
**CHURCH OF GOD AND THE EDUCATED ELITE: THE CASE OF IDAKHO
COMMUNITY KENYA, 1919-1953.**

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ABSTRACT: *The basic aim of this research is to investigate the role of the Church of God educated elite in the social transformation among the Idakho of Kakamega County in Kenya. It is based on the analysis of local written sources, oral sources and archival materials. With the establishment of Christianity in Idakho, Church of God Missionaries quickly realized that in order for Christianity to gain acceptance there was need for social transformation among the Idakho. Their culture had to be transformed through imparting western cultural attributes to the converts in an attempt to undermine their culture. Consequently Church of God missionaries employed a secular policy through the provision of education as an approach to reinforce evangelization and to win converts. The church's secular policy led to the emergence of pioneer teacher evangelists and educated elite which had comparatively well paid jobs as professional teachers, clerks, local administrators and members of the local councils. These pioneer educated elite and their children consolidated their social and economic power, both in the church and the Kenyan Government and used their leadership positions to harness economic influence in Idakho.*

KEYWORDS: Church of God, Christianity, Education, Educated Elite, Idakho.

INTRODUCTION

Missionary work in Kenya was first introduced by Ludwig Krapf and Johann Rebman in 1844 and 1846 respectively. These “pioneers” came on behalf of the Anglican Church Mission Society (CMS) and established the famous mission at Rabai near Mombasa. Their main objective at that time was to introduce Christianity into the interior of East Africa. It was only after the construction of the Uganda Railway (having started in 1896 from Mombasa and reaching Port Florence (Kisumu) in 1901) that gave new ardour to this effort (Strayer, 1978: 30). Uganda railway was an immensely important infrastructural factor, responsible for the movement of missionaries to the interior. It was therefore from that direction that the Missionaries moved into Western Kenya which was infact Eastern Uganda” by the turn of the century (Verweyen, 1978:9). The history of the Church of God (COG) in Western Kenya is going to be of even more significance for this work. Idakho was one of the areas among the Luhya that had earlier contact with the COG Missionaries, thus, this study affords an opportunity to examine the Church's role in transforming the area of contrasting historical circumstances, social and physical environments. Christianity would involve not only an acceptance to the gospel, but also the

adoption of western cultures. The converts were thus expected to abandon their traditional ways of life and pattern their new Christian existence in accordance with norms which they would learn from the mission station.

Missionaries of COG thought that Christianity would not take root until Idakho learned new methods of education, medical care and agriculture skills. The presupposition underlying this view was that, if Idakho were trained in the above attributes, they would find it easier to accept the gospel. The provision of education as an approach to evangelization, and its effects, therefore constitute the theme of this study. This study therefore, argues that it was COG education that would have a long lasting impact on Idakho area. For the COG missionaries, education was a deliberate, systematic and sustained effort to transmit new ideas which would ultimately lead to the transformation of the Idakho society (Black,1966:167). It was thus education that produced the pioneer teacher-evangelist, who in turn worked hard to transform the society. The efforts of pioneer teacher- evangelists in the propagation of the values of Christianity are also noteworthy. These pioneer Christians established a Christian village which they used not only to house the increasingly number of converts, but also as a centre of new innovations, particularly the development of education. Consequently, the effects of the effort of teacher-evangelists and the colonial situation like wage labour requirements all meant that an increasingly minority among the Idakho began to enrol in schools. Idakho thus increasingly began to view missionary education as a method of adapting to the new colonial situation. It was through this elite class, together with the pioneer teacher-evangelists, who became advocates of transforming Idakho society.

Objective

The specific objective of the study was to analyse the role of Church of God educated elite in Idakho societal transformation.

Significance of the Study

The research is useful as it attempted to broaden our understanding of Idakho reaction to the Church of God when it was established in the area. Lastly, the study on its part addressed the impact of the COG in Idakho and the active role that the Idakho pioneer converts of the COG played in the history development of the church in the area.

Limitation of the Study

The researcher faced the general problem of time and financial constraints associated with travelling in between data collection point, which limited the scope of the research. Also some respondents were unwillingly to divulge information for their personal reasons.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This was a historical study, as a result, much of the analysis resolves around primary and secondary sources of data. The methodology that was employed for this study is discussed in the subsequent section.

Study Area.

The Idakho are a Luhya sub-ethnic group that resides in Kakamega South district within Kakamega County. Kakamega South district was one of the four districts carved out of the larger Kakamega District at the start of 2008 that made up Western Province. According to the 2009 Kenya population and housing census, the population of the district was 104,699. The main cash crops grown include tea and sugarcane. Maize, beans, sweet potatoes, finger millet, cassava, bananas, fruits and vegetables are mainly grown as food crops, while livestock rearing is practiced by a few individuals in the district. The area has poor physical infrastructure due to heavy rainfall, poor maintenance and low funding (Kakamega South District Development Plan 2008-2012, 2009; 9).

Sample.

The study was carried out in Kakamega South District among the Idakho from August to November 2012. The key informants for the study consisted:

1. Elders from the Idakho community. These officials were very useful in providing valuable information on the establishment of the COG, the Church practices and the process of change that occurred in Idakho when they embraced Christianity.
2. Those who worked closely with the COG, for instance Church administrators and church elders. They provided useful information on the role of COG Mission played as agents of change in the area where they established their presences. They also provide information on how the church worked and the doctrine of the COG.
3. Spiritual leaders and some Christian converts of COG who played a crucial role as agents of change as was directed by Christian missionaries. They provided information about the teachings of the COG.

The total sample size was twenty two. During field work the researcher used purposive sampling technique and snowball technique. In snowball technique, the researcher identified an elderly informant who knew the area for his great interest in the past of the Idakho culture who in turn directed the researcher to most of the surviving Idakho elders. To deal with the weakness of snowball approach purposive sampling approach was used. In purposive technique people with information on the culture of the Idakho before they embraced Christian values were interviewed. Informants who had information on the establishment of COG were also interviewed. These informants provided information on the impact of the COG in Idakho society.

Data Collection.

Both primary and secondary sources of data were utilized in this study. The primary sources utilized in this study included oral interviews and archival sources. The evidence arising from the above documents were analysed, interpreted and proved useful in enriching oral sources. Primary data was derived from first hand information through oral interview conducted by the researcher. Additionally archival research was conducted at Kenya National Archives (KNA) in Nairobi. This included intelligence reports, handing over reports, Provincial and District annual, quarterly and monthly reports of North Kavirondo were examined during the period under study.

Oral Interview.

Semi-structured interviews were used to maximize discussion. The researcher verbally used questionnaires to elicit information from the interviewees by posing the questions. This was because most of them were old and could not read or write in English. Besides note-taking the interviews were recorded on voice recorder and later translated into English language, giving a verbalism account of the conversation with the informants. The questions were easily reframed to encourage free discussions other than just eliciting questions and answers. Oral interview provided an opportunity for cross-checking of the informants to avoid possible misinterpretation and to ensure the understanding of the collected data and hence validity. The method allowed the researcher to understand and capture the informant's oral interview.

Data Analysis.

In the analysis of data, the study utilized qualitative data to describe in depth what was on the ground. Oral data collected from questionnaire was compared and contrasted. Once the oral data was organized the researcher cross-checked the information with documentary sources from the KNA. Through description, comparison and interpretation as methods of analytical discussion, conclusions from data were made in respective stages.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**The Setting and Development of the Church of God in Idakho.**

Missionary work of the COG originated from the initial missionary outreach of Africa Compound Interior Mission (ACIM) under the directorship of Mr. A. Baker. The mission established itself in Western Kenya in 1905 at Kima among the Bunyore (a sub-group of Luhya community in Western Kenya). The missionaries selected Kima as a possible location for their mission station because of its high elevation and especially dense population (Makokha, 1996: 2). In addition, the location was among what the missionaries termed as "friendly and receptive people" led by Otieno Ndale, the chief of the (*Nyore*) (Makokha, 1996: 2). With these factors the missionaries choose Kima to become the centre of ACIM. However, due to lack of funds to meet the additional cost of expansion of the church in East Africa, the entire church of ACIM was transferred to the COG Missionary Board in America in 1926 (Makokha, 1996: 16-17).

It was through the witness of the new Christians, evidence by their mouth and deeds within their respective communities and among those they were sent to, that the COG spread out to Idakho

and established its first station in the area in 1919. Some of the early believers who became involved in the planting of the new churches in the area were; Thomas Itemere, Harun Shimenga, Ruben Kizikwa, Naman Ingonga, Nelson Luseno, Zakaria Shiholo Saul Aluvala and Sephan Maleshe. (Gladys Thomas Shihami, Oral Interview Shihami 17/07/2012). They were all African people in Idakho. However, the planting of the church in the area was not without considerable obstacles because of the competition with other Christian denominations that had already interacted with Idakho community. These denominations were Friends African Mission (FAM) and the Roman Catholic Church. This can best be elaborated by the informants, recalled it as follows:

“The Friends Church headquartered at Kaimosi never wanted the church at Kima to infiltrate Idakho. The local chief known as Chief Shivachi maintained that the Kima-based church was meant to evangelise in Bunyore: that if it penetrated his area it would cause his people to come under Paramount Chief Mumia who at the time had administrative authority over Wanga, Bunyore, Kisa, Butsosto and Marama (Sub-groups of the Luhya community in Western Kenya). Accordingly, the chief sent his assistant Chief Omukoto Shimwama with his “Askaris” (local police attached to the chief) to beat up the believers who identified themselves with the Kima based church, and even sent their houses on fire. Some of the believers were arrested and confined in the Chief cell”. (interview tape 2012 September).

Although the COG continued to experience some hostilities, not only from some of the FAM followers but also later from members of the Roman Catholic Church in the area, it nevertheless moved forward and established itself in Idakho.

Articulation of Church of God Secular Policy.

The pioneer converts Christians were to have a far reaching impact on the development of the Church of God in Idakho. In order to attract people these pioneers converts used evangelism and literacy. Churches were therefore established along side with schools in their compound. Furthermore, the early church adherents were young men and women whose fathers had positions in the COG hence giving them an appreciation of the advantage of the new learning. Following the examples set by the pioneers COG, several Idakho began to send some of their own sons and several of their other children from their clans to schools. Furthermore, the pioneer COG teacher evangelists offered various enticements to prospective students and converts. Salt, sweets, beads, cloth and foodstuff were distributed by COG to attract potential adherents particularly those from poorer families (Noel Nabwangu, Oral Interview 17/09/2012). Anybody suspected to be a sorcerer had little chance of becoming an important community elder and was in continual danger of being publicly cursed by elders. Punishment were occasionally administered to anyone openly accused of witchcraft and sometimes the accused was stoned or clubbed to death by incensed community members (Joseph Lumwamu Muyeka, Oral Interview, 19/09/2012). (Sangree, 1966: 126) argued that outcasts and those suspected to be sorcerers turned to the mission for protection and support. In several instances Idakho girls who were later married off to pioneer mission converts first came to the mission as runaway from forced or unhappy marriage. For example Jennifer Shivonchi who was a member of Roman Catholic

Church turned to the COG for protection of forced marriage (Jennifer Shivonchi, Oral Interview 18/09/2012).

Christian Village.

After the establishment of the COG station in Idakho, early converts and pioneer teacher-evangelists began to convert more followers in the hope of “obtaining and establishing a self supporting local church”. Initially, however, the Idakho conversion to Christianity was slow. For instance, they preferred their children to continue contributing labour to the family compounds rather than “waste time” in the classroom. The families depended on boys and girls providing household chores. Parents and grandparents alike were also eager to preserve their cultural heritage for the future generations. Children were thus put under a great deal of pressure to submit to these wishes lest they jeopardize the well-being of the entire lineage and clan (KNA, DCNN/1/8, North Kavirondo District Annual Report, 1927). Thus early converts were inevitably banished from their families, since they were considered “sellout” to their own people. Opposition to such pressure required a very strong will-power or great inducement. Consequently, early converts were drawn from marginalised groups in the traditional society. Invariably, the early converts were orphans, strangers or people escaping from punishment, and forced marriage and widows. To abandon traditional belief for the uncertain, ill understood and unappreciated beliefs of Christianity was a step few in the Idakho community were willing to take (Silas Ingonga, Oral Interview 19/09/2012).

As a result of slow acceptance of Christianity among the Idakho, in the late 1920s, COG missionaries established a Christian village. The village was a deliberate attempt by the missionaries to encourage their growing flock to leave within the confines of the mission station, and to live together as a Christian family. Unlike the traditional village, whose basis was kinship affiliations, the Christian village was made up of Christians from a particular location, not necessarily related (Elkana Muhalia, Oral Interview 20/09/2012). Leadership of the Christian village was shared by a council of church elders, headed by the senior- most teacher evangelist. Christian village leaders of the COG enjoyed a strong influence in recognition of their training and learning. The Christian village was only meant for the believers who built houses close to one another around the church. The end result of such village was the formation of Christian communities where this Christians would constantly be in close relationship with one another. Rules were rigidly enforced within communities. For serious transgressions, members were placed on probation and if they did not transform, they were dropped from the church (KNA, MSS/54/63, Letter from Educational Department, 1929).

The Christian village was thus an attempt by the missionaries to replace African village life, by adopting the church structure as the basis of unity and cooperation. The Christian village was thus perceived as a centre of change. The forms of cooperation in traditional and Christian society were similar, although the social relationship that provided the rationale for co-operation was different. In establishing the Christian village COG also made possible a new social mobility and brought together people of different clans in new communities. The village

church became the “family altar” and the church elders assumed the functions of kinship heads in the training of children, the maintenance of discipline and the organization of social and economic life (KNA, MSS/54/322, Minutes of Meeting, 12/8.1929).

Male converts learned how to make bricks and applied the new knowledge in the construction of a permanent church building at Bushiangala in Idakho. Women converts helped each other with the care and teaching of children, the sick were visited and food was shared with those in need. This new relationship was demonstrated in the organisation of many forms of economic and social cooperation. Land for the setting up of Christian village in Idakho used to be customary meeting places (*barazas*). In addition, other individuals with influence and access to wealth who lived near the station donated their own land for the building of the Christian village and school at Bushiangala station. This was the case of Zakaria Shiholo, Luhambi Muyeka, Andrea Shitendesha, Imunga Amunambi, Nicodemus Likakhasi, Mwetete Indiaka and Kalabai Kambasi who were able to arrange for the building of the Bushiangala church (Lawi Masinjira, Oral Interview 21/09/2012).

Church of God missionaries and pioneer teacher-evangelists encouraged the development of Christian village for a number of reasons. First, the COG felt that as new Christians emerged from the protection of mission station further separation from the non-converts could prevent them from succumbing to temptation of practice of ancestral propitiation; prohibition of traditional dancing, drinking alcohol beverages (or even participating in the making of such beverages), polygamy, seeking out the assistance of diviners or traditional healers. Self contained communal life would provide mutual support and lessen the chances of backsliding into traditionalism. COG missionaries and the early teacher evangelists also felt that separation from the unconverted was a commitment to Christianity (Joseph Lumwamu Muyeka, Oral Interview 19/09/2012). The Christian village was created as a shield against spiritual powers. In most cases, this feeling was reinforced by the hostility shown towards young Christians by members of the families and clans they had separated from. This hostility was so great that at times, converts were forced to relocate to their areas. Secondly, the missionaries also believed that these pockets of Christian influence would help to evangelise the Idakho more rapidly. Christian village was seen as a necessary preparation for outreach to the Idakho community, through prayer, preaching and teaching. Finally, to the missionaries at Bushiangala station the development of Christian village was a means of training Idakho in self support. Since, Christian communities were in the near future expected to undertake the financing of education programmes in their locations. Consequently, the Christian village in Idakho had developed into a model of new forms of social transformation in education, agriculture and medical care. Women were trained in new methods of maternal care, hygiene and preparation of a balanced diet. Christian village thus acted as an agent of change by transmitting western culture to the rest of the Idakho.

Even though the importance of Christian villages slowly declined in the mid 1930s, they were still instrumental in the establishment of churches among the Idakho. Indeed, by the early 1930s,

conversion to Christianity no longer led to isolation. For example, when a convert joined the church and moved to the Christian village, he still retained his land and the inheritance rights of his lineage. Births, weddings and funerals also continued to be occasions when family and kinship bonds were renewed. Christian village thus marked an attempt by the COG to create an institution that guided its members, through the church, to accept a new Christian way of life.

Land pressure and the changing patterns of land ownership were major contributors to the decline of the Christian village in Idakho in the mid 1930s. Land in the Christian village had been haphazardly allocated, with little basis either customary or colonial law. Many who moved into the Christian village simply squatted on land owned by others. Little thought was given to individual rights of tenure. As the new community mushroomed from simple dormitories housing young unmarried Christians into the Christian village of family homesteads, little time was taken to consider the changing economic relationships and the demands of individual rights (Gilpin, 1976: 102). And as land pressure increased, the Christian village became reduced to a few of the faithful who owned land around the church. The increased awareness of the monetary value of land also led to disputes over compensation and families who refused to pay rent to the land owners on which the village was built were evicted from the Christian village. Furthermore, the emergence of individual land ownership coupled with the spirit of competitiveness, led to the break up of the Christian village in Idakho in the mid 1930s. Christian village thus marked an attempt by the Church of God to create an institution that guided its members, through the church and school, to accept a new Christian way of life.

Education.

Reading and writing thus became the keys to that power and made schooling imperative. Africans perceived that they could also gain some of the Europeans economic, political, social privileges and prestige by obtaining an equivalent education (Edward Okang'a, Oral Interview, 18/09/2012). Indeed, the literate pioneer COG teacher evangelists in Idakho exemplified this idea because they had money with which to buy shoes and clothes and to pay taxes. They could afford their own bride-wealth payments, breaking traditional dependence of the elders for this. The educated COG thus acted as role model to the youth. The development of education paralleled the expansion of Christianity. During and after the Second World War, the demand for education became increasingly in Africa and included a growing desire for secondary and even university education. Due to the Second World War, COG influence, educated Africans began to espouse divergent views regarding Idakho education. Thus, as the advantages of COG became apparent in the interwar period, an increasing number among the Idakho began to demand more access to education opportunities.

In the early 1940s, Idakho religious tolerance was enforced by the administration and the protection of spheres of influence was effectively ended. Tolerance had one important effect on the Idakho society. At the level the missions' educated elite, the effect was a new unity, cutting across denominational lines and which presented unified demands for educational development. There was a growing feeling among the Idakho elite that educational development in their area

had been neglected. Demands for advanced educational opportunities were thus intensified. From the time of its establishment, COG mission had mainly focused its programs at Kima. This made Kima to be an academic centre of the COG. Further, inadequate funding from COG missionary board limited the mission's operations in Idakho. Therefore, Bunyore Girls School and Kima Central School (a boys' school) were the only known intermediate secondary schools run by the COG in the 1940s. These schools, however, admitted selected students from several primary schools. Only the very bright and sometimes lucky pupils from Idakho managed to be admitted to the two secondary schools at Kima. Many times, it recruited students from its neighbouring locations of Maragoli, Kisa, Butsotso, Isukha Marama, Samia, and Marachi while other students came as far as Mount Elgon and Luo land (Makokha, 1996:142-143).

To address their concern in the 1940s, the various denomination educated elite of Idakho FAM, COG and Roman Catholic Church introduced a system whereby pupils of different backgrounds would be able to associate in games and education with one another. By 1935, for instance, COG had built one sub-elementary school at Idakho, with no primary schools that offered standard IV, V and VI levels of education (KNA, PC/NZA/3/10/1/0, Education North Kavirondo District 1935). Besides, many of the pupils in Idakho had to raise the required fees since no government grants were available, and the Missionary Board grants of COG had been withdrawn during the Depression years of North America. Shortages of funds and missionaries personnel in COG meant that the mission had to increasingly rely on African teachers, headmasters and educational supervisors, with limited training to operate the school system. The situation forced COG missionaries to lobby before various planning committees and education officials for permission to secure full secondary schools in Idakho with better trained teachers. To achieve the goals, the COG leaders in Idakho sent some of its teacher- evangelists to Kima for further training. They were trained essentially as community development agents with some knowledge of health and agriculture and were expected to work partly through the school, but not to become school-oriented. Among the teachers who were sent to Kima were Victor Aluvala in 1936, Francis Andabwa and Richard Shireche in 1937, and Patrick Likobebe and James Kubasu in 1938 (Philip Nabwangu, Oral Interview 17/09/2012).

The COG missionary Board trained African leaders to help in supervisory COG schools. Such a need was strongly voiced by the church, with the support of the missionaries on the field. Ot'ichilo became inspector of schools in Bunyore, Herbert Khayo in Kisa and Butsotso and Nathan Mbwabi Likhaya supervised schools in Kakamega (Idakho- Isukha), in 1942. Curriculum and educational policy were not simply imposed on an amenable people. In practice, they developed and grew as a result of a bargaining process between all parties concerned. Issues like the role of the COG converts in educational committee members in advancement of education, Local Native Council (LNCs) educational resolutions and initiatives, threats of desertion to other missions, request for funds and financial leverage all contributed to the evolution of COG and government educational policy. In the post-war period, the overriding priority of the new elite was the development of secondary education. With the growing intrusion of the money economy and the need to employ educated Africans in the expanding

colonial bureaucracy, a more advanced academic education became the key to financial and economic success for many among the Idakho. Consequently, the enlightenment, brought about by the Second World War, not only allowed the educated elite to steadily rise to prominence, but also actively undermined vestiges of traditional Idakho society.

Apart from the considerations for constant pressure on the government and COG to expand the outlets on education, the Idakho also demonstrated a willingness to tax themselves to the limit to provide more funds for schools in the area. Even when the government or COG appeared unable or unwillingly to meet their demands, the Idakho occasionally attempted to fulfil them on their own through LNCs (KNA, NN/1/29, North Nyanza Annual Report, 1950). Consequently, in public (*barazas*) and LNCs, the Idakho increasingly demanded greater access to better and higher education, including opportunities for overseas university training. The 1945 North Nyanza Annual report indicated that “the demand for education by Africans as previously stated, has no limit, and despite all our effort in organization and finance, will not be met for very many years to come” (KNA,PC/NZA/1/40, North Nyanza Annual Report, 1945). Consequently, Idakho educational aspirations, although partly realized, had to contend with financial realities and the policies of the mission and government. The 1940’s, therefore, saw the growth of a sizeable and prosperous educated elite appear on the scene, assuming positions of influence and responsibility in the church and beginning to gain local prominence. This new middle class used the church as a means of developing secondary education in the area (Elkana Muhalia, Oral Interview 20/09/2012).

Social Classes.

Church of God missionaries had been and were essential to the introduction and expansion of the mission in Idakho. But without the devotion and drive demonstrated by the early converts of COG mission would probably not have developed in Idakho. The educated elite composed of Africans colonial official mostly mission educated. Social authority, administrative leaders such as chiefs, African District Councils (ADC) and the educated elite combined their salaries as chiefs, court clerks, school supervisors, teachers and evangelists, with incomes from extensive holdings of land /or commercial enterprises. Such salaries not only provided them with the means to maintain and expand their holding, but also allowed them to expand into agricultural production for the market. They also invested in business and trade such as butcheries, maize mill and shops- which further contributed to their general wealth (KNA/PC/NZA/3/79, North Nyanza District LNC Minutes, 10/3/1945).

These pioneer Idakho converts and teacher-evangelists formed the basis of new Idakho elite that helped transform Idakho society in the 20th century. The early school of COG at Bushiangala was never intended to provide formal academic education. It was one part of an integrated learning system, whose purpose was to socialize and educate the Christians in a new way of life, for a new existence, dedicated to teaching and evangelizing others. As already been noted, education was virtually denied to non- Christians because affiliation was a condition of entry into the church school. Much of the school literature was based on Christian religion. But during the

inter-war period, converts of COG leaders consolidated their position and became more successful in pressing for its demands. Education thus, became part of a new value system less identified with transmitting Christian values and beliefs, and more with providing access to new occupational and social status. Education was valued for its cash returns and pupils were encouraged to study and generally become rich and influential in the new society in order to follow the example of the highly qualified and well paid teachers such as Patrick Likobebe, Richard Shireche and Francis Andabwa (Gladys Thomas Shihemi, Oral Interview 17/09/2012). In addition, more and more women joined the churches during the period. With the frequent absence of men, who had left their villages to seek wage labour in urban areas or settlers' farms, the decline of traditional institutions and uncertainty arising from changes in society, more and more women joined the COG in search of a new vision of the world as well reassurance. Christianity thus created new roles for women, apart from modifying the traditional ones.

Women of Idakho who went to Kima were taught rudimentary methods of maternal and child care, nutrition and home-making. When these pioneers came back to Idakho, they shared the new skills they had learned (Lavan Ayuku Oral Interview 11/11/2012). One of the women teacher-evangelists was Gladys Itemere who became a primary teacher at Bushiangala School in Idakho. In addition, women who went to school initiated the beginning of a wage earning class of women among the Idakho, and it reflected the widening transformative impact of Christianity and its agencies. With the success of the pioneer working class women, parents began to take their daughters to schools in increasing numbers outside Idakho area, mainly to Bunyore Girls at Kima, Girls Boarding School at Kaimosi and Butere Girls. Subsequently, girl child education, just like that of boys, was seen as a future investment. Parents therefore, were willing to pay school fees for their daughters (Gladys Thomas Shihemi, Oral Interview 17/09/2012).

Church of God also produced an incipient commercial elite class, "entrepreneurs" which was significantly different from the ordinary agricultural peasants. This new class was made up of the commercial, clerical and agricultural elite. The new elite possessed "modern knowledge", wealth and power and hence, influence. They slowly, but increasingly became the reference point for the young and the old alike, and spearheaded Idakho demands for social reforms, better educational facilities and the growing of cash crops. The group earned their wealth and status due to the positions they held in the mission establishment and their investment in the colonial economy. They may not have been powerful as the colonial ruling elite, but those who held positions in the mission as evangelists, teachers, and successful businessmen were at least wealthy as some of the African colonial administrators (Philip Nabwangu, Oral Interview 17/09/2012). Entrepreneur group, thus, owned their wealth and status to their positions in the mission and their involvement in the market economy. Entrepreneurship, therefore, represented another avenue for wealth accumulation. They established shops in Idakho where they sold agricultural produce as well as agricultural implements that the local people purchased from them. Given limitations on capital accumulation inherent in the colonial economy, the main outlets for entrepreneurial initiation among the Idakho was limited to produce trade and the establishment of maize mills. The greater emphasis of the production and sale of maize thus

provided opportunities to enter produce buying and other forms of commerce (Maxon, 2003 ; 188).

All those who became commercial farmers specializing in extensive production and selling of maize accumulated land holdings that were quite sizeable compared to those of ordinary peasants. Among these were Francis Andabwa, Jacob Litala and Thomas Itemere, these better farmers used their land to grow maize (Philip Nabwangu, Oral Interview 17/09/2012). In Idakho, however, there is evidence that settlement in relatively unpopulated land during this time was pioneered, not by the landless poor, but by the enterprising farmers and teachers all who saw a chance to maximize their incomes through expanded production, trading in maize and general commerce (Enock Shivachi, Oral Interview 12/11/2012). However, Idakho commercial entrepreneurs continued to face huge obstacles in the form of competition from Asian traders and a largely hostile colonial state. The state limited the number of traders for the sake of reducing competition and improving the quality of produce. To achieve and maintain these quality standards, closer control and supervision of the traders were required. What was much less pressing, though, was state assistance to African traders. Consequently, most Idakho traders continually lacked access to credit facilities and even while the demand for goods grew in the post-war era, the colonial state and commercial bank still turned a deaf ear to most Africans who requested credit. Observing the success of the pioneer entrepreneurs, many more Africans in North Nyanza also applied for trading licences. For instance, between 1944 and 1947, the LNC approved licences for more than 170 new shops in the district. Most of these licences were for general trade in goods, hotels, maize mill and carpenter shops (KNA, PC/NZA/3/79, North Nyanza District LNC Minutes 10/3/1945).

But as the number of those who engaged in trade increased, there was an increasingly limited chance for many to prosper in commerce due to escalating competition. Many individuals thus lost out in commercial capitalism, while the few that remained did on a small scale, not for profit making but as a source of prestige (KNA, DC/NN/1/37, North Nyanza District Annual Report 1955). The elite's dominance of local colonial institutions further reinforced the advantages accruing from government policies. Friends and relatives of LNCs officials, or the officials themselves, were more often recommended for loans or licences to operate business, favourite among which was expansion of agricultural production. Thus, the elite's positions in the LNCs or their friendship with councillors gave them an edge over the peasants when it came to securing a loan or licence.

Having clearly enjoyed certain advantages over the ordinary peasants, the elite passed these on to their offspring. The elite's wealth and education ensured that their children would receive a high level of training, which was increasingly becoming necessary if the African was to secure a well-paying position. Using these important positions, these people were able to invest more in the education of their children and commercial businesses. Indeed, education was quickly becoming the critical avenue for securing not only formal employment, but also entrance into the elite

class, especially through admission into the better and higher learning schools. But for the poor, payment of school fees increasingly became difficult. For instance, by 1953, it was reported that: "Many pupils had been sent away and several schools closed as a result of the short period given to parents to pay fees. It was shown that parents found it very difficult to pay fees all at once for all their children and at the same time pay poll tax and licences. At that time, it was reported that "the cost of keeping a pupil in a secondary Boarding School for a year is Shs. 1000." (KNA, CS/1/14/97, Minutes of Education and Welfare Committee 6/11/1956).

This was money that most poor households could not raise in a year; hence they could not educate their children sufficiently so as to compete favourably in the colonial economic system. Consequently, it was the children of educated elite who increasingly benefited from education during the colonial era.

Church of God Missionary education thus created two distinctive social classes among the Idakho; the educated elite and the migrant labourers or the peasants. However, a full-fledged class conflict did not emerge. This was because, after the Second World War, the educated elite still remained guided by the same concerns for hospitality and generosity. Chiefs assisted in the construction of schools, the provision of education bursaries or fees payment for poor pupils. Moreover, the common bonds of church, kin and community were still alive and were one means of redistributing some of the wealth from the elite to the peasantry. To a large extent, therefore, the growing wealth of the elite did not always lead to resentment among the peasants but rather emulation, or a wish to attain the same income and status (Wagner, 1939: 46).

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it is worth noting that the result of increased Christianity and education was broader economic transformation among the Idakho in the post-war period. Increasingly, therefore, two distinct social classes emerged among the Idakho. First there were the COG educated elite who attained the status of a middle class. Their new social status was reflected in accumulation of resources. It was also instrumental in wealth accumulation, especially through engagement in entrepreneurial activities as well as pushing for education of their children and the community. Secondly, there were the peasants. In most cases, peasants had no education and little or no land and thus forced to seek for wage employment outside Idakho, a factor that led to the development of remittance household families. Thus, this paper has shown that after the Second World War the church increasingly became an arena of sectional economic interest. As education produced the first modern elite among the Idakho, many families began to see the advantage of education in the colonial situation and consequently, sent their children to school. Missionary education thus produced the elite among the Idakho. These elite who were driven by capitalistic tendencies of accumulation, worked hard to transform Idakho. Education thus became an important transformative force among the Idakho.

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