
AN I-KIRIBATI CULTURAL EMPIRICAL THEOLOGY

A

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A

Special Dedication & Appeal

I dedicate this work to the

Tangintebu Theological College

With an appeal to the General Assembly of the

Kiribati Protestant Church

To make a fair reading of this thesis and to give serious
consideration to its theoretical and empirical implementation in the
Teaching and Therapeutic Ministry of the Church.

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ABSTRACT

An I-Kiribati Cultural Empirical Theology

Maroti Robuti Riman

This work is based upon the conviction that there is a real value in a professional and empirical approach to learning and doing theology in the Tangintebu Theological College. The traditional method of theological education has been for a long time based upon a conceptual understanding of theology -- a "thinking mode" producing an "abstract theology" rather than a "doing mode" which produces an "empirical theology". Obviously, a conceptual understanding of theology does not automatically provide theological students and pastors with adequate skills in establishing and using it. Professional skills can be developed only through repeated intelligent empirical practice.

An I-Kiribati Cultural Empirical Theology is an attempt to introduce an appropriate way of doing theology which is cultural-empirical-professional in character. It is cultural in that it should emerge from the intelligent awareness of An I-Kiribati Katei -- cultural values, principles, belief system, social ethos and the general worldview of the people. It should work within the framework of culture where it is a part. It is empirical in that it must be developed through direct encounters and involvement with firsthand information -- the living human documents. It is a theology which

does not initially come out of text books, but through concrete experience with sensitive listening and responding to people with problems. It is built upon the foundation of human experience as the fulcrum for action. Research begins with problems of life as raw materials of experience. Thus, it never stagnates, but rather develops as life develops. It is professional in that it has to provide a theological education, amidst the changing conditions of the Kiribati society, that must be thoroughly professional so that it can produce church leaders who are capable of performing their pastoral work with professional competence and integrity.

Chapter One gives general background information on the scope of the research, including its overall significance for the academic and practical improvement of the teaching and counselling roles of the Tangintebu Theological College and the general ministry of the Kiribati Protestant Church in relation to the secular society.

In Chapter Two, an attempt is made to analyse the general religio-cultural milieu of the United States of America, including the initial development of the Clinical Pastoral Education movement as a reaction against the traditional theological education. The new theological and pastoral approaches and principles by the three pioneers of the movement, namely Anton T. Boisen, William S. Keller, and Richard C. Cabot, are discussed comparatively.

In Chapter Three, the initial impetus for an I-Kiribati Cultural Empirical Theology is described as a reaction against the traditional theological education and counselling ministry of the Kiribati Protestant Church. The new academic and empirical program is proposed, the objectives are laid down, and some philosophical views of education, theology, religious experience and the lay ministry of the Church are given. The thrust of this chapter is a call towards the mutual integration of Christian theology and the behavioural sciences, particularly psychology; it argues for a shift from the traditional uniformity to the modern integrative attitudes of learning and doing theology and the ministry of the Church in today's Kiribati society.

Chapter Four explores the general religio-cultural milieu of the Republic of Kiribati, with particular attention to the social ethos and the general worldview of the people. An attempt is also made to identify some theological and cultural issues that fall within the concerns of the newly proposed study program. The thrust of this chapter is a call towards a thorough appraisal of the Kiribati culture and an open dialogue with the Christian Gospel.

Finally, in Chapter Five, an attempt is aimed at drawing out the implications of the thesis. The cultural, psychological and theological integration and considerations are discussed, more theological and social analyses are made, and further proposals or recommendations for the future directions are given. Basically, this chapter is devoted to

integrating the findings, especially of Chapters Two and Three, and proposing a viable trend which would directly reflect and incorporate the cultural, psychological and theological context.

The overall concern of this research is to lay down a preliminary foundation for An I-Kiribati Cultural Empirical Theology, which is based upon a philosophy of life which is both realistic and idealistic, which encompasses matter and spirit, reason and faith, time and eternity. Certainly, this work is only a beginning, requiring further studies and the on-going development and refinement of theory, research and practice.

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My two academic years at the University of Sydney, Australia's oldest and possibly its largest university, have been a challenging and rewarding experience resulting in the production of this research work. This was made possible by the support and contributions of various institutions and friends to whom I am greatly indebted. My indebtedness to the institutions and people in encouraging this work is beyond my power to recount. I can only mention a few.

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Second, I wish to express my sincere appreciation to the people of the New South Wales Synod of the Uniting Church in Australia, through its Board of World Mission, for their generous two years financial contributions that have enabled my wife and two children to accompany me in Sydney. I offer special thanks to Mr. Robert L. Jakes B.A., B.Ed., M.Litt., Associate Secretary of the Uniting Church in Australia, for his unfailing support, care and concern during the past two years. My wife and I owe a great deal to the Jakes family. I also wish to thank Rev Ross A. Mackay B.A., LTh., Consultant for World Mission (1991), who arranged a preaching and mission-talk tour to many

parishes within the NSW Synod, including Canberra, during the "Month for Mission Appeal". The tour has been a very good opportunity for me to meet church members and to learn of their extended commitments to their partner churches, especially those who are underprivileged in terms of resources and expertise in the third world countries, including Kiribati. The warmth of fellowship that we have had together has been a source of strength to me and my family in our times of loneliness. My apologies go to parishes that I declined to visit because of the time constraint.

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Fourth, special appreciation is extended to a good friend of mine, Mrs Judy Kay, for her precious gift of a word-processing software, which enabled me to do my writing with a sophisticated computer system. I am very grateful for her support, care and concern.

Fifth, I should like also to take this opportunity of thanking our small Kiribati worshipping community, members of the Kiribati Students Association in Australia, and the Kiribati families here in Sydney for their respect, hospitality, and warm fellowship, and also the stimulus and encouragement through constructive discussions and sharing about cultural and educational matters during our leisure and relaxation around the bowl of yagona.

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While the responsibility for what I have written is wholly my own, I desire very heartily to thank my two kind supervisors, Professor Garry W. Trompf of the School of Studies in Religion, and Dr Kathleen O'Connor of the Counselling Services and the Centre for the Psychology of Religion, for the pains they have taken in reading my manuscript and pointing out some of its infelicities of style and statement and making a number of valuable suggestions. I am greatly indebted to Garry who is not just a supervisor but also a good friend who demonstrated his deep knowledge of the Pacific Cultures not only through his numerous research publications, but also through his relational attitude to one who finds himself lost and lonely in such a large university where many are preoccupied with their own work. I have also had the advantage of reading a draft of his forthcoming book, just before publication, especially a chapter on Pacific theologies, and also for including in the list my theological concerns based on this research. I am also deeply grateful for Kathleen's initial recommendation for an upgrading to pursue an honours degree to enable me to develop this research. Her unfailing guidance during the entire process of writing has been a true source of motivation and learning. The recommendations, from both my supervisors, to develop my research towards doctoral research have given me assurance of the academic and professional relevance for my vision in establishing what I call *An I-Kiribati Cultural Empirical Theology*.

I wish to single out for special thanks Professor James Tulip, Head of the School of Studies in Religion, who on many occasions has been a source of inspiration to me. He has been very kind in helping me overcome my own cultural barriers, and my other personal and academic problems. His prompt response to all my academic enquiries and also his support for my future PhD study program is an experience that must be cherished.

The manuscript of this work was in draft form awaiting final revision and editing when I suffered severe criticisms and disapproval from the Officers of the KPC in regards to my intention to take up an offer by the University to continue on to my doctoral studies. With terribly mixed emotions I undertook the task of revising and preparing the manuscript for binding and submission.

My deepest appreciation and love go to my dear Dad and Mum, Rev Robuti T. Rimon and Mataa Rimon for their unfailing love and prayers that constantly uphold me at all times. Even though my father and I are in the same field professionally, our experiences are widely different and our attitudes to the Church and its ministry and authority often at odds. However, it is my hope that my views expressed in this work are not a problem to his ministry.

Last but not least, I express my never ending love and thanks to Mamro, my dear wife, for her involvement and enduring support and love, and also to my dear daughter Alkka and dear son Rimon for their enthusiastic discovery of learning and also for their developing independence that has given me the opportunity to dedicate most of my time to this work.

[Redaction]

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ABBREVIATIONS

ABCFTM	-----American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions.
ACC	-----Australian Council of Churches.
AIDAB	-----Australian International Development Assistance Bureau.
amak	-----Ala M'aea Alinen Kiribati (Government's Women's Association).
BS	-----Banaban Source.
CET	-----Cultural Empirical Theology.
CKS	-----Central Kiribati Source.
CPE	-----Clinical Pastoral Education.
CWM	-----Council for World Mission.
EMSS	-----Equity and Merit Scholarship Scheme.
ICC	-----Island Church Council.
KNCC	-----Kiribati National Council of Churches.
KPC	-----Kiribati Protestant Church.
KPI	-----Kiribati Pastoral Institute.
LMS	-----London Missionary Society.
NKS	-----Northern Kiribati Source.
NSW	-----New South Wales.
NT	-----New Testament.
OM	-----Officers' Meeting.
OT	-----Old Testament.
PCC	-----Pacific Conference of Churches

PTC	-----Pacific Theological College.
RAK	-----Reitan Aine ni Kristian (KPC's Christian Women's Association).
RCC	-----Roman Catholic Church.
SKS	-----Southern Kiribati Source.
SPATS	-----South Pacific Association of Theological Schools.
TNS	-----Tungaru Nursing School.
TThC	-----Tangintebu Theological College.
UCA	-----Uniting Church in Australia.
UTC	-----United Theological College.
UTI	-----Union Theological College.
WCC	-----World Council of Churches.

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«m» «a» «R» «O» «T» «I» «R» «O» «B» «U» «T» «I» «R» «I» «m» «O» «N»

«S» «Y» «D» «N» «E» «Y»

«1» «9» «9» «2»

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Preliminary Remarks

My discussion in most parts of this research is going to be focussed mainly on the Kiribati cultural-religio milieu, and in order that my readers may be better able to understand my work, I am desirous briefly to point out that from time to time in making personal observations I do this in the interest of being a participant observer in the entire process and consistent also with my theory of *experience* and the notion of *human documents* which constitutes the main thrust of this entire work. Therefore, wherever subjectivity is sensed, especially in cultural and anecdotal materials, bear in mind that the reader is given the opportunity to ponder upon the firsthand information and to come out freely with his/her own conclusions.

Scope of the Research

The primary objective of this research project is aimed at exploring and identifying some selected important cultural, psychological and theological issues, values and insights, from within the Kiribati religio-cultural milieu, which I consider as most relevant to my vision in establishing what I would call *An I-Kiribati Cultural Empirical Theology* (CET)¹. The CET is relatively new, but it is an

¹ Hereafter referred to as CET.

effort to provide an appropriate Christian infrastructure to accommodate the mutual integration of the *Kiribati culture*, the *Christian theology* and the *behavioural sciences*, in particular *psychology*, in theory, research and practice. Essentially, the principal and guiding question of this research project is *How the Kiribati culture, Christian theology and the behavioural sciences can be mutually related to form an integral part of the teaching and healing ministry of the Church in Kiribati?* As a cultural, an empirical, and a theological activity, CET is based upon the philosophy of life which is both realistic and idealistic, which encompasses matter and spirit, reason and faith, time and eternity.

The project is meant therefore to be an *integrative enterprise*, and as such, comparative analyses, serious consideration and application of the data from all disciplines involved will be made with the view to improving the *teaching and healing* ministry of the Church in Kiribati.

Although no previous study has been done in this area in Kiribati, it is not entirely a new concern in the history of Christian teaching, caring and counselling. It has been, and still is, a continuing endeavour by Christian counselling movements, and also secular counsellors and psychologists whose work is of great importance in this undertaking. Therefore, special study of their work is imperative if this vision is to be materialized effectively in the

religious and secular domains of the Kiribati society. At the same time, proper adaptation of the findings is very crucial in the whole enterprise.

It is beyond the scope of this research project to trace the origin of the Kiribati civilization and history, or to cover in detail the many different aspects of the Kiribati traditions and customs, although some relevant information with regard to the history and culture might be mentioned. Rather, this specific study will be focused only on some selected areas which are considered to be most appropriate, particularly the basic and original cultural values and belief systems that represent, in general, the various existing customs and traditions of the islands and also the most pressing issues confronting the Church these days.

In lieu of written sources in this area, special effort has to be put into original research as there has been hardly a trace of relevant source material, whether in book or article form on the subject of *culture-theology-human science integration* in Kiribati and perhaps in the rest of the Pacific. However, very recently there has been a growing interest in the *interdisciplinary studies* in some of the local theological colleges in the South Pacific region, especially the Pacific Theological College in Suva Fiji. This, in fact, marks a new step forward that calls for a cooperative commitment in original research and publication on the subject in the near future. Basically,

this research project is aimed toward this direction, with particular concentration on the local context of Kiribati. Essentially, attempts will be made to compare and contrast the cultural, theological and psychological data with the view to producing what will be known as CET in the Kiribati context.

On the other hand, the instrumental purpose of this research is to identify and explore some important cultural, psychological and theological aspects which influenced the development of Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) in the United States of America.² This will be done by examining the religio-cultural milieu at the time of the CPE's pioneers. Special attention will be given to CPE fathers, namely William S. Keller, Richard C. Cabot, and Anton T. Boisen, each of whom have contributed to the initial formation of CPE. This information will provide a better understanding of their original intention in having the CPE organized.

It is not within the scope of this research to elaborate on details of American history, but rather to describe briefly some of the important aspects of Protestantism in the lives of the CPE fathers. Also, I will not be exploring the problems of separation, unification and the later development of CPE. However, the standards for Basic CPE and its objectives as outlined in 1987 will be discussed so as to

² Hereafter referred to as CPE.

provide material for integration and comparison. It is my hope that in the final analysis the reader will be able to identify both the similarities and differences between the work of CPC and that of An I-Kiribati CET.

The Significance of the Research Project

This research project is significant in connection with the teaching and healing ministry of the Kiribati Protestant Church (KPC).³ It has been assumed that KPC pastors, and chaplains in schools, hospital and prisons are able to perform their teaching and healing (counselling) ministry to their students or parishioners. The fact is that the assumption is not entirely valid, because the theological college from its beginning to its present stage had been neglecting the human sciences altogether, and also considered pastoral counselling lightly in its curriculum. The reason is that, right from the beginning, lecturers in counselling lacked adequate training in the behavioural sciences. Unfortunately, the behavioural sciences have been considered *unchristian* because they do not provide spiritual information, but rather, scientific information that are often perceived as contradicting the Christian faith and also incompatible with the traditional understanding of the Bible. It has been held that theology cannot work well with science just as water cannot mix well with oil. It is timely that this unnecessary or inaccurate dichotomy

³ Hereafter referred to as KPC.

should be challenged. This study is an attempt to deal with such a problem. Christian theology and the behavioural sciences all have reference to *human life* and its relationship to the entire cosmos, and they can only be valid in so far as they contribute toward our understanding of that *life* at different levels, and at the same time foster the growth and freedom of that *life* in its totality. They cannot be simplistically dichotomized, for God does not abide unambiguously in the Christian Tradition, nor Mammon in the human sciences. They should be understood as overlapping, although they are distinct and we must be sophisticated and open enough to know their unique differences as well as to recognize areas of congruence. Each has a complimentary role to be fully utilized in order for the church to have an all-embracing outlook on human life in its teaching and healing ministry. There must be true appreciation of the human sciences if there is true need for the betterment of our contemporary human services in theoretical and practical terms.

In the training of pastors I argue that the emphasis of the curriculum reflects two existing traditions within the KPC, namely *fundamentalism* and *liberalism*. The fundamentalist emphasis is placed on preparing students to be evangelists or preachers, whereas liberalism has a strong tendency to produce young theologians or thinkers and administrators or change agents. Consequently, many village pastors, chaplains and teachers of the faith are available, but many of them are not well equipped to do their teaching and healing

ministry efficiently and effectively. This is evidenced by the frequent complaints from pastors who experienced, not only their lack of confidence, but also their incompetence in dealing with the behavioural problems of their parishioners and the changing society. It is realized that the empirical aspect of doing theology is a bit vague. In other words, the *thinking* and *doing* components of theology as seen in the teaching and healing ministry of the church tend to be more abstract and less empirical because of the lack of appropriate information, explanation and skills required.

Still worse is the fact that many pastors are despised in their roles in the society and there has been a drastic decline of trust in what the ministry of the church could offer to improve the standard of life, or to address the empirical questions of life in more practical and meaningful terms. Declined interest and trust in the intrinsic and extrinsic worth and meaningful contribution of church ministry to everyday societal problems is more common among the young and educated populace who find it easier to come to terms with life and all its ramifications by means of empirical observation and analysis rather than mere religious abstractions. Thus, this project is designed to call attention to the role of the behavioural sciences in the teaching and healing ministry of the church in Kiribati.

The project is also significant in calling attention to the role of culture in the teaching and healing ministry of the church. In

Kiribati, as in many other developing countries, there is a strong tendency to take one's own culture for granted. *I-Kiribati* (the indigenous people of Kiribati) tend to depreciate their own cultural heritage and values and begin instead to absorb other cultural influences, especially those of the West, which are seen as culturally superior.⁴ Again, this project is an attempt to help theological students in their training, and also *KPC* ministers in their teaching and pastoral ministry to realize that culture and religious tradition are important, and they need to be taken seriously if their ministry is to be meaningful culturally.

Another problem to be addressed here is that of *hermeneutics*. From the very beginning, the biblical message has been transmitted and applied in its *raw nature*, that is to say, *hermeneutics* (interpretation) does not take its proper role in the teaching and pastoral ministry of the church. This is evidenced by the fact that religious realities are not seen as inseparable components of empirical realities. The spiritual aspect of life is considered exclusively as a mere prerequisite for *life after death* with ambiguous or vague bearing on the empirical present. Therefore this project is also attempting to provide a more appropriate hermeneutical approach where the biblical message and the Christian faith can be interpreted, articulated and applied to life

⁴ *I-Kiribati* is here used as a replacement of the old colonial name known by most foreigners as *Gilbertese*.

empirically. This *empirical approach* of interpreting the Christian faith takes seriously the cultural religiosity of the people, their thought patterns, language and experience, and also the contemporary behavioural sciences as equally relevant in understanding and doing Christian ministry.

Methodology

This study assumes that Christian ministry, everywhere and at all times, cannot be discussed in a vacuum. It always has a context which determines its beginning and encompasses its entire development and growth. It cannot be fully understood without discussing its historical context. The historical context of Christian ministry is always the church and its relation with the wider society of which it is a part.⁵ This indicates that effective Christian ministry should consider the cultural context of the church. Many studies have been done showing that there is a strong relationship between *culture* and *religion*. Arnold Toynbee strongly argued that culture is inseparable from religion in that culture is rooted in, and emerges out of religion.⁶ Also, Whitehead and Whitehead have found and attested what

⁵ Don S. Browning, *The Moral Context of Pastoral Care* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1976), 18.

⁶ Arnold J. Toynbee, *Toynbee on Toynbee: A Conversation Between Arnold J. Toynbee and G.R. Urban*, (New York, 1974), 55f.

Tillich asserted,⁷ that the relationship between religion and culture is that of form and content.⁸ Clifford Geertz once called for a thorough analysis of religion as a *cultural system*.⁹ Based on these works and many others such as Weber, Durkheim, Parsons, Geertz and Mulder, I will develop a theoretical framework in order to understand more about the Kiribati society and culture. The approach will be Clifford Geertz's "*cultural analysis*", which is an attempt to understand people's culture exposing their normalness without reducing their distinctiveness.¹⁰ Cultural analysis studies the values, conceptions and ideas with which people under inquiry function in their daily lives. Browning believes that the controlling values and value symbols seem to be the religious dimension of a culture that shape the identity of a community and organize their everyday activities, decisions and procedures.¹¹ Culture provides cohesion and commonality to a people,

⁷ Paul Tillich, *Theology of Culture*, ed. Robert C. Kimball, (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1959), 42.

⁸ James D. Whitehead and Evelyn Eaton Whitehead, *Method in Ministry: Theological Reflection and Christian Ministry*, (Minneapolis: Seabury, 1980), 69.

⁹ Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, (New York: Basic, 1973), 14.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Browning, 71.

group or society, and this cohesive element has a religious quality.¹² Therefore *cultural analysis* is adopted in this study because it acknowledges the relationship between culture and religion. However, room is given to accommodate other relevant methods in the course of this study to avoid the problem of being exclusive. In his remarks, Garry.W. Trompf clearly states that "no methodology is value-free" in that our choice of a methodology (or more than one), is a personal matter that should reflect what a scholar prefers or feels compelled to do.¹³ Obviously, this study tries to be eclectic or polymethodic as far as possible and at the same time it will develop consistently on a particular methodology, most preferably *cultural analysis*.

Developing countries usually are either "Model One" or "Model Two" types of societies, as described by Elizabeth Nottingham.¹⁴ In these types of societies, the difference between religion, customs, cultures, values, politics, economics and family are usually not easily recognized, because they overlap. Although religious and secular spheres in the "Model Two" type of society are becoming more distinct

¹² Phillip E. Hammond in Robert N. Bellah and Phillip E. Hammond, *Varieties of Civil Religion*, (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1980), 139

¹³ Garry W. Trompf, *In Search of Origins*, (Oriental University Press: London, 1990), 6.

¹⁴ Elizabeth Nottingham, *Religion: a Sociological View*, (New York: Random House, 1971), 33-35.

from one another, they still continue to overlap at certain points.¹⁵ The Republic of Kiribati during the last century and the United States of America at the latter half of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries demonstrated the "Model Two" type of society. This project will utilize this theory to understand the cultures of both Kiribati and America. The basic tool used for collecting the primary data for this project was library research. The Fisher Research Library of the University of Sydney, the theology libraries of the United Theological College, Moore Theological College, St. Andrew's Theological College, Union Theological Institute at Hunters Hill and Turramurra, including the Pacific Mission Center, and the center of the Christian Research Association, all in New South Wales, provided a great deal of materials related to the subject studied. Special attention will also be given to books which deal with the history of ministry and particularly the history of CPE in the U.S.A.

The other tool of data collection is my actual participation and experience, for about thirty years, in the Kiribati culture in general. This experience will be used as a means of comparison between CET and CPE.

¹⁵ Ibid., 37.

Importantly, this effort is undertaken to fulfil several purposes, viz:

First, to fulfil the requirement of the Master of Theology (Honours) at the School of Studies in Religion, University of Sydney.

Second, to understand the relationships between culture, theology and the behavioural sciences, in particular psychology, in research, theory and practice.

Third, to attempt to arrive at new insights as to how CET has some bearing on the teaching and counselling ministry of the KPC.

Fourth, to gather practical data in the form of illustrative material.

Definition of Major Terms

Clinical Pastoral Education: CPE is "a method of developing personal, professional growth in ministry."¹⁶ As defined in the Dictionary of Pastoral Care, CPE is a supervised experience which

¹⁶ David Lyall, "Clinical Pastoral Education", *A Dictionary of Pastoral Care*, ed. Alastair V. Campbell (New York: Crossroad, 1987), 36.

provides theological students and clergy with opportunities for intensive clinical study of problems in the field of interpersonal relationships. It seeks to make clear to the student, in understanding and practice, the resources, methods and meanings of the Christian religion as they are expressed through Pastoral Care.¹⁷

Culture: Don S. Browning's definition of culture seems to have components which directly influence theology and ministry. For him, culture is "a set of symbols, stories (myths), and norms for conduct that orient a society or group cognitively, affectively, and behaviourally to the world in which it lives."¹⁸

Fundamentalism and Liberalism: The terms fundamentalism (conservatism) and liberalism have been widely used in several different social contexts, i.e. in politics, economics and religion. Consequently, the original meanings were misleading when they were used in the context of religion. For the purpose of this project, the terms are used in the context of a theological battle between the rural faith group (Fundamentalists) and the urban faith group (Liberalists) during the second half of the nineteenth and early twentieth century Christianity in the U.S.A.

¹⁷ Ernest E. Bruder, *Ministering to Deeply Troubled People*, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1964), 125.

¹⁸ Browning, 73.

Fundamentalism was represented by a group of Christians who pessimistically believed that human nature was innately bad and urgently needed salvation. From their perspective, salvation was merely concerned with spiritual realities and could be achieved partly through individual conversion. Its complete fulfillment would be realized in the future life. Usually fundamentalists were characterized by their rejection of the results of modern scientific investigation.¹⁹

Liberalism, on the other hand, represents a group of Christians who believed salvation had to be in line with modern thought. They believed that human nature is innately good, and so salvation is obtained through social reformation and physical improvement rather than individual spiritual conversion. Liberalism is characterized by its "open-minded attitude toward the conclusions of modern science."²⁰

Kenneth Cauthen differentiated Liberalism into two categories, namely *evangelical* and *modernistic*. Evangelical Liberalism "represented the attempt of Christian groups who were convinced of the truth of historic Christianity to adjust this ancient faith to the

¹⁹ Anton T. Bolsen, *Exploring of the Inner World: A Study of Mental Disorder and Religious Experiences*, (1936; reprint, Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 1971), 85.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 87.

modern era."²¹ On the other hand, Modernistic Liberalism :

represented the attempt of Christian groups who were thoroughly immersed in contemporary culture to reinterpret what they felt to be of permanent truth and value in the Christian tradition in terms of methods and categories of early twentieth century science and philosophy.²²

Thesis

Cultural Empirical Theology, like Clinical Pastoral Education, is a training experience crucial for the teaching and counselling ministry, but its form and content must directly reflect and incorporate the behavioural sciences, the Christian theology, and the cultural context in order to be effective.

General Background Information

In many developing countries, people tend to depreciate their own cultural heritage and values, and begin instead to absorb other cultural influences, especially those of the West, which are usually seen as culturally superior. Derald Sue has described this symptom as marginal man, "to indicate a person who find himself/herself living on the margins of two cultures and not fully accommodated to either."²³

²¹ Kenneth Cauthen, *The Impact of American Religious Liberalism*, (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), 29.

²² Ibid., 30.

²³ Derald W. Sue, *Counselling the Culturally Different: Theory and Practice*, (New York: Wiley, 1981), 83.

However, rather than neglecting their cultural heritage altogether, the people of Kiribati continually regain their interest in consolidating those elements that promote unity, peace and prosperity at all levels of social, economic, political and religious life.

Before the arrival of the Christian faith into the Kiribati society, the Kiribati indigenous culture was dominated by mystical elements. How this mysticism was so embedded in the life of the people can be seen through their daily activities and their fondness of them.

After having been ruled by the British Colonial government for more than 87 years, it was not surprising to discover that the indigenous principles, values and culture were still very much alive. This was due to the fact that the Western culture was not able to penetrate the indigenous one. Even though much has been changed as a result of the new contact with Europeans, *I-Kiribati* still highly valued most of their *katei* (culture) or mode of life.

When they propagated the Christian faith to *I-Kiribati*, the foreign missionaries had to adapt to the local culture, otherwise they would all fail. In 1857, Dr. Hiram Bingham, of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM)²⁴, was the first missionary pioneer to come to the islands. He was accompanied by his Hawaiian

²⁴ Hereafter referred to as ABCFM

assistant missionaries who worked among the people, mainly in the northern and central parts of Kiribati. Unfortunately, they had to work for more than 30 years in order to convert less than half of the population of the islands. One of the reasons was that Bingham's approach in indigenizing the Christian faith was primarily aimed at translating the Bible into the peoples' indigenous language before having them converted. His relation to the local culture had a linguistic focus, giving him sufficient knowledge and experience of the indigenous language and thought patterns. Bingham was credited for his excellent work in having the Kiribati language reduced into a written form, which resulted in a completed translation of the Bible into the local language. His other works include the Kiribati Church Hymn Book, the Gilbertese-English Dictionary, and the Commentaries on the Gospels and Acts. He also established the first center for learning, which was the first school of its kind in the islands, where the islanders were taught, for the first time, how to read and write. Some of his outstanding students served as interpreters and advisors in matters related to culture. Some of them even accompanied him, to Hawaii when he left the islands where he accomplished most of his major works. It is important to know that Dr Bingham's total commitment in the translation of the Bible, which considerably occupied most of his missionary work, reflected the Protestant emphasis on the Word of God as the sole authority of the Church. Thus, the translation of the Word of God into the local vernacular held the first place in his entire attempt in establishing the Church on the islands.

The islands in the northern part of Kiribati, including Abaiang which was Bingham's mission base, were and still are predominantly Roman Catholic, while the southern islands strongly remained Protestant. Although the Roman Catholic Church officially came late into the mission field in 1881, it grew rapidly and won more converts wherever it went. One reason was that the very first missionary agents were local men (Betero and Tiroi) who had been converted by a Roman Catholic priest when they were labourers on a Plantation in Tahiti, who upon return introduced Roman Catholicism to their fellow countrymen. Another reason was that Roman Catholic missionaries put total effort on winning converts beside many other things. This effort reflected its traditional teaching that *there is no salvation outside the Roman Catholic Church*. Although the form and language of the liturgy was in Latin, *I-Kiribati* sensed in it many resemblances to their cultural religiosity, such as in rituals, and the use of symbols and images. Still another reason was that the Roman Catholic missionaries appeared to be more lenient and tolerant than their Protestant competitors. While the Protestant missionaries emphasized the Christian ethos over and against the indigenous one, giving priority to the changing of the total behaviour and lifestyle of the people as a prerequisite to church membership, Roman Catholic missionaries emphasized the *catholicity* of the *faith* over and against the *ethical implications* of that *faith*. So, instead of denigrating or wiping out those elements of indigenous traditions, beliefs and practices, the Roman Catholic missionaries were apt to give room for their incorporation into the church. These days,

the liturgical procession to the altar and the presentation of the eucharistic elements for consecration by the priest during the Mass, and the Reading of the Gospel are accompanied by a traditional dance, usually performed by a few selected men or women representing the appreciation and participation of the lay people.

On the other hand, the Protestant missionary attitude was characterized by its strict and rigid social teachings, or those *thou shalt not* traditions of the church, such as, Sunday Observance, Superstitious Idolatry, Indulgences (drinking, smoking, etc), Stealing, Adultery and some other minor regulations. Protestant missionaries appeared to have little, or even no interest in the cultural form of spirituality -- mysticism. It was said that the Protestant missionaries went about on the islands and abolished shrines without adequate explanations as to why they should be abandoned. They were apt to clean the entire society and everything therein as if it were totally unclean -- *pagan*. The result was that the church and its missionaries were seen as enemies of, and a threat to culture. Missionary activity in the 19th century in most islands resulted in the destruction of statues, carvings, religious sites and practices, artifacts and the abandonment of dances, songs and traditional ceremonies.

Following the political independence of the nation from the British and the rise of tourism, there has been a renewed interest in cultural identity, and a strong and ever growing interest in

nationalism which resulted in the resurgence of indigenous costumes, dances, rituals, and handicrafts, all of which are attractions for foreigners, although to the young generation their religious meanings and significances have been lost, if not changed. However, it is important to know that, even though much has been done by the missionaries in their attempts to eliminate everything they regarded as unchristian, *I-Kiribati* are not completely uprooted from their cultural cradle.

Although, Dr Bingham's missionary work was characterized by more confrontations from the natives, yet the major reason for his early withdrawal from the mission field was due to his poor health being threatened by the unfavourable climate of the islands. For this reason, Bingham and his Hawaiian missionaries had to leave the islands and handed over the rest of the work to another Protestant Mission, the London Missionary Society (LMS)²⁵, which at the time occupied the southern part of Kiribati. The missionary work was carried out mainly by the Samoan missionaries under the supervision of the British missionaries. From 1935 until 1968, the LMS took total control and missionary supervision of the whole country.

²⁵ Hereafter referred to as LMS.

Although the LMS came into the mission field in 1870, its work expanded rapidly in the southern and central Kiribati. By virtue of the fact that we have some cultural commonalities with the Samoan missionaries, their work among *I-Kiribati* was carried out with little difficulty. They had more converts wherever they went and their influence was, and still is, a strong part of the Kiribati form of Protestant Christianity. Two of the islands, Arorae and Tamana in the southern Kiribati, where the missionary work was carried out entirely by Samoan missionaries, remain to this day strong Protestant islands where there is no presence of any other church denomination. Since the arrival of Protestantism in 1870, the people of these two islands had established monuments to mark their covenant that *there will be no other religion or denomination beside the Protestant Church*. This covenant has been officially recognized by the Kiribati government and laid down as a By-Law of the island councils of these two islands.

Since its independence in 1968, the KPC has struggled to decide on the question as to whether indigenous mystical elements should be incorporated into the Christian faith. The question about traditional ways of healing is also a matter of concern. To some, particularly the fundamentalists, the incorporation of indigenous mystical elements and the traditional ways of healing into the ministry of the church would mean a *going back to the old pagan era*. For others, especially the liberals, the question is not about whether or not the indigenous mystical elements and the traditional ways of healing should be incorporated, but rather the question of *how* can they be fairly

appraised and utilized for the good of the church, the people and the society at large. *What* criteria do we need to formulate in our appraisal of culture? In other words, *How* can we accommodate or assimilate, distinguish or judge culture? *How* can we facilitate mutual understanding of the cultural traditions and their legitimate roles in relation to the biblical traditions and the scientific information? It is also equally important to be critical enough in our assessment of new cultural influences, their contributions as well as their weaknesses.

In fact, the KPC has an awareness of the many inevitable problems brought about by the changing conditions of the society, yet is still too slow to find appropriate ways to counteract them. In other words, the Church seems to be ineffective to provide direction or to foster appropriate control of the many ramifications of change. However, the Church cannot simply adopt a passive attitude towards change. It should be conscious enough to filter what is going on in the society, and be able to provide appropriate guidance and support. The promotion of social awareness should have been encouraged in order for the Church to take remedial steps and provisions for the future. The teaching role of the Tangintebu Theological College (TThC)²⁶ is very crucial in this regard.

²⁶ Hereafter referred to as TThC.

Following its political independence in 1979, the Government of Kiribati looked closely into the role of culture in the development of the nation. Cultural values, concepts, belief systems and traditional skills were reintroduced through the program organized by the Ministry of Education and Culture. For instance, the *Runga ni Maie*, which is an inter-island cultural event where traditional skills in dancing and singing, and also sport activities have to take place throughout the Republic every two years. Agricultural and fishing skills and their use were documented and taught, although difficulty in collecting information may have been experienced by those families who did not allow their traditional knowledge and skills to be publicized. It is not easy for *I-Kiribati* to share their knowledge and skills as these are considered as the very source of one's own survival -- *oin te maiu*. However, sharing of the skills as well as the resources can take place upon request, or according to one's own generosity and goodwill.

The local vernacular had become a compulsory subject in Primary, Secondary and Tertiary Education, giving sufficient time, and solid groundwork for the young generation to be fully acquainted with their own mother tongue and indigenous thought patterns.

The notion of *Te Taranib'ai* (self-sufficiency, self-reliance and self-worthiness) has been a fundamental aspect of culture that deals with the development, growth and prosperous life of the nation. The traditional definition of the *taranib'ai* concept tends to highlight only

the two-fold tendencies of the "self", namely, to be "-sufficient" and to be "-reliant". However, in my view, the *taranib'ai* also embraces the notion of "self-worthiness", that is, the tendency to be "-worthy". One who strives to attain *te taranib'ai* should be self-autonomous, self-sufficient, self-reliant, and above all, should possess a true experience of self-worthiness. People who make no effort to become *taranib'ai* are condemned as *taningaroti* (idle and lazy) and perceived as *akea uoia* (fruitless and unworthy).

The notion of *te taranib'ai* was given its political significance and application for the first time by the first *Beretitenti* (President) of the Government of the Republic of Kiribati, the Honourable Ieremia Tab'ai. In his numerous undocumented speeches in every *maneaba* (traditional meeting place) across the whole republic, during his term of presidency (1979-1991), Mr Tab'ai repeatedly promoted *te taranib'ai* as the main key to a genuine *independence* (self-governing and autonomy), and a genuine *economic growth and development* (self-reliance and sufficiency). For him, *te taranib'ai* cannot be achieved if the people are deprived of their freedom and rights and the country left to rely on foreign aid. His government carefully explored ways to achieve this goal.

Emphasis was focused on developing and exploiting the natural exportable resources, one of which being the *fishing deal* with the Soviet Union of Russia in 1985-6. This commercial deal had been one of

the great controversial issues that elicited strong opposition from free countries such as, the U.S.A., United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, and other small Pacific Island nations. Despite oppositions, the Russians finally came into the Kiribati waters as the government never changed its critical step towards *te taranib'ai*.

As explained above, the *te taranib'ai* concept has been a major concern of the government in its continuing onerous struggle for development, economic growth and prosperity. Consciously or unconsciously, *te taranib'ai* concept has been reduced into mere political and economic tendencies. Unfortunately, the significance of *te taranib'ai* has not been fully explored and appropriated to a variety of settings that encompass the life of the people, as individuals and as a nation. If the government wants to have a balanced development and wholistic growth, then its struggle for *te taranib'ai* should not be compartmentalized exclusively to political and economic arenas. For this reason, there is need to develop other areas of *te taranib'ai* in order to address those areas that have been neglected and, in effect, have jeopardized the wholistic development, growth and prosperous life of the people, their Church and their government. Indeed, in its deeper sense, *te taranib'ai* embraces all aspects of human existence. Beside the political and economic aspects, there are also cultural and religious or theological aspects that constitute a genuine *te taranib'ai*. And all this must be nurtured equally to ensure proper proportion of development and growth in all different areas.

By *cultural taranib'ai* an I-Kiribati is encouraged not to be estranged from his/her own *katei* (culture) and *rikiana* (identity and heritage). An I-Kiribati who is *culturally taranib'ai* is one who really knows, appreciates, respects, abides with and practices his/her culture without difficulty. An I-Kiribati should be culturally mature in order to attain the *cultural taranib'ai*. That means he/she must be able to think and behave in a culturally disciplined way. One who is estranged from his/her own culture loses his/her cultural identity and is far removed from the attainment of self-autonomy, self-sufficiency, self-reliance and a true sense of self-worthiness in cultural matters. Consequently, he/she would be described as *tiaki te I-Kiribati* (not an I-Kiribati). One's right to be an I-Kiribati by birth or adoption does not automatically make one to be *culturally taranib'ai*. It is not a physical appearance or transpersonal behaviour that makes one *culturally taranib'ai*. The true identity of an I-Kiribati is recognizable only in one's capacity to embody and demonstrate the true qualities of the Kiribati culture. The problem of estrangement from one's own culture occurs if the process of socialization is not carried out in a culturally disciplined way. Therefore, the socialization process should be oriented to cultural theory and practice. And the transmission of Western education must not entirely use foreign forms and systems, otherwise the *taranib'ai*, in terms of knowledge and skill, would be extremely uncultural. Cultural forms and systems of teaching and learning must be wisely utilized in the process of becoming *culturally taranib'ai*. Therefore, education (theological or secular)

should be built upon the cultural foundation in order to make it culturally meaningful, relevant and effective. The true embodiment and mastery of cultural knowledge, skills and behaviour is the core concern of *cultural taranib'ai*. In short, the role of *cultural taranib'ai* is to enable an I-Kiribati, young and old, man and woman living in Kiribati or abroad, to be culturally-informed, culturally-capable, culturally-free, and culturally-mature.

The KPC has been, for quite a long time, strongly encouraging of *te taranib'ai* concept with much emphasis on its political, economic and religious implications. In its political sense, the thrust of *te taranib'ai* is the *self-governing* identity of the Church -- that KPC should be an indigenous Church in terms of leadership and ministry. Since its independence from the LMS, KPC has been administered by local leaders chosen by the Church General Assembly. The actual localization of the ministerial office and the Church schools, including the TThC began in the latter part of the 1960s. Until now, the KPC has been run by local pastors, and the presence of overseas missionaries has declined, except in the Church High Schools where their expertise is mostly needed.

In its economic sense, the thrust of *te taranib'ai* is the *self-supporting* identity of the Church -- that KPC should rely on its own resources. Since its independence from the LMS, KPC has been running its own administrative and ministerial works from the funds provided by

the peoples' *Kareo* (Offering), with very little assistance from foreign bodies, such as the Council for World Mission (CWM)²⁷ in London, the World Council of Churches (WCC)²⁸ in Geneva, and the World Mission of the Uniting Church in Australia.²⁹

In its religious sense, the thrust of *te taranib'ai* is that of the *self-propagating* outlook of the Church -- that KPC should propagate the Christian message using its own cultural terms and means. This is an attempt to articulate the content and form of the Christian faith in terms that make sense to the contemporary understanding of the people. Attempts to indigenize theology and the ministry have been, and continue to be a crucial element in the training of pastors at the TThC. But to what extent has this process of indigenization been implemented? What are the pitfalls that we need to be aware of? Or, what are the most *pressing issues* that need urgent attention? Above all, how faithful is the Church to its mission?

Obviously, tendency towards self-centeredness and introversion, in the name of *economic, political, cultural and theological taranib'ai*

²⁷ Hereafter referred to as CWM.

²⁸ Hereafter referred to as WCC.

²⁹ Hereafter referred to as UCA.

has some disadvantages and needs reconsideration. First, it discourages or disturbs the notion of the universality of the Church. The indigenization of the Christian faith and the localization of ministerial leadership are true signs of religious and political *toranib'ai*, however, their validity would be maintained only as long as they do not promote division or distinction on the basis of race or colour in the membership and leadership of the Church. Second, the benefit of learning together, sharing together and experiencing together the rich diversity of gifts and expertise in the area of administration, teaching and counselling would not be fully utilized when the presence and contribution of foreigners in the local Church is not appreciated. The local church should not lack its global outlook, if that church wants to be the true, faithful and effective Church in the world. It should maintain an open dialogue and service to the outside world in order to demonstrate its genuine *toranib'ai*.

While there are a number of important issues to be considered, it is not the intention of this study to provide all the answers. However, some of them may be clarified as the discussion proceeds.

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## CHAPTER TWO

## CPE IN THE U.S.A.: A RELIGIO-CULTURAL MILIEU

## Background Information

Among the reasons why European people migrated to America was the desire for *religious freedom*. During the Protestant Reformation people who practiced beliefs other than those warmly tolerated by the nation were suppressed, expelled or even persecuted. The early settlers from England, for instance, were "*refugees from persecution*".<sup>1</sup> They travelled a long way to America, with only one purpose, that is, *to get away from persecution and to find a place where freedom of religion was either allowed or promoted*. They found America to be a place where the early settlers had been enjoying freedom of religion.

The First Amendment to the United States Constitution states that "*Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion*".<sup>2</sup> As early as 1776, the idea of a separation of *Church and State* came into the picture. Every individual was allowed to practice his or her religion in his or her own way. Each individual had the

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<sup>1</sup> Robert N. Bellah, et. al., *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life*, (New York: Harper and Row, 1986), 220.

<sup>2</sup> Robert N. Bellah and Philip E. Hammond, *Varieties of Civil Religion*, (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1980), 7.



right to interpret the Bible for oneself.<sup>3</sup> The obvious result of this religious freedom in America was that Christianity was fragmented and diversified into many independent groups, which was later called *denominationalism*, and it had no obvious connection with the organized European Church in the Old World.<sup>4</sup>

According to Sidney Mead:

Although bearing enough family resemblance to their Old World progenitors to be recognized as of direct descent yet all had been changed by the subtle magic of the new land and were different from any previous churches in Christendom.<sup>5</sup>

The outcome of denominational churches and the craving for religious freedom was that religion in America became a very personal matter, where each individual had the right to worship any God he or she wanted, or even not to worship at all.<sup>6</sup> A person could even believe that religion was merely ideology, that is to say, there is no

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<sup>3</sup> Anton T. Boisen, *Religion in Crisis and Custom: A Sociological and Psychological Study*, (1945; reprint, New York: Harper and Bros., 1955), 200.

<sup>4</sup> Sidney E. Mead, "The Rise of the Evangelical Conception of the Ministry in America [1607-1850]", *The Ministry in Historical Perspectives*, eds. H. Richard Niebuhr and Daniel D. Williams (1956; reprint, San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1983), 207.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 208.

<sup>6</sup> Bellah & Hammond, *Varieties of Civil Religion*, 8.

God, but God can be *reason* alone. The challenge of the frontier life, the vast land to be explored, forced persons to develop individual self-consciousness, personal liberties and rights.<sup>7</sup> Apparently, these attitudes were responsible for considerable variation in the religion of American citizens. The spirit of individualism encouraged people to think and to work for themselves. Consequently, the individualistic culture promoted the development of *democracy* and *politics*, as well as the development of *science*, and *industry*.

However, the rapid changes that were caused by increased industrialization, urbanization and immigration in American history created many social problems. A society that had been rural since its beginning was entering a new era -- *a period of urban growth*. For many people, especially the middle and upper-class people, this development was profoundly disturbing.

From the mid-nineteenth century until recently Protestant denominationalism was seen by many people as a national religion, partly because of its openness and response to the needs of the people. Especially in times of great calamity or other national problems, the church automatically identified itself with the nation by giving its

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<sup>7</sup> H. Richard Niebuhr, *The Social Sources of Denominationalism*, (1929; reprint, New Haven: Shoe String, 1954), 80.



hands to help.<sup>8</sup> It was interesting to note that the first response to the development of the urban moral challenge was that of American *Evangelicalism*.<sup>9</sup> Although the Evangelical groups were not fully successful in dealing with the problem of urbanization, it was clear that *individual conversion* was still the dominant interest of their religion.

The American Evangelical's response to the problem of urbanization was an aggressive one, which was expressed in revivalism.<sup>10</sup> Basically, the message of the revivalists was a condemning one -- a persuasive call for repentance and personal conversion. Predictably, salvation was seen as an individual responsibility.

While the effectiveness of traditional evangelical church-based approaches was questionable, many men and women from the middle and upper class in the urban area committed themselves to charity work voluntarily. Although this was different from the *preaching* and

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<sup>8</sup> Robert S. Michaelson, "The Protestant Ministry in America: 1850-1950" in Niebuhr and Williams eds., 253.

<sup>9</sup> Paul Boyer, *Urban Masses and Moral Order in America: 1820-1920*, (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1978), 3.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 7.

*literature* approach to urban ministry, the work was supported primarily by upper and middle-class evangelical churches, which still carried the old message that urban poverty was mainly the result of the *individual failings of the poor themselves*.<sup>11</sup> The goal of this type of Christian charity work was to eradicate *immoral taint* which had been embedded in the life of all slum-dwellers.<sup>12</sup>

Basically, this was the conception of the upper and middle-class Christians concerning *sin and salvation*. They saw human nature as innately good. Sin for them was individual *misbehaviour, bad habits and evil desires*. Consequently, salvation was a process within the individual, and it could be achieved by *changing* the bad moral behaviour through commitment and education.<sup>13</sup>

While some urban moral reformers still worked through the church, many other Christians worked through secular organizations, which had quite a different approach than did the church. Rather than trying to change the character of the cities, they usually accepted the cities as they were, relying on professional expertise and technical

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 146.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 147.

<sup>13</sup> Niebuhr, *Social Sources of Denominationalism*, 84-86



skill rather than moral superiority.<sup>14</sup> Contrary to the traditional church-based approaches, these secular organizations believed that the immorality and problem of the city-dwellers, especially the slum-dwellers, were due to a very bad environment. Therefore, Christian *liberals* emphasized *social transformation* more than did *fundamentalists*. As their work showed considerable success, they won much attention for the *Liberal* Christian cause. When the *liberal* groups tried to relate and apply the Christian ethic of love to modern industrial society, the social *Gospel* started to gain its prestige.<sup>15</sup> Emphasizing social and environmental factors, "the social-Gospel movement had the tendency to blame wrong doing and other problems in life on society and environment rather than on an individual's responsibility."<sup>16</sup>

Along with the development of urbanization, industrialization and individualism, science was more and more gaining its acceptance among educated people, particularly in the universities and among the middle-class -- an acceptance which influenced their concept and

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 278.

<sup>15</sup> Allison Stokes, *Ministry After Freud*, (New York: Pilgrim Press, 1985), 13-14.

<sup>16</sup> Walter Rauschenbusch, *A Theology for Social Gospel*, (New York: Macmillan, 1917), 32-33.

understanding of God. They perceived God as active creator and stern judge rather than redeeming God and Saviour.<sup>17</sup> Usually the middle-class people were mercantile, white collar and educated. They believed in hard work, active pragmatics, reasoning and personal responsibility. Therefore their concept of sin and salvation was influenced by a dynamic conception of life and by their sense of the individuals' worth and responsibility.<sup>18</sup>

The conflict between the faith of *fundamentalists* and *liberals* usually was sociological, cultural, and methodological. But as the conflict continued, it turned into a theological battle. The fundamentalists usually were pessimistic about human nature and believed that future salvation could be achieved only through repentance and conversion.<sup>19</sup> In contrast, the liberals, who were very optimistic about people, believed that human beings were the children of God and were called to establish the Kingdom of God in this world itself. Salvation for them was healing; social reformation took place here on this earth. They embraced the contribution of new sciences.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Niebuhr, *Social Sources of Denominationalism*, 84.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 85

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 184.

<sup>20</sup> Boisen, *Religion in Crisis*, 174.



The liberal groups usually believed that scientific methods could help solve the problems of the world. With the rise of science and technology, many people questioned the relevance of religion. The authority of the Bible, the mystical aspect of religion and the superstitious characteristics of traditional Christian belief were also under inquiry. The liberals' emphasis on reason was more important than anything else. While the fundamentalists perceived and explained life and the world from faith perspectives, the liberals saw them from the standpoint of science and reason. The gap between those two groups widened and remained unreconciled.

Early twentieth century America was marked by an increasing interest in the problem of health. A lot of organizations and individuals, Christian and secular, gave their attention to figuring out how to provide the conditions that promoted physical and mental health in the society.

In an atmosphere where individualism was part of the culture, different approaches to mental health were utilized. Some still believed that the environment was the cause of an unhealthy life, whereas others were convinced that mental illness was due to organic problems. The myth about mental illness was still very strong. Mentally ill persons were seen as *animals* rather than human beings. That is why the area of mental illness attracted very little interest. Not many people wanted to work in mental institutions.

Later developments revealed that *theological education* and the *behavioural sciences* were getting much closer to each other. At one point the liberals supported the study of religion by the behavioural sciences. There was an increasing interest in the interdisciplinary studies which brought about new perspectives and expectations as well.

However, the result of this interdisciplinary approach was that many questions related to the nature of religion were not treated properly. And this might be a further reason why Anton T. Boisen was eager to have CPE a program, where he might be able to prove that *theology* still deserved a place among the sciences.<sup>21</sup>

### Initial Development of CPE

The rise of CPE in the United States found its context in the 1920s, a time when science was on top of everything.<sup>22</sup> Science was so powerful in the minds of the people that they believed it had the answers to all the questions of life. On the other hand, science was perceived to be a big threat to the fundamentalists, an example of how

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<sup>21</sup> Boisen, *Explanation*, 182

<sup>22</sup> Edward E. Thornton, *Professional Education for Ministry: A History of Clinical Pastoral Education*, (Nashville: Abingdon, 1970), 24-39.



"the world was falling into serious difficulties by seeking to develop without regard to church regulations"<sup>23</sup>

This social revolution evidently affected the educational system of the country. The idea of emphasizing professional education was strong and the basis was the *experimentalism* of William James and John Dewey.<sup>24</sup> It was pragmatic, empirical and scientific in character.

At the same time, the effectiveness of the clergy's work was challenged. Working in pastoral ministry based on the authority of ancient tradition alone was not sufficient.<sup>25</sup> The church was challenged to reconsider its method for Christian ministry. It had to admit that for a long time the church had been aloof, seeing the world as an object, rather than the field where God is working to prepare for a *divine-human encounter* in the midst of human crisis. For centuries, the church felt that the world was dependent upon the church. It is true that once theology was known as the queen of sciences, but now the world had become increasingly active and independent of the

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<sup>23</sup> Avery Dulles, *Models of the Church*, (New York: Doubleday/Image, 1978), 96.

<sup>24</sup> Boisen, *Exploration*, 182-183.

<sup>25</sup> Thornton, *Professional Education for Ministry*, 24.

church.<sup>26</sup> Before the *Enlightenment* the church assumed that it had all the answers to any problem in life. Moreover, the church was in control even of higher education. But during the *Enlightenment period* various sciences and disciplines had even flourished without church control. Because of this they no longer felt it was necessary to pay attention to church regulations.<sup>27</sup>

Being aware of the duty of carrying on Christ's mission in the world, the church was challenged to serve the world rather than manipulate it. To accomplish this, the church had to change its attitude. Previously, the church had relied on the church's leaders and seminaries for training. Consequently, when the CPE movement in the U.S.A. started, it was an expression of attack against the seminary educational system.<sup>28</sup> The CPE movement was just trying to prove to the seminaries that learning theology is not limited to the classrooms and textbooks, but that there is another way of learning theology through *living human documents*.

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<sup>26</sup> Dulles, *Models of the Church*, 95.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Thornton, *Professional Education for Ministry*, 24.



Every movement, whether it is religious or social, always starts with persons. The following is an attempt to recognize those persons, known as the fathers of CPE, who initiated the formation of CPE in America. From them, this study expects to gain an understanding of the original intention which motivated the formation of CPE.

**William S. Keller, M.D.**

As early as 1923, William S. Keller, an Episcopalian physician had a vision that Christian Ministry in the modern community should learn from social work, medicine and community organization professionally.<sup>29</sup> He began his clinical training of theological students in Cincinnati, Ohio -- the Bexley Hall Plan in the Summer of 1923. His program was the first clinical program as an integral part of theological education.<sup>30</sup>

Basically, Keller's main concern about providing clinical studies for theological students was to challenge the curriculum and program of traditional theological education. He observed that theological education confined students to textbooks while overlooking the need to associate with and understand the problems of society.

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<sup>29</sup> Joseph F. Fletcher, "The Development of the Clinical Training Movement Through the Graduate School of Applied Religion", *Clinical Pastoral Training*, ed. Seward Hiltner (New York: Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, 1945), 1

<sup>30</sup> Thornton, *Professional Education for Ministry*, 41.

When Keller started his clinical training for seminary students, he wanted to train them so that they would be equipped "to make the world better through the establishment of right relationships with God, with fellow human beings, and with the material world in which we live"<sup>31</sup> Keller's deep concern for social justice and reformation made him believe that the ethical and spiritual values were best realized in the social order, and that it is impossible for organised religion to realize ethical and spiritual values out of social context.<sup>32</sup>

With this assumption, he was convinced that the next step the church and seminary should take was to train pastors through direct contact with social problems in society so that the training will enable the pastors to deal with the social problems of modern urban life effectively.<sup>33</sup> The goal of this training was to show that theology was used not only behind the pulpit and in ceremonial activity, but also in dealing with the social problems of contemporary urban life.

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<sup>31</sup> Robert C. Powell, *CPE: Fifty Years of Learning Through Supervised Encounter with Living Human Documents*, (New York: Assoc. for Clinical Pastoral Ed., 1975), 6.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.



It took quite a while until the program was really connected with theological education, because Keller's clinical program was geared mainly to sociological concerns rather than theological ones. Furthermore, the objective of the program was clear. Keller wanted theological students who were trained as social case workers to become "social engineers".<sup>34</sup> As any other middle-class Christian in the urban area, he believed in practical rationalism.

Keller's supervised casework was meant to direct the students toward firsthand, living source materials - the men and women actually in trouble -- rather than toward secondhand statements in the textbooks. Also it was designed to encourage students to observe the interaction of social and spiritual variables, and perhaps thus to discover for themselves some of the basis of ethical reasoning.<sup>35</sup>

When Joseph F. Fletcher became dean of Keller's summer school in social service in 1936, the program was identified as the Graduate School of Applied Religion.<sup>36</sup> Because the program was liberal, Fletcher had a lot of difficulty in convincing the fundamentalist church that basically the goal of the program was to integrate spiritual and scientific truth.<sup>37</sup> Keller's program was also criticized

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<sup>34</sup> Thornton, *Professional Education for Ministry*, 41.

<sup>35</sup> Powell, *CPE: Fifty Years*, 6.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

for having inadequate supervision, especially of the theological dimensions. The church believed that the main task of clinical educators was not to equip students to become social engineers, but rather to become effective pastors.<sup>38</sup>

Even though the role of religion in Keller's clinical program was not explicit enough, the Bexley Hall Plan represented the first clinical training effort which originated by and in the traditional theological education.<sup>39</sup>

#### Richard Clarke Cabot M.D.

The second person to be known as the founding father of CPE was Richard C. Cabot. He was born on May 21, 1868 in Brookline, Massachusetts, three years after the Civil War was over.<sup>40</sup> The time was characterized by citizens seeking to consolidate the separation and schism created between North and South, East and West. This was also the time when the spirit of optimism was gaining momentum.

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<sup>38</sup> Thornton, *Professional Education for Ministry*, 45.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 31

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 46



Richard Cabot was known both as a man of strong will and as a person with a deep sense of humility.<sup>41</sup> In his earlier years he believed social workers to be "the best, the wisest, the most spiritual ... more religious ... than the clergy."<sup>42</sup> Later, his humility surfaced when he admitted that he was wrong. He was also a man with a strong sense of social responsibility. This prompted him to introduce social workers into Massachusetts General Hospital in 1905.<sup>43</sup>

The idea of clinical training for theological students came to him first when he considered that the physician is not the only one who can help his patients.<sup>44</sup> Secondly, when he observed students at the Episcopal Seminary, he was wondering whether those seminary students had the right sense of call to ministry. Were they called only to preach, or were they also aware that they also had the responsibility to minister to those who were in trouble of mind, body and spirit?<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Henri J.M. Nouwen, "Boisen and the Case Method", *Chicago Theological Seminary Register* 67. No. 1 (Winter 1977): 13.

<sup>42</sup> Richard C. Cabot, *Psychotherapy and Its Relation to Religion*, (New York: Moffat, Yard, 1908), 50.

<sup>43</sup> Thornton, *Professional Education for Ministry*, 46.

<sup>44</sup> Nouwen, "Boisen and the Case Method," 13

<sup>45</sup> Richard C. Cabot, *Adventures on the Boarderlands of Ethics*, (New York: Harper, 1926), 1.

If the call was the latter, were they equipped to carry on that call? Thirdly, Cabot's observations developed into a challenge of the traditional theological education. As one of the CPE fathers, Cabot's important contribution to the development of Clinical training for theological students was his method of supervision. The main goal of supervision was to make students aware of their potentialities to grow as human beings.<sup>46</sup> Supervision also aimed to bring students to terms with their own feelings and to recognize what was going on in their relationships with peers and patients.<sup>47</sup> As he taught, it was his purpose to make himself vulnerable to others by allowing his students to see him fail while attempting to help a patient solve difficult personal problems.<sup>48</sup> His approach was widely accepted in the U.S. He did not regret or feel insulted when his students criticized him, because he believed that healthy criticism produced self-awareness. In later development of CPE, Cabot's approach to teaching became the model of supervision. His willingness to engage interpersonally with his students on a basis of equality made Cabot's model of supervision possible and effective. Cabot's greatest contribution to clinical training for theological students was his *Differential Diagnosis*.

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<sup>46</sup> Richard C. Cabot and Russell L. Dicks, *The Art of Ministering to the Sick*, (New York: Macmillan, 1936), 99-100.

<sup>47</sup> Ernest E. Bruder, *Ministering to Deeply Troubled People*, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1964), 126-127.

<sup>48</sup> Powell, *CPE: Fifty Years*, 7.



Differential diagnosis is a case method, which helped theological students to be more confident and effective, when they were faced with actual situations of human suffering. The emphasis of Cabot, and accordingly of Boisen, was diagnosis. The main question was: "How can I go beyond the presenting symptoms and find the actual cause?" -- diagnostic thinking.<sup>49</sup> Cabot observed that:

cases generally come from an angle, and with one system, often a misleading one, in the foreground. From this point of view, we must reason and inquire our way back into the deeper process and more obscure causes which guide our therapeutic endeavours.<sup>50</sup>

When new patients came, the chaplain's role was to have an initial pastoral interview in written form. Many times this initial diagnosis of a patient had to be revised after the second or third meeting with the patient. The Differential Diagnosis process was a reminder that diagnosis is never absolute. It is a process--a process towards an understanding beyond symptoms.

Cabot's clinical training for theological students was also motivated by his understanding of human nature and society. As a Unitarian, he was optimistic about human nature. For him, the minister's task is clear, namely, to help patients come to the awareness

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<sup>49</sup> Nowen, "Boisen and the Case Method, 16.

<sup>50</sup> Powell, *CPE: Fifty Years*, 7.

of their human potential for growth.<sup>51</sup> To achieve this task, the minister must have a deep understanding about human beings. He criticized the traditional theological education which had been neglecting this dimension. Cabot was convinced that there was another way of learning theology and it began, as its point of departure, with people instead of God, especially human beings in crisis.<sup>52</sup> "Clinical theology" is a theology that not only assists patients to meet God in their suffering, but enables them to face their sufferings.<sup>53</sup>

Cabot did not like pretense. He hated, for example, for pastors to pretend that they were medical doctors.<sup>54</sup> He encouraged ministers and theological educators to stand on their own authority or discipline and use it with the same sense of worth as other disciplines or sciences. He said further, clinical theology is also a means:

to deepen a theology and revive intimacy with Jesus Christ. It is a theology that gives a new face to the life of Christian Church, so that it will win back the community's respect for the clergy. The emphasis of Cabot's program was general hospital based work. Cabot was uneasy whenever he saw the minister's task limited to preaching alone. In the modern world he believed a minister must do the humble services of the home because individual service brings Christianity home to men's

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<sup>51</sup> Cabot and Dicks, 99.

<sup>52</sup> Thornton, *Professional Education for Ministry*, 48.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 48-49.

<sup>54</sup> Cabot and Dicks, 50.



hearts. Consistent with his method of teaching, he also wanted to see a minister allowing his congregation see him fight against despair and temptation, see him suffer and sometimes fail. But because he has given his best and made a good fight, the congregation will respect him and esteem his ministry -- he will be listened to in the pulpit as well as in his daily ministry.<sup>55</sup>

Clinical theology is professional-empirical-humanistic in character. It is professional because theological education in the most scientific era must be thoroughly professional so that it can produce ministers and church leaders who are capable of performing their pastoral work with integrity like other professionals. The goal of his clinical training for ministers was "competence in pastoral work"<sup>56</sup> It is empirical because clinical theology is developed through firsthand encounters with the sick. It is a theology which does not come out of textbooks, but through experience with sensitive listening to people with problems. It is humanistic because Cabot started his theology with the human being. His optimism about human nature, about growth and about the "wisdom of the body" reveals that his approach in clinical theology is humanistic.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Richard C. Cabot, "Clinical Training on the Earhart Foundation", *The Institution Bulletin: Andover Theological School*, (October 1935): 6-7.

<sup>56</sup> Thornton, *Professional Education for Ministry*, 49.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 48

Cabot's case-method of teaching at the beginning of his career and while working with theological students was oriented to "patients on paper" but he provided significant and meaningful encounters for the student with two other forms of living human documents: the student's peers, and his/her clinical instructors, which, in later development of CPE, became one of the standards for Basic CPE.<sup>58</sup>

### Anton T. Boisen

Anton T. Boisen, who is now known as the real father of CPE, was born on October 29, 1876 in a highly educated family, both from his father's and especially from his mother's sides.<sup>59</sup> Boisen himself had a quite interesting mixture in his education -- French Literature, forestry, theology (scientific theology) and psychology of religion as interpreted by Williams James.<sup>60</sup>

In the opening sentence of Boisen's autobiography, he begins by saying "so far as I can discover, my family record is relatively free

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<sup>58</sup> Powell, *CPE: Fifty Years*, 6.

<sup>59</sup> Anton T. Boisen, *Out of the Depths: An Autobiographical Study of Mental Disorder and Religious Experience*, (New York: Harper and Bros., 1960), 15-20.

<sup>60</sup> Boisen, *Exploration*, 89-90.



from abnormalities.<sup>61</sup> During thirty-seven years of his adult life (1899-1935) however, he developed several psychotic episodes which were called *dementia-praecox* or *schizophrenia*, catatonic type.<sup>62</sup>

He experienced these psychotic episodes at least five times, and some episodes needed hospitalization for a long period of time. But Boisen asserted that all five psychotic episodes had been for him, "problem-solving experiences." By that he meant that following those five psychotic episodes, five major decisions in his life were made.<sup>63</sup>

Boisen's call to ministry was rather complex and delusional. But for him, it clearly became a call to commitment.<sup>64</sup> He went to Union Theological Seminary in New York in 1908, when he was thirty-two. His special interest was psychology of religion as interpreted by William James.<sup>65</sup> He took all the courses George Albert Coe, Jamesian psychologist, offered, which he found very helpful. However, he

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<sup>61</sup> Boisen, *Out of the Depths*, 15.

<sup>62</sup> Boisen, *Exploration*, 28, 40, 157.

<sup>63</sup> Boisen, *Out of the Depths*, 202.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 56.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 60.

disagreed with Coe on several important issues.<sup>66</sup> First, although Boisen himself was an evangelical liberal, he was very critical of liberals because they rejected the traditional theology of sin and salvation.<sup>67</sup> He believed that "the chief cause of the decline of the church's influence, as measured by church attendance, varied inversely with the degree of liberalization of popular religious opinion"<sup>68</sup> Second, Boisen criticized Coe for failing to explore the pathological dimension and for failing to consider mental illness as within the responsibility of psychology of religion.<sup>69</sup> However, Boisen agreed with James "that sickness of soul might have religious significance" and the problems could be attacked through scientific methods.<sup>70</sup> On the evening of October 11, 1920, Boisen's role in life was changed at forty-four years of age. He experienced a delusional episode, in which he felt that he had broken an opening in the wall which separated religion and medicine.<sup>71</sup> Even though these thoughts were delusional, they

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 62.

<sup>67</sup> Kenneth Cauthen, *The Impact of American Religious Liberalism*, (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), 29. His definition of "Evangelical Liberalism" is appropriate for Boisen's stance.

<sup>68</sup> Boisen, *Out of the Depths*, 67-68.

<sup>69</sup> Boisen, *Exploration*, 93-94.

<sup>70</sup> Anton T. Boisen, "The Present Status of William James' Psychology of Religion", *Journal of Pastoral Care*, 7: 3 (Fall 1953) : 157.

<sup>71</sup> Boisen, *Out of the Depths*, 91.



were significant in terms of Boisen's later career.<sup>72</sup> The mental hospital where Boisen was a patient failed to be an effective hospital because it refused to consider the religious dimension of psychosis.<sup>73</sup> In a letter to his mother dated February 1, 1921, he described the hospital as "a place of weeping and gnashing of teeth and hopeless prison"<sup>74</sup>

After this experience, Boisen became obsessive about its meaning. He came to the conclusion that the boundary between valid religious experience and the abnormal was not clearly visible. The exercise of differentiating between valid religious experience and a mental problem was not determined by the presence or absence of the abnormal, but rather the directions of the change which may be taking place. Boisen was convinced that valid religious experiences were unifying.<sup>75</sup> However, only through its fruits can one decide whether it is a valid religious experience or a mental disorder. After seeing that the church had neglected mental health needs, and psychologists, sociologists and psychiatrists had been ignoring the religious experiences of their patients, Boisen finally decided to devote himself

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<sup>72</sup> Robert C. Powell, "Empirical Theology", *Chicago Theological Seminary Register*, 67, No. 1 (Winter 1977) : 4.

<sup>73</sup> Boisen, *Out of the Depths*, 110-111.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 113-114.

to the research of this area. His original intention in clinical training was not to train theological students to become better ministers of religion, but rather to have "colleagues in research".<sup>76</sup> Boisen's program was intended to be a seminary program, because he wanted to develop theology based on empirical experience and the actual experience of human beings facing the problems of life. Later, his theology was known as *empirical theology*. For developing empirical theology, Boisen found that a mental hospital was a better place to start and the inmates were the best textbooks.<sup>77</sup> His research started with problems of life as his raw material of experience and he avoided ready-made formulations from books.<sup>78</sup> Empirical theology, built on the foundation of human experience, was the fulcrum for action. Boisen believed it was about time that theology made use of the methods of cooperative inquiry as developed by the scientific worker. He recognized that theologians have done a good job in the field of biblical criticism and of church history, but leave the dimension of religious experience untouched.<sup>79</sup> For him, there was no contradiction between religious belief and science, and it was easy for him to embrace science without losing his religious conservatism.

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<sup>76</sup> Thornton, *Professional Education for Ministry*, 58.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid

<sup>78</sup> Boisen, *Exploration*, 185.

<sup>79</sup> Boisen, *Religion in Crisis*, 189-190.



Boisen welcomed the influence of both liberalism and conservatism which he received from his father and grandfather.<sup>80</sup>

In CPE, students do not learn *what* to think theologically, but rather *how* to think theologically. CPE does not teach theology but rather allowed it to unfold and develop. Empirical theology does not impart content, but rather revealed it. Truth is found in and through the living human documents -- experience of life. It is a growing, evolving and developing experience. Empirical theology never stagnates; it develops as life develops. It is a theology which developed side by side with human existence, especially human existence in crisis. When dealing with human crises, pastoral decisions have to be made but the appeal to theology alone is not enough. Instead one needs cooperative inquiry with other scientific disciplines.

Cabot's influence on Boisen's work in clinical training is significant. Especially his case method influenced Boisen in two aspects. First, *case method* was a medical model of treatment. Cabot was a doctor and so his concern was *diagnosis* and *treatment*. Although very fruitful, many times the medical case study gave very little room for spiritual dimension of life. Second, Boisen used the case study

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<sup>80</sup> Boisen, *Out of the Depths*, 39.

method, because of its orientation toward scientific method, and his main concern was with the *empirical* approach to the study of religious experience.<sup>81</sup>

Cabot not only influenced Boisen with his case method approach, but he also gave Boisen the first chance to apply his theory in a new setting, namely, a mental hospital. Cabot was keenly interested in Boisen's story and supported Boisen's work with the mentally ill people. However, like many other people of his time, Cabot did not accept the psychogenic interpretation of mental disorder.<sup>82</sup> He believed that mental disorder was always of chemical origin. He was also skeptical that a religious worker could do anything beyond giving comfort and consolation.<sup>83</sup> Boisen's use of case method was different from Cabot's. As he worked, his main interest was to discover the forces involved in the spiritual life and laws by which they operate. For him, insight was more important than techniques and skill.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Nouwen, "Boisen and the Case Method", 18-19.

<sup>82</sup> Boisen, *Out of the Depths*, 144.

<sup>83</sup> Stokes, *Ministry after Freud*, 49.

<sup>84</sup> Powell, *CPE: Fifty Years*, 10-11.



Based on his experiences as his main guideline, Boisen came to the conclusion that certain types of mental disorder and certain types of religious experience are alike -- attempts at reorganization.<sup>85</sup> Boisen identified himself as belonging to the *dementia praecox*, catatonic type, which he saw as similar to the religious conversion experience.<sup>86</sup>

This then lead to Boisen's understanding of conversion associated with what he called mystical experience. By conversion he meant, a certain type of conversion, namely, a dramatic, cataclysmic, sudden change of character which leads to spiritual awakening.<sup>87</sup> He defined mysticism as experiencing fellowship with the super personal and he believed that mysticism was not an experience of possession which led to ecstasy but rather it was an experience of transformation of personality.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Robert C. Powell, *Anton T. Boisen (1876-1965) : Breaking An Opening in the Wall Between Religion and Medicine*, (New York: Assoc. of Mental Health Clergy, 1976), 11.

<sup>86</sup> Boisen, *Exploration*, 158.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 307

<sup>88</sup> Boisen, *Religion in Crisis*, 112.

On this assumption he then built his further research on the relationship between religious experience and mental disturbance. The problem of understanding Boisen's concept of mystical experience among the mentally ill is critical in distinguishing between those which are mystical and those which are pathological. Even though in many cases the results of his research were destructive, he still wanted to take the risk of continuing his research in the area, because he was convinced that mental disturbance itself has a constructive purpose -- he wanted to get better.<sup>89</sup> Ministers of religion should consider seriously such cases.

As a supervisor, Boisen was not open for suggestions and criticism from his student. He was more of a teacher than a supervisor. The case study method developed by Cabot, which was intended to promote a relationship between supervisor and students based on equality, was not a part of the experience with Boisen and his students.<sup>90</sup> He was uncomfortable with the view that good teaching must be student-centered, never content-centered, and the teacher himself/herself an umpire rather than an explorer and guide. He did not want a teacher to be passive, because he has to lead; he has a theory to establish or disprove.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> Boisen, *Explanation*, 81

<sup>90</sup> Nouwen, "Boisen and Case Method", 28-29.

<sup>91</sup> Boisen, *Out of the Depth*, 186-87.



For Boisen, the case study was the central tool in his clinical training of theological students. He allowed his students to have ward observations, meet with patients, and have interviews. This case study method has to be done through firsthand encounter with living human documents, especially with those who were struggling with the reality of life.<sup>92</sup>

Boisen started his first clinical training for theological students in the summer of 1925. He admitted that clinical training would not be possible if it had not been for Cabot's encouragement and support.<sup>93</sup> As time went by his CPE was the first CPE which emphasized its work with mentally ill people, rather than with those physically ill. Boisen's program was the first program of CPE which took religion and its relation to mental illness seriously.

This interrelationship is the reason why he was always uneasy with the new development and new attitude of people towards religion. While Keller and Cabot placed more emphasis on skills and technique in ministry, Boisen emphasized, as pastor, service and true understanding, because he believed that without true understanding the spiritual realm of life will not be ministered to effectively.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> Boisen, *Exploration*, 253.

<sup>93</sup> Boisen, *Out of the Depths*, 152.

<sup>94</sup> Boisen, *Exploration*, 252

Boisen was troubled by the development of science which had dethroned theology -- the queen of sciences. It had gone so far that in the modern era the educated and the scientists would say that, it is impossible for a person to be religious and at the same time scientific. For Boisen, the relationship between religion and science is thoroughly compatible. He believed that theology still deserved a place among the sciences. There is no reason to take one and to discard the other. Empirical theology was his attempt to prove that theology still deserved a place among the sciences, because it could be developed by way of scientific inquiry. On the other hand, this was also a reminder for the church that in the modern society, the church should not be apprehensive about embracing the contributions of secular sciences in its ministry, if the church wants to be effective.

In an effort to gain support for clinical training in mental hospitals, Boisen admitted belonging to liberal groups. However, he defended himself by saying that he did not try to introduce anything new into the theological curriculum. Rather he tried to propose a new approach for theological education and at the same time maintain the traditional conservative understanding of sin and salvation.<sup>95</sup> He made use of the methods of science to inquire into the level of religious experience. Boisen was convinced that the church still needed the traditional conservative message of salvation. He recognized what the

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<sup>95</sup> Boisen, *Out of the Depths*, 187.



conservative churches would supply in response to the sick of soul. They would offer the traditional pastoral care, namely, the method of advise-giving without proper diagnosis -- a counsel based on common sense. The liberals, on the other hand, were losing their identity because they were too dependent on modern behavioural sciences in their ministry and they failed to utilize a theology which was distinctively their own.<sup>96</sup> Therefore, the liberal churches had difficulty ministering to those whose problem was to take religion seriously, because they would see the spiritual problems of their congregations or patients in terms of psychological and behavioural sciences alone rather than theological.<sup>97</sup> Boisen, who belonged to the evangelical liberal group, believed that the truth of conservative Christianity should be maintained while at the same time being willing to embrace the contributions of modern sciences.<sup>98</sup>

In the context of mental hospitals, Boisen's concept of sin and salvation was influenced considerably by Walter Rauschenbusch's *Theology for the Social Gospel*. The work of Rauschenbusch had broken the traditional individualistic theology to a sociologically relevant

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<sup>96</sup> Ibid., 151.

<sup>97</sup> Boisen, *Religion in Crisis*, 205

<sup>98</sup> Cauthen, *The Impact of American Religious Liberalism*, 29.

theology.<sup>99</sup> As human nature is fundamentally social, sin must be seen in relation to social process. Theology should be the science of redemption and provide scientific methods for the eradication of sin.<sup>100</sup>

In the context of mental illness, Boisen defined sin as "a tendency or an action which is out of harmony with the fellowship..."<sup>101</sup> In this definition of sin, "both individual and social was an experience of entering into the fellowship which has the capacity for universality".<sup>102</sup> To be cut off from this fellowship will bring about tragic individual isolation, death and destruction.<sup>103</sup> Such salvation was an attempt to reestablish a right relationship with the supreme.<sup>104</sup> Moreover, it was assumed that such a salvation was open to anyone, however imperfect they were. Persons are accepted as long as they affirm "a living relationship with the fellowship which is

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<sup>99</sup> Rauschenbusch, *A Theology for the Social Gospel*, 57.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> Boisen, *Exploration*, 307.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., 293.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

<sup>104</sup> Boisen, *Religion in Crisis*, 208.



united by its common loyalty to Jesus Christ and its common struggle for the better personal and social life."<sup>105</sup>

Because Boisen himself experienced mental disturbances, he believed that for mentally ill people salvation is not a matter of moral behaviour. Paul's doctrine of *justification by faith* is most fitting. Salvation was the experience of fellowship with the supreme, and fellow human, beings.

Working with the mentally ill, one will encounter many surprises. For example, when one does not expect them to fully understand some biblical portion, they are surprisingly like "normal people". Cabot was very skeptical about ministers of religion working with the mentally ill, but he would assert that both the physically ill and the mentally ill deserve equal attention from pastoral care. Behind all their misbehaviour, mistaken notions of worth, distorted relationships, strange attitudes, faulty language, there still lies the essence of God's highest creation -- human beings, with whom God communicates the message of salvation through Jesus Christ, the Son of Man.

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<sup>105</sup> Boisen, *Exploration*, 294.

The development of CPE in the United States has passed through different stages of growth and recognition. It is not the intention of this chapter to discuss the stages of separation, unification and other problems related to the development of CPE in the later years. However, since this chapter aims to provide an appropriate groundwork for integrating theological and psychological (scientific) information as integral parts of the teaching and healing ministry of the Church in Kiribati, the Standards for Basic CPE, 1987 will be quoted as a guideline of this study.

The standards of CPE which were first formulated in 1953 were adopted by the National Conference on Clinical Pastoral Training in October 13, 1953 and have undergone some changes.<sup>106</sup> Boisen, who lived long enough to see the struggles and development of CPE, wrote in 1960: "It has gone forward under its own power, developing a philosophy which differs not a little from mine. For this I can be thankful, so long as it concerns itself with the living human documents of persons in trouble."<sup>107</sup> The following represents the 1987 Standards for Basic CPE.

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<sup>106</sup> Thornton, *Professional Education for Ministry*, 239.

<sup>107</sup> Boisen, *Out of the Depths*, 195-196.



Basic CPE provides clinical education for clergy, theological students, members of religious orders, and lay persons. Basic CPE facilitates pastoral formation and ministry development by focusing on the supervised practice of ministry and the student-supervisor contract for learning.

### Standards for Basic CPE<sup>108</sup>

1. Participation of students in ministry to persons. Each student has responsibility to find a time he/she can have firsthand encounter with "living human documents" (patients) either in general hospital or mental hospital setting.

2. Observation and reporting of the practice of ministry. The result of meeting with patients and other experiences during the week, will be reported in the form of verbatim and weekly reflection, which tells about not only what happened with the patients, but of what happened with oneself during the interaction with patients and peers.

3. Individual and group supervision by a certified supervisor of the practice of ministry. Once a week students meet individually with his/her supervisor for one hour, and student also

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<sup>108</sup> Adapted from *The Standards of the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education*, 1987. (Decatur, Ga.: Assoc. for Clinical Pastoral Ed., 1987), 6-7.

receives group supervision when he/she meets with his/her supervisor and peers in a group.

4. Participation of Basic student(s) or Basic and Advanced students in a peer group which is large enough to enable the student to experience a variety of relationships and small enough to provide time for each student to enter into a creative interpersonal process for learning.

During CPE training, students have a chance to develop their ability to relate to each other. Their competency in human relations is tested. This interpersonal relationship is not just on the level of being good to each other, but it is at the deepest level of relationship. As Boisen has said, the cause of mental problems is actually due to the problem of relationships the meaning of group life.

5. A contract for learning developed between the student and supervisor. Each student has to develop his/her own goals and what he/she wants to learn from the program and consult with his/her supervisor.

6. A curriculum which enables students to meet the objectives of Basic CPE, utilizes the unique resources of the CPE center or cluster, and takes into account the students' interests. During the program students have access to the different treatment



modalities within the CPE center or cluster, i.e., group therapy, substance abuse therapy, psychodrama, individual counselling, worship, Bible study group, etc.

7. Presentation of theoretical material which enables students to understand the particular needs of persons to whom they minister and the variety of ways of helping those persons. This should include material from a variety of sources such as theology, the behavioural sciences, and pastoral care.

Times for didactic sessions were also included, where students have the opportunity to learn some theoretical aspects of ministry.

8. Seminars which assist students in integrating theological understanding and knowledge of behavioural sciences into personal and pastoral functioning. Once a week, students, peers and a supervisor have the opportunity to sit together and have seminar on theological and pastoral issues and how they relate to behavioural sciences.

9. Involvement of resource persons from other disciplines. Students have the opportunity to learn from other than pastoral and theological resources. They may be able to learn from psychiatrists, social workers, mental health workers, counsellors and other therapists.

After training, students are expected to achieve the objectives of Basic CPE. The goal of Basic CPE is the development of personal and pastoral identity and growth of professional competence as a minister. Specific objectives of Basic CPE are:<sup>109</sup>

1. To become aware of oneself as a minister and of the ways one's ministry affects persons.
2. To understand and utilize the clinical methods of learning.
3. To learn to utilize the support, confirmation and clarification of the peer group for the integration of personal attributes and pastoral functioning.
4. To utilize individual and group supervision for personal and professional growth and for developing the capacity to evaluate one's ministry.
5. To understand the theological issues arising from experience and enhance the interface between theology and the behavioural sciences in understanding the human condition.
6. To become aware of how one's attitudes, values, and assumptions affect one's ministry.

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<sup>109</sup> Ibid, 8



7. To become aware of the pastoral role in interdisciplinary relationships.

### **Summary and Interpretation**

Based on the foregoing discussion of the religio-cultural milieu, the initial formation of CPE and the fathers of CPE, several cultural, psychological and theological assumptions can be summarized in the following manner.

The complex development of denominationalism, economic, social, intellectual, industrial, urban expansion, scientific, technological discoveries and waves of immigrants threatened the traditional, conservative values and religion in the late nineteenth century America. People were disturbed by the increasing frequency of immorality, illness and mental disorder. Consequently, the conservative evangelicals responded to the problem through calling for repentance and conversion in revivalism, whereas the liberal groups responded by utilizing secular skills and techniques in their therapeutic intervention. While the conservatives held tenaciously to their traditional beliefs and adamantly rejected the modern therapeutic culture, the liberal groups believed that the work of the church must constantly adjust to the new developments within the society.

As science gained its momentum, the liberals believed that pastoral decisions should be based on reason and science alone, so that

the mystical and superstitious aspects of Christianity could be driven away. Since they firmly believed in progress, social reform and development, they understood God as *immanent*, i.e. God was present everywhere in nature and the human condition.<sup>110</sup> God could be identified through immediate service and action to one's fellow human being in suffering (Matt. 25:34-46). For liberals salvation was a *here and now* experience and they rejected the view of a *future salvation*. The three fathers of CPE belong to this context.

Robert Bellah et. al. were right when they wrote "individualism lies at the core of American culture."<sup>111</sup> Since the European discovery of North America, the desire to get freedom of religion, among the European settlers who fled to America and among the immigrants who discovered the West was in itself an expression of individualism. Each individual in the vast, new and free land had been trained to think, judge and make decisions for themselves.

Individualism places more stress on activity or doing rather than *being*.<sup>112</sup> Cabot, for example, in his understanding of functional

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<sup>110</sup> Stokes, *Ministry after Freud*, 10.

<sup>111</sup> Bellah et al., *Habits of the Heart*, 142.

<sup>112</sup> Derald W. Sue, *Counselling the Culturally Different: Theory and Practice*, (New York: Wiley, 1981), 81.



illness, believed in *work-cures* rather than *rest-cures*.<sup>113</sup> *Doing* was the method for achieving a better life. Keller also believed that the best way to learn is by *doing*.<sup>114</sup> Boisen, on the other hand, who was fond of mystical aspects of religion, recognized the importance of *reflection* and *self-reflection* in the process of clinical training.

In the individualistic society, *achievement* and *competition* are seen as motivationally healthy. The worth of a person is measured by objective, visible social achievement, rather than familial status, caste, rank or birth place.<sup>115</sup> Personal achievements are far more important than anything else. Furthermore, an individualistic society values equality and informality in relating to others.<sup>116</sup> Interpersonal relations are usually horizontal, assuming individuals are equals. Whenever there are relationships between two persons of different hierarchical levels, "there is an implicit tendency to establish an atmosphere of equality."<sup>117</sup> With some exception, generally, the

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<sup>113</sup> Thornton, *Professional Education for Ministry*, 51-52.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid., 42.

<sup>115</sup> David Augsburg, *Pastoral Counselling Across Cultures*, (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986), 100.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid., 81.

<sup>117</sup> Edward C. Stewart, *American Cultural Patterns: A Cross-Cultural Perspective*, (Yarmouth, Me.: Intercultural Press, 1972), 50.

relationships between students and supervisor or teacher are that of an equal and are informal.

In the individualistic society, the group is not a social unit but an aggregate of individual units, which means that individual identity, autonomy, privatism and asserting one's own rights are still highly respected.<sup>118</sup> Consequently, decision making and responsibility done by the individual are most likely.<sup>119</sup>

The development of CPE in the U.S. was more of a socio-cultural movement than a theological one. It was a reaction against the traditional theological educational system and its objectives. Text and textbook are not the only place where students can learn theology.

Living human documents abound for this purpose. However, CPE was also a theological movement. The split between rural faith (the conservatives) and urban faith (the liberals) made some contributions to the development of CPE. The conservatives, who strongly held the traditional theology of sin and salvation, were unable to tolerate the uprising of secular culture i.e., sciences and social revolution. By default they gave the religion and health movement into the hands of

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<sup>118</sup> Augsburg, *Pastoral Counselling Across Cultures*, 100.

<sup>119</sup> Sue, *Counselling the Culturally Different*, 82.



the liberals who believed that science can help to solve the problem of human suffering and also provide them with salvation *here and now*.

In their attempt to return ministers back to the original task, the three CPE fathers began their clinical programs. Keller, who was a physician, intended to train theological students to become "*social engineers*", with little theological supervision. Keller's program had the intention of integrating the social sciences with spiritual experiences. Cabot, who was also a physician, introduced to the program "*clinical theology*", a theology that brought ministers to the bedside. Both Keller and Cabot placed their emphases on skills and techniques in promoting their clinical training. Cabot's "*clinical theology*" was a technique to relate to patients theologically -- diagnostic -- theology -- how to relate theology in human settings.

The term "*clinical theology*" was also used by a British psychiatrist, the late Dr. Frank Lake. However, he described "*clinical theology*" as being other than a diagnostic exercise. "It is an interpersonal encounter of infinite complexity in which God the Holy Spirit is using one 'dead' man ... to communicate with another 'dead' man ..."<sup>120</sup> Lake did not emphasize techniques or skills, but one's

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<sup>120</sup> Frank Lake, *Clinical Theology: A Theological and Psychological Basis to Clinical Pastoral Care*, abridged by Martin H. Yeomans (New York: Crossroad, 1987), 68.

awareness of the presence of the Holy Spirit, awareness of how God was using the counsellor as a whole person for triadogue.

Boisen's *"empirical theology"* was an attempt to defend theology as still deserving a place among the sciences. Combined with his understanding of mystical aspects of religious experience, his empirical theology became complex. The question arises as to how far the methods of science can be applied to religious truth and mystical experience as well as to other fields of human experience. Boisen believed that religious experience is private and personal. Especially in mystical experience, the emotions are deeply involved, and cooperative inquiry is not easily possible. However, the critical need is an attitude of humility which is willing to put religious insight to the test. He admitted that the mystic is likely to be conservative in his theology. But for him, religion and the sciences are thoroughly compatible.<sup>121</sup>

Boisen, who was a pastor, emphasized *service, understanding and insight* rather than techniques and skills of counselling. CPE is a supervised experience in ministry with a firsthand encounter with *living human documents*.

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<sup>121</sup> Boisen, *Religion in Crisis*, 201-202.



### CHAPTER THREE

## INITIAL DEVELOPMENT OF CET IN KIRIBATI

### The Context

It has been made clear, in the previous chapter, that CPE in the U.S.A. was developed as a reaction against traditional theological education. Anton T. Bolsen, once stated that he did not bring anything new to theological education except perhaps a new method or approach of learning and/or doing theology. Again, what is central in his argument is the claim that text and textbook are not the only places where students can learn theology. Theology in its practical sense and as one of the human sciences should involve itself with living human documents.

The initial impetus for the CET in Kiribati is here described as a reaction against the traditional teaching, theological education, pastoral care and counselling in the ministry of the churches, particularly the KPC. This thesis attempts to introduce a new approach to grappling with societal problems that have been neglected by the society, or taken for granted by the church within the context of education and counselling. It is also an attempt to relate the knowledge and experience of Christian faith with *real life* by using the medium of culture, in this case the Kiribati culture, and the behavioural sciences, particularly psychology. In fact, this reaction is based on my own personal dissatisfaction with the traditional

teaching and healing roles of the Christian Churches, in particular the KPC whose influence in the society has now gradually declined.

It has been assumed that the training of pastors at the Tangintebu Theological College, which is largely based on the old forms of ministry, is quite adequate *without* a solid experience and acquisition of knowledge in the *I-Kiribati* traditional and contemporary culture and also in the behavioural sciences. However, this is clearly not the case. Today, old and young pastors are finding it increasingly more difficult to perform their teaching and counselling ministry in the rapidly developing and secularized society of Kiribati. They tend to retreat more and more into their religious realm with little or even no proper penetration into the roots of cultural and religious crises. Thus the teaching and pastoral ministry of the church has little or limited palpable reference to real life. Critically, all this is due mainly to several important reasons that need to be identified. Let me discuss each one of them.

*Firstly*, pastors in their training lacked adequate knowledge and experience of the cultural context in which they are a part. Indigenous values and belief systems are not thoroughly explored, compared or appropriated in the formulation of an indigenous ministry. The *sitz-im-leben* in which theology is learned is always foreign, and



so there is difficulty to impart true understanding and appropriate application of the Christian ministry in its cultural matrix. This is the disadvantage of the theological curriculum which does not include the study of the people and their culture as integral parts of their theological training. This has been what really happened during the past three decades in the history of theological education in Kiribati, which has its own myopia prevalent in the ministry of young pastors today.

In most cases, young pastors were criticized for being *babango te katei* (ignorant of culture) and often labelled as *minita ni I-Matang* (European or expatriate ministers) who worked from within the framework of different cultural backgrounds that have, or may not have appropriate bearing on the local context. Unfortunately, their ministry was not warmly welcomed by members of their congregations. Young pastors, like expatriate ministers, had difficulty in relating their ministry to the local context because of their inadequate awareness of, and denial of culture. There have been a number of cases where young pastors were rejected and forced to leave their parish work simply because they failed to work within the framework of their own culture. On the other hand, old pastors seemed to be more warmly accepted and given more respect for the fact that their ministry is, not only compatible with, but also brings meaning to, and consolidates culture. Their strict adherence to the cultural values and behaviour of the people gained them general recognition as strong advocates and masters

of culture. No wonder researchers in culture used to consult old pastors as primary resource persons and authority figures.

The old and young pastors represent, not only the two existing traditions of the KPC, namely *conservatism* and *liberalism*, but also the two different generations of ministerial work, namely the *Raro n Rongorongo* (Rongorongo generation) and the *Raro n Tangintebu* (Tangintebu generation). The *Raro n Rongorongo* refers to the old generation of pastors who were trained under the missionaries from the London Missionary Society at the Rongorongo Theological College, the first theological training center established on the island of Beru in the early 1960s. Later in 1968, the college moved to its present site on the capital island of Tarawa, and its name was changed to the Tangintebu Theological College, henceforth comes the name *Raro n Tangintebu* to mean the new or young generation of pastors. The names *Rongorongo* meaning *Tidings or News*, and *Tangintebu* meaning *Sound of the conch shell* (a cultural means of calling *I-Kiribati* to gather together and decide for a certain course to be undertaken) both share in common a strong commitment to the *Gospel* through the preaching, teaching and practical ministry of the church. This commitment needs to be renewed and the differences between the old and new traditions should be reconciled. While the *Raro n Rongorongo* takes seriously cultural values and behaviour as integral parts of their ministry, the *Raro n Tangintebu* are more or less prone to undermine the significance



of culture in their ministry. They tend to adhere to foreign thought forms which they learned from the text books whose contexts are different and seemed to be far removed from the actuality of the local context in which they are a part. Consciously or unconsciously, they are putting more effort into *duplicating* foreign theologies which leads towards a consolidation of the *foreignness* of the Gospel and the Christian faith, and at the same time a *denial* of their cultural heritage.

The foreignness of theology is not entirely destructive, but often brings biased implications. Although, we cannot do away with western theologies, nor can we be cut off from the centers of theological influence in Europe, North America, Latin America, Africa and Asia, yet we still have total freedom to determine our own theological trends. We cannot deny the fact that the problem with foreign theology is that it does not always properly *bring home* what it originally meant to bring. In other words, it cannot properly make sound implications in its cultural application. I have strongly and repeatedly made this same point in my previous work.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Maroti Robuti Rimon, *Pandanus Theology*, (BD Thesis, Pacific Theological College, Suva: 1985), 3.

Instead of using ways that are indigenous and therefore make sense to the local people young local pastors tend to adhere to foreign thought patterns and ministerial forms that have no proper bearing on the local context. Thus, theology lacked its cultural component and the obvious result was that it was criticized as being *out of tune* with its religio-cultural milieu. It becomes a theology *hanging in the air*. An effective theology is one which is deeply rooted in the local soil and climate where it faithfully grows and bears fruits for the locals to reap and share its full benefits. Thus, theology becomes a genuine blessing to God's people in their own land and culture. As this inquiry proceeds, I become more than ever convinced that the role of culture in the ministry of the KPC is, not only essential, but also effective. And it is therefore imperative for young pastors to have a solid understanding of culture in addition to their theological understanding which is predominantly Western oriented.

*Secondly*, old and young pastors are uninformed of the principles of the human sciences and their contributions to their ministry. This is due to the fact that the KPC through its theological college gives no provision for any specialised study in the behavioural sciences. The emphasis of the curriculum reflects the evangelical aim of the KPC -- to provide ministers of the Word, or what I would describe as a *pulpit service*. The outcome is that there are many *preachers* available but very few are able to cope with problems and needs beyond the pulpit. Even pastors who have had long years of working experience with people would be better helped in their pastoral work if they have



psychological knowledge and new counselling skills.

The rise of secularism is seen to lead gradually to what has been called the *death of religion* because the sciences are proved to be more influential and effective in their dealings with human life. The therapeutic role of the pastor has been replaced by the professional role of a medical practitioner. And even those problems that originate or have their roots in religious crises are dealt with by medical practitioners, or by the traditional healers whose function is categorized as witchcraft, and therefore condemned by the church. Consequently, instead of being a relevant institution in which people find comfort and strength, a place where people are shaped for their roles in life, a place which provides direction and hope, the church becomes largely irrelevant to modern people. It has little, or no, involvement in the political and social affairs of the people. It only serves the religious life of the people, especially the older community. No wonder church membership, or more accurately, church attendance is, by far, being dominated by older people, and the young people seemed to be left unattended. Their church attendance has been drastically declining during the past ten years, especially on Tarawa the capital of Kiribati. Furthermore, most of the problems associated with the rapid social changes, (e.g. urban drift, unemployment, poverty, school drop-outs, alcoholism, suicide, elopement, abortion, marital problems, family problems, interpersonal relationships, etc.), which are common among the young populace have not been dealt with adequately. Also,

problems such as, child abuse, mental illness, and developmental crisis are largely neglected by the church, but dealt with inadequately by the medical profession.

My three years placement with the Mental Ward of the Old Tungaru Central Hospital was a sad, but significant experience. It began in 1980 to 1982, when I was a student at the TThC. I chose to undertake a weekly visitation of the Mental Ward as part of the Pastoral Care and Counselling Course. During my first two years of visitation, I spent most of my time in observation and writing verbatim reports. My contact with the patients was limited, due to the fact that I was being looked upon as a theological student, and like a church minister I was only expected to read some passages from the Bible and to say prayers, and no more than that. The patients were locked behind bars, because they were believed to be aggressive, and I had no access to come closer to them. They were (and still are) confined exclusively from the rest of the society. And if some of them happened to recover and are returned to the village setting, it takes quite a long time for the society to accept them fully as normal individuals. Unfortunately, the churches shared this social stereotyping and a rather prejudice and judgmental attitude. It is extremely important for the Church to provide supportive schemes to enable individuals who have been fully recovered from the mental ward to reorientate themselves and feel fully accepted in the society.



What I noticed in the mental ward was that the patients were not treated as unique individuals. They were all under the same medication whose obvious side effect was so disturbing to the patients themselves, for example, a symptom characterized by distress and involuntary bodily movement. And the treatment, in general, was so harsh and tough. There were times when aggressive patients were beaten and tied up with hand clamps for many hours, even when their hands were seriously swollen. There has been no real concern for fair or constructive treatments to improve the condition of the rather aggressive patients.

Furthermore, during meals, it was sad to see that they ate their meals from empty tins. They were not given proper plates and cups. And when I asked why they were not given proper dishes the warden said they would break them. Another sad thing was that when the patients were caught up in a fight they were left alone to fight to death. There was an incident when two patients involved in a fight where one of them eventually lost his ear, and the other his tooth. Even the relatives of these patients were not informed about the incident. Evidently, there has been a lack of proper supervision and care.

During my last year of visitation, I was able to come closer to the patients, and had the opportunity to listen to, and to share with

some of them. It took me quite some time to establish a rapport in the first place. However, one of my encounters brought me a great surprise to discover that a seventeen year old patient, who showed extreme anxiety reactions, was one whose father had died very recently, while her mother died earlier when she (patient) was ten. She was admitted to the mental ward when she first developed the problem of insomnia following the death of her father. She was categorized with the rest of the patients, about twenty of them altogether, and underwent the same treatment as if her insomnia was primarily organic in origin. After having convinced her and the family that she would be getting better at home she decided to leave the mental ward. Practically, her recovery came about, not in the mental ward, but in the home where her close relatives, especially her elder sister and aunt, had consistently taken up that supportive role of tender care and parental love which enabled her to overcome her fear of isolation. Gradually, she began to develop a more autonomous reaction to life.

Unfortunately, the general environment of the mental ward lacked the true sense of care, guidance and also rehabilitational skills. There was no proper diagnosis and treatment. In a way, the mental ward was more like a prison than a rehabilitation and caring center. In my survey it was surprising to learn that some of the mentally-ill were sent to the Mental Ward, not primarily to be treated



in order to get well, but rather to be locked up because they were believed to be aggressive and dangerous to the family and the society at large.

Evidently, these mental patients were not well-looked after, and in fact, they were treated inhumanely, so to speak. There was no psychiatrist, to do the task, but only a general medical practitioner who had not been trained in psychological and counselling skills. It is also sad to see that training in this area had been, and still is, considered to be less important in the theological training of pastors, and the church continues to regard mental health as the sole role of a physician. The ministry to the sick is largely based on the old traditional form which involves only prayer and the reading of biblical passages. Obviously, the healing and supportive role of the church was a bit vague in this area simply because it has been left completely to the care of the medical profession. Up to date, there had been no established referral relations between pastors and general medical practitioners and also traditional healers in their therapeutic functions in the Kiribati society. There had been a tension between them where healing was concerned. While most I-Kiribati initially seek advice and assistance from the village pastors or priests, such help was not always available, and there were frequent searches outside the church. Although the medical profession had been more effective in dealing with patients with organic diseases, they appeared to be less helpful in dealing with mental illness and religious related problems.

The present mental ward system certainly needs improvement in terms of facilities and expertise. Although the building of the New Tungaru Central Hospital, (funded and built by the goodwill of the Government of Japan 1990-1991), provides better facilities for the sick, there has been very little provision in providing the required expertise. It has been generally assumed that the present system and level of expertise in this area was quite adequate in comparison to the mentally-ill population and the severity of their conditions. However, this assumption is not entirely valid because even on the small scale the general care of the mentally-ill has not revealed significant improvements. There is need for a new educational program from the Ministry of Health and from the Church to help promote familial and societal caring and supportive responsibilities for the underprivileged mentally-ill.

On the other hand, the role of traditional healing (labelled as witchcraft or *tabunea* as known indigenously)<sup>2</sup> appeared to be more effective in dealing with psychological and superstition-related problems. Generally, most I-Kiribati often regarded the *tabunea* as the last resort when the Church and the medical profession could no longer practically provide help. Unfortunately, the *tabunea* is totally condemned by both the Church and the medical profession. However, there must be adequate explanation as to why *traditional healing* should

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<sup>2</sup> See below, pp. 209-212 for further discussion of the *tabunea*.



be condemned. The church, since its early beginnings has failed to provide explanations. When the gospel was first introduced, it came hand in hand with Western colonial powers and cultural values and practices, including new forms of treatment and medicine. The LMS established the first medical centre on the island of Beru in the early 1880s. From then on, the importance of traditional medicine came under threat as the missionaries, and later the medical professionals condemned their usage and gave no room for thorough analyses. Although traditional medicine is strongly condemned by modern medical professionals, their usage is still common and many people still believe in them. There have been many cases of patients who were discharged from the hospital because their conditions could not be treated, however, their full recovery came about as the result of traditional medicines. It is important that experimentations and research into the traditional medicines should be made in order to affirm their validity and legitimate role in the healing process. Local pharmacologists, if such exist, should not rely entirely on Western pharmaceutical products. There is need to promote what traditional medicines could offer to the local and international world for treatment and prevention in the healing process.

Although the KPC has recently extended its pastoral ministry through the work of its full-time chaplains in the Seamen's Hostel, the

Tungaru Central Hospital, and the High Schools, yet pastors appointed to these places are not well equipped to do the task because they lack adequate professional training. Reports from some of these chaplains, whom I know personally, all showed their dissatisfaction with their roles. Admittedly, they confessed that they seemed to have done more harm than help in their counselling ministry. As shown in their quarterly reports to the Executive Committee of the KPC, chaplains undoubtedly lacked expertise and experience in the area of caring and counselling, although they showed good evidence of adequate capability in other areas of their work.

The need for a professional training for chaplains should not be ignored by the church and the Ministry of Health. Both institutions should work together and make appropriate provisions for the training of future care-givers and professional counsellors. So far, there has been no highly qualified chaplain or general practitioner to improve the situation. The idea of inviting overseas expertise in the area of psychiatry or psychotherapy and other professional volunteers is another option to be considered in the future. So far, the KPC usually submits requests for overseas volunteers from the CWM and the UCA to serve as teachers in its two Secondary Schools. Other professions are also needed and should be considered in the near future in order to alleviate problems that are beyond our local capacity in terms of



expertise and finance. Also, the Tungaru Nursing School (TNS)<sup>3</sup> should include core psychological and counselling courses in the training of local nurses. Being a guest lecturer in counselling, on several occasions in 1988-90 at the TNS, I realized the need to emphasize psychological subjects in addition to core medical courses prepared by the school.

Obviously, the pastor's ignorance of the psychological sciences is, in fact, a basic problem that stunts the growth and development of a better and effective ministry. This inquiry calls attention to the urgent need for specialised studies in the human sciences. The TThC should include the study of the human sciences as an integral part of the pastor's theological training. The idea of establishing a Counselling Centre in the college is a positive one that should be considered in the near future by the Church. The centre will be designed to provide assistance to students and the general public, and at the same time it will foster research and training for future professional counsellors.

*Thirdly*, the pattern and form of organization through which the church still operates belongs to an age that is gone. The KPC, its

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<sup>3</sup> Hereafter referred to as TNS.

theological college, and its ministry in general may be rightly described as the unchanged product of the missionary work of the nineteenth century. Although the KPC is now seen from the outside as an indigenous church, a different picture may be seen from the inside. What we see in the church today is that it does not possess that inner dynamism which leads to a constant search for new patterns and better ways of doing ministry. The church seemed to deny the fact that older attitudes are surely inadequate for new situations. In the midst of this situation of continuing technical and social change, the church appeared to hold on strongly to its past traditions for its present and future survival. There is strong tendency towards uniformity and continuity with the past, and weak or less concern for the present and future life of the church. It seems that the future with all its ramifications will take place in the church by surprise as there is little provision at hand. There has been more restrictions than freedom for pastors to do what they see is more appropriate in their ministry. For instance, no formal bible studies to be conducted by pastors other than those who work as lecturers of the TThC. This restriction interferes with the full-time program of the TThC. From time to time lecturers have to leave their teaching commitments and spend more time travelling from island to island conducting bible studies. Even the bishops who have regular visits to the local churches within the four main districts of the KPC are not given this



responsibility. One of the reasons for this has to do with the theological orientation and qualification of the bishops. In other words, pastors appointed as bishops still hold on to the old theological convictions that no longer shared by young local pastors and theologians, especially theological lecturers, and there is fear they might create inconsistency and contradiction in their teachings with what is currently taught in the theological college. There are two appropriate solutions to this problem; to organize refresher courses for bishops and old pastors to upgrade their theological awareness; and to replace old bishops with young ones who are more theologically informed and able to keep up with contemporary theological study and research. Although private devotions are strongly encouraged in every KPC family, public bible studies and prayer groups are restricted for fear of *te kau-n-aro* (denominational debates) which are common on the islands. Of course, this is a positive sign indicating a strong tendency towards biblical and theological scholarship because *I-Kiribati* Christians are not satisfied and not quite certain of their own theological convictions. Indeed, seeking after the truth would involve a lot of questions and debates and should not be suppressed, but rather controlled. Importantly, it is a question of how to go about it that must be considered seriously. An open dialogue with other faiths and other Christian traditions through well organized workshops and theological journals is a positive option in facilitating biblical and

theological scholarship. It is sad to see that the Protestant principle of the believer's freedom to study the Bible under the guidance of the Holy Spirit is now practically denied. The new restriction that believers are only allowed to read the Bible but should not attempt to make their own reflections and interpretations may be seen as a denial of the unconditional *inspiration* and *guidance* of the Holy Spirit to every individual believer. Not only do we limit the work of the Holy Spirit, but we also deny the rights of individuals to interpret the *logos tou Theou* for themselves. The KPC needs to reexamine its Statement of Faith, particularly the first clause which reads:

"Our faith is created, sustained and corrected by the Word of God. We accept the Bible as the authority in matters of faith and we pray that the Holy Spirit will help us to understand it in the right way".<sup>4</sup>

The church also needs to reconsider its strong tendency to uniformity rather than variety in ways of doing ministry. For instance, the use of the same liturgy, clerical wear (pastors should wear tie and coat when conducting services), no services in public places and the pastor's visitation of the workers in their working places are not

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<sup>4</sup> The author's own translation of the first clause of the KPC's Statements of Faith, which in the Kiribati language reads, "E a karikaki ara onimaki ma ni kateimatoaki ao ni kaetaki n Ana Taeka te Atua. Ti kariala te Baibara b'a ara b'ai ni kaetietl ni b'ain te onimaki ao ti tatano b'a E na buokira te Tamnei are Raoiroi n ota iai n te aro ae eti." Cf. *Ana Baki n Anene KPC*, Prepared by ABCFM & LMS missionaries (1908 & 1950), reprinted 1975 by KPC Press, Antebuka.



approved or encouraged, and even the pastor's involvement in social and political matters is seen as an act of deviation from the core of ministerial work. Consequently, the church's existence in a newly industrialised and developing society is frequently overlooked, and many problems are not properly addressed. Theology that excludes the social and political aspects of human life may be rightly described as a theology in a heavenly vacuum. Similarly, the church which lacks profound social and political outreach is a church in a utopian heavenly vacuum. The church should be able to free itself from its own self-made imprisonment. The church cannot free the world from bondage if it is not a free church itself. The true church should reach out into the world in order to be faithful to its calling -- to be the *ekklesia* in the modern world.

*Fourthly*, the pattern of Church government is becoming more deviated from the original polity of Congregational Protestantism. The structure of the Church becomes hierarchical where the authority is strongly invested in the ruling class, namely the Office Bearers, which consists of the Moderator, the General Secretary, the Secretary for Mission, the Secretary for Finance, and the Secretary for Education. Although the General Assembly of the KPC is seen primarily as the governing body, however, the implementation of its authority has been distorted and reshaped and eventually centralised in the Officer's

Meeting (OM),<sup>5</sup> the most powerful and active committee of the Church. Consciously or unconsciously, the Moderator has become unquestionably perceived more in terms of a bishopric status as in the Roman Catholic sense, and the OM assertively claims itself to be in total control of all administrative and ecclesiastical matters. The freedom and initiative of the local churches, the ministers and theological students, church schools and creative individuals are completely denied, if not discouraged, while the authority of the Officers is strongly exerted. They called themselves *taan babaine* (the controllers), and church members as *taan baireaki* (the controlled). The administrative function of the Officers has become drastically filtered through the channel of *authority* while its pastoral activity is rapidly diminished, or totally left into the hands of the pastors in the local churches. Consequently, the augmentation and consolidation of *power* and *authority* has become the basic feature of the OM, a pattern that needs to be challenged. The leadership role of the KPC should overcome that hunger or claim for authority and power and adopt a servanthood ministry where the freedom of all believers is promoted in order to be faithful to the original cause of Protestantism. While Roman Catholicism and its basic understanding of Church authority corresponds well to its traditional claim for the Petrine succession,

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<sup>5</sup> Hereafter referred to as OM.



the KPC which protested against that traditional claim or any other form of centralised individual authority would be an hypocrite by confessing one thing and practicing another. In actuality, the KPC in principle believes in the corporate authority of the General Assembly and the freedom of all believers, but in practice we see more evidence where that corporate authority and the freedom of believers have been frequently overruled. Members of the OM are more prone to exercise their administrative authority rather than their pastoral or shepherding role, and as a result, we see more confrontation and conflict in their relationship with church members. Unfortunately, the danger with this authoritative attitude is that the OM is establishing itself into an image of *a god with feet of clay* whose authority would be liable not only to criticism and confrontation, but also a demand for its downfall by church members who could no longer allow themselves to be suppressed under that yoke of church authority. In the past two decades in the history of Church administration, the OM has been a focus of constant criticism, and many reports of dissatisfaction from Church schools, local churches, individual ministers and Christians were often ignored. It is timely that the decentralization of the authority of the Church is imperative. The KPC General Assembly needs to re-define the roles of the Officers, and the overall pattern of government should be reformed in the light of the gospel. To be faithful to its ecclesial calling, the KPC must allow a

constant evaluation of its entire ministry. The changes in the Church should be directed towards those enslaving and authoritative aspects that stunt the growth and freedom of all I-Kiribati believers.

*Fifthly*, the Church continues to talk in religious terms which are no longer meaningful to the people. In fact, their language, thought forms and structures are out of gear with the modern worldview and experience of a young developing nation like Kiribati.

In Kiribati today there seems to be an increasing number of young people who are not agnostics or atheists, but recognize intellectually and in their hearts a persistent sense of doubt and disbelief. They experience in their personal existence a divided allegiance -- *belief in God versus disbelief in God*. And their perception and experience of the church and its ministry do not provide a satisfactory remedy to such a problem. The more they are educated, the more they find themselves driven away from the church and their cultural heritage. These people experience a divided personality in their religio-cultural life and in their commitment to the church. No wonder more and more young I-Kiribati are to be found at the very periphery of the church. During the 1985 census,<sup>6</sup> the official

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<sup>6</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica, *World Data Annual*, Chicago, 1991: 635.



demography on religious affiliation showed that the population was distributed thus, Roman Catholic (RC) 52%; KPC 40.9%; Baha'i 2.4%; Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) 1.4%; other 2.7%. At this time non-church goers could be estimated at 25%. Later in 1988 the population of Kiribati was estimated at 68,200, of which half are Roman Catholic and two fifths are Kiribati Protestant, with an additional percentage of sectarian movements.<sup>7</sup> A constant increased rate in the number of non-church goers during this period was estimated at 5% to 10%. Most recently, the population of Kiribati according to the 1990 census<sup>8</sup> has reached 71,100, of which more than half are nominal christians and entered churches only for weddings and funerals.

But what makes the young people lose their trust in the church? What causes them to experience the remoteness of God rather than to experience God's inescapable presence in their lives, in the sense of the Psalmist who wrote Psalm 139? In fact these questions are not easy to answer because they deal with personal and abstract matters that are really difficult in themselves. However, this problem is associated with the advancement of new technological and scientific knowledge which systematically excludes reference to experiences fundamental to belief. This should not be the case in the training of young pastors

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.,

today. Their scientific awareness should find theological meanings in their life of faith. And that matters of faith should not be seen in total isolation from matters of life.

Finally, but not the least, the traditional worldview and language of our religious culture no longer make sense in our empirical understanding of ourselves, the world around us, and God. Basically, the church had not caught up with the modern world. The church had been too slow to move along with time, as well as too weak to inform or give directions to the unavoidable rapid social changes in history. For this reason, the church should evaluate its traditional theological education and ministry in light of the present situation, rather than to insist on fidelity on past traditions that no longer serve the present needs. The important question is not whether to condemn or to perpetuate the past traditions, but rather *to be sure* that what we do in the ministry *brings home* to God's people the blessing of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The teaching, preaching, and healing roles, and the administration of the sacraments may cease to be meaningful to us if they are presented in old forms that no longer illuminate the originality and truth of our contemporary world of understanding and experience. The church is trapped in what I would describe as the problem of spiritualization and privatization of the faith. While there is a spiritual and private or personal dimension of



faith, there are also empirical and corporate dimensions that must be given proper attention. It is not enough to be spiritually healthy and empirically unhealthy. The psyche ( $\psi \cup \chi \eta$ ) and body ( $\sigma \omicron \mu \alpha$ ) of the individual and the community must be equally nurtured. Theology, as the basic language or tool of the Church, is not merely metaphysical and abstract, but rather empirical and concrete, as it is *theo-centric* as well as *anthropo-centric* in concern.

CET as a new approach, attempts to introduce a new functional understanding of theology (as distinct from our traditional understanding) as an *empirical science* where intuition, observation, reflection and experience are given equal weight and emphasis in the teaching and healing ministry of the church. The traditional approach of learning and doing theology in exclusively *otherworldly terms* remains as a stumbling block that CET attempts to remove. So, for the church to be empirical in its teaching and healing activities, it should be able to consider inclusively the relevance of human intuition, scientific observation, and interpretative reflection on human concrete experiences rather than on those abstract and magical or superstitious conceptions that are no longer acceptable in our modern world. In order to achieve this goal, both cultural and scientific information are to be accepted, complementarily, as inseparable components of theology. The culture of the people and their technological and scientific knowledge and experience can never be thought of in complete isolation from their religious knowledge and experience.

Thus, CET asserts that the knowledge and faith involved are never merely intellectual and spiritual, but also a kind of felt knowledge in which things are seen in a different perspective and take on a new significance.

The dualistic attitude to life -- good and bad, heaven and earth, or the religious and the secular may be seen as opposites, however, they should not be seen as exclusive dichotomies. As Tillich clearly asserted, "the religious and the secular are not separated realms. Rather they are within each other"<sup>9</sup> The word *secular* comes from the Latin *saeculum* which means *of this world, or related to this world*. And our knowledge and experience of ourselves and religion is, therefore, partial and part of this worldly existence -- *saeculum*. In this analysis, CET as a theological enterprise attempts to assist pastors and theological educators to be truly *related to this world* through the appreciation and appropriation of cultural values and scientific information (psychology, sociology, anthropology and history) in understanding and in doing Christian ministry.

#### The Proposed Program of CET

The focal point of discussion in this section will include the proposed stages of the development of CET as a new model of

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<sup>9</sup> Paul Tillich, *Theology of Culture*, (Oxford University Press, 1959), 42.



theological education within the area of pastoral ministry and counselling psychology. This would be an experimental endeavour that needs the assessment and approval of the Faculty of the TThC, the College Council, and the Ministerial Committee of the KPC.

The curriculum of the CET program will be coordinated with the standard curriculum set out as a guideline by the South Pacific Association of Theological Schools (SPATS).<sup>10</sup> The form of the program will be integrated so that lectures, seminars and field education will be interrelated and reinforce each other. Theory and practice will be discussed, tried out, and then applied in the field work under the supervision and guidance of the TThC and the village pastor. To expedite the process, the structure of the program will be divided into two areas of learning, viz; theoretical and empirical or practical. The theoretical learning will be done in the TThC and the empirical learning will be carried out in a variety of settings, i.e. the New Tuarua Central Hospital (including the Mental Ward, and the Nursing School), the Betio and Bairiki prisons, the Seamen's Hostel, and the local churches on urban Tarawa. The problem of distance makes it impossible to include the outer islands. Nearby islands such as Abaiang and Maiana may be included in the visitation and field work program. However, there are foreseeable constraints that must be

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<sup>10</sup> See, *SPATS Handbook: Guideline of Course*, Lotu Pasifika Publications, 1989, (Suva, Fiji).

considered, such as travel expenses and the approval of the Ministerial Committee of the KPC.

### **The Aim and Goals of the Program**

The aim of this program is to train theological students, village pastors and deacons, and those who wish to develop knowledge and skills in pastoral counselling as an adjunct to their work in the church and society. The goals will be designed to ensure that after completing the program, the participants:

1. Will be better able to assist individuals and groups with their problems.
2. Will be able to cooperate with others in efforts to create an environment which enables individuals and groups to work and develop together.
3. Will possess relevant communication skills in both listening and responding, and be able to apply relevant contributions of the human sciences (theology, psychology, sociology, anthropology, and group dynamics in counselling).
4. Will be better able to understand the counselee's problem and to help him/her plan and implement ways of overcoming it.



5. Will be able to analyse counselling situations, to make conscious and creative his/her own life experience in helping others, and to integrate insights and skills from the experience of helping other people.

6. Will have a knowledge of culture and community resources which can be used in approaching those problems which need special services, and will understand the limitations of his/her ability.

7. Will be able to use spiritual resources, (prayer, Bible readings, church and family *koinonia* -- fellowship), in appropriate and effective ways to help those being counselled.

8. Will be able to alleviate his/her own tension and anxiety and to overcome the problem of overconcern that may arise out of the helping encounter.

9. Will be better able to maintain conscious control of his/her own situation and that of the counselee, and to be aware of the effects of transference and counter-transference and other counselling problems.

10. Will be better able to embody in his/her total being, and also in his/her entire service to others the forgiveness,

healing, and liberating love of Jesus Christ, the Wonderful Counsellor.

The proposed curriculum will include the following:

1. Gospel-Culture Dialogue: exploring and developing ways of understanding, articulating, interpreting and relating the gospel to the culture of the Kiribati people.
2. Human Development: from birth to old age will be seen wholistically (physical, psychological, social and spiritual development).
3. Basic Counselling Skills:
  - (a) Basic Concepts (individualization, expression of feeling, control of emotions, client self-determination, empathy, patience, respect, listening, non-judgmental attitude, confronting, sharing and confidentiality).
  - (b) Crisis Counselling (facing stress, serious illness, death and bereavement, suicide, etc.).
  - (c) Preventive Counselling (adolescence and youth, drug-dependency, premarital counselling, family problems, preparation for old age): family therapy and interventions are important to analyse family roles and readjust them in order to create more balance and to overcome problems such as divorce, child abuse,



child-rearing disagreements, ethical values, etc.

4. Community Development: exploring and analysing characteristics of a community, formal and informal leadership, motivating people for change and development, team work, developing local potency, conflict resolution, giving and receiving feedback, and joint evaluation.

5. The Role of Religious Values in Counselling: effective use of spiritual resources (prayer, the Bible and church fellowship), the meaning of suffering, feelings of guilt and anxiety, the meaning of forgiveness, ethical problems such as euthanasia and abortion, medicine and family planning.

6. Psychological Disturbances: understanding of mental health and symptoms of mental illness, developing ways of working with medical professions and traditional healers (referral counselling network).

7. Counselling Reality Practice: students case presentations, verbatim reports, seminars and field work.

Central in this proposal is an intent to provide an appropriate program as an integral part of the training of theological students at the TThC. This program will train motivated people to be skillful

pastoral counsellors, so that they may work efficiently and effectively in the church and society. The overall motive behind the program is to help the KPC fulfill its educational and therapeutic role in the society.

Scanning the proposal, one immediately notes that the CET is geared to both formal academic training in techniques of counselling and also in the practical awareness of cultural and theological implications. The theory of *experience* is here stressed, that the art of learning in counselling techniques and skills cannot be fully studied and understood in the classroom setting alone. One has to study and hear the people who are involved in the helping and caring relationship and the process of healing. The need for a real encounter with people who have real problems has more advantages than just the classroom counselling reality practice. Effective pastoral counselling never leaves cultural and theological contexts untouched. Since pastoral counselling is to be done by pastors, they must learn and know their faith commitment, and be able to work within the framework which is cultural, empirical and theological. A wholistic approach is also strongly stressed in this proposed program.

In Kiribati today, many churches still feel that they are superior to the world; feeling that the church has all the answers to human sufferings and problems without utilizing the contributions of other sciences beside theology. The traditional method of counselling



has been done by imparting biblical passages, prayers and simple or undisciplined and unskilled advice-giving. It was without proper understanding of the problems involved, assuming that the church with its Christian theology had all the answers. The traditional chaplains, pastors and general practitioners rushed in with answers before they really understand the questions or the problems. Many times patients or counselees are seen as objects rather than human beings who have feelings and emotions. Consequently, the relationships between pastors and their parishioners or the chaplains and doctors and their patients is one of aloofness. The church still, using Richard Niebuhr's terms, "uncompromisingly affirms the sole authority of Christ over the Christian and resolutely rejects culture's claims to loyalty."<sup>11</sup>

This is not to impute malicious intentionality. Obviously, there is no bad intention behind the actions of pastors/chaplains in their helping relationships. They are simply doing their work according to the tradition. In the giving of pastoral care, the role of the pastors is not challenged easily. Generally, the people of Kiribati believe somehow that the pastor's or the priest's prayers carry more weight, or are more effective than that of a lay person. Therefore, if a lay person is visited by the pastor he/she will feel "not well-attended" if the pastor leaves without praying, or the priest leaves without giving the blessing.

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<sup>11</sup> H. Richard Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture*, (New York: Harper & Row, 1951), 45.

However, it would be better if such respected pastors and priests have some clinical training in modern pastoral counselling which would enable them to be more sensitive to the feelings and emotions of their people. More often, unable to give proper diagnosis, the pastors simply give some monistic advice by saying that all sufferings and problems are in the hands of God, hoping that this advice would change the patient's attitudes toward sufferings and problems. In actuality, monistic advice many times lacked proper diagnosis and analysis of the situation. Often pastors, especially the conservative ones, are not aware that in dealing with religious problems there has been a social impact. The church should be more aware of the social impacts of its ministry, and also be free enough to embrace and use the methods and findings of the social sciences, which will enable the church to do its religious mission more effectively. What the churches and their pastors or priests in Kiribati need urgently is a healthy understanding of the role of the behavioural sciences in relation to Christian faith. Their therapeutic roles need to be informed not only by their Christian traditions, but also by the indigenous culture, and the modern psychotherapies. Similarly, their preaching roles need to be informed, not only by their Christian traditions, but also by the indigenous culture, and the modern theological and biblical studies. The TThC should consider the establishment of a new program where theological education could be extended to pastors and church members outside the college. This program could be called *theological education by extension*.



Today, educated young people are more inclined to interpret mystical phenomenon in terms of the pathological.<sup>12</sup> Because of that perception, people no longer believed that there is such a thing as supernatural intervention in the life of a person. In Kiribati, "mystical phenomena" are still interpreted in terms of religious or theological experiences. Therefore, it is not unusual for a person who has some mystical experiences, or demon possession, to come to a pastor, rather than a medical doctor. In this case the role of pastors are preeminent.

The role of the pastoral counsellor is very important. The problem posed is how does one differentiate between what is pathological and what is religious? Socially, the difference between what is pathological and spiritual is not clearly defined. For ordinary people, they still overlap. Repeatedly, this is why training in the behavioural sciences is imperative if we need to deal with such problems in a more professional and effective way.

### **The Pastor and Pastoral Care**

One important point to discuss in some detail is the question of who the pastor is in relation to the role of care and counselling in the ministry of the Church. Undoubtedly, the traditional conceptions of the role of the pastor have undergone significant historical and

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<sup>12</sup> John Hick, *Evil and the God of Love*, (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1977), 209.

social changes that often resulted in some confusions. In Kiribati as well as in almost all parts of the Pacific the pastor is seen more as a leader, ruler, and a prince-like figure whose influence and authority are equalled to none in the society, a social position that often misrepresents the actual image of the pastor's calling. In many cases what the pastor does (including all church leaders e.g. RC bishop and priests, etc), or what people do to the pastor is simply the reversal of what they (the people) or the pastor ought to be. Because of this confusion it is therefore imperative to recapture the biblical prototypes or those formative and original notions of who and what the pastor was really meant to be. The intention of this discussion is to help pastors to have a proper perspective of their actual role and to remind them of their calling.

By definition, the word *pastor*, derived from a Latin word which means *shepherd*, is equivalent of "רֹעֶה" in the Old Testament and "Ποιμήν" in the New Testament.

In the Old Testament, רֹעֶה is used for God as a shepherd who takes care of Israel as his sheep. God takes care of his people as a whole community (Ezekiel 34), and as individuals (Psalm 23, Ezekiel 34). As a shepherd, God seeks out and gathers his flock (Ezekiel 34:12), and feeds them with good pasture (Ezekiel 34:14). Besides, the shepherd seeks the lost, brings back the strayed, binds up the cripple, strengthens the weak, and watches over the fat and the strong (Ezekiel



34:16). In Ezekiel 34,  $\text{רֹעִי}$  was used also in a negative sense for the rulers of Israel who only took care of themselves but never tended the sheep of God.

In the New Testament,  $\text{Ποιμην}$  is used primarily for Jesus as the good shepherd who takes care of his sheep (John 10). As a shepherd, Jesus saves, feeds and gives abundant life (John 10: 9-10). He also lays down his life for the sheep (John 10: 11, 15).

In his ministry, Jesus brought the good news, the gospel, to the people in their need. Jesus not only taught the gospel, but also brought the gospel through his *being* and *doing*. He lived among the people, healed the sick, cleansed the lepers, cast out the demons, fed the hungry, and raised the dead. All kinds of people, especially those who were neglected or were the victims of society's ostracism, prejudice, and injustice became the objects of his solicitude and care.

Evidently, shepherding is understood as for the whole community in all its dimensions as well as for individuals. This is especially depicted clearly in the parable of the lost sheep where God gives attention both to the ninety-nine sheep and also to the one sheep which is lost (Matthew 18:10-14).

The Gospels clearly show that Jesus wanted his disciples to follow his example and take care of his sheep. Before the sending out

of his disciples, Jesus gave them a living example of stewardship and caring. He went about all the cities and villages, taught in the synagogues and preached the gospel of the kingdom, and healed every disease and every infirmity. People were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd (Matthew 9:35-36). Even after the resurrection, Jesus commanded his disciples to shepherd his people (John 21:15-17). In the Epistles, Paul uses the word *pastor* for Christians who work in pastoral ministry (Ephesians 4:11).

The modern church still understands a pastor as one who must engage in pastoral care. Patton, a pastoral theologian who has had much experience in pastoral caring, pastoral counselling, and the practice of CPE in the USA, wrote:

A pastor is one who functions in a caring manner, but who is also responsible for that caring along with any other functions of ministry which he or she performs to the religious community which has authorized his or her ministry.<sup>13</sup>

Yet, because caring is a universal human function, every Christian, not only pastors, is a potential bearer of pastoral care.<sup>14</sup> But this is not a new idea; the writers of the New Testament also state this in 1.Thessalonians 5:11, 14 and Matthew 18:15-18. The primary

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<sup>13</sup>John Patton, "Toward A Theology of Pastoral Event: Reflections on the Work of Seward Hiltner." *The Journal of Pastoral Care* 40:139.

<sup>14</sup> Tillich, "The Theology of Pastoral Care" in *Clinical Education For the Pastoral Ministry*, (The Advisory Committee On Clinical Pastoral Education, 1958), 2.



difference between pastors and all others concerned with caring is "that pastors have a greater accountability for their caring and a greater responsibility to deepen their ministry by reflecting upon it and learning from it"<sup>15</sup>

The main function of a pastor is pastoral care, which can be understood in both a narrow sense and broader sense. Pastoral care has a narrow sense if it is only aimed at one individual or several individuals who are in trouble or crisis. William A. Clebsch and Charles R. Jaekle, authors of one of the definitive works on the history of pastoral care, as well as Seward Hiltner, Paul Johnson, and Wayne Oates, share a common understanding of what pastoral care is all about. For them,

Pastoral care consists of helping acts, done by representative Christian persons, directed towards the healing, sustaining, guiding, and reconciling of troubled persons whose troubles arise in the context of ultimate meanings and concerns.<sup>16</sup>

Today, there are many young pastors who are too slow or reluctant to learn the new methods of counselling and pastoral care because they are not only theologically inflexible, but also psychologically and emotionally defensive. They have the conviction that at the core of their pastoral work lies the Spirit of the Lord that

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<sup>15</sup> John Patton and Brian H. Childs, *Christian Marriage & Family - Caring For Our Generations*, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1975), 227.

<sup>16</sup> William A. Clebsch and Charles R. Jaekle, *Pastoral Care in Historical Perspective*, Eaglewood, (Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1964), 4.

constantly guides them in every pace of their entire ministry, and that learning from the secular disciplines is wrongly seen as a sort of substitute for what they thought as purely biblical theology. However, the basic question is not the validity of the notion of divine guidance, or the insistence on what one claims to be truly or purely biblical, but rather the question of how to counsel in a skilled and disciplined way. How to be a true embodiment of Christ's healing touch without causing more harm to those in unbearable situations. Because pastors and priests work for and with people, they need to understand human beings as fully as possible. For this reason, the study of certain behavioural and social sciences is necessary and essential. Anthropology, sociology and psychology help the servant of God to understand the nature, the culture, and the psychological aspects of human beings. Philosophy is also important because it offers a critical approach to understand the ultimate questions and of relating the various fields of inquiry. Learning from these disciplines does not mean that such secular disciplines can become a substitute for the theologically based disciplines and the pastor does not become thereby a psychologist or a sociologist who works in a religious institution. The nature of the pastor's ministry as a representative of the Church and Christ, the head of the Church, must be in proper perspective. The personal identity or the actual being of the pastor is of primarily important, rather than the learned scientific knowledge and skills which are only instrumentally important. Thus, the primary difference between pastors and all others concerned with caring is that of a greater



accountability and a greater responsibility in the pastor's calling.

The CET program requires that the future students who want to learn more from clinical training are people who need to be theologically flexible, and psychologically and emotionally open to new learning. The emphasis of the program therefore will be to do counselling in a skilled and disciplined way. The pastors are expected to have a greater accountability and a greater responsibility in their entire ministry. For this reason, the TThC is expected to prepare students to be competent to do their pastoral ministry professionally. To fulfil this aim, the college must provide a professional staff, adequate equipment, research facilities, and religious and public institutions in the community where care and counselling can be learned and supervised. As early as 1908, George F. Moore of Harvard warned:

The ministry is a practical calling like law and medicine, and preparation for it should be directed, unified, and limited by the practical end. Just as it is not the primary end of the law school to produce men learned in the history and philosophy of jurisprudence, but to train men to practice law in their own country and time; as it is not the primary end of the medicine school to make men learned in the history and theory of medicine, but to train physicians to practice the healing art in their own generation; so it is not the primary aim of the theological school to send out men learned in the history and philosophy of religion, but to train men for the practice of ministry.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Jackson W. Carroll, "The Professional Model of Ministry - Is It Worth Saving?" *Theological Education* 21:13.

As a church and as individuals Christians should be motivated by the love of God to provide ministry to all human beings by adopting the servant type of ministry. By virtue of the fact that the core of the Christian truth is that God's love in Christ is provided for all human beings, so Christians both as fellowship and individuals are called to be servants and channels of God's love and grace. The church must be open and free enough to acknowledge the world as the field where God works to save human beings. Without this compassion, the church may stay in its ivory tower and never accomplish its calling to serve the world.

### **The Role of the Supervisor**

Another aspect which needs to be discussed is the question of supervision. The role of supervision in any pastoral counselling setting needs to be defined. What is the supervisor's role and how his/her function relates to the individual students. In a society where communal, mutualism and interdependent living is dominant, the promotion of self should be seen in their relations with others. Understanding and freedom must also be understood in connection with the larger group of which the individual is a member. Supervision in Kiribati may be to direct students in a certain direction and motivate them in such a way that leads to self-awareness. In a general perspective, perhaps supervision in Kiribati means a special kind of tutorial, sharing and helping relationship in which students with some difficulties or inadequate experience present their work for the



scrutiny and critique of those with more experience. It is the *boto-kaewendiko* (teacher-pupil) relationship, or the *karo-nati* (parent-child) relationship. However, this level of relationship is not a true description of the actual role of supervision where all participants, both teacher and student, are seen equally as unique individuals with different viewpoints, experiences and contributions towards the teaching-learning process. A healthy and positive supervision is one where mutual dialogue takes place, rather than a one way monologue relationship. Thomas W. Klink, a major writer on pastoral supervision, defines supervision as:

- i) Supervision is a unique and identifiable educational procedure;
- ii) it requires as supervisor one who is both engaged in the practice of his profession and duly qualified to supervise;
- iii) it assumes as student a candidate seeking fuller qualification in the practice of his (intended) profession;
- iv) it requires for its setting an institution within whose activities there are functional roles in which student and supervisor can negotiate a 'contract for learning';
- v) the roles of both supervisor and student must be appropriate to their particular professional identity (in this case the Christian ministry);
- vi) lastly, supervision requires for its environment a wider community of professional peers associated in a common task.<sup>18</sup>

Supervision is a very important part of the process of training because it helps the students in reflecting upon their clinical

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<sup>18</sup> Thomas W. Klink, "Supervision" in *Education For Ministry*, Ed. by Charles R. Feilding, Dayton, Ohio: American Association of Theological Schools, 1966), 176-177.

experience. Because of this importance, Lowell G. Colston wrote that supervision is a key concept in CPE.<sup>19</sup> CPE without supervision is impossible because supervision is a prerequisite for such clinical experience. The role of supervisor in the process of supervision is crucial. Heiji Faber, a Dutch pastoral theologian, described the supervisor as a person who has knowledge, experience and wisdom. Supervisors represent a place of security in the often bewildering experiences of the hospital; act as a guide in unknown territory, and without evading responsibilities give the student a fair amount of freedom. The supervisor does not act as an authority, but is rather an older colleague or a "parent" figure.<sup>20</sup>

Obviously, in the supervisory procedure the supervisor is there to help students to reflect on their clinical experiences for their personal growth as well as professional competence and skill. In the course of training the students needs to develop both.

In addition to the supervisor-student relationship in supervisory procedures, there is also an option of group seminar. Through this group the students can learn to build relationships with peers. They

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<sup>19</sup> Lowell G. Colston, "Pastoral Theology and Clinical Training", in *The New Shape of Pastoral Theology*, Ed. by William B. Oglesby, Jr. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1969), 227.

<sup>20</sup> Heiji Faber, *Pastoral Care and Clinical Training in America*, (Leiden: Centrum voor Kerkelijk - Sociologisch en Pastoral - Psychologisch Onderzoek, 1961), 61-62.



can see themselves in interaction with one another, can dare to face their own needs, and can find help in effecting personal change.<sup>21</sup> They can also get feedback from group peers about their pastoral ministry. And while the group experience in clinical training is expected to be therapeutic in the broad sense of that word, its primary focus is educational.

### CET and the Notion of Experience

The basic tenet of CET is the *human experience* as the universal common ground and the meeting point between scientists, historians and advocates of religion. It is the most appropriate medium through which reason and faith, theory and practice, cognitive and emotive dimensions of life find full expressions. In other words, human existence in all aspects is encompassed by varieties of experience, such as intellectual, religious, emotional and physical or cultural experiences that all interchange to make life in the individual and the community meaningful and worthwhile. The central argument of this research is that in religion, as in every other human activity, we live by reflecting and interpreting the experiences, which in principle, can be shared by all human beings. While religious experience, if it is authentic, already contains faith, so scientific experience, if it is authentic, already contains knowledge. Thus, faith and knowledge may only become real to an individual, as a scientist and/or a theologian,

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<sup>21</sup> Robert C. Leslie, "Growth Through Group Interaction," *The Journal of Pastoral Care*, 1951, 5:38.

if they are encountered with true experience -- an interpreted experience. The conversion from disbelief to belief comes about as the result of an encounter with true experience -- an interpreted experience. The conversion of St. Paul may rightly fall into this category. Scientists and historians encounter experience in their study, and upon interpreting their findings they come to a point of belief or what they may describe as true or rational knowledge. Yet the experiences encountered by scientists or historians are, in important ways, different from those encountered by theologians or believers alike, and these differing experiences and varied interpretations of them inculcate distinctive attitudes which cause incompatibility and disagreement, and make understanding difficult. However, because there are different levels of experience and different ways of interpreting those experiences it is important for CET to be critical enough, as well as receptive and open enough, to comprehend and accommodate levels of congruence. This is why CET is emphasizing dialogue and integration as an attempt to understand -- (a) how the scientists and historians think and work, what problems they encounter and how they go about solving them, and what are the methods they employ; (b) how theologians and believers think and work, what do they encounter as problems and how these problems are to be solved, and what methods would they employ; (c) how I-Kiribati think and work, what problems they have to solve, and what methods to employ. In all this, there is a meeting point, obviously, by virtue of the fact that scientists, historians, people of religion and culture all think and live



by *interpreted experiences*.

Today, we cannot deny that science dominates our historical, religious and cultural civilizations in a way that it is viewed as a threat to our future -- the future of culture and religion, especially Christianity whose historical and cultural significance is diminishing. However, in this research, CET claims strongly that scientific, religious and cultural *experiences*, seen in depth, are not as far apart as we suppose. The fact is that we deal with different levels of *experience* using different levels of explanation or interpretation of the same ultimate realities of human life and the world around us. Although we are concerned with the differences we have, the separate fragmentation of *human experience* is a great advantage for it enriches the scope of our knowledge, our world view, and our consciousness of the ultimate reality - God. In principle, there is no encounter of the world, whether in its scientific or religious, technological or cultural aspects, which may not contain within itself an encounter with God. As rational human beings, we all share an intellectual hunger to formulate theoretical or conceptual systems to bring order and meaning to our experiences. In diversity, within our unique studies, we engage ourselves in a search for patterns and relationships in order that the many varied facets of our human encounter in the world is coherently and meaningfully interpreted. In this diversity, CET emphasizes unity in all attempts to organize the whole of *human experience* into a rationally connected system. As H. Dingle, asserts from his scientific-

philosophical perspective, it is the aim of scientific philosophy "to organize the whole of experience into a rationally connected system"<sup>22</sup> From the perspective of theology it is fittingly meaningful to say that the centre of this unity is He who unites what the world sees as irreconcilable entities -- the heaven-and-earth dilemma has been reconciled through His being both man and God; and the life-and-death dilemma has been overcome by His death on the cross and resurrection out of the tomb of death. In the words of the author of the letter to the Ephesians, who affirms that:

God has made known to us his hidden purpose -- such was his will and pleasure determined beforehand in Christ -- to put into effect when the time was ripe : namely that the universe, all in heaven and on earth, might be brought into a unity in Christ.<sup>23</sup>

Again in Colossians, we read:

Through him God chose to reconcile the whole universe to himself, making peace by the shedding of his blood upon the cross--to reconcile all things, whether on earth or in heaven, through him alone.<sup>24</sup>

From this standpoint of faith confession the thrust is made clear that in Christ all things hold together. That is the inner shape of universal history.

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<sup>22</sup> H. Dingle, *The Scientific Adventure*, (1952), 203.

<sup>23</sup> Ephesians 1: 9.

<sup>24</sup> Colossians 1: 19-20.



The notion of *reconciliation* is of vital importance in the development of interpersonal relationships, and also a word of profound meaning in Christian theology. In its deeper and Christian sense, reconciliation involves atonement, attrition, penance, penitence and remorse. Each of these calls for forgiveness, self-sacrifice or denial of our pride, generosity, the affirmation of our common frailty and the love of one another, a characteristic of an harmonized, understanding, peaceful and integrated relationship. For Christians, this movement in love towards one who is estranged is a gift of faith in God's act of reconciliation, and the ground of our common Christian unity -- the pattern and order of human relationships. As clarified profoundly by St. Paul:

When anyone is united with Christ, there is a new world; the older has gone, and a new order has already begun. From first to last this has been the work of God. He has reconciled us men to himself through Christ, and he has enlisted us in this service of reconciliation.<sup>25</sup>

### Experience and Education

The views of John Dewey, a renowned and influential American philosopher of education, is very appropriate to re-emphasize further the interrelationship of experience and education - the underlying aim of CET. Dewey was born in 1859 in Burlington, Vermont and died in New York City in 1952. He was a pioneer in the progressive education movement. In his book *Experience and Education* he argued that progressive education is opposed to the traditional type of education

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<sup>25</sup> II Corinthians 5:17-18

which was practiced at that time. He asserted that:

To imposition from above is opposed expression and cultivation of individuality; to external discipline is opposed free activity; to learning from texts and teachers, learning to experience; to acquisition of isolated skills and techniques by drill, is opposed acquisition of them as means of attaining ends which make direct vital appeal; to preparation for a more or less remote future is opposed making the most of the opportunities of present life; to static aims and materials is opposed acquaintance with a changing world.<sup>26</sup>

The world of everyday life is the starting place in Dewey's philosophy and educational theory. In contrast to other education theorists, Dewey did not look for something beyond the ordinary experience to find some more fundamental and enduring reality. He asserted that the everyday world of common experience is all reality for a human being. He identifies *education* with *growth* and sees it as a process of continuous interaction between the individuals and their environment. He wrote that "the educative process is a continuous process of growth, having as its aim at every stage an added capacity of growth."<sup>27</sup> Such education has no end. He argued that, "Since growth is the characteristic of life, education is all one with growing; it has no end beyond itself."<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> John Dewey, *Experience and Education*, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1938), 5-6.

<sup>27</sup> Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1916), 63.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 62.



The basis of Dewey's theory of education is -- experience. He stated that "education in order to accomplish its ends both for the individual learner and for society must be based upon experience - which is always the actual life - experience of some individual."<sup>29</sup> According to Dewey, education is a reconstruction or reorganization of experience. In his article *My Pedagogic Creed* he wrote "I believe finally, that education must be conceived as a continuing reconstruction of experience."<sup>30</sup>

For Dewey, an experience has two elements. In his book *Democracy and Education* he explained that:

The nature of experience can be understood only by noting that it includes an active and a passive element peculiarly combined. On the active hand, experience is trying - a meaning which is made explicit in the connected term experiment. On the passive, it is undergoing. When we experience something we act upon it, we do something with it; then we suffer or undergo the consequences.<sup>31</sup>

The meaning or the value of experience is measured by the connection of these two phases of experience. According to Dewey:

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<sup>29</sup> Dewey, *Experience and Education*, 113.

<sup>30</sup> Dewey, "My Pedagogic Creed" in *Dewey on Education*, ed. by Martin S Dworking, (New York: Teachers College Press, 1959), 27.

<sup>31</sup> Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, 163.

Mere activity does not constitute experience. It is dispersive, centrifugal, dissipating. Experience as trying involves change, but change is meaningless transition unless it is consciously connected with the return wave of consequences which flow from it. When an activity is continued into the undergoing of the consequences, when the change made by action is reflected back into a change made in us, the mere flux is loaded with significance. We learn something.<sup>32</sup>

Dewey also gave the following example of learning from experience. When a child sticks his/her finger into a flame, it is just an activity, not an experience. The experience happens when this activity is connected with the pain which he/she undergoes in consequence. Henceforth the sticking of the finger into flame means a burn. Being burned is mere physical change, like the burning of a stick of wood, if it is not perceived as a consequence of some other action.<sup>33</sup>

An experience is primarily practical, but the value of the experience lies in reflection upon it. To get the value or the meaning of experience, reflection is needed. But what is reflection? According to Dewey, "Thought or reflection ... is the discernment of the relation between what we try to do and what happens in consequence."<sup>34</sup> So, reflection connects what we try to do and what

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 169



happens in consequence. With this connection, an experience becomes meaningful or valuable for us.

Although all genuine education comes about through experience, according to Dewey it does not mean that all experience are genuinely or equally educative. Experience is educative if it leads to or constitutes the growth of further experience. If experience has the effect of arresting or distorting the growth of further experience, this experience is mis-educative.<sup>35</sup>

Dewey established two principles to make experience valuable and educative. The first principle is continuity. According to Dewey "the principle of continuity of experience means that every experience both takes up something from those which have gone before and modifies in some way the quality of those which come after."<sup>36</sup> Experience will be educative if the continuity element exists in that experience. Dewey wrote:

In a certain sense every experience should do something to prepare a person for later experiences of a deeper and more expansive quality. That is the very meaning of growth, continuity, reconstruction of experience.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Dewey, *Experience and Education*, 13.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 27.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 47.

The second principle to make experience valuable and educative is interaction. This principle means that every experience has objective and internal conditions. The objective conditions are the conditions outside the individual. They consist of a wide range. They include what is done by the educator, educational materials, and, most important of all, the total social set-up of the situations in which a person is engaged.<sup>38</sup> The internal conditions are the conditions inside the individual, including the needs and the capacities of the individual. According to Dewey: "Any normal experience is an interplay of these two sets of conditions. Taken together, or in their interaction, they form what we call a situation."<sup>39</sup>

Dewey criticized the traditional education of his time because traditional education paid so little attention to the internal factors. He argued that "experience is truly experience only when objective conditions are subordinated to what goes on within the individuals having the experience."<sup>40</sup> Further, he also warned that:

The principle of interaction makes it clear that failure of adaptation of material to needs and capacities of individuals may cause an experience to be non-educative quite as much as failure of an individual to adapt himself to the material.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 43-44.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 39.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 37.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 46-47.



Dewey criticized the schools of his time because they put emphasis on the subject matter to be learned, on the textbook, or on the teacher's word rather than on the activities of the pupil. The center of gravity of education of his time was outside the child. According to Dewey, the center of educational activities is on the child, so his theory is known as *child-centered*. He emphasized the participatory activities of the learner in the process of learning. He wrote "Since learning is something that the pupil has to do himself and for himself, the initiative lies with the learner."<sup>42</sup>

Yet, in Dewey's theory of education the role of the educator also is important. The main task of the educator is not to transfer certain ideas or to form certain habits in his/her students. He asserted that "the educator's part in the enterprise of education is to furnish the environment which stimulates responses and directs the learner's course."<sup>43</sup>

To play this role, an educator must regulate the objective conditions and understand the needs and capacities of his/her students. An educator has the duty of determining the environment which interacts with the existing capacities and needs of the students to

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<sup>42</sup> Dewey, "My Pedagogic Creed" in *Dewey on Education*, 134.

<sup>43</sup> Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, 212.

create a worthwhile experience.<sup>44</sup> An educator needs to recognize in the concrete what surroundings are conducive to having experiences that lead to growth. He/she also should know how to utilize the surroundings, physical and social, for building up experiences that are worthwhile.<sup>45</sup>

In the light of Dewey's theory of education, CET as a new model of theological and pastoral education needs to stress the importance of learning through clinical experience where students primarily learn from the direct involvement in the human situation, in addition to the secondhand information from books, theories and lectures. The encounter with the *living human documents* gives students experience which consists of trying and undergoing. Trying is the action of students to their clients and undergoing is the evaluation of the consequence from the clients. This experience will be valuable and meaningful if the students connect their action with the consequences reflectively. This experience will also be educative if it constitutes the growth of further experience.

Similar to Dewey's view, in CET the center of educational activities is on the students. The students are encouraged to be active learners and are expected to take the initiative and have a

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<sup>44</sup> Dewey, *Experience and Education*, 44-45.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 35.



number of participatory activities in the process of learning. They must set their own goals and ways to achieve these goals. If they have questions in their learning, they must primarily look for the answers themselves. Basically, the success of learning depends primarily on the students. However, the role of the supervisor as an educator is also important in determining the environment which will interact with the existing capacities and needs of the students to create worthwhile experience. While in Dewey's theory the role of cognition is most important for reflecting on experience, in CET the stress is not only on *cognition* but also on *feeling* and both are seen as equally important for doing such reflection. Having described Dewey's theory of education in relation to the importance of experience, we may now turn to examine the role of experience in doing theology.

### Experience and Theology

CET stresses the importance of experience as the medium of theology. Without experience theology is empty and meaningless. Because this view is supported by Paul Tillich's *method of correlation*, it is, therefore, important to make a brief analysis of this method.

Tillich is one of the world's great twentieth century theologians. He was born in 1886 in Starzeddel, Germany, and died in 1965 in Chicago, Illinois. In 1933 he migrated to America and continued to live there until his death. He wrote a number of books and articles and made a great contribution to theology. Although he was primarily

a philosopher and systematic theologian, he gave significant attention to practical theology. Seward Hiltner commented, "it is clear that Tillich's contributions to 'our field' are massive, including both the direct and the indirect influences."<sup>46</sup>

In his *Systematic Theology*, Tillich presents a theological *method of correlation* which will help theologians to answer questions raised by our human situation. According to him, "it is further necessary to seek a theological method in which message and situation are related in such a way that neither of them is obliterated."<sup>47</sup>

Tillich's method of correlation is a method of theology which is relevant to the human situation without losing the essential character of the Christian message. According to Wayne E. Oates, "He has provided the pastoral psychologist with a theological method for translating the power of the gospel into the idiom of twentieth century thought, namely a psychological way of thinking, a psychological idiom."<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Seward Hiltner, "Pastoral Psychology - After Paul Tillich," in *Pastoral Psychology*, (1968), 9:5.

<sup>47</sup> Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 1. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1951), 8.

<sup>48</sup> Wayne E. Oates, "The Contribution of Paul Tillich to Pastoral Psychology," in *Pastoral Psychology*, (1968), 9:12-13.



Basically, Tillich defines theology as "the methodical interpretation of the contents of the Christian faith."<sup>49</sup> He states also that the task of theology is apologetic. As he clarifies it:

Apologetic theology is 'answering theology'. It answers the questions implied in the 'situation' in the power of the eternal message and with the means provided by the situation whose questions it answers.<sup>50</sup>

Although Tillich understands theology as apologetic, he does not neglect the kerygmatic element, yet the whole of his systematic theology is written from an apologetic point of view. In making the difference between kerygmatic and apologetic theology, Tillich clearly states the two-fold functions of Christian theology:

In the kerygmatic type the kerygma - the message - is reproduced, interpreted and organized either in predominantly biblical terms or in terms taken from the classical tradition. In the apologetic type the kerygma is related to the prephilosophical interpretation of reality.<sup>51</sup>

Tillich criticized the supranaturalistic, the humanistic, and the dualistic methods of theology. He asserted that the supranaturalistic method is inadequate because it considers "the Christian message to be a sum of revealed truths which have fallen into the human situation

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<sup>49</sup> Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. I. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1951), 15.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>51</sup> Tillich, "The Problem of Theological Method." *The Journal of Religion*, (1947), 32:24.

like strange bodies from a strange world. No mediation to the human situation is possible."<sup>52</sup> The humanistic method is rejected because, "It derives the Christian message from man's natural state. It develops its answer out of human existence, unaware that human existence itself is the question."<sup>53</sup> The dualistic method is rejected because "it builds a supernatural structure on a natural substructure."<sup>54</sup> In contrast to these three methods, Tillich presented his method of correlation, which, according to him "replaces three, inadequate methods of relating the contents of the Christian faith to man's spiritual existence."<sup>55</sup>

Tillich defines the method of correlation as a method of theology which "explains the contents of the Christian faith through existential questions and theological answer in mutual interdependence."<sup>56</sup> Through the method of correlation Tillich tries:

to correlate the questions implied in the situation with the answers implied in the message. This method does not derive the answers from the questions as a self-defying apologetic theology does. Nor does it elaborate answers without relating them to the questions as a self-defying kerygmatic theology does. It correlates questions and answers, situation and message, human existence and divine manifestation.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. I. 64-65.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 65.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 64.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 60.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 8.



What does Tillich mean by 'questions and answers?' and how do they correlate in theology? According to Tillich, questions are raised from the situation. 'Situation' does not refer to a state but refers to the interpretation of existence. Again, as he put it:

The 'situation' to which theology must speak relevantly is not the situation of the individual as individual and not the situation of the group as group. .... The 'situation' theology must consider is the creative interpretation of existence, an interpretation which is carried on in every period of history under all kinds of psychological and sociological conditions.<sup>58</sup>

Tillich has some examples about what the situation is. For him, a situation is not the condition of the political split between East and West, but the political interpretation of this split. A situation is not the condition of the spread of mental diseases, but the psychiatric interpretation of this trend.<sup>59</sup> In his *Systematic Theology* Vol. II., Tillich states that:

The material of the existential question is taken from the whole of human experience and its manifold ways of expression. This refers to past and present, to popular language and great literature, to art and philosophy, to science and psychology. It refers to myth and liturgy, to religious traditions, and to present experiences. All this, as far as it reflects man's existential predicament, is the material without the help of which the existential question cannot be formulated.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Tillich, *Systematic Theology* Vol. II., 4.

Tillich argues that if the questions derive from the situation, the answers derive from the Christian message. He wrote:

The Christian message provides the answers to the questions implied in human existence. These answers are contained in the revelatory events on which Christianity is based and are taken by systematic theology from the source, through the medium, under the norm.<sup>61</sup>

In the method of correlation the questions and the answers are correlated. The situation and the message are both independent and interdependent. Tillich gave some clarification about the independence and interdependence of existential questions and theological answers, especially in his *Systematic Theology*, Vol. II. In his definition, "'correlation,' is a word with several meanings in scientific language, is understood as 'interdependence of two independent factors.'"<sup>62</sup> Tillich elaborated that:

it is impossible to derive the answer from the question or the question from the answer. The existential question, namely, man himself in the conflicts of his existential situation, is not the source for the revelatory answer formulated by theology. .... Man is the question, not the answer. It is equally wrong to derive the question implied in human existence from the revelatory answer. This is impossible because the revelatory answer is meaningless if there is no question to which it is the answer. Man cannot receive an answer to a question he has not asked.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. I., 64.

<sup>62</sup> Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. II., 13.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.



Although questions and answers are independent of each other, according to Tillich, they are also interdependent - "Correlation means that while in some respects questions and answers are independent, they are dependent in other respect."<sup>64</sup>

In what respect are questions and answers interdependent? They are, argued Tillich, in the "form" of the answer and the question. The form of the answer is determined by the form of the question to which it is addressed. In Tillich's words, "the substance of the answers - the revelatory experience - is independent of the questions. But the form of the theological answer is not independent of the form of the existential question."<sup>65</sup> The form of the question is also determined by the answer. Again, Tillich wrote "While the material of the existential question is the very expression of the human predicament, the form of the question is determined by the total system and by the answers given in it."<sup>66</sup> Explaining this statement, he gave an example:

If theology gives the answer, 'the Christ' to the question implied in human estrangement, it does so differently, depending on whether the reference is to the existential conflicts of Jewish legalism, to the existential despair of Greek skepticism, or to the threat of nihilism as expressed in the twentieth century

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

literature, art, and psychology. Nevertheless, the question does not create the answer. The answer, 'the Christ' cannot be created by man, but man can receive it and express it according to the way he has asked for it.<sup>67</sup>

Theology, according to Tillich, "formulates the questions implied in human existence, and theology formulates the answer implied in divine self-manifestation under the guidance of the questions implied in human existence."<sup>68</sup> Because the questions are logically prior to the answers, the first task of theology is to formulate the questions which grow out of the human being's experience as he/she reflects on his/her experience. In contrast with Protestant Orthodoxy, the theology of Paul Tillich does not start with the answer of the Christian message but with the question of the human situation.<sup>69</sup> By starting with the human situation, it makes the answer more relevant to the situation of human being.

As I have mentioned earlier, in Tillich's method of correlation, the theological answers are given from the sources, through the medium, and under the norm of theology.<sup>70</sup> According to Tillich the sources of theology go beyond the Bible. "The Bible, however, is the

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 15-16.

<sup>68</sup> Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. I., 61.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 62.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 64.



basic source of systematic theology because it is the original documents about the events on which the Christian Church is founded".<sup>71</sup> In addition to the Bible, the sources are Church history and the history of religion and culture. Tillich gave the reason why church history and the history of religion also become the sources of theology:

The biblical message cannot be understood and could not have been received had there been no preparation for it in human religion and culture. And the biblical message would not have become a message for everyone, including the theologian himself, without the experiencing participation of the church and of every Christian.<sup>72</sup>

The medium of theology is experience. "Experience is the medium through which the sources 'speak' to us, through which we can receive them."<sup>73</sup> The message is received, coloured, and interpreted through experience. The norm also grows within the experience.<sup>74</sup> Without experience, no theology is possible because experience is like the air in which theology breathes.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 35.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 34-35.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 40.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 52.

<sup>75</sup> Tillich, "The Problem of Theological Method" in *The Journal of Religion*, 32: 22.

However, experience is not the source of theology. Our experience, according to Tillich, "is changing and fragmentary; it is not the source of truth, although without it no truth can become our truth."<sup>76</sup> He also held that "Christian theology is based on the unique event Jesus the Christ" and that "this event is given to experience and not derived from it."<sup>77</sup> Tillich called experience a *medium*, "in order to prevent the individual theologian from looking at his religious experiences and making them directly a basis of his theological thought."<sup>78</sup>

Having described Tillich's method of correlation, it becomes apparent that according to this method, CET in its proposed program provides an environment in which students can learn and do theology. CET expects students in their empirical pastoral training to make direct involvements and encounters with abnormal individuals or unhealthy and troubled individuals - to gain experience of the real human situation and learn how to make sound interpretations of those experiences, to make proper diagnosis of the conditions of their patients, and to provide appropriate answers from the Christian message and the scientific information.

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<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. I., 46.

<sup>78</sup> Tillich, "Answer" in *The Theology of Paul Tillich*, ed. by Charles W. Kegley, (New York: The Pilgrim Press, 1982), 376.



Through empirical training, students are made aware that the human situation varies from one individual to another. This raises varied questions, and needs varied answers. Some individuals are anxious and scared about their condition. Some of them might have been hospitalized for a long time and feel lonely and depressed. There are also individuals who are very nervous and feel helpless because they will undergo surgery. Some individuals live in despair because they have a terminal disease. Many individuals are confused and questioned the power and justice of God. Some of them are angry with God because of their disease; others are deeply troubled and feel guilty. Some families grieve and cry when their beloved ones die. These and many other realities of life are to be encountered by students in their empirical training. In actuality, students work with the person in the "situation" which raises questions. And according to Tillich's method of correlation, the situation is not the condition or state of individuals who are anxious, scared, lonely, depressed, angry, guilty, etc. A situation is the creative interpretation of these conditions. A situation is how students interpret their encounter with individuals who have problems. The situation raises questions which need answers from the Christian message and the scientific information. From this perspective, the task of CET is to formulate the question as well as the answer through the medium of experience in the entire empirical situation where the integration of the Christian message and the scientific message would take place.

We have just discussed the role of experience as the medium of the Christian message. This view is crucial to our understanding of religion, and the transmission of the Christian faith in an educational setting. In the next section, this view is further developed in a way that helps us to understand and practice religion in a more empirical way.

### Experience and Religion

Religion in a deeper sense is not simply a body of knowledge or a series of beliefs, but rather an experience and life with a vital awareness of God as Creator, who is not to be understood without the practice of corporate and private devotion and commitment, prayer and praise. The home as well as the schools are communities of living learning people. Progress in the study of the Bible, Systematic and Pastoral Theology, Church History, and the Christian Faith are stimulated or retarded as much by the general attitude of teachers and parents. For example, their obvious belief or unbelief, their own interest or boredom of the subject, and their competence or ineptitude in presenting it and showing it in actual life. The transmission of religious education is not the communication of elements, but rather of *life*; it is not simply a process, but rather a *living process*. Our methods, ideals, principles and thought patterns are not inert entities; they are mental experiences impregnated with life. This is also true to science. The contribution of science to our world of knowledge is not the scientific method, but the *scientific life*. Our primary task,



therefore, as educators of religion (and this applies also to educators of secular disciplines), is to teach the realization of life, its ultimate concerns for growth and fulfillment, but not the mastery of method. CET, in this attempt, maintains that religion is native to all people which begins in the parent-child relationship in the home, and finds developments and refinements later in life's experiences through interpersonal encounters, experiences of the world, and also in schools in a teacher-student relationship. All elements of learning and experience contribute to the development of religious awareness as an affair of the whole person, interacting and responding to that which for him/her is most real and of greatest worth. The most important question here is not whether the person should be religious, but what religion should shape his/her whole life. For this reason, teachers and parents cannot escape their part in the religious education of children. It is in this crucial task of guiding the religious development of the growing mind that teachers and parents are responsible partners. The contribution of the behavioural sciences, for example psychology, is a great advantage in this onerous task. The experience of teacher and parent is a remarkable advantage, but to have, in addition a cultural, psychological and theological knowledge and skills would be a still greater advantage. Therefore, the proposal of CET to include scientific enquiry or empirical observation alongside our traditional theological and cultural orientation, and general human experience is a matter of great importance that should be given proper attention and immediate implementation in our theological curriculum.

Religious education in Primary and Secondary schools should be seen as equally important alongside secular subjects in the curriculum developed by the Government.

It is sad to see today that the teaching of religion in many universities is drastically declined or pushed to the periphery of the academic circle. It suffers from, what I would call, the "minority-syndrome," and as a result its very survival seems to depend entirely on the political and economic climate of the time. Therefore, its intrinsic worth should be elevated to attract, not only academic justice, but also public attention in order to stand the test of time. The recent amalgamation of the Board of Divinity with the Department of Religious Studies to form a new School of Studies in Religion at Australia's oldest university, the University of Sydney, may raise some important questions. Does the change do more good to the future development of Religious Studies as an academic discipline in its own right, or does it signal its own gradual downfall and demise? As an academic discipline, does it bear fruits edible in the socio-economic and socio-political domains? If not, is there anything to be done? This discussion should not go beyond the scope of this research to explore in detail the problems and future of religious education in secular institutions, however, there is need to take precautions as to how studies in religion develop into the next century alongside other secular academic disciplines. Religious education in secular institutions bridges the gap that traditional and confessional



theological colleges and seminaries have unconsciously maintained from the very beginning.

### CET and the Ministry of the Church

CET in its preliminary stage needs to propose its basic understanding and foundational philosophy of ministry which attempts to bridge the gap between ordained and lay ministries within the KPC. CET proposes that the divided nature of ministry is an irrelevant pattern in a society which is communal and values a combined human effort. The ministry of the KPC is to be seen as an obligation of every individual member - "ordained and lay." The running of administrative and ecclesial offices should not be reserved exclusively for the ordained clergy; although their leadership role is relevant, they also need the expertise and full support of the laity. The clerical leadership should be seen more in terms of servanthood and stewardship, but not as a ruling elite within the Church. Importantly, the KPC needs to reexamine its traditional understanding of ministry.

The traditional understanding of ministry is based only on a part of the apostolic commission. The apostles were sent out to preach and also to heal the sick and cast out demons. In the apostolic succession the ministry has become *preaching* in the Protestant tradition and the *administration of the sacraments* in the Roman Catholic tradition. It is generally believed that this is real service for God, while other good work may be done to his glory. For

Protestants, ministry is done by those who spend time preaching, or in other occupations that are in essence designed to bring people into the church to listen to the sermon. For Roman Catholics, ministry is done by those who are endowed with special authority to administer the sacraments.

However, the gospels pose a different question and offer a different ideal. The gospel tradition has at the core two unmistakable principles, both of which are essential for real ministry, viz: *togetherness* and *wholeness*. The former is the means by which the latter, the goal of human existence, is achieved. Togetherness is summed up in a theological doctrine of the Incarnation and is therefore implicit in the whole of the New Testament. It is theologically sound to say that without the incarnation there is no gospel and no salvation. It is extraordinary that the Church in Kiribati could ever lose emphasis of this doctrine, without which there would be nothing to preach. It is a terrible mistake to which the Church continually succumbs.

The traditional theory of theological training and that of pastoral work is based on *separateness* -- being set apart from the rest of the society -- the so called secular world. There seems to be no vision to move out of the ghetto of the parish church and share the life of the masses who had for so long been estranged from the church. The ministry of the church is confined within its own boundary, making



no effort to move out into the unchurchly sector of society. Perceiving it from this angle, it appears that the current pattern of ministry is based on what is known in Africa today as *apartheid*, which is the antithesis of *Incarnation*. The enclosed church underlies the *apartheid* that pervades ministry today. The urge towards *togetherness* is timely. There is need to explore the meaning of ministry in today's world. The hard core of ministry is based neither on places nor clothes but it is exercised wherever there are women and men to whom the Incarnation is a basic reality, and who are prepared to live out its implications. The proposal to revitalize the ministry of the laity is imperative if the KPC needs to be effective and faithful to its original purpose in the Kiribati society.

### The Lay Ministry

Between the late 1970s and mid 1980s a variety of books about lay ministry, from both Protestant and Catholic writers, suddenly hit the market. They concerned themselves with the difference between *theory* (or *theology*) and *practice* in the ministry of the Church, and the conflict over clergy and laity roles.

Despite all their different opinions there was one distinct trend which could be seen in all perspectives. A call for a new direction in the ministry of the Church through the laity was being summoned forth by these *prophets*. This new direction would involve the Church moving away from the self focus on the Church's own structures

toward an outward sacrificial service of individuals, becoming a Christian influence in the world of secular employment, and in society at large.

H. Butt notes a reappearance of the laity into taking up a responsibility in Church and world,<sup>79</sup> and describes his book as being "about a creative, responsive, lay mind-set needed as leaven in Church and society"<sup>80</sup> while Bucy says of this new direction: "This may be the new frontier in developing a Christian impact on the vast systems in our organized, complex, industrial society."<sup>81</sup>

The question then arises: "What is ministry and how is it to be understood?" Is it what is done in the confines of the Church buildings and grounds, with the occasional organized attempt at moving into the world by an outreach or aid programme? Can we also see that whatever each member does wherever they are can be done "in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Col. 3:17), and will therefore be a ministry of the Church, the body of Christ?

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<sup>79</sup> H. Butt; *At the Edge of Hope*; (New York: Seabury; 1978), 78-85.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>81</sup> R. Bucy (ed); *The New Laity*; (Waco, Texas: Word, 1978), p.9.



The following statement from "Learning to Share the Ministry" leads us to assume that this particular Church saw itself as a ministry in terms of the programme it had to offer:

"The educational programme at St Mark's became the foundation and reason for the existence of the parish... it remains the highest priority for the congregation."<sup>82</sup>

The major focus of St Mark's was indeed internal, where ministry was by members to members. Yet even when such a ministry is offered to the world at large the condition almost always seems to be "You must come to us." Tillapaugh criticized this kind of "fortress" mentality: "The fortress Church puts up its building, starts its programs and concentrates primarily within its walls."<sup>83</sup>

Vernon Grounds' foreword also comments on what Tillapaugh sees as:

".... many Churches are introverted, concerned about attracting larger and larger congregations to their pulpit-centered service, increasing their budgets, improving and expanding their facilities while their members remain afflicted with arthritic spectatoris."<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> Adams & Hahn; *Learning to Share the Ministry*; (Washington: Alban Institute; 1975), 15.

<sup>83</sup> F.Tillapaugh; *The Church Unleashed*; (Ventura: Regal Books, 1982), 8.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., p.5.

The question "What is ministry?" is associated with another question - "What is Church?" Does not our understanding of what the Church is mould our perception of ministry? If we see Church primarily as a *place* where people meet to worship, etc., then the place will be vital to the ministry. However, if we truly understand that the Church is a community of believers, then we shall also understand that wherever these believers are and are ministering, the Church is and is ministering.

In dealing with these questions it is extremely important to explore what the Bible says about the ministry of the people of God (i.e. the Church), to the world. One of the key passages is 1.Peter 2, particularly verse 9, which reads:

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

In this passage the apostle Peter, assuming he was the writer, explains that as a priesthood we are all representatives of God to mankind in how we live and what we say (cf. 2.Cor. 5:18-20). He then continues, giving detail and depth to what it means to be the people of God in ministry. The words of Christ which we now call the *Great Commission* are significant here:

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey all that I have commanded you.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Matt. 28:19-20.



This Commission was directed not only to the apostles, but also to all who have received the call to salvation in Christ and can be seen as the basic mission of the whole people of God. That is, the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ for the discipling of all nations, for baptizing and for teaching obedience to him. Therefore a broad statement of the ministry of the people of God, the Church, would be anything that includes as its first priority the discipling of all nations.

Since God has so ordained that all Christians minister to all nations (Matt. 28:19-20; Jn. 17:18; 20:21), then we have the assurance that he has also provided us with the ability to do so, both as individuals and as a body. This assurance is supported by the variety of gifts referred to in different passages (Rom.12; 1.Cor.12-14; Eph.4; 1.Pet.4). I will not debate here whether or not these lists name every spiritual gift possible, however the ambiguous meaning of certain gifts, such as word of knowledge, miracles, helps, does leave room for varying interpretations. My own belief is that the lists are not exhaustive, but I would want to raise the question of why we should be seeking after more gifts when we are not yet fully appropriating those we are already convinced about.

There is no scriptural justification for a higher and lower order (or calling) in ministry, which is the vision fostered in definitions of laity as *non-professionals* and *ordinary believers* as

distinct from *clergy*. The word *laity* comes from the Greek word *laos*, meaning *people*, (1.Pet.2:9; *laos theou* - *the people of God*). We all have a full share in what God has done, is doing and will do. This includes *clergy*, but elevates every believer to the status of minister.<sup>86</sup> It should be noted here that the word *minister* is a translation of the Greek word *diakonos*, meaning *servant*.

There is a lack of understanding by most average Church members that they are called to be ministers through their lives. This is usually expressed in their felt need to have an ordained clergy person as *the minister*, and have the ministry centre around the Church. This basic problem has developed through history into a self-perpetuating tradition. Ministers are hired to do the work of ministry. Gillespie says that the Church delegates "the ministry" (the work of the Church) to the clergy, and relegates the laity to the role of a "supporting cast" (Churchwork)<sup>87</sup>. Our traditional concept of ministry is faulty. It has put ministers in a vicarious position (hereby the term *vicar* becomes more significant), and absolved the rest of the Church from ministry responsibility and accountability. This position has no support from scripture.

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<sup>86</sup> Gillespie, in Bucy op.cit. p.14-17; L Richards & G. Martin; *A Theology of Personal Ministry*; (Grand Rapids: Zondervan; 1981), 17f.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.



The Church desperately needs a change in attitudes and values. Fenhagen suggests four such changes:<sup>88</sup>

- (1) the priority of ordained clergy as equippers (enablers) and members as ministers.
- (2) the importance of ongoing support for the "new" ministers.
- (3) the interdependence of the Church community.
- (4) the search for personal authenticity by members.

If the whole Church community understood ministry in these terms, then support such as education and small groups could develop to help each one to discern personal gifts and therefore calling.

The offices of apostle, prophet, evangelist and pastor-teacher have traditionally been seen as the source of the role for clergy. These offices were originally given "to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up" (Eph. 4:11-12). Yet, as Fenhagen rightly observes, the pressures against the clergy developing an enabling ministry "are enormous."<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> J. Fenhagen, *Mutual Ministry*; (New York: Seabury, 1977); 105.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., p.104.

Two things need to be taken into consideration regarding an enabling ministry. Firstly, the lack of understanding of personal ministry by most Christians, as already explained, and secondly, the lack of understanding about the secular workforce by the majority of the clergy. This raises the question of the suitability of most clergy to equip the laity for ministry in that workforce. How will they be successful if they are unable to empathize with those they are trying to equip? Conversely the clergy are usually (but not always) the only ones who have the resources and training needed for equipping, even though laity carry out equipping functions in Church programmes such as Sunday School, Youth Group, Men's and Women's Fellowships, etc. These programmes operate from within the Church, but have the potential to reach out from the Church into the community.

Paul explicitly told the Corinthian Church that they did not lack any gift. They were able and equipped to carry out the work of the Church of God (1.Cor. 1:6-7). This suggests that every member of the body of Christ possesses gifts needed for ministry, and therefore we need to discover and explore the use of our own gifts.

The intentional aim with this study would be to examine, devise and develop ways in which Church members in Kiribati can be a relevant Christian influence in the workforce. Taking some ideas from Fenhagen<sup>90</sup> the programme would include prepared Bible study, prayer, a

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<sup>90</sup> Fenhagen, *Ibid.*, 70f.



sharing time and a critiquing of recent ministry involvement, and discussion of personal and hypothetical case studies. These items would have the intention of discipling members as individuals, but with a system of mutual accountability within the group. After all, why should only those who are Church office bearers be held accountable for their ministries? The anticipated result would be a mobilization of laity.

This ministry would have a mission-perspective based on the priority of Matt. 28: 19-20. It is abundantly clear that, in order to effectively "make disciples of all nations", a new direction for Church as previously described is long overdue for action. For this to begin to take place the clergy must embrace a philosophy of authentic egalitarianism in both life and ministry, and be prepared to live with the tension of what this might mean as a Church leader. The laity also must embrace new values and work toward any necessary changes in personal attitudes. The Church as a whole must desist from purely internal ministry orientation, and refocus, ministry objectives on the world in terms of the priority of Matt. 28:19-20. Programmes can then be implemented to pursue this priority, using the mobility of the laity.

When this happens the Church will change direction from an introspective, self-serving body to an extroverted, society-influencing force, reaching out into the world where people are hungry, hurting and hostile. Only then will the Church truly begin again to disciple

all nations.

Having discussed some proposals for new trends in doing theology within the ministry of the Church, it is also appropriate to consider seriously the cultural matrix of the Church, the general world view of its members, including their cultural values and practices and also the pressing issues that need to be addressed. This will be done in the next chapter by exploring the Kiribati religio-cultural milieu in order to establish a groundwork where the proposals of CET may find cultural appropriation and application.

THE END OF THE WORLD IS NOT THE END OF THE WORLD



## CHAPTER FOUR

## THE KIRIBATI RELIGIO-CULTURAL MILIEU

## An I-Kiribati Ethos and Worldview

The discussion in this chapter will focus mainly on the psycho-social or psycho-cultural, and spiritual aspects of an I-Kiribati worldview, including the relationship of an individual to the rest of the community, political and value systems, and other social factors that contribute towards a basic understanding of the Kiribati *katei* (customs and culture).

However, discussion on the subject of the Kiribati culture is not an easy one, as Kiribati itself is so fragmented geographically and has an amalgam of many cultural variations that cannot be dealt with justice through the efforts of one *I-Kiribati* scholar only. For this reason, my discussion will be primarily focused on my research based on traditions from the islands of Makin in the northern part of Kiribati, Maiana and Abemama in central Kiribati, Nikunau in the south, and Rabi in the Fiji group for the Bandan culture. In my previous work, I have generally categorized these island traditions thus, Northern Kiribati Source (NK Source), covering the islands of Makin, Butaritari, Marakei, Abaiang and Tarawa; Central Kiribati Source (CK Source), which includes the islands of Maiana, Kuria Aranuka, Abemama and Nonouti; and finally the Southern Kiribati Source (SK Source), consisting of

Tabuteuea, Onotoa, Beru, Nikunau, Tamana and Arorae.<sup>1</sup> The island of Banaba in the western part of Kiribati is here included for the first time and would be described hereafter as the Banaban Source (B Source). This differentiation is made by virtue of the fact that the original inhabitants of the island of Banaba were not *I-Kiribati* by heritage. The original Banabans claimed to be ethnically and culturally different, and to be fair enough to this claim we should refer to their traditions by name of the B Source. Although, there are cultural similarities between Banaba and the rest of the Kiribati Islands, the differences are extremely astounding. While the Kiribati family is patrilineal, the Banaban is matrilineal and there are obvious elements of a mixture of matriarchy and patriarchy in their entire social system.

Every society, culture or religious organization has its own unique social ethos and traditional worldview. In its very basic sense, an ethos or worldview is a well organized and systematic principle of life that governs everyday existence of any particular people and their relation to the world around them. It is a total perception of the *Self-Others-World* interrelationship, the *I-You-It* or the *I-Thou* existential relationship, to use Martin Buber's concept. Generally, the

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<sup>1</sup> Maroti R. Rimoni, *The Pandanus Theology*, (B.D. Thesis, PTC: Suva, 1985), p.71.



terms *ethos* and *worldview* can be defined and used in many different ways, however, for the purpose of this work I find Clifford Geertz' definition most appropriate:

A people's *ethos* is the tone, character and quality of their life, its moral and aesthetic style and mood. It is the underlying attitude towards themselves and their world in that life reflects. Their world view is their picture of the way things in sheer actuality are, their concept of nature, of self, of society.<sup>2</sup>

One way to understand people's worldviews is through understanding their belief system -- religion and cultural behaviour. Because the fact shows that religion, belief system, cultural background and worldviews are interrelated; they cannot be separated or isolated from one another.<sup>3</sup>

World-view is like a seed planted in a particular place on a certain soil and climate. The seed will grow along with the particular characteristics of the place, and congruence with the concrete reality of the place. Moreover, world-views are composed of people's attitudes, values, concepts and all life experiences.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 127.

<sup>3</sup> Michael Kearney, *World View*, (Novato, Ca: Chandler & Sharp, 1984), 41.

<sup>4</sup> Sue, *Counselling the Culturally Different: Theory and Practice*, 73

I-Kiribati world-views can be known as they are reflected in their indigenous belief system -- mysticism. I-Kiribati world-view can be distinguished into three interrelated attitudes, viz, distance, concentration, representation.

Human beings should *tau-nano* (hold or take distance) towards their surrounding world, both material and spiritual. The purpose for achieving distance is to get in touch with one's own true self -- the experience of being one with God. Taking an attitude of distance involves *taana-n-nano*, *rau-n-nano* and *nano-rinano*.

*Taana-n-nano* is a readiness to surrender all one's possessions, abilities and rewards with gladness without complaint. *Taana-n-nano* is also a willingness to sacrifice or to renounce everything that is perishable and subjected to change. An I- Kiribati mysticism affirms the concept of seeking unity in the midst of diversity. I-Kiribati believe that the whole universe is one unit; which means that all things are interdependent, and that all things come from and return to the one, who created them, that is God, everything is in the hand of God. Things can be divided and distinguished, but that is not the true reality, because the state of divisions is only temporary. Finally, people will seek the intrinsic unity, because each one is part of the unity. Unfortunately, human beings have destroyed the unity and this



leads them to become more individualistic.

I-Kiribati view their world as integrated. They generally believed that *aomata ma b'aai nako* -- human beings and all things are in constant relationship with one another and with the invisible world, causing them to be in a state of complete dependence upon those visible and invisible powers of the supreme God, or what our ancestors referred to as *Na Aneau* -- God the creator, and *Nakaa* -- God the guardian of Paradise. Most traditions from the NK, CK and SK Sources held that the creator and the guardian of paradise refer to the same deity who is known by many different names. My previous research in the NK Source about the Land of Bouru (land of paradise) discussed in some detail the link of the name *Na Aneau* (the creator God) and *Nakaa* (the Guardian of Paradise).<sup>5</sup>

Distance or *tau-raroo* is also seen in the attitude of *Rau-n-nano*, which means peace at mind. *Rau-n-nano* or resignation is rather a balance of the soul, but it is not the picture of someone who is passive and does not like to work; it is not a withdrawal, but rather an acceptance of what happens in life with satisfaction and gratitude.

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<sup>5</sup> Maroti R. Rimon, "The Land of Bouru: Understanding the Kingdom of God as Self-Realizing Eschatology", in *Christ and the Tanoa*, (Lotu Pasifika Publication: Suva, 1989), 99-105.

The core attention of *rau-n-nano* is the mind -- *te nano*, which means a depth of feeling-meaning. I-Kiribati people place a greater emphasis on spirituality, religion and philosophy. That is why they are able to accept the external material causes of disaster as they are, because human beings cannot do much about them. However, progress and improvement are achieved first of all through one's attitude; as to how well they accept and understand the unavoidable fate. Happiness is not determined by material wealth, but it springs up from the real self.

In "peak experience," as Maslow described, the world is seen as it is -- it is accepted. Evil (disaster, injustice, poverty, etc.) is no longer seen as enemy. It is there; human beings must face it and accept it. Further he wrote:

Evil itself is accepted and understood and seen in its proper place in the whole, as belonging there, as unavoidable, as necessary, and, therefore, as proper.<sup>6</sup>

Development is not first of all to change the evil, but rather to find out the appropriate mental attitude to face it. The main aim in life is not to minimize the negative aspects, and maximize the positives because it is impossible to maximize one without maximizing the other. Instead the aim is to minimize the passions altogether so

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<sup>6</sup> Abraham Maslow, *Religions, Values, and Peak Experiences*, (Columbus: Ohio State Univ. Press, 1964), 63.



far as possible, to mute them in order to perceive 'feeling' which lies behind them. The aim is peace in the heart.

Each individual always has periods of happiness and periods of unhappiness, the ups and downs of every day experience of life. The aim is to see that the harmonious universe is preserved. Beside being totalistic, the Kiribati world-view is also dualistic. There are two forces or more which are always in tension and conflict with one another. Even though tension and conflict are accepted, the balance of the whole should be maintained, so that the whole order will not be disturbed. The aim is to have a stable world based on conflict. In order to keep life in balance and to avoid the repression, one tries to mute one's emotions entirely, and to put oneself beyond both happiness and unhappiness.

This world view seems to be influential to personal and community conduct in solving their differences. In the process of decision-making, I-Kiribati usually adopt the non-threatening method to equilibrium, namely the "neither-nor" position. Every attempt is made to avoid conflicts and open debates. Even if the differences are so tense the sense of control is highly expected. Whatever decision is made in the final analysis it will always be the corporate decision of the group, not the individual. Plutocracy is totally denied in the

Kiribati society, and for this reason the few emerging wealthy members of the society, in this case the highly paid government employees or businessmen, have no political or social control whatsoever.

*Nano-rinano*, patience or endurance, is the third step to achieve distance. It is the ability to accept all kinds of trials and facts of life without complaint. In other words, *nano-rinano* -- patience means broadmindedness, humbleness and not trying to push oneself to the front, which consequently, would enable one to embrace all kinds, of differences, and contradictions, no matter how big they are -- an absolute tolerance. This means that those who have *nano-rinano* attitudes usually do not distinguish between friend and enemy or one religion over another. Because of this attitude, I-Kiribati are able to live at peace with their neighbours who have a different culture, religion and belief.

In his attempt to integrate religious experiences and social science, i.e. psychology, Maslow clearly explained peak experience as "non-comparing or non-evaluating or non-judging cognition."<sup>7</sup> This world-view cannot be depicted more clearly than through the notion and practice of *te ikotaki* (gathering). *Te ikotaki* is a ritual of gathering

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<sup>7</sup> Abraham Maslow, *Toward a Psychology of Being*, 2nd. ed. (New York: Van Nostrand, 1968), 75.



together, setting apart from the rest of the society, usually for three consecutive days,<sup>8</sup> and making total devotion to all activities and regulations involved as a thorough preparation for a certain course of action. It also symbolizes the mystical and social unity of those who participate in the ritual who are bound together as a particular social group who have the responsibility to help each other and to work together.

Even though *te ikotaki* is basically a mystical activity, it has social and cultural consequences, and it is a symbol of solidarity. The sense of solidarity as the outcome of *te ikotaki*, consequently leads to the spirit of *te ibubucki*, or helping each other and working together. In its religious sense, *te ikotaki* is to achieve a state of peace, balance, prosperity and salvation -- a state of equilibrium of all elements which are in that particular receptacle. During *te ikotaki* everyone is treated the same, and each one is aware of being part of the group. Through *te ikotaki*, religious, social, economic and political differences do not matter. 'Everyone is treated the same'. What is more important than one's religious belief, or social status, or economic class, or political ideology, is the reality that all live

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<sup>8</sup> Number *three* is considered an absolute number of perfection by I-Kiribati, such as *seven* according to the Hebrews.

within one community, that each of them is part of the totality. Differences are allowed and tolerated as long as they do not disturb the harmony of the whole. At the same time, the harmony of the whole will swallow up the identity of the individuals. This condition can be achieved only when people who participate in *te ikotaki* have the awareness that the sense of community must surpass the individual differences. The same experience profoundly occurs also in the *maneaba* gathering -- *maneaba* existence.

Since people vary in their ability to carry out the spiritual disciplines, it is possible to rank individuals according to their spiritual abilities and other achievements. Beside a horizontal type of relationship, there is also a vertical division among I-Kiribati. However, this vertical division is not hierarchical, but understood in terms of *aamarau* (refined, soft) and *aamatoo* (coarse, rough) relationships. The *aamarau* persons are basically those individuals who are sensitive to others and to God, and have achieved their true self; they are wise and able to control oneself; and morally and spiritually mature. The *aamatoo* person is the opposite of the *aamarau* one. The vertical division between *te boto* (teacher) and *te kaewenako* (pupil), *te ikawai* (older person) and *te ataei* (younger person), *te karo* (parent) and *te nati* (child) are in terms of *aamarau-aamatoo* relationships. *Te boto* is more *aamarau* than *te kaewenako*, and *te ikawai* is more *aamarau* than *te ataei*. In such a relationship emphasis is placed on the



nurturing role of the parent to ensure that the natural ignorance and needs of the child is improved to an adult state of autonomy and growth. This type of relationship may be rightly described in terms of Transactional Analysis where the "therapists seek to act out their Nurturing Parent, Natural Child and Adult ego states to empower the same states in their clients."<sup>9</sup>

In order to enhance distance, one must concentrate one's inner life so that the material concern can be superseded by a spiritual one. Concentration, meditation, or introspection is another important I-Kiribati approach of solving a problem. The aim of concentration is to find the true self. It is manifested in the practice called *te tabutabu*, which is an abstinence of certain food, drink, sleep and sex, the consequence of which is *te muianounou*, which is the attainment of inner freedom and a state of being wholly complete. Those who have attained *te muianounou* have a strong sense of optimism and total hope in everything they do. In *te tabutabu* there is *te aki mamatam* (abstinence of food and drink) and *te taubaang* (moderation, total control of all types of wants and desires). Undergoing *te aki mamatam* one's physical power can be weakened, and one becomes more aware of one's relative and limited existence. Through *te taubaang* one becomes

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<sup>9</sup> Stanton L. Jones & Richard E. Butman, *Modern Psychotherapies*, (Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1991), 331.

more aware of one's sense and power of control where the self is no longer subjected to the passions and material wants. The practice of true *tabutabu* must be practiced in the midst of the present society but in secret. The Kiribati mysticism believes that the perfection of life is not an eschatological matter alone, but it can also be accomplished in the *now*. The notion of *te karanaoi* (perfection) is not thought of in utopian terms. An I-Kiribati from childhood learns to strive for and accomplish *te karanaoi* in all aspects of individual and communal life.

The basic idea of *te tabutabu* is similar to Jesus' teaching of fasting. A good fasting should be done in secret without disturbing one's daily life activities (Matt. 6:1; 16-18 RSV). If it is done in that manner, *tabutabu* will bring about *te muianounou* -- the experience of inner freedom, undivided being, optimism and hopefulness, where the material world is no longer able to control nor induce him/her. The end result of *te tabutabu* is also called the experience of detachment.

In the experience of *te tabutabu*, the person involved feels the unity with the supreme power -- being one with God; this is the pure basic feeling-meaning, which is at once the individual's true self. The notion of purity in *te tabutabu* is very strong in such a way that the person who engaged in it makes every effort to set apart from what is considered to be unclean. It is believed that physical purity is an outward manifestation of an inner purity of mind - a stage where one



feels close to the supreme power. Commenting on detachment, Maslow wrote:

This is a little like talking about the god-like perception, superhuman perception. The peak experience seems to lift us to greater than normal heights so that we can see and perceive in a higher than usual way, we become larger, stronger, bigger, taller people and tend to perceive accordingly.<sup>10</sup>

The result of the experience of being one with God, is to take on or demonstrate the characteristics of God. The Greek word *αἰώνιος*(*aiōnios*) in the New Testament which is translated as "eternal life" can also be translated as "possessing God's characteristics". The characteristic of God is peace, so the person who is in unity with God must show that he/she is the agent of peace. God is love; so also the person who has achieved unity with God. The immediate task of human beings is to restore the innate beauty of God's creation --the world. This can be done, if everyone at one's assigned place carries out one's assigned duty. This duty should be performed for the good of society. In a communal society, the need of society always surpasses the individual's.

Representation is an attempt to achieve harmony in the community -- to restore unity. The religious concepts of distance, concentration and representation are the three core concepts of the Kiribati mysticism which influence an *I-Kiribati* attitude to life.

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<sup>10</sup> Maslow, *Religions, Values*, 61-62.

There are other important cultural concepts and values that we need to explore further. This includes the gender roles, statuses and identities, rituals, and the social structures that govern, regulate or shape the physical and mental behaviour of the people. In addition, some discussion will be made with reference to the *Maneaba* decision-making, the traditional concept of time, the practice of the *tabuneas*, the traditional concepts of illness, suffering and the notion of salvation, and also the question of virginity which is one of the pressing issues in the Kiribati society today. Foreign influences that also help shape the contemporary world-view of *I-Kiribati* will also be discussed. Generally speaking, the most influential agents of change in the Kiribati society from the very beginning have been the ongoing activities of the new religion (Christianity), the new economic system (Capitalism), and the new political system (Democracy). Although Christianity, Capitalism and Democracy have exerted themselves to be the norms, strong elements of traditional belief -- mysticism, and the traditional economic system -- *te Ibukanib'ai* (reciprocal giving and sharing), and the traditional political system -- *maneaba* system (mutualism and communism) are still functionally necessary and widely respected.

### The Gender Roles

Issues and beliefs about gender are such fundamental aspects of the Kiribati culture that we need to examine them in order to understand the levels of relationships and the roles of both men and



women in the Kiribati society. My approach in this study is primarily based on the etymological analysis of words and concepts in an attempt to understand the most literal and original meaning of those important words, titles and concepts.

Gender socialization begins at birth. Gradually, perceptions and beliefs of being a *male* or *female* develop in a way that both male and female are becoming interested in pursuing activities previously defined or stereotyped as exclusively male or exclusively female domains. Traditional myths, beliefs, language usage, names and titles for both male and female contribute to the gender socialization process.

The socially defined gender roles show how the sexes are organized with their respective roles. From the point of view of the Kiribati culture, *gender roles* are not to be confused with *gender statuses* or *gender identities*. A *role* is what the society assigned to a particular sex to undertake in a given context. It is a *function* to be done, but not a *status* to be honoured, nor an *identity* to be affirmed. Although these concepts are all interrelated, the Kiribati indigenous understanding does not confuse them. *Gender roles* are systematically arranged to meet the needs and aspirations of the society and its people. This was the original objective of the socially defined gender roles. However, the shift from this original traditional understanding came about as the result of one of the many

misunderstandings or misinterpretations made by Europeans since their first contacts with the islanders in the early nineteenth century. Because they came from a rigidly stratified society where there were nobles and commoners, where roles were largely organized according to specific ranks, so there was a problem of *ethnocentrism*, and the distinction between what is foreign and indigenous was overlooked. Europeans simply interpreted the Kiribati society in terms of their Western hierarchical society. This was apparently evidenced in their documented works<sup>11</sup> about the islands, the people and their culture, where *oi-ni-m'anen te kawa* (the village elders) were confused with village chiefs; and *baatuan te utu* (family elders) were confused as nobles; and *taan taetae n te m'aneaba* (spokesmen in the *maneaba*) were regarded as paramount chiefs in the community.

The traditional titles for elders, both men and women were not differentiated in terms of a *superior-inferior* type of relationship. The word *Oi-ni-m'ane* which literally means *real man* used to be a title for an old man, and *Oi-n aine* meaning *real woman* a title for an old woman. These original titles are systematically consistent with the

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<sup>11</sup> See in particular, Arthur Grimble, *A Pattern of Islands*, (London: John Murray), 1969; Rosemary Grimble, *Migration, Myth and Magic from the Gilbert Islands*, (London: Routledge Keagan Paul), 1972. Many other works on Kiribati written by expatriates contain some elements of what I would describe as an unconscious misinterpretation of some aspects of culture, particularly those aspects that only an I-Kiribati can fully comprehend, e.g. the political position of the *unimane* in the *utu*, *maneaba*, *kawa* and in the society at large., etc.



entire traditional role of the elders (real men and real women) who are regarded to be the sources of *real* advice and care. Etymologically, the root word *oi* meaning *trunk* (e.g. of the tree) clearly shows the direct connection and link between the source and the branches (ancestors and their children). By virtue of the fact that they have lived longer and have acquired much experience, wisdom and vision, old men and women are looked upon with great respect as true advice-givers, true care-givers, wonderful guides or in today's sense - professional counsellors. However, the change in the meaning of their titles came about when they were given their written form in the first place. *Oi-ni m'ane* changed to *Un-m'ane* which literally means *aggressive man*, and *Oi-n aine* changed to *Un-aine* meaning *aggressive woman*. The notion of authority or power is embodied in the prefix *un-* which gives a new meaning to the suffixes *m'ane* and *aine*. The title of the *unim'ane* acquired its authoritative and aggressive connotations when it became an official title for the Resident High Commissioner of the British empire during the colonial days. The *unaine* was used as an honorary title for the wife of the Resident High Commissioner. The adoption of these titles into a political arena has imprinted a wrong image of the real *unim'ane* and real *unaine* and their social roles. The new generation has now adopted a mixed or distorted understanding of the image and role of the *unim'ane* and *unaine*. Today, the position of the old men has been elevated above and over old women, and are looked upon more as figures of authority than figures of care and guidance, while old women are increasingly pushed into the background.

Unfortunately, the women old and young apathetically accept their position without question. In this regard, the feminist theology would have positive impacts in fostering a new awareness of the emancipation of *I-Kiribati* women. It is timely that the TThC in its theological curriculum should include the study of liberation theologies, including the feminist theology. Consciousness-raising in matters that are simply taken for granted in the society, especially those with limiting or binding tendencies is an important aspect of theological education that needs to be emphasized. That is to say, the level of Christian social awareness should be raised through educating people. The faithfulness of the Church in its mission is to be judged by its perpetual process of bearing good fruits through its prophetic role in the society. It should bring about social transformation and free itself from a static and compliant attitude.

It must be noted that *E Tabu te Uea* (Monarchy is forbidden) is the social norm observed all over the islands long before the contact with the outside world.<sup>12</sup> The hierarchical system has no place in the social organization of the extended family and the village communities.

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<sup>12</sup> The exceptions are Makin, Butaritari, Abaiang, Tarawa and Abemama, during the early 19th century, when there were several attempts by some families who claimed social supremacy and control, although all such attempts were not successful, and none of them gained general social recognition. It was reported that these struggles to supremacy were supported by the early Europeans who provided the locals with arms and later became good friends of those who won the battle.



There are no noble families nor commoners. All *I-Kiribati* see themselves equally, the same. The ruling of the family and society is based on a *corporate authority* of all the *Oi-ni-mane* and *Oin-aine* whose roles are more understood in terms of caring and guidance through advice-giving, but not in terms of power and authoritarian leadership. These are only a few examples of such a confusion about social roles and social statuses.

It must be understood that socially defined gender roles in the Kiribati society has nothing to do with a status, nor any form of rank. The differences, therefore, in gender roles were differences only in functions to be done, not in statuses to be affirmed. These differences in *roles* are meant to cater for the needs of the society. Traditional arrangements of gender roles have cast the man in the role of family provider (fish and coconut winner), and he was expected to be strong, self-sufficient, successful and rational. On the other hand, the woman was cast in the role of homemaker, and defined as gentle, dependent, nurturing and emotional.

This represents the kind of social structure functional in a pre-industrialized village setting, where roles were arranged, rather than chosen, by the society for the benefit of the whole community. Both men and women simply adjust themselves according to their socially defined gender roles through the process of socialization. These social roles are important only in so far as they faithfully serve

their intended purposes. Both sexes are accepted as they are, and for what they are, and there is no discrimination of any kind whatsoever. This is evidenced now by the rapid rise of women in leadership alongside men which is fully supported by the society. There is no evidence of any social reluctance to the worth and contributions made by women in the village setting and also in the work force. In actuality, women are not discriminated against in matters of education and employment, and there is evidence that more and more women are sent for further studies overseas. Today, many young women are holding high positions alongside men in various ministries of the government.

There are also gender titles attributed to each of the sexes. The title for the male sex is *Nao* literally means Wave (as in the ocean). It can be used in place of the male's name, or used alongside his given name. This is a metaphoric title showing that a Kiribati man must live an active life according to his roles expected of him. Like the *Nao* he must be strong and aggressive, active and creative, and should not cease from creative and productive roles.

On the other hand, the female title is called *Nei* meaning pool or pond. In the same manner, *Nei* is used as the female's title signifying that calmness and peaceful nature expected of her in her social roles. A Kiribati woman is expected to live a peaceful life. In metaphorical terms, she is looked upon as the real *Nei* from which the



calmness and peace of life is to be found. She should be the true embodiment of the *Nei*, that is, to reflect in reality the calmness and stillness of the pool or pond in her entire role in society. For this reason, a female is generally accepted as a figure of peace, often called *Te Tia-Raoi* (the Peace-Maker). The notion of peace which is vividly reflected in the symbol of the *Nei* is an underlying factor that determines the caring and nurturing roles expected of all Kiribati women. The metaphor of peace, which has become an attribute of a female is derived from the actual process of thatch-making from the pandanus leaves. There are certain stages in the process, one of which is known as the *tao-rau* literally overflow-peace, where the bunch of leaves are immersed into the *Nei* for some time to make them soft and easily unfold and ready before the *wae-rau* (thatch-weaving) process. When the process is complete the thatch is then called *te rau* (the peace). Thus, peace -- *rau* or *raoi* comes from the *Nei*. The thatch is also seen as a symbol of peace because it brings shade and shelter to the people. Likewise, the woman is a symbol of peace in the household.

The *Nao-Nei* attribute categorizes the specific roles that must be played by each of the sexes. Such a categorization is not based on a "superior-inferior" type of relationship. It has nothing to do with a social caste for such a system is non-existent and unacceptable in the Kiribati society. People in the community are not differentiated upon the basis of "who they are" -- identity or status, but rather on the basis of "what they do" -- roles and functions. Thus, the differences

are found only in the specific roles people do for the whole community. However, these differences do not matter. What matters more is their end results meant for the good of all and the maintenance of the social order and peace of the community. The specific features of the Kiribati culture were developed out of the sum total of efforts which people made to avoid disunity, disharmony and unhappy relationships. In other words, the Kiribati culture is based on the renunciation of personal selfish interests. Individuals are conditioned to sublimate their own interests and desires in nurturing and developing others. Even today, the majority of people are more creative and productive in cooperative enterprises rather than private and individual undertakings. The principle of a combined human effort seems to work best in the Kiribati society. A traditional saying, "*Maua nako*," is a powerful utterance commonly used by any group of people who willingly joined together their efforts in accomplishing the task -- signifying "Let us do it together". The *Maua-nako* utterance always calls for a combined human effort in a variety of settings where there is need for help. When it is uttered it ignites an extra-ordinary dynamism or inner potential of an individual or the group. It is also used to mark the beginning of any combined act, such as in lifting heavy or important things (e.g. family canoe), or in starting songs and dances, or before saying *tekeraoi* (good wishes) over meals, like "cheers" prior to drinking in Western cultures.

In Kiribati, both men and women are considered as co-partners



and co-creators of all that there is within the society and its culture, that means, both sexes are equally responsible for shaping culture the way they like, determining the structure of the social institutions, regulating the economic life, defining sex roles and judging sexual behaviour, and also controlling the religious life and the destiny of humanity. The principles of *Te Baraoi* (Equality) and *Te Karinerine* (Respect) are the norms in all social relationships. Interpersonal relations between men and women, or adult and young are typically horizontal; it is a relationship on the basis of equality and respect. Hierarchy has no place in leadership and social relations before the European era. Since Kiribati culture is based on the tradition of corporate communal living, both male and female, young and old live within a giving and sharing reciprocal relationship. Everyone is treated the same. Individual differences are allowed and tolerated as long as they do not create competition and disturb the harmony and peace of the whole. At the same time, the harmony of the whole embraces the identity of the individuals. What is important is the reality that all live within one community, and that each of them is part of the totality -- the giving-receiving reciprocal relationship, which is widely accepted as the most appropriate social norm. Individual interests are fully supported as long as they are not promoting individualism, self-centredness or private selfish gains.

Because of this strong attitude in caring for the well-being of all members of the community there is originally no such thing as

marginalization in the society, although it is gradually happening in some sectors of the society, especially on urban Tarawa today, as the result of Capitalism. What we learn about the ever increasing gap between the rich and the poor, the powerful and the weak, the elites and the grassroots in so called third world countries is not as yet fully accepted as a major problem in Kiribati today. However, we cannot deny the fact that the gap of marginalization will be increasingly widened as the rate of development in capitalistic terms is an inevitable factor. The problems associated with the activities of capitalism are enormous and should be controlled through the uplifting of an already existing belief and practice in socialism - where the development and well-being of all I-Kiribati is of paramount importance. The Kiribati form of socialism is to be promoted in such a way that does not rescind the freedom of individuals, as can be seen in other forms of socialism in so called communist countries.

Since the contact period between *I-Kiribati* and Europeans, which began as early as 1765, both cultures have co-existed throughout the island communities.<sup>13</sup> Kiribati has benefitted tremendously, as well as being seriously harmed by this contact. Much of Western ideas and value systems have been moulded in, or even replaced indigenous systems. Western culture asserted itself very strongly to be the

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<sup>13</sup> The New Encyclopædia Britannica, Micropædia Vol.6: 887., Chicago, 1991.



dominant one. As a result, we learn that in order to be successful capitalists we should be aggressive individuals, shrewd with our customers, and should aim at maximum profits and gains. These new values, not only contradict the Kiribati traditional principles of sharing-giving and communal responsibility, but are responsible also for the new emergence of a minority social class of elites who rule and control the island economic community. The Kiribati traditional concept of wealth is not based on how much you have accumulated, but on how much you shared out. This traditional criteria of measuring one's wealth is incompatible with the Western measure of economic success based upon the competitiveness and shrewdness to acquire more and more.

At the same time, Christianity faces the obstacle of being a part of a culture brought by the missionaries, and as such we see advantages as well as disadvantages to it. Without adequate understanding, interest, reverence and sensitivity to the indigenous culture the missionaries forced their way to evangelize a society, which they described as in "complete darkness",<sup>14</sup> using ways and thought patterns that are solely characteristics of the sending culture, to educate the natives in ways known and regarded as Christian norms at a time. Ancestral worship was banned, sacred

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<sup>14</sup> *Te Baba n Amerika*, Accounts of the missionary work of the ABCFM in Kiribati, (Beru, Kiribati), p.18

shrines were destroyed, and many important beliefs were completely forced out of the people without adequate explanations as to why they should be abandoned in order to make room for Christianity. Western capitalism and Christianity have successfully established themselves and become the norms in place of the indigenous culture. To be truly christian and capitalist *I-Kiribati* have to find themselves far more removed and driven out from the indigenous religio-cultural cradle. This shows an example of the superior-inferior relationship between the two cultures, which also has impacts on other levels of relationships in the Kiribati society, e.g. male-female relationship, elder-young relationship, e.t.c. All this affects our total contemporary indigenous worldview. Although much has been changed as the result of this contact, there are still positive elements that can only survive with great difficulty and should be given special attention. Proper appraisal of their legitimate roles has to be done and the idea of their incorporation into the Church should not be ignored. Christians in Kiribati must retain the pride of being truly *I-Kiribati* Christians, rather than just a simple copy or duplication of an old Western form of Christianity. The coming of the missionaries with the Christian faith did not mark the beginning of the presence and activity of God in Kiribati. They did not bring God to us in their briefcases or clerical vestments, rather they came with a new explanation of the God who already present and work in the history of the indigenous people. The reality of God's presence and activity cannot be understood in terms of an *import-export* mode. The missionaries came with new explanations



that must be appropriated and compared with what was already there. The indigenous culture is the peoples' own version of the Old Testament that needs to be seen and interpreted in a new perspective - in the light of the Christian Gospel. In this perspective, the indigenous culture should find true meaning and fulfillment in the Gospel. This view needs to be accepted and developed in our theological endeavour in Kiribati.

### *The Maneaba Decision-Making*

Decision making is always the product of the group, not the individual. Old men from every *utu* (family) are given the respect and responsibility to make decisions, to maintain peace and order in the society, and to foster the welfare of the entire community. They are regarded, not as political princes or rulers in the strict sense of the word, but rather as plenipotentiaries and patriarchs who are trusted for their long experience and special knowledge in matters of culture and life --they know what is the best for their children. They are old and mature enough to provide their children the benefit of their advice. As patriarchs, they are in a better position to exert control and to maintain order and tranquility as well as unity in the family and also in the *maneaba*. For this reason, the absence of the *unimane* in matters of decision and during cultural and familial events of celebration, such as birthdays, weddings and funerals (to mention a few), is perceived to be a great disadvantage. It is generally believed that the *botaki* (social gathering) attains its significance, that is,

becomes *te oi ni botaki* (the real gathering) if and when the *oinimane* are present. Barrie Macdonald, in his *Cinderellas of the Empire* acknowledged the importance of the social role of the old men in the Kiribati society. As he described it,

Within their families the *unimane*, the old men, were paramount; they retained control over the land; they resisted the aspirations and desire for change exhibited by their mission-educated children and by returned labourers; they gave up the traditional worship of their traditional gods, girded their loins with immaculate lava-lavas and, in times of crisis, turned again to ancestral deities.<sup>15</sup>

What about women? Do they participate in a traditional decision-making process? The answer to this question is both *yes* and *no*! Women's participation in the decision making is not ignored, but often mediated. Their actual involvement is not totally based on their being present, but rather on how much influence and control they have in the proceedings and the final decision. By virtue of the fact of childbearing, women spend most of their time at home with the children, and their attendance and presence at the decision making, which always takes place at the *maneaba*, away from the *muenga* (home), is not consistent. For this reason, the husband's presence in the meeting represents the whole household, including the wife.

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<sup>15</sup> Barrie Macdonald, *Cinderellas of the Empire*, Towards a history of Kiribati and Tuvalu, (Australian National University Press, Canberra, 1982), p.73.



In the *maneaba*, a place where all social functions are held, and most importantly a place where community decisions are made, there are formal arrangements for the *boti* or the *inaki* (sitting-place) where old and young, male and female should be seated. The *boti* systematic arrangement<sup>16</sup> is not hierarchical, but rather arranged according to the *kaingo* and the *utu* (hamlet and the extended family). There is also *te boti n iruwa*, a reserved *boti* for visitors situated at the lagoon side of the *maneaba*, which is the most convenient entering position for all strangers or visitors who always come by canoe, which was the only means of transportation in the early days.

There is also a section in the *maneaba* called *berano ma bururu* (noisy and wet), the specific spot or zone at the periphery of the *maneaba*, where the noise and mess from the young and restless could be accommodated. This is the place where women and their children are supposed to be seated as *taan angana* (active observers) during the meeting. This sitting position has nothing to do with the idea of inferiority, as many people used to believe today; however, like the

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<sup>16</sup> For details about the formal sitting arrangement in the *maneaba*, see Maude, H.E., (1963)., 'The Evolution of the Gilbertese *Boti*'. *Polynesian Society Mem.* No.35. My own perception and interpretation of the *boti* may not be the same with that of Maude. The major difference lies where the *boti* is considered in hierarchical and authoritarian terms. I would assert that the motives behind the arrangement of the *boti* have nothing to do with rank, or some sort of social position in a pyramid of hierarchy.

visitor's *boti*, the arrangement is made simply for the sake of convenience and order.

When carefully studied, one would discover that the allocation of the *boti* is undoubtedly designed for several important reasons. First, for the sake of convenience; for instance, the most immobile members such as *unimane* sit around the center of the *maneaba*, and in front of *aine* and *ataei* (women and children) who sit at the periphery where they have easy access to move in and out during the *maneaba* session. Second, for the sake of order; for instance, during the formal *kaka-rabakau* (dialogue or interchange of wisdom) or the formal *taetae-ni-ikawai* (conversation of the elders, or in its literal meaning conversing in an elderly fashion), which are the vital characteristics of the *maneaba* proceedings, it is highly expected that *kain te maneaba* (members of the *maneaba*) should not make noises i.e. *beraro*, or commit any offence i.e. *kamatauninga*. Without the control of *beraro* and *kamatauninga* the order of the *maneaba* will be disturbed. Because of the fact that the *maneaba* system is based on the principle of acceptance of all people (old and young, men and women), the *boti* is systematically organized in such a way that the *beraro* and *kamatauninga*, which are the common characteristics of the young and restless members, are accommodated under the supervision and control of the women at the periphery or background but not at the forefront. Clearly, young people and women are not excluded from the *maneaba* and their presence is not ignored.



The very existence of the *maneaba* is meant to accept and receive all members including foreigners, (henceforth comes the name *manea* - to accept or receive, and *aba* - people); to maintain *te babaine* (order), *te rau* (peace) and *te eti* or *riai* (justice); to promote *te karinerine* (respect of all people), *te baraoi* (equality), *te akoi* (hospitality), *te ibuakanibai* (sharing), *te inanoi* (mutuality), and *te bo-n-nano* (unity); to facilitate *te ataib'ai* (social awareness) and *te m'am'akuri* (sense of responsibility); and above all to concretize the real sense of human worthiness - *oi-n-aomata*.

The vast unused area in front of all the *unimane* in the middle of the *maneaba* is called the peace-zone -- *te nei ni kaua tabakea* -- the pond of peace of all the elders. This peace-zone is regarded as the most holy part of the *maneaba*, and also a refuge. During the *maneaba* proceedings no one is allowed to intrude into the peace zone to avoid disruption and disturbance to the *Nei* -- peace, harmony and equilibrium of the *maneaba* existence. Women and children, wherever they may be seated in the *maneaba*, are considered as active observers. Their presence is fully acknowledged in that they have all the rights to be fully informed about every detail of the meeting, to raise questions, usually indirectly through the channel of the husbands, and even to vote like men. The voting system is not indigenous in origin, but has become part of the traditional decision making in almost all modern *maneaba* today. It should be noted that the traditional meeting proceedings are often time consuming as decisions are to be slowly and

carefully discussed and *karab/noaki* (to roll-on) from one *unimane* to another *unimane* in order to arrive at the all-agreed resolution. Once decisions are made, they are final and cannot be changed because they are the *baine man te maneaba* (decision from the *maneaba*). Every attempt is made to ensure that there is no *moti-rannan* -- indecision in the *maneaba*. Decisions from the *maneaba* are based on the corporate authority of all the *kainga* members who are present and represented by the *unimane* in the *maneaba*. The role of the *maneaba* in terms of decision-making is similar in some aspects to that of the Westminster model and the House of Representatives. The major difference has to do with the practice of election and the way decisions are made. There is no general election for the *unimane* position in the *maneaba*. All *unimane* from all *kainga* or *utu* automatically have full rights to sit in the *maneaba* as decision makers on the sole ground of being the oldest from the family. There is no precise age set down in the acquisition of the *unimane* stage. In general, the age range for the *unimane* usually falls between the late 40s to the late 50s. Note that life expectancy at birth is 50.6 years for a male and 55.6 years for a female.<sup>17</sup> In decision making, the attitudes of neither-nor positions on differences and communal consensus are the basic norms in making resolutions. Note that the *kauntaeka* (open debate) is avoided, but if it occurs it is described as an act of a child -- *babaka-n ataei*, which

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<sup>17</sup> Encyclopaedia Britannica, *World Data Annual*, Chicago, 1991: 635.



is condemned as a failure and lack of control. Politeness, good manners and reverence in verbal and non-verbal behaviours in the *maneaba* is always highly expected.

Because of its time consuming nature, women are not able to stay long enough in the meeting as the young are to be fed and taken care of. This does not mean that their participation in the decision making process is ignored or overlooked. Naturally, their rights are respected, however, their domestic responsibilities and inconsistent attendance are major constraints. The idea of establishing a Child-Care Centre may be an option to allow a consistent attendance and full participation of women in the *maneaba* decision making. Today, in most church gatherings in the *maneaba*, both men and women are equally involved in decision making, especially when the village minister is a woman. There is a strong and ever growing awareness in the church that women do have a significant role to play in almost all matters in the village and the church.

### The Traditional Concept of Time

It is important to explain that the concept of time in the Kiribati context follows *kairos* (Καίρος) -- time, opportunity; not *chronos* (Χρόνος) -- time, fitting season. This may be best described by using the "coconut" analogy, -- *the coconut falls when it is ready to fall*. No one can tell when the coconut will fall. This is what we call the *coconut time*. What matters is not the urgency of

time, but rather the *rightness of time* to arrive at the best decision and the *rightness of time* to do things. We do not determine time, but the situation determines its own time. It is true that there are exceptional situations when people should consider the urgency of time, and here the analogy of the coconut is added to suit the situation, thus we can cease waiting for the coconut to fall down, and start climbing the tree to bring the coconut down, a process that should be done with great care. Indeed, bringing the coconut down also implies our total control of time. We can bring it down early or later, but the fact is that the coconut has to be brought down. Again, what matters is not time, but rather *tian ao karanaoin te beku* (the completion and fulfillment of the task); -- sooner or later, the task must be done, or the coconut must fall. The concept of the *coconut time* is very much part of the Kiribati attitude to responsibilities in life. Other known means of measuring time include *otin ao bungin taai* -- sunrise and sunset, and also *te iabuti ao te ora* -- high and low tides. Because the exactness of time does not matter to an I-Kiribati, there is no real pressure to work within the limits of time; only the strong tendency to accomplish the task. Also, in situations where the person interferes with time, the importance of the person supersedes that of time, as value is placed not on responsibilities (within a certain time), but rather on persons. The idea of so called right time and wrong time are totally determined by the situation in which the importance of the person is given supremacy.



The introduction of Western education is associated with the importance of time. While the formal education or well-structured learning is always carried out within a specified time, *I-Kiribati* have their own pace of learning which often ignore the urgency of time. They tend to learn better in a situation where time is not imposed. For *I-Kiribati*, what matters most is not compliance with time, but rather devotion to learning at one's own pace.

The biblical notion of the "rightness and fullness of time" which marks the divine plan of God's decisive time to come down from heaven to bring to us redemption and life in all its fullness, is clearly demonstrated in the coconut analogy. At the "rightness and fullness of time" the coconut falls from high and rolls down to the lowest level of earth with new possibilities of life; it brings nourishment and opportunity for growth and abundance of life. The sense of the eucharist is also conveyed in the breaking of the coconut where its flesh and juice brought home to us the precious gifts of life from God, compared to those foreign elements that have no practical relations to our world of knowledge and experience. Attempts have been undertaken in the TThC to use the coconut flesh and juice as eucharistic elements. However, this indigenization has not been warmly accepted by the KPC, particularly the conservatives. And the Church continues to use eucharistic elements imported from overseas that are expensive and foreign. This reflects the old conservative Christian view of the Eucharist in which the emphasis is placed on its literal and

magical sense rather than the empirical and practical sense. For this reason, the imported elements are considered real and sacred while local elements are unreal and profane. The coconutization of the eucharistic elements is an option towards the indigenization of the Christian faith and practice that should be taken into serious consideration by the KPC and perhaps the RC.

Further more, the notion of the mission of the Church is also present in the botanical feature or behaviour of the coconut. The coconut maintains or embodies in itself possibilities of life, growth and bearing of fruits. As opportunity allows, the coconut may drift away in the wide ocean and brings life to the needy and the lost; or it may reach other shores and becomes, unconditionally, the coconut of life for others. The peoples' relation to the creator may be best described in terms of their relation to the coconut as the *tree of life*. The analogy of the coconut, not only represents the traditional concept of time, but also a deeper understanding of life in its temporal and spiritual or theological applications.

The Stage Theories of Developmental Psychology for human development is better understood simplistically in the stages of growth and developmental crises people know and experience in the life of the coconut. Their knowledge and experience of the coconut provide glimpses of the entire span of life in a more objective way. Their objective experimentations in the planting and inspection of the



orchard to ensure good health and fertility at each different stage of the coconut's life is a form of experience that makes for a creative and cautious attitude to one's own life. While in the medical profession the problem of infertility has been overcome by the method of sperm transfusion into the ovum, so the instilling of rusting metal into the germ sprout or the soft content of a sprouting coconut shows the same positive result. The use of the coconut analogy has been introduced for the first time in the field of theology by Dr. Sione A'manaki Havea, a well-known Tongan theologian and one of so called *fathers of Pacific theology*. However, the coconut analogy, which is a living symbol that represents all Pacific islands, can also be applied to a variety of setting where life and growth are the focal point of concern. In the field of education, the University of the South Pacific uses the coconut analogy for the first time in its course ED 151: Human Development, in describing and highlighting the importance of the different stages of crises, development and growth from conception to death. Also in the field of communication the analogy of the rolling coconut or the *coconut wireless* is used to refer to the oral transmission of information and traditions from generation to generation and from place to place. In Kiribati, a common saying, "*Iraua kanam te ben?*" --"How many coconuts have you eaten?" is used to determine maturity and also the quality of one's state of manhood and womanhood. Simply the phrase depicts the idea that the more coconut the person has eaten the more mature he/she would be.

### The Tei-i-ao Celebration

The observance and celebration of the ritual known as the *Tei-i-ao* is another important aspect of culture that shows the Kiribati feminist world-view and basic attitudes to life. This discussion will be focussed mainly on the basic features of the ritual which characterizes the total cultural behaviour and identity of *te aine* -- the Kiribati woman. What is exceedingly important to know about the ritual is the fact that it is one of the very rare old practices that have survived the test of time and also observed by all I-Kiribati throughout the islands. Other familiar names of the ritual include - *Te Tekateka* (literally means the 'sitting'); *Te Katebo* (the Immersion); and *Te Anaki n Aine* (simply the female's periodic illness).

The term *Tei-i-ao* is a combination of three different words, viz: *Tei* which is a verb meaning stand; *i* is a preposition - at; and finally *ao* which simply means outside or field. In its literal sense the *Tei-i-ao* is the Standing-outside or Standing-at-(the)-field, an action which shows a moving out of a young girl from her childhood-confinement to a new stage of *ataei-aine* (young woman), or young adulthood known in the Western society as puberty, which is marked by the menarche, an onset of menstrual periods. The first menstruation is traditionally regarded as an important biological and social marker, witnessing the rightness of time when the girl is "ready" to move out from the world of a child into the field (*ao*) - the real world of an



adult. Thus the rightness of time is the readiness of the girl to assume new responsibilities, such as self-care including care of body (e.g. beauty, virginity, etc.); learning new traditional arts, wisdom and skills; and also undergoing specific disciplines and preparations that are necessary for life as a young woman, when she becomes a wife or a widow, as a mother, grand-mother and so on. Therefore the *Tei-i-ao* is a precise time at which a concrete ritual and ceremonial process is to take place. Important procedures are to be undertaken by the girl under private supervision of a group of wise or skillful women, including the oldest woman, usually the grandmother.

The transmission of the family's secret knowledge and skills from the group of so called wise women of the *utu* is an important matter so every procedure should be undertaken in private to avoid public exposure. In the past there used to be a special hut built separately from the dwelling house where the ritual should take place. Today, the ritual takes place in the main dwelling house. During the ritual, the main dwelling house becomes out of boundary to other members of the family. The feasting and celebrating parts of the ritual are usually held in the family or village *maneaba*. The ritual lasts for three consecutive days, for it is traditionally believed that perfection and effectiveness of the ritual can only be acquired after that period of time. The entire three days of the ritual include the following important procedures:

Firstly, the girl must abstain from food for three days, except a limited quantity of water to ease her hunger. The purpose is to prepare the girl in matters such as, how to control hunger at times of famine and droughts (which were common in the past), including control of sexual drives (for it is not customarily proper for girls to seduce, or to ask for sex). Culturally, abstaining from food or fasting is considered effective in creating total control of the whole self - body, mind and soul. It is also considered as an orientation towards a sense of responsibility and strong determination. Related to all this is the notion of the *Maribo*, a characteristic required of a girl (as well as a boy). The word has two components, *mari* and *bo*. The former literally means plenty in terms of food and wealth, while the latter means to meet or encounter. The main purport and thrust of the word *Maribo* is hard working for the purpose of having plenty of food and wealth or prosperity for all. It must be noted that Kiribati is tropical, hot, very dry on the islands and very hard to get food. Root crops have to be grown in compost pits which have to be cut into coral rock because there is no top soil. For this reason *maribo* is essential for the girl who is now ready to be the *ataei-aine* (young woman) and will no longer be called the *bai nakanoko* (fragile-handed) to mean simply a totally dependent child, that is a child who lives under the care and mercy of parents or guardians. This stage marks a breakthrough from dependency to independency.



The notion of *maribo* cannot be thought of in passive terms, such as in the Hebrew's biblical story of the "manna from heaven". It is not something to be received without sweat and labour. The *maribo* requires great effort and strong determination. Thus, the girl is expected, not to escape from the hardships of life, but rather to face or encounter them, to have control over them, to be active and productive to ensure plenty, wealth and prosperity for all members of the *utu*. A woman who lacks the sense of responsibility is criticized as being one whose *Tei/-ao* brings her no positive effect. In all arranged marriages, one of the foremost conditions of a good bride is the true sense of *maribo*. A *maribo* wife is a good sign of a sensible and caring mother.

The *maribo* concept leads to another important concept known as the *taranib'ai*,<sup>18</sup> which is heavily emphasized during the ritual. There can never be the *taranib'ai* without the *maribo*. For this reason, females (like males) are expected to be *maribo* in order to attain the *taranib'ai*. Importantly, the first aspect of the ritual as I have described it is designed to equip the girl with the essentials of life -  
- total control of self and external world, and strong determination

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<sup>18</sup> See p.24-30 above, for explanatory notes on the *taranib'ai* concept.

and sense of responsibility -- all of these are present in the two notions of *maribo* and *toronib'ai*.

Secondly, the girl must undergo the process of *tekateka i oin te boua*, literally means sitting at the trunk of the pillar. The pillar symbolizes strength and support in that it holds together the whole house to stand firm. Metaphorically, to sit leaning against the pillar means to assume a pillar-function for the whole household. Thus, without her the whole household will certainly collapse. The emphasis in this concept is her supportive role in the maintenance and self-sufficiency of the household. This is why another term *boua ni kaua* (supportive pillar), is used as a figurative name of the wife, referring to her supportive role to her husband. During the session of the *tekateka i oin te boua* the girl will be engaged in doing a number of chores, such as *binaka* (twining - making strings from a coconut fiber); *nananga* (weaving - making fine mats from the pandanus leaves); and many others, including Western skills, such as needle work and crafts. It is also a time for wise old women to share their stories and experiences about life, and also impart traditional wisdom, arts and skills. These may vary significantly from family to family, for each family has its own distinctive area of traditional expertise. The transmission of traditional knowledge and skills is treated with great care to avoid publicity. The sharing of knowledge and skills to



outsiders is regarded as an act of *kamoamo* (bragging) and *bakatae* (prodigality, extravagance), and therefore kept as family secrets. These family secrets of knowledge, wisdom and skills are regarded as one's own cultural *toranib'ai*.

The whole process of *tekateka i oin te boua* emphasizes the notions of *taana-n-nano*,<sup>19</sup> *nanam'aka* (courage and boldness), and *mwianounou*.<sup>20</sup> The word *nanam'aka* comes from the prefix *nano* meaning mind and suffix *m'aka* meaning powerful. Thus *nano-m'aka* literally means *powerful mind*, or a state of being bold and courageous. A successful person is often described as a *nanam'aka* person. It is extremely important for the girl to have these qualities in order to accept her responsibilities and face life in a positive manner.

Finally, on the third day, as she approaches the end of the ritual she will undergo the *kotebo* that is, the rite of *tebotebo* (immersion or bath), and the *kabiraki* (anointing with special oil) before she makes her public appearance known as the *teirake* (rising up). In the past the *tebotebo* used to take place in the family's *nei*, where immersion is possible. Today the *tebotebo* is just a normal bath.

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<sup>19</sup> See p.161 above for notes on *taana-n-nano*.

<sup>20</sup> See p.168f above for notes on *mwianounou*.

The purpose of the *tebotebo* is for the *tæ-ibennao* (purification). The idea of purification is associated with the belief that human bodies are liable to the wrath of the *anti* (bad spirits) and the curses from enemies that could cause uncleanness, disease and even death. Therefore the *tebotebo* is essential for the purpose of the *tæ-ibennao* to cleanse and free people from all such misfortunes. Following this the girl will be *kabinaki* (anointed with special oil) to complete the act of *tæ ibennao*. The anointing with special oil is meant for the *katoka burna*. The word literally means put on cover, which is an act of assuring safety and wholeness of life. During the *kabinaki* there are special words to be uttered (like prayers) by the woman who conducts the rite, usually the grandmother. When all is done the girl will make her public appearance -- the *teirake* which is marked by a big celebration of feasting by all members of the *utu*. The feast marks the consummation of the ritual process. It is a celebration which draws together *kain te utu* (all members of the hamlet or extended family) as a means of renewing and strengthening their bond of relationship.

In its profound meaning the *Tei-i-ao* is more than just a dedication in honour of the female sex. What is essential in the whole ritual and celebration is the rightness of time and the readiness of the girl to be accepted in the society as a complete and worthy human being. She is no longer treated as simply a child or *bainakanoko* (fragile-handed) whose survival is under the care and mercy of others, but rather as an *ataei aine* who has all the right to encounter life



with the right sense of freedom, determination and self control. Interestingly, the *Tei-i-ao* as a ritual of initiation (like *baptism* in Christianity), takes place when the girl is believed to be biologically and socially ready, that is, when she is able to comprehend and articulate what the ritual means to her in her total being and existence in society. Further, the society does not simply accept her quietly, but rather supports her fully through the ritual and celebration. Essentially, the *Tei-i-ao* is a precise event through which cultural values are transmitted to enable her to attain self-understanding, self-discipline, self-integration, self-vitalization and self-actualization. It is extremely important to know that as a social ceremony the *Tei-i-ao* is to be celebrated *once-and-for-all*, for it is believed that it has a perpetual significance throughout the entire lifespan. Most importantly is the fact that the girl accepts her *menstruation* in a very positive way. Culturally speaking, it is something expected with great enthusiasm by the young girls. It is an event that conceptually and practically affirms their importance in society. It also serves as an affirmation of their gender identity, their being uniquely different from males. In fact, it makes them proud of themselves for *being girls*, and there is no such negative thing such as a "*penis-envy*" according to the psychosexual theory by Freud. Hypothetically, I would argue that in the Kiribati society it is more likely among many young boys to have what I would describe as a "*menstruation-envy*" in place of Freud's "*penis-envy*".

Obviously, *menstruation* is not something viewed as unclean, as we may learn from most cultures; or something to be ashamed of; or something being undervalued or condemned. Instead, it is culturally accepted, respected, appreciated, enhanced and celebrated to affirm an unquestioned right and role of a female in the society. Females are in no way inferior to males in the Kiribati society, and the *Tei-i-ao* ritual is an unquestioned evidence of this claim. However, there are still disadvantages and constraints to women in other aspects of the culture which are maintained through the collaboration and support of the new religion (19th century Christianity), and also the new political and economic systems and ideologies.

The celebration of the *Tei-i-ao* has been one of the few and very old rituals which has survived the unfavourable transformation of culture by Christianity. The early Western missionaries had been very successful in eliminating many of the important traditional practices which they wrongly regarded as being unchristian. It took quite some time for the christians in Kiribati to fully accept and allow the practice of the *Tei-i-ao* in the church. With few adaptations, the ritual is now celebrated in the church with a Christian meaning and blessing. The *Tei-i-ao* is now seen as a celebration of thanksgiving to the Lord for his care and protection upon the girl from her time of birth until her first onset of menstruation, and also a time of feasting to wish her God's continuing blessing. It is also maintained as an event that affirms her full worth and social recognition, and above



all, as an evidence of the family's support and love for her. Despite the new changes in the lives and mentality of the young generation, the *Tei-i-ao* ritual is still celebrated without detaching those positive notions of *maribo*, *taranib'ai*, *taeibennao*, *katoka burua* and *muianounou*. While the ritual remains the responsibility of the extended family, the church is represented and fully participates through the presence and role of the minister who says prayers and words of counsel to the girl and her family during feasting. Moreover, there used to be a formal session for *te manoro* (open discussion) where guests usually *anga te ue* -- give out the flower, that is, the free giving and sharing of traditional knowledge, wisdom and skills, an essential part which is uncommon in other traditional gatherings. The *manoro* session is spontaneous, and *te ue* is meant as a free long life gift to the girl concerned and to all members of the family. Today, in addition to those valuable traditional wisdom and skills, *te ue* takes the form of material gifts, such as money and parcels of goods.

### The Question of Virginity

The question of virginity is one of the major problems that is worth mentioning because it has never been addressed by the church since its beginning on the islands. This is due to the fact that all "sex-talks" or issues about human sexuality and other sex-related matters are regarded as traditional *taboos*.

But what is the traditional teaching about *virginity*? Apparently, the Kiribati and Banaban<sup>21</sup> cultures seriously consider *virginity* as a *mark of holiness* and also a *sign of faithfulness* on the part of an unmarried woman. The test of virginity during the first sexual intercourse after the wedding has been traditionally regarded as the main highlight of the whole ceremony. The failure of the bride to such a test would lead to certain critical actions which vary from island to island. Usually, she would be *chased away* by the groom's family. According to the B Source, the failure of virginity is a disgrace to the bride's family. If this happens, the parents of the bride would immediately provide a substitute, usually a younger sister or it could be another close relative, to cover up the failure and alleviate their feeling of shame. The substitute should be a virgin. The practice of *te anomui* (replacement) or *bride-substitution* is applied when the bride fails to be a virgin, and also in cases when the wife died leaving behind the husband with the children. In the latter case, there is also a practice of *bridegroom-substitution*. The reason for substitution in the case of a dead spouse is for the welfare of the children, that is, to avoid a step-mother who is not related to the

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<sup>21</sup> The original inhabitants of Banaba, also known as Ocean island (who call themselves Banabans to differentiate from I-Kiribati), were removed to Rabi Island in the Fiji group after World War II, in 1945 by the British Government during the early years of phosphate-mining on their homeland. My knowledge of the Banaban culture comes mainly from my grandfather (d. 1984, Rabi); my wife who is a Rabi-Banaban; and also my own personal experiences gained during six years of residence on the island (1974-1979), including several research visits in 1984-5, and later in 1988-9.



children. The practice of *te anamui*, in both cases was common in the past throughout the islands. However, today *te anamui*, in the former case only, has ceased to be observed while in the latter case it is still practised by both I-Kiribati and the Banabans on Rabi island in the Fiji Group.

There are cases where the groom still takes his bride despite the strong opposition and antagonism from his family. However, if this happens it would eventually lead to total *excommunication* from the family. Excommunication from the family means a permanent and total loss of all the rights to be the son. This is not easy for an I-Kiribati or a Banaban because to lose your family and heritage is, in fact, losing everything -- which is the total collapse or damage of one's identity, self-worth and respect. In a communal society, the sense of *belonging* is very important because it determines your identity and self-worth in relation to the rest of the community.

The Kiribati term *Nikira n rano*, which literally means the rest of the age, is used of a woman who fails to be a virgin, and who would be left unmarried for the rest of her life unless one is willing to accept her. In a way, she is rated as second class citizen among her peers. The society calls her the *Nikira n rano* because of the fact that she would be left unmarried while the rest of her peers are all married. Some Kiribati women have chosen to stay single for the rest of their lives, not primarily because they wanted to be single, but

because they are the very unfortunate *Nikira n rano*. The young unmarried man who chooses to marry the *Nikira n rano* is looked upon by the society as *tekebuaka* (unfortunate, unlucky).

On the other hand, while they are also expected to be *holy* and *faithful* before and during marriage life, men by no means could be tested for their true physical virginity. However, rumours about their being unfaithful during the period of engagement is valid and would lead to a sudden breakup. Also during marriage rumours of the same kind usually leads to divorce.

There has been an increasing number of *elopement cases* among the young people during the last decade. This is the only way to avoid the formal traditional marriage, especially the *test of virginity*. However, not all elopement cases take place simply for that reason. In some cases elopement is a cheaper way to marriage. Traditional marriage, these days, is increasingly very expensive, especially in urban areas where AU\$5,000-\$10,000 or more is required for the whole ceremony. In other cases elopement occurs in order to avoid the traditional arranged marriage which is still observed strongly on the outer islands. On urban Tarawa today most marriages are not arranged. The young are encouraged to make their own free choices.

The strict rule of virginity can be very destructive and become a curse not only to girls, but also to their future grooms. It used to



be the cause of other related marital problems. According to my survey, the highest rate of divorce cases comes from marriages where the bride was not a virgin. Although the problem of *divorce* has been well addressed, and in many cases, the Church has been very effective in bringing about *forgiveness* and *reconciliation*, yet the issue of *virginity* remains untouched.

This section shows examples of some still existing negative elements of culture that really affect the lives of young people, especially females. This, I believe, is one of the most dehumanizing aspects of culture that should have been abolished by the missionaries. However, the failure on the part of the missionaries and the church was due to the corresponding old social teaching about holiness. That is to say, the law of virginity is strongly enforced with the coming of Christianity and its traditional teaching about it as a sign of holiness. But what does the gospel really mean by holiness and faithfulness in relation to virginity? It is timely that the Christian Churches in Kiribati should re-examine their social teachings and be able to address all those dehumanizing aspects of traditional customs and culture in the light of the *gospel*. Although there are positive elements of culture that we need to incorporate into the ministry of the church, we cannot overlook those negative elements that must be challenged and removed altogether from the church and society. The recent establishment of the Kiribati National Council of Churches

(KNCC)<sup>22</sup> is seen as a mouthpiece of true Christian theological and moral propagation that should effect social, political, economic and religious changes in the society.

### The Practice of *Te Tabunea*

One important element of mysticism in Kiribati is the art of *te tabunea*. If we try to explain what *te tabunea* is, we are immediately confronted with the fact that within its genuine province, the word has been used in more than one sense. Etymologically, the *tabunea* consists of *tabu* meaning sacred or holy, which refers to the divine attribute of the supreme god; and also *nea* meaning a sound as of a strong wind, which is a description of the unseen *tabu* god who is omnipotent, omnipresent, and omniscient. In another sense, the *tabunea* designates what is described as the *maroro ma anti* (an open dialogue or communion with the divine or ultimate reality). In this sense it is frequently understood as an act of tampering or invoking the ultimate or supreme power. Thus the *tabunea* originates and functions to link I-Kiribati to the source of supreme power of *Karawa* (heaven) and *Moone* (hell), *Maiu* (life) and *Mate* (death). I-Kiribati seek to encounter the sacred both temporally and spatially by means of the *tabunea*, such as in prayer and meditation or any other form of ritual as practiced in

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<sup>22</sup> The KNCC officially began in 1990, and consisted of eight representatives, out of which four members from the KPC and the other four from the RC. Its first chairman was the KPC Moderator (1988-1990).



other religions. According to the traditional healer the *tabunea* produces both a spiritual and existential reality. In its ritualistic act, the *tabunea* from stage to stage helps the healer to experience an incarnation of selflessness, virtue and wisdom. The practice of the *tabunea* requires the renunciation of secular life and acceptance of an ascetic type of life, not only on the part of the *ibanga* (traditional priest), but also on the parts of all participants involved. The society recognizes the religious potential of men and women who engage themselves in a good *tabunea*, that is, a *tabunea* which produces positive results in healing, and the general welfare of the person.

Indigenously, the practical purpose of the *tabunea* is to bring liberation to the so called possessed, healing to the sick, wisdom to the ignorant, peace of mind to the troubled, strength to the weak, courage to the downhearted, prosperity to the poor, and life to the dying. People engage themselves in the *tabunea* because they are in desperate need. By means of the *tabunea* they look for ultimate reality beyond the scope of human capacity. In actuality, the *tabunea* is an original indigenous form of awareness of, and mutual communion with the divine source of life. And in its actual practice, the *ibanga* does not consider magical powers (or miracles) to be of primary importance. The greatest miracle for the *ibanga* is to explicate the truth and to make people recognize its importance. At the very heart of the practice, the *ibanga* submits his total being to the divine guidance and inspiration. The art of listening, concentration and meditation are of

primary importance in the whole process. The end product of the *tabunea* should always have worthwhile and practical or empirical implications in life, especially for the participants.

There is much to be explored in order to fully understand what the *tabunea* really means to I-Kiribati, and how important it is in their religious and social life. As a form of mysticism, the essence of the *tabunea* is very much alive today, even in the religious and devotional life of I-Kiribati Christians today. We cannot fail to notice certain similar as well as dissimilar elements between the Christian and the indigenous religiosity and practices from which we can anticipate further dialogue between the two so as to compliment each other. In actuality, I-Kiribati frequently relapse into their old beliefs because they find no marked differences but duplications. Or to some, Christianity is accepted on a very superficial level and not given an adequate priority in their intellectual and empirical lives. Perhaps this is why most troubled I-Kiribati are more prone to turn to the *tabunea* to alleviate their anxieties.

Although in today's vocabulary the *tabunea* has negative connotations and condemned by the Church as a witchcraft, many I-Kiribati cannot deny its positive contributions, and for this reason the Church must be able to reconsider its definition and make a careful re-appraisal. A change of mentality from what has been imposed by foreigners in the early 19th century is imperative. There is need to



liberate our minds from those areas of cultures that had been for a long time condemned and associated with the notion of guilt and sin. To do justice to cultural values that have been condemned as unChristian, the Church needs to be sure to identify their weaknesses as well as their legitimate functions in the lives of the people and be able to utilize them in the ministry. While there have been many Christians excommunicated from the Church simply because they returned to old practices which were categorized as pagan, the Church seldom takes up the responsibility to reassess them and renew its teaching about them. The KPC as an autonomous Church should cease from its traditional compliance with those old social teachings of the 19th century missionaries. The KPC should see its ministry more in terms of liberation from feelings of guilt and sin, rather than the imposition of these negative feelings through its practice of excommunication from the Church. It is unfortunate that people are often excommunicated from the Church simply because of their fondness of important cultural ways that are condemned without adequate explanation. There are many positive cultural concepts which are found to be more inclusive and liberating than what we learn from traditional Christianity which was entangled with foreign cultural values and standards.

Having described *te taburea* as one of the positive senses of indigenous religiosity, I would now turn to another positive concept - the concept of illness and suffering. It is through our understanding of the cultural attitude towards illness and suffering that we are

better able to make a proper diagnosis and provide appropriate help and change in the person's life.

### Illness, Suffering and the Notion of Salvation

I-Kiribati are monastic by character. The world is viewed as a totality in which all things are interdependent. It is not an object to be exploited or controlled, or developed. The world must be accepted as it is, because human beings cannot change it. Suffering is accepted without protest. Suffering, both physical and mental is accepted as normal. I-Kiribati held that illness and suffering of any kind are parts of creation, and should be accepted as part of our true humanity such as life and death. A common traditional saying "*Ti tebo te Maiu ao te Mate*" ("Death and Life are equally the same"), shows that for I-Kiribati the realities of life and death are both valued and accepted as integral parts of a complete human being. Thus, good health or illness and suffering are perceived positively as *kanoan te maiu* (contents of life). According to I-Kiribati, we should live and should die in order to be fully human. In short, life and death are not enemies but rather absolute gifts to humanity. This perspective is also supported by another common tradition from the NK Source, particularly from the island of Marakei which attempts to explain why human beings suffer. The tradition of the *Abi mai karawa* (basket from heaven) bestowed upon the peoples of the earth during the time of the *karikib'ai* (creation) was the people's answer to this primordial question. It was said that the contents of the *Abi mai karawa* included



all things from blessings of all kinds to suffering of all kinds, e.g. the gift of life, good health, wisdom, knowledge and skills, and also illness, suffering, disasters and the gift of death. Human beings are recipients of all this.

Associated with the realities of illness and suffering, and life and death, there is also a strong sense of the present world, not only as corrupt and helpless, but also temporary. I-Kiribati have their own eschatological hope of a perfect and permanent land of paradise called *Oban Nakaa* (the land of Nakaa), which is attainable by all I-Kiribati after death. This eschatological belief of a paradise makes no discrimination among people in the sense of the Christian doctrine of predestination (in its simple sense), where God has eternally chosen those whom he intends to save, or that salvation is due entirely to the eternal decree of God. There is also no idea of purgatory, a doctrine held by the Roman Catholic Church, where the souls of the dead are held for purification purposes before entering heaven, a process that can be aided by the prayers, almsgiving, indulgences, fasting, sacrifices, and other works of piety by the faithful on Earth. The indigenous eschatology is seen as a reality, both of the present and the future. It is interesting to note that the notion of salvation is generally perceived by I-Kiribati more in terms of "acceptance" into *Oban Nakaa* - the land of paradise, which involves the reward of "happiness" to the faithful ones and the reward of "sadness" to the

unjust.<sup>23</sup> There is no such fearful picture of the fire of hell where all the wicked should suffer forever. Although the travel to *Aban Nakaa* involves some procedures on the part of the dead,<sup>24</sup> all I-Kiribati are entitled to enter that paradise. However, the so called unjust souls, the aged, and disabled also have their *boti* in the *maneaba* of Nakaa, although their participation in the activities of the *maneaba* takes second place to the faithful and young souls. It was believed that to die young is a privilege for reasons of the *konamaki* (disposed to action, prompt), and the *ewenako* (active and energetic), because only those who were *konamaki* and *ewenako* would fully enjoy the dancing and feasting activities of the *maneaba* of Nakaa.

When Christianity first came to the islands it introduced a new awareness of salvation which was associated with the eternal blessing of *heaven* and the eternal punishment of *hell*. This was one strong factor why there were mass conversions to the Christian faith in the first place because the call to salvation is wrapped up with a warning of the threat and punishment of hell, rather than the good news of God's unconditional love for both the living and the dead. Illness and

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<sup>23</sup> The "unjust" are those who violated the gift of life by murdering others and by committing suicide. According to the NK Source, there were a number of cases where the souls of the dying travelled to the Land of Nakaa and observed that so called "unjust" looked very unhappy; and those who committed suicide still have ropes around their necks, but no eternal painful punishment whatsoever. Although they have their *boti* in the *maneaba* they did not fully participate in the singing and dancing activities.

<sup>24</sup> M.R. Rimon, *Christ and the Tanoa*, Ibid., 99-105.



suffering were then seen in a new perspective, often associated with the notion of imperfection and guilt. Through the powerful and persuasive teachings of the missionaries, the indigenous people began to learn that their gods were inferior and imperfect, and that their perpetual relationship with their gods would not bring them any good, but rather imperfection, guilt or sin, illness and suffering.

Evidently, the initial establishment of Christianity in Kiribati is characterized by more confrontations and condemnation than negotiations and explanations between the indigenous belief patterns and the Western form of the Christian faith. As a result, the indigenous belief patterns and religious concepts were seen as imperfect and condemned as theologically wrong according to what was taken to be the Christian norm at a time. Those who returned to old cultural practices are reluctant to attend church services simply because they have feelings of imperfection and guilt, and as a result, from time to time they often perceive their illness and suffering in terms of punishment from God. The Christian Good News must always be a liberating story where forgiveness and reconciliation flourishes. Loyalty to sound cultural values and practices should not be associated with the idea of sin, illness and punishment. The gospel values should find their deepest meaning and expression in the cultural values and practices of the people. The context of the gospel must always be the culture where the Church exists. From the perspective of the Kiribati culture, illness and suffering as well as life and death are the main

features of humanity, and are accepted as absolute gifts rather than curses. The traditional concept of salvation is inclusive not discriminative for it embraces all of mankind - all I-Kiribati are welcome to the paradise *maneaba* of Nakaa, even the so called "unjust" have their *boti* reserved. The idea of eternal punishment, as traditional Christianity preaches is not compatible with the indigenous concept of the paradise *maneaba* of Nakaa where all are accepted, included and embraced. How can the two views be reconciled without deviating from the central teachings of Christianity? Is it possible to include the indigenous theological concept of "Salvation for all" as part of the central teaching of modern Christianity? In this study CET attempts to dig into the wealth of culture with the view to making comparative analyses with the Christian Gospel and affirming their empirical significance to I-Kiribati Christians.

In light of what has been discussed in this chapter, we are quite clear about the tremendous importance of the Kiribati religio-cultural values and practices and perhaps the evils entangled within them that call for more thorough and more extended, persistent Christian attention. Although the Europeans are being condemned for political and cultural imperialisms, it must be realized that Christianity is a faith operating in any and all states and cultures and identical with none. It can and does bring forth good fruits, but it should and must stand in prophetic challenge to much of the life in any society. However, in the Christian Gospel itself, and in its



transmission from culture to culture, we find cultural biases that need to be identified and reinterpreted in view of the receiving culture in order for that Gospel to really reach home, and bring fulfillment. And this is precisely one of the major concerns of CET.

Women, like men, are to be accepted equally into the church. The social differences of gender roles should not be taken as grounds to exclude women from the ministry of the church. The church must be the meeting point where such differences are reconciled and integrated to form an inclusive but outward mission of the Church. The ability to work as individuals and as a group in the Church should be encouraged and given more emphasis above the distinctions or divisions people have on the basis of age, sex, colour, culture and religion. The social teachings of culture and the Church are far from perfect, therefore, constant study and evaluation of their pitfalls is imperative.

In most Pacific islands women are denied much freedom of expression and self development of talents because of traditional and Western cultural restrictions. Even in most churches their role in the ministry is always seen at the background. Over and against the gospel, cultural taboos have exerted themselves. Even the traditional teachings of conservative churches have used the Bible as a tool to keep women out of the ministry. The cultures of the Bible are being confused with the gospel itself. It is therefore imperative for the churches in Kiribati and in the Pacific, not to be ignorant or

insensitive to all this, but rather to be more open minded to utilize new hermeneutical approaches and accept an unbiased re-reading of the Bible. It is the crucial task of all theological colleges in the Pacific to provide an exact study of the Bible and a better knowledge of the history of Christian thoughts and traditions.

At the same time, the emergence of *capitalism* is associated with the introduction of new socio-economic structures of domination and exploitation. In the name of *development*, social classes are gradually being established and the gap between men and women is now beginning to emerge. Unfortunately, all these are supported by the collaboration or silence of countless indigenous people. It is extremely important that the KPC and other Christian Churches should make a serious study of the situation and work together towards new social transformations. While in cultural matters all I-Kiribati can work together despite their differences, there is no reason why the churches cannot come together likewise. The collective efforts of the churches invested in the KNCC should be given full implications.

From the middle of the nineteenth century, Protestant and Roman Catholic missions with great seriousness and increasing numbers and well stratified structures sought to build the true resemblance of the Western "male Church". The women's life and freedom were drastically undercut. Ecclesial offices were filled only by men. There were no ordained women ministers and deaconesses in most churches in



the region. Theological education and the ministry of the churches had been male-oriented. For instance, in its early beginnings in Kiribati, the first theological college run by the LMS recruited both men and women, but women were trained primarily to become the wives of the graduates. It was reported that many single young men cannot be appointed to the ministry after graduation simply because they were single. They should be married men first in order to join the ministry. It was also reported that male students should find their brides from within the college. This practice came to be the norm of the time, and although change has been initiated, in retrospect most single ministers today are received by the village or parish people with certain preconditions. In some cases, single ministers are forced to marry their brides provided by the village in order to settle down as full time parish ministers. Female ministers are given more freedom to marry or not to marry, and if married their husband must be a committed Christian.

However, in 1968 when the LMS withdrew from the islands and handed over the leadership of the church to the local people, new changes started to emerge. The early 1970s was a new turning point in the history of the KPC. The first three General Assembly Meetings of the Church (1968, 1970 and 1972), pressed vigorously for reform of ecclesial structures and the ministry of the Church. For the first time, young women are recruited, not primarily to be prepared as wives of ministers as they used to be in the past, but as full time students

in their own rights, like men. As a result, there has been an increasing number of young ordained women now serving as full time ministers throughout the islands in the Republic. More and more young women students are given equal opportunity like male students to undertake higher theological studies overseas. Women are also accepted as full members of the General Assembly which is the governing body of the KPC. During the past three years there have been two local women ministers appointed as full time lecturers at the TThC, the only center for theological training in the Republic, which also serves the neighbouring Micronesian churches. More female members of the TThC Faculty of Theology should be encouraged in the future.

The *Reita n Aine ni Kiritian* (RAK - Fellowship of Christian Women Association) is the oldest, and has been one of the largest and active association in the Kiribati society. It is through the RAK that women's participation and contribution to the KPC is clearly seen. The RAK funded the constructions of the KPC Head Office at Antebuka and Ms Pateman's House (Girls Dormitory), at the TThC. Beside many other projects, the RAK has an annual *kareo* (offering) of money to help towards the financial running of the KPC. The RAK is well established with a newly built Head Office; a centre for local handicrafts; and a small motel. The RAK also has good working relations with other Women's Associations, such as Te Itoiningaina (RC Women's Association), and the amAK (Government's Women's Association). The



Secretary of the RAK is also a full member (and the only female member) of the (KNCC). The RAK is also a full member of the Pacific Women's Association of the Pacific Council of Churches (PCC), based in Papeete, Tahiti in French Polynesia.

Also in the history of the Republic's *Auti ni Maungatabu* (House of Assembly), there have been a number of KPC women involved in politics. It is my hope that in the near future the KPC would be able to appoint a female Moderator, or the government to appoint a female President! According to my survey, KPC is now leading in the Pacific in areas related to the emancipation of women in the ministry of the Church.

The full inclusion of I-Kiribati women into the ministry as marked by the ordination of women in the KPC is the first and historic step in the history of Christianity in Kiribati and the Pacific region. Remarkably, this change began immediately after the withdrawal of the LMS from its ministerial control in the year 1968.

While much has been changed as the result of the constant drives of modernism, there are still positive elements of culture that can only survive with great difficulty and should be given special attention. CET is interested in consolidating those aspects that promote learning, caring, freedom and growth of the whole person.

There is more to be examined in culture and in the traditions of the Church that go beyond the size of this paper. However, in this study I have tried to bring together what I regard as important in our understanding of the Kiribati indigenous world-view, the rituals and different forms of mysticism, and also influential concepts that form a fundamental aspect of an *I-Kiribati Katei* today, including some significant political, economic and religious changes that have been brought about by Europeans, especially the British missionaries and colonists in the 19th century.

Imperatively, it is timely that our theological trend in Kiribati and the Pacific today should be focussed on the study of the interrelations and dialogue of the indigenous Cultures, the Human Sciences and the Gospel. The call, therefore, is for a shift in our theological interest from its being very Western oriented to its becoming truly *I-Kiribati* or Pacificness.

There is much that we need to explore, re-examine and develop from within our own cultural context as well as to offer to the wider world. The interest of CET is not focused exclusively in a search for a theological *tanahib'ai*, but also in an open dialogue with the human sciences, and a constant search for relevance and new changes that foster development, growth and freedom in our theological activity.

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CHAPTER FIVE

The Integration: Implications and Conclusion

In the previous chapters the initial formation of CPE in the U.S.A. and CET in Kiribati have been discussed and some cultural and theological aspects have been identified. In this chapter, the implications of the research are laid down and more proposals are made to help facilitate the effective operation of the envisaged program of CET in Kiribati.

Implications of the Findings

Since most CPE clusters in the U.S. are not Church-based programs, there is always the risk that CPE will lose touch with the original mission of the Church -- *Marturia* (Witness), *Koinonia* (Fellowship) and *Diakonia* (Service). Placing greater emphasis on *diakonia*, it has lost touch with the other two. The danger is that CPE might become a new denomination among the other Church denominations in the U.S. Convinced of the importance of *clinical theology* and *empirical theology* CPE unfortunately does not have any particular theology as the foundation of its movement. Influenced by the language of *behavioural science*, the traditional theological concept of *sin* and *salvation* was interpreted in terms of modern social sciences rather than through the eye of *faith*. Emphasis was placed more and more on social services as interpreted by social sciences, with the result being that their ministry to and understanding of human

suffering was no different in character from that of the agnostics. The conclusion can be drawn from these data that CPE program is not necessarily a Christian-based program.

Although CPE has proved to be a valid model of pastoral education, as an American product its own basic goals, methods, principles, values and emphases have been proved to work more effectively within the context of a highly individualistic society, its direct duplication or application into a highly communal society like Kiribati may not be very appropriate. Realistically, the educational and cultural context of Kiribati today is different from that of America, as well as other developed countries where CPE is used. This is why CET is formulated as an alternative approach of teaching, education and counselling in a society which is less individualistic and more communal, less liberal and more conservative, -- a society where people take religion seriously as the main highlight almost everyday in the *maneaba*, in every home, and even at work places.

CET as an integrative enterprise must adapt its entire program to the conditions and situation of Kiribati. Through this integration and adaptation CET would provide a new method of theological education where learning and doing theology will emerge from the cultural orientation of the students and find its development in lectures, research and workshops, and through empirical involvement with the firsthand documents. In its educational program CET

integrates both cultural awareness and experiences with the relevant contributions of theology and psychology, as well as the other human sciences (sociology, anthropology, biology etc), and group dynamics into a ministry of teaching and healing. Like CPE, CET will assist ministers, theological students and lay persons to be better equipped caregivers. In practice, it will be a Christian-based program with certain theological assumptions. An essential question is, *Does one have to be theologically liberal in order to benefit the most from this program?* Or, *If CET is a Church-based program, does it mean that it must be theologically conservative?* In this research it is strongly asserted that the Church is called to a non-traditional ministry and witness. The traditional witness is obsolete. There is no more adequate way for the Church to express and demonstrate a solidarity with Christ in today's Kiribati society than to express and demonstrate a solidarity with people who struggle for healing, peace, justice and freedom. The question for the Kiribati Church is not only *Who Christ is*, but *Where is Christ?* The TThC has been long preoccupied its theological curriculum with courses that totally emphasize the notion of "Who is Christ". It is intrinsic and worthwhile to engage students in an intellectual theological search in books and lectures as part of their training, but it is far more necessary and relevant to engage students in an empirical theological involvement with people, especially people who are desperately seeking "Where Jesus is" in their pains and crises. Therefore, what CET proposes or ensures is a change to a more balanced emphases in the theological curriculum where the thrusts of

the *theological intrinsic* and *worthwhileness* and the *theological necessity and relevancy* are equally fostered in the training of future ministers. When this change is achieved, then the Church would be free from its traditional style of ministry, to align itself with the poor, the sick, the oppressed and the marginalized (Matt. 25: 35-40).

These findings clearly underscore the need for some kind of theological foundation so that CET program will not lose touch with the mission of the Church. Furthermore, CET has the responsibility of providing a basic training within the church, which will enable pastors and theological students to utilize the contributions of the human sciences and theology in their ministry of caring.

Theological Basis of CET

In order that CET will not lose touch with the ministry of the Church, it is very important that this study attempts to find a theological foundation. Basically, as a theological program, CET cannot be detached from the ministry of the Church because in its original purpose it is designed to be an extension of the the Christian ministry. This means that Christian ministry and the Church cannot be dichotomized, because they are one. Christian ministry is the action and the Church is the context. To formulate a foundational theology of Christian ministry upon which CET is based, one has to start with the Church -- to be more specific, the actual image or images of the Church as acquired or manifested in the New Testament.

The life and work of the Church is the continuation of Christ's ministry. Thus, the ministry of the Church can be defined in terms of Jesus' work -- his teaching and his acts. To know the origin of Christian ministry, one needs to return to the intention and action of Jesus -- the focus of Jesus' ministry in his life, death and resurrection. This sets men and women free and reconciles them to God and to one another. So, if the Church is the continuation of the incarnation, the ministry of the Church should be the incarnation of Jesus' ministry.

The uniqueness of Jesus' ministry is marked by his lowliness and humbleness -- "one who serves" (Luke 22: 27). Many passages in the Bible show that the idea of a suffering servant is pivotal in Jesus' ministry. To save humanity, he humbled himself, taking the form of a servant and becoming obedient unto death, even death on the cross (Phil. 2: 7, 8).

The Church needs to reconsider its method used in Christian ministry. In Kiribati, the image of the Church as the suffering servant is the most appropriate for Christian ministry. When Jesus came to the world he was the man for others. In like manner the Church is the Church only when it reaches out to others, to those in the ordinary secular human life, not dominating, but helping and serving them. In the suffering servant Church, the Church is not only for those who are in the Church, but it is also for those who do not

even have faith. It must relate to people irrespective of their race, culture, creed, social position, or prestige.

The motivation of Christian ministry, especially in the image of the Church as the suffering servant, is the love of God. God calls his people to care and at the same time to love those in the world. This love is no mere sentimental affection, but a positive force for justice, righteousness, freedom and peace.

This new commandment by Christ becomes "good news" for the world, because the Church cannot tolerate any longer seeing people, the creation of God, left unattended, dying on the streets, without doing anything (Luke 10: 33, 34).

As a suffering servant, the Church consists of people who are called to witness in obedience to the Great Commission (Matt. 28: 19, 20). The Church as witnessing people must forever be looking outward rather than inward. In the first place, the Church is responsible for the message of redemption -- Christ offers forgiveness of sin, invites people to repentance and delivers them from the destruction. In Christ people find the source of hope and a new life (2 Corinthians. 5:17).

However, Christian ministry is not simply bringing the people to conversion. It is not enough that the people should hear the gospel proclaimed only. They need also to experience the gospel, which gives

them peace, healing, reconciliation and liberation. In light of this theological foundation, CET will be able to serve more effectively, and provide a wholistic Christian ministry in the Church and the society at large. With a proper perspective on this theological foundation, CET in its program cannot detach itself from the very purpose of the Church -- *in and for the world.*

Religious Resources

The use of religious resources is most essential in the context of caring and counselling in Kiribati. However, the use of religious resources should have a definite aim. For example, the use of scriptural resources should be specifically related to a person's need. The parable of the sower in Mark 4:3-8 provides a description about the use of Scripture to meet human needs and conditions. The parable implies the importance of the knowledge of the condition of the soil. Not every soil can grow the seed, but only the soil which has been plowed and prepared can grow seed and bear fruit. This means that the use of religious resources, particularly the reference to the Scripture, has to be preceded by true understanding of the problem. The knowledge of the person's background, culture, and the need of the situation may help a pastoral counsellor to use religious resources in an appropriate and effective way. Howard Clinebell commented: "Use religious words and resources only after one has some awareness of person's problems and their background, their feelings and attitudes

regarding religion."¹ This emphasizes the importance of diagnosis. CET will utilize the relevant contributions of psychology to train students in analyzing human situations and in applying biblical experiences to ministry. It also provides an opportunity for the students to become familiar with the useful biblical passages and use them in practice.

There is also an increasing awareness on the part of many in the secular disciplines of the value of religious resources. Carl Jung, for example, once said, "Among my patients in the second half of life - - that is to say, over thirty-five -- there has not been one whose problem in the last resort was not that of finding a religious outlook on life."² In the context of pastoral care and counselling, especially in Kiribati, it is absurd if the pastor does not utilize religious resources. This does not mean that spiritual factors are the only or the primary cause of mental or physical illness. However, in pastoral care, the spiritual dimension should have its proper place in the helping process.³

¹ Howard J. Clinebell, *Basic Types of Pastoral Care and Counselling: Resources for the ministry of Healing and Growth*, revised ed. (Nashville: Abingdon, 1984), 122.

² Carl Jung, *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*, (1939, reprint, New York: Harcourt Brace, 1961), 264.

³ David J. Hesselgrave, *Counselling Cross-Culturally: An Introduction to Theory and Practice for Christians*, (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1984), 272.

In Kiribati today, where most of the young population's point of view has been influenced by Western educational systems and scientific investigations in almost all areas of life, one may assume there is a possibility that some of the populations would view spiritual phenomenon in terms of the pathological. They perhaps no longer believe that there is such a thing as "supernatural intervention" in the life of a human being. Like the rational materialist and existentialist they also believe that there is no supernatural agency which can break into the autonomous physical world ruled by natural law.⁴ The result is that they have a strong bias against spiritual healing. In the Western society the naturalist and the existentialist believe that the very existence of demon possession, for instance, is socially dependent. However, this notion in recent years is no longer true. Interest in occultism, spiritism and satanic worship has resurfaced in Western society. These issues have become crucial areas of pastoral care.

Generally speaking, the majority of the people in Kiribati still believe in the existence of supernatural intervention in the life of a human being. The people are presented with the question of how to deal with it. How does one understand the phenomenon of the supernatural?

⁴ Morton T. Kelsey, *Psychology, Medicine and Christian Healing*, revised ed. (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988), 7.

The CET in its initial and future development will assist students to be aware of the reality and seriousness of demonic influences on the people of Kiribati. At the same time the program will provide training for the students to be more alert to social reality, which will basically enable them to understand and empathize with the needs of the people.

Identifying cases from the field, students will exercise their skills to differentiate between what is pathological and demon possession, while also recognizing the role of pastoral counselling in these encounters.

Action and Reflection

A systematic way to achieve the objectives of CET is by means of intelligent action and reflection. By action, is meant direct interaction between students and clients (patients in a hospital or homes, prisoners in a jail, or other people who are in crisis), students and staff of the medical or correctional institution, group peers and also students and their supervisors. It involves active conversation and questioning, listening and responding, writing of verbatim reports, and the analytical interpretation of the encounter. In reflection, the total sum of the student's personal experiences are seriously reconsidered, or reflected upon. Reflection requires serious consideration of or meditation upon the past knowledge or experience acquired from the encounter. Reflection is important because it

increases self-awareness, wisdom and new insights. During reflection students are given the opportunity to relate their own experiences with their personal life and ministry. Through action we are confronted by persons in crisis, and through reflection of our experiences we then come to terms with the living knowledge of our own bondage, weaknesses, temporalness, as well as our strengths, gifts, and hope. Action and reflection are helpful in building one's courage to claim one's uniqueness.

Sharing of experiences and self-reflections in a well-organized and caring group seminar is also an important exercise. It enables students to be honest with their own feelings, their struggles, and their differences, and yet still feel accepted. It helps one to know that it is all right to be different. The atmosphere of a caring group and the attitudes of its members are the determining factors, which makes one feel accepted and appreciated even though one is different. Self-reflection is not a goal but a means. It is a means of monitoring one's own learning, development and growth in interpersonal relations. In this exercise, self-reflection and definite concrete action should lead the individual to more effective learning and living.

Theoretically, writing from a culture which stresses "being" over "doing" the invitation to self-reflection, or the sharing and writing of experiences may have some difficulty. Basically, it is difficult in a communal society, when affiliation is stressed, to share

personal and individual achievement with somebody else without being thought of as egotistical or individualistic. An individual's achievement is not highly considered as important unless it contributes something good to the total group. In the communal society, people have to avoid individual competition, because competition in itself strengthens individualism and individualism disturbs the balance of equilibrium.

It is hard to sit and write or talk about one's own achievement or growth without being overshadowed by one's own culture. Achievement or growth is not something for sharing, but it is something to be proved in action or in life. It is not the responsibility of the individual to state one's own achievement or growth, but the responsibility of "others", (or the group or teacher/supervisor in the context of education), who have seen it happen in a person's life, because the individual is weak without the leader or the group support. In the group seminar, an individual is dependent upon one's group or leader in order to claim one's achievement and growth.

In Kiribati you may be bashful and anxious about sharing your own achievement because once you have said it, you have the obligation to fulfill it in life. You must be able to behave according to what you have claimed to be, otherwise people would brand you a liar. Because it is *angabuako* (inappropriate) and *kamama* (shameful), one has to avoid

such presumption.

However, self-reflection is very crucial because it leads students to self-awareness, an exercise which is very important in the educational objective of CET. The implication of the data is that CET should include the activity of self-reflection adapted to the local culture and implemented so as to focus on the meaning of an individual in a communal society.

Doing-Being Dilemma

The problem of the "doing-being" dilemma could be effectively reconciled if their cultural validity are fully explored and understood in their respective context, and also their legitimate roles are systematically adapted or stipulated to suit the need in the context where they are applied.

I-Kiribati culture stresses "being" rather than "doing" in relation to activity. The orientation is towards passive, experiential and contemplative patterns which is in contrast to Western values. I-Kiribati believe that life is only temporary. Material wealth is not prized because when one dies material wealth is meaningless. That is why I-Kiribati place a greater emphasis on spirituality, religion and philosophy. For I-Kiribati, "being" is essentially important for existence.

In the *maneaba* existence, all people are one and the same; mutuality is exercised and there is no individuality. This is the time when group solidarity and tolerance are fully realized. Individual differences are still tolerated as long as they do not disturb the peace of the group as a whole. Community needs always surpass the individual ones. However, since people vary in their ability to carry out the spiritual disciplines, it is possible to perceive individuals according to their spiritual abilities and other achievements. Thus, we have the indigenous */banga* (priest); the spokesmen of the *maneaba* -- *win te maneaba*; and so forth.

In the society where the culture stresses the ideas of group solidarity, communal consensus, neither-nor positions on differences, mutuality and the *baraoi* and *karinerine* relationships, the decision-making process is determined by the situation and the ethic of fit -- *angaraoi*.

As far as possible I-Kiribati must not show their greed for individual achievement and competition, because personal achievements and competition strengthen individuality and consequently disturb the harmony of the community -- *maneaba* existence. Place of birth, family background, heritage, traditional roles and statuses are seen as more important than personal achievement. However, when one is ascribed to a certain status or role, he/she must behave like as expected and obey certain moral norms.

However, the American culture stresses doing over being, and as such the individual is far more important than the community. Separateness is enforced as the result of tolerance, individual freedom for competition and strife for personal achievements and growth. The survival and existence of an individual is a matter of personal choice and effort, and as such there is always a winner and a loser. The harmony and equilibrium of the community is replaced by the conflict between individuals. The sense of estrangement from one another is a common disease. If the community is to be served, it is done in and according to the sole will, rights and freedom of the individual. The identity of the individual cannot be swallowed by the community. The community acknowledges social differences and encourages those differences to be developed. While the communal society like Kiribati is characterized by the "We" identity, the individualistic culture like America is characterized by the "I" identity.

While the differences are so obvious between the Kiribati and the American cultures, the CET is interested in reconciling the dilemma by means of integration. This integrative approach is based on the assumption that no culture is absolute. Therefore, a synthetical learning and application of sound aspects from the two cultures is encouraged. Doing and being are both important entities and each should be given proper treatment in the life of the individual and the community. While doing is aimed at the action of growth, being is aimed at the presence of others and their well-being, and both are to

be seen in their practical actuality in both worlds, that of the individual and that of the community. While doing is centered on the "self", being is on the "other" and the two modes of self awareness are both intrinsic and necessary, and each should be given equal attention in order that growth and well-being become intellectually and empirically fulfilled in individuals and in groups in a variety of social settings.

Conservative-Liberal Dichotomy

The problem of the "conservative-liberal" dichotomy should be reconciled by coming into a common understanding that evangelism and pastoral care are inseparable tasks of the church. They cannot be seen as merely an effort of evangelization on the one pole, and a social support on the other pole. Rather, they must be understood as comprehensive and wholistic tasks which cover all aspects of human existence.

The conservative-liberal problem is seen to be a perennial one. The conservative believe that the most important mission of the church is evangelism, whereas the liberals believe it is a pastoral ministry. However, T.W. Mason as quoted by C.W. Brister, was right when he said that "each congregation has a dual role to perform in the world -- evangelistic and pastoral." Both are inseparable, "for they are two aspects of a single life."⁵

Today, it is not enough for *I-Kiribati*, as well as the rest of the world to hear the gospel of peace only; they must see also the gospel actually making peace. In a culture where the concept of unity is dominant, the solution above is most likely -- unity in diversity.

A Proposed Structural Analysis

CET urges the need for a structural analysis of the Kiribati society. This will be made through its theological education program that will help I-Kiribati moving towards a better society. Structural analysis is an aspect of social science which reveals most causes of social problems, and is essential in facilitating social reform and change. The Church (leaders and members) should seriously make a thorough study of the society to identify the weaknesses, to reveal the actual situation and the severity of the problems, and to deal with root causes effectively. Obviously, structural analysis is a crucially important process in raising the social awareness of the people in regards to the unjust social structures and relationships within the entire society. It should begin at the level of the people within their own experience and their own level of understanding. It is the obligation of the people. No one can do their analysis for them. This ensures the collective initiative and participation of the people in the direct development process to change their conditions. Undoubtedly, lack of understanding of the social stratification and structures, and

⁵ C.W. Brister, *Pastoral Care in the Church* (New York: Harper & Row, 1964), 87.

also the positive and negative forces that operate on the people that are oppressed leads a development effort directly to failure. Development with social justice can take place only when we are clear where injustice takes place. Structural analysis involves a dynamic process where the awareness of the people is articulated and acted upon in the context of their active programs.

For CET, the goal of structural analysis is to *reveal* the character of the system of the society, to uncover a system of bondage in order to transform the power structure that creates the bondage into a process of liberation. It should *identify* for the people who is the oppressor and the victim. It should enable people to recognize the need for change -- the formation of a new humanity.

The process of structural analysis must always start with the people: with their local situation - family -- the village -- the place of work -- the Church, etc; where the people live, work or meet. The people will be encouraged to reflect on their reality in order to understand it well. They must undertake the analysis themselves. It is anticipated that in the articulation of their own experience they should be able to reveal the effects of the culture and system within which they live. Structural analysis in this context would enable the people to overcome the social limitations (fatalism, superstitious practices, apathy, helplessness, etc), and to begin to move towards effecting changes.

Pastors should take up the role of motivator or enabler and work together with the people in a mutual learning process. They must be able to assimilate the experience of the people and the many-sided knowledge of the resource persons -- those who are committed to the cause of the people. They should provide people with technical aspects of doing social and structural analysis. The structural analysis must be an on-going process with the people. It cannot be rushed and finished with. It must be brought to bear on every aspect of program experience, as a continuing exercise of the people.

People often blame fate or lack of ability and understanding for their condition. Usually they believe without question that their social positions and roles contribute to the smooth working of the society. Consequently, they help to perpetuate unjust systems under which they suffer.

With structural analysis, CET would be able to set its social goals more clearly. This includes:

(1) Opting for the weakest of the weak and the poorest of the poor -- those members of the society in a variety of settings (village, work force, schools and even the churches) who are suffering, oppressed, deprived, depressed and exploited; and to effect a shift from a development or project approach to a people's movement approach, in which the community becomes the master of its own destiny, planning, deciding upon and implementing its activities. *Let*

the people write the agenda should be the norm.

(2) Identifying the oppressor and the oppressed; the winner and the loser; and also the root causes of oppression and exploitation.

(3) Describing social stratification through cultural analysis and deepening the social investigation process. An analysis done at the people's level explains their universe. Their suffering, suppressions, and oppression come into proper perspective only when placed within a framework where experience becomes meaningful.

(4) Encouraging clear and long-term objectives to establish a just and egalitarian human community without exploitation and oppression; helping formulate appropriate strategy and tactics to overcome oppression in a collective manner, in which people as a community work together using combined efforts.

(5) Providing an overall perspective for development work in the light of which its intrinsic worth and effectiveness can be judged.

(6) Identifying available resources in the community and the need if any for outside assistance.

(7) Understanding the need for self-reliance and solidarity with other oppressed people. The cultural values of the *maribo*, *toronib'ai*, *ibuobuuki*, *maua nako* etc, are crucially important to be actually put into practice.

(8) Sensitizing people to their needs and rights; turning from apathy and a mentality of fatalism, enabling them to fight for their rights. An analysis at the level of the people opens up their eyes and changes their mentality.

(9) Motivating people to establish new relations, new values and supporting groups and institutions, as well as material assets.

(10) Fostering action and reflection as an on-going process with the people; encouraging them to grow together through mutual criticism to further forge unity and solidarity. With the help of analysis, people are brought into a common awareness of the suffering of others under bondage also. When they understand the inter-relatedness of the local situation to the national and international oppressive and exploitative system, they are emotionally ready for solidarity with all suffering people.

Social analysis, as a method of analyzing the problems of society, involves two levels of action and reflection, namely the *class analysis*, which is an analysis between social classes; and *sub-systems analysis*, which is an analysis between the sub-systems of the society - political, economic, and cultural (including religion, family, education, mass media, etc). How the social classes and the sub-systems operate in themselves and how they relate should be explored using the following methods and means:

- (i) Questionnaires and surveys.
- (ii) Social investigation.
- (iii) Formal and non-formal education.

Pastors and educators and also members of the KNCC are in a better position to organize formal study circles, discussion groups and seminars whereby thorough analyses of the issues can be carried out. Issues may include oppressive cultural values, the *maneaba* communal authority and the rights of individuals, land tenure, rivalries between church denominations, wage levels, educational system and policies, care for the disabled and the mentally-ill, method of imprisonment, marketing policies, distribution of national wealth, and many other pressing issues from time to time.

Reflection on the history and experience of the people is imperative. Daily experiences that touch people to the core should be amplified. It is through awareness-raising that people begin to question. Questioning is a positive sign that people are awakening. Constant interpretation is the task of the Church (pastors, KNCC, etc) and educators who are always at hand to render this service to trigger people into thinking and acting for themselves.

Conscientization through a socialization process from childhood is also imperative. This calls for the roles of parents, families, village peoples, primary and secondary schools and their teachers, and

the general adult population. Those involved in this process should be positive thinkers who are well-informed with the ills of the society and are willing to direct the young towards new mentalities and personalities. The role of CET is crucially important in training pastors to be effective and professional resource persons and also facilitators and enablers in the society, who are capable of facilitating intelligent understanding of the situations, and also in creating a caring and loving community. If this role is materialized, there is no doubt that the service of the Church would be proved relevant in today's Kiribati changing society.

Conclusion

In conclusion, there is need to assert that there are no rules of time, place, or tenure of theological and pastoral education opportunities. They can be varied and take place in as many settings as there are people. Therefore, the scope of CET's future theological and pastoral activity is as broad as life itself, and tries to be inclusive enough to touch all the areas of human and social concern within the Kiribati society. This will call forth new, creative, and effective ways of maintaining and fulfilling the vitality, creativity, and relevance of the teaching and counselling roles of the churches in Kiribati.

If the KPC and its theological college, and also other Christian churches, accept serious responsibility for this challenge, then it will

be demonstrated that the program of CET is beneficial and should be utilized in a variety of professional settings within the Kiribati context.

There are many other significant areas to which attention must be given that go beyond the scope of this present work. However, what has been discussed so far initially laid down the conceptual foundation of CET, which requires further developments and refinements in research, theory and practice in the near future.

THE END OF THE WORLD IS NOT A DATE, IT'S A STATE OF MIND.

GLOSSARY

KIRIBATI TO ENGLISH

- Abaa** ——— a defined plot of land; also used as a collective name for people, especially when preceded with /a —definite article.
- Aban Nakaa** ——— The land of Nakaa; paradise.
- Abi mai karawa** ——— a basket from heaven; a tradition from the NK Source about the origin of all things that surround human life, e.g. sickness, blessings.
- Aine** ——— a woman, or women
- Akaa uala** ——— fruitless and unworthy; a description of persons who are not productive or contributive to the well being of the family, or the village, etc.
- Aki mamatan** ——— Abstinence of food and drink
- Akoi** ——— Hospitality.
- Angaraol** ——— Fit; suitable; most appropriate.
- Anti** ——— Spirits; usually bad or evil spirits.
- Ao** ——— field; outside the home.

Amarau	-----A traditional term used to describe the level and nature of interpersonal relationship, which is polite, gentle or easy; (literal meaning: refined, soft).
Amata	-----People
Amatoa	-----The opposite of amarau, see above., (literally means coarse, rough).
Anaki n aine	-----Female's periodic illness.
Ataei	-----Children, the young person.
Ataeinaine, ataei-aine	-----Young unmarried woman.
Ataib'ai	-----Knowledge; information; learning; social awareness.
Auti ni Maungatapu	-----House of Assembly.
B'aa	-----Things; properties.
Baaturan te utu	-----Family elders.
Babaire	-----Decision.
Babaka n ataei	-----Childish; immature, insensible.
Babanga te Katei	-----Ignorance of Culture.

- Bainokonoko ——— a descriptive of a young and dependent girl before the age of puberty; (literal meaning: fragile-handed).
- Baire man te maneaba ——— Decision, or instruction from the *maneaba*.
- Bakatae ——— Prodigality; extravagance.
- Banaban ——— The original inhabitants of Banaba island, also known as Ocean island.
- Beretitenti ——— President.
- Beroro ma bururu ——— a sitting zone for women and children at the periphery of the *maneaba*. (lit. noisy and sprinkled).
- Binoka ——— Twining - making strings from a coconut fiber.
- Bo-n-nano ——— Unity; agreement.
- Boraoi ——— Equality.
- Botaki ——— Social gathering.
- Boti ——— a sitting place within the *maneaba* allocated to all members of the *kawa* - village.
- Boti n Iruwa ——— Visitor's sitting place within the *maneaba*, always situated at the lagoon side.

- Boto ——— An expert, teacher.
- Boua ni kaua ——— Supportive pillar; also referring to a supportive role of a wife to her husband; or a young man to his *baatua*.
- E Tabu te Uea ——— Monarchy is forbidden.
- Eti ——— Right, correctness.
- Owenako ——— Active and energetic; skillful.
- Ibonga ——— Priest.
- Ibuakanib'ai ——— Reciprocal giving and sharing.
- Ikawai ——— Adult, old person.
- I-Kiribati ——— The indigenous people of Kiribati; a replacement of the colonial name known by many foreigners as Gilbertese.
- Ikotaki ——— A gathering together of people. An old practice of gathering in preparation for a certain course of action, which involves certain ritualistic activities.
- I-Matang ——— The people from the Land of Matang, (traditionally the land of the spirits); The name now used to refer to Europeans.
- Inaki ——— Sitting place within the *maneaba*.
See also *boti*.

- Inanoi ————Mutuality; co-operation; a process of union between different groups or parties.
- "Iraua kaniam te ben?" ————A traditional saying which asks about one's state of maturity, or manhood and womanhood; lit. "how many coconuts have you eaten?" — how mature are you? Frequently used to mean — how strong are you?... etc.
- Kain te utu ————Members of the family; usually an extended family.
- Kaain te maneaba ————Members of the *maneaba*.
- Kabinaki ————Anointing with oil; a ritualistic process during the *Teiao*.
- Kaewenko ————Learner, pupil.
- Kainga ————Abode of an extended family.
- Kaka-rabakau ————Dialogue, interchange of wisdom; a formal conversation in the *maneaba*.
- Kamama ————Shameful; disgrace.
- Kamatauninga ————Disrespect.
- Kamoamoa ————Proud; bragging.
- Kanoan te maiu ————Contents, or characteristics of human existence through out the life span.

- Karabinoa, karabinoaki ——— To roll on; a term used to refer to a process of a shared or corporate decision making of the *maneaba*.
- Karawa ——— Heaven; paradise.
- Karea ——— Offering; free giving; contribution to the Church.
- Karikib'ai ——— The process of creation.
- Karinerine ——— Respect.
- Karo ——— Parent; sometimes used to mean only a father.
- Katebo ——— Immersion; another name for the *Teiao* ritual.
- Katei ——— Culture, conduct or manner of life.
- Katoka-bunna ——— Putting-on-cover; a ritualistic process of protection from misfortunes or evil curses.
- Kau-n-aro ——— Denominational debates.
- Kauntaeka ——— Debate; open debate.
- Kawa ——— Village.
- Konamaki ——— Disposed to action, prompt.
- Kororaoi ——— Perfection.

Maiu	———Life (when used with <i>te</i>); alive.
Mate	———Death (when used with <i>te</i>); dead.
M'am'akuri	———Work-oriented; strong sense of responsibility.
M'anea	———To accept, receive, embrace.
M'aneaba	———Traditional meeting house. A place where all people are received, accepted and embraced: — from <i>m'anea</i> and <i>aba</i> .
M'aneaban Nakaa	———The <i>maneaba</i> of Nakaa.
Maribo	———Hard working for the purpose of having plenty of food and wealth or prosperity for all.
Maroro	———Open discussion; to engage in conversation, usually informal.
Maroro ma anti	———A communion with the evil spirits; or one's ancestors.
Maua-nako	———An interjection at the beginning of the cry made by people when they are just at the point of hauling together; an utterance that calls for a combined human effort in a variety of settings.
Minita	———Church Minister.
Minita n I-Matang	———European, expatriate minister.

- Moone ——— Hell; a place of eternal punishment.
- Motirannan ——— Indecision.
- Mwenga ——— Home, residence.
- Mwianounou ——— The attainment of inner freedom and a state of being wholly complete; having a strong sense of optimism and total hope in life.
- Na'Areau (Na Kareau) ——— The Creator God, according to the Kiribati traditional Creation Myth; (literal meaning: the Spider).
- Nakaa ——— The Guardian of Paradise, according to the traditional Kiribati eschatology. The name is a shorten form of the Na'Areau or Nakareau. The names Nakaa and Na'Areau refer to the same deity - the creator and the guardian of paradise.
- Nano-m'aka ——— Courage; boldness; lit. powerful mind.
- Nano-rinano ——— Patience; a lowly state of mind; or broadmindedness; humbleness and not trying to push oneself to the front.
- Nao ——— The masculine title, such as Mr. (literal meaning: a wave).
- Nati ——— Child; offspring.

- Nei ——— The feminine title, such as Mrs. (literal meaning: a pool, pond).
- Nei ni kaua tabakea ——— The pond of peace of all the elders; the peace-zone at the center of the *maneaba*, surrounded by all the *boti* of the *oinimane*.
- Nikira n roro ——— The rest of the age; a widow; unmarried woman; not a virgin.
- Oi ——— The very thing itself; the very person himself; one's self; literal meaning: source; trunk; torch.
- Oi n aomata ——— Real person; human worthiness.
- Oi n aine ——— Old women; (literal meaning: real women). The author of this work introduced for the first time this new Kiribati written form for Old women, claiming it as most appropriate in conveying the real traditional image and role of the old women in the Kiribati culture and society. See also *Oinim'ane* below.
- Oi ni botaki ——— The real (important) gathering.
- Oi-ni-m'ane ——— Old men; (literally, the source; or real men)
- Oi-ni-m'anen te kawa ——— Village elders.
- Onomwi ——— Replacement; substitution of a bride or bridegroom in the case of a dead spouse.

- Raoi ———Calm, peace.
- Raranga ———Weaving - making fine mats from the pandanus leaves.
- Rau ———Peace; pandanus thatch.
- Rau-n-nano ———Peace of mind.
- Riai ———Proper, suitable, fit, Justice.
- Rikiana ———One's origin - from the word *rikia* meaning identity and heritage.
- Rangarango ———Tidings, news; Adopted as the name of the first Protestant theological college established by the London Missionary Society, on the island of Beru, which was the LMS first Mission base from 1870-1968.
- Raro ———Generation, age.
- Raro n Rangarango ———Rangarango generation; refers mainly to the old generation of pastors who were graduates of the Rangarango Theological College, during the British colonial years and missionary era of the LMS. It also taken to mean their views, teachings and a conservative ministerial and ecclesial style within the KPC.
- Raro n Tangintebu ———Tangintebu generation; refers mainly to the new generation of pastors who are trained at the Tangintebu Theological College from 1968 onward. Also used to

mean a more liberal theological and ministerial activities within the KPC.

- Taan babaire ————The controllers, decision makers.
- Taan baireaki ————The controlled; people under certain restrictions; under authority.
- Taan Ongara ————Observers.
- Taan taetae n te maneaba ————Spokesmen in the *maneaba*.
- Tabunea ————An incantation; sorcery; magic; (literal meaning: holy inspiration).
- Tabutabu ————Observance of traditional and religious taboo; e.g. food regulations, etc.
- Tae-ibennao ————The ritual of purification.
- Taetae-ni-ikawai ————Conversation of the elders; conversing in an elderly fashion.
- Tangintebu ————Sound of the conch shell; Adopted as the new name of the Kiribati Protestant Church theological college when it was first transferred from Rongorongo to the capital island of Tarawa, in 1968.
- Taningaroti ————idle; lazy.
- Taona-n-hano ————A readiness to surrender all one's possessions, abilities and rewards

with gladness without complaint;
a willingness to sacrifice or to
renounce everything.

- Tau-rarua ——— Hold or take distance.
- Taubang ——— Moderation; total control of all
types of wants and desires.
- Te ——— The definite article in the Kiribati
language.
- Te Ue; Anga te Ue ——— The process of giving gifts in the
form of traditional wisdom and
skills during the traditional
botaki; lit. the flower; give the
flower.
- Tebotebo ——— The rite of purification (bath), or
immersion during the *Teiao* ritual.
- Teiao ——— A ritual, during puberty, marking
an onset of menstrual periods.
- Teirake ——— A rising.
- Tekateka ——— A sitting.
- Tekateka i oin te boua ——— A ritualistic process of sitting at
the trunk of the pillar during the
Teiao; assuming a pillar-function
in the family; also referred to in
connection with the female's sense
of responsibility and endurance.
- Tekebuaka ——— Unfortunate; unlucky.

- Tekeraoi ———Fortunate; good luck, best wishes.
- Tidki te I-Kiribati ———A person who may be a citizen of Kiribati, but not an indigenous I-Kiribati; also applied to indigenous I-Kiribati who frequently deviate from the cultural norm.
- Tia-Raoi ———The Peace-Maker.
- Tian ao kororaoi te beku ———The completion and fulfillment of the task.
- Ti tebo te Maiu ao te Mate ———Death and Life are equally the same - an expression when one is faced with challenges and hardships; usually when life is threatened.
- Toronib'ai ———Self-reliance; self-sufficiency, self-worthiness.
- Tungaru ———The indigenous name of the group of islands known by Europeans, during the colonial days as the Gilbert islands. During its political independence on 12 July 1979, the name Kiribati, which is a rendition of the English name Gilbert became the official name.
- Unaine ———A common written form for Old women; (literal meaning: Aggressive women).
- Unim'ane ———A common written form for Old men; (literal meaning: Aggressive Man).

- Utu ——— Hamlet, extended family.
- Wae-rau ——— Thatch-weaving.
- Win te maneaba ——— Speaker of the *maneaba*; lit.
the mouth of the *maneaba*.

THE END OF THE WORLD IS AT HAND. THE END OF THE WORLD IS AT HAND. THE END OF THE WORLD IS AT HAND.

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