

have this to say of the people deemed primitive. "There is little, if any, concern with the distinctly spiritual welfare of man apart from his physical life. No line is drawn between the spiritual and the physical. Even life in the hereafter is conceived of in materialistic and physical terms. There is neither paradise to be hoped for nor hell to be feared in the hereafter. Traditional religions and philosophies are concerned with man in past and present time."¹

I find it somewhat paradoxical that a society that worships sex, drugs, and money considers people who worship totems and nature as primitive. No one calls himself a barbarian when he spends hours cleaning his new car. No one would consider it pagan for a woman to be upset over someone ruining an expensive gown. No one would consider it savage if a man fought someone trying to take his wallet. Why, then, must these people be considered primitive in their actions?

The greatest insult is the fact that Western civilization practiced animism just as vehemently as the rest of the world. Did not the much-celebrated Greeks have gods and goddesses? The Scandinavians believed that Asgard was the home of their gods, Odin being the greatest of them all. For the Greeks, it was Zeus on Mt. Olympus. Yet, history has deemed these beliefs as Greek and Roman classicism. Not only are they not considered primitive, but they are required courses of study in many colleges and universities. Are we then to accept this cultural chauvinism in regard to European animism at the expense of our own dignity and self-worth?

Prof. Mbiti is quite thorough in his analysis on African religions and philosophies. Africa, being considered the cradle of savagery by many historians, serves as a prime example for my comparisons of civilization and primitive culture, in particular their relationships to health concepts as well as the relationships between men and women. "Among the Lugbura it is held that God calls a would-be diviner in her adolescence (mainly women). She wanders about in the

woods and after several days, returns with the power to divine. The community then erects a shrine for her, which is referred to as the 'hut of God', and diviners are called the 'children of God'; being regarded as the link between men and God. The Turkana believe that the diviner is God's chief representative, functioning as a doctor, purifier of age-sets, predicting raids and soliciting rain. In time of war, it is the medicine-men who, among the Luo, make sacrifices and prayers to God."

Historian Lerone Bennet, Jr., tells us that "social life was well organized. The old, the sick, the infirm were cared for. Spinsters were rare; prostitution was unknown."² If the women within the culture of the Lugbura and other tribes are usually the healers, a very different set of cultural transactions take place.

The divinity of women would necessitate the culture providing a life-style harmonious to the feminine psyche. The concept and practice of machismo or male chauvinism would have to be considered antisocial if not psychopathic. This being the case, lack of social intercourse among the women of that culture would be unknown. Sexual intercourse would be considered natural and an act of cooperation. It is hard to imagine a society that believes in the spiritual superiority of women, treating those women as sex objects. Needless to say, the entire attitude toward childbirth would be hallowed.

We are told by Prof. Mbiti that the doctors of the community played a great part in the development and perpetuation of their culture; the doctors, considered divine emissaries, were much like some ministers today. Asian culture also expresses this concept, the terms *sensei* (teacher) and *nesei* (doctor) being interchangeable.

The so-called witch doctors or voodoo doctors within the animistic framework were as legitimate and scientific today as they were centuries ago. Many times science and modern medicine men cannot understand the nature of their cures. However, the people who came under the care