are characterized by typical ceremonies, traditional songs and dances found in the Luo traditions. Upon death of a husband, there was widow inheritance and other rituals associated with death of husband or family member, in the traditional Luo Society.

The doctrinal teachings of AINC on syncretism are mainly that there is need to believe in the Holy Trinity only that is God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. The church discourages the belief and acknowledgement of other traditional spirits and demons. The church also encourages the recognition of Jesus Christ as the sole saviour, who could nullify demonic powers and that demonic spirits are harmful to the strength of salvation of the church.

Thus the church deals with syncretism through various methods depending on the gravity of the act of syncretism and also the intention of the concerned faithful. These include guidance and counselling of those encouraging various forms of syncretism, prayers for the proponents of these practices or preach against their practices and also condemnation of those who persist, denial of leadership positions as well excommunication of the errant members.

5.4. Recommendations

This section stipulates the recommendations to be implemented by the AINC for the practice of pure church doctrines devoid of any traditions and cultures that would otherwise compromise the Christian faith of the church followers when mixed with the church teachings. The study recommends that current Christian teachings should be anchored on the bible teachings alone in the guiding principles of Christianity. This will help in decreasing the practice of Luo traditions and culture in the church that are not fruitful for the spiritual growth of the Christians.

The study also recommends that teachings of the word of God and gospel of Lord Jesus Christ should always be pegged on the church doctrines and practices since syncretism is harmful to the growth of the church. The church also emphasized commitment to Christian discipleship and centrality of Jesus Christ for spiritual growth of the Christians. Lastly, the study recommends that every member of church that encourages fruitless syncretism should be discouraged through prayers and guiding and counseling according to the Christian teachings for sustainability of church and Christian doctrines among its members.

5.5. Suggestion for Further Study

This study contributed significantly to the body of literature on influence of Luo traditions on the beliefs and practices of African Israel Nineveh Church. The study suggests that further study should be done on effects of Luo traditions and beliefs and practices in church on the spiritual growth of the church members. The study also suggests that in future, similar research to be done in other ethnic settings and areas before generalization is made. Finally, the study suggests a thorough study of Luo traditions that are still useful and relevant to the modern life of the faithful and which do not go against the teachings of the gospel. These could be officially incorporated into the teachings as well as the rituals of AINC. Hence enculturation is a key aspect of the future and spiritual growth of AINC that requires a serious study.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This study has been a long journey and I feel indebted to those who participated in their own ways to make it a success up to data collection. I thank the almighty God for his special grace and protection over the entire period of data collection. Special appreciation goes to some of the lecturers who took me through course work just to mention Father Charles Oduke, Dr. Naila Napoo as well as my thesis Supervisors, Dr. David Ndegwah and Dr. Hezekiah Obwoye for their dedication, sincere guidance, suggestions, criticisms,

understanding and support as I was doing this thesis. To the entire school of humanity, thank you for your encouragement. Finally I acknowledge the efforts of my research assistants Miss. J. Clarice and Ms. Winnie Oluoch who helped me collect data and interact with Alego Usonga community members. I appreciate the support I received from all those who typed my work after data collection process.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: MORGAN AND KREJCIE (1970)

Table 3.1
Table for Determining Sample Size of a Known Population

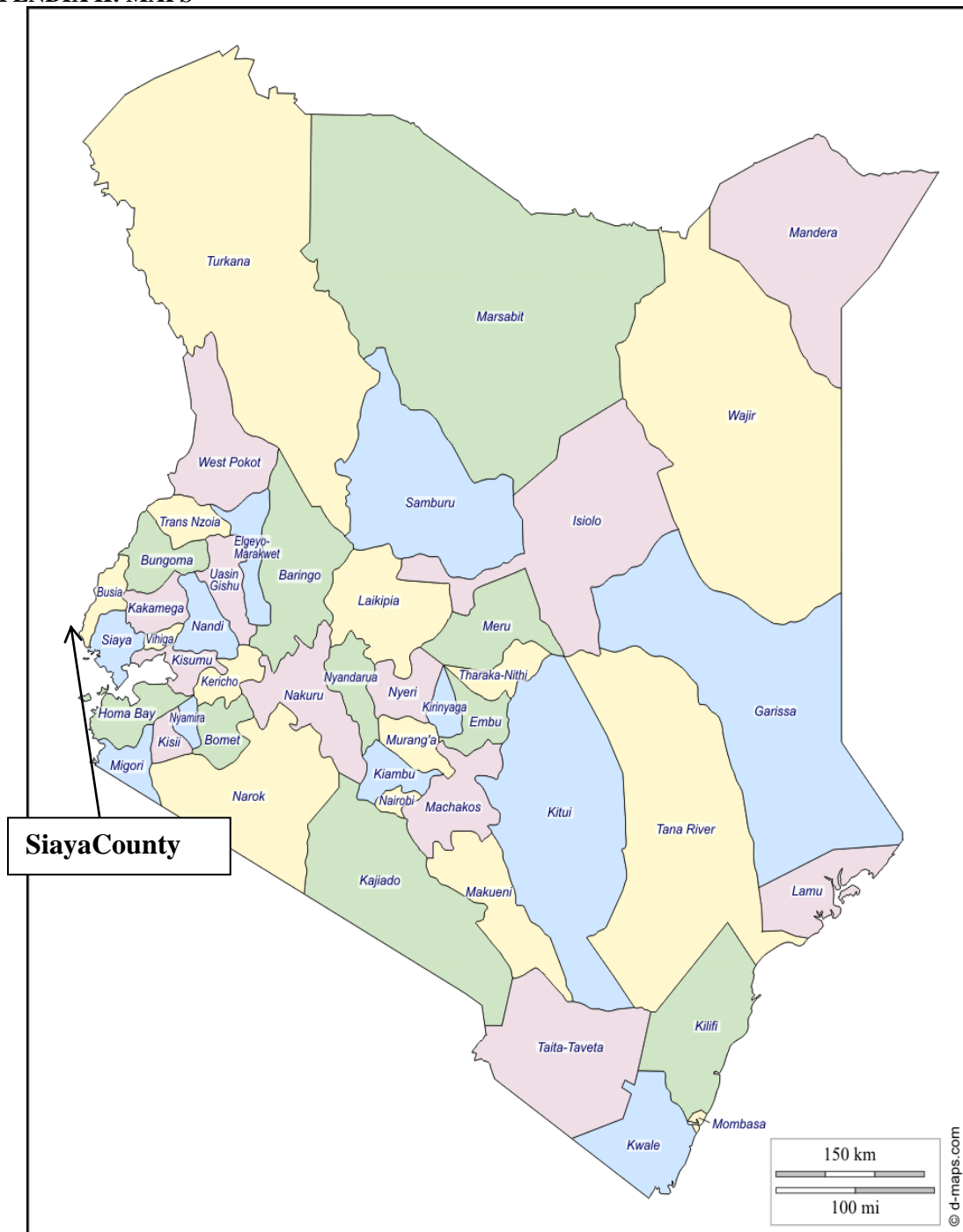
N	S	N	S	N	S	N	S	N	S
10	10	100	80	280	162	800	260	2800	338
15	14	110	86	290	165	850	265	3000	341
20	19	120	92	300	169	900	269	3500	346
25	24	130	97	320	175	950	274	4000	351
30	28	140	103	340	181	1000	278	4500	354
35	32	150	108	360	186	1100	285	5000	357
40	36	160	113	380	191	1200	291	6000	361
45	40	170	118	400	196	1300	297	7000	364
50	44	180	123	420	201	1400	302	8000	367
55	48	190	127	440	205	1500	306	9000	368
60	52	200	132	460	210	1600	310	10000	370
65	56	210	136	480	214	1700	313	15000	375
70	59	220	140	500	217	1800	317	20000	377
75	63	230	144	550	226	1900	320	30000	379
80	66	240	148	600	234	2000	322	40000	380
85	70	250	152	650	242	2200	327	50000	381
90	73	260	155	700	248	2400	331	75000	382
95	76	270	159	750	254	2600	335	1000000	384

Note: N is Population Size; S is Sample Size *Source: Krejcie & Morgan, 1970*

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Source: Krejcie & Morgan, 1970
Figure 1 Sample size

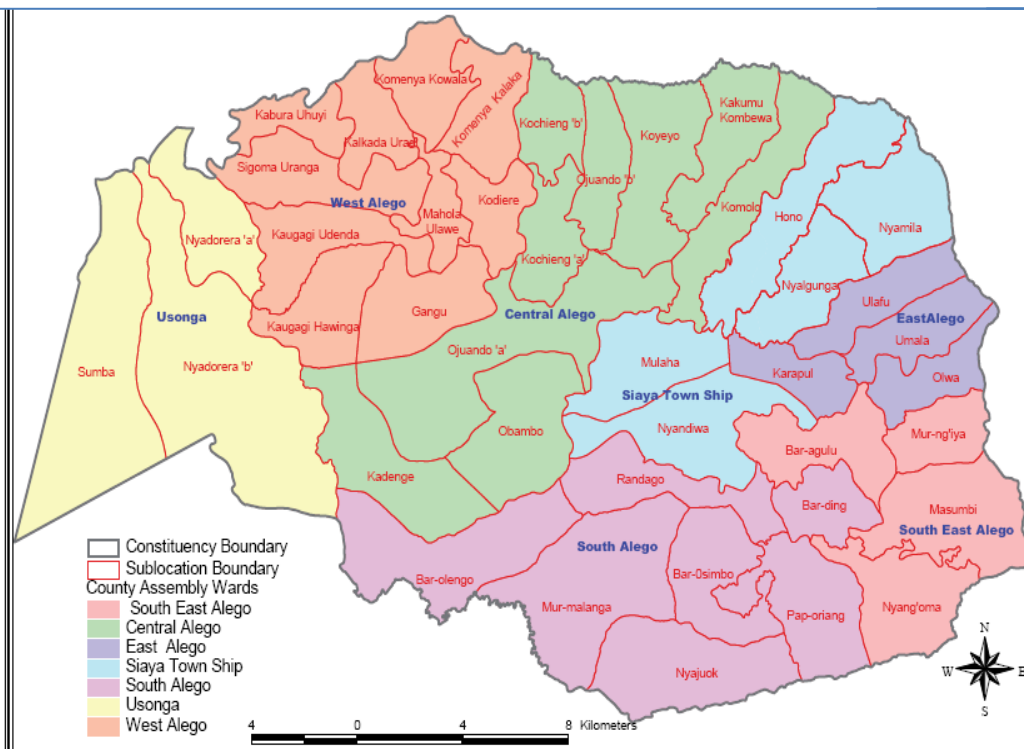
APPENDIX II: MAPS



Source: <http://softkenya.com/county/>
Figure 2. Map of Kenya showing Siaya County



Source: <https://msanii2009.wordpress.com/2013/09/19/voting-patterns-in-siaya-county>.
 Figure3 Map of Siaya County showing Alego Usonga Constituency



Source: <http://softkenya.com/constituency/alego-usonga-constituency/>

Figure4. Map of Alego Usonga Constituency

Florence Akoth Omondi. "Influence of Luo Traditional Religion on African Israel Nineveh Church in Alego Usonga Constituency, Kenya." IOSR Journal Of Humanities And Social Science (IOSR-JHSS) , vol. 22, no. 9, 2017, pp. 35–63.