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## Athanasius' Physical-Substitutionary Theory of Atonement & the *Agikuyu* Christians' Fear of *Kirumi*: Towards an Existential-Transcendental Theology of Atonement

John Kamau Mwangi

<https://orcid.org/0009-0008-6631-1051>

John Michael Kiboi, PhD

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0866-1677>

St. Paul's University, Kenya

### Abstract

This research article sets out to explore Athanasius' physical-substitutionary theory of atonement, and eventually demonstrate how it can be a remedy for the *Agikuyu* fear of *kirumi* (curse). This will drive us to construct an existential-transcendental theology of atonement. Through an analytical design, the research article will methodologically strive to retrace the curse from the Garden of Eden tree to the reversing of the curse on the tree - the Cross of Christ. In retrospect, this evangelistic-remedial work intends to generate the *Agikuyu* Christians' deeper understanding of the Christian doctrine of atonement towards overcoming the fear of *kirumi*. Theoretically, thus, it employs existential-transcendentalism as the concept that guides the construction of an existential-transcendental theology of atonement towards addressing the *Agikuyu* Christians' fear of *kirumi*.

**Key words:** *Agikuyu* Christians, Atonement, Curse, Existentialism, Transcendentalism.

### Introduction

In Africa's communal-minded context, salvation should be understood as a holistic phenomenon that entails physical, spiritual, economic, and religio-cultural dimensions of liberation. Understanding the Christian concept of holistic salvation is a challenge among *Agikuyu* Christians, especially in the realm of *kirumi* and its remedy. The religio-social experiences of the *Agikuyu* Christians (Kenya) points to the fact that even after receiving the Gospel of Jesus Christ they do not fully understand the all-inclusive efficacy of Christ's atoning work on the Cross. This reality is demonstrated by the negligence of the Paschal Mystery in their religio-cultural attempt to deal with the fear of *kirumi*. This problem stemmed from the Christian missionaries' disregard of inculturation during the evangelization of the *Agikuyu* people. Ultimately, the *Agikuyu* people did not encounter a deeper evangelization; hence, there is an on-going reversion of some *Agikuyu* Christians to *Agikuyu* cultural practice of *ndahiko* to address the persisting fear of *kirumi*. In this case, one foot is in Christianity, whilst the other foot is in the *Agikuyu* religio-cultural practices. This scenario brings about syncretism and dualism among the *Agikuyu* Christians.

Besides this, the Christian missionaries who evangelized Africa held the view that Africans could not become genuine Christians without the renunciation of their African Indigenous Religion and culture and embracing Christianity that went hand-in-hand with western culture. Nowadays, Christianity is almost everywhere in Africa. However, regardless of the above-mentioned 'everywhereness' of Christianity in Africa, African Indigenous Religion influences the lives of Africans more than Christianity, especially during crises. Partly because of the aforesaid missionary evangelistic anomaly and the inculturation slackness of the African Church, African Christians acknowledge Christianity, but this religion is a few inches deep in their lives. This research article seeks to respond to the question as to whether by establishing proper understanding of the efficacy of Christ's work of atonement we can address the existing *Agikuyu* Christian fear of *kirumi*?

### ***Agikuyu* fear of *Kirumi***

The author presupposes that the *Agikuyu* Christians' fear of *Kirumi* and their religio-cultural effort to deal with it is evidence to the lack of a deeper evangelization of the *Agikuyu* people. The *Agikuyu* Christians' fear of *kirumi* reveals a phony Christian faith that is characterized by dualism and syncretism. In that mixed Christian faith, *Agikuyu* Christians claim to be Christians, but they remain adherents of their African Indigenous Religion, especially during crises when they revert to their indigenous methods of handling their critical life issues, such as sickness, drought, curse, childlessness, and so on (Gathogo 2017, p.115-137, Tempels 1959, p.15, Wachege 2002, p.70).

Essentially, a curse is a solemn utterance that is intended to invoke supernatural power to inflict harm or punishment on someone or something. For example, in the *Agikuyu* community, there are different curses that can be directed to individuals or the entire community because of violating certain taboos or oaths (Asante & Mazama, 2009, p.189, Wachege 2012, p.1). The *Agikuyu* people consider a curse (*kirumi*) as a disturbing anguish in life admitting real fear of curses. The fear of curses dominates the lives of Africans regardless of their religious affiliation, culture, and locality. Hence, *Agikuyu* Christians struggles with the questions related to curses and cursing (Benson 1964, p.409, Wachege 2012, p.1).

Waweru, Kimaro, Wambugu (2022) observes that the indigenous *Agikuyu* people had different ways through which an individual incurred *kirumi*. The reality and fear of curses necessitated a careful adherence to the moral teachings passed to the *Agikuyu* people by their elders and ancestors. Breaking the *Agikuyu* people's set prohibitions led to *thahu* (uncleanliness, whilst someone's failure to make a deliberate confession generated *kĩrumi* (Waweru, Kimaro, Wambugu 2022, p.103). In the indigenous *Agikuyu* community, the pronouncement of curses could only be from senior members of the community (Thyaka 1995, p.67). Famine and draught were seen as calamities coming as the result of the *Agikuyu* community provoking *Ngai's* anger through non-observance of the set rules (Kabatha 2020, p.55-60).

Therefore, the pain and effect of *kirumi* was both personal as well as communal. The *Agikuyu* people believed that God would occasionally punish them by striking the very life he had given them. However, during the seasons of life-threatening calamities such as drought, all the elders governing different territorial units gathered to plead with *Ngai* for rains and other related blessings (Routledge 1910, p.227, Kinoti 2010, p.29). For the *Agikuyu* people, a curse was not a mere wish for misfortune on a particular person or thing, but a power that produced real results because in cursing it was believed that some supernatural power is released that is effective in determining the destiny of a person or community (Hachalinga 2017, p.2).

### **Indigenous Methods of Alleviating Fear of *kirumi***

The *Agikuyu* people had different remedies for *kirumi*. Nonetheless, the absolution of *kirumi* was dependent upon the kind of *kirumi*. According to Jomo Kenyatta (1938), there were different ways that the *Agikuyu* people had devised in order to harness the spiritual powers that would shield them from life-threatening attacks. These included amulets (*githiitu*) that were worn according to the particular danger against which the person wished to be protected. Such charms were considered a symbol

of security in the daily life of the *Agikuyu* community. Additionally, the *Agikuyu* people guarded their lives by the observance of different taboos that protected them from falling into evils (Kenyatta 1938, p.281-292, p.316-319).

Similarly, in his extensive writing on the *Agikuyu* people, I. Cagnolo (1933) claims that individuals had to guard their lives and how they lived in good terms with the other spiritual realms. This was done through different elements of worship that involved a *mundu mugo* (witchdoctor) who, in his priestly roles, intervened in different moments of life when the people felt threatened by *kirumi*. Indeed, there were different ways of obliterating *kirumi* that had been entrenched in the *Agikuyu* people's established system of sacrifices (Cagnolo 1933, p.177).

Furthermore, Kenyatta (1938) confirms that in times of certain illnesses that appeared beyond ordinary control, the *Agikuyu* people called for spiritual and magical treatment. This was mainly because they attributed this challenge to some supernatural powers. In such instances, a *mundu mugo* was invited to invoke the spiritual world and through invisible powers remove the evil spirits from the affected person or family (Kenyatta 1938, p.293-295).

A *mundu mugo* played different roles in the community, such as prophetic roles, purification roles, divination roles, and the addressing of different kinds of sicknesses. He was a religio-social consultant in most of the perplexing moments of life. A *mundu mugo* was taken to be the guardian of the ancestral cult (*Ugo*) and he was the celebrant at different ceremonies when *ndahiko* ritual was to be carried out (Muraya 2013, p.113, see also Muraya, Wamue-Ngare and Gathogo 20115).

Moreover, Sammy Githuku (2012) elucidates different rituals that were meant to address diverse life challenges and different occasions where the *Agikuyu* people would fall from observing the taboos and, therefore, had to invite *mundu mugo* for the ritual of *ndahiko* as a way of addressing the evil that was likely to befall upon them. He argues that *ndahiko* was the most common remedy, which was a purification that used to be applied after contamination (Githuku 2012, p.69-73).

There were various forms of *ndahiko* rituals with slight differences and their key focus was to cleanse and remove the evil (*thahu*) gotten through breach of different taboos (*Migiro*). Therefore, the *ndahiko* ritual entailed ceremonial vomiting of the known and unknown uncleanness (Githuku 2012, p.69). In support of that reality, H. Kinoti (2010) holds that:

The conclusion of any affair of wrongdoing was some form of atonement (*horohio*). The reasonable order of things' appears to have been that the individual should not suffer from evil that was not confessed. Hence, the family cleansing ceremonies (*ndahikanio*) that were performed from time to time. During the ceremonies each family member was supposed to vomit "what you know and what you do not know." The formula used *Tahika wariga iria iriganiire* indicated that each person was cleansed from the evil he openly confessed, the evil he dared not mention and those he might not be aware of (Kinoti 2010, p.163).

Nonetheless, doctrinally speaking, the use of the vicarious goat and the whole process of *ndahiko* among the *Agikuyu* people was insufficient because even after the said goat had been slayed the victim would still fall into another evil necessitating another sacrifice. While the fear of *kirumi* and *ndahiko* phenomena may seem to be ancient, the religio-social experiences of the *Agikuyu* Christians indicate that the fear of *kirumi* still influences their lives in the contemporary times.

According to Patrick N. Wachege (2012), even with the Western and Eastern mainstream religious influence, the belief in *kirumi* among *Agikuyu* Christians still exists. Consequently, the fear of *kirumi* still conservatively guides, guards, and influences the lives of Africans in their socio-cultural and religious life. The fear of *kirumi* permeates the lives of the *Agikuyu* people irrespective of their status (Wachege 2012, p.1). For example, there is a story in Maragua that is in Marang'a County - Kenya, which can be used to demonstrate how the fear of *kirumi* still influences the lives of the *Agikuyu* Christians today. In this case, because of their fear of *kirumi*, some *Agikuyu* Christians buried a cow together with a man who had directed that in the event that he died before receiving that cow, his family should bury him with it.

This case shows that the fear of *kirumi* among the *Agikuyu* Christians persists; the said fear still deters them from experiencing the full benefits of the holistic salvation. It is for that reason that this research article seeks to explore how the Athanasius physical-substitutionary theory of atonement can be a remedy for the *Agikuyu* fear of *kirumi*. This point introduces us to the St. Athanasius physical-substitutionary theory of atonement as the remedy for the *Agikuyu* Christians' fear of *kirumi* and yields to the construction of an existential-transcendental theology of atonement.

### **Athanasius Physical and Substitutionary Theory of Atonement as the Remedy**

This article explores how Athanasius physical-substitutionary theory of atonement can be a remedy for the *Agikuyu* fear of *kirumi*. This evangelistic remedial effort will give rise to the construction of an existential-transcendental theology of atonement. In that context, the article concentrates on the Athanasius physical-substitutionary theory of atonement tracing the curse from the tree of knowledge of good and evil to the reversing of the curse on the tree-the Cross of Jesus Christ. This work aims at bringing about the *Agikuyu* Christians' deeper understanding of the Christian doctrine of atonement towards overcoming their fear of *kirumi*.

The Athanasius (1944) physical-substitutionary theory of atonement can exterminate the *Agikuyu* fear of *kirumi* and bring about a deeper evangelization and the holistic salvation of *Agikuyu* Christians. In his physical and substitutionary theory of atonement, Athanasius holds that God's original plan was that humanity should enjoy life in the Garden of Eden. But, because of human disobedience to God by eating from the forbidden tree of the knowledge of the good and evil, the harmonious fellowship between God and His people was impaired; this reality brought about a curse, which was associated with the said tree. Because of Adam and Eve's disobedience, the loving and just God had to punish them; this led to their eternal condemnation (divine dilemma) (Athanasius 1944, p.31-40).

Death and corruption deeply characterized humanity. The human race was in the downward fall towards its ultimate destruction. Humanity that was created in God's image and in its possession of reason reflected in the very Word Himself was disappearing, and the good work of God was being undone. The law of death that followed from the transgression, prevailed upon humanity, and from it there was no escape. Athanasius (1944, p.30-32) thus noted,

The thing that was happening was in truth both monstrous and unfitting. It would, of course, have been unthinkable that God should go back upon His word and that humanity, having transgressed, should not die; but it was equally monstrous that human beings which once had shared the nature of the Word should perish and turn back again into non-existence through corruption.

In other words, God had created humanity in His own image; thus, it was unfortunate that His work could be brought to nothing through the deception caused by the serpent. How could God allow the destruction of humanity and eternal condemnation, destroying what was good and bringing to question His goodness? Athanasius states that it was impossible that God could leave humanity to be carried off by corruption (Athanasius 1944, p.30-32).

Certainly, thus, it would have been unreasonable that God the Father of the truth should change and disregard His word concerning death for humanity to continue in existence for God could not lie. God was to demand repentance from humanity for their transgression; how could human beings who were already under the curse for disobedience meet and resolve this case? Only the incorporeal and incorruptible immaterial Word of God (Jesus Christ the God-man) could enter the world and through Him the *power of the curse* could be destroyed and reversed on the tree, namely, the Cross (Athanasius 1944, p.30-33). Hence, the *Agikuyu* Christians' fear of *kirumi* is obliterated at the Cross.

The imagery of the tree takes a very central point in the history of human sin and salvation. Anselm argues that death and curse came upon humanity through the disobedience of human beings, which necessitated human obedience for life to be restored. Regarding this issue, he argues that as sin the cause of our condemnation had its origin from a woman, so ought the author of our righteousness and salvation (Jesus Christ) to be born of a woman. And so also it was proper that the devil who being man's tempter, had conquered him in eating of the tree, and should be vanquished by man in the suffering of the tree that man bore (Anselm, C.D.H 3:2).

We note the use of the imagery of the tree right from the fall of humanity in Genesis throughout the Bible representing great work of Jesus Christ on the Cross. Moses in the wilderness, when the Lord sent venomous snakes among the children of Israel, was directed by the Lord to make a Bronze Snake and raise it on a pole and anyone who was bitten would look at it and live (Numbers 21:8-9).

Incidentally, the image of the bronze snake on a pole represents the victory to those who looked up on it which in the Gospel of John (3:14) the bronze snake is compared to Christ on the Cross. Besides, the snake could be taken to represent evil,

curse, pain, and affliction brought up by the disobedience of humanity in the Garden of Eden, but on the Cross all these evils were conquered by the atoning work of Christ (Wilson & Taylor 2015, p.330). Thus, the Athanasius physical-substitutionary theory of atonement becomes the once for all remedy for the *Agikuyu* Christians fear of *kirumi*. *Agikuyu* Christians should no longer have the fear of *kirumi* because *kirumi* was fully conquered by Jesus Christ's substitutional and sacrificial death on the Cross.

God made all trees grow out of the ground; hence, both the trees of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil grew in the middle of the Garden of Eden (Genesis 2:8-9). Adam and Eve chose to eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil rather than the tree of life that sustained everlasting life. For this reason, God expelled them out of the Garden of Eden to deny them an access to the tree of life (Wilson & Taylor 2015, p.550). Thus, the Lord God said, "...the man has become like one of us since he knows good and evil he must not reach out and take the fruit from the tree of life and eat then he will live forever" (Gen 3:22).

Wilson & Taylor (2015) support the position that is similar to Anselm's standpoint, which holds that Adam and Eve were presented with the choice between obedience and disobedience to the directive given by God. However, when they ate the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil, the tragedy called the fall of humanity and the first mention of the curse occurred (Genesis 3:14, 17) that changed the history of humanity and necessitated the coming of Jesus Christ to redeem humanity from the fall and the curse (Wilson & Taylor 2015, p.449). In the New Testament, we have the image of a tree that is unproductive and that is cut down or cursed symbolizing the fall of humanity or the disobedience of God's people. The indication here is of a tree that does not draw from the life available in Christ; thus, resulting into cutting of mortal life as a form of judgment. The cursing of the fig tree for lack of fruitfulness is a form of judgment which ends the life of the tree pointing to obedience that yields life and disobedience resulting in a curse (Mark 11:12-25, Wilson & Taylor 2015, p.553). About that issue, Wilson and Taylor (2015) states:

Trees, our steady, long-suffering and dependable companion throughout life, urging us to have their kind of deeply rooted lives drawing up nourishment, planted in Christ... Just like a tree is nourished by the constant supply of water without which, under the blistering sun, the tree would surely die, so life that is rooted in the word of God will also be established and it will be strong (Wilson & Taylor 2015, p.553).

Trees were the source of timber that was used to make crosses; hence, death through crucifixion was also regarded as death on the tree. Death on the cross was the cruelest form of death and the victim was regarded as under God's curse. This point brings us back to Anselm's argument that since the curse came through the disobedience of Adam and Eve when they ate from the forbidden tree, Christ had to come and undo the same by bearing the sins of humanity on the tree, namely, the Cross (Anselm, C.D.H 3:2). Hence, the Cross is the lone remedy for the *Agikuyu* Christians' fear of *kirumi*.

Hence, according to Athanasius (1944), atonement is accomplished at the Cross by the sacrifice made by Jesus Christ on the tree that calls for obedience and faith to be allowed to access the tree of life that was originally placed still in the same Garden of Eden, but humanity chose the tree of good and evil resulting to curse and death. Christ offered His own body on the Cross to abolish the death and the curse that humanity had incurred on themselves (Athanasius 1944, p.20-37). For that reason, *Agikuyu* Christians' fear of *kirumi* should cease because Christ abolished it on His Cross. *Agikuyu* Christians must die (leave the old remedies to *kirumi*) to live for whoever would save his life will lose it and whoever loses his life for the sake of the gospel will surely save it (Matthew 16:25-27; Macquarrie 1966, p.80). Indeed, the substitutional death of Christ replaced all the *Agikuyu* Christian's remedies for *kirumi*.

The chasing away of Adam and Eve after they ate the fruit of the tree of good and evil was intended to stop them from taking the fruit from the tree of life. For this reason, humanity participation in the choices they make and the outcome of their choices is clearly noted. Therefore, this brings us to the related John Macquarrie's (1966) argument that human beings are aware of their existence; thus, they can take part in the decisions regarding their redemption from the curse through

atonement. The choice is between the tree of good and evil that result to curse and the tree of life that results to life eternal (Macquarrie 1966, p.250-340).

According to Athanasius (1944), atonement is accomplished at the Cross raising the imagery of the tree where the sacrifice of Jesus Christ is made. The *Agikuyu* Christians should fathom that while humanity chose the tree of good and evil resulting to curse and death, Christ has now offered His own body on the Cross to reverse the curse humanity had incurred on themselves (Athanasius 1944, p.37). To end the fear of *kirumi*, the *Agikuyu* Christians should understand this theological argument and believe in it towards their deeper evangelization and holistic salvation. They should deliberately choose the Cross (Jesus' sacrificial death) as their only remedy for *kirumi* and disregard all their indigenous remedies for it. This is how they can respond to God's grace for their salvation.

### **Existential-Transcendentalism**

The article employs the existential-transcendentalism as the theory that guides the development of an existential-transcendental theology of atonement, which addresses the *Agikuyu* Christians' fear of *kirumi*. Transcendentalism is a method which, according to Lonergan (1972), is an upward movement to achieve progress through the four levels of human activity, from experience to understanding to judging, to deciding, to carrying out the truly good in accordance with the values which have been judged relevant. In addition to this natural upward direction of development, the transcendental method includes another movement from above downward whereby God reveals himself to humanity through incarnation of Jesus Christ the God-man (Lonergan 1972, p.38).

Therefore, existential-transcendentalism theory holds that human beings have the ability to transcend beyond self and in this transcendence they encounter the co-descending incarnate God-man in Christ on the Cross (salvific tree) and through their union with Christ all the fears of the curses are annihilated (Lonergan 1972,p.35, Kiboi 2022, p.158). Macquarie's (1966) argument is that people are aware of their existence; thus, they are able to take part in the decision regarding their redemption from the curse through atonement. Therefore, human beings are presented with the choices between the tree of good and evil that result to curse or the tree of life that results to life eternal. As Macquarrie (1966) deconstructing the classical view of atonement, observes that human beings are not saved like a burning house without their participation. Like the biblical prodigal son(Luke 15:11-32), they have to respond to the grace extended to them and in so doing, the work of Christ's atonement is actualized in their lives (Macquarrie 1966, p.330-316).

### **Justifications for using transcendentalism as a methodology**

A few justifications for using transcendentalism as a methodology in theological research are for example; first transcendentalism emphasizes the importance of self-transcendence and reflection in the pursuit of knowledge which means that the researcher must be willing to go beyond their own assumptions and preconceptions in order to gain new insights and understandings. This is particularly important in theology, where the subject matter is often deeply personal and subjective, which Muller 1984, p.19), says, penetrates

To the truth of our lives [and] is not a simple task. It takes responsibility [that is] aided by faith. Coming to understand ourselves and the world around us is a way of coming to know God and how he deals with us. When all is said and done, understanding allows us to be free to love God and others more deeply. This love is affective, intellectual, moral, and religious.

Further, transcendentalism is concerned with the fundamental structures of human understanding and knowledge. In theological research, this means that the researcher is interested in the underlying assumptions and conditions that make theological inquiry possible. By understanding these structures, the researcher can gain a deeper understanding of the nature of theological knowledge (Mueller 1984, p.17). Further, there are others, as in the case of Kiboi (2022, p.158) who have used it in the past.

### Critique for using transcendentalism as a methodology

As noted earlier transcendentalism emphasizes the importance of individual, search for truth through spiritual personal experience. On critiques of this as methodology we note that it tends to put emphasis on personal experiences over objective analysis and empirical evidence. This is, at times, viewed as not enough for studying theological concepts, which often require careful analysis of scripture, tradition, and historical context. Theology requires an understanding of objective reality, as well as recognition of the limitations of human understanding and perception. Therefore, while transcendentalism has some valuable insights to offer theological research, it should be approached with caution and used in conjunction with other methodologies that provide a systematic approach to theology (Mueller 1984, p.17).

### Efficacy of Christ's work of atonement

The aforementioned argument demonstrates the establishment of the all-embracing efficacy of Christ's work of atonement will address the existing *Agikuyu* Christians' fear of *kirumi*. Overall, Christ's atonement work offers victory over all the powers that for long had enslaved humanity; the Cross of Christ brings deliverance from the curse, which includes the *Agikuyu* Christians' *kirumi*. The Cross marks God's victory over the visible and invisible forces that oppresses humanity, which includes the *Agikuyu* Christians (Colossians 1:13, 2:14-15). The finished Christ's work on the Cross brings complete triumph over all the enslaving demonic powers, such as the aforesaid fear of *kirumi*. In view of this, Macquarrie (1966) states that: "Man has fallen into the grip of dark powers; Christ comes into this situation and battles against these powers; with his cross comes the overwhelming victory, bringing deliverance and new life to man"(Macquarrie 1966, p.318).

This opens up a new possibility for the existence of *Agikuyu* Christians, which is oriented away from the self-being and towards the Being, sustained by the grace of the Being, and enabled by God self-giving love (Macquarrie 1966, p.319). In addition, Macquarrie (1966) states, thus:

Christ the King who wins His victory over the enslaving forces, is also Christ the prophet who gives us the example of obedience, but still more He is the Priest who utterly gives Himself as sacrificial victim and thereby brings right into human history the reconciling activity of God in a new and decisive manner(Macquarrie 1966, p.321).

In regard to the biblical prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32), the first step towards salvation takes place when he becomes aware of the disorder of his own existence. Indeed, whenever there is awareness of sin, there is depravity in totality, for such awareness is not itself a sin, but a conscious turning from it. In turn, the father does not need to be placated; before the son "came to himself," the father was already awaiting and desiring his return, he sees him at a distance and he is already on his way to meet him and take him home(Macquarrie 1966,p.314; Morris in Ferguson & Wright 1988,p.54).

Likewise, as God's prodigal sons (Luke 15:11-32), *Agikuyu* Christians should consciously become aware of the disorder of their own existence, namely, the use of their indigenous remedies for *kirumi* even after the death of God's son (John 3:16). Their awareness of that sin would mark their conscious turning from it and their participation in their holistic salvation.

This would also mark their response to God's grace. Their father (God), in turn, does not need to be placated by them through their indigenous remedies for *kirumi* because no human effort can save them; for that reason, God gave His Son to die on the Cross for their holistic salvation. Human beings are saved only insofar as they respond to and appropriate into their existence the saving activity that is directed towards them. Atonement becomes atonement in the full sense when humanity consciously appropriates it (Macquarrie 1966, p.316). For this reason Kiboi (2022) states that;

God as the first mover has provided salvation in his Son Jesus Christ and has urged us to gaze at him both for our salvation and for assurance of the same. By raising our spirits to Christ, in whom we have our salvation, God meets us in this God/man and his Spirit cries in us, Abba Father and testifies to our spirit that we are God's children and we receive assurance of our salvation. It all begins in God when he reveals himself to humans and they respond by asking questions (objective-subjective approach) which we are referring to us transcendentalism (Kiboi 2022, p.164).

## Conclusion

As noted thus, the research article has focused on exploring the *Agikuyu* Christians' fear of *kirumi* and its indigenous remedy and demonstrating the Athanasius physical-substitutionary theory of atonement as the prescribed remedy for the *Agikuyu* Christians' fear of *kirumi*. Similarly, the *Agikuyu* Christians should consciously respond to the aforesaid grace after which the work of Christ's atonement will be actualised in their lives towards annihilating their fear of *kirumi*. *Agikuyu* Christians should, in the understanding of their existence, seek to transcend above themselves rather than reverse to *ndahiko*. In rising and transcending above their being, they encounter and behold the spiritual realm and God-Man descending in the person of Jesus Christ. Indeed, the research article has demonstrated that Jesus Christ is the unique meeting place of the God-human relationship (Mueller, 1984:8). Thus, Christ, the God-Man, becomes the meeting point between God and human beings; at this meeting point, the *Agikuyu* Christians' fear of *kirumi* is removed, and is replaced by holistic salvation that embraces all domains of life.

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