THE TRANSFORMATION OF AN AFRICAN RELIGIOUS MOVEMENT:
A CASE OF THE AKURINU OF KANDARA SUB-COUNTY IN MURANG’A
COUNTY, KENYA, 1926-2000

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DECLARATION
This thesis is my original work and to the best of my knowledge has not been presented for a degree award in any University.

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C50/CE/23246/10

This thesis was submitted with our approval as University Supervisors.

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DEDICATION
To my Dad and Mum for your moral support and encouragement. To my wife and children for the material support, love, care and prayers during the period of study. I will forever treasure your perseverance, patience and invaluable support that gave me the impetus to soldier on.
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I further wish to thank the staff of various Libraries and archives who went to great lengths to locate and avail the numerous materials required for this study. Fieldwork would not have been possible without the assistance of many individuals. I am indebted to all my informants and contact persons who helped identify potential informants.

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<tr>
<th>Term</th>
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<tr>
<td>Mucii (pl. mucii)</td>
<td>Family Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thingira</td>
<td>Man’s hut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nyumba</td>
<td>Wife’s dwelling hut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ikumbi</td>
<td>Granary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mihiriga</td>
<td>Clans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mwana wa Mumbi</td>
<td>Child of Mumbi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mbari</td>
<td>Sub-clan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Itura</td>
<td>Big location</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mwaki</td>
<td>Small region</td>
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<tr>
<td>Muramati</td>
<td>Custodian</td>
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<tr>
<td>Muthamaki</td>
<td>Ruler</td>
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<td>Riika (pl Maarika)</td>
<td>Age-set</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kiama</td>
<td>Council of Elders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metumi</td>
<td>Murang’a</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mwene</td>
<td>Owner of land</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mondo</td>
<td>Kikuyu bag</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kimera</td>
<td>Season</td>
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<tr>
<td>Muhingo</td>
<td>Closed period</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anaake</td>
<td>Warriors</td>
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<td>Aiiritu</td>
<td>Young ladies</td>
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<td>Atumia</td>
<td>Women</td>
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<td>Athuri</td>
<td>Men</td>
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<td>Njama ya ita</td>
<td>Council of war</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kihunguyu</td>
<td>Nosy parker</td>
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**ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AIC’s</td>
<td>African Indigenous / Independent / Initiated / Instituted Churches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AICN</td>
<td>African Israel Church Nineveh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIM</td>
<td>African Inland Mission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIPCA</td>
<td>African Independent Pentecostal Church of Africa.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASF</td>
<td>Akurinu Student Fellowship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DC</td>
<td>District Commissioner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FGD</td>
<td>Focus Group Discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KCA</td>
<td>Kikuyu Central Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KANU</td>
<td>Kenya African National Union.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KISA</td>
<td>Kikuyu Independent Schools Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEMA</td>
<td>National Environmental Management Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NLM</td>
<td>Nomiya Luo Church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PC</td>
<td>Provincial Commissioner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLWH</td>
<td>People Living With HIV/AIDS</td>
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<td>OAIC</td>
<td>Organization of African Independent Churches</td>
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This study seeks to investigate the history, practices and transformation of the Akurinu movement, a religious group that emerged in Kandara sub-County, Murang’a County in Central Kenya in the 1920s. Its emergence was as a response to the socio-economic, political, and religio-cultural conflict caused by British colonial administration and the teachings of western Christian Missionaries in Gikuyu land. In the colonial period the Akurinu movement became withdrawn from the society and rejected everything that was foreign except the Bible. They adopted an adamant non-cooperation attitude not only to the Europeans but also to fellow Africans. After independence, the Akurinu community adapted themselves to the changing circumstances by initiating transformational changes which boosted their public image, social interactions and upward economic mobility. The study employed theoretical frameworks of Social Movement and Modernization theories with a view to analyze the group’s emergence and the transformational process undertaken. The study covered the period between 1926 and 2000. The study was conducted in Kandara sub-county and covered areas that had large following of the Akurinu under the Kenya Foundation of the Prophets Church. These included Kaguthi, Gathugu, Rwathia as well as Mukurwe and Gacharage. Both secondary and primary data was used. A total of 64 informants both men and women of varying ages were interviewed. Collected data was analyzed through qualitative method, placed under historical interrogation and compared with existing information for authentication purposes. This research established that the emergence of the Akurinu movement was a result of a combination of political, socio-economic and cultural factors in colonial Kenya. The study also established that this movement had undertaken transformations that have impacted positively to the Akurinu way of life in the larger society.
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

The study of African religions has consistently been enjoying serious publicity and attention from several scholars of religion and social sciences. These academic specialists are no less divided about the meaning of the term religion than are members of the public. Norbeck (1961:7) posits that their search sometimes revealed the curious philosophy that “religion has an inherent and unchanging meaning.”

It is for this reason that different scholars have offered varied definitions for the term religion. Russels (1995) defined religion as humanity’s sensitivity to ultimate meaning of existence, which derives from his relationship to a transcendent or super-empirical plane of reality. Yinger (1946) opines that religion is a system of beliefs and practices by means of which a group of people struggle with the ultimate problem of human life. For Smith (1978), religion is the attitude or active relationship and actions growing out of that attitude and reality or relationship, towards whatever or whomever an individual and or group of persons take to be of greater value and reality.

Many scholars generally agree that religion comprises of beliefs, practices, and rituals that relate to the sacred, God and the mystical or the supernatural (Harold Koenig, 2009:284). Religion is therefore of integral importance as it concerns the deepest root of
human existence and integrates human life into a coherent whole (Schuurman, 2011:273).

In the light of the above, it suffices to say that there lacks an acceptable universal
definition of religion as people view it from different perspectives based on their beliefs,
occupations, experiences and academic backgrounds.

African traditional religion is part of the religious heritage of humankind and refers to the
indigenous beliefs and practices that give ultimate meaning to human existence and
enhance the quality of life (Mbiti, 1990). In this religion, one is born into it as a way of
life with its cultural implications. It is the religion, which resulted from the sustaining
faith held by the forebears of the present generation of Africans passed from generation to
generation, and still practiced today in various shades and intensities by a large number of
Africans (Awolalu, 1991:111). It is a religion that ‘is not merely a matter of facts, but
mainly a matter of meaning’ (Gimode, 1993:38), denoting that Africans are not converted
into it, but each person is born into it, lives in it, practices it and is proud to make it his
own.

This religion has no written literature or sacred scripture or creedal forms, but is
essentially transmitted through “oral traditions; myths and legends, stories and folktales,
songs and dances, liturgies and rituals, proverbs and pithsayings, adages and riddles”
(Depamo,1978), passed down from one generation to another and thus written in
people’s hearts, minds and oral history. In African thinking, there is no division between
religion and life, body and soul, natural and supernatural.
This serves to illuminate our understanding that in African religion, humankind is viewed as a life force interacting harmoniously with forces in the universe namely; God, the deities and ancestors. For Mbiti, “It is religion, more than anything else, which colours their understanding of the universe and their empirical participation in that universe, making life a profoundly religious phenomenon. To be is to be religious in a religious universe” (Mbiti, 1969:262).

The main features of African indigenous religions revolved around the ways of worship, symbols, and myths among many other lifestyle details. Worship consisted in large parts attempts to express reverence and perhaps to enter into communion with that which is worshiped or to request help for problems such as ill health, disharmony, or poverty (Mbiti, 1962). Rituals and spiritual prayers formed part of African worship and were used to create a sacred atmosphere necessary to convey request for help and to sanctify and explain the meaning of life stages such as birth, puberty, marriage, and death. Divinities or intermediaries between man and the Supreme Being held a special place in African society (Kenyatta, 1939). They were used as channels through which sacrifices, prayers, and offerings were presented to God. Religion therefore had fundamental influence in the traditional life of Africans.

Each of the numerous societies living in the expansive continent and occupying a defined territory had well developed indigenous religions, usually associated with places of origin, particular myths and with different ways of understanding God’s role in all spheres of life (Idowu, 1973). Traditional African religious practices are centered on the
belief and worship of a supreme God referred to in different names. In Nigeria for instance, the Igbo called him Chukwuamon, a term that connotes the Great one. The Edo referred to him as Osanobwa, meaning the source of all beings (Depamu, 1978: 126). The Ewe and Fon of Dahomey used the name Nana Buluku that translates to the Great ancient deity. The Batanga of Zambia called him Leza- the one who does what others cannot do. The Dinka in Sudan addressed him as Nhiali, translating to the only one. The Ruanda used the term Imana referring to his greatness. The Agikuyu of Kenya referred to Him as Ngai, denoting the provider. The use of these terms describes the attributes, nature, work and character of the African Deity. It is thus essential to note that God was no stranger to African peoples, and in African traditional life, there were no atheists (Mbiti, 1969: 29).

Nearly all African societies in the colonial period had developed a fair number of religious faith and sects including various manifestations of Christian, Islamic and syncretic beliefs. Haynes (1996) observes that during the colonial era it was the rural areas that anti – colonial religious movements flourished because of dissatisfaction with aspects of colonial rule. Organized religious movements under the leadership of inspired prophets promising spiritual salvation to the followers are numerous in the history of sub-Saharan Africa. Kimbanguism in Zaire, the Musama Disco Christo Church in Ghana, the Aladura movement in West Africa and most recently the Lord’s Resistance Army of Alice Lakwena in Uganda are case examples. Kenya has a detailed history of religious movements, some linked to indigenous or traditional gods, ancestral spirits, and a large number to Christianity. The charismatic leaders of these movements led their people
either in opposing Christianity or in attempting to purify and Africanize Christianity introduced to them by European missionaries.

One such movement witnessed between the Gusii and Luo of western Kenya was Mumbo cult. The communities believed in Mumbo, a god who lived in the sky, and were lead by prophet Onyango and Sakawa respectively (Wipper, 1977). In the late 1930’s, Elijah Masinde led the Luhya of western Kenya in the formation of the Dini ya Musambwa, a religious outfit whose aim was to expel out the colonialists and missionaries and restore the traditional Luhya religion (Ibid). Among the Luo, the emergence of Legio Maria founded by Simeon Ondeto and the Luo Nomiya church led by Johanna Owalo are classic examples of prophetic movements, which combined Christianity, traditional religion, and manifestation of the Holy Spirit (Opwapo, 2011).

In Kikuyu land, the emergence of the Akurinu religious movement is perhaps one of the momentous events in the history of the Agikuyu (Macharia, 2012). Existing literature trace the genesis of the movement to the cultural and religious crises of the late 1920’s in Kikuyu land (Kinyanjui, 1974: Murray, 1973). Like other movements of its kind, the origins of the Akurinu was also connected with itinerant prophetic figures, such as Joseph Ng’ang’a and Musa Thuo, who claimed divine calling to their ministry (Spear & Kimambo, 1999; Githieya, 1997). The Akurinu indeed provide an ‘example of innovative approach where traditional cultural and religious ceremonies have been adapted and transformed to have Christian meaning’ (Daneel, 1974: 309). The Akurinu did not want to abandon either their African values or their Christian faith and felt that it was time to
develop an expression of Christianity that was truly their own, one which would meet the needs of the whole person in every aspect of his life, a ‘place to feel at home’ (Welbourn & Ogot, 1966).

They found the Bible’s worldview similar to their own, and thus used important expressions of Christianity and only added from the Gikuyu religion; those items they felt were missing especially the pre-Christian methods of communicating with the supernatural through dreams, visions, and prophetic messages. They found the scriptures especially the Old Testament, which portrays a culture similar to that of traditional African, a very convenient justification for syncretism in areas such as circumcision, polygamy, levirate as well as seer and sacrifice (Waigwa, 2007). The Akurinu represents “a manifestation of Christianity consistent with their own unique historical experience, rooted self-consciously in their unique cultures, and contributing to a richer worldview interaction of the gospel” (Wambugu and Padwick, 2006:61).

They have developed over time an innovative approach where Agikuyu religion and other faiths have been syncretized and transformed to have Christian meaning, as seen in areas such as songs, dance and rituals. Since its emergence, this community of believers has witnessed transformational changes in their practice of worship and way of life, which has ensured stability and identity within the fellowship of churches besides boosting their prestige in their participation in the life of their society.

The term Akurinu is generally used to refer to a religious movement that emerged in Kikuyu land during the religio-cultural crises of the 1920s and whose followers are
clearly distinguished by their spiritual regalia where men wear white turbans on their heads and women put on long white dresses and white headscarves. There is a lot of controversy regarding this religious movement caused by its schismatic tendencies which has resulted to emergence of numerous groups, all using the turban as their trade mark, though in varying colors. Many have retained the white turban and dress but in the recent past, the use of other colors like pink, purple, red and green has been observed (Macharia, 2012). Their collective identity is expressed by the symbolism of their white garments and every adherent of this religious group, wear a turban as a way of acknowledging the New Testament doctrine of the priesthood of all believers and as a mark of equality before God (Waigwa, 2007).

During the colonial period the Akurinu, piety and holiness did not allow them to freely associate with the rest in the society, as they believed that this could defile their holy life. Their strong conviction that the world was ending and that they were transiting to the heavenly world made them not get involved with secular matters (Mwaura, 1984). It is this attitude that guided the Akurinu social behaviour and way of life that distinguished them from the rest. This explains their strict observance of dietary and ablution rules, not shaking hands in greetings and the adamant non-cooperation attitude (Aroti Magazine, 2014). After independence, the Akurinu movement responded to social change and transformed leading to decline of some of their old practices, modification, reinvention and change in their way of life (Ibid).
Presently, adherents of this movement are loosely referred to outsiders as Akurinu, a term whose origin and meaning remains obscure. Different names and titles have been used in reference to Akurinu. Kenyatta (1938:273) referred to them as “Watu wa Mungu.” Arathi and Aroti, the colonial administration called them false prophets, while most recently, a term such as “wagithomo” is used. The term “Aroti” was coined from the group’s emphasis on dreams “iroto,” visions “cioneki,” and auditions “migambo.” It is the Aroti who later came to be known as Akurinu, a name believed to trace its origin from a Meru word “Gukurina,” which interprets to roaring like a Lion in worship and prayer (Macharia, 2012). It is also argued that the term Akurinu emerged in reference to their response when answering a religious question; Mukuri nu? (Who is the redeemer?) Ni Jehovah (It is the Lord) (Dorcas Njoki, O.I.2012).

By the year 2000, there were numerous Akurinu groups scattered manly in Central and parts of Rift valley regions. They included the Holy Ghost Church of East Africa (Limuru), Gods Word Holy Ghost Church (Kahiriga), and the Chosen Church of the Holy Spirit (Nakuru) as well as the Kenya Foundation of the Prophets’ Church in Kandara (Mwaura, 1984). However, for the purpose of this study, we shall concentrate on the latter Akurinu group that emerged at Kaguthi in Kandara Sub-County of Murang’a County, under the leadership of Musa Thuo.

This study seeks to fill the gap of the knowledge on the historical genesis of the Akurinu in Kandara, their transformation process and its impact on the society.
1.2 Statement of the problem.

There have been numerous studies on religious independency in Kenya today. The Akurinu religious movement in Murang’a county has been in existence for several years, having emerged at about the same period with other independents, yet adequate information on the movement remain scarce. Available studies tend to consider all Akurinu groups as virtually identical. (Waigwa, 2007; Macharia, 2012; Kenyatta, 1938). The Akurinu religious beliefs and practices have been characterized by a unique way of syncretic merger of Agikuyu traditions with Christianity. This has occasioned the movement to be the object of contempt and ridicule by many who view their practices as religious fantasies and obstacles to national development, yet, it has continued attracting large following in various parts of the country, although they draw heavily from the Kikuyu community (Macharia, 2012). Changing trends in a society in transition has prompted the Akurinu movement to undertake transformational changes in areas such health, education, diet to mention a few. This change has affected positively to a fast changing Kenyan society and despite the transformation, there seems to be a clear neglect in scholarship on its nature, responses and impact to the larger society. A historical study on the Musa Thuo’s Kandara group of the Akurinu movement has been lacking. This lack of study and adequate information on one of the oldest religious movement in Kenya is the topic worthy of study.

1.3 Objectives of the study

This study aimed to achieve the following objectives;
1. To examine the emergence of Akurinu movement of Kandara Sub- County in Murang’a County within Gikuyu pre-colonial setting.

2. To examine some observances and practices of the earliest Akurinu movement in Kandara-Sub County in Murang’a County from 1926-1963.

3. To interrogate the transformations in practice of Akurinu worship and way of life within the context of globalization in the period 1963-2000.

1.4 Research Questions

The study was guided by the following questions;

1. What factors led to the emergence of Akurinu movement within the Agikuyu community?

2. What were the beliefs and practices of the Akurinu movement in Kandara-sub County in Murang’a County in the period 1926 up to 1963?

3. To what extent has the Akurinu movement changed in their worship and way of life in the period 1963 – 2000?

1.5 Research Premises

The study was based on the following premises;

1. The dismantling of the Agikuyu socio-political, economic and religio-cultural structures by colonialism led to the emergence of the Akurinu movement in 1926.
2. The earliest Akurinu movement in Kandara had beliefs and practices that were unique and inherently Agikuyu in nature between 1926-1963.

3. Major transformational changes have taken place within the Akurinu movement from 1963-2000.

1.6 Rationale and Significance of the Study

The Akurinu religious movement in Murang’a County has been in existence since the cultural and religious crises of the late 1920s in Central Kenya, yet very little is known about it. Available studies on the Akurinu movement take a religious standpoint emphasizing more on their way of worship, beliefs and practices (Mwaura, 1984; Waigwa, 2007). There has been no single study on Akurinu of Kandara, Murang’a County. Moreover, the contemporary transformation process of the Akurinu has largely been under-investigated, thus justifying the study.

The study on the Akurinu of Murang’a was mainly instigated by the fact that although it emerged early in the 1920s, it has attracted little scholarly interest. In addition, this movement has been an enigma to many, hence this study sought to unravel some of the mysteries of the Akurinu movement. Its unique syncretic merger of Agikuyu indigenous religion with Christian faith makes it necessary to study their approach to Christianity that would perhaps provide other churches with guidelines towards indigenization of Christianity. Over time, this religious movement has undergone transformational changes that have affected its members and the society in general. Therefore, there is need to examine the history and the transformation of the Akurinu of Kandara, in Murang’a
County and the impact it had on the society then and now, and a challenge to Akurinu community to contribute positively to a fast changing Kenyan society.

The choice of 1920 is justified by the fact that it marks the period in which the movement emerged in Kikuyu land. The year 2000 is crucial in the movement’s history as it marked the pinnacle of reforms within the movement as witnessed in the transformation process (Macharia 2012). The study therefore reconstructed the history of Akurinu movement of Murang’a County and established factors for its emergence and the changes that have occurred in various aspects of the movement.

1.7 Scope and limitations of the Study

The study confined itself to Kandara- sub County in Murang’a County. Kandara is the home of Musa Thuo who is regarded as the founders of the Akurinu movement in Kandara. The study confined itself to the Akurinu, under the Foundation of the Prophets’ Church that has the largest membership compared to other Akurinu communities in the sub- County. The choice of Murang’a County as the area of study was favored because of its accessibility to the researcher in view of limited time and finances. Other Counties where the presence of the Akurinu was felt were mentioned only as far as they related to the Akurinu of Murang’a County. The study covered the period between 1926 and 2000. However, for the sake of laying a base for the study, a detailed discussion on the emergence of colonialism before 1926 is provided. The study covered the period up to 2000 but we pushed it beyond this in order to capture continuity and change witnessed in
the movement. The years 1963 and 2000 gave ample timeframe within which the investigation on transformation process in the Akurinu movement was made.
1.8 LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

1.8.1 Review of related literature

Introduction
This review of related literature focused on the studies that discussed religious independence phenomenon in sub Saharan Africa. There has been intense growth of interest on religious independency in Africa today from scholars of religion, anthropology and political science who have extensively studied on the subject since the introduction of Christianity in Africa. The sub-sections of this literature review examine studies on religious independency in Africa, Kenya and specifically Kikuyu land.

There has been clear emphasis by many scholars on the socio-political factors occasioned by social injustices and disruption of African social life by colonialism and missionary activities as the cause to the emergence of independent religious movement. The rapid growth of independent churches in Africa as noted by Barrett (1968) has further prompted more scholars to venture into tracing the complexities of their origin.

Sundkler (1961) regarding independence in South Africa point at socio-political causes resulting from social injustices and oppressive Apartheid policy where Whites exploited Africans and marginalized them through racial discrimination for many years. For him these triggered the rise of independent movements in South Africa. Blandier (1953) is of a similar view on Messianism in Zaire in his assertion that independency originated in the colonial situation in which the colonized is done injustice by the colonizer. Both studies
provided useful information in identifying the growth of Akurinu religiosity and the syncretic merger of Agikuyu traditional practices with western Christianity.

The studies by Lanternari (1963) noted that social, economic, and political factors influenced the emergence of religious movements. He further observes that the main causes to the rise of independent churches is the quest of the oppressed people for freedom from subjection and servitude to foreign powers as well as the destruction of traditional values. This view is collaborated by Hastings (1976) and Webster (1964) who opines that independency is all a revolt against imperialism whether the basic causes are religious, political or social. This study was very informative and assisted this research in establishing the causative factors for the emergence of the Akurinu movement in Kikuyu land.

Turner (1967) differs sharply with the above view and argues that the formations of African independent churches was not caused by social, economic and political problems faced by Africans during colonial period but were basically creative religious movements which provided security and spiritual guidance in the context of newly established groups. Turner further observes the vital role-played by charismatic or prophetic African leaders in the growth of independent religious movement. In his study on the Aladura movement in West Africa, Turner examines the political, economic and psychological reasons that led to the emergence of indigenous movements but asserts that religious factors were central to their emergence. The above study provided useful insights in examining the causative factors for the emergence of the Akurinu movement.
Barrett (1968) observed that some African communities are more prone to Christian independency because of the presence of socio-historic and religious factors. In the context of his theory, Barrett considers the Kenyan Luo, to be extremely high on this scale, and thus the reason behind the emergence of several independent religious movements among them. Barrett further argues that independency reflects a rebellion against a Christianity that had become “over-Europeanized.” Thus, there was a longing in the hearts of Africans to find a mode of religious expression, which would satisfy their needs. Consequently, African religious movements like the Akurinu emerged, which laid much emphasis on African culture in their religious consciousness. This work provided necessary contextual information relating to the Akurinu’s merger of African traditional culture with their Christian theology.

Martin (1975) notes that Simon Kimbangu, the founder of an African independent Church of Jesus Christ on Earth employed Christian symbols and more importantly saw himself as the figure of Christ. Kimbangu surprisingly is opposed to all traditional religious symbols, erotic dancing, use of dance drums and polygamy. His teachings spread from Zaire to Angola and adjacent areas among the Ba-kongo. For Martin, the colonial displacement created the potential for the movement to develop around the prophetic figurehead of Kimbangu. This study provided useful insights to this research especially relating to the symbolic use of regalia by the Akurinu.

Daneel (1987) argues that independent religious movements constitutes an integral and legitimate part of the universal church as observed in their response to the gospel, their
belief system and missionary strategy. He further postulates that these movements just like the historic mission churches have their incompleteness but always strive towards recognition of the Lordship of Christ. Daneels view on the causes of religious independent movement is collaborated in Barrett’s assertion that the cause of the entire movement of independency is the clash of three impinging cultures, the traditional, the colonial and the missionary (Barrett, 1989). This study provided useful information in investigating the transformation process undertaken by the Akurinu movement in its quest to identify its place and mission in the larger Christian fellowship.

Oosthuizen (1968) contrasts Daneels view that independent churches emerged out of nationalistic enterprises and political aspirations. He points at cultural conflict as the basis of independent churches and asserts that independency is strongest where culture clash has been strong and where a group has been protected from the shock of culture clash independency is absent. The above study was very relevant to this research in providing insights in examining whether similar factors accounted to the emergence of the Akurinu movement

Hastings (1996) studied the growth of the church in the last five centuries from the rise of the Ethiopian Orthodox church in the 15th century, the early Portuguese missionaries right through to the church and its key role in Africa today. Further, his study assessed all aspects of Christianity in Africa including its relationship to traditional values, customs and politics as well as forming the link between Ethiopian Orthodoxy, Roman Catholicism, Protestantism and the numerous independent religious movements in Africa.
Hastings observed that independency is a revolt against imperialism whether the basic causes are religious, political or social. He attributes the emergence of the Akurinu whom he refers to as “Watu wa Mungu” to similar factors, (1979). His work was vital in aiding this study especially in establishing the factors that influenced the emergence of the Akurinu.

Several scholars have published works on African religious life, practices and the social history of specific communities. Mbiti (1969) shared a unitary view of the pervasive religiosity of African traditional society, arguing that Africans are notoriously religious. For him, religion permeates all the departments of life so fully that it is not easy or possible to isolate it. He further asserts that religion is the strongest element in traditional background and exerts probably the greatest influence upon the thinking and living of the people concerned (Ibid: 1). Parrinder (1969) is of a similar view with Mbiti that man is incurably religious. He further explains that all human beings are religious by nature, because they have been created that way by God. Yinger (1965) attributes the factors, which may cause the emergence of religious movements in society to weakening integrative function of religion. The above studies on African traditional religion do not specifically discuss the Akurinu movement. However, they provided useful basis for the study in explaining why Africans were opposed to European cultural imperialism. The Akurinu selectively borrowed practices from the Agikuyu religion and thus resisted the influence of modernism heralded by colonial education and improved medical facilities.
In Kenya, several scholars have studied on religious independency. Muga (1975) asserts that the emergence of Independent religious movements is not related to mission churches but to African leaders who were reacting against white rule in general. He argues that western Christian teachings have in some way or another destroyed some aspects of African social and cultural life that are deeply rooted in the African family, religion and many aspects of African way of life. He further views independency being the result of frustrations, which resulted from the introduction of social stratification with Europeans at the highest strata and the Africans at the lowest strata. His scholarly work was valuable to the study as it helped trace the factors leading to the emergence of the Akurinu Movement.

Wipper (1977) examines the political, psychological and sociological causes of the Diniya- Msambwa and the cult of Mumbo. His study on the two protest movements in Kenya is viewed in the light of a political-religious rural protest that began in Northern parts of Kenya’s Western province during the late 1930’s. His argument is that these movements originated by secession from Christian missions, although some arose independently of any direct affiliation with a particular church. The latter part of his argument accurately fits the Akurinu movement.

Similarly, in a study of two cases of Christian independence in western Kenya, Welbourn and Ogot (1966) argue that the cause for the rise of the Church of Christ in Africa – Johera and the African Israel Church Nineveh is merely ethnicity and African traditional culture and practices. The two characterize these movements as institutions that
accommodated the needs of the African communities in entirety. The above was fundamental to the study by providing useful insights on African traditional values and practices. The emergence of the Akurinu movement was a rebellion against European cultural imperialism that sought to impose western culture on Africans.

Gimode (1993) studied the history and culture of the Avalogoli, a section of the Luhya of western Kenya and explored their religious experiences, dynamism and response to the physical and social environments. He observes that the introduction of Islam and Christianity on Logoli culture was an important stage in the evolution of the Logolo religion. For him the introduction of the two did not displace the indigenous religion but instead enriched the Logoli religious experience. His work was valuable to the study in assessing the factors causing transformation in Akurinu church.

A historical description and the factors that led to the emergence of the Luo Nomiya Church have been analyzed by many scholars. Opwapo (2011) analyses both secondary and primary sources on NLC in order to reconstruct its history, dynamics of its beliefs and practices. She further explores gender roles and attitudes of the church towards women. She observes that gender and the Christian ideology of independence influence the formation of social relations. Women in NLC besides being member and leaders do also shape religious ideology of this church. Oginga Odinga (1968) posits that NLC that emerged in 1907 was a revolt in the church that resulted to dramatic breakaways and foundation of independent churches, which preached the gospel with strong political overtones. Ogot (1968) study on the rise and origin of the NLC argue that John Owalo,
the founder, was the first Christian rebel who was willing to accept the new Christian faith but on his own terms and without accepting the white man’s way of life. This work was very informative for this study specifically in analyzing the factors that led to the emergence of the Akurinu movement.

Teresia Hinga (1990) study on the theological significance of religious independency in Africa using the Legio Maria church as a case study, argue that independent churches are not mere aberrations of the orthodox Christianity and that Legio Maria was essentially concerned with theological and specifically with the quest for salvation as liberation from oppression in its multifaceted form. This was very useful to the study in examining the relationship between the Akurinu movement and the mission churches.

The literature pertaining to the Akurinu movement is scarce. It seems that the earliest references to this group are in Kenyatta’s work, *Facing Mount Kenya*, an anthropological study of the Kikuyu in 1938. Kenyatta (1938:273) referred to this movement as “Watu wa Mungu” and saw their birth in the crisis of clitoridectomy in 1929. He describes them as a protest group that amalgamated both Kikuyu and Christian beliefs, and incorporated in their religion most of the “ritualistic points” which the missionaries rejected. This group was received with hostility and was “looked upon as simply a bunch of lunatics…” by the Colonial government and ordinary people. The religion of “Watu wa Mungu” was functioning in several parts of Gikuyu country, but had little influence with the general population; its appeal being to such individuals as had been pronounced sinners by the missionaries and to others who had been cured of diseases (Ibid: 279).
The Akurinu claimed to experience visions through the Holy Spirit that gave them the knowledge to predict the future, detect witchcraft and even make rain. It is for this reason that they called themselves *Arathi* (seers), after the Kikuyu diviners who professed to have had many of the same abilities (1962:263; Middleton, 1953:65). Kenyatta submits that initiation of both sexes was the most important custom among the Gikuyu as it marked transition from childhood to adulthood. Mbiti, (1969:119); Kakai, (1992); Muriuki, (1971:9), as Kenyatta emphasized the importance of circumcision for the community. They argue that it provided initiates the opportunity to learn secrets of their community, sexuality, marriage and procreation. The studies highlighted above were valuable to the study as they help lay the basis on the historical foundation of the Akurinu movement.

Apart from early references from Kenyatta’s work, there are administrative records in archival materials in the Kenya National Archives dating from 1929 to independence that shed more light on “Watu wa Mungu” referring to the Akurinu and their relationship with the colonial government and the ordinary people. However, these records are silent on their beliefs and practices but rather portray them as a subversive group. Welbourn (1961:140) explains that Watu wa Mungu were accused of immorality and disregard for tribal authority, but remains silent about their genesis, beliefs, practices and observances. The above references were important to this study as they provided useful background information on the genesis of the earliest Akurinu movement in Central Kenya.
Jocelyn Murray, a missionary researcher on African history studied the Akurinu’s history from 1920s to 1974 drawing out a historical background of the group, the causative factors of the movement as well as the characteristics of the early Akurinu churches. For Murray, sociological, theological and economic factors led to the emergence of this movement. Her work was instrumental in aiding this study in reconstructing the early history of the movement and the factors that influenced its emergence in 1926.

Kinyanjui (1973) posits that the Akurinu movement was a product of mission churches and schools. He asserts that this seer group that begun among the Kikuyu emerged from within the mission church. They advocated a total return to the Kikuyu culture and religion. They rejected anything associated with Europeans, hospitals, schools and clothes. Instead, they wore hides and skins and lived in caves. The author, a prophet and founder of one of the many Akurinu groups claimed that as the influence of the early church increased among the Kikuyu, the group met with some resistance and resentment prompting members to keep bows and arrows and carry swords (Kinyanjui, 1973:126).

It seems that scholars are yet to agree on the relationship between Akurinu movement and the historic Mission churches. This study investigated whether such a relationship existed or the group of believers had an independent origin from the historic mission churches. This study further enquired whether the early Akurinu movement was violent, anti-social and isolated from the rest of the society. It established if time and changing circumstances in post independent Kenya has transformed the movement to an acceptable community of believers.
Sandgren (1982) like Kenyatta contends that the initiation controversy and its aftermath resulted to the birth of Akurinu within the Kikuyu society. He further notes that although the Akurinu were initially not recognized as a religious force, their origins were the same as the independents. He elaborates that, though the early Akurinu in Gakarara (Murang’a) asserted their independent beginning, apparently, they also knew that Kikuyus elsewhere were having similar experiences, particularly in the neighbouring district of Kiambu where Joseph Ng’ang’a was recognized by many as the first *Murathi* (Seer). In view of the aforementioned, it seems that the prototype of the Akurinu movement may have emerged simultaneously in Murang’a and Kiambu Counties. The scholarly work above provided vital information particularly in tracing the historical genesis and development of the Akurinu movement in Murang’a County.

Mwaura (1984) studied the history, some basic beliefs and the organizational structure of the Holy Ghost church, one of the many Akurinu groups. She asserts that the Akurinu is a prophetic movement among the Agikuyu that selectively rejects western dress, medicine and education and use the Bible together with some elements of Gikuyu traditions. She observes that this movement started in a Pentecostal revival that begun in 1922, and that their worship was characterized by manifestations of the spirit that empowered them to speak in tongues, prophesy and experience visions. She further notes that the Akurinu movement was formed with little or no contact with western mission churches. For Mwaura, the Akurinu movement is unique, as it has consciously attempted to form a radically African type of Christianity, where the pattern of the mission churches plays no
significant role. Mwaura contends that Akurinu movement was more or less dominated by the Agikuyu community.

She further examined the position of women in the church leadership, observing that they had no role to play. She has also examines the role of religion in development and transformation of societies and argues that religion performs the function of social control. It shapes people’s relationships and responses to life. She describes religion as a double sword and that it has the potent for mobilizing people and sustaining their unity against any form of oppression, but can also cause conflict or can be used as a tool of oppression. Her work is vital to this study as it provided background information on the circumstances, which may have caused the emergence of the Akurinu movement in central Kenya.

Githieya (1992) observes that the Akurinu was an indigenous African spirit movement that emerged among the Agikuyu of Central Kenya in the mid-1920s. He traces the origin of the Arathi whom he collectively refers to as Akurinu to the larger struggle of Kenyans against colonial rule and European missionary teachings and cultural imposition on the Agikuyu. He argues that the Akurinu movement did not result from a break with mission churches, but its origins was connected with itinerant prophetic figures, such as Joseph Ng’ang’a and Musa Thuo. Githeiya points at the enormous importance of the Bible for the early Akurinu group. The Bible was the group’s primary source for theological reflection, which the Akurinu used in communicating its message to other Africans. This study enquired to establish if the earliest Akurinu Movement was the product of the
historic mission churches or emerged independently from such influence. This study was very informative in tracing the historical genesis of Akurinu spirit movement that emerged among the Agikuyu of central province of Kenya.

Ndung’u (1994) studied on the Akurinu Churches with special reference to their theology posits that leadership in this church center’s on charismatic and inspired African prophets who possess all knowledge required by the community. The election of the leader is usually communicated in dream by the Holy Spirit. Ndung’u further examined the role of spiritual healing in the Akurinu movement and observed that the giving of the laws at Mount Kenya to the Akurinu has greatly influenced their practice of faith healing. His study traced the Akurinu strict dietary rules and noted that they do not take Pork, industrial fat and alcohol nor smoke tobacco or use any intoxicating drugs. According to Ndung’u, the Akurinu prohibit pre-marital sex, use no contraceptives and are opposed to divorce and abortion. He further contends that initially the Akurinu were traditional farmers but this has changed today. The Akurinu migrated to towns and engaged themselves in different trades that include dressmaking, business, servants, drivers, and mechanics to mention but a few. Some have become enterprising property owners and business magnets in numerous towns and cities. A large number have embraced formal education and have become researchers, teachers and theologians. This study evaluated this transformation and the fusion of Agikuyu traditions and culture into the movement’s way of life.
Waigwa (2007) emphasize that the history of Akurinu should be viewed in the larger story of the struggle of Agikuyu against colonial rule and western religious practices imposed to them by European missionaries. He asserts that the Akurinu teachings and practices indicate a selective continuity with certain aspects of Gikuyu traditional religious heritage, which are considered neither commanded nor forbidden in the Bible. Waigwa notes that the Akurinu religious movement did not split from any western mission, although its first generation membership had come out of the various missions as well as the unchurched population that followed Kikuyu traditional religion. His work was vital to this study through the provision of useful information on the movement protest against imperialism and western culture. This formed an important base in which an assessment on the transformation and syncretization of the Akurinu heritage was made.

In the most recent publication on the Akurinu movement, Macharia (2012) examines the theological importance of the emergence of the Akurinu movement that concided with a time when the Agikuyu were craving for political liberation. The Akurinu came as an answer to this. They preached liberation, telling people to shun their evil ways and get ready for liberation. They opposed the caste system sanctioned by the British administration, proclaiming liberation for all people and their redemption from sin. His work was very informative to this study in tracing the origin, beliefs and practices of the Akurinu movement.
From the reviewed literature above, it is evident that scholars hold different views on the causes of the emergence of independent churches. It is therefore convincing to argue that one factor may not have been responsible for their emergence, but rather a combination of several factors. For the Akurinu movement, its emergence can be traced to the economic, socio-cultural and political conflict occasioned by oppressive colonial rule and missionary teachings in Kikuyu land in the late 1920s. This study seeks to examine the transformational changes in the political, economic and social life of the Akurinu community in Kandara and its impact on the society.

1.8.2 Theoretical Framework

Transformation is a social change in the nature of social structures. Religious movements throughout history have fundamental roles in instigating important social change. In order to explain the origin and the transformational process within the Akurinu in Kandara, this study employed two integrated theoretical frameworks-namely Social Movement and Modernization Theories. The two frameworks share a common denominator in that both are primarily theories of social change.

Social movement theory can be understood as a complex set of many actions by many different collective actors all oriented towards some very broad issue or goal. These interconnections between events are directly tied to cycles of protest. It therefore refers to the study of social mobilization including its social, cultural, and political manifestations and consequences (Sidney, 1994 and Tilly, 2004).
Many social movements throughout history have emerged and dramatically changed the societies in which they occurred. Tilly (2004) argues that social movements are triggered by incentives created by political opportunities, combining conventional and challenging forms of actions and building on social networks and cultural frames.

In social movements, large groups of people who are usually without political power and influence decide to promote or resist social change through unconventional means. According to Sidney (1994) and Tilly (2004), Social Movement Theory has three main concepts, namely; Relative Deprivation, Collective Behaviour and Resource Mobilization. Proponents of this theory view social movements as large-scale informal groupings of individuals or organizations, which are connected through their shared interests to focus on specific political or social issues, in order to carry out social change.

Relative Deprivation in its rudimentary form explains the emergence of new sects and denominations in western Christianity. It postulates a correlation between the rise of new religious movements and condition of deprivation. Morrison (1971) affirms that Relative deprivation is generally considered the central variable in the explanation of social movements and is used to explain quest for social change that inspires social movements; social movements emerge from collective feelings of relative deprivation. It asserts that new religious movements recruit their followers from the deprived, who feel that they are not receiving a fair share of what seems to be available. New religious movements therefore constitute not only dissent but also socially deprived persons. For Relative
Deprivation to occur individuals have to perceive their expectations as legitimate and if these expectations are blocked, individuals will experience discontent and frustrations.

Social movements therefore have their foundations among people who feel deprived of some resources. These characteristics are generally associated with sects or religious protest movements, and the Akurinu movement easily fits into that characterization. The first characterization as noted by Scroggs (1999: 72) is that of protest against relative deprivation. The Akurinu came together not only to express their desire to get rid of relative deprivation but also form a new world order where they could find acceptance and value among themselves. This movement was born in protest to economic oppression, exploitation and political dominance by the colonialists. The Agikuyu community in the face of colonial rule experienced differential distribution of highly regarded attributes such as power, prestige, status and opportunities for social participation where by individuals or groups like Akurinu felt disadvantaged in comparison to others and thus formed socio-religious groups. Consequently, the Akurinu movement emerged to offer spiritual chaplaincy that addressed the deprivation challenge.

Collective Behavior refers to the actions of groups of people in unusual circumstances. Social movements are the most organized forms of collective behaviour and tend to be most sustained. Blumer (1939) argues collective behaviour occur when large numbers of people fail to accept some of the dominant values, norms and leaders in a society. People faced with unusual situations can create meanings that define and direct the situation. Under such circumstances unconstrained social and political movements can develop.
The emergence of the Akurinu movement in Central Kenya was a result of cultural and religious conflict with European missionaries. This group of believers were working together to positively change and transform social, political and economic realities to improve on their living conditions.

Resource Mobilization refers to the process by which a discontented group assembles and invests resources for the pursuit of the group goals. The resource mobilization perspective conceives of collective actions in terms of the mobilizing, converting and transferring of resources from one group and one arena of actions to other groups and actions (Tilly, 1978; Gamson, 1975).

The theory argues that social movements develop when individuals with grievances are able to mobilize sufficient resources to take action. Resources are understood to include knowledge, time, individuals, leaders, finance, solidarity and legitimacy. The key factor in social movement’s success or failure is its capacity to mobilize and efficiently manage resources. Akurinu leaders led the oppressed by arousing feelings of discontent in Kikuyu land against the colonial government. These feelings generated strains or tension creating a sense of relative deprivation, which culminated to birth, and development of the Akurinu movement in Central Kenya. This theory is more accommodative in explaining the historical factors that led to the emergence of the Akurinu movement.

Modernization theory is a description and explanation of the process of transformation from traditional or underdeveloped societies to modern ones. Hussain et al (1981) and Lenin (1964) assert that the concept of modernization incorporates the full spectrum of
transition and drastic transformation that a traditional society has to undergo to become modern. This theory explains the process of change towards social, economic and political systems resulting to economic growth and change in the socio-political and cultural structures of the society.

Modernization theory helps raise for this study critical factors in explaining the process of transformation and its impact within the Akurinu movement. This movement had witnessed the progressive transition from the old practices that had either been modified or changed into modern ones. Their beliefs, practices and way of life have been transformed through adoption of modern values such as formal education, health care and positive social integration resulting to improved standards of living. Modernization is about the readiness to accommodate the process of transformation resulting from changes (Coetzee et al, 2007: 31). The gradual transformation process undertaken by the Akurinu after independence had great impact on their socio-economic and political life. The Akurinu movement was simply conforming to a modernization process that demanded a search for new identities and adjustment outside the Kikuyu traditional world mileu.
1.9 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1.9.1 Research Design

The research was based on historiographical, historical explanation and their related qualitative procedures. Both primary and secondary data were analysed. Archival and oral interviews constituted the primary sources. Archival sources were mainly obtained from the Kenya National Archives in Nairobi. Documents ranging from district annual reports, hand over reports for both colonial and post-colonial periods were analysed. From these documents, the historical data on Agikuyu trade, land tenure and land policies, labour policies, taxation and agricultural policies was obtained. The post-independent population census, National health and education records and development plans were vital sources of primary data. These were instrumental in analysing the transformation process undertaken by the Akurinu movement. Archival data on the early Akurinu was scanty and irregular and had to be complimented and corroborated with oral and secondary data for authentication purpose.

To obtain oral data, interviews were conducted with the help of two questionnaires. (Appendices A1) for the adult group consisting of twenty-one questions designed to cover the historical background and transformational processes of the Akurinu movement. (Appendices 2) for the youth had thirteen questions which covered aspects of the youth life in the churches, the problems they faced and the changes that they have observed in the Akurinu churches. Sixty-Four informants were interviewed, twenty-six being the elderly, twenty-three were from middle age and fifteen came from the youth group. The
elderly informants included senior prayer leaders, leaders of several Akurinu churches in the sub-county and church elders. For the youth interviewed, data recorded was transcribed as soon as possible to retain authenticity. In the study all informants who aged 50 and above were treated as elders, while 18 years and above were considered as youth.

Secondary data was the other category of resources used in this study. This included published accounts by early travellers, missionaries and colonial administration. Other sources in this category were books, journals, related articles, unpublished thesis, seminar papers, magazines and newspapers. Secondary data was obtained from the various libraries such as the Post Modern Library at Kenyatta University, Jomo Kenyatta Memorial Library of the University of Nairobi, Catholic University Library and Institute of African Studies. Internet sources provided useful contribution to secondary information.

The secondary data provided useful interpretation by various scholars on religious independency in Africa, East Africa and Kenya. Secondary data was vital in corroborating the primary data. This was instrumental and helped fill the gap on the transformation process undertaken by the Akurinu of Kandara that the study intended to fill.
1.9.2 Sampling Techniques

Being a historical study, purposive and snowballing techniques were used to identify resourceful people for interviews. These included the youth, men and women, leaders and worshippers from the Akurinu churches in Kaguthi, Gacharage, Rwathia and Gathugu as well as Mukurwe. Administrative officials and clergy from other non-Akurinu churches were also interviewed. The Respondents were cautiously selected based on the researcher’s judgment and through recommendation of others in the field. Contact persons were used to introduce the researcher to respondents, who in turn recommended others. The use of contact persons became crucial because the researcher observed that a number of Akurinu were reluctant to give information on their church to strangers. This study employed the qualitative research designs where research samples were drawn from the youth above 18 years, women, men and the elderly, above 50 years. Selection of a list of respondents of the movement’s leaders, followers, worshipers and government officials, members and clergy of other churches in the sub-county under study was done using snowballing and Purposeful sampling procedures. The researcher in most cases interviewed respondents individually but sometimes group interviews were conducted.

1.9.3 Area of Study

The study was conducted in Kandara, in Murang’a County. This County is the immediate neighbour to Kiambu in the south and Nyeri in the north. It is rich in terms of agricultural production, specializing in tea, coffee and dairy products, among others. Its cool climate due to high attitude has ensured a reliable rainfall pattern. However, there are pocketed
areas that are dry with poverty levels on the increase. The County under this study is
predominantly occupied by the Kikuyu speaking people and is the home of Musa Thuo,
the proto founder of Akurinu movement in Kenya. Kandara is approximately 49
kilometres from Nairobi. Refer to list of figures.

1.9.4 Target Population

The target group was composed of the leaders of the movement and worshippers whose
knowledge on the history of this group of believers was sought out. A careful and guided
selection of respondents was done. The study targeted the elderly (50 years and above) or
those who may have lived through the colonial era, the middle aged (30-49 years) and the
youth (18- 29 years). Precedence was however given to the elderly who possessed vital
information on the movement’s history. Other communities than Agikuyu but living in
the County and found to have relevant information were also useful. Specific attention
was accorded to the church in Kaguthi village in Kandara where the movement had
massive following. Kandara sub-county has an approximated population density of

1.9.5 Data Analysis

As we concluded this research, there was plenty of information gathered from the oral
interviews, archival and library research. This information was qualitatively analyzed.
Using a qualitative approach, the researcher analyzed the data collected inductively from
respondent’s perspectives. To come up with a reliable, accurate and valid analysis of
historical work, all the data was classified according to their content and the specific historical timeframe within which events and developments took place. The study being a historical inquiry required the establishment of the historical specificity of social phenomena in terms of the relations between these elements over time. The analyzed data was then placed under historical interrogation and evaluation to identify themes and patterns in the Akurinu religious movement under study. The carefully, logical and critical results were used by the researcher in writing this thesis.

1.9.6 Challenges Experienced During the Fieldwork.

Several challenges were encountered during fieldwork. For instance, most informants, especially the elderly Akurinu were uncooperative and adamant to give information to a stranger, and non- Mukurinu. The Akurinu movement has been secretive in its activities for many years prompting the public to view it as mysterious. This was noted to have persisted even after independence. The problem was however solved by the researcher using contact persons and some locally research assistants who confessed to the Akurinu faith.

One other obstacle was loss of memory by the elderly Akurinu in Kandara. This resulted to distortion and inaccuracy in the oral data collected. This challenge was however addressed by providing authenticity of oral data against secondary data evidence. Moreover, the analysed data was placed under logical historical interrogation and evaluation.
CHAPTER TWO

THE BACKGROUND OF THE AKURINU MOVEMENT IN KANDARA,
MURANG’A COUNTY

2.1. Introduction

In the previous chapter, we provided a backdrop upon which this research was anchored, stated its objectives and methodological approach. In this chapter, we examine the Agikuyu pre-colonial setting in the social, political and economic aspects upon which Akurinu movement was clearly entrenched. Among the core issue discussed was the Agikuyu way of life. Using the theoretical tool of social movement, this chapter argues that the Agikuyu had a functional political government, a well-organized economic life and very conscious of their social welfare. This chapter starts by providing the analysis of Agikuyu people of Murang’a, their origin, and way of life as a basis of establishing the context in which the Akurinu movement emerged among the Agikuyu before 1963.

2.2 The Pre-Contact Kikuyu Setting; Murang’a on Eve of Colonial Rule

Murang’a County, formally called Fort Hall, one of the Kenya’s former Central Province districts, is believed to be the cultural cradle of the Kikuyu people Muriuki (1971). Lying approximately 85 kilometers North East of Nairobi, the County covers 2.558 square kilometers, and borders Nyandarua to the west, Embu to the east, Nyeri to the north, Kiambu to the south and Machakos and Kirinyaga counties to the south east and the north east respectively. It has an approximated total population of 942,581 (2009, National
Census Report). The County has seven constituencies, which are Kandara, Gatanga, Kangema, Kigumo, Kiharu, Maragua and Mathioya.

Kandara sub-County in Murang’a County has a population density of 444,700 (2009, National Census Report) and consists of Ithiru, Ruchu, Gaichanjiru and Muruka divisions. The main economic activities of Kandara population is mixed farming and livestock keeping, though coffee growing is practiced in some sections. Other agricultural activities that support the sub-County’s economy include growing of macadamia, horticultural activities along river-beds and poultry farming. Quarrying activities are also common in diverse localities in the sub-County. Majority of residents in the district conduct trade and business in major towns within the sub-County. Majority of the population belong to mainstream Christian denominations, including Catholics and Protestants, although many have remained faithfully in traditional religious movements like the Akurinu.

The origins and migration of Kenyan societies have received immense attention from various Historians. The Agikuyu people are Bantu-speakers in Kenya who are believed to have originated in the area around the Niger and Nile basin and migrated to their present homeland with other Bantu speaking people like the Kisii, Embu, Mbeere, Meru, Taita (Ochieng, 1974). As they migrated, various factors such as economic needs, spirit of adventure, clan and family feuds forced various groups to keep moving. When the Bantu crossed the Uganda border, the Western Bantu like the Kisii and the Luhya settled in the western side while the Agikuyu and other Eastern Bantu moved eastwards. The Agikuyu came to the Shungwaya dispersal point where they migrated towards central Kenya to
occupy the Mt. Kenya region (Lambert, 1954). Muriuki (1974:49) however, argues that Kikuyu proper have no traditions of ever migrating from Shungwaya and demonstrates that by the 15th century, together with the Cuka, Mbeere, Embu, Ndia and the Gichugu, the Kikuyu had migrated from Tigania and Igembe in Meru. At Ithanga and Mbeere regions, the communities had consolidated themselves before the Kikuyu moved to a point in Gaturi, called Mukurwe wa Gathanga in present day Murang’a County, where they continued to evolve to become a distinct group (Ibid: 62). From this central point of dispersal, the Kikuyu moved into the rest of the plateau. A group settled in the Northern part of Central Kenya while another migrated southward. Leakey (1977) argues that the Southern part (Kiambu) was the last settlement of the Agikuyu at around 17th century while the Northern Kikuyu (Nyeri) was the first. Were (1984), opine that Kikuyu settlement did not happen at once but seem to have come in several waves and from quite different sources. Sorrenson (1968) suggest that those that settled in the Northern Kikuyu area cleared the land to settle because it was unoccupied but the Southern Kikuyu found that the land was occupied by the Dorobo or the Athi who were hunters and gatherers. Historians have pointed that the Dorobo were largely absorbed by the Agikuyu (Lambert, 1956; Muriuki, 1974). Lambert (1954) posits that the Southern Kikuyu convinced the Dorobo to sell their land to them, which they did because the Dorobo being predominantly hunters and gatherers saw no need of land for farming, but were only interested in the forest resources.
Kikuyu migration and settlement in the Central Kenya is seen in three territorial areas of Gaki (Nyeri), Metumi (Murang’a) and Karuri (Kiambu) (Muriuki, 1971). They later expanded to occupy other areas such as Nyandarua, Laikipia, Nakuru, Kirinyaga and Nyahururu. The first Kikuyu group to enter Metumi (Muran’ga) found a densely forested area, occupied by the Gumba, who were hunters and gatherers. The Kikuyu spread north and south along the belt forcing Gumba to retreat into the forest (Brown, 1925). It was possible that Metumi, that part of Murang’a County north of Maragwa river was fully occupied by 1750 and the area between Maragwa river and Chania river fully occupied by 1900 (Lambert 1956). Consequently, land in Murang’a County was occupied ridge by ridge by the pioneers, who were later joined by their relatives, although such people like Ahoi (tenants at will) and Ndungata (voluntary servants) who had no kinship relationships also acquired land Muriuki (1971). Colonial policies of migrant labour, forced labour, wage economy, and industrialization forced the Agikuyu to migrate to towns and settler farms (Kanogo, 1987; Zeleza, 1989; Tignor, 1975).

Apart from the migration stories, the Agikuyu also have aspects of oral traditions such as myths that explain their origin. Campbell (2007) argues that for the history of a people to be meaningfull and enduring it is usually reduced to a myth, and that unless a historical event is mythologized it cannot become a source of inspiration and thus an enigma for tribe’s survival. For the Kikuyu, the most common of the myth is the story of Mukurwe wa Gathanga in Muranga county. In this myth, God created a man called Gikuyu and his wife Mumbi and settled them in the Mukurwe wa Gathanga garden (Muriuki, 1971).
Gikuyu and Mumbi, so the story goes, were blessed with nine daughters namely *Wanjiru, Wairimu, Waithera, Wambui, Mwithaga, Waceera, Wangui, Wangare and Wanjiku* (Kenyatta, 1938). As the girls became of age, Gikuyu their father was worried as there were no men to marry them. Therefore, Gikuyu went to Mt Kirinyaga, believed to be the dwelling place of *Mwene Nyaga* (God) and sacrificed to Him. God provided men who married these girls, eventually giving birth to many children. These daughters are believed to be the origin of the Kikuyu community. From these daughters the nine clans of the Agikuyu are derived: *Anjiru, Airimu, Aceera, Ambui, Angui, Agachiku, Angare, Aitherandu and Ethaga.* There are varied sources with differing number of clans. However, a careful study of extant literature, taken in conjunction with the recently collected data, indicates definitely, there are ten clans. The evidence points to their having been nine originally and these were directly descended from the legendary nine daughters of Gikuyu and Mumbi. At one point in the history of the Agikuyu, an additional clan, the *Aichakamuyu,* was formed from the descendants of a girl, from one of the clans, who became unmarried mother. As a result, the Agikuyu have widely accepted that their clans are ‘kenda muiyuru’, full nine meaning ten (Muriuki, 1974). This myth shows that the Kikuyu were religious people since time immemorial.

### 2.3 The Agikuyu Politico-Religious Organization

Traditionally, the Agikuyu were a decentralized community, which was ruled by a council of elders (Muriuki 1974). There were various categories of elders among the Agikuyu whose differentiation was based on the gerontocratic logic. Therefore, age was a
very important factor for one to rise up the political ladder with the clan being the main political unit. Kenyatta (1938) notes that the clan (muhiriga) was one of the three pillars of the Kikuyu community, the other two being family (nyumba) and riika (age-set). Politically, no single clan was dominant, though some were entrusted with specific public duties on behalf of the community at large. Each clan, however, was associated with distinctive traits and idiosyncrasies and all of them made distinguishing markings on their beehives and livestock (Muriuki, 1974).

Politically, the family was the lowest unit while Mbari (clan) was at the highest. However, the core of the Kikuyu society was Nyumba (family), which was the immediate operative political unit (Muriuki, 1971). Every Nyumba formed a Mucii (the homestead) and various homesteads were grouped together into an Itura (collection of dispersed homesteads). The Matura (plural of Itura) were linked together to form bigger administrative units called Mwaki, which was part of the ridges. The ridge was in essence the largest administrative unit, which would eventually come together in terms of crisis, mutual need and countrywide ceremonies (Muriuki, 1974).

Age sets were formed by people who were circumcised together. Circumcision was therefore an important aspect of a Gikuyu man (Kimani, 2013). There were two main dominant age set of Mwangi and Maina (Irungu), where each Kikuyu had to belong to one depending on the riika of the grandfather (Leakey, 1977). These two dominant age set were important in the itwika ceremony as discussed below. Being a patrilineal society, the father was the head of the family whose roles were not only familial leadership but also
the spiritual heads of their families. Many families joined to form a clan. In addition there was no position that was hereditary but leadership was based on age, personal merit and behavior of an individual (Lambert, 1954). The reason why the Agikuyu were largely egalitarian is explained by a myth (Kenyatta, 1938). This myth explains that long time ago the Kikuyu were ruled by a despotic ruler who could not allow them to cut down trees. However they managed to rebel and overthrow the king, and in protest cut down trees. This is believed to be the origin of the ndemi (cutters) group who cut the trees. From that moment, the Agikuyu started the itwika ceremony to avoid authoritarianism (Kenyatta, 1938; Muriuki, 1971). The itwika ceremony entailed the exchange of power from one riika (age set) to another after a generation to avoid one riika dominating the other. The powers of the group in leadership were political, judicial and religious. Thus for the Agikuyu, there was no difference between politics and religion; the two were intertwined.

There also existed councils (ciama, singular kiama), such as kiama gia ituura (village council) which comprised of several heads of families in the village. Kiama kia rugongo (district council)¹. There was also the kiama kia ndundu (inner committee) composed of senior elders of the villages who were advanced in age and wisdom. The leader of this kiama was called a muthamaki (king)² (Kenyatta, 1938:194). There was also an important

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¹ The Kikuyu were not divided into districts in the pre-colonial period. This was a council over a ridge because the kikuyu country is hilly and divided into ridges.

² It is important to note that the English equivalent of Muthamaki is king; however, this is not in the strict sense a sovereign king with powers. The Kikuyu did not have a king, though due to this aspect of a muthamaki, many Eurocentric writings have posited that the Kikuyu had a king.
council of young men known as njama ya ita (council of war) whose members were between 30-40 years (Lambert, 1954). The role of this council was to deal with security and military activities and represent the youth in the political arena.

Age-set system was another important social aspect of the Agikuyu. Kenyatta notes that the age set system (riika) was a pillar of the Agikuyu society. Riika was formed by people who were circumcised together. Thus, initiation was very important for both sexes; circumcision for boys and clitoridectomy for girls. Initiation was the prerequisite for the attainment of full adult social status where one acquired responsibility of womanhood and manhood. Men would take up leadership roles, marry, join warriors and later become elders. Women were allowed to marry and get children. Marriage was an important social aspect of the Agikuyu. The Agikuyu marriage was polygamous and exogenous and took pride in having huge families (Kenyatta, 1938). No woman would get children without being circumcised because such a woman was considered physically able but socially unacceptable to get a child (Lynn, 1984).

In addition, after circumcision one would get to know the secrets of the community since it was believed that they were no longer children and were now full members of the community (Kenyatta, 1938). For girls circumcision was done every year but for the boys there were the closed period (muhingo) in which no circumcision was done at all. This was done to allow enough boys to be circumcised together in order to provide a regiment for warriorhood (Lambert, 1956; Muriuki, 1971; Leakey, 1977). Muhingo period would
take up to 5 seasons (*Imeera*)

Circumcision was religious in nature as it involved activities such as the initiates seeking permission and blessing of the grandparents, elders, uncles, and sponsors (Kimani, 2013). In addition, the process would not take place until a medicine man had cleansed the parents of the initiates, the sponsors, and the initiates themselves (Cagnolo, 1933). The religious specialist was important due to his ability to wade off the evil spirits, which were believed to cause complications to the initiates after the process of initiation (Ibid).

Religion was therefore central in matters concerning initiation. Indeed, the Agikuyu fits in Mbiti’s description of Africans being “notoriously religious” (Mbiti, 1969). Mbiti notes that every aspect of an African was religious, and points out that, even the beer drinking party started by prayers, recitations of praising the ancestors and pouring of libations. A careful study of the Agikuyu religious organization prior to colonialism echoes Mbiti’s view. The Agikuyu believed in a supreme God whom they largely referred to as *Ngai* (the one who divides) (Leakey, 1977; Mbiti, 2002). The Agikuyu also referred to their God as *Mumbi* (Creator) and *Mwenenyaga* (possessor of brightness). They believed that their God lived in Kirinyaga (Mt. Kenya) (Kenyatta, 1978:234). *Ngai* was believed to be all-powerful, eminent, benevolent, all knowing and mysterious (Mwaura, 1984). This explains why Agikuyu religion had a naturist aspect because people had a strong belief and contact with nature. As such, natural aspects such as thunder and lightning were regarded as direct manifestations of *Ngai* and His works (Kenyatta, 1938).

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3 The Agikuyu calendar was organized in terms of seasons (see section 2.4) but one season was not equivalent to one year, therefore in this context 5 seasons of *muhingo* may not be 5 years.
The Agikuyu being very religious, worship was at the centre of their day-to-day life. This worship entailed prayers, which were either individual, family or communal (Kibicho, 1972). Individual prayers were short and were said daily, mainly seeking blessing of the day or night, Leakey notes that such a prayer would be as short as;

“God keep me through this night or day or
Thank you God for keeping me through this night…..” (Leakey, 1952).

Family prayers would involve the extended family and were mostly common during the various rites of passage of birth, initiation, marriage and death. According to Kenyatta (1938: 245), communication with God was established in all these occasions by a family group. However, family prayers could also be conducted in times of human or animal diseases, when adopting a man from a different tribe or during purification and cleansing ceremonies (Kibicho, 1972: 45). Communal prayers were also embraced by the Agikuyu. These prayers were conducted publically under a mugumo tree (fig tree) (Kenyatta, 1938). In every ridge there existed a mugumo tree set aside for communal worship and sacrifice to God (Leakey, 1977).

Apart from prayers, the Agikuyu would also worship their God in songs and dances. There was also reverence (guthathaiya) which included recitations meant to sooth and appease God and ancestral spirits. Such recitation would include; Thai thathaiya Ngai thai (Leakey, 1977). This reverence for the spirits included pouring of the libations as a presentation to the ancestors. In addition, sacrifices and offering were made to God and
spirits. These included slaughtering of goats and sheep (*kuruta igongona*) (Kenyatta, 1938).

Agikuyu religion would not be complete without the religious specialists such as elders, medicine men, prophets, priests, rainmakers, and mediums. The work of these specialists was not to teach people about God because all members of the community were automatically considered to have acquired spiritual knowledge during their childhood teachings, but they played specific roles that involved invoking the spirits or God directly. Prophets for instance were very important in the Agikuyu traditional religion because they foretold the future. A renowned prophet among the Agikuyu was Mugo/Chege wa Kibiru, from Kariara, Murang’á, who had prophesied about the coming of the white man through an iron snake (train) that would be emitting fire (Muriuki, 1974).

### 2.4 Socio-Economic Organization

The Kikuyu social and economic systems were closely linked. The Kikuyu had *mucii* (homestead) which consisted of several families that were often connected by kinship. For the Kikuyu polygamy was not only acceptable but a desired measure of a man’s worth and wealth which enhanced his economic and political status. The man therefore was the head of the family with several wives, each having her own separate hut and granary. The status of women differed greatly to that of men. While men developed to become independent with age, women remained dependent on male guardians either as daughters or wives (Muriuki, 1974). Seniority and age however allowed women to enjoy limited powers. In a polygamous marriage, the first wife exercised authority over her co-
wives especially by influencing the husband. For instance, a hard working first wife had to be consulted if another wife was to be married (Waititu, 1997). Infact, in other cases, she encouraged the husband to marry and would even pick a girl for him (Leakey, 1994). Every Kikuyu belonged to one of the ten clans mentioned before and after the man married from a different clan, the offsprings would belong to the father’s clan, although the woman would continue to be associated with her father’s clan and practices (Wanjau, 1998). In polygamous homestead each wife was a *githaku* or her “side” consisting of an area defined by her daily operations outside her hut. The *githaku* meant physical space and a social unit, as “each woman’s children in a polygamous arrangement belonged to her *githaku*” (Wanjau, 1998; 18). The polygamous man would build his own house (*Thingira*) at the centre for effective management of the homestead. Children of a specific wife would call themselves by the name of their mother, meaning that they belonged to her family. Community life among the Kikuyu revolved around the village, a term that denotes the settlement on a ridge of several independent homesteads linked by a network of foot paths that are usually associated with a particular *mbari* (sub-clan) (Muriuki, 1974).

The Agikuyu ascribed roles or status to individuals according to age as follows; *ciana* (children), *mumo* (young initiates), *anaake* (warriors), *aiiritu* (young ladies) *atuumia* (women) and *athuri* (elders/men) (Lambert, 1956). The family head and the seniors were responsible of teaching the young ones not only the required values but also spiritual matters such as reverence of God. As such many related families formed a *mbari*. Besides
mbari being very important in other aspects such as sharing, it also gave one a sense of belonging and security (Ibid).

Traditionally, like many other Bantu, the Agikuyu economic life revolved around farming. They were mixed farmers who practiced crop growing and animal keeping (Leakey, 1977). Crops that were grown by the Agikuyu included sorghum, beans, millets and arrowroots and kept animals such as cattle, sheep and goats. Goats were very important for the Agikuyu since they were used as sacrifices in many religious functions (Kanogo, 1987).

Each family constituted an economic unit. Everybody in the family, including children had an economic role to undertake. Therefore, labour was divided according to age and sex. Men provided security, cleared the land, build fences around homesteads and tended the animals. Women were largely seen as care-givers to bring up children, cook, fetch water and firewood, thatching of houses, plastering the walls with clay or cow dung and farm work such as planting, weeding and harvesting. Children would be trained by the seniors according to gender where the boys would accompany their father or uncles to the grazing field while girls were trained by mothers, aunts and grandmothers how to conduct home chores (Lynn, 1984). It was rare for a man to take a woman’s chore unless it was an emergency. Kenyatta (1938: 53) notes that any man or woman who did the opposite sex chores was regarded as a kihunguyu or muburabureki (nosy parker). The division of labour made everything systematic and orderly, which ensured material prosperity.

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4 See section 2.4 on economic organization and how the mbari was instrumental in sharing and helping one another in various chores.
Laziness was highly condemned. The lazy people were ridiculed through songs and proverbs (Ibid).

The Agikuyu economic calendar was controlled by two seasons (imera, singular kimera); kimera kia njahi (season of dicolos lablab), and kimera kia mwere (season of bulrush millet). Each season would take six months where kimera kia njahi was characterized by long rains while kimera kia mwere received short rains (Muriuki, 1971). Religion was at the center of Agikuyu economic activities. If it failed to rain, the rain-makers were sought in order to invoke the spirits and appease God to bring rain. The Agikuyu were also very keen on avoiding things such as killing, rape and immorality, which were believed to defile the land. This is because a defiled land would not produce or it would call for the cleansing rituals (Leakey, 1977).

Apart from farming, the Agikuyu of Muranga County traded with neighbours such as the Maasai, Akamba and Arabs (Tignor, 1976). They exchanged their farm produce with animal products and honey. Trading activities involved both sexes. Carrying and selling grains at the market was chiefly done by women, while taking sheep and goats or cattle to the market for sale was the job for men (Kenyatta, 1938). Trading centers and routes were located along markets where commodities of trade were available. Using barter trade, crops such as yams, sweet potatoes and maize were exchanged for swords, pots, iron and livestock (Muriuki, 1971). In Murang’a, established trading centers for specific commodities emerged. These were at Mukangu for swords, Njahi (dicholos lablab), spears and cloaks, Gakoe for maize, Kanorero for yams, sweet potatoes, swords and iron,
Giitwa for swords and Njahi, Githembe for goats and Gaichanjiru for foodsuffs and for licking salt for livestock (Muriuki, 1969). This led to the emergence of trade routes in the County to join with Nyandarua, Nyeri and Kiambu Counties. These routes were Kangema- Weithaga- Kigumo- Gatharaini-Ngirigacha-Thika- Kiama- Kiriri -Karimiru-Gatukuyu to join with Ngararia- Mukinyi- Mabanda – Makuyu. The second route started at Gatukuyu-Ngararia- Kairu- Makindu- Kabuku- Goita- Sabasaba- Mathangeini-Mugoiri- Mbiri (Muriuki, 1969). Other economic activities included crafts such as pottery, basketry, dress making, which were done by women while men engaged in activities such as wood carving, smith and bee keeping. Salt manufacturing which consisted of burning of papyrus rush to produce ash used as salt was a major economic activity (Ibid).

At clan level, economic work was communal and mbari was seen as an economic unit. Land was communally owned but with the administration of a muramati (trustee) (Sorenson, 1967). Mbari’s ownership was reinforced by the peoples religious beliefs especially the reverence for ancestors who fostered a deep attachment to ancestral land. Consequently, land had more than economic value since it not only provided the people with material needs, but a religious significance for it was the abode of the ancestors (Muriuki, 1971; Kenyatta, 1938; Sorenson, 1967). The ancestors were revered and were seen as objects of prayers and propitiatory sacrifices that were important aspects of Kikuyu worship and religious beliefs.
2.5 Early links with the Outside World: Christianity Comes to Kikuyu Land: 1885-1929

Prior to the coming of the Europeans, the Swahili and Arab trade caravans in search of ivory and slaves passed through the southern edges of the Kikuyu country to Buganda (Sorenson, 1967). Besides raiding and looting communities in the interior, the coastal traders also created demand for foreign imported goods and introduced new means of exchange through cowrie shells and beads, which assumed monetary role (Ibid). With the Berlin Conference and the partition of Africa concluded in 1885 and 1890 respectively, the British took the step of effectively occupying her sphere of influence. To avoid costs, the British delegated the burden of administration to a commercial company, once the Royal Charter was granted in 1888. The Imperial British East Africa Company (IBEACO) immediately engaged in trade, dealing in ivory and rhinoceros horns from the interior and cloth, copper wire, iron and porcelain items from overseas (Tignor, 1976). The Company however lacked sufficient resources and a myriad of other problems forced it to surrender its charter to the government in 1894. With the liquidation of the Company, the British government assumed direct responsibility for the administration of the territory in July 1895 (Ibid).

Initially, the British government considered the area between the coast and Lake Victoria as unprofitable, but the need to safeguard the route to Uganda prompted the British to declare the territory as British East Africa Protectorate. British occupation of Central Kenya was punctuated by violent episodes. The first contact between the Kikuyu and the
Europeans occurred in 1887, when Count Teleki and his caravans arrived in Dagorreti near Nairobi, and received by Waiyaki Wa Hinga (1840s-92), the paramount leader of the Southern Kikuyu (Muriuki, 1971). Frederick Lugard and George Wilson arrived in Dagoretti in 1890 and entered into a blood brotherhood oath with Waiyaki (Richards, 1960). A British expedition led by Eric Smith and Purkiss in 1891 attacked, destroyed Waiyaki’s homestead and put up Fort Smith. Waiyaki was arrested and deported to Kibwezi where he died in 1892. Following the death of waiyaki, Kinyanjui wa Gathirimu (1865-1929) was appointed the first chief among the Kikuyu.

The work of establishing colonial rule over Murang’a County was carried out by Francis Hall, the first District Commissioner. In August 1900, Hall left Machakos with a group of armed soldiers and porters heading to Murang’a where they founded a station and erected a Fort, which was later called Fort Hall (Muriuki, 1971). Colonial transformation of the Kikuyu of Murang’a County was met with immediate resistance, which led to many deaths and destruction of property. Agikuyu of Muruka, Ngararia, Ruchu, Gatanga, Gaturi and Kihumbuini resisted British rule.

The Agikuyu of Muruka in Kandara sub-County resisted British rule until punitive colonial expeditions were sent against them. They began by ambushing a Swahili caravan killing the leader and his mail runners (Muriuki, 1967). In 1901, they killed three porters and a police officer. In 1902, they were joined by Agikuyu from Kihumbuini and Ng’araria in attacking and killing five Indian traders and a settler (Ibid). A strong British force responded by killing two hundred Kikuyu and captured three hundred heads of
cattle and two thousand sheep and goats. The casualty levels were felt to be unacceptably high and officials downplayed the figures (Muriuki, 1974).

In September 1902, Colonel Meinhertzhagen attacked the Agikuyu of kihumbuini and ordered his forces to kill every living creature except children and burn all huts and farms (Meinertzhagen, 1903). Hall thereafter proceeded to crush resistance from the Agikuyu of Gaturi (Muriuki, 1969). As a consequence of growing resistance of Agikuyu in the Murang’a County, the colonial government in 1902 placed Fort Hall in the hands an Assistant District Commissioner, backed by a contingent of Kings African Rifles, policemen and Maasai warriors (KNA, History of Fort Hall 1888-1944). More punitive excursions led by Colonel Meinertzhagen in 1904 were directed against the Agikuyu in Murang’a County, leading to hundred deaths, villages razed down and livestock taken away (Rosberg and Nottingham, 1966).

Agikuyu resistance against British rule in the County was however short lived. Muruka people deserted their homes, while leaders in Nairobi of the Agikuyu of Kihumbuini sued for peace, just like the people of Gaturi (Muriuki, 1969). A number of factors have been advanced to explain why the Agikuyu were easily defeated by the British. Kinyanjui (1999) argues that colonial expeditions coincided with a series of natural calamities such as rinderpest (1898), drought and famine (1898-1900) and smallpox (1899-1900). All these weakened the Agikuyu against the colonial forces. Resistance was further weakened by the use of superior weapons by the British soldiers as compared to the Kikuyu spears, bows and arrows (Ngigi, O.I, 2014). Kikuyu resistance was further compromised by the
presence of collaborators in Murang’a such as Karuri Gakure and Chief Njiiri Karanja (Muriuki, 1974) and the persistence of rivalries within Kikuyu society (Lonsdale, 1977). Eventually, Agikuyu of Murang’a were subdued and placed under the colonial regime as Kenya was subsequently declared a British colony in 1920.

By the terms of the Berlin Conference (1884-85), European nations occupying territories in Africa had to develop the areas and replace slave trade with legitimate trade (Ogot, 1976). This explains why the colonial powers initially undertook to develop infrastructure in Africa. The most notable development in Kenya was the construction of the Kenya-Uganda railway (Sorrenson, 1967). This railway was constructed in order to access Uganda, which was considered useful as noted above. Moreover, colonization was not just an exploration venture but was a profit making process and hence every colony had to be self-sustaining. The construction of the railway begun in Mombasa in 1896, passed through the savannah plains of Kenya to the highlands of Central Kenya and headed to Kisumu (Kennedy, 1987). On reaching Nairobi, the construction had to halt for some time because the engineer had to come up with ways of handling the approaching escarpment. Nairobi was cool and had a good climate prompting the change of the headquarters from Machakos to Nairobi in 1907 (Odinga, 1990). With the construction completed in 1901 and the transfer of the protectorate to Nairobi in 1907, missionary activities reached the interior of Kenya while the colonial authorities were able to send pacification expeditions to conquer resisting communities (Tignor, 1976). The construction of the Uganda railway drastically changed commercial activities between the coast and the
hinterland. It was soon realized that this could not enable the railway become economically profitable, prompting the British Government to introduce large-scale agricultural production based on European immigrant settlers.

Nairobi and its environs particularly the highlands were considered useful in the development of the colony. The reason being, Kenya was not endowed with mineral resources like gold, copper, and diamond as in colonies such as Zimbabwe and South Africa. Consequently, the administrators in Kenya had to look for an alternative in order to make Kenya productive and not a liability to Britain. The alternative became the fertile soils in the Kenyan highlands (Ogot, 1968). Thus, for the colony to be self-sustaining, the fertile soils had to be exploited. As a result, the then commissioner to Kenya, Sir Charles Elliot took it upon himself to invite Europeans to come and occupy these lands (Sorenson, 1967). He encouraged the settlers to come to Kenya by promising them vast land, labour and protection. The settlers came in huge numbers from places like Britain, New Zealand and South Africa (Tignor, 1976). Tignor notes that by 1931, the number of settlers in Kenya was 31,000.

The pioneer settlers arrived in Murang’a County in 1902 and experimented on growing of vines, wattle and cotton with little success., but in 1907 sisal was successfully grown in Makuyu near Thika (Tignor, 1976). The alienation of Agikuyu land to pave way for settler farming immediately led to conflict with the Europeans The Agikuyu were so conscious about land that they considered it more important than a mother because, a mother would give birth once but the land would feed the child forever (Kenyatta, 1938).
The advent of European occupation of the Agikuyu land in Murang’a coincided with indeed one of the most severe famine in the history of the Agikuyu -Ng’aragu ya ruraya (the famine of Europe) (Muriuki, 1974). It got this name as the Kikuyu associated the famine with the coming of the Europeans. Due to this famine, large numbers of Kikuyu from the southern part of Kikuyu land migrated to seek refuge in Fort hall (Murang’a) that was not affected, as a strategy to cope with the problem (Kamande, O.I, 2015). The history of the Agikuyu depicts that they adopted strategies to solve crisis, such as shifting for some time and then resettle back when the problem was solved. They would leave their land unoccupied but this did not mean that the land did not have an owner (Tignor, 1976). The Europeans interpreted this scenario to mean that the land was empty and declared it Crown land. Sorrenson (1968) notes that the Agikuyu knew the owner of the land even when it was left unoccupied. Following the 1915-crown land ordinance that legalized the occupation of African land, the Agikuyu by 1926 had become “tenants” on their own soil as “nine thousand square miles (of land) were in the hands of about two thousand Europeans (Welbourn, 1961:116).

Eventually the British managed to alienate vast lands for the settlers in the county who engaged in growing cash crops such as coffee, sisal and tea, all which required regular supply of African labour. In Murang’a, African labour had to be sourced from neighbouring centers of Kihumbuini, Kiunyu, Kandara, Muruka, Gaichanjiru, Muthithi, Kagunduini and other areas (Muriuki, 1969). Due to increased settler population, an attempt by the colonial government to introduce corporate production as the mainstay of
the economy, and the reluctance by Agikuyu to provide labour, acute shortage of African labour occurred. Various strategies were put into place to ensure that Africans provided enough labour. For instance, Africans were forced to work for the settlers (Mamdani, 1996). Forced labour was hardly enough to serve the settlers and hence other strategies were adopted. Taxation was introduced, which encouraged peasant commodity production and at the same time force the African to work for the Europeans (Zwanenberg, 1975; Zeleza, 1989). In spite of the introduction of hut and poll tax in 1901 and 1910 respectively, labour in the settler farms remained insufficient. Poor wages, brutality, overworking, hunger and flogging were some of the factors that kept Kikuyu away from European farms (Mamdani, 1996).

The settlers had to devise other methods and means to curb shortage of African labour. The Squatter system which entailed an Africa being given a piece of land in a settler farm where he could do his subsistence farming as he offered labour to the settlers farm, was introduced (Kanogo, 1987). Kipande system was introduced to ensure that no African could escape from his employer. Kipande was a form of identification that contained once name, area of residence/work, current wage and the name of the employer. Africans were required to hang the kipande on their neck. With the Kipande system, it was hard for the Africans to run away from their work place since they could be traced (Zwanenberg, 1975). The Kikuyu were put into overcrowded reserves away from other communities and deprived of their means of production, and forbidden to grow profitable cash crops like coffee, tea and sisal (Kanogo, 1987). In 1918, the Resident Native Ordinance was
passed demanding the squatter payments be made in labour and not in kind or cash (Colin, 1974).

The First World War (1914-1918) had far-reaching consequences on the Agikuyu, specifically in Murang’a County. The British in an effort to subdue the Germans deployed Indian troops but also required large numbers of potters to overcome the formidable logistics of transporting supplies far into the interior by foot (Mugo, 2005). As a result, many kikuyu were forcefully conscripted to serve in the carrier corps and in the regular military units, either in Tanganyika, India and other places (Ogot, 1968). The war helped unite the Agikuyu but also gave them the confidence to resist the British. Ogot (1968) observed that in the process “Africans became more aware of themselves as a distinct racial group; they discovered the weaknesses and heterogeneity of the white men, and even crucial, they learnt the importance of organized resistance.” The Agikuyu who participated in the war returned home with “money, knowledge of the world and expectations of a better lot from the government” (Trench, 1993). However, they were deeply disappointed as the British government only rewarded their white counterparts. The demoralized African soldiers who had been denied post war benefits and the creation of white settler dominated economy coupled with the experiences gathered by the Kikuyu in the war, gave rise to considerable political activities in the 1920s in Kikuku land (Nduati, O.I, 2014)
2.6 Political Resistance

Political mobilization in Murang’a County began in the 1920, a year that saw Kenya’s transition from a protectorate to a crown colony and thus officially sanctioned the period of settler control (Swainson, 1980; 22). Improved literacy levels because of missionary education and the experience by African soldiers from the First World War resulted to heightened political activities in Murang’a County. In 1920, Kikuyu Association was formed by chiefs and headmen in colonial administration, but due to its membership, quickly failed to inspire confidence in the wider Kikuyu community (Ingham, 1963). In 1921, Young Kikuyu Association was established but renamed in July to the East African Association in a bid to appeal to a broader African constituency (Mungeam, 1970; Ingham, 1963; Wiper, 1989). E.A.A under the chair of Harry Thuku had large following in Murang’a County that included members such as Joseph Kangethe, Job Muchuchu, Henry Gichuiri and Jesse Kariuki, all from Fort Hall. Heightened political activities under E.A.A could be felt by 1922, with its leaders agitating for the rights of the people against taxation, the Kipande system, unfair wages, forced labour for women as well as men, and the abuses of local head (Wipper, 1989). Thuku’s political strategy was to mobilize the masses in a bid to overthrow the colonial regime. This prompted the British imperialists to ban the EAA and arrest Thuku on 14th March 1922, a development that saw thousands of his followers lay siege on the police station (former Kingsway police station) where their leaders were held (Ibid). When men hesitated to attack the station, Mary Muthoni Nyanjiru, a great patriot from Murang’a, loudly challenging men’s cowardly position, leaped forward charging towards the station. This fracas prompted the police, aided by
the settlers from Norfolk Hotel to opened fire on the crowd, killing Nyanjiru and several other protestors (Singh, 1969; Wipper, 1989). As a result, Thuku was deported to Kisimayu where he was detained for nine years.

EAA activities continued even after Thuku’s arrest. In a meeting held in 1924, Thuku was elected in absentia as the president, Joseph Kang’ethe the secretary and Job Muchuchu the treasurer (Wipper, 1989), the latter leaders came from Murang’a. The same year, it presented a memorandum demanding for the release of Thuku, return of alienated land, removal of tax on women, abolition of the Kipande system and for cases to be heard by elders and not chiefs (Singh, 1969). Pressure from EAA compelled the colonial secretary in 1923 to accept that African interest be paramount, hut tax was reduced from sixteen to twelve shillings and a proposal to reduce African wages was declined, instead the wages were increased (Singh, 1969).

The Kikuyu Central Association (KCA) was formed in 1924 after the demise of EAA. In a meeting at Fort Hall (Murang’a) to elect leaders, attended by delegates from Nairobi, Kiambu, Nyeri and Embu, Joseph Kangethe became the president, Jesse Kariuki the vice president, Henry Gichuiri the secretary, Job Muchuchu the treasurer, thus retaining many of the leaders from Murang’a. The headquarters of KCA also remained at Kahuhia, Murang’a County (Singh, 1969).

In 1925, a ruling by the Supreme Court declared that Africans were not owners of their land, even in the reserves, but tenants at the will of the crown. A strong worded petition opposing the court ruling and demanding the revision of the 1915 Crown Lands
Ordinance was presented to the Governor. It also demanded the release of Thuku, adequate education opportunities and the ban on Africans against growing of coffee. In 1927, KCA moved its headquarters from Murang’a to Nairobi, a move aimed at attracting more Agikuyu from Kiambu. In 1928, Sir Hilton Young was sent to East Africa to work on an East African Federation among other issues. The association further requested Jomo Kenyatta to represent it grievances to the Young Commission, in the absence of James Beauttah who was away in Uganda. Kenyatta became the General-Secretary in 1928, and thereafter in 1929, the editor of the association’s newspaper called *Muiguithania* (reconciler) (Singh, 1969). In February 1929, Kenyatta was sent by KCA to present its grievances to the Colonial Secretary in London. By 1929, KCA had become a strong political outfit that resisted and protested against missionary denunciation of female circumcision in Kikuyu land

### 2.7 Missionary Work

In the 18th century, there emerged revivalism of Christianity and an urgent need to spread the gospel overseas. Europeans viewed Africa as one of the areas that urgently needed the gospel of Christ. This was because of the reports by Europeans explorers; that Africa was a dark continent, a den of desolation, misery and crime (Stock, 1899). The inhabitants of Africa were seen as primitive and savage. This prompted missionary’s urgency into coming to civilize the ‘black’ continent and its people.

The Pioneer European Missionary group to arrive in Kikuyu land was the East African Scottish Industrial Mission in 1898. It was later renamed the Church of Scotland Mission.
The Church Missionary Society (CMS) which was an evangelical wing of the Church of England arrived at the coast of Kenya in 1901 and received by the Sultan of Zanzibar despite the fact that he professed Islam (Waigwa, 2007). CMS had missionaries such as Ludwig Krapf who was so instrumental in the introduction of Christianity in Kenya. Other mission groups that came to Kenya include among others; Gospel Missionary Society (GMS), Church of Scotland Mission (CSM), London Missionary Society (LMS), Consolata Fathers, Hill Mill Fathers (HMF), Holy Ghost Fathers (HGF), the Lutheran Mission (LM) and the African Inland Mission (AIM) (Anderson, 1970). Because of the stiff competition with Islam in the coastal areas, missionaries started to penetrate the interior of East coast. Krapf, for instance would visit local chiefs and make plans for future missions. Krapf was later joined by John Rebmann.

One of the most notable feature of CMS missionaries was that they did not isolate themselves from African because they lived in African villages and did not condemn their values and customs without first attempting to understand them (Waigwa, 2007). Most importantly, they realized the problem of language barrier and sought to understand the African languages. This was a very vital step in making the spread of Christianity to Kenya a success. Krapf for instance, learnt Kiswahili language, wrote the first *Kiswahili* dictionary and later translated the New Testament to Kiswahili and *Kikamba* (Sindima, 1998). CMS established mission stations in Weithaga and Kahuhia in Muranga county in 1903 and 1906 respectively (Anderson, 1970).
The first decades of missionary work however achieved little as only the desolate, homeless, run-away/freed slaves, and outcasts were easily converted (Anderson, 1970). Nevertheless, their fortunes changed dramatically by the turn of the 21st century with the coming of the colonialism. Hitherto, the interior of the protectorate could not be ventured into due to transport challenges, hostile communities and language barriers. With successful quelling of resistance and completion of the railway, the missionaries moved into the heart of the land and embarked on the evangelisation trial. The simultaneous arrival of the missionaries and colonial administrators, and the fact that the former appealed for help and protection from the colonial government when faced with rejection and hostility from the Africans, greatly influenced the Kikuyu response to the gospel. Some writers have argued that the missionary and the colonial master were the same. Anderson (1970) argues that Europeans came in different names such as explores, the government official, the missionary, the settler and the trader5, but they all had the same goal of subduing the ‘primitive’ Africa. Indeed, communities could not tell the difference of the various European groups. A popular saying among the Agikuyu; ‘Gutiri mubea na muthungu’ (there is no marked difference between a white missionary and a white settler/colonial administrator) emerged (Nthamburi, 1995:39). Dissenting views indicate that the missionaries had similar plans to the colonizers and “came to prepare ground for them (Mukuthurua, 2009) thus aided colonization process.

5 See Anderson J (1970), the struggle for the School for an analysis of why different European groups came to Africa.
Following the ideas of David Livingstone, the great explorer and missionary, European missionaries in Kikuyu land engaged on evangelistic work in the firm belief that Africans could only be won to Christ once Christianity and western civilisation were properly inculcated. It is in line with this view that Colonisation, Christianity, Commerce and Civilisation, which were inseparables and wholly good for the colonized were introduced. Missionary evangelization approaches were similar in that they first sought out assistance from the local chiefs for land and protection, built churches, schools, hospitals and farms. Mission stations became a haven for the Kikuyu because they would get food supplies, medicine and shelter (Anderson, 1970). The missionaries took advantage of this situation to convert many Agikuyu into Christianity, decimate their civilisation and culture. The coming of the European missionaries in Kenya in the 19th century saw the introduction of new practices in the field of health and condemnation of traditional approaches to healing (Kibicho, 2006:47-53), which the missionaries denounced as witchcraft and paganism. Mission stations were established which housed the church, school, health centre’s and a farm to generate income. The schools and health centers were used as points of converting Africans (Anderson, 1997:107).

Although Missionary activity and teachings in Kikuyu land were positively received and their effects increasingly felt in the community, it immediately came into conflict with the socio-religious traditions of the Agikuyu.
2.8 Conclusion

This chapter sought to locate the Agikuyu pre-colonial way of life. The Agikuyu had well defined political, social and economic structures prior to colonialism. Politically, they were ruled by a council of elders with the help of different councils (Ciama) over the ridges. Additionally, they enjoyed a thriving economic base supported by both farming and livestock keeping that was supplemented by trade. Socially, the Agikuyu conducted ceremonies that marked the rites of passages such as birth, initiation, marriage and death. Of importance in this chapter was the centrality of Agikuyu religious belief system that permeated every aspect of their life.

British colonial rule and Missionary teachings in Kikuyu land brought about profound socio-economic, political and religio-cultural changes that dismantled Agikuyu way of life. Missionary teachings denounced African cultural activities such as female circumcision and polygamy. Agikuyu dissatisfaction led to the birth of both political and armed resistance against the colonial regime. It is against this background that the Akurinu movement emerged in Kandara, Murang’a County. In the next chapter, we seek to analyse the origin and rise of the Akurinu movement.
CHAPTER THREE

THE ORIGIN AND RISE OF THE AKURINU MOVEMENT IN KANDARA, MURANG’A COUNTY: 1926-1940; A CRASH OF ‘CIVILIZATIONS’

3.1 Introduction

Numerous Akurinu groups in Kenya share a common historical origin. The earliest Akurinu group is believed to have emerged during the cultural and religious crisis of the late 1920s and early 1930s (Mwaura, 1984: 57). This religious movement is believed to trace its roots from a group of believers who were referred to as Arathi (prophets). Later, Arathi came to be known as Aroti (dreamers); this is because they believed in seeing of iroto (dreams) and cioneki (visions) (Waigwa, 2007; Macharia, 2012). This group of dreamers and seers later became the proto fathers of the Akurinu (Waigwa, 2007).

The movement emerged among the Agikuyu in 1926 during the political, economic, religious and cultural crisis in Central Kenya (Mwaura, 1984). Evidence collected from administrative records and oral accounts point to one Joseph Ng’ang’a as the founder of the Akurinu religious movement (Mwaura, 1984; Kinyanjui, 1974; Murray, 1973). He is said to have come from Kambui in Kiambu County, acquired education in mission schools, and was therefore literate in both Kikuyu and Kiswahili (Mwaura, 1984). Although the exact date of his birth remains unclear, he is said to have been of youthful age at the time of his call in 1926 (Waigwa, 2007). He lived a normal life that included attending beer-drinking parties (Mwaura, 1984; Waigwa, 2007; Macharia, 2012). It is argued that Ng’ang’a was called by God on his way home, after attending a beer drinking
party. He fell by the roadside, could not walk and slept. It was this time that he heard a voice call him. He became conscious in his spirit that God called him. He took the beer he was carrying and gave the rest to the others together with the apparatus with which it was made (Waigwa, 2007:67).

After this call Ng’ang’a went into seclusion for three years, abstaining from ordinary life, devoting his life to prayer and intensive Bible study (Ibid). After 1930, Ng’ang’a embarked on evangelical work and teachings that attracted many people to his group. His message was repentance, baptismal by the Holy Spirit and piety. His repentance teachings seemed to have attracted most of the people because preaching liberation at a time when the people were oppressed by the colonial government was very relevant. Waigwa (2007) notes that the teachings of Ng’ang’a were too pertinent to the people at that time when they needed God to save them from the brutality of the colonial masters. Ng’ang’a was always assisted in his mission work by Samuel Muinami and Joseph Munga’ra who were said to be his cousins, and an elderly Musa Muchai (Mwaura, 1984; Wachu, O.I,2015). The three established their teachings at Kijabe escarpment while Ng’ang’a remained at Gatundu. Ng’ang’a teachings went far and wide, reaching neighbouring districts and spread fast even beyond southern Gikuyu to parts of Rift Valley (Waigwa, 2007).

By 1930, several Akurinu religious groups had emerged in different geographical locations, outside Kiambu, but all tracing a common origin. In Nyeri, specifically at Ihururu and Mukurweini, a group led by Elijah Gichuhi, Isaac Ndiangui and Joseph Nderito emerged. In Meru, Johnstone M’Kiambati became the leader of Akurinu of
Chuka-Mwimbi area (Mwaura, 1984). In 1934, Hezron Tumbo, Johana Wang’endo and Elijah Gachuki together with Paul Kuniara established large Akurinu groups in Limuru, Manguo and Magina area called the Holy Ghost Church of East Africa (Ibid). Meanwhile, as numerous Akurinu groups were emerging in diverse parts of Central and Rift Valley regions, an unfortunate encounter occurred in February 1934, in which three Akurinu proto leaders were killed by the colonial forces. These were Joseph Ng’ang’a, Samuel Muinami and John Mung’ara, who are today considered as Akurinu martyrs (Macharia, 2012). Colonial soldiers had been sent to Ndarugu forest in Juja in search of a murder suspect who was thought to be in the company of a group of Akurinu. Police opened fire killing the three Akurinu leaders (KNA; DC/KBU/1/27).

3.2 Musa Thuo: Early life and Conversion

The emergence of Akurinu movement in Murang’a County depicts a separate development from Kiambu. Waigwa (2007) posits that while Ng’ang’a continued with his evangelical ministry, another man, Moses Thuo, from Murang’a County, in 1926, received a divine call. However, Macharia (2012: 15) opine that Moses Tuo was preached to and converted by Ng’ang’a in one of his evangelical visits to Murang’a.

Thuo was the son of Chege and Nyambura, and was born in 1888 in Kaguthi village, Kandara sub-County, Murang’a County (Kiminja, O.I.2014). He received his education from Githumu African Inland Mission where he went up to grade four (Ibid). At Githumu, Thuo became a Christian and was baptized, but in 1929, he left the AIM along with other Agikuyu who felt that the missionaries were hindering progress towards
African leadership both in the affairs of the church and the school, and joined an independent church group led by Daudi Maina Kiragu. During fellowship in his home, Thuo begun to experience intense spiritual renewal along with repeated dreams and visions, an experience that was at variance with the beliefs and practices espoused by the larger independent group led by Kiragu (Ibid). Thuo led several followers in involuntarily prayers, groaning and shouting loudly as they confessed their sins. Large numbers of people joined Thuo’s group due to the new experience of the Holy Spirit and the realization that this religious outfit meet the deeper spiritual needs of the Gikuyu society (Ibid). His ministry led to the birth of the Kenya Foundation of the Prophets’ Church at Kaguthi, Kandara, in Murang’a County in 1927 (Kimani, O.I., 2013)

With the leadership vacuum created following the demise of the three Akurinu leaders, Musa Thuo become the undisputed leader of the Akurinu movement. After the divine calling in 1929, Thuo like Ng’ang’a, went into seclusion and engaged in intensive Bible study accompanied with meditations, dreams, speaking in tongues and sorrowful groaning in intercessory prayer (Waigwa, 2007). Thuo was a brilliant young man when he joined the Akurinu movement and displayed leadership qualities that even Joseph Ng’ang’a did not possess (Ibid). Unlike other Akurinu leaders, Thuo had strong acumen for politics as observed in his joining the Kikuyu Central Association, a role he took even after his conversion into Akurinu faith, in spite of opposition from other Akurinu who felt that their religion should not be involved in politics (Mwaura, 1984; Waigwa, 2007; Macharia, 2012). His active role in politics and his acumen in frontline participation in
Akurinu affairs in Murang’a County placed him at an added advantage over other leaders in Kiambu and other Counties (Macharia, 2012). It should be noted that Thuo was literate, having received formal education from the mission school at AIM Githumu, giving him an upper hand over other leaders at the time.

Upon recognizing Thuo’s leadership abilities, the leaders of the Akurinu movement ordained Thuo in 1933 to head the movement in Murang’a (Macharia, 2012). His immediate assignment was to initiate the process of formalizing the structure of all the Akurinu groups. He convened a meeting of all Akurinu leaders in the Country, which took place at his home in Kaguthi, Kandara sub-County in Murang’a County on September 9th 1933 (Ibid). This congregation aimed at uniting and strengthening the various Akurinu groups in the Country. This meeting harmonized Akurinu beliefs and practices, which had developed differently due to geographical distance and varied theological stands (Ibid). Leadership issues were also discussed, with many hesitating to endorse one leader and preferring that even Thuo be one among equals in the leadership of the larger Akurinu movement, in spite of his advantaged position (Ibid). Large meetings and conventions were held in various centers in the Country after the 1933 convention.

Oral evidence alludes to 1st June 1927 as the date when the Holy Spirit descended on Musa Thuo commissioning him to establish the Akurinu Kenya Foundation of the Prophets’ Church in Kaguthi, Kandara (Karanja, O.I., 2013). His whole life became intricately connected with the birth and development of the Akurinu movement in Kikuyu
land, a religious group of its kind in Central Kenya. Thuo became the supreme leader (Mutongoria) of the Akurinu, the only in the rank who had the religious privilege to conduct marriage and church ordination ceremonies (Muiruri, O.I., 2014). He was assisted in performance of duty by Elijah Ng’ang’a, Shadrack Njuguna, Ibrahim Maina and Misheck Kiguru, whose main role was a baptizer (Mubhatithania), who later moved out and joined PCEA church in Kaguthi (Ibid).

Thuo is considered as one of the most progressive of the Akurinu pioneers leaders due to his ability to bring all Akurinu groups together. Owing to constant harassment, arrests and imprisonment of the Akurinu, Thuo’s leadership prowess was evidenced by leading the group in seeking formal application from the then district commissioner in Murang’a, in 1933 for permission to hold their meeting freely (Macharia, 2012). This development made it possible for Akurinu from other Counties to converge at Thuo’s home in Kaguthi, Kandara (Murang’a) and deliberate on issues affecting the movement without fear of being arrested. This development boosted Thuo’s leadership among the Akurinu pioneers so that even Joseph Ng’ang’a appeared to serve in a more or less as an assistant (Ibid). After this, the ability to hold church service and evangelistic meetings without fear of arrest placed the Akurinu in Murang’a at an advantaged position far above that of their brethren in other areas. Indeed, the whole Akurinu movement began to take advantage of the cessation of the hostilities against their faith in Murang’a (Ibid).

The Kenya Foundation of the Prophets’ Church spread fast reaching Gatanga sub- County and beyond. Several branches were established in areas such as Gacharage, Gathugu,
Mukurwe and Rwathia (Kiminja, O.I., 2014). By 1942 the Akurinu population in Murang’a had increased, although the District Commissioner report in June 1942 observed that though their activities were not criminal they were embarrassing to the government” KNA DC/ F.H.2/1/4. The Akurinu in Kandara, just like the rest of the Kikuyu community were opposed to the social, political, economic and cultural pressures brought by the British administration and Western Christian missionaries (Kenyatta, 1938). They reacted towards European aggression by withdrawal and rejection, preached a non-violent opposition of colonial policies, refused to carry Kipande and to be counted during census as well as paying taxes, taking their children to mission schools or hospitals (Mwaura, 1984:85; Waigwa, 2007)

3.3 Causes of the Emergence of Akurinu Movement in Kandara, Murang’a County

The above historical survey on the Akurinu religious movement explains little about the factors that led to its emergence. The argument by some scholars that Independent Religious Movements like the Akurinu, emerged as a reaction to colonial injustices does not account for enough. However, the nexus between colonial malpractices and initial religious reactions has been clearly demonstrated by scholars (Lantenari, 1963; 19-62; Blandier, 1971; 417-487). Others have argued that attempts to establish the causes of religious independency, like the Akurinu movement, the situation on the ground should be put into consideration (Lonsdale, 1963; 350). It should be noted that in our review of literature, a conclusion was made that no specific factor, whether political, social, cultural or religious can in explain the genesis of a particular religious movement. All the same, a
concessus was reached that although certain factors were found to be more prominent to their emergence, the strength of the general movement was in the combination of all factors. Using the theoretical tool of social movement, we concluded that the above is applicable to the Akurinu movement whose causes for emergence were varied and complex.

The rise of the Akurinu movement is directly associated with the social cultural crisis that occurred in colonial Kenya in the 1920s in Kikuyu land (Kinyanjui, 1974; Murray, 1973). Being a marginal group, they seemed to have suffered more directly from the European injustices in the country. The cultural ways of the native Kikuyu had been interfered with by the missionaries who denounced and rejected some of their cultural practices. The Church of Scotland Mission, for example, came up with a priority list of the traditional practices that had to be done away with. Macpherson (1970:105) observes that these included beliefs and customs regarded as being at variance with Christian principles but not necessarily actively opposed to them and therefore were to be allowed to die out of their own accord. In this category were reverence to ancestral spirits, the traditional sacrificial system and the practice of magic and “ugo” (Prophesy). Customs regarded as incompatible with Christian principles and therefore unacceptable in a Christian community such as polygamy and sexually motivated dances were denounced. There were also customs regarded as medically or hygienically undesirable such as the exposure of the dead and female circumcision that the missionaries rejected.
The introduction of Christian teachings among the Kikuyu was thus accompanied by denunciation of Agikuyu beliefs and practices which were seen as primitive and devilish (Hiuhu, 1938). This was however done without logically evaluating their importance in the Agikuyu traditional way of life. From the onset, the missionaries denounced the Agikuyu practices of health, illness and healing (Ugo) which were said to be at variance with Christian teachings. The whole Agikuyu process of healing was in the eyes of the European missionary’s part of a wide scheme of witchcraft and paganism, and had to be eradicated in order to pave way for Western civilization and the Gospel (Anderson, 1970). To discourage these practices they set up health centres in their missions, to which they referred the sick among the African converts. It is for this reason that most mission stations had the four pillars of Western civilization, namely, the school, the church, a health centre, and a farm to generate some income.

The schools and health centres were however used as points of converting Africans (Anderson, 1970:107). The inability of mission churches to grasp the salvatory needs of the Agikuyu as clearly expressed in the causes of the sickness, left African converts unsatisfied. A spiritual vacuum was thus created among the Agikuyu converts who turned back to their traditional religions that offered divine healing (Hinga, 1938). Agikuyu worldview is controlled by some forces, which are believed to intervene in circumstances beyond human capability (Mbiti, 1969). The early Akurinu in Murang’a County therefore borrowed from the Agikuyu way of life and established a movement that believed and practiced healing of bodily diseases through spiritual practices, a perspective that took
into account both the physical and spiritual wellbeing. As a result of the ban on certain Kikuyu traditional practices such as polygamy, ceremonial dances and drinking of traditional liquor by the missionaries, the Akurinu in Kandara, Murang’a County, became withdrawn, rejected western dress and boycotted to buy European products.

In addition, the Agikuyu were reluctant to continue accepting the patronizing approach and racialist attitude displayed by the Western Missionaries churches which were so integrated into “racialist society that their membership was profoundly alienating for black people” (Bediako, 1994). It is the above factor, characterized by the desire for African self-expression and freedom, from missionary control that led to the rise of the Akurinu movement.

3.4 The Female Circumcision Controversy in Kikuyu Land

The forceful demand of western missionaries in Gikuyu land that Africans must renounce and keep culture and politics out of Christianity split the Church into two theologically irreconcilable groups. On one hand, were those who opposed the missionaries’ theological position of keeping culture and politics out of religion, who referred themselves to as Agikuyu a Karing’a (Kikuyu Cultural Nationalists), while on the other were those who supported the missionaries’ demand, who came to be known as Agikuyu a Kirore (Fingerprint or Abolitionists Kikuyu) (Waruiru 1971:26).

The 1920s and 1930s saw increased missionary opposition against Agikuyu cultural practices that gained momentum especially with the support of the colonial government, which discouraged the participation in customary practices such as polygamy and female
circumcision, as well as dances, songs, rituals and feasting associated with the latter, called *Mambura* (divine services) (Ahlberg, 1991; Githiga, 1997). Traditional dances were condemned as sexually immoral; many rites and rituals were labeled retrogressive and contrary to the Christian faith and had thus to be given up (Nasimiyu, Wasike & Warata, 1993; Njoroge, 1999). The polarization of the issue of female circumcision by missionary churches especially the Methodists and Scottish Presbyterian, set a stage for contestation between Christianity and the Kikuyu, causing a great deal of strife in every facet of the society. The missions issued a formal declaration requiring African followers to sign (*kirore*) acknowledging disapproval of female circumcision and of membership of the proto-nationalist Kikuyu Central Association. The missionaries took an uncompromising stand (Groves, 1948: 58; Murray, 1974; Natsoulas, 1997) and sought colonial government support in outlawing female circumcision (Hayes, 1975; Thomas, 1996; Natsoulas, 1997). This directive immediately faced swift resistance from the Kikuyu in Kandara, led by the nationalist Kikuyu Central Association, whose argument on the ban, was that this was the beginning of an assault on all Kikuyu traditions (Natsoulas, 1997:140).

The European disregard of Agikuyu cultural practices meant that gender roles and relations, which were fashioned during initiation rites of circumcision, would also be altered significantly. In addition, the colonial land and labour policies compromised the traditional Agikuyu men and women roles in the sense that majority of the Agikuyu
people were pushed out of their fertile land into reserves and squatter land (Wamue, 1999).

According to Mwangi wa Muthoni, an elder in Kaguthi village in Kandara:

Agikuyu men resisted the ban on female circumcision and refused to marry uncircumcised women, which in return put a lot of pressure on Agikuyu women who resisted the ban due to fear of victimization, poverty and lack of support from their male counterpart (Wa Muthoni, O.I, 2014).

KCA further fuelled the circumcision issue by linking it to the land issue grievance of Kikuyu, suggesting that the attack on Kikuyu tradition would jeopardize the tribal organization of land. Uncircumcised girls could not be married by Kikuyu men, the intergenerational ownership of land would be broken, and Kikuyu land and unmanageable girls would be taken by Europeans (Nastsoulas, 1997; Kanogo, 2005). Prior to colonial rule, female circumcision was an acceptable rite of passage that underlined the Agikuyu cultural selfhood. Jomo Kenyatta (1962) affirms this by stating that:

The moral code of the tribe is bound up with this custom and that it symbolizes the unification of the whole tribal organization ….the essence of an institution which has enormous educational, social, moral and religious implications, quite apart from the operation itself….No proper Gikuyu would dream of marrying a girl who has not been circumcised, and vice versa. It is taboo for a Gikuyu man or woman to have sexual relations with someone who has not undergone this operation. (Kenyatta, 1962)

In other words, Kikuyu culture was firmly held together by the cultural practices that foreigners vigorously sought to extinguish. In their dismissal of female circumcision, the missionaries perceived the practice as not only brutal, punitive and impulsive but also
unchristian, medically and hygienically undesirable. For Kenyatta, those who attacked
female circumcision focused only on the surgical operation and missed “the
understanding of a very important fact in the tribal psychology of the Gikuyu.

Kanogo in analyzing female circumcision opines that:

Missions across the colony had been campaigning against female circumcision for
several years and failed to understand that “irua” (circumcision) was not simply a
cosmetic surgery with no deep cultural implications as many colonial administrators
believed it to be (Kanogo, 2005:73-90)

Muriuki in examining the dynamics of female circumcision observes that:

Circumcision was not merely a mutilation of the body, as the missionaries would have
had the adherents believe, but also a vehicle for the transmission and perpetuation of the
norms and values of the Kikuyu cultural traditions. Through it individuals gained
membership to an age set which provided them with a new focus of identification with
the society, a new frame of reference through which they relate themselves to the total
society and identify themselves with its values and symbols (Muriuki,1974).

For the missionaries, female circumcision was simply a disgusting ceremony, very
incompatible with Christianity (Peterson, 2004). In Kandara, they used several methods to
halt the practice, which included excommunicating circumcised girls and parents who
allowed the practice on their daughters. This development led to large sections of
Agikuyu boycotting mission schools and churches, and soon formed Independent Schools
and later Churches (Natsoules, 1997:140). In 1930, religious leaders and Kikuyu political
activists proceeded in establishing their own churches and schools so that Africans could
practice Christianity, educate their youth, practice and preserve their traditional customs
without external interference. This led to the formation of Kikuyu Independent Schools
Association (KISA) as well as the opening of several Independent Schools and Churches, mainly in Murang’a and Kiambu.

In 1935, Archbishop William D. Alexander, a member of Marcus Garvey African Orthodox church, that was advocating for cultural liberation of African peoples, arrived from South Africa and assisted in the establishment of the first Karing’a seminary at Gituamba, in Murang’a and ordained the first African clergy (Welbourn,1961). The new clergy was instrumental in establishment of Independent Churches in Kikuyu land. By 1925, there was increased demand for female education, though this was not directly the result of the circumcision dilemma; the two were related (Ibid). In spite of the formation of the Local Native Council (LNC), in 1925 in Fort Hall, and the fact that it began collecting taxes, the colonial government and the missions refused to fund secondary and girl’s schools, thus helped strengthen the growing opposition movement (Ibid). The LNC in Murang’a were under government pressure to take a stand against Female circumcision, prompted the council in 1926 to pass a resolution banning the ‘major’ form of operation as it was believed that this would relieve some of the negative health consequences associated with the practice (Ibid). In response, KCA became very vocal and active in the effort to retain Female circumcision and frustrate the colonial and mission attempts to denounce it. The Karing’a Independent Churches differed substantially from the teachings by the missions as they heavily borrowed from the Kikuyu religious worship in such practices like praying with their eyes open facing Kirinyaga (Mt. Kenya), which for the Agikuyu was Gods dwelling place, and
characteristically ending their prayers by chanting, *thaai, thathaiya Ngai thaai* (We beseech thee, oh God) (Peterson, 2004). As the Karing’a group was busy establishing Independent schools and churches, another strand, the Akurinu, a seer group emerged in 1926 in Kandara, Murang’a County. This religious group advocated for a total return to the Kikuyu culture and religion (Waigwa, 2007). This was a Gikuyu seer group, which refused European place of clothing and objects and worshipped facing Mount Kenya, the dwelling place of Gikuyu traditional high God. The Akurinu was not only a religious movement, but also a politically motivated resistance group that emerged in the 1920s during the female circumcision controversy. Religious freedom was at the core of this controversy and the Akurinu wanted the freedom to express their Christianity without any external pressure.

Political and economic changes occasioned by colonialism were widespread and deeply felt by even those at the margins of the society like members of the Akurinu movement. The emergence of the Akurinu movement in Central Kenya is closely linked to the rise of nationalism, as their initial calling was to intercede for the nation’s liberation from the colonial yoke in a pacifistic manner (Macharia, 2012). The movement emerged in 1926, when Kikuyu land and particularly Kandara had been alienated by European settlers.

The movement opposed the oppressive colonial policies such as Forced labour, high taxation, the Kipande system and the banning of certain Kikuyu traditional practices, like female circumcision, polygamy and ceremonial dancing and looked forward to a time when the colonialists would be overthrown (Mwaura, 1984).
They sympathized with the struggle for political liberation by providing food, medicine, clothing and vital spy information to Mau Mau land and freedom fighters (Kinyanjui, 1999). Their strong nationalistic sentiments and mass emotions were to find political expressions in early political organisations that were formed by Africans (Macharia, 2012), like Kikuyu Central Association. The Akurinu used religious songs to reflect upon the hardships brought about by European colonialists and invoked nationalistic emotions of their followers some of whom joined the liberation struggle as exemplified by Musa Thuo, who became a member of Kikuyu Central Association (Waigwa, 2007).

Consequently, this movement became a rallying point at which nationalistic sentiments were echoed through songs and sermon. With such an understanding, Akurinu leaders mobilized their members to offer moral as well as material support to the freedom fighters (Macharia, 2012).

The Akurinu in Kandara, just like the rest of the Agikuyu, were expelled from various places where they lived, resulting to loss of their prime land to the colonial administrators (Welbourn, 1961). As a result, God revealed himself to Musa Thuo to deliver the Kikuyu.

A 72-year-old grandmother, an adherent of the Akurinu movement in Kandara, observed that:

God spoke to Musa Thuo in 1926, during his call about the condition of his people, the Kikuyu’s cry for liberation from land alienation and oppression had reached God (Njoki.O.I, 2014).
The Akurinu in Kandara were therefore reacting to the social, political, economic and cultural pressures brought upon the Gikuyu by the British colonial administration and Western Christian missionaries. Colonization led to “the occupation of African lands by white settlers who condemned Africans to forced and cheap labour, high taxation, segregation on basis of colour” (Kenyatta, 1965). Their reaction took a religious orientation, as they prayed for the liberation of the country. They reacted towards the colonial aggression by withdrawal and rejection (Waigwa, 2007). They preached a non-violent opposition of unjust colonial policies that discriminated against and exploited Africans by refusing to carry kipande, to be counted during censuses, to pay taxes, to take their children to missionary schools or hospitals, and to be employed in settlers' farms (Macharia, 2012). They also abstained from buying colonial industrial goods from the shops, to eat or drink from plates and cups, or to travel by vehicles (Lambert, 1956).

By 1927, the Akurinu in Kandara had increased in number and could easily be noticed by colonial governments (Ibid). They had also started receiving a lot of attention from the public and could be seen moving around in groups preaching and praying for the country (Waigwa, 2007). The colonial government regarded them as subversive and accused them of collaborating with political movements such as the Kikuyu Central Association (KCA) (Macharia, 2012). Some of their sacred shrines were closed down by the government on the assumption that they were used for secret meetings of a political character (Brown, 1973).
In 1931, The Akurinu in Fort Hall (Murang’a) were holding secretive meetings as they had been forbidden by the colonial administration due to their apparent non-cooperation policy (KNA/PC/CP/8/7/2). When these groups continued to meet in private and to increase their furtiveness, the government responded in kind by arresting some of the organisers and members. In Kandara and Kangema in Murang’a County, several Akurinu leaders were sentenced to six months imprisonment while lesser accounts of two months were preferred to the followers (KNA/CP/9/10/3). They did not see any reason to defend themselves and whenever they were arraigned in court, they would sit quietly in the dock and refused to say a word (Macharia, 2012). They believed that arrests and imprisonment were inevitable and were therefore ready to go to prison in order to break the vicious cycle of injustice that continued to pull their people down (Waigwa, 2007). The early Akurinu in Kandara were marked by an isolationism that went hand-in-hand with adamant non-cooperation, and even occasionally physical hostility (Ibid).

Consequently, for the Akurinu, the erosion of traditional forms of cultural authority, alienation of tribal lands, the establishment of ‘native reserves’, and the restrictive taxation systems, poverty and socio-economic inequalities (Nthamburi, 1991), intensified their quest for both political and personal identity. Mwaura (2007) attributes the emergence of these African churches in the colonial period to their opposing missionary paternalism and insensibility to their cultures and worldview. The rise of the Akurinu movement can thus be viewed as “resistance against the wider project of harnessing the
African continent, its resources and its people, to the glory, self-aggrandizement and financial profit of metropolitan countries (Ibid).

Among the various factors posited to account for the rise of the Akurinu movement, the religious reason features prominently. Ndung’u (2006; 484) argue that religious reason are more important than hitherto acknowledged by many scholars, in explaining the rise and growth of the Akurinu movement in Kenya. It should be observed that the Bible became a critical factor in the historical development of the movement (Ibid, 484). Ludwig Krapf is believed to have been the first European to do any Bible translation in Kenya (CMS/ C/A5/0/16/1). Although Karl Peters, while traversing Kikuyu country in 1883 did some work in Kikuyu language, it is Reverend A.W McGregor, the first Church Mission Society Missionary who started systematic work of the language at Kabete in 1900 (CMS/C/A6/1/3). He translated the Gospel of John and wrote an English-Gikuyu vocabulary text, which was published, by the British and Foreign Bible Society in 1904. To facilitate and consolidate translation of the Gikuyu Bible the United Kikuyu Language Committee was formally constituted in 1912 representing various Protestant Missionary Societies in Gikuyu Country for the purpose of a united action in translation (Hamshere, 1909). The main objective of (UKLC) was to secure rapidly a uniform translation of the Bible and other literature (UKLC MIN/6/4/1908). Because of this development, the first Gikuyu New Testament was published in 1926 by an Inter-Mission team of translators and by 1935, the supply of these copies had run out, and a reprint was decided upon (Barlow, 1936).
The Old Testament was available in Kiswahil, while some books in it, like the book of Jonah, were available in Kikuyu language (Ibid). The rise of the Akurinu in 1926 coincided with the translation of the Bible into vernacular allowing their leaders to read and interpret its content. Consequently, Akurinu itinerant founders such as Musa Thuo and Joseph Ng’ang’a went into seclusion to study the Bible in the period 1926 to 1930 (Mwaura, 1984). They quickly began “to detect a basic discrepancy between missions and the scriptures on what were to them the major points of conflict, namely the traditional customs being attacked by the missions” (Mbiti, 1986:30). Yet the act of translating the Bible was a colonial strategy to subdue the Kikuyu. Learning Gikuyu, translating the Bible and the ability to converse in Kikuyu, was in itself a great means of inducing sympathy and mutual understanding between the Native and the White Master. In essence, translation was to offer the linguistic bridge needed in order to serve the larger colonial mission (Barlow, 1936).

One of the most important results of the translation of the Bible into African vernaculars was “the loosening of the controlling grip of the missionaries and their societies” (Bediako, 1994:246). The translation of the Bible became a pivotal element in form of Agikuyu nationalism, mimicking the ideological power of the colonizers, and their mechanisms of exclusion. Indeed it” opened up space for colonial differences to emerge” (Johnston, 2001:27), permitted and dislodged the powerful position of the European missionary as the only interpretive authority. Significantly, the Bible enabled the Agikuyu Christians to distinguish between what was taught by the missionaries and what was taught in scripture. The Bible was “indeed the “time bomb” which would eventually help
For the Akurinu, the Bible thus became a powerful ideological and spiritual weapon against colonialism, alongside the prophetic revelations received by itinerant prophetic figures such as Joseph Ng’ang’a and Musa Thuo.

The Akurinu believe and claim that their church was founded through the Holy Spirit, for just as God had chosen the House of Israel, He wanted to establish a people among the Africans through whom he would reveal his will. It was for this reason that the early Akurinu called themselves “Watu wa Mungu” meaning, “the chosen people of God (Kenyatta, 1938: 275). The Akurinu therefore developed various attitudes and approaches to Christianity, without having to confirm to boundaries of missionary orthodoxy and maintained a distinct Agikuyu religio-cultural identity. The Akurinu in Kandara believed that they were living in the time of the end after which God would inaugurate ‘a new heaven and earth’ (Waigwa, 2007). Their life in this world was thus regarded as transitory and therefore one was to lead a life that would lead to acquisition of salvation (Ibid).

The Akurinu claim that they emerged due to divine intervention whereby God raised up prophets from among the Kikuyu people after pouring on some of them the Holy Spirit during a state of spiritual and material dryness (Mwaura, 1984). After the down pouring of the Holy Spirit on specific individuals, they got the Holy Spirit’s gift of prophesy, seeing visions, dreaming and speaking in tongues. All these were aspects of divine revelation as put by an Akurinu member from Kandara:

God appeared to Musa Thuo in a dream, called him in his baptismal name and told him to change his ways. So he realized that He was GOD who spoke to him……..due to this.
influence of the spirit, Musa Thuo kept on roaring till the moment he died (Wangu, O.I, 2014).

The Akurinu became a community wholly within the traditional sector of the society, uneducated and unstructured in western terms, shaped by the experience of the spirit and the frontier of ritual avoidance (Hastings, 1994). The movement was begun by prophetic figures who claimed divine calling to their prophetic ministry. These prophets attracted large numbers of people to their meetings which gradually grew to become a noticeable movement by the end of the 1920s (Waigwa, 2007). The spiritual revelations are evident in the conversion of Joseph Ng angl’a and Musa Thuo who at various points had an encounter with the Spirit from God. The founders of the Akurinu movement thus developed a way of life and faith that was not articulated in books of theology, but instead found in songs, stories, forms of worship, dance, laws of impurity, concepts of evil and practices of prophecies and in understanding of healing and salvation (Macharia, 2012; Mwaura, 1984).

3.5 The Spread of Akurinu Movement 1940-1963

The events that followed the period after the 1933 meeting of all Akurinu leaders in Kaguthi in Kandara, Murang’a County are unclear, but it is certain that leadership wrangles and theological disagreements led to more divisions in the Akurinu Movement. A major rift emerged between the young and old adherents of the group centred around observance of certain Kikuyu traditional practices like polygamy, sacrificial rites and other sacred rituals (Mwaura, 1984;66). The young generation of the Akurinu adamantly
affirmed that God in the Bible forbidded such traditional practices as consultation of diviners, eating of animals used for ceremonial and sacrificial purposes, eating of blood and meat from strangled animals (Ibid). Musa Thuo, the leading figure of the Akurinu movement in Murang’a, established his dominance in Ithiru, Ruchu and Kaguthi areas under the Foundation of the Prophet’s Church, which had its headquarters at Kaguthi, Kandara (Ibid). This church was built on community land set aside for public use (Wangui, O.I.2013). Between 1942 and 1946, the Akurinu population had increased tremendously in Murang’a (Mwaura, 1984: 68), as was the case in Kandara area, with members making pilgrims to their mother church at Kaguthi. Many walked all the way from such areas as Muruka, Gaichanjiru, Ng’araria, Naaro and Kihumbuini to their head office at Kaguthi for worship, meetings and other church functions (Gitau, O.I.2013).

Despite his leadership role in the Akurinu movement, Musa Thuo continued retaining political affiliation and active involvement with the Kenya African Union (Waigwa, 2007; Mwaura, 1984; 74), which opposed colonial injustices like land alienation, forced labour and loss of Kikuyu culture.

Following the Great Economic Depression of 1930s Britain was encouraged to rely on trade with her colonies as “earnings from exports drop significantly as the entire world entered a depression facilitated by the American stock exchange cash in 1929” (Ochieng and Maxon,1992). Britain hoped to build Kenya’s economy on agricultural exports and as such a two way approach was adopted; ‘peasant’ and ‘plantation’ economies- the former referring to small scale subsistence African farms and the latter, mainly to the White
settler farms (Ehrlich, 1968). The loss of funds was supported by introduction of taxes on Africans forcing them into wage market and into welcoming arms of settler farmers and industry who then had the upper hand when it came to setting wages (Ogot, 1968; 266). The Akurinu in Kandara, just like the rest of Kikuyu society were displaced from their ancestral lands and forced to provide labour to the European farmers (Mwaura, 1984:28). This affected negatively on the social, economic and cultural way of life of the Kikuyu. The Akurinu became squatters in their own lands and experienced the oppressive nature of the colonial regime, through forced labour, taxation, Kipande system and imprisonment (Ibid, 52). For the Akurinu, Musa Thuo, became the emissary sent by God to liberate His people from the oppressive colonial government (Irungu, O.I.2013). In his evangelisation mission in Kandara and beyond, Musa Thuo preached the message of purification and reform in order to restore Kikuyu traditions and their socio-economic way of life (Ibid). This led to the birth of more Akurinu churches in areas such as Gakarara, Gathugu, Mukurwe and Rwathia in Kandara.

The outbreak of the Second World in 1939 saw Kenya became an integral British military base as 98,000 Africans were recruited as Askari’s into the King’s African’s Rifles, representing 30% of the unit total strength (Shiroya, 1985). For the Agikuyu soldiers, the war stimulated nationalistic feelings and exposed the weaknesses of the Europeans masters. The war affected negatively on the British for it produced an atmosphere where the white regime realized that it must begin to listen more closely to concerns of her colonies (Roberts, 1963). From the onset, the war put pressure on both
land and labour in the African colonies. The government was given powers of requisition, control of movements and censorship (Zeleza, 1989:147). The Defence Regulation of 1940 gave the Governor power to order Provincial Commissioners to produce Quotas of workers for the military and special services (Ibid, 176). The disruptive effects of the war and the deplorable labour policies created fertile grounds to the growing of political consciousness in Kikuyu land. Deeply aggrieved, the Kikuyu began to raise anger against the colonial administration. It is not clear whether the Akurinu in Kandara participated in the war (Kiarie, O.I. 2014), but it remains a fact that just like the rest of the colonial subjects, they greatly suffered from its effects and the colonial injustices. All these grievances against the common European enemy presented the Akurinu movement in Kandara the opportunity to spread further their Christian message.

In the 1940s, the Kikuyu community was sharply divided which witnessed increased conflict among themselves as well as the colonial political and economic order (Berman, 1991:198). At the same time, there was a small but growing class of Kikuyu landowners, who had acquired tracks of land and developed close ties with the colonial government, resulting to an economic disparity within the Kikuyu land (Ibid). In October 1944, Kenyan nationalism had grown from its ethnic enclaves to assume a nationalistic stature that saw the first attempt in the formation of a country-wide political party, the Kenya African Study Union (KASU) (Ogot, 2003: 16). Harry Thuku became the inaugural chair of KASU, which changed its name in 1946 to Kenya African Union (KAU) (Anderson, 2005:282). KAU failure to attain significant reforms addressing people’s grievances
shifted the political initiative to younger and more militant leaders within the native Kenya Trade Union Movement, KAU branches in Nairobi and the Kikuyu in Central Kenya (Makhan, 1969). The ban on KCA in the 1940s witnessed continued resistance by Agikuyu in Murang’a up to the time of Mau mau emergency. The Akurinu movement in Kandara was closely linked to the highly political Kikuyu Central Association, whose secretary general was Jomo Kenyatta. Kenyatta is believed to have been a close friend to Musa Thuo, who retained political affiliation and involvement with political parties like KAU (Mwaura, 1984: 74). Kenyatta is said to have paid several visits to Thuo’s home at Kaguthi just before independence (Nyoike, O.I.2015). It is for this reason that Kenyatta appears on the dust cover of his book, Facing Mt Kenya, adorning the Akurinu attire. The link between the Akurinu in Kandara and the political class saw the rapid spread of this faith to neighbouring Gatanga sub-county and beyond.

The emergence of the Mau Mau movement “signalled an important shift in Kenyan politics towards the widespread use of violence” (Ogot, 2003). In 1951, KAU members in Nairobi revitalized the operations of the group making it more radical in pursuing its objectives. In particular, a central committee (Muhimu) was set up to co-ordinate oathing activities of the Mau Mau freedom fighters (Ibid). Despite the colonial government proscribing Mau Mau in 1950, the movement continued to abound of oathings, secret gatherings, intimidation and violence, prompting the government to declare a state of emergency in 1952 (Ibid).
An incident took place on 24th November 1952 in Kandara, where one Ngugi Wainaina, an alleged mute, had a vision and began acting in a strange way. He claimed his message from God was that the Kikuyu must be strong in resisting colonial rule. This attracted a large crowd that defiantly defied police orders to disperse. A fracas ensued prompting the police to open fire, killing several people. This incident encouraged people to openly defy the colonial forces and emergency regulations, which was followed by large crowds gathering in Kandara near Chief Kagori Ndung’u’s home, which went ahead to burn down his houses. The government responded by fining the offenders and confiscating their animals (Kariuki, O.I.2014).

This followed the arrest of many prominent Mau Mau leaders, apprehension and rehabilitation of thousands of Agikuyu (Ibid). This development in Kikuyu land had special consequences for the Akurinu movement, a group that aimed at keeping itself separate from the rest. The role that was played by the Akurinu in the struggle for liberation from colonialism remains unclear. Macharia (2012) has argued that the initial calling of the Akurinu movement was to intercede for the nation’s liberation from the colonial yoke in a pacificist manner, through songs and sermons, which echoed nationalistic sentiments. Waigwa (2007) contends that though the movement shunned active political participation, they sympathized with the struggle for political liberation. Mwaura (1984; 73) posit that if they did participate in the struggle, they did so as individuals and not as a group, but agrees that just like other Kikuyu, the Akurinu were subjected to colonial injustices, alienation of their land and economic exploitation. Musa
Thuo even took the oath with his followers binding him the more in active involvement in liberation politics (Ibid). Although details are unreliable, there seems to have been a historical link between the Akurinu and the leaders of the Mau Mau revolt.

In the 1950s, leadership wrangles and theological differences led to numerous splits in the Akurinu group of the Kenya Foundation of the Prophets’ Church. In 1950, a group at Kaguthi led by Johana Waweru split and founded the African Mission of the Holy Ghost Church in Muruka, Kandara. The disagreement was so pronounced that the antagonistic Akurinu groups would occasionally turn violent to one onother (Gatungo, O. I.2015). A line demarcating the two had to be drawn using a muthigi (leadership stick carried by Akurinu) at a point in Kamurugu, Ng’araria area, with no one group allowed to go beyond this point (Ibid).

In 1957, the Colonial Government required the registration of all organisations, including religious bodies. The Akurinu lacked a centralized organisation forcing numerous Akurinu groups centred around particular leaders and from different geographical areas to register under different names (Mwaura,1984: 75), leading to “the various splits into Saturday and Sunday groups, polygamists and anti-polygamist, those with and without Luhya connections, which were thus institutionalized and in additions new divisions appeared” (Murray, 1973:216). Musa Thuo registered his group in 1961, the same year in which Johana Waweru’s Afican Mission of the Holy Ghost Church was also registered (Mwaura, 1984: 100).
Internal feuds and discord persisted resulting to formation of more Akurinu groups in Kandara such as the Holy Ghost Church of Africa at Githumu, by Daniel Nduti, with branches at Naaro, the African Mission of Holy Ghost (Kenya), and Akurinu Christian Worship Church (Ibid).

The followers of the original Kenya Foundation of the Prophets’ Church referred themselves to Athenjeri, a term denoting that they were the genesis of the Akurinu movement while the splinter groups were collectively called Israel, meaning that they were off shoots from the original Akurinu group (Wanjiru, O.I.2015). The two groups had different practices though their beliefs and practices remain similar. The Israel group were known to adorn their sacred attire in varied colours, a different mode of beating the drum and fast lyrics in their hymns. The original Athenjeri group ecclesiastical dress remained white and were known for avoiding shaking hands in greetings even amongst themselves as a sign of piety (Njeri, O.I.2015).

Between 1955 and 1963, there was intense evangelistic work by the followers of the Akurinu groups in Kandara, resulting to the conversion of many people and establishment of new branches, mostly in former Central Province. By this time, the Akurinu were no longer harassed by the administration and after 1963, they were free to preach anywhere and practiced their faith as they wished as long as they did not infringe on any state laws (Mwaura, 1984: 77).
3.6 The Attraction to the Akurinu Movement

The Kenya Foundation of the Prophet’s Church one of the largest Akurinu church in Kandara attracted all and sundry, men, women and children, spread and expanded with unprecedented speed even after the death of Musa Thuo, the founder. There are varied reasons for attracting large following and the rapid spread of this church.

As already discussed, the coming of Christianity in Kikuyu land was followed by the establishment of colonial rule. The missionaries and the colonial master were the same, as they had the same aim of subduing the “primitive” Africa (Anderson, 1970). The evangelisation mission immediately conflicted with the Kikuyu way of life and cultural practices as Christianity was taught to Agikuyu in deeply rooted European culture loaded with colonial stigma, paternalism and foreignness. This was further worsened by the denunciation of African traditions as primitive and savage. In denouncing Kikuyu, culture the missionaries feared that Africans might understand and interpret the important expressions of Christianity and appropriate them in their own historical experience that is rooted self-consciously in their culture (Ibid).

Musa Thuo’s Akurinu movement employed an innovative approach to Christianity where cultural and religious ceremonies were “adapted and transformed to have Christian meaning” (Daneel 1974; 309). The founder was therefore advantaged because the Akurinu movement drew back the Agikuyu to their cultural practices such as polygamy, levirate, seer as well as sacrifice and rites of passage. For the Missionaries, the Kikuyu practice of polygamy was unacceptable and offensive to Christian morals (Ibid). Besides
being a sign of acquisition of wealth, status and power, the practice of polygamy among the Kikuyu was resorted to in instances of childlessness and to legitimize a man getting a partner during the pregnancy and lactating period for the wife (Muriuki, 1974). The Akurinu in Kandara practiced and encouraged polygamy (Ndung’u, 1994), a practice borrowed from the Old Testament parallels where patriarchs like Abraham and Solomon were celebrated polygamists. The tolerance shown by the Akurinu towards polygamy was very acceptable to the Kikuyu people at a time when their cultural practices had been dismissed by the missionaries. Consequently, entry to this Akurinu church became easy to polygamist families, both men, wives and children.

The Kenya Foundation of the Prophets’ Church, and “all Akurinu churches in general, was founded on the belief in the guidance of the Holy Spirit“(Mwaura, 1984), which is manifested in their sermons, hymns, testimonies and prayers as well as in dreams, visions and prophecy. The Spirit is therefore active and a living force in the church. For the Akurinu, the Holy Spirit is regarded as a mysterious power capable of overcoming evil forces (Ibid). Further, the Akurinu believed in the existence of angels who performed similar duties to those of Spirits.The Spiritual world was of great significance to the Kikuyu people, thus the Akurinu belief in Spirits comfortably replaced the Agikuyu cluster of Spirits. This kind of re-interpretation was very acceptable to the Kikuyu living within changing circumstances (Mucheru, O.I.2014).

The Akurinu believed in faith healing through prayer and therefore did not seek medical attention, a practice they seemed to have borrowed from the Agikuyu traditional way of
life in which a healer was a very important person who healed without making any medicinal prescription. Whenever an issue arose such as sickness, those who were literate among the elders turned to the Bible to search for a solution. The Akurinu viewed themselves as God’s prophets (Anabii), and therefore believed they had similar powers to effect healing through prayers. Prior to colonialism, the Akurinu were leading the Kikuyu way of life, in which the medicine man (Mundu Mugo) played an important role in the lives of the people. Some members like Jason Warii are reported to have been a medicine man before he became a Mukurinu (Ndung’u, 1994:385). Thus, the practice of healing was not new to them. The difference was in the new procedure the Akurinu adopted based on their reading of the Bible. The inability of mission churches to offer healing services and the fact that they ignored and rejected the healing world left many African converts unsatisfied. The Akurinu in Kandara prayed for the sick and exorcised the possessed, filling in the vacuum created by the missionaries, thus the large numbers of followers.

The Kikuyu just like all other African societies had a notion of God as a supreme being (Mbiti, 2002:29) and who could only be approached in cases of major problems (Kirwen, 2005:13). Ngai, the common name of the Kikuyu God denoted that God is the creator and ruler of all things and distributes everything to his children everywhere (Kibicho, 1972). He is also addressed by the Kikuyu as Mwene Nyaga (prosessor of brightness). He is associated with Kirinyaga (mountain of brightness). The Kikuyu believe that Mount Kenya was Ngai’s resting place (Kenyatta, 1978:234). The Akurinu concept of God is directly borrowed from the Agikuyu traditional religion, with Ngai sharing all the above
attributes. The Akurinu movement in Kandara belief in an African God was an attempt to come to terms with the Agikuyu existential situation, thus appealing to many followers.

The Akurinu faith in Kandara emphasized the importance of prayer as a means of communicating with God. In this Church, prayer is very central to worship. The Akurinu believed that just like God revealed his will to the prophets in Gikuyu religion through dreams and visions, so was the case in the Old Testament and in the New Testament. The Akurinu prayer was characterized by intense roaring and vigorous body shaking and possession of the Holy Spirit. Their prayer was very aggressive and ritualistic and toilered to respond to the demands of their followers. Akurinu form of prayer thus meet the spiritual, emotional and religious needs, a feature that attracted many Agikuyu to the Kenya Foundation of the Prophets’ Church in Kandara.

The disruption of Agikuyu social, political and economic way of life by the Colonialists and Missionaries, and the appeal and desire by the Akurinu to replace the former solidarity of the Agikuyu society was essential in attracting mass following in Kandara. The arrival of White settlers in Kikuyu land drastically changed the Agikuyu way of life and brought with it new problems. The greatest was labour problem. Although compulsory labour was never officially sanctioned, taxes and rising needs for money acted as form of pressure or compulsory persuasion (Ochieng, 1977; 112). The Kikuyu men were now forced to move out to labour while women were left as the custodians of the homes. As labourers, the Kikuyu were heavily exposed to European patronizing and racist attitude, which profoundly alienated the Africans. Alienation of Kikuyu land
dismantled the *Mbari* land unit, with all its religious and cultural implications. The Kipande system introduced in 1919 served a duo purpose of controlling African movement and facilitating collection of taxes. The forceful conscription of the Kikuyu during the First World War disrupted the existing patterns, later had disastrous effects in Kikuyu Country. The Akurinu movement in Kandara that emerged in 1926 in the above troubled period had now crystalized into a separate mass group of believers that attracted many traditional Kikuyu believers and many ex-missionary followers.

The charisma and astute personilty of Musa Thuo, the leader of the Kenya Foundation of Prophets’ Church also played a crucial role in the formation and rapid spread of the church. Thuo received divine revelation in 1926, which completely changed his life (Mwaura, 1984). His doctrine of repentance, baptism, abstinence and honesty appealed to many Kikuyu at a time of suffering under colonial yoke (Macharia, 2012). Thuo was God’s chosen to deliver His will to the Kikuyu and guide them on the ways to salvation. His role as a prophet and mediator between God and his people gave him an added impetus as the founder of the Akurinu movement in Kandara. The divine character of the message and revelation, reaching the Kikuyu in Kandara through Thuo, was the movement’s dynamism and without it this church would not have emerged. For the Akurinu, Musa Thuo played the character of the Biblical Moses who liberated the Israelites from Egyptian bondage, but this time were the Kikuyu, who became God’s chosen people. Consequently, the charismatic personality in Thuo and the divine calling immensely attracted mass following from the Kikuyu community in Kandara. Many more
members joined the movement automatically because their parents were Akurinu. More joined as a result of attractions by the uniqueness witnessed in Akurinu services, prayers, songs and functions such as baptism, marriage and funerals.

3.7 Description and Observances of the Kenya Foundation of the Prophets’ Church in Kandara

The earliest Akurinu believes and practices evolved from a synthesis between the Bible and the traditional Kikuyu religious background in which they grew. Mwaura (1984: 107) argue that the Akurinu did not reject everything brought by the Europeans, for they retained the Bible, and at the same time, did not retreat into a purely traditional life, for they only borrowed selected practices. For the Akurinu in Kandara, the Bible became their foundation, strength and inspiration that give meaning to their daily life. Musa Thuo, just like other Akurinu proto fathers spent years in seclusion reading the Bible and seeking direction and guidance from the Holy Spirit through revelations in dreams, visions and prophecy (Ibid.: 108).

Though it is not clear how the Akurinu beliefs and practices evolved to become their doctrinal faith, it is most probable that when early Akurinu faced theological challenges, particularly when their beliefs clashed with Kikuyu traditional practices, they turned to the Bible for answers (Ibid). The emergence of the Akurinu under Musa Thuo in Kandara coincided with a time when Agikuyu world-view seemed threatened by the new circumstances brought about by colonial and missionary activities. Thuo efficiently mastered this situation and designed a doctrine that was dynamic and relevant to the
needs of the Kikuyu in changing times. Such beliefs include the doctrine of God, the Bible, the Holy Spirit and prayers, belief in Angels among others. The Akurinu in Kandara, under the Kenya Foundation of the Prophets’ Church developed a unique belief system with some of their practices similar to other Christian denominations while others borrowed from Kikuyu traditional religion, making them distinct from other religious groups. While there are areas where they have sought to replicate the missions, like in baptism, there are however practices that had undergone modification because of modernization and progress.

3.7.1 Belief in Agikuyu Traditional Worldview

One remarkable trait of the Akurinu Church in Kandara is its insistence on proclaiming Christianity based on Agikuyu traditional outlook. This church is pragmatic in contextualizing Christianity in Agikuyu culture. Much of their spirituality has been informed by the Agikuyu worldview as observed in their beliefs and doctrines (Waigwa, 2007). This church has maintained an expression of many of the Agikuyu beliefs within Christianity or the extension of these beliefs on Christian doctrines (Ibid). They preach a brand of Christianity, which is deeply rooted in Agikuyu traditional culture and flexible enough to respond to their demands. The worldview of its members take into consideration their beliefs, such as in the forces of evil, malevolent spirits, ugo (prophecy) and the practice of healing as well as Kikuyu sacred rites and sacrifice. This Akurinu church prescribes certain practices that help their members come closer to the ideal upheld by the Christian faith (Macharia, 2012. The Akurinu movement has witnessed
rapid growth mainly due to its ability of bringing people to Christ via media that is understandable to them and relevant messages that meet their needs. Mugambi share a similar view in his assertion that:

The African world view should be appreciated and the gospel communicated in terms which the people can understand (Mugambi, 2002:52)

The Akurinu church represents a manifestation of Christianity consistent “with their own unique historical experience, rooted self consciously in their unique cultures and contributing to a richer world-wide interaction of the gospel” (Wambugu and Padwick, 2006).

3.7.2 Belief in God and the Bible

The belief in God is manifestly the beginning of Akurinu spirituality. The Akurinu hold as an integral part of their worldview, a belief in a supreme God. Every Mukurinu has in his/ her heart, mind and soul an idea of God, who is a personal, indigenized but universal God (Waigwa, 2007). For them, God is simply known to be in existence and is Omnipresent, Omniscient and Omnipotent. The Supreme being “is no stranger” (Mbiti, 1989:29). This explains why the Akurinu refer to God in their prayers mainly as the God of their ancestors, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Ngai wa maithe maitu). In this, the Akurinu try to evoke the idea of God who is specifically the God of their fathers even though He is also the God of all people, race and nation. The Akurinu belief and present God as Omniscient who knew all happenings in the past, and all that was currently taking place and, all that was to take place in the physical and moral order. He has no beginning or an
end: He was not created; neither will he die (Mbiti, 1989). Their belief in God (Ngai) is a major aspect of Agikuyu religion. Ngai is believed to have created man and everything that exists, including the earth. He is the creator of life, giver of land and all that man requires for his sustenance (Kenyatta, 1938; Leakey, 1977; Mbiti, 2002). For the Akurinu, God is Omnipotent and Omnipresent, witnessed in His might and ability to be everywhere. Mbiti (1989:61) opines that “the God whom African religions acknowledge is the same God as in the Bible……we believe that God and Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ…..has been dealing with humankind all times and in all parts of the world”. The notion of and beliefs about God as expressed in His names, attributes, activities and character reflects the Agikuyu traditional religion awareness of God. The strong belief of the Akurinu in God and the uniqueness of their fellowship with Him are evident in the claim of the divine call of their leaders. The founders of Akurinu movement laid claim to being divinely appointed to lead the church (Githieya, 1997; Spear& Kimambo 1999; Waigwa, 2007; Macharia, 2012).

In the Akurinu Church in Kandara, the issue of the gender of God has no role to play, though it is observed in the use of male metaphors in describing Him as noted in the doctrine of three persons in the Godhead: God the father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit (Waigwa, 2007). Just like the Kikuyu, the Akurinu used a generic term with no gender connotations to describe God, meaning that God is considered to be both male and female as “transcendent beings have no partial gender but are complete” (Hugo 1994: 6).
For the Akurinu, the fatherhood of God does not refer to the human fathers but God the source of being.

The Bible is very important for every Akurinu and forms the core of their faith. The role of the Bible is central in influencing the Akurinu way of life. The Akurinu in Kandara revere the Bible so much that for them it is not just enough to call it the book of God, as one of the respondent asserted:

“Mbuku ya Ngai ni theru” (The word of God is Holy) (Elikana, O.I.2014).

The original founders of the Akurinu movement studied the Bible in depth, spending years searching for guidance from it on how to steer their new movement (Ndung’u, 1994:109). For three years the original founders such as Joseph Ng’ang’a, Elijah Kinyanjui, John Mung’ara gathered in the House of Musa Thuo to pray and read the Bible (Waigwa, 2007). It should be noted that although the Akurinu rejected everything that was foreign and European in nature, they retained the Bible and made it relevant to their beliefs. All the laws and doctrines that the Akurinu adhered to, must be supported by Biblical reference. For instance all the rules and regulations of the Akurinu in Kandara including what to eat and avoid, are majorly derived from the books of Leviticus and Numbers. For instance from the book of Numbers 6:5-7, the Akurinu were not supposed to shave their head or beards, resonating with the laws that the Biblical Israelites were given by God. It is for this reason that all their sermons, hymns and testimonies are all punctuated by; the Bible says or God says. The Akurinu movement therefore aimed at “establishing a Biblically based religious tradition” (Guda, 2011:136), that strictly
followed Biblical prescription. For them, the Bible was ”the primary source of most, if
not all, values that regulate the practice of prophecy” (Mabhunu, 2010:65).

Every time the Akurinu in Kandara were confronted by theological issues especially those
that clashed with the Agikuyu traditions, they all sought for solutions from the Bible. For
instance, issues of polygamy and beer drinking have been controversial, but the Akurinu
had always derived their answers from the Bible. As such, they quoted the Bible in giving
clear guidance on spiritual matters. It should be observed that Musa Thuo, the Akurinu
leader in Murang’a addressed a number of controversial issues facing the early church
using the Bible. These included the practice of polygamy and not shaving of hair and
beards. On polygamous marriage, the church did not restrict its members to marry more
than one wife as seen in Genesis 16: 3-4; 1 Samuel 1: 1-4; 1 Kings 3: 4-5). Early church
members used not to shave or trim beards as instructed in Numbers 6: 2-10 (Waigwa,
2007).

The Akurinu hold tenaciously to the Bible as a source of all their knowledge. For them
nothing was practiced which did not derive or could not be located within Bible locus.
Consequently, all aspects of the Akurinu faith have been scrutinized using the scriptures.
Indeed they believed that in addition to dreams and visions, God speaks to His people
through the Bible) Macharia, 2012). It should be noted that the Bible was the primary
source of all values that regulate the way of life of the Akurinu. It is clearly a source of
power, and grants its power to those who follow its prescription the most. Ndung’u (2006:
489-90) asserting on its importance to the faith observes that “the Bible is used as though
it transmits some mystical power which makes things happen….the Bible is treated as though it transmits a power responsible for the suffering the person is experiencing. The Bible is more than a text; it is a ‘religio- magical symbol of God’s presence and power’.

The Akurinu have a belief that what the Bible records as having happened before can be repeated today with the right faith and intermediary (Wangare, O.I. 2014).

The point should be made that there exists an interconnectedness of the Bible and the Agikuyu understanding of the worldview. Akurinu Christianity has echoes of traditional Agikuyu religion, which dramatizes its unity in the universal appeal to the spirits that animates all forces of nature (Waigwa, 2007). The Akurinu thus easily adopted the Bible because they could “hear and see a confirmation of their own cultural, social and religious life in the life and history of the Jewish people as portrayed and recorded in the pages of the Bible” (Mbiti, 1986:26). It is the same reason that the proto Akurinu relied heavily on the Old Testament teaching as it resonated with much of what was important within an African outlook of life. This was clearly illustrated in “the importance of fertility and sexuality, the place of ancestors, polygamous practice, the importance of land and a host of other cultural and religious similarities” (Anderson, 2001:32; Clark, 2006:5; Ndung’u, 2006:486). The Western Missionaries who introduced Christianity in Kenya only believed in the Bible content, but failed miserably to see any connection between the Biblical content and the Agikuyu worldview. This was a feature that the Akurinu quickly discovered and proclaimed especially after Bible translation to vernacular. This serves to explain the concurrent emergence of the Akurinu movement with the translation of the
Bible into vernacular in 1926 (Ibid). For the Akurinu, the Bible is not treated merely as literature but as theologically the subject of God. They understood the Bible to take “God’s existence for granted and related to how the world came into being, what went wrong with it, and God’s plan for its reconstruction and ultimate salvation” (Constantelos, 1999:137). The Akurinu believe this to be a continuing truism, hence trust the Bible to be “a normative standard for the faith, practice and their worship” (Fowl, 1998:2). The Bible thus came in as the basis of understanding the nature and God’s demands; hence, the interpretation of the Bible became a critical component of this church.

3.7.3 Belief in the ‘Holy Spirit’ (Roho) and Power of Prayer

The Holy Spirit is the third person in the Holy Trinity. Christians are said to rely on the Holy Spirit as a guide and counselor as Jesus promised in the book of John 16. Although the concept of the Holy Trinity is universally accepted by all Christians, the manner in which the Holy Spirit manifests itself is controversial in many churches (Mwaura, 1984). A true Mukurinu must be filled with the Holy Spirit that happens immediately one believes, confesses sins and repents (Macharia, 2012). The Akurinu, however, believe in the Holy Spirit whose manifestation in some instances become physical as exhibited in speaking in tongues and ecstatic prophesy. To them the Holy Spirit is not dormant but a living force. Macharia (2012) notes that the Akurinu movement was among the first movements in Kenya to demonstrate Pentecostal tendencies like speaking in tongues while maintaining uniquely African ethos. Thus, the Akurinu faith is anchored on the belief in the works of the Holy Spirit that gives the power to overcome sin and
temptations and lead a morally upright life (Waigwa, 2007). The Akurinu in Kandara had a strong belief that all their members are spiritually inspired and that there are intermediaries who communicate directly with God in Spirit and possess the ability to interpret the visions to them (Githinji, O.I.2014). Those possessed by the Holy Spirit sometimes fall into ecstasy and give utterances that may not be intelligible to those around them (Ibid).

Accordingly, the importance of the Holy Spirit for the Akurinu in Kandara is illustrated in the call of their leader, Musa Thuo, through the revelation of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit reveals the truth from the scriptures, convicts people and blesses them with gifts such as healing, prophecy, preaching, speaking in tongues, interpreting tongues, wisdom and knowledge (Mwaura, 1984). In addition, the Holy Spirit blesses people with fruits such as love, kindness, patience, faith, joy and goodness (Macharia, 2012). Consequently, the belief in the Holy Spirit as one of the unique aspects of the Akurinu church in Kandara is heavily witnessed as key to their worship. Indeed, the Akurinu fall under the category of Spirit movements that include Legio Maria, Dini ya Roho and Nomiya Luo church – they claim to be guided by the Holy Spirit whom, they assert, is continually present among them (Murray, 1973).

In comparison to other Christian denominations where the formula of the trinity is always God the Father, God the Son and the God the Holy Spirit, the Akurinu always put the Holy Spirit before the son (Kariuki, O.I.2013). For them they have God, Holy Spirit and
Son, thus laying more emphasis on the Holy Spirit. Ndung’u (1994) depicts the concept of Akurinu trinity as seen in their prayers;

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ngai Baba tuguire tha</th>
<th>God our Father, have mercy on us</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wendani waku na roho na Jesu Kristo</td>
<td>By your love and of the Holy spirit and of Jesus our savior.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mukuuri witu</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source; Ndung’u (1994)

Indeed the Holy Spirit to the Akurinu is the organ of trinity that is present, active and works in them. This is because the Akurinu believe that the beings in trinity play different role and indeed in different times of history. Waigwa (2007) argues that the Akurinu have a belief that God the father in the Old Testament worked closely with forefathers like Moses and Abraham just as He did with His son Jesus, in the early church. The Holy Spirit is alive today as is always emphasized by the Akurinu, especially in their hymns. Below is an example of a hymn in the Akurinu church that depicts the importance of the Holy Spirit:

*Jesus came died and resurrected*

*Promised His disciples that after ascending the Holy Spirit would come to make them become the light of the world and judge the nations.*


Some sections of Akurinu argued that it was the Holy Spirit who directed them not to seek medical services in hospitals, but rather resulted to prayers whenever they fell sick.

Kenyatta noted that:
Watu wa Mungu (Akurinu) being the chosen people, naturally believe that they possess these powers and they go about trying to heal the sick. Sometimes they succeed in doing so and this gives them more prestige among the indigenous population (Kenyatta, 1938: 276).

The Akurinu are quick to note that the works and the power of the Holy Spirit are hidden to non-believers. Indeed one has to experience it in order to know it. He is mysterious and unknowable, the power that grips a person so that one is no longer under his or her own control and roar like lions (Ndung’u, 1994). Waigwa (2007), in his study noted that the Holy Spirit to a Mukurinu is like a dress that you cannot do without. Just like the way the dress covers you, the same way the Holy Spirit covers the life of a believer. However, the moment one sins, the Holy Spirits departs and leaves him naked.

Therefore, no Mukurinu can survive without the Holy Spirit because they rely on his power to do virtually everything (Kinyanjui, O.I.2013). For instance, when one wanted to be baptized, he/she had to embark on serious prayers until the Holy Spirit revealed his baptismal name. The Akurinu believe that the Holy Spirit speaks directly to them, gives and renews the strength of the believer and guides him to eternal life. Consequently, the Akurinu in Kandara believed and proclaimed the centrality of the Holy Spirit in their lives and the force behind the extraordinary deeds within the church and by leading prophets (Ibid).

As observed earlier, the Spirit is usually aroused during singing, dancing and prayer revealed through prophets or prophetess. In our fieldwork, Gabriel Mwaura responding to the question of the manifestation of the Holy Spirit observed that:
The Spirit reveals Himself to people what is to be said in prophecy. He may reveal what one needs to wear (colour of the turban), the sash, dress or carry a stick, marriage partners, as well as warnings on impending dangers or occurrence of disasters like floods, earthquake, drought and famine (Mwaura, O.I. 2014).

In view of the above, Akurinu’s consciousness of the Holy Spirit also explains their choice of the white ecclesiastical attire, symbolizing piety to the Lord (Ibid). An observation should be made that the Akurinu believed the Spirit to be a person, although they refrain from expressing Him in words. “He is addressed as personal divine being and not as an impersonal manipulated being” (Daneel 1987: 263). In reference to Ephesians 6:12, the Akurinu maintain a strong belief in the existence of both good and evil spirits. The good spirits as observed earlier are allegiant and obedient to God, while the evil ones are believed to be disobedient to God and under direction of Satan who controls an organized hosts of wicked spirits, who inflict and even possess humans causing physical and mental illness. It is the Holy Spirit who directs the activities of the Akurinu church and not any human being (Waigwa, 2007). It is for this reason that the early Akurinu did not have any structures, constitutions and doctrines to guide church activities as the Holy Spirit did everything.

Conclusively, from the aforementioned, the indispensability of the Holy Spirit in the Akurinu community in Kandara is undisputed. The functions of the Spirit are highly acknowledged, recognized and appropriated. This church offers a celebrative faith characterized by appropriation of spiritual songs and dance accompanied with intense drumming, all believed to invoke and stir the Spirits presence and actions, resulting to
healing, prophecy and providing guidance and direction to the whole movement. The Akurinu predisposition to spiritually virtually led to their being designated as spiritual (Roho) church (Murray, 1973), a label that continues to date. It is for this reason that the Holy Spirit in the Akurinu church is recognized as the ultimate initiator, renewer, reviver and revealer as well as being the instructor, supervisor and source of life, salvation and all spiritual and physical wellbeing of the church and its adherents, and most importantly the force behind the phenomenal growth of this church.

A common feature and practice of the Akurinu Church in Kandara is their emphasis or reliance on prayers. The Akurinu believed that prayer not only formed the bedrock of their practice and doctrine, but also was the fountain-head of all their blessings and success (Waigwa, 2007; Mwaura, 1984). Prayers thus formed an integral part of their worship, and were thus said spontaneously; hence, they did not have prayer books, which they could use to recite or memorize, as was the case in the ‘Mission Churches’. It is through prayer that the Akurinu conversed with their God. Ndung’u (1994) argues that the Akurinu insisted on Prayer as the only means of receiving God’s revelation.

During the fieldwork, informants responded affirmatively that early Akurinu in Kandara used to conduct their prayers in a different pattern from other Christian denomination. It is worth to note that Akurinu were expected to pray three times at odd hours of the night\(^6\). They would pray at 9am, 12 midnight and 3am (Ndung’u, 1994: 119). The Akurinu believed in piety hence the reason behind wearing white robes for God is holy and the

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\(^6\)The Akurinu believe that at night, the spirit of God and also the devil are very active, hence at night it is the best time to ‘fight’ with the spirits of the enemy and also receive blessings from God (Waigwa, 2007).
place of worship was holy. They also believed that one should not put on shoes or money in the place of worship. The conduct of prayer was also different for men and women. Men would pray with their hand raised while women would stretch their hands in receiving posture for God’s blessings (Ibid).

In 1930s, Akurinu in Kandara as was elsewhere doubled their prayers because they had the burden to pray for the country, which was under the bondage of colonialism (Macharia, 2012). As a result, the Akurinu would undertake pilgrimages to mountains where they could concentrate on prayers. (Waigwa, 2007). Pilgrimages to mountains became a common feature of Akurinu in Murang’a making them be considered as special as they would bring with them uhoro wa Kirima (message from the Mountain) (Ndung’u, 1994). During the prayer retreats in caves and mountains, they received numerous revelations and instructions that form the basis of Akurinu faith and practices (Ibid). Among the places they retreated were; Kirinyaga (Mt. Kenya), Nyandarua (The Aberdares), Kiambiruiru (Ngong hills), Kirima kia Lawu (Mt. Suswa), Kilimambogo (in Thika), Kenton forest (in Kijabe), Kirima kia Ihoro (The Menengai), Kikipiri hills (Kirima Kia Mbuci), Limuru railway tunnel, Kirima kia Ihii (in Maii Mahiu) (Waigwa, 2007).

Unlike in many Christian denominations, the Akurinu in Kandara conducted their prayers with their eyes open (Macharia, 2012). Musa Thuo, the Murang’a chapter leader of Akurinu is said to have received the instructions on how to pray. The procedure was to

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7 Akurinu believed that the dwelling place of God was holy. In addition, the holy place could be made unclean by the issue of money because according to the Bible the dwelling place of God should only be a place of worship and not a place to conduct business (Mwaura, O.I. 2014)
pray while facing Mt. Kenya, with the hands raised up and the eyes open. The reason why
the Akurinu could not close their eyes while in prayer was symbolic in that they did not
want the country to fall into darkness (Ndung’u, 1994). This explanation was given
during the colonial period, as the country faced serious political upheavals and colonial
domination. There is a common quote associated with Jomo Kenyatta on the closing of
eyes in prayer, that when the missionaries arrived, “Africans had the land and the
missionaries had the Bible. They taught us how to pray with our eyes closed. When we
opened the eyes, they had the land and we had the Bible” (Walker, 2002:144). However,
it is argued that the Akurinu did not close their eyes as they prayed to allow them see
visions (Macharia, 2012: 21).

The belief in the efficacy and power of prayer prompted the Akurinu not to recognize
cure by Western medicine (Waigwa, 2007; Ndung’u, 1994). For the Akurinu, whenever
they fell sick one would be healed through divine prayers⁸. Special emphasis and
attention in prayer was placed on spiritual healing, prophecy, vision and exorcism. It is
argued that the Akurinu were against Western medicine, because they believed that the
European would poison them in order to continue ruling in their land (Ndung’u, 1994).
The failure to seek medical services was one of the areas of conflict between the Akurinu
and the colonial government not only in Kandara but also in all areas where Akurinu
presence was felt. In describing the Akurinu, the DC of Murang’a writing to the then PC
observed that:

⁸ Today sections of the Akurinu have changed and seek medical attention in hospitals. For changes and
transformation of the Akurinu faith, see the next chapter.
They refuse to take medicine for minor ailment or to be taken to hospital for major ones. (KNA/PC/CP/8/7/3).

Healing of bodily diseases through prayers, which is otherwise known ‘kuhoerwo ukahona’ (divine healing), is an integral part of Akurinu spirituality. In fact, the healing of sickness and deliverance from oppression through prayers are by far the most common reasons, which people give for attending the Akurinu worship services.

During the fieldwork, it was noted that a section of the Akurinu in Kaguthi, in Kandara Sub-County had set aside Friday, as a day for healing purposes through divine prayers (Kamande, O.I.2014). On these days, elements such as holy water and oil are often consecrated for healing purposes. It was also noted that there were Akurinu prophets and prophetesses who claimed to possess specially healing powers through prayers (Ibid). Though not many, it was observed that people from all walks of life continued visiting their homes in search of spiritual healing. Testimonies of healing and miracles were usually given by those who claimed to have received them. In quite a number of cases, those cured had gone through gruesome experiences or had illnesses that had defied surgery, traditional or western treatment and medication (Nyambura, O.I 2015). This explains in part why these spiritual Akurinu healers are sought by those who are unhappy and dissatisfied with the mission churches’ attitude to the problem of evil.

Akurinu prayer is characterized by roaring, vigorous shaking of the body and possession of the Holy Spirit (Macharia, 2012). Through effectual prayer and elaborate ritual action, members attract the attention, power and action of the forces of God, Holy Spirit, Jesus
Christ and the angelic forces against the malicious evil spirits (Ibid). The role and pattern of prayer is that of adoration, confession, intercessions, petitions and thanksgiving. Petitions are also said in form of psalms and recitation of holy names (Waigwa, 2007).

A central feature observed during the fieldwork, is the aggressiveness, the ritualistic and ferventness of Akurinu prayer. Njeri, noted that for the Akurinu:

Prayer is the only entrance into the supernatural and the key that opens the universe, causes things to happen and the path to spiritual growth. It is a requisite for any Mukurinu who desired to be called and used by God (Njeri, O.I, 2015).

One key aspect of Akurinu prayer was that it took several spontaneous forms as directed by the leading Spirit. It could cause the worshippers to scream, shout loudly, strange roaring, trance, ecstasy and sometimes making unintelligible utterances (Minja, O.I.2014). For others it could compel them wrestle or prostrate on the ground, forth and back movements, gesticulating and at times jumping. Prayers in the Akurinu community in Kandara were very important and even preceded dreams, prophecy and visions. A prayer “spiritualizes the individual and absorbs him/her into realms where lust desires and craving of the natural person are completely done away with” (Barrett, 1968). This aspect of vigorous prayers has continued attracting great attention from crowds and on-lookers wherever Akurinu worship, who experience spiritual power, salvation and remedies to social, cultural, spiritual and economic challenges.
3.7.4 Belief in Angels

The Akurinu believed that angels existed and performed similar duties to those of Spirit. They were intermediaries between God and man who served as messengers, guardian and guides to the people of God. One Githendu, a Mukurinu observed that:

Angels are messengers who not only protect and guard us, but relay reports to God on our behaviour here on earth. Besides providing protection on us, they have been instructed by God to offer blessings to us. Even at death, it is your guardian angel who takes your soul to God (O.I, Githendu, 2014).

Of equal importance was the fact that the functions of the angels did not undermine or conflicted with the belief in and the role of the Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ, and the trinity in the spirituality of the Akurinu church. Kibandi expounded this assertion by stating that:

Names of angels are given to certain individuals in the Akurinu community underlying their importance to the movement. Similarly, specific angels are invoked from time to time perhaps in an attempt to deal with specific issues affecting the church. (O.I, Kibande, 2015).

The Akurinu have always referred angels as children of God in reference to Luke 20:36. They are portrayed as God’s messengers, ambassadors and emissaries who are of unquestionable integrity, good will and obedience to Him (Waigwa, 2007). The Akurinu considered angels to be ministering Spirits whose functions could not be limited to specialized categories but were presented in broad and varied auxiliary functions and thus “they appear as helpers and protectors to people in need, as proclaimers of news or mediators of revelations from God, and as guides and guardians” (Lockey 1995:4). There
was a strong belief among the Akurinu of Kandara that angels appeared in human likeness, paid visit to people and welcomed hospitality. It is for this reason that Akurinu showed hospitality to strangers. Abraham Mwaniki, a respondent noted that:

Araika a Mwathani mena miiri ya andu maceragira kirindi kia Ngai giterigiriire. Nikio Mukirinu wothe atugaga ageni hindi ciothe” (God’s angels in human likeness unexpectedly visit people of God and for this reason Akurinu treat strangers with hospitality (Mwaniki, O.I, 2015).

3.7.5 Baptism

The Akurinu in Kandara acknowledged the importance of baptism as one of the sacred rites (Mwaura, 1984:160). It was observed the Akurinu in Kandara practised Spirit baptism as opposed to water baptism practised in many missionary founded churches (Ibid:161). Baptism was a pre-requisite to other rituals such as circumcision, marriage, and even death (Ndung’u, 1994: 309). To the Akurinu, baptism was embraced early enough by their founder Musa Thuo, who were baptized in 1926 and given a new name. As noted earlier, the role of baptizing among the Akurinu was done by a Mubaitithania (baptizer). For one to qualify as a baptizer, one must have reached the level of a senior elder in the church 9.

Unlike other churches that conducted baptism on infants, the Akurinu believed that baptism should be done to an adult (Mwaura, 1984). Baptism involves dialogue between the Baptist and the candidate of baptism and thus could not be conducted on children.

9see the hierarchy of leadership as described in section 3.1
The Akurinu also practiced baptism on new converts who have decided to join their faith (Ibid: 162). However, those who had undergone baptism by immersion or came from “Holy Spirit” churches did not undergo a second baptism. Baptism of a new convert was graced by joy and jubilations from the congregation who acted as witnesses to the same. The joy is explained as welcoming a prodigal who was once lost but now found the true way. This reverberate the biblical story of the prodigal son who was lost for many years but one day decided to return home and was received with joy and celebrations (Ibid).

After baptism, one was regarded as a true believer and for the new converts a turban was put on their heads. The turban (see below on Akurinu dressing), was said to be a mark of the entry of a true soldier in the army of Christ which was always at war with the devil (Kimani, O.I.2015). Concisely the Akurinu valued baptism as it cleansed one off his/her sins, delivers one from evil and gave him a new name and beginning. The Akurinu also believed that through baptism one was united to the larger body of Christ and had the hope of uniting with Jesus during Parousia. Indeed the Akurinu believed that after baptism their names are written in the book of life (Macharia, 2012).

It is worth noting that the Akurinu did not give any teaching or conducted catechism before baptism like in other churches (Ibid). This is due to the belief in the power of the Holy Spirit, who through prayer revealed to the candidate their baptismal names among other things as already noted. If one had not received a baptismal name even after praying, the Ahoi (prayer leaders) helped him/her to pray. Nevertheless, the Akurinu prepared for baptism a day before. After the day of baptism was set, the elders and the
candidate assembled there a day before. The purpose of this early arrival was to allow the candidates’ time to cleanse themselves (*gwitheria*) in order to be acceptable in the eyes of God. In addition, the candidates were given instructions on how to behave throughout the ceremony so that nothing goes wrong during baptism (Ndung’u, 1994: 305).

Akurinu conducted their baptism on Sunday’s with the whole congregation expected to attend in order to act as witnesses. Men and women assembled in different rows in the church; women on the left and men on the right before approaching the *Kigongona* (Sanctuary). It was worth noting that women played subsidiary roles in the Akurinu church and were not as elevated as men were. However, majority of the people among the Akurinu who possessed the gift of prophecy were the women. Since prophecy was central to the Akurinu Faith, it was argued that women took it to compensate for their low positions that they hold in the church (Waigwa, 2007).

Finally, the most important component in Akurinu baptism was the receiving of a new name. As noted earlier, these names were greatly treasured as people spent days or months of prayers for the Holy Spirit to reveal the name to the candidate. They waited for the revelation of the candidate’s baptismal name in dream, vision, or prophecy (Mwaura, 1984:160-187). These names were mostly derived from the Old Testament especially those that belonged to people with exceptional character. These include people like Abraham, Moses, Aaron, Samuel, Elijah, Jeremiah and Joshua. On the other hand, the Akurinu names for women are mostly Deborah, Miriam, Rebecca, Rachel, Naomi and Ruth (Ndung’u, 1994; Macharia, 2012). These names reflected the new abilities that one
had been given by the Holy Spirit after baptism. After baptism, the door to conduct any ritual for the Mukurinu was then opened.

3.7.6 Rites of Passage and the Concept of Thahu (Ritual uncleanness)

Earlier it had been observed that the Akurinu of Kandara, just as elsewhere were greatly influenced by the Agikuyu traditions in their way of life and worship. As a result, the Akurinu held with a lot of importance all rites of passage (Kinyanjui, 1973). Among the Agikuyu, the rites of passage started from birth and ended with death. Other rites of passage were naming, initiation and marriage. For the Akurinu, giving birth was highly respected because it brought about the propagation of life but at the same time made the pregnant woman ritually unclean. The concept of “thahu” (taboo) was openly portrayed after birth. After delivery, the woman could not go to church for a number of days depending on the sex of the child, in accordance with law of Moses, that is 33 days in case of a boy and 66 for a girl (Lev. 12:4-5) (Mwaura, 1984). After the elapse of this period, the woman and her baby visited the church for the cleansing ritual. It is important to note that no prayers or cleansing was done to the husband or the father of the child. It is argued that on the day the wife was cleansed, the man ought to have prayed for himself and washed his clothes and body in water to clear off the thahu (Ndung’u, 1994).

After birth, naming of the child was done. The Akurinu strictly borrowed the names of their children from the Bible especially, the names of the mighty characters in the Old Testament. It is believed that such names gave the Akurinu the same spirit that was adorned by these personalities in the Bible (Lucia, O.I, 2015). Thirdly, was marriage,
which was held with a lot of importance by the Akurinu. This was because it raised the status of the person not only socially but also in ecclesiastical matters (Ndung’u, 1994). For instance, apart from the positions held by the fact that one was a youth, no other position in the church could one hold if not married (Ibid). No man could become an elder if not married.

It is also important to note that the date of the wedding was left to the girl to fix because it was not to coincide with the day when she was on her menstrual period as this made her ritually unclean and hence could not participate in any igongona (ceremony) (Ndung’u, O.I, 2015). In addition, the Akurinu wedding was conducted on Sunday as this was regarded just as any other igongona (ceremony) as the Akurinu took Sunday as an important day of carrying out their rituals and ceremonies because it was the only day they could be allowed to meet during the colonial period (Waigwa, 2007).

The final stage of passage was death. Death was treated by the Africans with sorrow and fear. This is because it physically and permanently removed the person from the living members of the family. During our fieldwork, it was clear that the Akurinu had many ritual and beliefs about death. For instance, it was ritually unclean for Akurinu to touch the coffin or touch the soil during burial. In Kandara, Hezekiah noted that:

\[ Ni \textit{thahu kuhutia mundu mukuo kana ithanduku ria andu akuo ona kana kuhutia tiiri wa irima ria akuo.} Ni \textit{Turi andu aria amure gatagati gaitu a kuruta wira ucio.} \textit{(It is a taboo to touch the dead, the coffin or even soil during burial but we have some people amongst us who are selected to do this job)} \]

(Hezekeal, O.I, 2015).
We also established that in this church, if there were photographs to be taken during the funeral, it had to be done far from the coffin. This is unlike in other Christian denominations where touching or coming close to a coffin is a common practice. Therefore, the Akurinu did have selected people who dealt with burial procedures. The selecting men for this duty were either married or unmarried but no women were involved whatsoever (Ibid). These men however must have been of good moral standing and active members of the church. After the burial, these men were considered unclean, could not share the same toilet or house with the rest, and could not shake hands in greetings, to avoid contaminating the people. Thereafter they were secluded for 8 days in a room for cleansing by sprinkling of holy water and prayers (O.I. Chuaga, 2015). For those who are employed, they were allowed to report to duty but in the evening they join the others in seclusion until they were cleansed. This practice is believed to have been borrowed from the Agikuyu traditional society in which the cause of death was believed to be the evil forces that were likely to contaminate the living.

3.7.7 Ecclesiastical Attire, Days and Places of Worship

Different Church congregations are recognized by the types of uniform they wear (Makuwatsine, 2012). The Akurinu in Kandara, just like in other areas, had a distinct way of dressing from other Christians. Indeed, it is the mode of dressing that distinguished a Mukurinu from people of other denominations. This feature of clothing provides a visible sign of their distinct identity from other religious groups. Daneel observed that:
The wearing of uniforms or dress contributes to a rich diversity, which helps to determine the identity of each group and psychologically permits an experience of uniqueness, self-esteem, newness and release from daily drudgery (Daneel, 1987:224).

The Akurinu mode of dressing attracted a lot of debate in the society. The way of dressing among the Akurinu was taken so seriously that, before wearing any garment, it must have been prayed for by a muhoi in case it had contacted any thahu (ritual uncleanliness) (Ndung’u, 1994: 256). Hence, Akurinu despised second hand clothes for they were very sensitive about spiritual uncleanliness, which to them could be brought about by contaminated clothes (Mwaura, 1984).

As noted before, Akurinu consulted the Holy Spirit on everything they did. Akurinu way of dressing was believed to be instructions from the Holy Spirit which were received in the famous Mount Kenya retreat in 1927 (Waigwa, 2007). As observed earlier, the Akurinu believed that God was present in Mountains and therefore most of their retreats were in mainly on mountains. The 1927 Mount Kenya retreat was described as the most famous due to the revelations received (Ibid). It is said that a group of staunch Akurinu adherents from Kandara and Limuru, namely, Lilian Njeri, Jasan Kanini, Henry Maina, Philip M’mukubwa, among others received a communication from the Holy Spirit to embark on a pilgrimage to Mount Kenya Ndung’u (1994). It is important to note that Lilian Njeri was the only woman on this pilgrimage. She was a respected prophetess who displayed a unique spiritual charisma and was therefore accepted into the leadership of the early Akurinu. Macharia (2012) argues that God was so much impressed by Lilian that the Lord spoke to her concerning her dressing. Lilian was dressed just like any
Gikuyu traditional woman\textsuperscript{10}. As they moved towards the mountain and just before they crossed River Nyamindi, Lilian was told by God to discard all the traditional adornment she wore (Macharia, 2012). She obeyed and discarded them in river Nyamindi. According to Waigwa (2007), such adornments were a reflection of worldliness. The pilgrims were also instructed to wash their feet and hands with water before going up the mountain to meet with God. This signified a break away from their earlier traditional life and start of a new life in the Spirit (Macharia, 2012).

As they moved up the mountain and probably as they came closer to God, more instructions on dressing were given. First, was the issue of the \textit{Kiremba} (Turban). This was a white cloth which was to be wrapped on the heads of the Akurinu in order to identify them as priests. Women were also to tie a white head scarf. \textit{Kiremba} was a holy garment that was to be worn all the time as described in Zechariah 3: 4. It was evil for the turban to be defiled especially by a non-mukurinu touching it. During the field work John kamau recalled that:

\begin{quote}
We used to school with Akurinu and nobody would touch their \textit{kiremba} because we were made to believe that it was holy and it should not be contaminated. As children we were also made to believe that if you touched it, one would be possessed and portray the ecstasy the Akurinu have when they are encountered with the Holy Spirit (O.I, Kamau, 2014).
\end{quote}

The \textit{Kiremba} became the trademark of the Akurinu and a sign that distinguished them from the rest of the people. In the 1940’s a decade of increased political agitation in

\textsuperscript{10} Gikuyu woman used to dress in an animal skin and decorated herself with red ochre. In addition, she would put on many ornaments like \textit{migathi} (necklaces), \textit{nyori} (earrings) \textit{bangiri} (bangles) and \textit{ciiamba} (anklets).
Kenya, Akurinu are said to have had problems with the colonial government because they would be easily identified because of the turban (Mwaura, 1984:68).

Secondly, the pilgrims were instructed to be wearing a *kanju* (derived from Kiswahili *kanzu*). This is a long white robe that the Akurinu adorn during prayers (Macharia, 2012). The *kanju* was to reflect on the idea of cleanliness required for the chosen priests. It is important to note that both the *kiremba* and the *kanju* were to be white as a symbol of cleanliness, righteousness and holiness\(^\text{11}\) (Waigwa, 2007). For men, dressing was not to be impressive but simple. It was believed that dressing impressively for a *Mukurinu* man was a pathway of becoming a *kiumbani* (a womanizer) (Ndung’u, 1994:255). Beneath the *kanju*, they were to put on a pair of shorts and not trousers. Consequently, the early Akurinu used to cut their trousers in order to make a pair of shorts\(^\text{12}\). In addition, shoes and ties were not allowed. Members of the Akurinu community would put on *nginyira* (sandals made from old vehicle tyres). This was an expression of non-worldliness (Ibid).

In addition to the dressing, there were other additions completed Akurinu attire. These included *mondo* (bag), a rod and a gacuka (Ibid). *Mondo* is a cotton white bag that is carried by Akurinu. It contains the Bible, representing the laws and covenants, and the hymn-book. For the Akurinu the hymn-book was very important for it is through hymns

\(^{11}\) See next chapter for changes in the colour of dress where not only white is recognized but different colours are now allowed for different reasons.

\(^{12}\) The issue of dressing on shorts at one time brought controversy in the church especially with the younger members who did not like the idea of shorts. In 1960’s there was a change of dressing where men reverted to trousers after one of them is said to have received a revelation on the same. Transformation in the mode of dressing among the Akurinu is addressed in the next chapter.
that they made convictions and declaration that reminded them of who they were\textsuperscript{13}. Men were also fond of carrying \textit{Muthigi} (a stick) (Kinyanjui, 1973), which reflected authority. The carrying of sticks and staffs symbolized leadership and at the same time weapons to wade off dangerous animals, harmful spirits and evil forces in their pilgrim journeys (\textit{Ibid}). Gacuka (a Sash), was to be tied on the woman’s bust and acted as Akurinu’s wedding ring (Waigwa, 2007). The Sash was therefore a useful attire in distinguishing a married Mukurinu from unmarried women. Women also put on head-dresses, which were usually called veils, around their heads. The sanctity of dressing continued influencing Akurinu way of life as well as creating strong religious symbolism among the believers. Dress also acted as a marker as it separated the believers from the ordinary life or the profane world.

It must be pointed out that a peculiar observation was made during the fieldwork that a section of the Akurinu, particularly men were noted not to wear the turban all times, including during the church service. This was perhaps in line with the early Akurinu practice of not wrapping the turban on the head or adorns white robes even after the 1927 revelations on ecclesiastical attire. This observing was made in an Akurinu church at Kihumbuini in Gatanga, Murang’a County.

Worship is the avenue through which the Akurinu expressed their faith and practices. For Christians, although the day of worship was largely Sunday, it differed depending on the practicing denomination. We established that the different groups of the Akurinu prayed

\textsuperscript{13} In most cases, mondo is carried by a select member of the clergy who is chosen after his suitability is tested, but in other groups of the Akurinu everyone is expected to have it for the Bible and the Hymn book are necessary tools for any Mukurinu.
on Sunday but had a service day during other selected days of the week, like Friday. However, during the days of the week, the normal Sunday service, which involves preaching, was not followed but they conducted “huduma” (one on service). Huduma involved the congregation sharing out their issues with the pastor. It also included personal prayers or fellowships (Kibe, O.I, 2015).

The Akurinu believed in eschatology (second coming of Jesus) and therefore laid great emphasis in evangelism (Mwaura, 1984). This explains the reason why Akurinu in Kandara moved in procession to their worship areas as a way of announcing to people the good news in accordance to the commands of Jesus of preaching to all the nations. The Akurinu emphasized the importance of occasional procession to fish for sinners on roads and markets. By so doing, they were able to reach to the neglected sinners, thus fulfilling the Lords command to take the gospel everywhere and to every creature (Muna, I.O, 2015).

Many Akurinu groups used the flag as mainly witnessed during their procession and when conducting open-air service. The flag is believed to symbolize the presence of soldiers of Christ and their regiment wherever they were (Ibid). The colour of the flag was usually given in dreams or vision. White symbolized purity of the believers, while red stood for their purification through the blood of Jesus. Green was said to refer to the period when one was in darkness as contrasted with yellow, which was the Holy Spirit. It is worth to note that the flag had other marks like the cross and a number of stars. The
three colours represent the Three God- head, God the father, God the Holy Spirit and God the Son (Chuaga, O.I, 2015).

This also explained why the Akurinu were known to have no permanent buildings but conducted their worship under trees or in open-air fields. Visions, dreams, prophecies and revelations formed the centre of the doctrinal practices of the Akurinu movement.

The theology of Akurinu church was found in their songs. Songs were used to transmit important messages and were part of their lives. The content in the songs embraced confessions and praises with constant refrain of ‘Amen’, ‘Halleluya’ and ‘praise God’. The drum was a powerful instrument of the Akurinu music. It is said that the more they beat the drum, the far kept the devil away (Ibid). The Akurinu offered a celebrative religion characterized by singing using powerful drumming and rigorous dance. Spiritual hymns and songs were revealed to the church through the founder, prophets and certain individual members from a divine source.

3.8 Conclusion

The approach employed by European Missionaries in their evangelisation mission in Kikuyu land failed to take into account important religious, cultural, Political and social factors. They ignored the spiritual, moral and religious needs of the Agikuyu, which were manifested in the Agikuyu concept of God, visions, and dreams, prophesy and spirits. As stated before, the Kikuyu had their own solutions to unexplained forces beyond human understanding. Missionary teachings discouraged and denounced certain cultural practices like Circumcision and polygamy, which for the Agikuyu were the moral code of
tribal identity. The emergence of the Akurinu movement in Kandara, Murang’a County in 1926 was therefore a response to Missionary paternalism, insensitivity to the Kikuyu culture and the colonial government malpractices, political intolerance and economic exploitation. It was the objective of this chapter to address the growth of the Akurinu faith in Kandara. It was established that the Akurinu group grew rapidly despite the colonial challenges and stigma even from their Agikuyu community. Leadership wrangles and consequent schisms caused the church to expand far and beyond Murang’a County. The chapter addressed the common beliefs, practices and observances of the Akurinu that formed the core of their faith and distinguished them for other Christian denominations.
CHAPTER FOUR


4.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, we analyzed the growth, beliefs, practices and observances of the Akurinu movement in Kandara. It was established that the growth of the Akurinu movement was guided by an intricate practice and belief system that was strictly followed to the letter. Everything that the Akurinu practised was controlled by set rules and regulations. The religious movement that developed among the Agikuyu continued attracting mass following in the post Colonial Independent resuting to birth of several Akurinu churches in Central Kenya and beyond. The rapid growth could be attributed to a number of factors including social, cultural innovations, transformations and negotiations of the sacred, the secular, the old and the new (Ndeda 1992:228). The effects of the emergence and growth of the Akurinu religious movement in Kandara had far-reaching political, economic and social consequences on people’s life. Gradually, a notable conspicuous change was observed reflecting that some of the rules that the Akurinu followed religiously as analyzed in chapter three, indeed were relaxed and transformed. This chapter analyses the transformation of the Akurinu movement from 1963-2000. It is argued that though the Akurinu retained some of their practices, notable changes have also occurred. Using the theoretical framework of Modernization, the chapter addresses change as observed in the Akurinu movement in Kandara in areas of education, dressing, medicine, employment, diet, music, and politics, among others. These issues are
addressed in three sections, the social, political and economic transformation in the life, culture and practices of the Akurinu.

4.2 Transformation in the Akurinu Movement.

The Akurinu under the Kenya Foundation of Prophets Church in Kandara have experienced considerable transformation over time resulting to a significant change to their approach to the world. They regarded their life as transitory and as such, there was therefore no need to involve themselves with a world that was quickly ending (Mwaura, 2007). This did not make the Akurinu to totally withdraw from the realities of life but they heeded to the Bible teachings that “we should enjoy the days of heaven on earth” and that the “righteous shall eat the good of the land” (Macharia, 2012). With this realization, it was obvious that in the land that the Lord had given the Akurinu, they had the right to enjoy and take part in the productive activities for their material wellbeing.

The Akurinu believed in utmost simplicity as they engaged in worldly activities waiting to ascend to heaven. Good works such as preaching, studying the Bible, liberating people from worldly pleasures and most importantly, concern for others welfare were encouraged in this movement. If one attained this balance, “he/she would have unbound happiness in the new world as well” (Mwaura, 2001). This was influenced by the notion of communalism in African societies that “I am because we are and because we are therefore I am” (Mbiti, 1969). The only difference between traditional Africans and the Akurinu was that unlike the former that was united by ethnicity “the latter were united by the virtue of belonging to one faith” (Murray, 2000). Consequently, the Akurinu struggled
with being spiritual and balancing with ‘issues’ of this world which they termed as secular. Nevertheless, change was inevitable in the face of modern world and the influences of globalization. Although some sections of the Akurinu have retained some old basic values and principles, it is evident that over time the movement has transformed.

4.3 Social Transformation in the Akurinu Movement.

After independence in 1963, the Akurinu Church in Kandara continued reaching more people through evangelization as they were longer been harassed by the administration (Mwaura 1984: 77). In the rapidly changing Kenyan society, the Akurinu worship and way of life underwent observable social transformation as it encountered other religious forms in independent Kenya (Aroti Magazine, 2014). They had to respond to social changes, which led to revitalization of the once indigenous religion and, in some contexts, synthesis, reinvention and change (Macharia, 2012).

Modernizing social change had resulted in the decline of some old Akurinu practices and modes of thought, revitalized and modified others (Ibid). Globalization, advanced and increased interaction among people facilitated by progressive technological changes in communication, knowledge and skills, as well as interfacing of cultural practices, systems and values, the once rich and dynamic culture of the Akurinu, just like any other became diluted.

4.3.1 Dressing

Dressing has been central not only in defining a people and their culture, but also individual’s personality. Indeed the manner of dressing defines the Akurinu. With the
advent of colonialism and the introduction of western way of dressing, Africans lost their cultural way of dressing in traditional hides and skins. There were however, Africans who initially resisted this new order of dressing mode, Akurinu being a case in point. In the previous chapter, the mode of dressing for the Akurinu was analyzed. We noted that the Akurinu retained the white turban and Kanzus as their ecclesiastical dress (Mwaura, 1984: 90). During the famous Mount Kenya retreat\textsuperscript{14}, the Holy Spirit gave instructions on Akurinu mode of dressing. In the new mode, the Akurinu were required to adorn white attires. The Akurinu hated European clothes and could not put on shoes, suits or ties (Ndung’u, 2006). Women could not put on ornaments, as this was too ‘worldly’ (Macharia, 2012).

Gradually, in Kandara the Akurinu attitude towards the mode of dressing changed. As observed earlier, the initial Akurinu did not adorn the turban or even the white attire. The 1927 Mount Kenya retreat came up with new instructions on wearing of the white turban and dress (Ibid). After independence, the Akurinu stopped condemning Western clothing with many discarding the wearing of shorts in favour of long trousers and the Kanzu’s (Waithera, O.I, 2014).

This mode of dressing remained in practice up to about 1980s but soon changed, with the emergence of “the first crop of educated, focused and committed Akurinu elite class” (Aroti Magazine, 2014). A new mode and fashion of dressing by the Akurinu came into

\textsuperscript{14} See the previous chapter for an analyses of the “Famous Mt. Kenya Retreat” in this retreat, some traditional regalia and ornaments were ‘rejected’ by the Holy Spirit and from then hence forth, the Akurinu adopted a new style of dressing as revealed by the Spirit.
The Suits that the Akurinu once rejected became men’s most respectable worship attire. A respondent, Mwangi noted that:

In Kandara, the Akurinu of 1980s had completely changed in their way of dressing. They wore expensive suits, ties and shoes. Many preferred bright colours like white, green and purple. There was a unique fashion that they preferred in which the coat was tailored to be long, with baggy trouser tied above the waist. Other bright decorations were common on their coats. The design and fashion of tying the turban had been changing since then (Mwangi, O.I, 2015).

However, there were sections of Akurinu in Kandara who held on Kanzu’s and the robes that signified purity. They retained the dressing mode of the original antipathies. Kinuthia noted that:

Majority in Kandara have changed and accepted the European suits that they initially rejected. However, there are those who will insist on the Kanzu especially when going to the sanctuary. These are mostly the (Atongoria) leaders of service, Ahoi (prayer leaders) and Anabii (prophets). The Kanzu is thus an instruction of the Holy Spirit and those that are instructed to wear it must do so to escape punishment because of disobedience. Kanzu signifies Muraika wa thayu (angel of peace) (Kinuthia, O.I, 2015)\textsuperscript{15}.

The Akurinu under the Kenya Foundation of the Prophets’ Church in Kandara believed that their white garments had religious symbolism and possessed power over evil forces and acted as a marker that separated believer from the profane world (Mwaura, 1984). As observed earlier, for the Akurinu, the turban indeed was the ‘trademark’ that distinguished them from the rest of the people. However, as from the 1980s as mentioned earlier, though white turban remained dominant, the use of multiple colours like red,

\textsuperscript{15} For the hierarchy of the Akurinu leadership, see chapter three.
yellow, purple and green became very common. It is argued that when one was called by God to be a *Mukurinu*, the Holy Spirit also revealed the colour of the turban. It is worth to point out that the practices and beliefs of the Akurinu of Kandara remain unclear for an outsider, thus proving hard during the fieldwork to get information regarding the meaning and use of different turban colours. All the same, a number of Akurinu interviewed explained that the different colours represented one’s area of ministry and calling (Mambo, O.I, 2015). Additionally, the data collected showed that the colour of the turban is determined by the angel upon the life of a particular *Mukurinu*\textsuperscript{16}. As noted earlier, white symbolized holiness, purity and righteousness. Purity is a central belief to all Akurinu, thus the reason behind the white turban being very common and consistent with many. Other colours like pink/red stripes represented angel Michael who for the Akurinu is in charge of heavenly wars, while closely related to pink was the red turban, which meant fire (Ibid). This illustrated that the angel upon the Mukurinu in red is as dangerous as fire. Indeed, the Akurinu have a belief that if one disobeyed the angel upon him represented in red, he likely to die. Other commonly used colours are dark green, purple and sky blue. It was however observed that the Akurinu do not whatsoever allow the use of black colour as it represented the angel of darkness who is Satan. Indeed nobody is allowed to wear black from top to bottom during service (Chuaga, O.I, 2015).

\textsuperscript{16}Akurinu believe that they are controlled by angels set aside by God to watch over them. The angel may change depending on the level of spirituality, position and role-played in the church.
It is important to note that though the Akurinu in Kandara had changed and embraced some aspects of dressing like wearing of shoes, one could not enter the sanctuary with shoes. This was because the sanctuary was holy and could not be soiled with dirt.

This research established that the practice of Akurinu adorning attires of varied colours other than white originated from a faction of the Akurinu, referred to as the Akurinu ‘Israel’ that broke from the Kenya Foundation of the Prophets’ Church back in 1950, under Johana Waweru. Thuku, an elderly Mukurinu respondent of eighty years, explained to our team that:

Akurinu ‘Israel’ in Kandara was a faction of the larger Musa Thuo’s Akurinu community whose members inscribed the word ‘Israel’ on their turban and robes and adorned red, white, purple and green Kanzu’s. The group emerged among the Agikuyu in 1950 under the leadership of Johana Waweru. They also hoisted flags either at the entrance of their prayer house or worshiping places. This group was also commonly referred to as ‘Israel ria Namba Njeru’ (Israel of bright letters) (Thuku, O.I, 2015).

Due to the fact that the Holy Spirit spoke to every Mukurinu, we concluded that the style of dressing among the Akurinu would continue transforming because there was no central authority that regulated and guided the manner of dressing as it was during the inception of the movement. By the year 2000, many members of the movement had become more liberalized as witnessed in the new breed of Akurinu youth whose mode of dressing would be termed as ‘worldly’ by the early Akurinu. Indeed, from observation, the only difference marking the Akurinu youth from the rest was the turban (Aroti Magazine, 2014). This observation was very conspicuous among the young men as majority of the Akurinu women continued to garb in long pleated skirts and dresses. Nevertheless, it was
observed that even Akurinu women in Kandara had been affected by changing trends and lifestyles in the rapid globalization process. Kimani noted that:

Some Akurinu independent pastors in Kandara allowed women to choose between *Gachuka* and a wedding ring, while women also visited hair salons and then wore the turban above the hairline showing their hair make (Kimani, O.I, 2015).

This development on lifestyle and morality issues witnessed disagreements, wrangles and divisions in the Akurinu church in Kandara, a movement that enjoyed one origin, foundation and common doctrine, resulting to mushrooming of numerous Akurinu splinter groups with different structures, some new doctrines and cold relationship between them (Aroti Magazine, 2014). Nonetheless, Akurinu leaders in the Kenya Foundation of the Prophets’ in Kandara continued observing some values of the ‘old’ rules as instructed in the famous 1927 Mount Kenya retreat on modesty in dressing, the turban, priestly vestments, mode of worship and prayers. Succinctly, on matters of dressing, the Akurinu were caught between “preservation of old values and modernity with its ever changing global culture” (Aroti Magazine, 2014).

**4.3.2 Marriage and family life**

The Akurinu in Kandara highly respected the institution of marriage and considered it as a precious gift from God. This movement continued to enhance the social life in the larger community with its unparalleled influence in the preservation of the value of key social moral fabrics such as the sanctity of marriage and family life (Ibid). In line with the cultural practices of the Agikuyu, the Akurinu encouraged endogamy and polygamy.
During the fieldwork, it was observed that though many Akurinu have transformed and discouraged polygamy, the practice remains common. Joseph Mwangi a Mukurinu, who supported polygamy, responded by asserting that:

An African man does not primarily marry for sex, but to have a big family, share happiness, labour and wealth with his children (Mwangi, O.I, 2014).

The initial Akurinu borrowed the practice of polygamy from the Old Testament parallels where patriarchs like Abraham and Solomon were celebrated polygamists. They therefore believed that God acknowledged the practice, which at the same time largely concurring with African spirituality and religiosity. For them, the New Testament is elusive about polygamy as Jesus did not preach against it, while pious saints like Paul preached more against adultery and fornication, but remained unclear on the subject. They further advanced the argument that branding of polygamy as sinful and unacceptable in Christianity was for Africans; a western culturally conditioned ecclesiastical regulation and not a Biblical requirement (Ibid).

It was however observed during the fieldwork that the practice of polygamy among the Akurinu in Kandara was on the decline. This was not based on church policies but external factors including economic constraints caused by the rising cost of living (Mucheru, O.I, 2015). Members who were already polygamous on joining the church were encouraged to stay together. Desertion of a husband by his wife, even after formal membership, was also an accepted reason for polygamy, so was barrenness (Ibid). It was noted that polygamy among Akurinu youth was generally discouraged, as it would
encourage multiple divorces due to the loss of indigenous values that ensured and regulated marriage stability (Aroti Magazine, 2014). Generally, it was observed that divorce cases among the Akurinu in Kandara were very rare and strictly discouraged. Church weddings were favoured over traditional forms as they are considered and seen as a sign of piety, righteousness, commitment and continuum of family values. All the same, the Akurinu community respect African customary marriage and recognized it as a sacred rite of passage, which was usually conducted with accomplishments of appropriate Christian forms of singing, dancing and merry making. Accompanying the importance of marriage among the Akurinu, is the related significance given to procreation that is considered as the main purpose of marriage. For this reason, childlessness was seriously regretted, as it was a threat to life and stability of the society. By the year 2000, many Akurinu had transformed and denounced polygamy mainly due to economic constraints and the danger of contracting HIV/AIDs (Ibid).

After independence, members of the Akurinu Church in Kandara engaged themselves in socio-political and economic ventures in the many urban centres in the sub-county and beyond. Many Akurinu had to migrate into various towns in search of better urban life. They were immediately faced by urban problems such as unemployment, housing, alcoholism, prostitution, drug abuse, among others. These gradually occasioned great moral laxity and new social values. Change in the style of living, ethical and moral problems did not spare the followers of Akurinu movement. “A new dichotomy had invaded Africa, driving a wedged between religious and secular life, which was
something unknown in traditional life” (Mbiti, 1991:221). This led to a general perception in Kandara that “some of the Akurinu had become loose of morals, that some drunk alcohol and moved around as non-Christians which was unheard of before” (Waigwa, 2007; Macharia, 2012). This saw the ‘loose’ Akurinu earn a slur term ‘Ngurinu Njugi’ meaning wise and sly Akurinu. By year 2000, members of the Akurinu community in Kandara had transformed and started cultivating materialistic, individualistic habits and values previously associated with western culture, occasioned by the structural change in the world economy. All the same, there were sections of Akurinu of Kandara who continued living in simple, pious and unworldly life like the early Akurinu. Thus, the Akurinu movement has shown continuity and change over time.

As observed before, the Akurinu represents a manifestation of” Christianity consistent with their own unique historical experience, rooted self consciously in their unique cultures” (Wambugu and Padwick, 2006:61). Since independence, the Akurinu under the Kenya Foundation of the Prophets’ Church in Kandara have been borrowing and aping heavily from other protestant faiths which has seen their culture diluted or destroyed and negative values spreading all over. This development vented its fury schematically and systematically upon the foundation on which the Akurinu community was built. “Moral decline in the modern Christians has not left the community unaffected. Over the years the spiritual scale has tipped down. The community started exhibiting traits of the ‘deculturizing’ effect of western Christianity forcing it to brutally sever its roots and loose
its authenticity. It is falling prey to the cultural tutelage of western churches” (Macharia, 2012).

The Akurinu youth in particular were faced with a difficult task of remaining faithful to the word of God in modern changing times where “the younger generations are challenging the authority of the parents” (Mbiti, 1991:224). The Akurinu youth had a responsibility of remaining ethically, ceremoniously and spiritually holy in a fast changing society. Many Akurinu youth had lost good Christian values and virtues resulting to rebelling against the word of God and found themselves getting involved in pursuit of money and pleasures of the world. One John Kamau, a Mukurinu respondent noted that:

_Umothe tuhanyukanagia na thi-ino uria ihana tugietha mbia_. (Today, we keep in pace with the changing world in pursuit for money) (Kamau, O.I, 2015).

The Akurinu Church in Kandara had a huge responsibility of imparting spiritual teachings to the youth long before they had matured into adulthood and after. This had been witnessed through several youth workshops, seminars and meetings in different locations in Kandara. It is worth to mention now, that it was observed in our fieldwork that the number of the youth joining the Akurinu church has been increasing tremendously over time (Ibid). Despite the decadence of morality and African culture in the face of globalization, Akurinu church continued attracting large numbers of the youth both educated and uneducated in the society. This research established that from 1990s to 2000, the church boasted of a following of youthful membership in both genders from
varying social and economic positions (Charagu, O.I, 2015). This shows a bright future prospect for the church since it can still win youthful membership. The converts are a result of spiritual conviction, moving in search of truth and marriage ties with Akurinu families.

When asked about the future prospects of the Akurinu church, Wanjiku responded:

This church has a bright future, you know we attract quite a number of people especially the youth, into the Akurinu church and you know our beliefs are not as before when people would run from this church because members did not go to school (Wanjiku, O.I, 2014).

The Akurinu church has continued winning converts from other denominations such as the Catholic Church, African Independent Pentecost church (AIPC), among others.

4.3.3 Education

Initial the Akurinu in Kandara did not embrace western education because it was introduced by the white man, whom the Akurinu considered as the enemy to the people of God. They equated colonial domination with the suffering that the Israelites faced under the harsh Egyptian rule. Consequently, everything that was European in nature except the Bible was opposed by the Akurinu (Mwaura, 1984). In addition, education was considered worldly and hence ignored by the Akurinu whose main purpose was to concentrate on the heavenly kingdom. Thirdly, the Akurinu isolated themselves from the rest in the society and therefore could not mix freely with the others in schools (Ibid). Thus for a long time education was not a priority for majority of the Akurinu.
The initial exclusion of the Akurinu of Kandara from both the missionary and African led Independent Schools impacted negatively for the first Akurinu generation resulting to their inability for a long time to even document their own history (Aroti Magazine, 2014). Their history “has been documented by a third party, loaded with bias and prejudice” (Ibid). However, with the attainment of independence in 1963, the Akurinu have since changed their attitude towards education. Indeed, the pace in which the Akurinu embraced education is said to be one of the most phenomenal transformation in the life of the Akurinu (Macharia, 2012). By 1963, most of the Akurinu enrolled for elementary schooling after which majority did not continue to the next level. The influx of the Akurinu in formal education is said to have occurred after Musa Thuo, the Akurinu leader in Murang’a encouraged his followers to embrace the practice after independence. Prior, the Akurinu had the fear that their children would be compelled to remove the turban in schools. They strongly believed that it was better for a Mukurinu child to miss education than remove the turban (Njaramba, O.I, 2014). Thuo himself having received basic education in a mission school before conversion was able to convince many of his followers on the benefits of education. He advised that Akurinu children attending school would be allowed to dress in their religious attire (Waigwa, 2007).

In the 1970s, Akurinu youth in particular, were noted to have attended schools in large numbers, hence confirming a change in their beliefs about formal education (Ibid). When asked whether it was against the Akurinu beliefs to attend school, Njogu responded that:
Going to school was forbidden by the old people before, but we have greatly changed since then, in fact, it is our parents who encourage us to learn up to the university and for me, I want to be a medical doctor (Njogu, O.I, 2015).

In addition, all the respondents interviewed in the study thought that education was a good idea and that Akurinu children should acquire higher education including joining universities (Ibid). This presented a voice of change from the stringent exclusive beliefs that prohibited education. Njogu, further pointed that:

Akurinu children should go up to the university just like other children because if they fail to do so, then they will be left behind in terms of development and you know, today everyone if looking forward to development (Ibid).

The growth of the educated Akurinu was rather gradual, but gained momentum as from the 1980s “with the emergence of the first crop of educated, focused and committed Akurinu elite class” (Aroti Magazine, 2014). By the year 2000, there was an influx of the Akurinu students from Kandara in the institutions of learning in pursuit of basic and higher education, which they believed was an integral factor towards the development of the community (Ibid). The zeal to acquire education resulted in many Akurinu joining varied social and economic positions such as in employment, business and trade\(^\text{17}\). As from the 1980s, there was increase in number of Akurinu students from Kandara pursuing various courses in the universities ranging from education, law, medicine, media and management, just to mention but a few. Among Akurinu personalities from Kandara, who have attained high educational and professional qualifications include, Peter Maina

\(^{17}\text{See section 4.2 for an analysis of economic transformation of the Akurinu}\)
Ngugi, who served as the Secretary General, of the Kenya Foundation of the Prophets’ Church at Kaguthi and currently a lecturer at Mt. Kenya University in Thika and Zipporah Mumbi originally of the Kaguthi Church, who holds a Degree in Special Education (Maina, O.I, 2015). From the larger Akurinu Community are personalities like Abraham Macharia, a qualified and practicing lawyer (Macharia, 2012) and Dr. Ayub Macharia who once served as the acting director at National Environment Agency (NEMA).

In 1989, a group of Akurinu students representing various tertiary institutions in Kenya met after an Akurinu Youth Convention in Nyahururu and formed the Akurinu Student Fellowship (AYF) whose aim was to curtail the rampant brain drain of Akurinu student, particularly those in secondary schools, colleges and universities (Aroti Magazine, 2014). This development was necessary to halt the increasing drop out rate of Akurinu students which was observed to be high than among other students in other denominations. During the fieldwork, it was observed that a significant number of Akurinu youths, in particular young men discarded the turban especially after secondary education (Ndung’u, O.I, 2015). The practice was noted to be common even for those who proceeded to join the universities. Our research team established that this practice resulted from effects of modernization, prompting the youth to rebel and challenge parental authority. John Thuku, a former Mukurinu and form 4 leaver preparing to join the university explained the reason behind these as:
Parents force most of us to continue adorning the turban while in school. Immediately one is of age and can, make independent decision the turban is discarded (Thuku, O.I, 2014).

The Akurinu Students Fellowship (ASF) represented the interests of Akurinu students in tertiary educational institutes besides organizing Keshas, visit to mother churches and weekend challenges. This development systematically uplifted the Akurinu church into higher platforms in socio-economic participation in the country and even in the Diaspora (Akurinu outside Kenya, living in either Europe or the Americas) (Aroti Magazine, 2014)

As a result of their commitment to education, the Akurinu in Kandara no longer isolated themselves but instead took their children to school to get educated. The Akurinu also took advantage of the adult education programs (Macharia, 2012), perhaps for those who did not have a chance of going to school earlier on. Joshua Maina noted that he was very eager to learn since his childhood but because of ignorance, his parents did not take him to school. However, knowing the importance of education, Maina did not only take his children to school but also enrolled for an adult education program that taught basic literacy and English (Chege, O.I, 2015).

Nevertheless, this is not to say that the Akurinu did not encountered challenges along the path of education. First, they faced discrimination as observed in a case whereby a school refused to admit a student because of the turban (Daily Nation 2/6/ 2013). In addition, there were schools that insisted on short skirts uniform. In such cases, the Akurinu feel alienated because they do not put on short dresses. These schools continued demonstrating outright discrimination against the girls by forbidding them from wearing
the turban and long dress. A respondent who sought anonymity lamented about schools in Murang’a, Kiambu and in Nairobi Counties that insisted that girls had to wear short dresses, which was against the Akurinu faith. She observed that:

Even if the schools would treat our girls specially and allow them to put long skirts, we are always worried because our girls would be influenced by the others and at that age the adolescent peer pressure will suffice (Elikana, O.I, 2014).

However, despite the challenges, the Akurinu’s desire for education seemed unstoppable especially in today’s fast changing world. The Akurinu church became vibrant with members participating in the promotion of literally skills in major fields including theology, media, intellectualism and science in the society.

4.3.4 Health

The attitude of the Akurinu in Kandara towards health has portrayed continuity and change over time. In 1920s, the Akurinu were totally opposed to the up take of western medicine. They were so tied to the group’s belief that they would rather lose their lives than undergo timely medical treatment. It was an ecclesiastical requirement not to seek medical services as required by the second Mount Kenya commandment (Ndung’u 1994). The Akurinu also rejected early medical services mainly because they were European in nature. Secondly, the Akurinu believed in faith healing such that when one fell sick, prayers invoking healing were offered by the religious leaders. The Akurinu churches practiced faith healing since their inception (Ndung’u, 1994). This was influenced by the
Kikuyu culture, in which the medicine man was highly respected for his ability to cure diseases (Kibicho, 2006).

It was until 1969, after government intervention that some sections of the Akurinu agreed to seek medical attention (Ndung’u, 1994:368). Large sections of the Akurinu started seeking health services just like others in the society. Mikaili noted that;

I seek medical services when am sick because even the doctors use knowledge that is given by God. Indeed God said that we are His co-creators and hence we should continue with his creation (Mikaili, O.I, 2015).

Many Akurinu gradually become accustomed to the application of scientific methods in solving human health problems. Many hitherto inexplicable ailments could now be diagnosed and treated in health facilities. Many issues that were in the past attributed to the mystic realm by the Akurinu were simply explained through scientific knowledge.

However, while we make these observations, it is important to note that, sections of the Akurinu in Kandara have remained conservative and persisted with the old practice of faith healing. This is because of they believe that God is the healer and involving any other method of healing is contamination of the body, the Temple of the Holy Spirit. During the fieldwork, it was observed that sections of the Akurinu continue to hold on faith healing and could not consult a doctor or seek medical services.

4.3.5 Dietary prescriptions

From the inception of the Akurinu movement in 1926, members of this faith have been very strict in observance of dietary laws as stipulated in the Laws of Moses (Macharia,
2012). They did not feed on anything that had come into contact with blood. Initially, the Akurinu could not buy meat in butcheries and only eat what they had slaughtered. The responsibility of slaughtering was given to a particular Mukurinu in and outside the church where the rest could buy. In most cases Friday was set aside as the slaughter day (Njane, O.I, 2015)

The Akurinu in Kandara under the Kenya Foundation of the Prohets’ Church (Athenjiri) were very particular on dietary rules. They could not feed on any food prepared using ordinary fat. They only used milk cream, fat obtained from the animals they slaughtered and strictly avoided consuming lard (fat from pork, an unclean animal according to Deuteronomy 14) (Ibid). Accordingly, they believed that fat from the slaughtered animals was pure and has no addictives that defile the body. Drugs, tobacco, cigarettes and intoxicating drinks were totally forbidden to its members (Chuaga, O.I, 2015). They also did not eat the internal organs of the slaughtered animals such as the heart, liver, lungs, kidneys and pancrease as they were said to have been in contact with blood (Ibid). The observance of dietary prescription, prohibitions and ablution laws as spelt out in the book of Leviticus was a strict practice to followers of this movement. This made the Akurinu be social misfits because they could not eat outside their homes or in social gatherings. In our fieldwork, we established that the selective feeding habits of the Akurinu resulted to the non-Akurinu isolating them. Kamau noted that:

_Ugikuyu-ini niitwendete kurianira muno, no mundu angikorwo ndangiria gwaku onawe ndungiria gwake. Ucio no ta murogi._ (In the Kikuyu culture, eating is a social
habit and we share a lot. However, if one cannot eat your food, you also cannot eat his. We believe such kind of a person is a witch) (Kamau, O.I, 2015).

After independence, large numbers of Akurinu in Kandara underwent transformation, began eating food prepared using ordinary cooking oil, and even started taking food in social gatherings. By year 2000 and with the emergence of the Akurinu elites of 1990’s, dietary rules became very relaxed. During the field work it was observed that they mingle with all sorts of people in hotels and take all types of food regardless of the cooking oil used (Ibid).

4.4 Political Transformation in the Akurinu Movement

Politically, the Akurinu were known to be passive (Macharia, 2012). In the early years in post-colonial Kenya, the Akurinu in Kandara did not want anything to do with politics, as they believed that they were citizens of the heavenly kingdom (Mwangi, O.I, 2015). Even with independence, the Akurinu way of life was marked by isolation that went hand-in-hand with adamant non-cooperation with the rest of members of the society (Ibid).

Gradually, the Akurinu attitude to the rest in the society changed from being defiant to cooperation. In Kandara, for instance, in the 1970s, the Akurinu were noted to be generally cooperative, willingly participated in communal work and at the same time faithfully serving God. As mentioned earlier, Jomo Kenyatta was a close ally to Musa Thuo, the Akurinu leader in Murang’a. Thuo and Kenyatta were said to have belonged to the same age set (Ibid). It can therefore be concluded that the close ties between the two
leaders translated to the Akurinu in Kandara offering political support to Kenyatta’s government.

Bildad Kaggia became the first Member of Parliament of Kandara after the elections in 1963. Kaggia was a Kenyan Nationalist, freedom fighter and a politician who established himself as a militant and fiery crusader of the poor and landless in post-colonial Kenya. Earlier in 1946, Kaggia had denounced his Christian faith and established a purely African movement divorced from European church doctrine, which people referred to as ‘Dini ya Kaggia’ (Kaggia’s Religion) (Rosberg, 1985). Although Kaggia’s doctrine spread fast and far in Kikuyu land and harboured similar aspirations with the Akurinu, like retaining African traditions and opposition to the colonial regime, the Akurinu in Kandara and elsewhere did not join this religious outfit (Waithaka, O.I, 2014). The Akurinu however worked closely with Kaggia after he abandoned religious work and shifted his attention to the political field, where he continued to champion the plight of the poor and landless, a principle that made him fall out and irreconcilable with Jomo Kenyatta till his death in 2005 (Ibid).

The emergence of Akurinu educated elites in the 1980s saw many venture into different academic and professional sectors in the country (Aroti Magazine, 2014). In the same year, the government ordered that the Akurinu should remove the turbans as photographs for the issuance of national identity cards were taken (Ibid). The Akurinu in Kandara adamantly refused to obey this directive, a situation that threatened political stability, catching the attention of the then Attorney General, Charles Njonjo. This culminated into
a big delegation of the Akurinu from Kandara and others parts of Central and Rift Valley regions visiting state house, where the directive on removing the turban to access the national identity was dropped (Kimani, O.I, 2015). The Akurinu in return promised loyalty and allegiance to Moi’s government (Ibid). It is worth to note that despite their passive political involvement the Akurinu movement was a recognized force even by the government of the day.

Later in the 1990s, individual members of the Akurinu in Kandara gradually developed political ambitions. A case in point was the nomination of one Samuel Mwaura, a Mukurino from Ng’araria to the post of a councillor in the 1997 General elections (Njau, O. I, 2014). By the year 2000, there were however very few Akurinu members from Kandara who had climbed the political ladder through appointment in the Government (Aroti Magazine, 2014).

It must be noted that sections of the Akurinu in Kandara still held onto the idea of being citizens of heaven and hence shunned any political involvement even after independence. They practiced religious bigotry which saw many remain in political isolation. They even discouraged their members from participation in civic activities such as voting or seeking political posts. Lucia wanjiku is such a Mukurinu who did not vote or encourage politics in her life. She however, did not admit it openly and before it was known by the neighbours, she used to blame her lack of voting to the drunkard husband alleging that the husband would hide her identity card. Wambui noted that:
Sisi tulikuwa tunaitana kama majirani twende kupiga kura, lakini Lucia alikuwa anatuambia ati hapati kitambulisho chak. Na kusema kwamba bwanake alificha (As neighbours we accompanied each other to vote, but every time we called Lucia, she would say that her husband had hidden her Identity Card) (Lucia, O.I.2015).

From the data collected, Lucia’s husband was always against her conversion to Akurinu faith that she did after they got married. Lucia therefore took advantage of the situation and blamed her failure to vote to the domestic feuds, yet it was influenced by her Akurinu faith.

Such behavior influenced people’s attitude toward Akurinu whom they viewed with contempt, scepticism and suspicion. Such bigotry erodes the purpose of religion in political involvement as “a higher civic involvement enables religion to contribute social change which generates the social capital for community development and social opportunities, complementing the state and the market forces” (Okullu, 2003).

Members of the Akurinu movement in Kandara who embraced politics in the 1990s claimed that God was interested in both the spiritual and the physical wellbeing of His people. They cited the reference in the Biblical case in which God sent His servant Samuel to anoint a King for the Israelites. Nonetheless, the Akurinu political participation in Kandara remained insignificant. A more visible political participation for the Akurinu was necessary in order to define their role in the wider society and “provide leadership salted with the fear of the Lord” (Aroti Magazine, 2014).

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, a number of religious groups, which were difficult to classify but had close resemblance with the Akurinu, began to emerge. Example of this
was the Tent of the Living God, founded by Ngonya wa Gakonya in 1987, a sect which aimed at liberating Kenyan masses from economic exploitation, political subjugation and advocated for a return to indigenous values, culture and religion (Wamue, 2001). Ngonya started by sensitizing the people on the importance of the discarded African religious beliefs and practices, encouraging the masses to denounce foreign Christian worship and the reversion to indigenous shrines (Ibid). He even joined the Akurinu church in 1988, before breaking away. The Tent of the Living God was a fundamentalist movement with a religious, political and cultural agenda aimed at liberating Kenyan masses from political and mental oppression by Moi’s government (Karangu, O.I, 2014). It is most probable that Ngonya fell out and split from the Akurinu due to his strong engagement in politics and the militant approach to religious issues (Ibid).

The other religious outfit that emerged around the same time and under similar circumstances with the Tent of the Living God, was Mungiki, a religio-political movement that composed mainly a large Gikuyu masses, who mostly were victims of land clashes on the eve of the 1992 multy party general elections in Kenya (Wamue, 2001). This religious sect, founded in 1987 by Ndura Waruinge, a son to General Waruingi of the Mau Mau rebellion, was opposed to exploitation and accumulation of massive wealth by certain individuals, especially officials and politicians in Moi’s government, at the expense of the masses (Ibid). Members of the Mungiki sect initially belonged to the Tent of the Living God, but they differed when the former began making offerings of sacrifices in ways not prescribed in Kikuyu traditions and to advocate for
women’s forceful circumcision (Ibid). Although Mungiki was almost exclusively a Gikuyu affair, the sect expected to bring on board all other Kenyan in its quest to unite and mobilize the masses against political, religio-cultural and economic exploitation. For Mungiki, this could only be achieved through mass religious action that would revive the heritage of African people’s beliefs and practices.

It is important to note that the two religious sects had similar features with the Akurinu of Kandara, but at the same time differed sharply. While they all advocated for the return to the Kikuyu religion and culture, appealed to the lowly in the society and opposed oppressive governments, they totally contrasted in political involvement, violent demonstrations and use of intoxicants like tobacco (Murundia, O.I, 2015). Consequently, the Akurinu in Kandara rejected the activities of Mungiki and Tent of the Living God sects, which they found to be morally, corrupted a distorted and animist doctrine that lacked religious sanctity (Ibid).

4.5 Economic Transformation in the Akurinu Community

Economically, Akurinu were believed to be lazy and did not engage themselves in the mainstream economic activities (Kenyatta, 1938). The Akurinu in Kandara believed that simplicity was what they were called for and in this transitory life, waiting for the glory in heaven; they did not need to do a lot to improve their status and were consequently regarded as the poor of poor’s (Hastings, 2006). The Akurinu movement was almost exclusively patronized by the poor, the illiterate and the sick. “Watu wa Mungu seems not interested in doing anything that is of help economically” (Kenyatta, 1938:278).
Peterson (2007) has argued that there is a positive correlation between non-believing and affluence. As societies become richer, religion become less significant. Religion has a strong connection to economic activities (Weber, 1963; Meagher, 2009). In the face of modernity and the confusion and complexity of life, Akurinu in Kandara changed and transformed economically. Historically, from the 1920’s to 1960’s, the Akurinu found themselves in the pre- and post-colonial informal sector, which was dominated by unemployed Africans who had to utilize their creativity to earn a livelihood (Mwaura, 1984). They settled for self-employment because they lacked formal education and technical qualifications, prerequisites in the formal ‘white colour’ jobs. The Akurinu deliberately never bothered to send their children to schools due to the fear of facing discrimination and the idea of learning bad morals (Waigwa, 2007). They started conducting their children through ‘hands on’ approach. Consequently, the vocational occupation of the father was usually passed on to the male children almost effortlessly (Kanyi, O.I, 2015). This explains why the Akurinu enjoyed skilful artist prowess in areas such as carpentry, masonry, stone dressing, tailoring among other trades. It should also be pointed out that the formal sector had some demands that could make them break the Sabbath given that most companies operate on Saturday’s and Sunday’s. Moreover, even the dress code of some work places could definitely lock the Akurinu out. Consequently, the informal sector became a lucrative vocation commensurate with their spirituality and economic well-being.
Since 1963, sections of the Akurinu in Kandara transformed and became more critical of the view held by the early Akurinu who saw the materialist world as temporarily and evil. The birth of elite Akurinu of 1980’s saw many pursue varied economic ventures beyond the simple farming practices by their early predecessors (Aroti Magazine, 2014). By the year 2000 many Akurinu believed that wealth and riches were God’s blessing and that man must labour to become successful, thus enjoy the fullness of life (Ibid). Their belief in hard work, honesty and trust catapulted many into greater economic achievements in varied areas. This transformation saw many Akurinu in Kandara accumulate wealth and influence, translating into an upward socio-economic mobility in the society over the years. According to Lucia:

Ngai etire Iburahimu na akimutongia, thutha ucio Isaka na Jakubu akimatongia muno gukira Iburahimu, kwoguo gutonga ni kirathimo kia aria endete” (God called Abraham and made him rich, later Isaac and Jacob were made richer than Abraham, therefore riches are blessings from God to those that He loves) (Lucia, O.I, 2015).

Their zeal in pursuit of money is a testimony of their belief that they were called to be integral members of the society. In Kandara, many Akurinu operated shops, hotels, dressmaking, taxi businesses as well as Matatu drivers, touts and mechanics. The Akurinu did not have any problem in conducting business and trade with others and believed that it is God who called them to these ventures.

The positive socio-economic mobility of modern Akurinu in Kandara clearly contrasted with proto Akurinu who lived in extreme poverty due to their belief that the world was
evil and temporally. A colonial administrator described Akurinu as a people who “rarely wear boots or shoes, buildings must be built of indigenous materials, and one of the precepts is that money is the root of all evil (Lambert, 1942).

With this positive change in fortune, the rise of Akurinu elites of 1980’s and the successful erasing of the social stigma of exclusiveness and isolation from the rest in the society, the Akurinu church in Kandara had undertaken great transformations. By year 2000, the Akurinu community had to adapt fast in order to catch up with the rest. They took active roles in building of Harambee schools, churches and raising funds to offset hospital bills for affected members. Many built descent and permanent living houses back at home. Some migrated into urban centers in search of employment and business opportunities.

In addition, members of the Akurinu faith unlike in the past agreed to join the police force. Initially, the turban would lock them out of the force. However, those who joined the force were allowed to fix the crown on their turban (Munde, O.I, 2015).

After 1963, the Akurinu in Kandara developed a philosophy of encouraging thrift, a habit of saving and spending money carefully among its members. This in turn translated to stimulated savings, investment and therefore economic growth. In Ng’araria village in Kandara district, the Akurinu church had one John Mukurinu who collected and kept member’s money. Members borrowed this money and paid back with little interest (Muthoni, O.I, 2015). Initially, the Akurinu movement was viewed by many as an institutional outfit of the unsophisticated and poor members of society (Hastings, 2006).
This has since changed, as the church has always been at the forefront in complimenting government effort whose work traverses all spheres of the economy. The church provided alternatives to the secular approaches of addressing the socio-economic issues in the country. This is achieved through their spiritual teachings based on transcendental power that gives hope, meaning and purpose to the poor (James, 2012).

In Kandara, the Akurinu faith and culture continued to influence member’s social interactions and upward economic mobility due to their belief in honesty, work ethic and altruistic behavior. The movement valued morality and positive work ethics, thereby appealing to people’s consciousness and contributing towards positive social interactions, leading to efficiency and peace building. In the wider context, the economic transformation witnessed in the church has seen most of the Akurinu in Kandara remain pro-active towards economic growth in the country, “which has resulted to their liberation and spiritual gratification” (Aroti Magazine, 2014).

4.6 Organisational Structure of the Kenya Foundation of the Prophets’ Church.

The Kenya Foundation of the Prophets’ Akurinu church in Kandara started as a community that did not have any organized hierarchy of leadership and membership structures. Initially it did not have any written rules or regulations but was open for membership for all people who repented their sins and accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour (Mwaura, 1984; 89). The Akurinu church used to operate under the leadership of the so-called ‘Murathi’ who would give instructions as received from the Holy Spirit. Gradually, Akurinu church underwent transformation to become a fully-fledged ministry
with leadership hierarchy and governance from a central point (Ibid). It must however be remembered that Akurinu faith had echoes of Agikuyu traditional religion, which is also evident in its leadership structure and general organization. For example, Akurinu fellowships are not leader centered, though there were senior prophets, just as there are Angels and Archangels. There appeared to be no clear distinction between clerics and laity, as they appeared equal as represented in all wearing the turban (Waithera, O.I, 2014).

There were two levels of Church government functions, that consist of the official hierarchy for administrative duties and a religious arm that dealt with purely religious matters. The former involved general administration, like building of more churches, laising with the local authorities and government on all official matters and issues relating to the welfare of the entire community, while the latter involved evangelical work, discipline, organising and officiating at ceremonies like baptism, marriage, ordination of priests and funerals (Mwaura, 1984:89). The administrative officials included the Chairman, Secretary General and a Treasurer, while in the religious realms were Mutongoria (leader), Mubatithania (baptizer), Muhunjia (preacher) and Muhoi (prayer leader).

The chairperson was always the mutongoria whose duties were to pray for the congregation and officiate at ceremonies, particulary marriage, ordination, baptism and opening of newly built churches. Musa Thuo became the first Mutongoria (Chairman) of Kenya Foundation of Prophets’Akurinu church until his death on 8th August 1975, when
he was succeeded by Jackson Njuguna Kung’u from Gathugu, who died in 1990. Johanna Mwangi, from Gatura in Gatanga, led the church from 1990 to 1999, when he started a splinter church in Gatanga, leaving behind Musa Ng’ang’a, who is the current chair (Muturi, O.I, 2015).

Besides baptizing converts, the baptizer also led in burial services and local congregation as well as supervising church service. A muhoi led in prayers in church congregation while a preacher’s duty was that of evangelising and giving sermons during Sunday services (Ibid, 90). Other recognized people were the prophets and hymn leaders.

With the emergence of the Akurinu, elite class of 1980s came the idea of a revised leadership hierarchy. This prompted the Akurinu in Kandara to embrace “formalization of the church activities as part of the wider trends towards realism” (Macharia, 2012:65). A new hierarchy headed by an Arch-Bishop, Bishop, Senior Pastor and a pastor came into place in the 1980s (Muturi, O.I,2015). The availability of learned personnel resulted to Akurinu openly conducting preaching and evangelizing to all people irrespective of their ethnicity, commonly known as crusades (Mwaura, 1984).

The Akurinu in Kandara had to reconstruct their churches from the initial mud walled and grass thatched roofs to permanent and magnificent buildings in the face of changing trends in the society. In the past, it was common to spot small congregations of Akurinu adherents on Sunday in open-air service, others on roundabouts, under trees and on roadsides preaching, singing, on processions and praying. Coloured flags hovering above them symbolizing the location of the soldiers of Christ (Aroti Magazine, 2014). The
emergence of the first crop of Akurinu elites in 1980s saw the vibrant growth of the movement in both the rural and urban areas, which demonstrated Akurinu relevance in the Kenyan spiritual market. Nonetheless, this growth has been characterized by continuous intense expansion with smaller units emerging from mother bodies, each adopting colourful names (Ibid).

The Akurinu in Kandara offered a celebrative religion characterized by a prodigious singing, drumming and dance. The appropriation of spiritual songs, hymns and sacred language as a revelatory medium is central to the ethos and rhetoric of Akurinu church. They used song and dance as the avenue of expressing their beliefs and practices (Mwaura, 1884:92). A common feature in Akurinu songs and sweet melodies is the powerful use of the drum, which is blended with handclapping, dancing and foot stomping. The fervor, tempo and exuberance of Akurinu music is so captivating that it brings out the African spirit in songs and dance. There is a belief among the Akuring that the vigorous beating of the drum keeps the evil spirits away (Wamuyu, O.I, 2014). It must be noted that the use of the drum by the Akurinu was a cause of conflict with the missionary churches who considered the practice as pagan and therefore devilish (Waigwa, 2007). It has been asserted that: “in fact, until recently no Christian could use with impunity any musical instrument in church except the piano and the organ, neither of which is built in Africa (Kubi, 1980).

It should be observed that Akurinu spiritual hymn and songs were revealed to the founders, prophets and even certain individuals from a divine source. This explains the
mystic factor in their songs that one feels filled with the supernatural element in the course of their performance. One inspired and talented Akurinu composer was Daudi Ikigu Nderi, who authored a common hymn-book, titled, “Nyimbo cia Ikigu.” The late Daudi is said to have been illiterate but inspired and gifted by the Holy Spirit in composing these songs. These songs were first compiled, edited and printed into a hymn-book in 1977 (Aroti Magazine, 2014). There are other common hymns like “Nyimbo cia Roho” a text that Akurinu consider very vital in their worship and way of life. Akurinu sacred songs carry in them spiritual messages and are tailored in rich African tunes and melodies that remain edifying and relevant to all generations.

One of the pioneer Akurinu gospel singers who contributed immensely in bringing Akurinu music to the limelight was Julia Lucy in the 1970 from Gitura in Kandara. She also made great strides in popularizing songs in the Akurinu hymn-book composed by Daudi Ikigu. Julia Lucy remains the most popular and longest standing Akurinu gospel singer (Aroti Magazine, 2014).

The emergence of educated, focused and committed Akurinu elite class of 1980s in Kandara witnessed a radical departure from the old singing and dancing of the Akurinu spiritual songs. The younger generation of Akurinu gospel musicians transformed the singing and dancing of the Akurinu sacred songs. They worked towards upgrading the same old hymns and transformed them using modern musical instruments such as the piano, organ and guitar (Kung’u, O.I, 2015). They also produced and recorded the gospel music in Kiswahili and English with hip-hop melodies that have seen it gain popular
appeal from the public. This bold move by the youthful Akurinu aimed at challenging the dominant narrative that portrayed them as backward and unsophisticated. The youthful Akurinu gospel music artists were demonstrating their versatility and dynamism in an environment where they have endured negative publicity as well as projecting a progressive image of the Akurinu community.

4.7 Women in the Akurinu Church in Kandara.

Women in the Akurinu church in Kandara took subordinate roles to men. They remained at the margin rather than the centre of both the church and society (Wahu, O.I, 2015). They were not able to have a voice in the church hierarchy and mainly played a supportive role (Mwaura, 1989). As noted earlier Akurinu faith borrows closely from the Kikuyu traditional religious set up in which women played subsidiary roles to men. Social inequality between sexes resulted to Agikuyu women been locked out of religious professions such as sacrifices, but played major roles in domestic activities such as providing food, giving moral foundation to the children and maintaining the family (Muriuki, 1974). As such, traditionally women had care giving roles that put them in a unique and strategic position to not only produce and sustain life but also help to instill socio-religious values and morals in the family and society. Agikuyu society was thus male dominated in political, social, economic and religious structures (Ibid).

Akurinu women have played primarily a supportive role to men and have not been involved fully in decision-making process in and within the church (Mwaura, 1989). During the struggle for the liberation of the country from the yoke of colonialism, women
alongside men offered spiritual and moral support through prayers and songs to the freedom fighters (Macharia, 2012). In the famous Mount Kenya retreat of 1927, only one woman, Lillian Njeri made the pilgrim that received instructions from God. It should observed that Lillian was a respected prophetess and displayed unique spiritual charisma, prompting the early Akurinu to accept her into leadership position (Macharia, 2012). Although the Akurinu faith consider women not adequate to handle leadership roles in the church, the example of Lillian demonstrate that women are integral, vital and important force behind the vitality of the Akurinu church.

The upsurge of Akurinu elites of the 1980’s did not leave women behind. Akurinu enlightened women have since then stood strong in encouraging women’s involvement in the church ministry. From 1980 to 2000, many Akurinu enlightened women have participated actively with courage and conviction, spirit and strength in the service of the community. They contributed to community worship through the gifts of the Holy Spirit such as prophesy and healing. Some women in the Akurinu church in Kandara “performed acts of healing and driving away evil spirits” (Edet and Ekeya, 1988). Women are given central and honoured position in healing activities, worship and social life of the church because these are considered gifts of God’s spirits that illuminate authority.

Women in the Akurinu church in Kandara are confined to such roles as teaching and carering for the children and keeping the church compound clean. Nduta, one of the Akurinu respondents pointed out that:
Akurinu women play a vital role in the church. For instance, some are chosen to be leaders after been put under observation for long and proved to be leading good family life. They teach moral conduct to the children, lead in songs and prayers as well as maintaining the neatness of the church. Women are resourceful problem solvers and therefore spirited social justice leaders who serve with a servants’ heart for healing and restoration of justice in the community. They are well recognized when it comes to receiving the Holy Spirit because it is said that men receive him first and women later but the Holy Spirit possess the latter more because they will speak in tongues in long prayers. During functions in church, women who prepare food for the congregation must be married (Nduta, O.I, 2015).

From the aforementioned, the role of women in the Akurinu church in Kandara should therefore not be ignored. It has been observed that “women all over the world are the pillars, they witness to the image of God within them and the hope and renewal for the church rests within this witness” (Mwaura, 1977). The role of women in many churches remains one of the most contentious issues in gender-power politics both within and outside the church as “history has it that the church too cannot be absolved from the evils of inflicting lamentable injustices on women” (Wachege, 1992:93).

This is despite the fact that “women comprise the large majority of active church members and are the sustaining force in almost every congregation” (Crabtree, 1970:19). Despite women being ready and interested in highly demanding and challenging positions, many churches have failed to fully receive and respond to women’s gift by marginalizing them in key areas of participation. Yet “women are still the majority in the spiritual and liturgical life of the church” (Mwaura, 1977). The full ordination of women
in church leadership roles has been controversial as “many Christian churches and denominations reserve their priesthoods or equivalent positions to men. Some of the Christian churches see the inferior role of women as part of a divinely ordination order” (Oduyoye, 1992:17). “A visitor from another planet would find it paradoxical that while the majority of church goers are women, religious doctrines certainly do not value the female sex very highly or at least have been misinterpreted over the centuries to give women a subordinate role in religious practices. They have been debarred from conducting religious services and administering sacraments” (Ndeda, 1997). This has been the scenario in the Akurinu church in Kandara.

Despite their spiritual strength and acknowledged contribution in the church, Akurinu women have not had a voice in the church hierarchy. However, as they perform these duties, they are seen as capable of offering charismatic leadership services in varied levels. Women like Lillian of the famous Mount Kenya retreat was incorporated in the early Akurinu leadership due to her charisma (Macharia, 2012). Julia Lucy gained fame as a gospel hymn composer in the 1970’s, while the editor of Atoti Magazine, Mary Waruingi a Mukurinu, ranks among the elite in the church, is a preacher of the Gospel, and also an upcoming Gospel singer (Aroti Magazine, 2014).

The period 1980 to 2000 is an epoch in the history of Akurinu church as things took a turn for the better with the emergence of the educated elite. Since then, women in the church have enjoyed prestige and some degree of authority than before.” The role of women in the modern Akurinu church in Kandara is both interesting and intriguing. In the
new Akurinu churches, women receive a great deal of visibility and are integrated in decision making process and exercise a certain degree of power and authority” (Aroti Magazine 2014). This period saw Akurinu women play significant roles just like their counterpart men in both informal and formal economic sectors. They engaged in business ventures, fundraising activities, sewing, cake baking as well serving as heads of households. A number found employment in the civil service, teaching and theology and thus actively participated in the economic life of the nation. It is against this backdrop that the Akurinu Warriors Women Convention (Ngwataniro ya Mahoya ma Atumia) was formed which brought together women from different Akurinu churches for prayers. These conventions held every month have been very successful in unifying women from various Counties and have even attracted men converts (Aroti Magazine, 2014).

Consequently, with the world undergoing dramatic changes because of modernization, formal education, monetization of the economy, feminism and other modern social forces, the role of women in the Akurinu church has transformed. The secular and religious worlds are experiencing great changes with regard to gender roles and Akurinu enlightened women are speaking with a new voice and new urgency as they continue complimenting men leadership.

4.8 Conclusion

This chapter sought to address the transformation of the Akurinu church in Kandara in the post independent era. We established that Akurinu movement has transformed over time. The church that was once conservative in its worship, attitude to diet, politics, music and
education has since transformed and undertaken changes. The early Akurinu observed strict dietary rules, did not dress attractively or participated in voting or elective political post. This transformation changed the Akurinu way of life and practices such that they relaxed their dietary rules and could now eat in hotels, took active roles in politics, started seeking medical attention in hospitals and embraced formal education. Indeed, Akurinu became a church with well-organized leadership structures and operations. In this transformation, the Akurinu church in Kandara was conforming to a modernization crisis that demanded a search for new social adjustments and identities outside their traditional world milieu. However, there were sections of Akurinu who remained conservative and could not for instance visit hospital or seek medical attention from a doctor, as they believed in faith healing, while others could not participate in any political activity, like voting or vying for elective posts. Generally, the church also retained values such as liturgy attire, mode of prayers and the turban. Conclusively, transformation in the Akurinu movement will continue especially with new breed of liberal Akurinu youth taking leadership roles of this church.
CHAPTER FIVE
SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The Akurinu movement in Kandara under the leadership of Musa Thuo emerged in 1926 because of the social, economic, political and religio-cultural crisis of the late 1920s and early 1930s in Kikuyu land. This movement did not decline in the post-colonial period and with political independence but continued to reach and convert many into its faith. The survival of this church could be attributed to a number of factors, which include socio-cultural innovations, transformations and modification of the old and new practices. Its emergence had great impact on the secular aspects of life in political, economic and social spheres.

5.2 Political involvement

From the early history of the Akurinu movement in Kandara the colonial government accused them of involvement in political subversion. Consequently, their leaders and followers were harassed and persecuted through arrests, imprisonment, fines and their shrines destroyed by the authorities. During the emergency period (1952-1956), they were suspected of associating and helping the Mau Mau freedom fighters (Brown, 1925). Most probably, this was because Musa Thuo was a close ally to Jomo Kenyatta, a powerful political leader who was also suspected of having connection with Mau Mau. The Akurinu claim that they did not support the colonial government fight against Mau Mau and only prayed for freedom and liberation, but never took arms. During Kenyatta’s and
Moi’s reign, the Akurinu as a group did not oppose or antagonize any government but continued praying for peace and stability in the country (Mukundi, O.I, 2014)

The Akurinu of Kandara under the Kenya Foundation of the Prophets’ Church have not been able to venture into other ethnic groups for converts, thus their members have remained predominantly Kikuyu. They have been deeply involved in certain government-encouraged ventures like construction of harambee schools, cattle dips, churches and planting of cash crops such as coffee and tea. The vast majority of the Akurinu in Kandara held the view that their primal concern was their spiritual welfare that was to be far removed from worldly affairs (Mwaura, 1984: 215). For the Akurinu, their present life was regarded as transitory and one was therefore to lead a life that would eventually lead to acquisition of salvation.

After independence, the church encouraged members to educate their children and improve their living standards (Ibid). They encouraged their children to pursue education up to the highest levels, while the elderly enrolled in adult literacy programmes.

In conclusion, it is suffice to say that the Akurinu of Kandara were deeply and realistically concerned with the social and spiritual wellbeing of members than political involvement. The fact that the Akurinu church involved itself in government initiated developing project or social programs, a political activity; they did so with the intention of improving the welfare of their members.
5.3 Economic participation

In the colonial period the Akurinu in Kandara were generally regarded as lazy and always avoided work. They also declined to own property and engagement in the mainstream economic activities (Kenyatta, 1938). They believed in simplicity as they awaited transition to heavenly glory and thus saw no need to improve their status, thus remaining the poor of the poor (Hastings, 2006).

Since independence, the Akurinu of Kandara adapted to changing circumstances by coming out of self-isolation and begun cooperating with rest in the society as they pursued varied economic ventures beyond simple farming practiced by their early predecessors. They have been fully involved in the government efforts to improve people’s welfare through provision of clean drinking water, better medical care, improved productivity through self-help projects and co-operative societies (Mwaura, 1984:216). Their belief in hard work, honesty and trust catapulted many into greater economic achievements in varied areas.

The emergence of the elite Akurinu class of the 1980s witnessed many accumulating wealth and influence in the society. Their zeal in pursuit of money was a testimony of the transformation of the Akurinu into integral members of the society. In Kandara, many engaged in trading ventures and integrated well with other members of the society. This transformation successfully erased the social stigma of exclusiveness and isolation associated with the early Akurinu. By the year 2000, the Akurinu community in Kandara had adapted fast in order to catch up with the rest and build up more magnificent
churches, descent and permanent homes, while others migrated into urban centres for employment and business opportunities. However, despite the country’s economic growth in the industrial sector leading to major urban development, by the year 2000, most of the members of the Akurinu predominantly remained in rural area.

In conclusion, the Akurinu of Kandara under the Kenya Foundation of the Prophets’ Church have made enormous contribution to the economic life of the society by embracing education and engaging in economic activities so as to alleviate poverty amongst its members in the rural environment of Kandara. Many members of the Akurinu church became involved in agricultural activities in both cash and subsistence crops, dairy and poultry farming and in business while others found employment in Kandara town and other centres.

5.4 Social integration

The Akurinu movement in Kandara though Christian in name and content, borrowed heavily from the Kikuyu traditional religion. Much of the Akurinu spirituality has been informed by Agikuyu beliefs and doctrines (Waigwa, 2007). They believed that God (Ngai), was Supreme and the creator of all that exists (Mbiti, 1989:61). The belief in prophecy, ritual uncleanness (Thahu), tolerance of polygamy and veneration of ancestral spirits by the Akurinu is also based on Agikuyu culture. This church has experienced rapid growth mainly due to its ability to spread Christianity consistent with people’s unique historical experience rooted self-consciously in their cultures.
In the pre colonial Agikuyu traditional system, the family, clan and the council of elders provided cohesion and stability in the society. The advent of colonialism and missionary activities in Kikuyu land had far-reaching consequences that completely changed and destroyed the social and religious institutions of the society. The Akurinu emerged in a society that was experiencing religious, cultural, political and economic changes and quickly appealed to many who felt that they could not discard some of their traditional beliefs and practices, yet they wanted to become Christians. The Akurinu therefore offered a new way of worship that coped with contemporary issues and an elaborate religion that did not call for an abrupt break with the whole past. The Akurinu movement thus provided a new religious home for its members who had to adapt to this new outlook. For the Kikuyu, the relevance of such a movement at that short time attracted many who after joining became members of a community of believers (Akurinu Church).

Membership to the Akurinu church demanded full participation and great commitment in communal activities of the group such as religious meetings, evangelising, helping one another in all social and economic matters and fellowship (Mwaura, 1984: 223). Through certain prohibitions, the Akurinu movement answered the desire for renewal among its members. It was a prohibition among the Akurinu to eat pork, blood or use of drugs and intoxicating drinks, a practice that provided members with the newness of life and a moral code, that distinguished and made them superior to the mission Christians.

In conclusion, the Akurinu made the Christian Gospel message easily understood by the people by integrating it with their culture, providing a progressive explanation of the
changes in the Kikuyu society occassioned by the colonial rule. The movement also made
great contribution in its effort towards indigenisation of Christianity by reinterpreting and
reorganising some of its beliefs and practices. The Akurinu movement also succeeded in
providing a sense of security, renewal and hospitality to its members that were lacking in
the mission churches.
5.6 Conclusion

The study validated the assumption that major changes have taken place in the Akurinu movement in Kandara from 1963 to 2000. These transformational changes in areas such as embracing of formal education, seeking medical attention, political and economic empowerment, just to mention a few, have uplifted the living standards of the Akurinu. The conclusion of the study is that Akurinu religion played and continues playing a vital role in the society. However, religion is not practiced in vacuum and is therefore influenced by the culture and the society in which it is practiced. Consequently, society and religion transforms concurrently. Thus, Akurinu movement has witnessed transformation that has seen it grow to become the great church it is today.

This research also concluded that the Akurinu community in Kandara lacked the enlightened and dynamic leadership that would significantly promote its further expansion. Although the founder had acquired basic education, most of its members were illiterate and belonged to the marginalized squatter and labourer class. With a membership of mostly illiterate and socially disadvantaged, the founder lacked the knowledge to organise leadership training. Since the death of the founder, the Akurinu church has not organized any leadership training. The early Akurinu were more concerned with spiritual matters than leadership issues. The lack of trained leadership that could ensure consensus in belief, faith, practice as well as firm guidance and control was the cause of several schisms resulting in the splintering of many groups. It would be
recommended that these leaders get good training and those aspiring for leadership positions should be carefully assessed.

The Akurinu of Kandara under the Kenya Foundation of Prophets’ Church is essentially a movement for one ethnic group in Kenya and in its present condition; it may be difficult to expect it to develop national dimensions. It has not been successful in attracting an appreciatable following among the non-Kikuyu ethnic people, although the church has spread to non-Kikuyu regions like Eldoret, Kitale, Meru and Embu through immigrant Kikuyu.

The Akurinu church movement initially was the object of contempt and sometimes ridicule for the practice by some of their members of not shaking hands, not eating food prepared by ordinary oil and refusing to vote as well as not sending their children to school. Its initial isolation policy and adamant non-co-operation resulted to further contempt by the society. However, this has changed with the transformation process taking place within the movement.

Inspite of the weaknesses, the Akurinu movement has responded to the needs of the times by adjusting and undertaking transformations to remain relevant in changing time. This has seen the church continue recruiting young, old, illiterate and elite, and members from other mainline western Christian churches. The movement can be seen as a phenomenon in that it has a bearing on the past, present and future. It reacted against certain aspects of the past; the Kikuyu traditions. It aimed at an encounter with the present and the past and
despite its deficiency, the Akurinu movement in Kandara met with the existing needs and aspirations of the people.

Consequently, the future of the Akurinu church rests on a dynamic leadership that will bridge the gap between the traditional and the contemporary, and between the early and modern Akurinu. It is further suggested that Akurinu should initiate leadership that can clarify the place of theology of the movement to both the uneducated and the educated elite group. The movement should assimilate vibrant educated youth into the upper echelons of its ranks and at the same time attract people from the higher income brackets who will provide a Christianity that is not retrospective, but that which represents the future. This future goes beyond the old dichotomies of the colonial and post colonial, the traditional and the contemporary, embracing the best of the old and the new.

The Akurinu church in Kandara remain a stable community that continue to multiply in Kenya’s spiritual market with members thriving on economic resilience and tenacity in order to mitigate poverty. That the theology of the Akurinu has shown change and consistency can hardly be disputed. Their theology and spirituality has largely remained intact in changing times, though some practices have undergone modification based on modernization and global advancements. Moreover, a multiplicity of factors ranging from culture, social and economic forces of change are gradually causing transformation in this movement.

The future of the Akurinu movement rests on the fact that they are living in a fast changing world where nothing remains stagnant. They are caught between preservation of
old values and modernity with it’s ever-changing global culture. The character of the Akurinu church in conditions of globality will continue to be determined and shaped by how and to what extent it negotiates continuity, identity and change. Its development must be viewed in terms of its relationship and links with the global context and its ability to interrogate and negotiate wider external influences and global forces. The theoretical framework of modernization was instrumental in this research in helping prove that Akurinu movement had undertaken changes and transformations. However, discontinuity was also evident since sections of the Akurinu retained their old rules and practices, as given in the 1927 Mount Kenya retreat. Despite the transformations, there are aspects that remain intact in the Akurinu movement, hence general conclusions that lead to conjecture, were avoided. All the same, the researcher felt that there remains much to be studied concerning the Akurinu community in areas like burial procedures and the turbanless Akurinu.

It is worth to conclude by asserting that the Akurinu community demonstrates the resoluteness and innovative originality of an African religious movement that in the context of a congested and contested religious space, where western Christianity has, with immense success, obliterated African cultural and religious beliefs to substitute them with foreign ones, this church remains stable. However, the Akurinu church will have to rediscover their prophetic calling which dares to anticipate the future and step out towards it by faith. There is an urgent need to rediscover a refinement of what it means to be a Mukurinu in the context of a global world of change.
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APPENDICES

A1: QUESTIONNAIRE GUIDE

1. What is the meaning of the term Akurinu?

2. The Akurinu have also been referred to in different names? Do we still have names like Watu wa Mungu, Arathi and Aroti?

3. What was/is the difference between Dini ya watu wa Mungu and Akurinu?

4. Who are the founders of the Akurinu movement in Kandara?

5. Are there differences in Akurinu based on territorial differences, e.g. in Kandara, Murang'a, Kiambu, Nyeri or other areas?

6. Explain briefly the structure of the Akurinu church?

7. What are some of the beliefs and practices that Akurinu prescribe to?

8. Some of the beliefs are strictly unique to Akurinu e.g. why do sections of Akurinu refuse to greet people by shaking of hands?

9. What are the different sub-sections of the Akurinu groups?

10. What are the differences between the different groups mentioned above? Are these differences, doctrinal, religious, or administrative?

11. What is the attitude of the Akurinu towards education? Is the attitude the same for girls and boys?

12. What is the attitude of Akurinu towards dressing for both sexes? (colours and shapes, tukubia for boys, different colours for the turban)
13. What is the attitude of Akurinu concerning food? What are the does and don’ts concerning food? (Fat, tealeaves, meat).

14. Concerning meat, is it true that the Akurinu do not buy meat from butcheries?

15. Can Akurinu eat meat from any animal? Say a camel, pig, and rabbit?

16. How has the Akurinu conducted marriage over time? Do they allow polygamy? Starting from the choice of a marriage partner? Help us understand the conduct of baptism…..choice of a name and how baptism s conducted. Circumcision for boys and girls? How do Akurinu do it?

17. Concerning the sanctuary, is it divided? Explain? Can anybody enter in any part of the church?

18. Today, Akurinu have transformed, explain some changes that you have observed among the Akurinu.

19. On business can Akurinu practice any kind of business?

20. What is the attitude of the Akurinu concerning politics? E.g. vying, voting, and campaigning?

21. Songs and dances for the Akurinu have also changed? Expound
A2: QUESTIONNAIRE GUIDE

1. Were you baptized in the Akurinu church?

2. Are both your parents’ members of the Akurinu church?

3. As a youth what are some of problems have you encountered?

4. How were these problems solved?

5. In the church do we have a special place for the youth?

6. Do the youth hold any position of responsibility in the church?

7. What are the colours of your Sunday worship attire?

8. Are there any changes you would wish introduced in the church?

9. If yes, do they touch on leadership or organization of the church?

10. Are there observable changes occurring in the church?

11. What is the attitude of the youth towards education?

12. Back at home do you eat all types of food?

13. In your church, are there members who have engaged in politics?
Figure 1 MURANG’A COUNTY
Figure 2 KANDARA CONSTITUENCY
Figure 3 COUNTIES OF KENYA