

Duquesne University

Duquesne Scholarship Collection

Electronic Theses and Dissertations

Fall 12-20-2019

A Theological Appraisal of Marriage in Tiv Culture

Emmanuel Ahua

Duquesne University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://dsc.duq.edu/etd>

Recommended Citation

Ahua, E. (2019). A Theological Appraisal of Marriage in Tiv Culture (Doctoral dissertation, Duquesne University). Retrieved from <https://dsc.duq.edu/etd/1833>

This Immediate Access is brought to you for free and open access by Duquesne Scholarship Collection. It has been accepted for inclusion in Electronic Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Duquesne Scholarship Collection.

A THEOLOGICAL APPRAISAL OF MARRIAGE IN TIV CULTURE

A Dissertation

Submitted to the McAnulty Graduate School of Liberal Arts

Duquesne University

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

By

Emmanuel Ahua

December 2019

Copyright by
Emmanuel Ahua

2019

A THEOLOGICAL APPRAISAL OF MARRIAGE IN TIV CULTURE

By

Emmanuel Ahua

Approved April 5, 2019

Prof. Elochukwu Uzukwu, Ph.D.
Professor of Theology
Department of Theology
(First Reader)

Dr. James Chukwuma Okoye, D.Phil.
Professor of Old Testament Studies
Director, Center for Spiritan Studies
(Second Reader)

Prof. George Worgul, Ph.D.
Department of Theology
Dissertation Director

Dr. Marinus Iwuchukwu, Ph.D.
Chair, Department of Theology
Associate Professor of Theology

Dr. Kristine L. Blair, Ph.D.
Dean, McAnulty Graduate School of Liberal Arts
Dean.

ABSTRACT

A THEOLOGICAL APPRAISAL OF MARRIAGE IN TIV CULTURE

By

Ahua Emmanuel

December 2019

Dissertation supervised by Dr. George Worgul, Ph.D.

Marriage is humanity's essential characteristic. It is the essential union between male and female geared towards raising and sustaining rational family life in society. This is what makes people human and differentiate them from other animals. Marriage is a natural institution and a socio-cultural reality in which each group of people should determine, according to their own context. In other words, every institution, society, and culture have a right to choose what type of marriage arrangement that best explains and works for it.

Nevertheless, the Western European understanding of marriage, as adopted by the Catholic Church's Magisterium in her teaching, have been presented as a standard for varied cultures and social groups as may exist within the church. This position brought tension between Christianity and polygamous practices in the Church. But it known that Christian marriage, as it now canonized, did not come down from the sky, it is the result of historical development that is still in process. However, to maintain the Churches position,

the code of canon law title seven, cann. 1055-1165, especially cann. 1055.1 presented monogamy as the only acceptable form of marriage.¹ The Catechism of the Catholic church part two, chapter two, article 7 deals exclusively on the sacrament of matrimony, especially nos. 1601-1611 sets monogamy as the acceptable form of marriage in the Church.² Moreover, the Christian doctrine determined to obliterate all forms of polygamy long before its encounter with traditional polygamy in Africa. At the encounter of Christianity with African tradition, the former condemned polygamous marriage as a pagan practice and sought to bring it down. Although polygamy was permitted for a certain time, as it appears in the lives of the Old Testament patriarchs such as Abraham, Jacob, and David, with the coming of Christ, polygamy was revoked, Matthew 19:3-9; Mark 10:1-2; and Luke 16:18. So polygamy is thought to be an inadequate institution for expressing oneness, justice, equality and love in marriage. Nevertheless, after many years of Christianization, polygamy in Africa has vivaciously persisted as a cultural institution. But on arrival to the African continent, the Christian missionaries require married converts to Christianity to be monogamous. Those in polygamous marriage prior to their conversion ought to send away their wives but one before receiving baptism. The Church requires polygamous people to send away all wives but one, preferably the first, in order to receive baptism. This requirement is largely viewed by traditional polygamists as in injustice and lack of compassion especially to the wives and children involved. Although, the Church has kept

¹ Code of canon Law,
[http://www.vatican.va/system/sling/cqform/defaultlogin.html?resource=%2Farchive%2FENG1104%2F_P3V.HTM&\\$\\$login\\$\\$=%24%24login%24%24](http://www.vatican.va/system/sling/cqform/defaultlogin.html?resource=%2Farchive%2FENG1104%2F_P3V.HTM&$$login$$=%24%24login%24%24) accessed 9/9/2019.

² The Catechism of the Catholic Church,
http://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc_css/archive/catechism/p2s2c3a7.htm accessed 9/9/2019.

its position against polygamy without compromise, some individuals have also kept the practice consistently. Besides, some people enter polygamy even after baptism.

On the Doctrinal Question on Polygamy, the question whether to accept polygamy as licit institution has been traditionally approached in terms of nature, authority and love. The argument of nature appeals to the Natural Law and it's largely identified with Scholastics. For them, polygamous relationship is contrary to natural law for it neither ensures equality between man and woman nor education of the offspring. Indeed, "polygamy jeopardizes both parents and children in terms of equality, peace, and education."³ The perfection of natural law requires that these basic values be strictly observed in marriage. While among the Tiv people, education of children in polygamous marriage may not necessarily be a major problem, the issue of inequality among the partners cannot be disregarded. The argument of authority is based on the power of customs, culture and the universal authority of the Church to repudiate polygamy. In particular, the ultimate authority which the Church itself appeals to is the authority of the gospels. For instance, "appealing to Matt 19:3-9, the Council of Trent (1563) decreed that polygamy is unacceptable among Christians and that those who intend to become Christians should repudiate the practice."⁴ Until today, appealing to both the gospel and the sacred traditions, the Church insists on monogamous as an ideal Christian marriage. The argument of love attempts to explain more logically why the Church cannot accept polygamy as licit institution. The Second Vatican Council depicts polygamy as a deformation which stains the dignity of marriage. This is because polygamy does not

³ Sequibo Dwane, "Polygamy" in *Church and Marriage in Modern Africa*, 234-35

⁴ Eugene Hillman, *Polygamy Reconsidered: African Plural Marriage and the Christian Churches*, (NY: Orbis , 1975)

ensure justice and equality in marriage as a community of life and love.⁵ The Council asserts that with the grace of Christ, Christian spouses can grow in holistic communion and reveal to the Church and to the world the new communion of love.⁶ However, “such communion is radically contradicted by polygamy. Polygamy negates the plan of God which was revealed from the beginning, because it is contrary to the equal personal dignity of men and women who in matrimony give themselves with a love that is total and therefore unique and exclusive.”⁷ So, against the traditional Tiv understanding of polygamy, the Church insists that as an institution, polygamy falls short of God’s plan for marriage because it puts obstacles in the way towards deeper communion between partners and thus contradicts the Spirit’s gift of love and life.⁸ All the three arguments seem to lead to a close that polygamy is not capable of satisfying the demands of Christian marriage. If the Church continue with this project of the Western European understanding of marriage, the other cultures of the world, especially in some African cultures may find it hard to adopt to the western idea of marriage. This will increase the tension between Christianity and polygamous practices.

This attitude may also not allow the church to understand the perception of these groups in their varied contexts. The changing attitude of the church, in openness to inculturation, is a welcome idea that needs to be explored in its verities. In the same spirit,

Vatican Council II, “*Gaudium et Spes*” in *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*. New rev. ed. Gen. ed. Austin Flannery, (New York: Costello, 1992), no. 47.

⁶ Vatican Council II, *Gaudium et Spes*, no. 47.

⁷ John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio*, no. 19.

⁸The Catechism of the Catholic Church, (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2010), nos. 1645 & 2387.

the church in Africa cannot be indifferent to the call of deepening its theology of marriage and ipso facto put it into practice.

However, considered, there are implications for either position of an African understanding of marriage and the current European Influenced Catholic theology of marriage. This proposal considers the pastoral implications of marital concepts in the church's self-understanding in Tiv culture. It asks, how can the Church address in a persuasive way the dynamics of marriage in Tiv culture? How would Catholic theology of Marriage be different if it were to attend to the yearnings of Tiv culture? What influence does colonialism have on Catholic theology and her sacraments? Is marriage still the same today in the postmodern world as in the pre-Vatican II era? If our understanding of the sacraments is about celebrating what God is doing in the life of the human person, where comes the authority of the church on issues of marriage?

There seem to be multiple narratives about marriage. We have many narratives describing the male /female situations across diverse cultures. Marriage, especially in Africa is not just about love, it is about associations based on extended family and family support systems.

There is considerable literature on marriage and family in African societies. However, literature on the subject in Africa offers generalized practices and so fails to account for marriage and family in a particular African society. Given the importance of marriage and family life every effort should be made to study and analyze each distinct group practice. In light of this, this proposal is designed to address marriage and family among the Tiv of North-central Nigeria. It shall identify means by which the teachings of

the church on marriage will bear on the cultural context of Tiv people in a way that makes meaning to their practice of faith. To achieve this, the concept of marriage in the church's understanding shall be highlighted alongside issues related to the practicality of such understanding in the everyday marital relationship among the Tiv.

The idea of proposing marriage in a monolithic or One-Size-Fits-All fashion will certainly defeat the true contemporary understanding of marriage. A theological appraisal of marriage that would be meaningful, then, will entail a theological treaty that would take cognizance of the essential characteristic of marriage as a vital union intended for the procreation and sustaining of children in a particular society

DEDICATION

Dedicated to my late parents, Ahua and Hannah Andede. It all began with them.
And for all who are championing the course of inculturation in African Church—esteemed
friends and colleagues.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

No book or work of any intellectual conversation, no matter how small or short, bears the mark of only the author. At every stage, from conception to final point, there are always other people involved whose inputs are vital to the final outcome. The experience is not different, in the making is this contribution to the dialogue on Tiv traditional marriage and the catholic church understanding of marriage.

First, I acknowledge God almighty, the source of my strength and savior, whose graces has always been sufficient for me. I thank my family, the family of Ahua Andede for their unalloyed support and encouragement in documenting this experience. They are always there for me in good and difficult times.

Gratitude is owed to my Spiritan Superior, Fr. John Atoba, C.S. Sp and confreres of Nigeria North East Province for encouragement and for arranging a further studies and a way of life for me that allowed me to have this experience. Thanks are due to my Spiritans confreres who have help me in one way or the other. I do remember in a special way, Fr. Jeff Duine, C.S. Sp of the USA province and Council who provided me with accommodation and Feeding during the course of my studies. I thank sincerely all the Spiritan confreres in the Pittsburgh area who in different ways provided support for me in the course of my studies. Same gratitude goes to Fr. Kenneth Okoli, C.S. Sp provincial superior of the British province and confreres for their kind gesture to accommodate me in the province and enabled me to have pastoral ministry in the archdiocese of Southwark during my final research work I am truly grateful!

A special word appreciation goes to Sr Victoria Chia, DDI who has been a pillar of support in many ways. She is always there to console and encourage me in good and

difficult times. Sr. God alone will reward you for your generosity. Same appreciation goes to Ian chandler, Fr Ude Asue, Clement Iorliam for proofreading the work and suggesting the necessary inputs. I thank Dr. Ilesanmi Ajibola, Dr. John Odeyemi, Dr. Martin Ahiaba for their support while on this journey.

Finally, I will not forget to thank immensely my able director professor, George Worgul, who has been so good to me in the course of this work. His sense of understanding and support are unquantifiable. His encouragement through patience is can never be forgotten soon. May God continue to bless all your efforts and family. Same goes to my able and challenging readers, Professor, Eugene Uzukwu, C.S. Sp and Professor James Okoye, C.S.Sp. Your critical comments and inputs are greatly appreciated.

Finally, I express my profound gratitude to everyone who had one thing or the other to do with the process of writing this dissertation. I appreciate you all!

Table of Contents

ABSTRACT	iv
DEDICATION.....	x
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	xi
INTRODUCTION.....	1
0.1 Thesis and the question	1
0.2 Statement of the problem	3
0.3 The aim of the work.....	3
0.4 Objectives of the work.....	4
0.5 The goal of the work.....	5
0.6 Methodology.....	5
0.7 Project’s contribution	5
0.7 Chapter synopses	6
CHAPTER ONE	8
THE TIV WORLDVIEW	8
1.1 Origin and history: Who are the Tiv?.....	8
1.2 Brief history of the Tiv people and their worldview.....	14
1.3 Tiv cultural and religious worldview.....	16
1.4 The advent and spread of Christianity in Tivland.....	18
1.5 Christianity, social and cultural transformation in Tivland	26
1.6 Inculturation of Christian Ethics.....	31
CHAPTER TWO	33
MARRIAGE IN TIV CONTEMPORARY CULTURE	33
2.1 Introduction	33
2.2 Concept of culture	36
2.3 Marriage among the Tiv people	41
2.4 Marriage among the Tiv people.....	60
2.5 Elements of Tiv Marriage.....	61
2.6 Monogamy and Polygamy	63
2.7 Sexuality in Tiv Culture	69
2.8 Tiv marital and sexual ethos	72
2.9 Some other related issues of marriage in Tiv culture.....	76

CHAPTER THREE	89
SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS VALUES BEHIND TIV TRADITIONAL MARRIAGE SYSTEMS	89
3.1 Introduction	89
3.3 Marriage Practices.....	97
CHAPTER FOUR	118
MAGISTERIAL TEACHING/UNDERSTANDING ON MARRIAGE SINCE VATICAN II.....	118
4.1 Introduction	118
4.2 Contemporary meaning and purpose of marriage.....	118
4.3 The nature of marriage in scripture	119
4.4 Marriage according to Catholic Church teaching and tradition	126
4.5 More current teaching on marriage: Vatican II Council	128
4.6 Magisterial teaching on marriage since Vatican II: The Popes from Paul VI (January 1962 - March 1968), to Pope Francis (March 2013-date).....	139
4.7 Nigerian Catholic Bishops’ teaching on marriage.....	151
4.8 The Catechism of the Catholic Church.....	162
4.9. Current theological views on marriage.....	165
4.10Pastoral-practical issues.....	168
CHAPTER FIVE	171
THEOLOGICAL APPRAISAL OF MARRIAGE IN TIV CULTURE	171
5.1 Introduction	171
5.2 Overview of the shift in Theological Enterprise (2nd Vatican Council to Date).....	173
5.3 Theological endeavor in contemporary Africa: The Inculturation Approach	182
5.4 Challenges of African inculturation theology today	186
5.5 Contextual assessment of polygamy in the scripture and among the Tiv people	187
5.6 An assessment of Tiv marriage culture and the Church’s teaching.....	189
5.7 Theological Appraisal of marriage in Tiv Culture	194
5.8 Theological implications: Toward the inculturation of marriage in Tiv culture	198
5.9 Theological reflection and evaluation of marriage in Tiv culture	208
5.10Summary and Conclusion	219
5.11Recommendations and Suggestions.....	222
BIBLIOGRAPHY	230

INTRODUCTION

0.1 Thesis and the question

Marriage is humanity's essential characteristic. It is the essential union between male and female geared towards raising and sustaining rational family life in society. This is what makes people human and differentiate them from other animals. Marriage is a natural institution and a socio-cultural reality in which each group of people should determine, according to their own context. In other words, every institution, society, and culture have a right to choose what type of marriage arrangement that best explains and works for it.

Nevertheless, the Western European understanding of marriage, as adopted by the Catholic Church's Magisterium in her teaching, have been presented as a standard for varied cultures and social groups as may exist within the church. This attitude may not allow the church to understand the perception of these groups in their varied contexts. The changing attitude of the church, in openness to inculturation, is a welcome idea that needs to be explored in its verities. In the same spirit, the church in Africa cannot be indifferent to the call of deepening its theology of marriage and ipso facto put it into practice.

However, considered, there are implications for either position of an African understanding of marriage and the current European Influenced Catholic theology of marriage. This proposal considers the pastoral implications of marital concepts in the church's self-understanding in Tiv culture. It asks, how can the Church address in a persuasive way the dynamics of marriage in Tiv culture? How would Catholic theology of Marriage be different if it were to attend to the yearnings of Tiv culture? What influence does colonialism have on Catholic theology and her sacraments? Is marriage still the same

today in the postmodern world as in the pre-Vatican II era? If our understanding of the sacraments is about celebrating what God is doing in the life of the human person, where comes the authority of the church on issues of marriage?

There seem to be multiple narratives about marriage. We have many narratives describing the male /female situations across diverse cultures. Marriage, especially in Africa is not just about love, it is about associations based on extended family and family support systems.

There is considerable literature on marriage and family in African societies. However, literature on the subject in Africa offers generalized practices and so fails to account for marriage and family in a particular African society. Given the importance of marriage and family life every effort should be made to study and analyze each distinct group practice. In light of this, this proposal is designed to address marriage and family among the Tiv of North-central Nigeria. It shall identify means by which the teachings of the church on marriage will bear on the cultural context of Tiv people in a way that makes meaning to their practice of faith. To achieve this, the concept of marriage in the church's understanding shall be highlighted alongside issues related to the practicality of such understanding in the everyday marital relationship among the Tiv.

The idea of proposing marriage in a monolithic or One-Size-Fits-All fashion will certainly defeat the true contemporary understanding of marriage. A theological appraisal of marriage that would be meaningful, then, will entail a theological treaty that would take cognizance of the essential characteristic of marriage as a vital union intended for the procreation and sustaining of children in a particular society.

0.2 Statement of the problem

Marriage in Tiv culture has been a problem for the Tiv Catholic Church. Marriage has caused much resistance to Christianity in Tiv land. These problems that Christianity face with Tiv marriage is around polygamy, and so-called trial marriage. The Church considers such marriages as sinful. Tiv people who married in the customary fashion are excluded from the sacraments as their marriages were regarded as mere concubinage.

Moreover, since the intervention of God in human history, revelation became the basic category of Christianity. Traditional religions and customs were then thought of as citadels of Satan, which must be dismantled, annihilated and totally destroyed for the greater glory of God. The institution of marriage among various cultures was not excluded in this project. Thank God, with Inculturation, there is now a new understanding. Traditional values are no longer seen as totally evil. However, there is still some work to be done.

There are now serious moves to reconcile the two—culture and Christianity through dialogue in order to give Christianity a befitting welcome in Tiv culture. It is in line with this understanding that the researcher is motivated to carry out a thorough study of marriage among the Tiv vis-à-vis the Christian understanding of marriage. The emphasis is to highlight marriage is understood in Tiv culture and the Catholic tradition, and the problems that hinder a harmonious relationship between the two societies.

0.3 The aim of the work

Incarnating Catholicism in Tiv cultural heritage, inculturation, making Christianity feel at home with the Tiv is the task of this work. The researcher wants to make Christ's

proclamation of the reign of God and its sermons radically relevant to the Tiv cultural milieu. We are challenged to study in depth the traditional religion of our people as well as the Christian faith, and in the process allow both the Christian religion and the Tiv culture to interrogate one another.

The researcher's aim is to confront the traditional understanding of marriage among the Tiv with the Catholic understanding; as a point of unity may enrich the Christian message by identifying some elements which Christianity could adopt, or ennoble and purify. The aim is to unlock and explore all areas that are necessary for promoting better understanding of marriage among the Tiv Catholic Church. The understanding is to begin discussion on the problem of marriage and family life where both aspects are regarded as one. The focus is towards the anthropological fundamental principle of Tiv marriage and family life.

0.4 Objectives of the work

The objective of this work shall be to raise the current issues of the sacrament of marriage that are facing the study of theology, most especially among the Tiv of North central Nigeria; recommend compatible African sacramental theology on marriage that is based on the Church's revelatory sources (Bible and Tradition); present a theology that is at once faithful to the Roman Catholic tradition, and also sensitive to the diverse historical, cultural and social experiences of the Africans, and will examine aspects of marriage practices in the African context (Tiv) vis-à-vis the Christian notion of sacramental marriage in order to find a middle ground on how marriage as a sacrament should be treated with the Roman Catholic Church context.

0.5 The goal of the work

The goals shall be to identify and appreciate the reasons why Inculturation theology in Africa is vital to sacramental marriage; articulate the current Roman Catholic position on the importance of contextual theology; recognize and identify how African traditional values have shaped African theologies on marriage, and finally to appreciate how this interaction will provide a platform and means by which Christianity will continue to be meaningful in her teaching on marriage to the Tiv people.

0.6 Methodology

The method adopted in this work shall be both analytical and comparative; using the principles of ‘Relationality’ and ‘toleration.’ Relationality, and toleration models encourage flexibility, collaboration, dialogue across religions and cultures and could bring together or correlate the gospel ideal and the ideal of secular humanism. For, flexibility, negotiation, and learning from the other are preferred to univocal absolute and exclusivist position.

0.7 Project’s contribution

Given the importance of marriage and family life every effort should be made to study and analyze each distinct group practice. In the light of this, this proposal is designed to address marriage and family among the Tiv of North-central Nigeria. It shall identify the means by which cultural contexts can be made to have a bearing on the teachings of the church on marriage. To achieve this, the concept of marriage, in the church’s understanding, shall be highlighted alongside issues related to the practicality of such understanding in the everyday marital relationship among the Tiv. The project shall look out for the basic issues that can generate conversation between the Catholic Church and

Tiv traditional understanding of marriage. The most common issues are polygamy and sexuality that borders around the practice of the faith in the Tiv Catholic Church.

0.7 Chapter synopses

The introduction to this work reflects a concise exposition of the various marriage theologies, a primer of the project's methodology for offering better clarity to this topic, and a short description of the project's procedure which includes an outline of its details will be presented in the Introduction. Chapter 1 considers the history and worldview of the Tiv, while chapter 2 focuses on the marriage customs and systems among the Tiv Society. The chapter presents marriage as understood and practice among the Tiv of North-central Nigeria. The Tiv of North-central Nigeria view marriage as the core of the whole social structure. It is seen in terms of an alliance between two kinship groups. The idea of marriage is inseparable from the religious and social life. In chapter three, Social and Religious values behind Tiv Traditional marriage systems, the most dominant of the Tiv social and religious values were explained and emphasized. Chapter four makes a theological excursus of the church's teachings on marriage since Vatican II. The survey covers some of the Vatican II documents and pastoral letters, and other church documents. Chapter five dwells on the theological Appraisal: Challenges and possibilities of inculturating marriage among the Tiv.

Generally, the project is designed to raise the current issues of the sacrament of marriage that are facing the study of theology, most especially among the Tiv of North central Nigeria and some allusion to other Sub-Saharan African context. It recommends compatible African sacramental theology on marriage that is based on the Church's revelatory sources (Bible and Tradition). The emphasis is on a theology that is at once

faithful to the Roman Catholic tradition, and also sensitive to the diverse historical, cultural and social experiences of the Africans (INCULTURATION). It examined aspects of marriage practices in the African context like polygamy and sexuality (Tiv) vis-à-vis the Christian notion of sacramental marriage in order to find a middle ground on how marriage as a sacrament should be treated with the Roman Catholic Church context.

CHAPTER ONE

THE TIV WORLDVIEW

1.1 Origin and history: Who are the Tiv?

Tivs are an ethnic group predominantly in Benue state of Nigeria. While most Tiv people reside in Benue state, some of them are scattered in neighboring states such as Taraba, Adamawa, and Nasarawa. Extending on both sides of the River Benue in Central Nigeria, Edward Terkula Atel submits, “Tiv covers an area of about 30,000 square kilometers and stretches from about 6° 30' to 8° 10' north latitude and from 8° to 10° east longitude.”⁹ One of the physical characteristics of Tivland is the existence of rivers Benue, Katsina-Ala, and Buruku which are sources of water supply for farming and fishing activities.

Most of Tivland is 2440 meters above sea level. Shagbaor F. Weigh states, “[t]he land lies within the guinea savannah region with distinguishable belts of vegetation. Soils become less sandy generally and more fertile nearer the Benue and Katsina-Ala rivers.”¹⁰ He further says, “the area has Temperature average between 80°F and 90°F,”¹¹ indicating a very high temperature level. He asserts, “Tiv area has a tropical climate with two clearly marked seasons. Wet season begins from April and extends to early October, and the dry season begins from October to March.”¹²

⁹ Edward Terkula Atel, *Dynamics of Tiv Religion and Culture: A Philosophical-Theological Perspective* (Lagos: Free Enterprise Publishers, 2004), 6.

¹⁰ Weigh, *Between Continuity and Change*, 30.

¹¹ Ibid. 30.

¹² Ibid. 30.

The Benue valley, which the Tiv occupy, is fertile land for agriculture, which explains why the people are both commercial and subsistence farmers, who grow different types of crops like cereals, citrus, and tuber producing plants, thus earning them the welcome appellation, “food basket of the nation.”¹³ Cropping is usually done during the wet season but the Tiv are fortunate to have different types of crops producing all year round. In other words, while some crops yield produce during the wet season, others produce in the dry season. While the harvesting of one crop is coming to an end, the harvesting season of another crop begins.

According to Wegh Shagbaor the term “Tiv” connotes a triple heritage: an ethnic group, the father figure of the people and language spoken by the people.”¹⁴ The Tiv language belongs to the Benue-Congo sub-family of the Niger-Congo family of languages. As a people, the Tiv are a proud people with a distinct culture, including a distinct language, norms and belief. They have keen sense of justice, and an overwhelming desire for decency in public and private affairs. They, like any other tribe, are perceived to have a resilient soul, robust spirit and a courageous heart.

Tivs are reported to “have no dialects and speak one language, which is understood wherever the Tiv language is spoken.”¹⁵ This is partly because the Tiv were never conquered or penetrated by other people before the arrival of the British. The language has accents. In the written form, the *Shitile*¹⁶ accent has slight advantage over others because

¹³Paul Bohannon, *Tiv Economy* (London: Longman, 1965), 55

¹⁴ Shagbaor F. Wegh, *Between Continuity and Change: Tiv Concept of Tradition and Modernity*, (Enugu, Nigeria: SNAAP Press Ltd, 2003), 33-34.

¹⁵ Ibid

¹⁶ Shitile is a tribe in Tivland. The Christian missionaries first came to this part to Tivland. It became the focal point of the Christian activities and evangelization in Tivland.

it was among the style that the Dutch Reformed Church Missionaries learned and condensed into writing.

The mainstream history of the Tivs was formulated as oral tradition comprising of legends and myths. The oral narrative asserted for instance, that rich grainy and fertile agrarian Tivland now occupied was not their original ancestral homeland. The tradition holds that, “the Tiv had their homeland in the distant land to which they refer to as *Swem*.”¹⁷ According to this oral tradition, the Tiv were in a foreign land to which they had been compelled and forced to migrate and settle. The migration narrative has various versions. While some scholars argued that the Tiv people migrated northwards from the Bantu of Southern Africa, through the Congo region of Central Africa, across the mountains of Cameroon to the Benue valley sometime during the 16th and 17th centuries, Gbenda, “traces the origin of the Tiv from *Swem*, a place (hill) located in the Republic of Cameroon.”¹⁸ Be that as it may, there have been no archaeological evidence in support of either theory of migration. Nevertheless, what is historically certain is that, amidst inter-ethnic wars and disputes, the Tiv people migrated from East Africa, “precisely, present day Malawi.”¹⁹ They journeyed through the “Congo to the Cameroons and finally settled in the fertile ground of the Benue trough, around the turn of the fifteenth (15th-19th) centuries.”²⁰

¹⁷ Akpenpuun Dzugba, *On the Tiv of Central Nigeria: A Cultural perspective* (Ibadan-Nigeria: John Archers publishers limited, 2007), 26.

¹⁸ Joseph S. Gbenda, *Eschatology in Tiv Traditional Religious Culture: An Interpretive Enquiry* (Nsukka: Chuka Educational Publishers, 2005),

¹⁹ Onov Tyuulugh, *Mlu u Tiv Hen Nigeria*, (Zaria: NNPC, 1979). Onuv was an authority in Tiv History. Although he wrote many of his works in Tiv language, his contributions to the history of the Tivs is greatly valued. His works are not scientifically verified; but remains credible to the Tiv Nation.

²⁰ W. T Gbor, *Mdugh u Tiv man mnyer ve hen Benue*, (Zaria: NNPC, 1981). (Here Gbor argues that it is lack of sufficient knowledge that Tiv people originated from the Cameroons).

The Tiv had to accept the verdict of history at the time by which migration and settlement were decided by military power and autocratic dictatorship of the moving or mobile ethnic nations. Their journey to the Benue trough probably took place during the nineteenth century. They travelled on foot from *Swem*²¹ to the Benue Valley. According to Dzurgba, “we have located Swem at the source of Katsina-Ala River in the south-western Cameroon.”²² Thus, Dzurgba argues, “our conclusion is that the Tiv people’s original homeland was in the area that is now Akwaya sub-division in the southwestern Cameroon.”²³ Thus, “*Swem* can no longer be regarded as a mythical homeland as David Craig Dorward has suggested.”²⁴ *Swem* is a real mountain which is located in Akwaya sub-division in south-west province in southwestern Cameroon.

It can be strongly conjectured that the Tiv people migrated from the land that is now Akwaya sub-division in the south-west province of Cameroon. Katsina-Ala River flows from the south-west of Cameroon and enters Nigeria through the eastern border of Central Nigeria. River Katsina-Ala flows northwest and joins River Benue a few miles away from the vicinity of Buruku. In the words of Dzurgba, “the Tiv could not move towards the south and the west of their location in Akwaya area because the larger ethnic groups called

²¹ Dzurgba, *On the Tiv of Central Nigeria*, 26. According to Dzurgba, Swem exists in Akwaya sub-division or Akwaya local government area. In Akwaya, there is a range of mountains and one of them is the highest of them all. This highest mountain is called *Swem* even by the people of Akwaya. This, therefore, confirmed the Tiv’s claim that they had once lived as a single community on a mountain called Swem. The location of Swem that had been vaguely indicated as lying to the south-east of Tivland has been revealed and identified as Akwaya sub-division in the south-west province in southern Cameroon.

²² Dzurgba, *On the Tiv of Central Nigeria*, 26.

²³ *Ibid.* 26.

²⁴ *Ibid.* 28.

Anyian and Boki had expanded their settlements beyond what is now the south-west province in Cameroon.”²⁵

Studies on the Tiv people attracted European attention as early as they arrived in what is today called Nigeria. The Tiv people are uniquely interesting for many reasons. They attracted the attention of some western anthropologists as a “Tribe without rulers, with decentralized political and cultural system.”²⁶ It is argued that the social organization of the traditional Tiv society was completely egalitarian. There was no central authority. They had no king, so every man was ruler of his own house. They lived in compounds administered by the oldest man. This “politically decentralized society organized around kinship ties gave invading forces much greater problems than many centralized states since their village to village, hamlet to hamlet resistance was akin to guerilla warfare.”²⁷ They were never conquered or subdued by any invading force, either by local neighboring tribes, or even by the British colonizers. It was not “until 1907 that Tivland was peacefully brought under British control.”²⁸ However, bringing in the Tiv people under British rule was a difficult task. Several efforts were made by the British authority to impose their style of rulership on the people. With guerilla styled defense mechanism of the Tiv was a strong military counter attack which work for them. For instance, “soldiers of the Royal West African Frontier Force (RWAFF) were killed with bare-footed archers who shot deadly

²⁵ Ibid..29.

²⁶ Godwin A. Apebo, “The Dilemma of the Taraba Tiv-Taraba denied them-Benue rejects them”, (unpublished work).

²⁷ Charles Keil, *Tiv Song: The society of Art in a Classless Society*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983)10.

²⁸ Tyu Agbehe, *Affidavits in Tiv politics*, (Makurdi, Benue State, Nigeria: Satos offset press, 1976), 7.

poisoned arrows from their hiding positions.”²⁹ Thus, the sappers and other soldiers were put under heavy attack, leading to depression, distress, stress, frustration and hopelessness. The policy of military subjugation of the Tiv people continued to be weakened and eventually collapsed.

According to Moses Tsenongu, “this situation remained until 1946 when the British colonialists established a Tiv central authority by creating the office of a paramount ruler [known as the Tor Tiv].”³⁰ The Tor Tiv lives and administers the people in the modern-day city of Gboko, their headquarters town which was built in 1932. The native authority had the responsibilities of leadership, such as collecting of taxes on behalf of the government, maintenance of law, order and stability in the local communities, judicial functions of adjudication and settlement of disputes, legislation of customary laws and mediation between the local communities and the British colonial administration.

After the troubled times, there followed a period of security, peace and plenty of food and the Tiv experienced a population explosion. This was facilitated by polygamous marriages in which one man married two or three wives with six to ten children from those wives. In this agrarian society, the wives and their children provided manual labor for farming. The number of wives and children that the men had was an indicator of Tiv economic power. Thus, the Tiv increased in number to become a major ethnic group in Nigeria. Going by the 2006 national census, the National Population Commission puts the Tiv population figure at 2,946,198³¹ These statistics right now cannot account for the true

²⁹ Ibid. P.43.

³⁰ Moses Tsenongu, “Nuptial poetry among the Tiv of Nigeria” Anthropos institute, <http://www.jstor.org>, (accessed 10/6/2012).

³¹ Nigerian Population Commission: Population Distribution by sex, state and senatorial district: 2006 census priority tables (vol.3).

population of the Tiv, but it does provide a clue to what represents the Tiv position in Nigeria. It is important to note that the Tiv people are the largest ethnic group in the middle belt of Nigeria and the sixth largest ethnic group in Nigeria. Hence any study on the group is ipso facto significant to the overall understanding of Nigeria's internal order.

1.2 Brief history of the Tiv people and their worldview

The Tiv people are an ethnic group in Benue state of Nigeria. The term Tiv connotes a triple heritage: an ethnic group, the father figure of the people and language spoken by the people. The Tiv people are the largest ethnic group in the middle belt of Nigeria and the sixth largest ethnic group in Nigeria. While majorities of the Tiv people reside in Benue state, some of them are scattered in neighboring states such as Taraba, Adamawa, and Nasarawa.

The majority of Tiv history was formulated as oral tradition in the form of legends and myths. According to this oral tradition, the Tiv were in a foreign land to which they had been compelled and forced to migrate and settle as related above.

The Tiv according to Tyu Abeghe, “have made a lot of history.”³² This history making attributes which non-Tiv may regard as disturbing mysteries are transparent in all over (Tiv) human works of life: politics, fighting, play, dance rhetoric, religion et cetera. Instances abound, they deceived the colonialists with their early “cults-Haakaa (discard witchcraft) of 1920; and Nyambuan (Beef cult) in 1939. They shocked Nigerians during the riot of 1960 Nande Arson (Burning of houses) and the brutal riot of 1964 known as

<http://www.population.gov.ng/images/Vol%2003%20Table%20DSx%20LGAPop%20by%20SDistrict-PDF.pdf> (accessed 1/24/2016).

³² Ibid

Atemtyo (head breaking) which culminated in the slaughter of the head of Mbalagh in Tiv division on February 12th, 1964.”³³

The Tiv people are basically agriculturists. As agrarian people this may also count for polygamy as more hands are needed to do the farm work. They cultivate in large quantities crops like: yam, Millet guinea corn, maize and beni seed, cotton and a lot of soya beans, groundnuts and rice. The population estimate varies widely. In 1933 Captain R.M Downes estimated their number at “600,000, in 1971; he put the figure to I million.”³⁴ In 1991, Nanevwua Uhondo put the figure “at 3 million.”³⁵ The Tiv people presently count no less than “10 million.”³⁶

On the religious and physical plane, the Tiv people, neither do not separate the spiritual and physical into separate compartments or regard the supernatural and unseen as something apart from the physical and visible; ipso facto; they are the same. They do not differentiate between magical and religious ideas. The idea of duality nature, macrocosm and microcosm, the one and the many, the visible and invisible permeate their whole world-view. The world on which they live, the cosmos, tribe (and the different clans), nation et cetera are all expressed as “Tar”. This Tiv conception of “Tar” is vividly described by Captain R.M Downes in these words:

To him (Tivman) the (world or Tar) is not just this country: it is everything that is around him, including the dual but invisible entities of the actual, visible and tangible, and the no less actual, but the visible background which

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ R. M Downes, *Tiv Religion*, (Ibadan –Nigeria: Ibadan University Press, 1971), 1.

³⁵ Nanevwua Uhondo, *Democratization and Revolutionization of Tiv Titular system*, (Makurdi, Benue State: Musa Bakare, 1991), 1.

³⁶ Nigerian Population Commission: Population Distribution by sex, state and senatorial district: 2006 census priority tables (vol.3).

<http://www.population.gov.ng/images/Vol%2003%20Table%20DSx%20LGAPop%20by%20SDistrict-PDF.pdf> (accessed 1/24/2016).

contains the motive forces of life, the shadows, unseen powers of the spirit that can advance and retard the affairs of mankind.³⁷

This totalized thinking regulates and predicts behavioral patterns. This is dominant in all spheres of life; both social, political and religions. The Tiv are a very interesting group, their religion is not enshrined in any formal creed, and its tenants are not reasoned about, but have a great psychic power; they are firmly encrusted in their consciousness and are a part of their being. Nothing can exist that is outside of religion. Their religion is not connected with a single picture, complete, or closed system of thought. The religious and mystical ideas of these people are extremely complicated. The intricate interlinking of religious ideas and other cultural elements is a nest of puzzle. Those who sought a key to the situation have mistakenly, according to Bohannan, called Tiv religion an ancestral cult, and earth cult, a pantheon of gods, fetishism, animism, pre-animism and animalism. No two authorities of Tiv religion agree even on the major point of interpretation. It is on this complicated worldview that the marriage systems or forms among the Tivs are crafted.

1.3 Tiv cultural and religious worldview

The Tiv are a very interesting group that are highly religious. The Tiv religion is not enshrined in any formal creed and its tenets are not reasoned about, but have great social power because they are firmly imbibed in the consciousness of the people and are a part of their being. Nothing can exist that is outside of religion. Their religion is not connected with a single picture, complete, or closed system of thought. The religious and mystical ideas of these people are extremely complicated. The intricate interlinking of religious ideas and other cultural elements is a nest of puzzles. Early European scholars who studied

³⁷ R.M Downes, *Tiv Religion* (Ibadan, Nigeria: Ibadan University Press, 1971), 20.

Tiv society have mistakenly, according to Bohannan, “called Tiv religion an ancestral cult, earth cult, a pantheon of gods, fetishism, animism, pre-animism and animalism.”³⁸ No two authorities of Tiv religion agree even on the major point of interpretation.

The Tiv people do not separate the spiritual and the physical into distinct compartments or regard the supernatural and unseen as something apart from the physical and visible. They do not differentiate between magical and religious ideas. The idea of dual nature, macrocosm and microcosm, the one and the many, the visible and invisible, permeate their whole world-view. The world in which they live, the cosmos, tribe (and the different clans), nation inclusive, are all expressed as “*Tar*”.³⁹ “*Tar*” has a symbolic conception expressed metaphorically as a man stooping down. Thus, for the Tiv, the sun rises from the north (Head of *Tar*—*Ityogh ki tar*) and sets in the south (the downside of *Tar*—*Ityo I tar*). So, facing where the sun rises his right-hand side becomes the east (*imbusu Tar I yan*), and his left-hand side invariably becomes the west (*imbusu Tar I mese*). The image of finding these cardinal points in Tiv worldview is of the human being, his head—north and his buttocks—south. So, from our consideration, the east from where the sun rises is the north or head (*ityogh ki tar*). The west, his foundation is the south (*Ityo Tar*). The north and south flanks are respectively his West (*Imbusu tar I mese*), and his East (*imbusu tar I yan*). This Tiv conception of “*Tar*” is vividly described by Captain R. M Downes in these words:

³⁸ *Ibid*, 20.

³⁹ “*Tar*” is the totality of the Tiv cosmos that define their worldview. It regulates and predicts behavioral patterns. It is a dominant principle in all spheres of life, both social, political and religions.

To him (Tivman) the (world or Tar) is not just this country: it is everything that is around him, including the dual but invisible entities of the actual, visible and tangible, and the no less actual, but the visible background which contains the motive forces of life, the shadows, unseen powers of the spirit that can advance and retard the affairs of mankind.⁴⁰

It is with this cosmology that Tiv crafted their traditional institutions. According to Wegh, the Tiv people have great admiration and protection for their institutions. The Tiv man is proud of his land, earth, or *tar*, which is why he ignores the Western customs and ideas and would proudly and openly tell the white man that before his advent, everything in the Tiv land was better.⁴¹ Thus, the Tiv people have great respect for tradition and cultural practices such as marriages, naming and puberty rites, burial rituals, and care for human life, among others.

1.4 The advent and spread of Christianity in Tivland

The 18th century evangelical revival group that started in Europe and then later spread to America contributed immensely to the evangelization of Africa. The revival which manifested in Europe and was referred to as the ‘great awakening’, provided a solid platform for the future evangelical work in Africa. Tivland was also greatly impacted and transformed.

The revival tradition of these evangelicals laid “emphasis upon religious activity and lay leadership. They encouraged charity, philanthropy, education and missionary activity.”⁴² Mission societies and boards employed workers who held a wide range of roles in many different fields. The missionaries were explorers, priests, doctors, nurses, teachers,

⁴⁰ R.M Downes, *Tiv Religion* (Ibadan, Nigeria: Ibadan University Press, 1971), 20.

⁴¹ Wegh, *Between Continuity and Change*, 60-61.

⁴² Ibid.63.

agriculturists, technicians, carpenters, electricians, architects, builders, printers, plumbers, entrepreneurs, social workers, administrators and accountants. They came from different walks of life used their skills and competencies at the service of the missions. In Tivland for instance, mission stations were spread in rural areas where only bicycles and motorcycles were used regularly. The missionaries had to be “carried on the backs of the natives across the streams in the rural areas.”⁴³ The colonial government that accompanied the missionaries encouraged them “morally, materially and financially”.⁴⁴ However, their efforts led to improvement in tropical healthcare delivery which was a great advantage to the missionaries, most especially the discovery of quinine to treat malaria. The “discovery of quinine had also reduced malaria hazards and many missionaries survived to preach the gospel.”⁴⁵ The discovery of Quinine greatly favored and enhanced the missionary effort in the evangelization process in Tivland.

Improved in health care condition propelled the early success of the Sudan United Mission, (SUM) in Tivland. SUM was founded in Europe by Karl W. Kumm,⁴⁶ who came to Tivland in the early 1900’s. Karl was of German origin, born October 19, 1874 in the town of Osterode in Hanover province, Germany. His desire to spread the gospel message spurred him to leave his country and travel to Britain in order to prepare himself for the missionary enterprise. This later led him to make an adventurous journey to different

⁴³ Ibid.64.

⁴⁴ Michael Crowder, *West Africa under Colonial Rule* (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1968), 44-64.

⁴⁵ Thomas. R Batten, *Tropical of Africa in World History*, Book Three, 4th Edition (London: Oxford University Press, 1964), 21-22.

⁴⁶ Karl W. Kumm was a German who founded the Sudan United Mission (SUM) which first evangelized the Tiv nation even before the advent of the Catholic Church. SUM later became what is known today as NKST (Nongo U Kristu U Sudan hen Tiv—Sudan United Mission in Tivland). See Dzurgba, *On the Tiv of Central Nigeria*, 65.

places. One of the continents that he visited was Africa. Dzurgba attests that, “under the Northern African Mission (NAM), Karl Kumm came to Alexandria, Egypt, and learned Arabic language.”⁴⁷ It was in Egypt that Karl met Henry Grattan Guinness who was the “evangelical leader in Britain.”⁴⁸ Grattan had a burning desire to see that the gospel was preached to the people of a vast region, which stretched from West Africa to East Africa, between North Africa and South Africa. This huge area was “called the Sudan.”⁴⁹ In fact the meeting of Karl Kumm with Grattan set the platform for the African Mission. After the meeting, on November 13, 1902, Karl Kumm launched the Sudan Pioneer Mission. Later, “the word ‘Pioneer’ was dropped, and replaced with ‘United’, and the new name became Sudan United Mission (SUM).”⁵⁰

Ultimately, the Sudan Mission was an interdenominational and international organization. Thus, after its inauguration, the SUM committee decided to send missionaries to Nigeria for an exploration of the land and its people. Four men were selected and commissioned. They were, “Dr. Karl. W. Kumm, Dr. Batema, J. G Burt, and J. Lowry Maywell.”⁵¹ Dr. Kumm was the leader of that missionary expedition. These four “began their journey on July 23, 1904.”⁵²

On arrival in Nigeria on August 10, 1904, the group was separated due to the bad condition in Lokoja at that time. Dr. Kumm had to “travel up north to Zunguru to meet

⁴⁷ Dzurgba, *On the Tiv of Central Nigeria*, 65.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.* 65.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.* 65.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 65.

⁵¹ Jan Harm Boer, *Missionary messengers of Liberation in a Colonial Context: A Case study of the Sudan United Mission*. (Amsterdam: Editions Rodopi N.V., 1979), 18-37.

⁵² *Ibid.* 37.

with Sir Frederick Lugard who was regarded as the conqueror of the African colonies.”⁵³ He went to ask for permission to start a mission station in Northern Nigeria. He was granted permission to establish a mission at Wase. Later, Dr. Kumm returned to Lokoja to join his friends.

From Lokoja, “they travelled up river Benue and came to Abinsi, a town in Tivland.”⁵⁴ From there, the conditions became worse and all of them had to go back to Wase where Kumm had started a mission with the permission of Lugard. They arrived in “Wase on October 8, 1904. They established the first SUM’s mission station in Wase.”⁵⁵

Subsequently, another branch of SUM, the Christian Reformed Church, was established, and had government’s permission to work among the Jukun and Tiv. This project of joining the two tribes to form a Church mission was quite challenging. The two, Jukun and Tiv, shared different social and cultural values that would not encourage collaboration. Thus, the target was to evangelize homogenous groups with a large population—that could save cost and other challenges. In the pursuit of this idea, a decision was reached to start an independent mission in Tivland. Consequently, “it was at this time that the Christian Reformed Church branch handed over power to South African branch of SUM to carry on this mission.”⁵⁶ This became the first Christian mission station in Tivland.

⁵³ Dzugba, *On the Tiv of Central Nigeria*, 66-67 Says this of Sir Frederick Lugard.

Sir. Frederick Lugard, who had worked successfully in conquering Uganda in East Africa as well as South Africa until 1895, had been appointed a British High Commissioner in 1901 to conquer the protectorate of Northern Nigeria for British occupation. It was at that time that Colonel Kembel and Colonel Morland conquered Northern Nigeria. Sir. Fredrick Lugard was in Zunguru at that time. Dr. Karl Kumm went to Zunguru to seek for permission to establish a mission station in Northern Nigeria. Sir. Fredrick Lugard granted them permission to set up a mission station in Wase. Lugard was in Zunguru until the Capital of Northern Nigeria was moved to Kaduna. (Cf Dzugba, *On the Tiv of Central Nigeria*, 66-67).

⁵⁴ *Ibid.* 66.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ *Ibid.* 68.

Thus, the South African branch of SUM was the first Christian mission to establish itself in Tivland.

The British colonial government gave permission for a mission station to be built to the East of River Katsina-Ala. Today that location is known as Saai Utu's village. Carl Zimmerman became the first mission coordinator to oversee this new project. The new coordinator, "Zimmerman arrived from Wukari on horseback on August 17, 1911."⁵⁷ Saai Utu was the Chief of Shitile as was directed by the principle of indirect rule of Sir Lugard. Prior to this era, there was nothing like chieftaincy. Chieftaincy was imposed on the Tiv by the British. In collaboration with Chief Saai and the British, "a mission station was established at Saai village."⁵⁸ Subsequently, "a primary school was also established."⁵⁹ In addition to its core purpose of providing western education, SUM primary school was a useful tool for effective evangelization. In 1911, Saai's wife gave birth to a baby boy. He was named *Isholibo* which means sin. This suggests that Christianity had an immediate social implication for the Tiv people.

Despite their willingness and cooperation, the Tiv people found Christian worship to be alien, strange and funny. For example, "when the missionaries asked them to close their eyes for prayers, it was usually a matter of laughter."⁶⁰ They kept up their conversations, even during services. This meant they needed a period of orientation to change from the traditional religious worship of the Tiv to a more formal Christian worship. Nevertheless, this initial contact produced some early success, as the "Saai mission station

⁵⁷ Ibid. 68.

⁵⁸ Ibid. 68.

⁵⁹ Ibid. 68.

⁶⁰ Ibid. 69.

had made three converts, namely, Akiiga, Alam, and Iverkpen.”⁶¹ It was from here that Christianity started expanding to other parts of Tivland. These converts became fundamental to the ongoing evangelization work in Tivland.

The SUM missionaries were very interested in their mission work. They were open to learn the local language within a short time. Within one year of their presence in Tivland, “they wrote a reading book in Tiv language; they also composed twelve hymns in Tiv language.”⁶² In order to engage and incorporate the locals into the mission work, “[I]n 1914, Akiiga was sent to SUM’s (CRC) evangelists school at Wukari.”⁶³ He completed his course and he became the first Tiv evangelist.

In 1915, the management of the mission changed from SUM to Dutch Reformed Church Mission (DRCM). Note that SUM was not a church, but an international and interdenominational organization, which recruited volunteer workers from various churches. The South African branch of SUM was dominated by volunteers from the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC). But it was under the auspices of SUM that South African branch of SUM worked among the Tiv. However, “at the beginning of 1916, the synod of DRC decided to take full responsibility of the mission work in Tivland as a Church.”⁶⁴ With the complete takeover by DRC, the mission started expanding rapidly. Some missions were established as early as 1913. However, formal establishment of mission areas started around 1918.

⁶¹ Ibid. 70.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid.72.

In July 1918, “it was decided that a third mission station be established at Sevav in Tombo district, but the government gave permission at the end of 1919.”⁶⁵ This growth continued both in material and spiritual levels. Between 1920-1921, “four Tiv persons were baptized. They were Akiga and his wife, Yangona, Kaaer and Kanyam.”⁶⁶ With government permission, DRCM established Mkar and Adikpo mission stations in May 1923. The “two mission stations were sited at Mkar (at the foot of Mkar Mountain) and Adikpo.”⁶⁷

With the school apostolate as the key to the mission, the DRCM started many schools to promote their missionary work. Opening schools also brought the pupils in touch with the gospel. Eventually, “Mkar became the headquarters of DRCM in Tivland,”⁶⁸ and gradually, Mkar also became the center of DRCM’s educational system in Tivland.

Today DRCM and SUM (CRC) designations are jointly incooperated into a native expression for the group: *Nongo U Kristu U Ken Sudan Hen Tiv* (NKST). NKST has now fully assumed the position of an indigenous Christian Church of the Tiv people. The church is now most commonly referred to as NKST. Since then, “NKST has flourished in Tivland as a self-supporting, self-governing and self-propagating church which became autonomous on July 7, 1957.”⁶⁹ Significantly, the Dutch Reformed Church Mission (DRCM) made tremendous contributions to the cultural transformation of the entire Tiv society.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid.73.

⁶⁸ Ibid. 75.

⁶⁹ Ibid. 83.

1.4.1 Expanded mission: The Catholic Church and other denominations

According to Dzugba, “DRCM came to Tivland in 1911 and DRCM was the only Christian mission in Tivland for twenty years before she was joined by Roman Catholic Mission (RCM) in 1930 after the railway from Enugu had reached Makurdi in 1924.”⁷⁰ The German missionaries of the Congregation of the Holy Ghost Fathers “arrived at Makurdi in November, 1930.”⁷¹ The first Holy Ghost missionaries who arrived first, were Fathers Winterie and Kinsten. They were accompanied by two lay professed conferees, Brother Maurice and Remigius. Monsignor Herey, “the vicar apostolic of South-eastern Nigeria, came to introduce them in Makurdi to the Catholic faithful who were mostly railway workers from South-eastern Nigeria”⁷² Bishop Herey had “succeeded Bishop Shanahan, and was residing at Enugu.”⁷³

Apart from the RCM and DRCM, other Christian Churches, like the Anglican, Methodists and Baptists, came to Tivland very late, and restricted themselves to the areas of Makurdi and Gboko. It is only of recent that these groups have started expanding to other parts of Tivland. Today, Tivland, has so many Christian groups that it is almost impossible to count. The churches in Tivland groups range from Pentecostals to emerging New Religious Movements.

⁷⁰ Dzugba, *On the Tiv of Central Nigeria*, 84.

⁷¹ *Ibid.* 84.

⁷² Daniel I. Denga, *Educational Development in Tivland: Problems and prospects*, (Calabar: Rapid Educational Publishers limited, 1988), 32.

⁷³ *Ibid.* 32.

1.5 Christianity, social and cultural transformation in Tivland

It would be right to argue that social and cultural issues were the key areas of challenge to both DRCM and RCM missionaries in Tivland. Efforts were however made in these areas, and the impacts have been great. While the contributions of both bodies on cultural transformation may be rated equal, in all honesty, DRCM made more impact on the cultural changes and social progress that have taken place in Tivland since 1911. Aspects where Christian social and cultural transformations are evident include the following areas:

1.5.1 *Marriage institution*

During this rapid growth of the church, there were some issues confronting the missionaries. One of such issues was an *exchange marriage* system that was practiced in Tivland at the time DRCM was planting Christianity. This form of marriage may rightly be described as a barter marriage. According to those who practiced the local custom of exchange marriage, a man could exchange his daughter or a sister or a female relative for a wife. Dzugba, commenting on this exchange marriage, said, “a man who had no daughter, nor a sister nor a female relative had to borrow a female from his brother or relative.”⁷⁴ In the absence of these three alternatives, a man could remain a perpetual bachelor.

The matter of exchange marriage bothered DRCM. Having discussed the matter of barter marriage in its meetings in 1926 and 1927 when the DRCM sent a delegation to the British government in Nigeria. The delegation told the “government that barter marriage

⁷⁴ Dzugba, *On the Tiv of Central Nigeria*, 80.

was against Christian principles.”⁷⁵ Thus, DRCM requested the government to negotiate with the Tiv people for a change. As an alternative, DRCM recommended a dowry marriage where a marriage is contracted by payment of money to the parents of the prospective wife. Hence, “the colonial government of Northern Nigeria abolished exchange marriage in Tivland in August 19, 1927.”⁷⁶ In place of exchange marriage, dowry marriage was thus introduced in Tivland at the request of DRCM through the British. In addition, they started pushing for the idea of one man and one woman among the faithful. The *one man, one wife* policy became a strong policy decision in RCM. Because of this development, in the RCM, it became a rule that for one to remain a practicing Christian, one would have to marry only one wife and be baptized, before one could lawfully be admitted to the sacraments.

1.5.2 *Global Perception*

On their own, some people, especially children, understood and believed that Tivland was the universe (Tar sha won cii), or the earth (Tar), and their clans were independent sovereign nations. Therefore, all other clans in Tivland were independent sovereign countries as far as politics was concerned. They had not been in contact with other nationalities, especially those nationalities that were coming from Europe and America. In this context, “the unity, cohesion, incorporation and solidarity of the Tiv people were firmly rooted in their common ancestor called Tiv.”⁷⁷ They looked at other tribes as alien (Ityo I gen). Therefore, before the advent of Christianity, the Tiv people had a parochial or narrow view and limited perception of the reality of the world and its diverse

⁷⁵ Ibid. 80.

⁷⁶ Ibid. 80.

⁷⁷ Ibid. pp.84.

nationalities. Contact with the European missionaries brought about a change in global perception and understanding in Tivland.

1.5.3 *Conversion of persons*

Through the Church establishment and evangelism, the Tiv were converted from Tiv Traditional Religion (TTR) to Christianity. In TTR, the people had one supreme deity called Aondo and many small spiritual forces called *Akombo*,⁷⁸ as in the plural form, while one was *Kombo*. The religion which incorporated these deities in its structure was referred to as polytheism by the European missionaries. I think the Europeans misunderstood the Tiv religion because Tiv society never had a pantheon of gods.

The Tiv were converted to Christianity, which the European referred to as monotheistic. Those who embraced this new religion had to undergo a lot of changes, for example, replacing their traditional family names to Christian names that were recorded in the Bible. This experience “changed the people’s beliefs, taste, feeling or emotions, perception, thought, decision-making, choice-making, mental orientation, general behavior and human relationship.”⁷⁹ The converts interaction with Christianity changed their attitudes towards social, economic, political, scientific and technological ideas and materials. In a religious language, “the Tiv became Born-again and, therefore, culturally transformed.”⁸⁰

⁷⁸ See Eugene Rubingh, *Son of Tiv: A study of the rise of the Church among the Tiv of Central Nigeria* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1969), 76-80. Akombo are spiritual forces created by Aondo to regulate the cosmos and to protect it from malfunction. The existence of these forces may be discovered by man, as well as the ways in which their equilibrium may be restored when they have been disturbed. This restoration requires the manipulation of certain paraphernalia and often involves a sacrifice of blood or beer above the guardian emblems. Those who are initiated and thus have obtained the right to manipulate the Akombo emblems may in this way restore order to a situation in the human realm in which brokenness is present and calamity hence breaks out.

⁷⁹ Dzurgba, *On the Tiv of Central Nigeria*, 85.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.* 85.

1.5.4 *Western Education:*

Before the advent of Christianity and its development, traditional Tiv education was based on oral tradition and the undertaking of practical activities used in domestic life, as well as occupations such as cooking, child bearing and rearing, farming and animal husbandry among others. The missionaries introduced western education and maintained the wide-gap lead throughout the sixty years of British rule in Tivland (January 1900-Oct 1960), when Nigeria as a nation gained her independence from the British. The introduction of western education brought about formal education as against the informal education that was practiced by the Tiv people. There was a system of writing, accompanied by learning of the English language. Western education, in the words of Dzurgba, “transformed traditional education and the entire Tiv society in terms of knowledge, skills, and activities.”⁸¹

1.5.5 *Development of Tiv Language*

Interaction between the Christian missionaries of the west and Tiv culture brought about transformation. Before now, Tiv language was in an oral form, not in written form. Most forms of communication were conducted through speech. Tiv conversation, discussion and messages were all done through the spoken word—Tiv. There were no set of alphabets or set of letters that could be used to write the Tiv language. The DRCM introduced English written letters into Tiv language and made Tiv language a written language. As a result, “the Holy Bible (*Chighan Bibilo*), hymns (*Atsam*), Catechism (*katekisima*) and books were translated into Tiv and used in Churches (*A yough aduaa*) and

⁸¹ Ibid. 86.

schools (*Imakeranta*).”⁸² The missionaries also introduced Arabic numbers and the Roman numbers into Tiv language. Numbers were used in mathematics and arithmetic. The introduction of these contributed significantly to the development of both oral and written forms of Tiv language.

1.5.6 *Western Medicine*

Before the coming of the Christian missionaries and western culture, *Akombo* were responsible for all causes and effects of all illnesses. Therefore, each *Kombo* has one, or more area of operation. While some *Akombo* takes charge of children’s or women’s disease (*iangev*) in special cases, others take charge of general diseases that attack humanity. Tiv traditional medicine believes the efficacy or the healing power of all herbal drugs (*Mchimbim*) derived from the prior operation of *Akombo*.

Witchcraft also causes diseases. Thus, the endorsement of consultation by a wizard or witch was to be implemented before the administration of drugs. All these complicated processes brought about suspicion, mistrust and conflict, as to who was the cause of one’s illness and subsequent death.

On the contrary, “western medicine introduced new non-religious causes of disease, namely: virus, germs, bacteria, bacilli, fungi, protozoa and worms, among others.”⁸³ Thus, through hospitals, clinics, leprosana, doctors and nurses, western medicine helped transform the Tiv people’s health-medical perception, beliefs, knowledge, understanding, skills and practice.

⁸² Ibid. 87.

⁸³ Akpenpuun Dzurgba, “Biomedicine and Traditional medicine in Nigeria. A comparative Evaluation”, in *African Journal of Biomedical Research*, 1998, 26-75.

1.6 Inculturation of Christian Ethics

The interaction and conversation between the Christian missionaries and the Tiv help affirm their belief and understanding of the natural law theory (*gbaaondo*). The decree of God from the beginning of creation, helped to enshrine the law of God among the Tiv people in their daily dealings.

Christian missionaries are most remembered for their contributions to the teaching of Christian ethics, through preaching sermons to the congregation, teaching in schools, and ecclesiastical discipline. Thus, “the missionaries insisted on honesty, truthfulness, and integrity.”⁸⁴ In this ethical system, obedience to ethical principles, for example honesty, was taught and backed up as a command issued by God. Consequently, the ethical commands are compulsive, coercive and mandatory. Overall, the emphasis was on personal integrity.

The point of this chapter is to introduce the entire work and to call for the Church’s attention to the need for inculturation of Tiv marriage system in the Tiv Catholic Church. The early Christian missionaries tried to implant Christianity in Tivland through their own methods of providing Christian teaching via the establishment of schools, hospitals and other social amenities.

Now it is the turn of the Church to build on their efforts by developing and deepening the faith preached by the early Christian evangelizers. The only way that could impact this project is through the process of inculturation. Emphasis should be placed on making the Gospel values to interact with the culture of the host community. In this dissertation, it means making the teachings of the Church on marriage interact with the Tiv

⁸⁴ Dzurgba, *On the Tiv of Central Nigeria*, 89.

cultural norms of marriage. This interaction, when viewed with a positive mind, will certainly yield a beneficial outcome for the Tiv Christians, who are caught between their previous cultural experiences and habits and the Christian teachings on marriage.

CHAPTER TWO

MARRIAGE IN TIV CONTEMPORARY CULTURE

2.1 Introduction

Marriage is one of humanity's essential characteristics. It is the union between male and female, argued among some cultures and religious groups to be geared towards the raising of rational family life in society. As a natural institution and a socio-cultural reality, each group of people celebrate marriage according to their own context and values. Hence, marriages should not be modelled on the idea of a 'one size-fits-all context' but should be allowed to evolve and grow based on each cultural group and context. In other words, every institution, society, and culture have a right to choose what type of marriage arrangement that best explains and works for it. For example, marriage among the Tiv is considered as a very important step in the life of Tiv people. It is a sign of maturity and responsibility. It is a sign of the fulfilment of the wishes and aspirations of one's parents, kin group, and the community at large.

Nevertheless, the Western European understanding of marriage, as adopted by the Catholic Church's Magisterium in her teaching, has been presented as the norm for varied cultures and social groups as may exist within the Church. This attitude may not allow the Church to understand the perception of these groups in their varied contexts. The changing attitude of the Church, in openness to inculturation, is a welcome idea that needs to be explored in its verities. In the same spirit, the Church in Africa cannot be indifferent to the call of deepening its theology of marriage and *ipso facto*, put it into practice.

However, considered, there are implications for either position of an African understanding of marriage and the current European influenced Catholic theology of marriage. This work considers the pastoral implications of marital concepts in the church's self-understanding in Tiv culture. It asks, how can the Church address in a persuasive way, the dynamics of marriage in Tiv culture? How would Catholic theology of marriage be different if it were to attend to the yearnings of Tiv culture? What influence does colonialism have on Catholic theology and her sacraments? Is marriage still the same today in the postmodern world as in the pre-Vatican II era? If our understanding of the sacraments is about celebrating what God is doing in the life of the human person, where comes the authority of the church on issues of marriage?

A closer look at our understanding and practice of Christianity in Tiv Catholic Church shows that Christ is still a stranger among us instead of being the African eponymous ancestor. That explains why the trouble with us could be rightly described in the words of Leslie Dixon Weatherhead, "that we have been inoculated with a small dose of 'Christ-thing' which keep us from catching the 'real-thing'—authentic Christian life."⁸⁵ Perhaps one reason the present conflicting situation on marriage exists in the Tiv Catholic Church is largely because the Tiv Catholic Church has not taken the time to allow Christianity to interact with the culture to produce enduring effects on the practice of the faith. This has affected the teaching and practice of the sacraments; especially the sacrament of matrimony.

⁸⁵ Cited by Titus Baka, "Untruly African most untruly Christian," in *Beyond Frontiers Vol. 2. No. 1.* 1989: 4.

The conciliar constitution, *Gaudium et Spes*, (nos. 53 – 62) addressed the promotion of culture in its relationship with the Christian faith, however the autonomy of cultural differentiation and the firm church regulations on aspects of marriage and family has continued to be problematic in Tiv's marriage affairs. Nevertheless, the post Vatican Council II emphasis on inculturation, a process geared towards getting the message of Christ firmly established in various cultures of the world, has provided the leeway to theologially address the ominous tension.

There are considerable literature on marriage and family in African societies. However, these documents approach the practice from a generalized anthropological and sociological perspectives. They often fail to offer any system-oriented assessment of the practice as it directly affects the everyday life of the couple in their distinctive native contexts. Given the importance of marriage and family life in most African culture, the Tiv tribe inclusive, every effort should be made to study and analyze each distinct group's practice.

From the theological and pastoral problems arising from the extant literatures on marriage, there is a need for differentiated context consideration of the marriage culture in relation to the church's teachings on marriage. This dissertation therefore aims at identifying the means by which the teachings of the church on marriage will make positive theological and pastoral sense in the practice of the faith among the Tiv people of the North central region of Nigeria. The work is expected to unlock and explore all the areas that are necessary for the promotion of better understanding of the sacrament of matrimony in the Tiv Catholic Church as against the present condition of dichotomy between believe and practice.

To achieve the set objectives of this dissertation the concept of marriage in the church's understanding shall be highlighted alongside issues related to the practicality of such understanding in the everyday marital relationship among the Tiv. The work shall investigate the Tiv situation in connection with the sacrament of matrimony, and the Tiv cultural marriage forms in order to create a holistic understanding of the sacrament of marriage in Tiv culture. In addition, the work shall pay particular attention to the relationship between the sacrament of matrimony and the Tiv cultural marriage forms.

Ultimately, this dissertation shall corroborate the vision of a fulfilled Christian life within one's cultural expression. It is believed that the inculturation process as proposed at the second Vatican Council if properly implemented, would certainly lead to a greater understanding of marriage in the church, and create a better understanding and dialogue between the church and various cultures of the world.

2.2 Concept of culture

In this work, the meaning of culture is limited to the purpose of our investigation—marriage among the Tiv Culture. The aim is certainly not to challenge or argue with scholars of cultural studies on the issue of the meaning of culture. However, the intention is to agree with fellow scholars of equal persuasion, and to present our subject in a manner that our readers will gain enough knowledge and understanding, not only of the term “culture” but also other important issues that will be examined in this study.

Culture is a complex phenomenon that deals with the whole of a person's life. In much of the literature I have seen, culture is defined as an ‘attribute’, something most organizations ‘has’, along with other attributes such as structure and strategy. According to Patricia M. Hudelson, “culture is seen as an independent variable that can be manipulated

through management intervention in order to achieve organisational goals.”⁸⁶ This confirms the fact that culture is indeed, a very complex human entity with social and environmental facets. It may be termed people’s way of life as moulded by their society and environment. By this understanding, culture could be, “understood as a whole and distinctive way of life.”⁸⁷

However, anthropology takes quite a different approach to culture. Most anthropologists would define it as the “shared set of (implicit and explicit) values, ideas, concepts, and rules of behaviour that allow a social group to function and perpetuate itself.”⁸⁸ Rather than simply the presence or absence of a particular attribute, “culture is understood as the dynamic and evolving socially constructed reality that exists in the mind of social group members. It is the ‘normative glue’ that allows group members to communicate and work effectively together.”⁸⁹ In the same light, Akpenpuun Dzurgba, also elaborates that, “Culture is broadly divided into two components, namely material culture and ideological culture.”⁹⁰ On the question of what is culture? He argues,

⁸⁶ Patricia M. Hudelson, “Cultural and quality: an anthropological perspective” in Oxford Academic: International Journal for Quality in Health Care (2014) 16, (5): 345-346
<https://academic.oup.com/intqhc/article/16/5/345/1822533> accessed 24/9/2018.

⁸⁷ Chris Barker, Cultural Studies: Theory and Practice (4th Edition), (Los Angeles: Sage Publications, 2012), 40.

⁸⁸ Patricia M. Hudelson, “Cultural and quality: an anthropological perspective” in Oxford Academic: International Journal for Quality in Health Care (2014) 16, (5): 345-346
<https://academic.oup.com/intqhc/article/16/5/345/1822533> accessed 24/9/2018.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Akpenpuun Dzurgba, *On the Tiv of Central Nigeria: A Cultural perspective* (Ibadan-Nigeria: John Archers publishers, 2007), P.x.

Culture is made up of the ideas, beliefs, customs or traditions, means and methods of survival, provision of security and protection, individual and collective relationships, institutional organization and administration, general and dissemination of knowledge, maintenance of health and treatment of sickness, production and distribution of goods and foods, clothings and housing, reproduction and socialization as well as rewards and punishment. ⁹¹

From this understanding, culture covers the whole of human endeavour. Thus, he asserts, “these cultural components or ways of life are collectively heard and accepted by an ethnic group, or people in a society.”⁹² Hence, culture establishes patterns of relationships, institutional organizations, administrative power and authority, responses and reaction, worldview and perception of things, mode of thought and code of behaviour.

Commenting on the issue of culture, Kalu asserts that “culture seeks to maintain order and stability in the content of rapid social movement, change and development.”⁹³ He notes that culture has the capacity to sanction, and enforce the members’ to obedience, as well as demand compliance and conformity to the social order.⁹⁴ Invariably, cultural sociopaths are to be subdued, subordinated and coerced to submission and obedience. A true cultural person must therefore, necessarily be a conformist. This is because culture inculcates common group sentiments (feelings/emotions) and worldview.

Stanley J. Baran considers culture as “the learned, socially acquired traditions and lifestyles of the members of a given social group.”⁹⁵ It is “the learned, socially acquired traditions and lifestyles of the members of a society, including their patterned, repetitive

⁹¹ Ibid. 3.

⁹² Ibid. 3.

⁹³ Ogbu U. Kalu, ed., *Reading in African Humanities: African Cultural Development* (Enugu: Fourth Dimension, 1980), p.x.

⁹⁴ Ibid. 5.

⁹⁵ Stanley Baran, *Introduction to Mass communication: Media Literacy and Culture*, second edition (Mountain View: Mayfield, 2002), 9.

ways of thinking, feeling, and acting.”⁹⁶ By inference, it means that culture makes human experiences important and useful. It does this by selecting certain experiences and organizes them in a broad manner and in forms or patterns through which people make meaning out of their own lives.

Every culture is a human achievement, a human endeavour, in response to given situations, as presented by the society and the environment at large. Because culture is a human endeavour, no culture is perfect. Modern anthropology uses the term culture to designate the distinctive way of life of any given society. Clifford Geertz in his work *After the Fact: Two Countries, Four Decades, One Anthropology* gave a very extensive treatment on culture. He presented a nuanced concept of culture and how it was understood by different groups and people. He concluded that in every group “people had cultures: manners of doing things, distinct characteristics, and one apiece.”⁹⁷ This understanding resonates well with McKim Marriott’s view that, “No states, not even an infant one, is willing to appear before the world as a bare political frame. Each would be clothed in a cultural garb symbolic of its aim and ideal being.”⁹⁸ In Geertz’s analysis of culture, it entails “sorting out the structures of signification—of established codes.”⁹⁹ For example, Geertz insisted, “you cannot wink (or burlesque one) without knowing what counts as winking or

⁹⁶ Ibid. 9.

⁹⁷ Clifford Geertz, *After the Fact: Two countries, Four Decades, one anthropologist*, (London, England: Harvard University press, 1995), 42.

⁹⁸ McKim Marriot, “Cultural policy in the new States” In Clifford Geertz, (Editor). *Old Societies and New States: A Quest for modernity in Asia and Africa*, (London: Collier-Macmillan Ltd, 1963), 63; also see Ekewnze Aaron Chira, “Modernity versus Tradition: An Insight into the Cultural Conflict in Some Selected Igbo and Yoruba Literature” in *Igbo scholars International Journal*, Vol.5;No1, march, 2018 <http://www.igboscholarsforum.com.ng/igboscholars-international-journal-vol-5-no-1-march-2018/> accessed 24/9/2018.

⁹⁹ Ibid. 9.

how, physical to contrast your eyelids, and you cannot conduct a sheep raid (or mimic one) without knowing what it is to steal a sheep and how physical to go about it.”¹⁰⁰ Hence, “understanding a people’s culture exposes their normalness with or without reducing their particularity.”¹⁰¹

Given the extensive treatment of culture by anthropologists to enlighten our search, it is appropriate to now move on to finding out the marriage culture of the Tiv of north-central Nigeria and what is distinctive about it vis-a-vis the Christian Church in Tivland.

In Tiv society, a custom or cultural tradition is known as *Gbaaondo*. The term is a combination of *Gba* (created, has created, or create), and *Aondo* (God or Supreme Being). *Gbaaondo* (a tradition or traditions) were decreed by Aondo who created the man and the woman whom he sent down to the east of the earth (*Tar*). According to Dzurgba, “Aondo provided legitimate organizational and administrative structures, patterns of relationships, social institutions, occupations, child-education, medicine, religion, housing, water supply and human activities.”¹⁰²

As important as culture seems to be for the Tiv people, it is not immune to change. Culture is dynamic and open to change. Culture is subject to change by means of interaction with other cultures through diffusion and adoption of new ideas, beliefs, knowledge, skills, tools, goods and services. There is certainty that culture grows, expands, transforms and reforms. In the case of a change, obsolete elements are discarded, while other elements are lost without the people’s intention. Change in culture is gradual or sudden, evolutionary or

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Ibid. 14.

¹⁰² Dzurgba, *On the Tiv of Central Nigeria: A Cultural perspective*, 6.

imposed, or partial or complete. Whatever, the type of change that occurs in culture, it is induced by a certain factor or a combination of factors. Thus, Dzurgba states,

[I]n African societies, including the Tiv of North-central Nigeria, the factors that have induced change on a large-scale are trade, colonization, Christianity, Islam, western education, medicine, mass media, politics, communication, transportation and mechanization of production and distribution of goods and services.¹⁰³

Therefore, African cultures (especially among the Tiv) have been changed either slowly or rapidly, according to the factors that induced change. It is in this context that this research studies the marriage culture of the Tiv of north-central Nigeria.

2.3 Marriage among the Tiv people

The concept of marriage is essentially a human activity, and this may include some universal meaning as companionship and procreation. Within the Tiv context, however, marriage is regarded as a sign of maturity and responsibility; it is a sign of fulfilment of the wishes and aspirations of one's family and the community at large. In this case, maturity and responsibility for the Tiv presuppose the individual's willingness to bear children which are a gift from *Aôndo*.¹⁰⁴ The Tiv person who claims to totally embrace Tiv familial values has one primary ambition, that is, to marry many wives and to have as many children as possible. This is because "a large family is believed to bestow prestige."¹⁰⁵ The different forms of marriage among the Tiv are discussed below.

¹⁰³ Ibid. 10.

¹⁰⁴ Aondo is a designated name for God. He is regarded and understood as the Supreme Being that created and sustains all created beings and things.

¹⁰⁵ Shagbaor F. Wegh, *Between Continuity and Change: Tiv Concept of Tradition and Modernity* (Enugu: SNAAP Press, 2003), 75.

2.3.1. *Yam-ishe marriage by exchange*

The earliest form of marriage among the Tiv was “Yam-ishe.” It was a form of marriage by exchange, where a man who is ready to marry locates another man who has the same need. They then exchange their sisters or daughters as wives. In this system of marriage, each man was the guardian of his sister (“*ingyor*”). He exchanges his ward (“*ingyor*”) for another man’s ward (“*ingyor*”), who then becomes his wife. Marriage by exchange then was the system through which a Tiv obtained a wife by giving his *ingyor* to the girl’s *tien*.¹⁰⁶ But, since marriage is communitarian among the Tiv, exchange system of marriage can be more exactly described as, the system by which one community exchanged one of their *ingyor* for a woman of another community for one of their male members.

In exchange marriage, the consent of the father of the girl was sought as it is in many marriages among the Tiv, the suitor approached the father of the girl first. Then the father directed him to the elders of the *ingyor* kin. If the *tien* was pleased with the suitor, he allowed him to court his *ingyor*. All the elders of the *ingyor* unit discussed the matter together while the suitor courted the girl. The wooer invited the *tien* to see his *ingyor* whom he wished to exchange with him.

The period of courting was brief but very intensive. Any member of the suitor’s family could go to the girl’s home and speak to the elders and the girl. Moreover, the bridegroom had a mediator in his bride’s clan who spoke to the elders and found out all about the character of the girl for him. The future husband was sometimes allowed to stay

¹⁰⁶ *Tien* is referred to the guardian of the sister, the exchange ward who is given to him as exchange partner. Although, the Father of the girl too can sometimes be appointed as *tien* to his daughter. She becomes his *ingyor*. Therefore, in this work I am going to use *tien* and *ingyor* when and where there is such a dual relationship, except when and where there is a necessity for distinction.

the night in the home of his future wife but without sleeping with the fiancée nor having sexual intercourse.

In those days when the standard of morality was high among the Tiv, and the girls were shy, many would not even speak to their suitors. A girl would offer her wooer water for bathing. She would perform other menial duties for him, but sometimes in absolute silence. If a girl spoke much to her suitor in his presence, he would sometimes refuse to marry her. If a man had sexual contact with a woman at her home, he would also refuse to marry her. He would say that she had a weak character and if he married her, she would behave in the same way. Some girls were too shy even to accept gifts from their suitors.

The importance of exchange marriage was underscored by the special position of male children. In Tiv traditional culture, only male children could aspire to both temporal and spiritual leadership in the community. They were the only initiates of *akombo a ibiam*¹⁰⁷ and were also the only people who could aspire to erect a “*poor biam.*”¹⁰⁸ Given this importance, every exchange aimed at a balance. If in a particular exchange, one party was blessed with more children, the husband whose wife had fewer children went and got one of his sister’s daughters and used her to exchange for a second wife.

An important aspect of this form of marriage was the principle of equalization. Notably, the main purpose of marriage among the Tiv was procreation. In the olden days it was almost impossible for the childless woman to continue to live honorably in the

¹⁰⁷ Akiga, *Akiga’s Story: The Tiv tribe*, 196-198. Biamegh belong to the rite *akombo* rite of fertility.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid. 199-205. *Poor* and *Biamegh* are twin *akombo* rite. Even when you have been initiated to the *Biamegh*, and have not been to the wilf plum tree, if you have not also been made master of the *poor*, you are only a *Biamegh* initiate and have not the power to set it right for anyone else. Initiation to the *poor* is the final stage in the cult of the *Biamegh*.

society without a child. She was despised. This was based on the principle of equalization. For example, if one of the exchange women bore children and the other remained childless, the family into which the latter was married had the right to annul the contract and demand the return of the daughters together with her children! This problem was sometimes amicably resolved by giving another girl to the community which had a childless wife in exchange for another wife.

If one of the women bore more children than the other, another solution was to be found. The community with fewer children asked their brother-in-law to give them one of the daughters to exchange for another wife. The request was willingly granted. The law of equalization was applied only when the number of children was excessively unequal. If one of the women bore six daughters and two sons, and the other bore three sons and two daughters, the law was enforced. More emphasis was placed on the number of daughters, because the community, which had more daughters, would certainly have wives in the future, and thus increase exponentially to the detriment of the other. The Tiv word for the practice is *dugh*, which literally means to deduct or subtract.

An equalization daughter still belonged to her biological father. Her father retained the right to perform fertility *akombo*¹⁰⁹ for her. But in her husband's home, she was called by her paternal clan. For example, if she was from *kunav*, she would be called *Wan U Kuna* (daughter of *Kunav*). To the Tiv, the *kem* marriage from the husband's point of view, had

¹⁰⁹ *Akombo* refers to the Tiv magico-religious practices. *Akombo* are divided into two: the *Akombo* of birth and the *Akombo* of the hunt. Every *Akombo* has its own guardian emblems, and it is between these emblems that each kind of *Akombo* can be distinguished; *Akombo* is the object over which the rites are performed, is force in itself. The sprinkling of the blood and the beer is now more than a purely magical act which influences *Akombo* in such a way that the cause of the trouble is removed: 'Health is in the blood of the chicken.' Only a few, chiefly the very old men—generation which will in a few years be gone—understand that the true meaning of the rite is a gift of food to the 'fathers who are under the soil', and even this little more to them than a form of words. For more read, Akiga, *Akiga's Story: The Tiv tribe*, 176-234.

“an unsatisfactory aspect which was that he had to pay the full and final price for a woman whose potentiality as a child-bearer were unknown”¹¹⁰ This was obviated in the *Iye* (Courtship) by not giving the exchange till she had proved herself fertile in marriage; and even a regular exchange was not ratified until children had been born on both sides. Another regrettable result of the change is that, “the Tiv marriage contract has now become commercialized”¹¹¹ Although marriage by exchange was the preferred form of marriage, it caused constant disputes, along the line of child bearing, fertility, and productivity.

2.3.2 *Marriage by capture (kwase u ngohol/ Tsuen/ Koron)*

Marriage by capture is similar to exchange marriage. It allowed mutual capture of wives without revenge, after an arrangement between the two lineages was made. This marriage by capture (kwase-ngohol/ Tsuen/ Koron)¹¹² was divided into two. There was, first, the forceful snatching of a wife from her husband. In Akiga’s words, this “was usually done by some “scoundrel(s)” who could fall on a travelling couple and take the wife and sometimes, even harass her husband.”¹¹³ According to Dzurgba,

¹¹⁰ Ibid. 174.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² *Kwase u ngohol* (receiving a woman), *Tsuen* (snatching a woman), *Koron* (grabbing a woman) are all forms of marrying women through the process of marriage by capture. This was sometimes become the standard way of showing superior and powerful the youth of a given community were as compared to the next community.

¹¹³ Akiga, *Akiga’s Story: The Tiv tribe*, 38; also see Mimi Atedze, “Marriage in Tivland,” <https://www.fabmimi.com/2016/01/marriage-in-tivland.html> accessed 24/9/2018.

this form of marriage by capture originated among the Tiv as a hostile act. It first took the form of retaliation on that section of the Dam tribe known as *mbayongo*, who seized their women by force at the time when they were passing down through the bush tribes, and as a result of this experience, the Tiv in later years took to seizing the women of their own tribesmen.¹¹⁴

The practice moved from a retaliation procedure against enemies to include even those who were not seen as enemies, but real tribesmen who would become lawful in-laws after the traditional marriage rites are performed. Later, this evolves into honorable marriage by capture—the *iyē*. The *iyē* is similar to *yam-ishe* marriage (marriage by exchange), what is today called elopement, but has differences in approaches and procedures.

This form of marriage by which the “Tivs themselves lost many of their women during their migration, caused many “Inter Tar (that is inter clan) wars” in Tiv land.”¹¹⁵ It therefore became necessary and preferable to have the second form of this marriage. Akiga referred to this form as the “honorable marriage by capture: the “*Iyē*.”¹¹⁶ Shagbaor Wegh correctly describes it, though inexhaustibly, thus:

¹¹⁴ Dzurgba, *On the Tiv of central Nigeria*, 137.

¹¹⁵ Ibid; also see Mimi Atedze, “Marriage in Tivland,” <https://www.fabmimi.com/2016/01/marriage-in-tivland.html> accessed 24/9/2018.

¹¹⁶ Ibid. 141.

'Iye' began with a young man accompanied by his friends going to another country (district) to find a wife. The target in this case was no longer married women, but the unmarried girls. There the young man stayed with a man whose mother was from their own (district). They then sent out friends, or relatives, as go-betweens, who scouted for girls of marriageable ages, and selected one for the young man. Once the young man had received all necessary information, he made the initial contact with the girl (now visited the girl's house), then the wooing of the girl began. This could go on for months.¹¹⁷

Another element to this insight on "Iye" was that usually the young men that formed this group and went to another district, were, often, each looking for a wife. They also performed dances. The girls who come to watch the performances often indicated their interest in some of the young men by choosing to dance with them. If an "Iye" outing was successful, sometimes one man could come back with many wives. But most of the times, the girls did not elope with their fiancés immediately. Whenever they finally eloped, however, the father or the brother of the girl was usually compensated later with a girl. Thus, the "Iye" marriage form was eventually like the "Yamshe" (marriage by exchange).

2.3.3 Marriage by purchase (*kwase Usha uikya*).

The term 'marriage by purchase,' as used here, roughly translates the Tiv *kwase u sha uikya* (woman in exchange for property) but has not the same meaning as the now somewhat discredited anthropological term for the marriage of a free woman in consideration of a bride-price, which corresponds rather to the Tiv *kem* system. Although the form described is a true purchase, it is not referred to as slave marriage here because such is not the vernacular understanding. Moreover, a woman married in this way, in practice, is no more a slave than the other wives, and her children were in a better position than those

¹¹⁷ Wegh, *Between Continuity and Change*, 76; also see Moses Tsenongu, "Nuptial poetry among the Tiv of Nigeria," <https://www.thefreelibrary.com/Nuptial+poetry+among+the+Tiv+of+Nigeria-a0252290788> accessed 24/9/2018.

of a free wife for whom no exchange had been given. The advantages of this type of marriage are clear. When a man had bought and paid for his wife, there could be no further argument, and he could 'build a big village,' that is, become the father of a large family, without fear of complications. Under the exchange system, the husband's hold on his wife was not at all secured. He had her, as it were, on loan from her group, to whom he was in a measure responsible. He could "play with the body, but not the head."¹¹⁸ His children could always appeal to their mother's group against their father's group, and many of the rites could only be carried out by elders from their mother's home. Moreover, if the woman he had given in exchange misbehaved herself, proved barren, or died, he was liable, in default of finding a substitute, to lose not only his wife, but his children as well. But a woman bought as a slave (from a conveniently remote district) belonged to him unconditionally, and if anything went wrong, he was not responsible for her to anyone. The children, having no *igba*, (mother's clan) felt themselves then, more completely members of, and dependent on, their father's group.

Akiga described 'marriage by purchase' a practice where a woman was "bought as a slave and then married."¹¹⁹ Simply stated, men would buy wives with cattles, cloth and brass rods. Women of this kind were mostly purchased from "Utyusha,"¹²⁰ from the Udam, and from more distance clans who were mostly non-Tivs. A man could be sure of keeping such a wife and her children, but after the death of the husband, the children run the risk of

¹¹⁸ Akiga, *Akiga's Story: The Tiv tribe*, 159. It is a proverbial saying which implies; you can have intimate union with her but does not own her destiny. Her life and her destiny only belong to her clan. The *kem* form gave the husband only the right to cohabit with the woman, and had no claim whatever to the children.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Ibid. 158. Utyusha was the name given to some of the southern Tiv clans.

being considered slaves. Akiga says that children of such marriages had no “*Igba*” (mother’s clan), which means that they were at risk of being maltreated in the community after the death of their fathers. The “*Igba*” usually serves as the protector agent of the extended lineage. The real difference between the Tiv marriage systems is this: the *kem* form gave the husband only the right to cohabit with the woman and had limited claim to the children. These also applied to marriage by capture until it was redeemed by an exchange. Exchange marriage carried with it also a right to the children, provided that an equivalent number was born by the *ingyor*, but the husband had no absolute claim over the woman who still belonged to the original owner. (For this reason, if she fell ill, she had to be sent back to her own group to be ‘set right’. If the husband failed to do this, he was held responsible for her death). In marriage by purchase, the ownership of the woman was transferred unconditionally to the husband, body and soul, along with all rights to any children she might bear thereafter.

2.3.4 Kem marriage: marriage by bride price (Kwase-kemen).

Kem as a form of Traditional marriage, is a process and is marked by rites prior to consummation. *Kem* ritual mark the all the important moment of establishing a marital union between clans and communities. These rites denote progressive incorporation into the community and create a growing sense of belonging and responsibility. In spite of the changes which modern life is bringing, Tivs tend to cling fast to these rites; the rites associated with *Kem* marriage. Their aim is to educate in matters of sexuality and family life, parental responsibility, privileges and the expectations of society. The rites are

traditionally schools and centers of information, authority and reference. Though performed physically, they have psychological, sociological and religious transformative power.

Kem marriage is the most difficult to define. Broadly, it means ‘acquiring something gradually.’ *Kem* is now the legal marriage system of the Tiv people. In its present usage *kem* translates the English word ‘bride wealth’ coined by Evans-Pritchard. *Kem* is a noun formed from the very ‘*kem*.’ Normally the verb *kem* is used in various ways. In its commonest usage, it means to accumulate a number of things by keeping them one after the other. *Kem* indicates that the things so amassed have been painstakingly collected and carefully handled. For example, one can *kem* seed yams to make a yam farm. Thus, a Tiv says ‘*m kem sule*’. One also refers ‘*kem inyaregh*’ (money) to buy a cow, a horse, a car etc. Another Tiv verb which is synonym to *kem*, from which we have the noun ‘*uzomzom*,’ meaning an accumulation of small things, carefully collected from here and there. When a Tiv says, ‘*M kem kwase*’ it means that he has collected some money and has given it to parents or guardian of the woman. It is this sense that the word *kem* came to be used for the Tiv traditional gifts to parents before and after marriage. For the same reason father-in-law and mother-in-law are called ‘*terem kem*’ and ‘*ngokem*’ respectively.

Prior to the appropriation of *kem* by the British Administration in Tivland as the only system of marriage for Tiv, *kem* was only a preliminary to the system of marriage. Although the Tiv exchanged women for property, the system was not called *Kem*, it was known as ‘*kwase u sha uikya*,’ a woman by exchange for property, or ‘*ishe ii sha uikya*,’ exchange for property.

If a Tiv wanted to marry a girl, he would continually bring presents to her and her parents consisting of small things like salt, tobacco, meat, fish, oil and cam wood among others. *Kem* was carried out in two ways.

- a) A man who wanted to marry a girl would collect gifts in his house and later take them to the girl's home and distribute them to her and her relations.
- b) Another man would continually hand his gifts to his wife and her parents' one after the other as he got them. Finally, he was given the girl in exchange, or he would elope with her and an exchange would be given later after she had bore a child or two. Formally the amount of property, which one gives, depended on one's economic condition.

It is important to note that the Tiv never used the verb 'yam' and 'tee' which means 'to buy and to sell' in relation to this form of marriage arrangement. This shows clearly that traditional gifts were never intended to be a price for the girl. Normally his presents were voluntarily made to the girl and many other persons in her home.

However, later developments indicate that, at the time, when there was not much property, *kem* was as cheap and simple as described above. But when the Tiv began to acquire more property, they added other considerations to the practice which made it expensive and complicated. The father, mother and *tien* of the girl were no longer satisfied with the small presents from the suitor, they would tell him how much he had to give them in addition to the voluntary gifts. Traditionally, during courting, a man would make a lot of presents to the parents-in-law, the *tien* and the girl. If the father of the girl considered the suitor a suitable husband for his daughter, he would ask him to contact the oldest man of the patrilineal *ingyor* unit. If he, the *orvesen* (elderly man), also agreed, he would ask

the prospective bridegroom to make him some presents. Sometimes this was a range of traditional clothing.

In the *kem* marriage form, the man must make a kind of down payment on his wife and then pay more as the in-law's demand. Among the Tivs, "*kem*" does not finish, it is always paid at the insistence of the in-laws. It is regarded as what keeps the prestige of marriage and the bond between the two families. Thus, a man, by choosing a girl would demonstrate his marital intention to her and her people by taking gifts to them and provide other needful services to them as well. This went on until the girl's family, satisfied with the suitor's cumulative goodwill, asked him to come and pay the bride price. One never finished paying it even after the death of the bride. Sometimes surviving children are made to continue the payment. The value of the bride price is the recreation and reconstructing of relationship among family lineage. This is so because marriage among the Tivs is based on fertility, procreation and enjoys a relative form of permanence. Today, this form of marriage has developed into quite several processes. Whatever the process in any district, the marriage contract is based on bride price. It needs to be added that in many cases, especially now, the suitor often elopes with his fiancée. The bride price and other things are usually done afterwards.

The Kem ritual starts with the two families (clan) agreeing on date for the process of Kem. When the day is approaching, the family of the bridegroom will send a message of reminder to the parents of the bride that the time is drawing near. On the agreed date, the two families are gathered in the father-in-law homestead.

On arrival, the elder in the family of the bride will welcome the in-laws to be and asked them of their mission. The elder representing the in-laws would then narrate why they had

come and what is their mission. They are warmly welcomed by the family of the bride with drinks (Burukutu) which is a local brewed drink made of corn or millet. This drink is sign that the families are now in one accord, and that they can now discuss what will form an alliance between the two families.

After the initial exchange of greetings, the elders will summon the bride to come and give approval whether she would want to marry the bridegroom. The bride who covered with a cloth head-to- toe is accompanied elderly women in the family to the venue of the ceremony with songs and dancing. At the venue, the bride is made to identify the groom in a short ceremony led by the women as a sign of approval. After the identification and approval, the elders of the family of the groom will now thank the parents of the bride for accepting to be part of their family through marriage.

With this, the Ter Kem, elder in the family will now present a list of items and money to be paid as bride price. Little dialogue is ensued about the items presented. Mutual agreement has to be reached before the *kem* process is commenced. After an agreement is reached, the two families will now sit to do the kem process.

The *kem* process is the exchange of items and money brought by the groom's family, and the acceptance by the bride's family. The highlight in the *kem* process is the interaction between the two elders of the two families. The elder in the Family of the groom will make an official request that he has now fulfill the condition of *kem* demands and would want to have his wife. The elder of the bride will now make an official statement as way of responding to his in-law. He will thank him for finding his family worthy to be part of his family. He will express his willingness to be part of this alliance. However, he will remind the grooms family that he is giving their daughter to their family in one piece, and

would want her to remain in the same condition. That it would now be their responsibility to take care of her. He will prayer for her to be fruitful and bear many children.

After this prayer of blessing, the elderly woman on the bride side is invited to make her own demands before the daughter is finally given out in to marriage. Normally, the mother of the bride is given clothes and other material items like palm oil, salt, Basins, chair, umbrella etc. to be shared among the women of the community. The women in return, also presents kitchen utensils for the daughter who is going to start a new home.

When this is done the ceremony of handing over the bride to the groom is followed. After this process, Food and drinks are served and there is drumming and dancing by the two families. Then after festivities, The groom's family will take the bride to their home.

2.3.5 *Marriage by elopement (ii kwase)*

Marriage by elopement, or literally “stealing a wife,” is quite common among the Tiv (mostly among the youth). Dzurgba defines elopement in Tiv marriage system as “an act in which a young woman or a spinster leaves her home secretly in order to get married.”¹²¹ It is done on the principle of love. It was considered a legitimate way of both the young woman and the young man getting married to each other based on mutual love for each other. Traditionally, the act is referred to as “stealing a wife.”

It is interesting to note that, ancient Tiv society recognized the importance of true love and the danger of imposing love in marital union of husband and wife. In this way it

¹²¹ Dzurgba, *On the Tiv of Central Nigeria*, 110.

became necessary for lovers to resort to the process of elopement in order to initiate a marriage process. It is amazing that this form of marriage was not deemed criminal but was and is seen as a mark of prestige and show of brevity on the part of the bridegroom. It was cultural sign of expressing free consent on the part of both the man and the woman.

It was learned through practical experiences that true love had led to orderly, stable and peaceful marriages, while imposed love had led to frequent marital quarrels and disharmony. Thus, the right of the girl to choose her own husband was given a due recognition.

Therefore, when a young woman was being made to get married against her will, she had the right to elope with the man of her choice, usually in the evening or at night when it would be difficult to run after her. Usually, in this case, “mothers or sisters were the brain behind elopement.”¹²²

After elopement, the parents of the young man and himself would go to his wife’s parents and inform them that he had married their daughter; that they should not search for her. On reporting his marriage, the young man might be welcomed as a brave son-in-law, or he might be beaten lightly out of pretense or seriously out of genuine frustration on the part of the parents. The symbolic beating was done by women, mothers-in-law (*Ungo mba kemev*). However, the marriage remained valid and legitimate.

To steal a wife gives the bridegroom prestige. In all cases the parents or guardian of the girl then come to the husband’s home or compound, or, especially if it is the man’s

¹²² Ibid. 110.

first wife (remember the Tivs are notoriously polygamous), the father goes to her compound and steps are taken to regularize the marriage by agreeing to pay bride wealth.

Typical elopement in Tiv culture takes place either in the afternoon or the early hours of the evening. On elopement, the new wife is normally taken to the husband's brother's house or his age grade (*or kwagh*), who has the responsibility for the ceremonial reception (*kwase kuhan*) welcoming the woman to her new home. The host is required to kill a fowl (*ikyegh avure*) and the only people permitted by tradition to eat it are the new husband and other married couples. During the reception, the blood of other animals (particularly goats) killed for the entertainment of the new couple and guests are sprinkled on the two sides of the entrance (*igburhunda*) leading to the hut housing the new couple. In the meantime, the new husband (*or kwase he*) was required to distribute gifts (*ichegh*) to his friends and age grades. At the end of the reception, the host was required to accompany the new couple to their house where, depending on whether the man's father was a man of means, another elaborate reception ceremony called *genga* – (*amar a kwase*) was organized for the couple. After that, the young man's parents and relatives would go to the parents of the new wife to finalize the marriage according to the Tiv marriage custom. This in most cases was done after the first child is born. Thus “elopement enabled poor men and orphans to marry good wives who made them wealthy and noblemen.”¹²³

Reasons for elopement in Tiv culture are varied, but in most cases, the reasons are based on the girls' social and economic conditions. For example, the girl who was an orphan and was harassed by a wicked or cruel stepmother could elope to establish a home

¹²³ Ibid. 111.

of her own. In her marriage, her husband would give her love, protection and in addition, security by providing her a house, foodstuffs, clothes, shoes, beads, and other things for her comfort. Therefore, orphans were often encouraged by other women to elope with their fiancés. Elopement is still legitimate today in Tiv culture.

2.3.6 *Kwase Dyako (marriage by inheritance)*

This system of marriage allowed a brother to inherit the widow of his dead brother. A son could also inherit the widow of his father (other than his mother). Such women were also called either *kwase ikoson* or *kwase ichoghol*. In all cases where the widow had children for the deceased, all additional children arising from the new arrangement remained the children of the deceased since the widow's relationship with the new "husband" was not recognized technically as marriage. The idea was to forestall the disintegration of the family, ensure continued protection of the widow and support for her to still champion the line of her deceased husband. To ensure maximum protection of the widow in the new relationship, she and her new "husband" were taken through the "*megh*" ritual. Essentially, the ritual "*u aver megh*" was a process in which the widow and her husband joined their legs under which a fowl was passed to ensure the ability of the widow to still bear children.

Laura and Paul Bohannan, in their treatment of marriage, try to give a synthetic version of the marriage institution among the Tiv. They argued that marriage among the Tiv is a complicated subject for several reasons. First, "exchange marriage was not only the basic form of marriage, but the standard; that is, other means of acquiring wives varied

regionally in name, ceremony and as to the status of the children.”¹²⁴ Of the various forms of marriages highlighted, they noted that marriage with bride wealth was superimposed and became a substitute to other forms of marriage in 1927. They emphasized, “marriage before 1927 was exclusively exchange marriage.”¹²⁵ In theory, exchange marriage was ideally simple; but in practice, complications arose at every step.

At the best “exchange marriage was a delicate equilibrium. It assumed that the two women bore approximately equivalent numbers of children and had an approximately equal life span.”¹²⁶ Due to the complications posed by exchange marriage, present-day marriage has assumed *Kem* (cumulative bride wealth) marriage whereby the guardian formally received a bride wealth for his ward.

As stated in chapter one, apart from the traditional understanding of marriage among the Tiv, the Tiv of north-central Nigeria view marriage as the core of the whole social structure. It is seen in terms of an alliance between two kinship groups. The idea of marriage is inseparable from religious and social life. The Tiv view marriage as an adult life task imposed by the sheer fact of existence within a community of relatives and deliberately assumed by an individual; an act which gives rise to a network of new relationships. It was noted in chapter one that marriage among the Tiv as an institutionalized office ordained by God is not static. It has over time undergone a process of evolution and evaluation based on social, cultural controls and traditional religious rites. One fundamental idea is that there are many forms of marriage rites among the Tiv people. However, marriage contracts are established based on the signs of the time and their

¹²⁴ Laura and Paul Bohannon, *The Tiv of central Nigeria* (London: Hazell, Watson & Viney, 1953), 69.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.* 69.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.* 70.

influence on local culture. Marriage rites among the Tiv are based mostly on extensive rules of exogamy and endogamy and residence is primarily patrilineal or patrilocal.

The marriage pattern of the Tiv differs in content from the Roman Catholic Church's idea of marriage. Primarily, marriage among the Tiv is not based on the traditional Catholic Church idea of "one man, one wife" that is exclusive to the couple; a situation whereby consent is exchanged between the couple in front of witnesses approved by law, followed by consummation. The tradition among the Tiv recognizes the consummation of a marriage with the birth of the first child. In this regard, marriage is only progressively realized.

Moreover, the Tiv people are notoriously polygamous, and this is seen as a sign of wealth and success measured around the many children that make up the family. Despite its polygamous nature, marriage among the Tiv shares some elements of unity and permanence. In fact, in Tiv traditional marriage, there is no room for divorce. Couples could only be separated for some grave reasons of conflicts, sickness and infertility as approved by the society. This period of separation is meant to mend whatever has caused the separation of the couple and the two communities in the marriage contract. This lack of divorce among the Tiv is occasioned largely due to the rigorous procedures and cultural norms associated with marriage and divorce.

The difference in content of marriage pattern among the Tiv and the Christian Catholicism as mentioned above does not deplete the wholesome quality of the practice of marriage among the people. A balanced relationship of interest and love are shared and maintained in marriages albeit occasions of human frailty which are also obtainable in

Christian marriages. Some of the forms, values and procedures in Tiv marriage are discussed below.

2.4 Marriage among the Tiv people

The Tiv of North-central Nigeria view marriage as the core of the whole social structure. It is seen in terms of an alliance between two kinship groups. The idea of marriage is inseparable from the religious and social life. The Tiv view marriage as an adult life task imposed by the sheer fact of existence within a community of relatives, and deliberately assumed by an individual- an act which gives rise to a network of new relationships. Marriage among the Tiv as an institutionalized office ordained by God is not static. It has over time undergone a process of evolution and evaluation based on the social, cultural controls and traditional religious rites. One fundamental idea is that there are many forms of marriage rite among the Tiv people.

However, marriage contracts are established based on the signs of the time and influence on the culture. Marriage rites among the Tiv are based mostly on extensive rules of exogamy and endogamy, and residence is primarily patrilineal or patrilocal. Though, due to modern influences and western education, some people are now practicing neo-locality as the situation may warrant. Marriage among the Tiv is not based on the traditional Catholic Church idea of “one man, one wife” that is exclusive to the couple. A situation whereby consent is exchanged between the couple in front of witness approved by law, followed by consummation; the tradition among the Tiv recognizes the consummation of a marriage with the birth of the first child. Thus, marriage among the Tiv is a promise not just between the couple, but to the community at large, to generations past and to those yet to be born. In this regard, marriage is only progressively realized. This concept of marriage

is essentially a human activity, and this includes some universal meaning as companionship and procreation. Within the Tiv context, however, marriage is regarded as a sign of maturity and responsibility; it is a sign of fulfilment of the wishes and aspirations of one's family and the community at large. In this case, maturity and responsibility for the Tiv presuppose the individual's willingness to bear children which are a gift from Aôndo [God]. The Tiv person who claims to totally embrace Tiv familial values has one primary ambition: "to marry many wives, and to have as many children as possible. This is because a large family is believed to bestow prestige." Moreover, the Tiv people are notoriously polygamous, and this is seen as a sign of wealth and success measured around the many children that make up the family. Despite its polygamous nature, marriage among the Tiv shares some elements of unity and permanence. In fact, in Tiv traditional marriage, there is no room for divorce. Couples could only be separated for some grave reasons of conflicts, sickness and infertility as approved by the society. This period of separation is meant to mend whatever has caused the separation of the couple and the two communities in the marriage contract. This lack of divorce among the Tiv is occasioned largely due to the rigorous procedures and cultural norms associated with marriage and divorce.

2.5 Elements of Tiv Marriage

Any discussion of a particular culture in Africa allows for some generalization since variations are often slight and minimal. One of such generalizations that can safely be made is that, "African societies expect childbearing and homemaking of its women." Another generalization, however, not specific to Tiv is that human life is considered sacred and a gift from God. The logic that necessarily follows from these statements, especially for the Tiv people is that the source of life (the sexual act) should also be treated with the

sacredness which human life deserves. This accounts for the numerous taboos and legislations, concerning sexual relationships. The marriage institution best demonstrates the importance of the procreative process with the meticulous process of realizing it.

Marriage in Tiv as in many parts of Africa is patrilocal basically because Tiv is Patrilineal. John C. Wood holds that “marriage settlement was the patrilocal system, whereby patrilineage men remained on the patrilineage land and guarded patrilineage property...while the daughters of the clan married out...” The situation, therefore, “inevitably leaves women without property or land for cultivation. Perhaps women are not expected to be autonomous but always dependent on men, as father, uncle or husband.” Once a woman was married, the husband’s lineage acquires right over the woman’s sexual reproduction and labor. However, her patrilineage men are still important in protecting their daughter married to another lineage. When a daughter married out was not well treated or cried back to her clan, her patrilineage men would challenge the situation to whatever level in order to bring peace for their daughters.

The word for marriage in Tiv is *Ivaa*, which literally designates “the act of binding,” or *er* which could mean “made.” *Ivaa* or *er* is followed by *Nom* (groom) or *Kwase* (bride) depending on whether the man is being referred to or the woman. When the man is being referred to it is *er kwase* and *er nom* when the woman is being referred to. Furthermore, the issue of marriage goes a long way to demonstrate the sexualized construction manifested in roles and general relationships and ethos of Tiv. The role of each party is defined by the sex.

At the end of this process, the father of the bride, or in some other cases, the clan-head pours libation (*ifan*) with water, invoking the ancestors to bless and protect the couple

and grant them many children. This moment is the most sacred in the whole marriage process. It is at the end of this rite, which is usually long and solemn, that festivities and proper celebration begins.

At the conclusion of the marital rites, the mother of the bride will present her with articles that will help her set up her home. Home in Tiv understanding is 'kitchen.' The act of 'kitchen making' is symbolic because it represents responsibility, care and productivity. The bride's mother will present her with cooking utensils, a female goat, which is a sign of productivity, a broom signifying cleanliness. The bride is then escorted by the young girls of her clan to her husband's house, in company with the mother and clan women accompanying her.

2.6 Monogamy and Polygamy

The Tiv practice both monogamy and polygamy. Some people may marry one wife, while some have many. In traditional Tiv society, the question of whether a man marries one wife, or several wives is not an ethical one, which sees monogamy in conflict to polygamy. One is free to remain monogamous, or marry many wives if one can afford it, and chooses to do so.

2.6.1 One Man, One Woman

Monogamy is simply the marriage of one man to one woman to the exclusion of all others. Monogamy has always been part of Tiv marriage system. Judging from the practice of exchange marriage which gave little room for extravagance, one may safely assert that monogamy must have been the predominant pattern during the time of exchange marriage. On the contrary, where the traditional outlook prevails, the possession of several wives is

normally a mark of importance and success in life, and therefore polygamy is something which the average Tiv would like to achieve. In other words, monogamy is for the majority a matter of necessity rather than choice. Commenting on this, Shagbaor Wegh affirms that, “this does not mean that one can completely ignore the fact of many Tiv who have remained genuinely monogamous.”

2.6.2 *One man many women*

The future of African marriage, which is most widely known, and discussed is that of polygamy—the marriage of one man to many women. According to Wegh, Nwogu defines polygamy as:

Voluntary union for life of one man with...several wives. Its essential characteristic is the capacity of the man to take as many wives as he pleases. The mere fact that at a given moment he has only one wife does not affect the character of the marriage so long as the capacity of taking more wives is retained.

Polygamy in Tiv and Africa in general, was a product of economic, social and political circumstances. In Tiv culture, the number of wives a man had corresponded with his social standing and no man, however wealthy, would be regarded as a social and political figure if he did not add wife to wife. The social significance of polygamy in Tiv culture may be viewed by considering the place and functions of this institution within its own socio-economic and cultural context. It must be emphasized that to consider polygamy in isolation to socio-cultural structure is to destroy the basis for any meaningful analysis of the subject matter.

2.6.3 Polygamy and procreation

One of the basic functions of humans is to procreate and reproduce human kind. The Tiv have always taken their procreative responsibility seriously, knowing fully well that the survival and continuity of the family or lineage rests squarely on the ability to procreate. No wonder that among the Tiv, procreation is regarded as the main function of marriage. The synod Fathers in their deliberations on the importance of marriage and procreation also affirms this position, “in African tradition procreation is what makes marriage valid and is one of the most important values in married life. Absence of children could lead to the breakdown of a marriage.”¹²⁷ Although among the Tiv strangely enough, childlessness does not constitute breakdown of a marriage.

However, the greatest outcome of marriage for the Tiv is still children. Children are not only a sign of prosperity, but also bestow prestige on their parents. They are seen as the future of the family. One without a child is as good as dead. Moreover, Tiv being a patrilineal society puts a premium on male children. Wegh states,

A Tiv who has not had a male child in his family does not consider that he has established a family...Girls as a rule belong more to someone else's family. The onus is on the male child who would continue the family. In the absence of this, the Tiv man therefore, wastes no time, if possible, in marrying a second wife, if the first wife had not given him a son at the expected time.

This point strongly defines the role of polygamy as a form of marriage and family life in Tiv culture. Tiv birth of a male child in any marriage settles a lot of instabilities in

¹²⁷ Cecil McGarry (Editor), *What Happened at the African Synod?*, (Pauline publications Africa, 1995), p.70.

marriage among the Tiv. It ensures prosperity and continuity of the family line. The failure to leave behind sufficient number of offspring to ensure the continuity of the family is a major disaster.

Polygamy is also motivated by more than the need for children. Marriage brings about an alliance between two families. These alliances, therefore multiply in the case of polygamy. Polygamy is a function of social solidarity on the level of the large family, the lineage and the clan. In Tiv culture, each new marriage, Joseph Yego affirms, “sets up new relationships of affinity between two different kin groups that of the husband and the wives; and their children are kin in both groups.” The Tiv are very proud to belong to large families and enjoy great esteem by sharing a wide network of family relations.

2.6.4 *Socio-economic dimension of polygamy*

The connection between wives and children in Tiv culture is tied to the element of traditional hospitality. Wives and children do not confer *shagba* (prestige) to the exclusion of hospitality. Tiv admire the hospitable person; one who gives generously of his food and help other people. Such a person is *Shagbaor* (a prestigious person). Hospitality among the Tiv demands that one who passes by a kin be welcomed and invited to a meal. A stranger must not be turned away. A stingy man is not liked, and even if he is a chief, he would get little respect, and people would disapprove of his behavior to his face.

Tiv are mainly an agrarian society. Practically all food produced comes from the rural areas. For a family to raise its economic fortunes, it must have a big family as its work force. A large family community renders all the operations of rural life more efficient, clearing land, building, making artifacts and utensils, guarding the fields against marauding birds and animals, and so forth. All these are subscribing to Tiv hospitality patterns dictated

by their common culture, the large family more easily acquires prestige associated with generous hospitality.

2.6.5 Polygamy and the care of widows

One other important function which polygamy performs among the Tiv is that of widow care. The essence of widow inheritance among the Tiv is to look after the livelihood of the widow. This is best understood with the practice of viri-patrilocality. Once married, practically every woman leaves her father's house and joins her husband in his home, for the rest of her life. Tiv are anxious to see that their daughters are happily married and settle with their husbands' family. The viri-patrilocal rule supported by the communitarian aspect of marriage makes it incumbent on the widow to stay in her husband's place with or without children. This of course does not rule out the possibility of divorce.

This arrangement must not be considered as a new marriage. It is an internal arrangement of the family. No bride price is paid, and no more marriage celebrations take place, for the original marriage is seen as continuing in the family through one of its members who now takes the place of the deceased brother. If the surrogate happens to have a wife of his own, the provision he makes for the widow is not regarded as a second marriage. If not the relationship with the widow does not stop him from marrying another wife.

The system makes the family, community a ready source of strength. The community provides the widow care and security. In societies where such a system is non-existent, the widow occupies an insecure position, and suffers depression, especially if she has no children.

2.6.6 *Other reasons for polygamy*

Several other reasons can be adduced for the occurrences of polygamy. As a matter of fact, there seems to be limitless situations that can bring about polygamy.

Childlessness: The value of children in Tiv culture has been widely recognized. People who have several children go through life with a sense of self-fulfillment. Considering the importance of children then, the Tiv will do everything to ensure that they have them. If it takes too long for a wife to have children, the “natural thing” a man may do is to marry another wife. Moreover, the general attitude among the Tiv has been that if a woman cannot have children, it must be that something is wrong with her.

Sex of child: The Tiv like many other African societies shows a preference for the male child. In a patrilineal society like the Tiv, a male child is needed to ensure the continuity of the family. This should not necessarily mean that women are less valued in Tiv culture. However, the male child, for the reason given above, enjoys a special place in Tiv society. Therefore, a man who does not get a son from his wife as expected may feel justified in marrying a second wife.

Wife’s infidelity: Tiv like several other societies displays double marital sexual standards. The infidelity of the woman is regarded as a serious matter, while that of the man is treated with levity. The wife is treated as such because of her reproductive state. She is looked upon as one with the responsibility of propagating the lineage/clan.

Several Tiv men also beat their wives for being unfaithful. In some cases, men choose to divorce their wives, but it seems that the preferred action is to marry another wife.

Parent's Request: The Tiv have a lot of respect for their parents. So, if the parents of the man request that he should marry a second wife, he should honor that request. This normally happens when the first wife does not show respect to the parents of the husband. In a situation where the first wife, though, has many children, is regarded by her father-in-law and mother-in-law as disrespectful, then their real intention in making the request might be to spite her. A man may therefore marry a wife as a punitive measure against his insubordinate wife.

By way of restatement, polygamy among the Tiv is not just about women. More importantly, it is about Tiv society in its entirety; its familial values; it is about personality, prestige, community, and continuity of the group.

2.7 Sexuality in Tiv Culture

Sexuality in Africa is not separated from the community. Sexuality from an African point of view is seen as “a power that God has endowed on man and woman for the purpose of transmitting life, companionship and interpersonal relationship.” Phiri Kofi Arthur contends that, “marriage is inevitably connected to sexuality. It is the proper place where sexuality finds its fulfillment and purpose.” This view of Phiri summarizes, defines the aim of sexual difference, and justifies marriage in terms of the union of man and woman. He argues, “it is from this background that sexual aberrations such as homosexuality, lesbianism and bestiality are regarded as abominations; since they are unions that cannot bear fruit in the form of children.” Benezet Bujo contends, “Sexuality is too important for the development of the whole community in its three-fold-ness of marriage, family and sexuality to be left over to what might be pleasing to an individual.” Marriage is not a

matter for the individual. In fact, marriage can only be achieved when both the individual and the whole community are integrated and involved.

Indeed, marriage as understood and practiced by the Tiv, “is an alliance or covenant, not only between two individuals but between two families and then into the broader community, thereby including the connecting two clans or tribes.” Thus, marriage does not end with the death of the husband. This explains the value of levirate marriages (inheritance) among the Tiv. It is because of this that Benezet insisted, “African traditional marriages are meant to be indissoluble up to and even beyond death.” More on that, in Tiv, “a decision in the question of divorce rests not with the couple; but with the community.” The community plays a vital role in the management of marriage covenant. The community is seen to be the custodian of the marriage covenant and sexuality.

In fact, it can be said that the anamnestic dimension of sexuality in Africa essentially belongs to the eschatological belief. The use of sexuality is commanded by the ancestors to perpetuate their memory. Sexuality in Africa is not only a duty to be carried out; but also, a gift of God and of the ancestors. Life is the main aim of sexuality. Anything contrary to this understanding is not acceptable. African understanding of sexuality does not endorse homosexuality as a positive value.

Thus, it is safe to say that the problem of marriage and sexuality in Africa cannot be solved by contract settled according to the western model. Marriage sexuality is best understood in terms of African cultural values that are better defined by marriage, family and sexuality in Africa. African sexuality is best defined in the marriage process, as could be seen in the whole process of the preparation for the marriage; and most clearly of all in the marriage ceremony and the role of the community.

With western education, it is generally believed that virginity is no longer an issue in marriage. In fact, no young man preparing to marry would seriously consider that he will marry a virgin. Young men no longer expect this of their future wives. They may even think that it is unfair to expect women to be virgins at the time of their marriage while no such expectations are placed on men. This shows a shift from traditional sexual morality.

Life in urban areas also has contributed to the change in understanding of sexuality among the Tiv people. Wegh argues that, “The Tiv associated the city with lawlessness, immorality; and perceived, perhaps rightly, that the city was a place where foreign influences co-existed with traditional views of life, and possibly altered such views.” The Tiv still view the city with suspicion, and largely consider it as a place where anti-traditional ideas are propagated. Some of the issues that stem from cities includes: keeping of secret girl friends in private accommodations, men are also kept by rich women. These practices obtainable in the keeping of a woman applies in the keeping of a man. These practices gradually led to prostitution.

One cannot determine precisely when prostitution started among the Tiv. Generally, prostitution has been linked with the development of towns, and from this, one may then suggest that in Tivland, it is relatively new. As a full-time occupation, prostitution is believed to have been introduced by foreign women. This view seems to be supported by the fact the first words the Tiv learnt, *ashawo*, *kilaki*, *kaluwa* which means prostitute, are all foreign. According to Wegh,

prostitution among the Tiv grew in the 1960s, especially during the civil war. The war opened several economic opportunities. During the (Nigerian) civil war, several phrases were coined to describe the practice of prostitution. *To za ikyo* (go forest) was a

reference to the forest region of the south-east of the country where the war was being fought. To yem tyav (go war), or yem a gbo a nan (go to give bullet) were also references to prostitution.

Overall, sexuality in Tiv culture was understood as a sacred obligation that was geared towards procreation and the propagation of children. It was also meant to create community and sustain lineages and clans. Having presented the Tiv position on marriage and sexuality, we shall now attempt to examine theological implications and offer a framework for the possibility of inculturation of marriage from the provisions in the Church's documents.

2.8 Tiv marital and sexual ethos

Tiv society have very high moral standard on sex ethics. When Tiv elders today look at western education and modernization and the negative impact they bring on Tiv traditional customs and values, they lament that *tar vihi*, the land has spoilt and is in need of repair. The expression, “to *sôr tar*”, “repair the land”, is used when Tiv elders administer justice to their people followed by a religious rite.”¹²⁸ Most Tiv anthropologists refer to this concept as moral regeneration but suffice to mention here that it also refers to the physical repair of broken infrastructure.

For instance, adultery was a serious crime that has public consequences. The Tiv understand adultery as sexual intercourse between a married man and a married woman who is not his own wife. When a case of adultery was known and was taken to the Council of Elders in Tiv society, the adulterer was reprimanded by the elders for breaching an

¹²⁸ Ibid. 14.

ancestral law on marriage and sexual conduct. In addition, the adulterer had to symbolically dress up the woman whose nakedness he had seen during the adulterous sexual intercourse. According to Akpenpuun Dzugba, as a punitive measure, the man “brought the cloth called *ityoakpem* which was handed to the oldest elder, and the woman was dressed in public view of those present at the court, *ate jir*.¹²⁹ The fine for the female adulterer was a female chicken. Furthermore, the husband personally took his wife to her parents whose responsibility it was to discipline their daughter for gross misconduct. The parents, their children, the son-in-law sat together and held a meeting under a closed door. The father was the chairman who directed and facilitated the discussion. At this sitting, “[t]he son-in-law presented his case by narrating the story of his wife’s infidelity stating the events or the times or periods the wife committed adultery after which the wife was called upon to respond to the husband’s accusations.”¹³⁰ This also shows that even before the advent of Christianity, Tiv society already knew and practiced forgiveness and reconciliation. This is because if the wife was found guilty, “she would express remorse before her parents and the entire family by apologizing to the parents and her husband with a promise that she would stop such misbehavior. The family problem was peacefully resolved, and reconciliation achieved.”¹³¹ In some cases, “when an adulterer was unable to pay the fine, s/he was sent to prison.”¹³² Also in some cases, the culprit was made to do community work as a form of punishment. While adultery was condemned in strong terms, virginity was a value that was upheld.

¹²⁹ Akpenpuun Dzugba, *The Tiv and Their Culture* (Ibadan: John Archers, 2011), 68-69.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.* 70.

¹³¹ *Ibid.* 70-71.

¹³² *Ibid.* 150.

Tiv had very high regard for virginity. In classical Tiv society, the integrity of the family in general and of the girl was measured by the virginity of the newly married woman. Tiv did not expect their daughter to have sex before marriage. In every marriage, the husband expected his wife to be a virgin, that is, someone who had not had sex before. On the first night of the marriage,

[I]t was expected that the husband was going to be the first person to have sex with the new wife. The following morning, the husband's parents were usually curious to find out if the woman was a virgin or not. The parents of the husband would be very happy if the new wife was found to have been a virgin, but they would become cold if she was not.¹³³

The first night's experience was important also to the parents of the woman who had just got married. The joy of her marriage would be complete if the news was received on the testimony of her husband that she was a virgin. They waited anxiously for this news that was sent in a symbolic way. After a few days, the parents would receive a cloth from their son-in-law. They would inspect the cloth anxiously. If they saw a hole made at the center of the cloth, the message was that their daughter was not a virgin, and the mother would weep profusely. She expressed deep grief because people in the community would see her as having failed in her duty as a good mother. She had failed to protect her daughter from being spoiled by bad men. On the other hand, the cloth without a hole implied that the mother had been successful in protecting her daughter's chastity. Akpenpuun Dzugba affirms, "[t] his mother would burst into laughter and would begin to dance and sing happily. This shows that virginity and virgins were important aspects of the institution of marriage in Tiv society."¹³⁴

¹³³ Dzugba, *On the Tiv of Central Nigeria*, 112-113.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.* 113.

It was believed that virginity had a positive influence on unity, harmony, stability and peacefulness in the marriage. Virginity increased mutual goodwill, understanding, tolerance, trust and cooperation. It sustained mutual love and caring. It facilitated integration and blending in body and spirit. The couple becomes emotionally attached to each other. All these were attributed largely to the fact that the woman got married as a virgin. Thus, “virginity was seen as the basis for marital faithfulness and obedience on the part of the woman. These benefits doubled if the husband also was someone who had not had sex before marriage.”¹³⁵ The case of the husband was confirmed by administering a ritual oath known as “kor.”¹³⁶ Failure to tell the truth is also sometimes amounted to some fine and in some cases community work. The severe penalty given to the woman was not just to humiliate her but show that women owns the key to the reproductive process of the family. They are regarded in Tiv culture as the foundation of the family. No Tiv man would like to have a woman who was regarded as being blemished, to propagate a family and subsequently build up a lineage. The severe penalty was given to deter the young women to uphold to the moral sanctity that was demanded in preparation for marriage and family.

Tiv also frowned at immoral acts like incest. Incest is an illegal sex between close relations. All blood relations within the extended family are not allowed by cultural ideals and religious laws to engage in sexual activity and childbearing. When two close relations engage in sexual relationships, “the guilt is cleansed by offering a burnt sacrifice which signifies that the act of incest has been burnt and the dignity of their sexual status is restored

¹³⁵ Ibid.133.

¹³⁶ “Kor” is traditional Tiv ritual oath that is administered to individuals to ascertain truth or falsity. If an individual false fully swears by Kor, the result was swelling of the feet and belly, and subsequent death.

lawfully and morally.”¹³⁷ This totalized thinking regulates and predicts behavioral patterns. This is dominant in all spheres of life - social, political and religions.

2.9 Some other related issues of marriage in Tiv culture

In Tiv marriage culture there are critical issues that are vital when discussing marriage forms and values. Marriage follows different procedures, depending on the form of marriage in question.

2.9.1 “Iye” (Courtship).

Although “*Yam-ishe*” or “*isheyamen*” (exchange marriage) was the main method of getting married among the Tiv, it became increasingly difficult, as the population grew, for young men to get wives unless the family had several daughters. As a result of this difficulty, many unscrupulous men began to take the wives of other people by force.

The method of getting married by taking other people’s wives by force was considered very bad and often resulted in the bloodshed of many innocent people. Therefore, the elders of various “*Ityar*”¹³⁸ (plural of “*Tar*” – which could mean people, world, clan or district, and district) met and improved this crude method of “*ngohol ior kasev*” (taking other people’s wives by force). For the elders, instead of “*ngohol ior kasev*”, the provision should be made for young men of one “*tar*” to go in group to another “*tar*”

¹³⁷ Dzurghba, *On the Tiv of Central Nigeria*, 116.

¹³⁸ Tar is one of the most meaningful words in the Tiv language. The first and most common meaning of Tar is a peopled territory, Tar referring to the people themselves who inhabit a certain territory. It is for this reason that Tivland is called Tat Tiv. Every kindred, clan and district in Tivland is called Tar of the children of one father. We say, *Tar Mbativ* when we speak of *Mbativ* district. This means the territory which is occupied by sons of *Tiav*. Tar also refers to people who occupy a certain territory but do not belong to a common ancestor. Thus every nation or country is Tar. Tar also has a very profound religious significance. In the religious concept Tar refers to the mysterious world of the elders and the instruments, which they use to set right *Tar Tiv*.

and “*ngohol*” girls who were not married or women who had married but had divorced their husbands, though divorce in those days was very rare. Although the parents would be very angry because of the running away of their daughters, when money was paid the matter would be settled between the two families instead of involving the whole clan. The young man also would be proud that he had run away with the girl. This method assured peace and stability among the Tiv. It allowed freedom of movement without the fear of couples being molested. Although this method of exchange visit in search of girls was genuine, since young men were eloping with girls without proper negotiation with the parents, it was still called “*ngohol*” (taking).

The Procedure of “*Iye*” gave marriage among the Tiv, a new outlook. This type of marriage was really a competition between one “*tar*” and another. For example, if “*shagbaor*” (wealthy man) wanted to go for *iye* to another “*tar*”, competition would be very high. In each case the go-between was “*igba*.”¹³⁹ The “*igba*” was one, who, would stand in as the go-between of the marriage contract. When those participating in “*Iye*” would come to “*tar*” to engage various girls, they would lodge with their “*igba*” who would enlighten them about the situation in the area. The “*Igba*” would tell them where various unmarried girls were and the situation of the water: for during those days a large area comprising several families got water from one common well situated near the stream.

Most courtships according to Akiga, “the communal pond (*ijor*) was where the man waited (in the morning) for his intended wife to come for water.”¹⁴⁰ On identifying her, he

¹³⁹ *Igba*, also called *on-mbago* is referred to maternal agnates. It was the mother’s clan who would be responsible for the bridegroom.

¹⁴⁰ Akiga, *Akiga’s Story: The Tiv tribe*, 141.

asked for water to wash his face, once the girl accepted, it was signal enough for the courtship to commence in earnest. From that point onwards, the men (and the friends who had accompanied him) were obliged to follow the girl anywhere she went, extolling her virtues and giving her reasons why he was the preferred marriage partner. This process dragged on for days on end and because it was expected that the woman and the man (including those who accompanied him) would not eat in front of each other throughout the initial days of the courtship, the woman had her first opportunity of eating every day in the night after the man might have retired to rest (and also eat) at the broker's place. The idea was to apply sufficient pressure on the girl (and her family) into accepting the hand of the man in marriage. The woman's acceptance (though confidential) came by way of *ibumun* — a token gift of the woman to the man which was anything ranging from a bangle to a necklace. The gift signified that the woman was ready to consider eloping with the man.

In modern times, courtship is the period during which a man and a woman or fiancé and fiancée have a romantic relationship before getting married. In traditional culture, “when a man courted a woman, he frequently visited her and gave her gifts (*uyua*).”¹⁴¹ Apart from the gifts, the man or the son-in-law to be, could work on the mother-in-law's farm. His hard work could endear him to his parents-in-law and other members of the family. In Tiv culture, all married women in the family or in the compound are mothers-in-law. While all the men and unmarried women were referred to as (*wonov*) brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law respectively. The son-in-law was supposed to prove his worth to the

¹⁴¹ Dzurgha, *On the Tiv of Central Nigeria*, 112.

mother-in-law especially. In the words of Dzurgba, “this was the nature of courtship that was practiced in the past and which has continued today with some modifications.”¹⁴²

2.9.2 *Marriage dances*

Whatever type of marriage ceremony was performed, there was always an artistic celebration of the matrimony. There were two types of marriage dances. The first was the one that took place immediately after a bride was brought to the groom’s place. This was usually called *kwasekuhan* or *kwasegeren* (literally, celebrating the bride or ululating for the bride respectively). According to Moses Tsenongu, “this can still be found, though in a less zealous form, in some Tiv villages. But the second type of the marriage dance (*Ivom* or *Dam* or *Genga*) is, in my estimation, 99% extinct.”¹⁴³ This was the dance that took place much later when a man decided that he should demonstrate his wealth by hosting the *Ivom* or *Dam* or *Genga* ceremony. This was a nuptial dance done only by men who were wealthy. This dance is called *Genga*, meaning the Drum or *Ivom*, meaning mound/heap; and *Amaa* which literally means dance. The preparation for *Genga* or *Ivom* takes several years. Then a date is fixed, and people begin to brew millet beer.

Even then it was not every wife that attracted this dance. Unless a woman came from a particularly long geographical or cultural distance from her husband’s, this dance was not organized in her honor. The “*Ivom* or *Dam* Marriage dance was therefore not for every woman.”¹⁴⁴ And definitely, not every man had the wherewithal to marry from

¹⁴² Ibid. 112.

¹⁴³ Moses Tsenongu, “Nuptial Poetry among the Tiv of Nigeria,” In *Tydskrif vir Letterkunde*. 48.1 (Autumn 2011): From Literature Resource Center. http://www.letterkunde.u.ac.za/english/Default_eng.htm

(Accessed October 15, 2015), 133.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.136

a geographical or cultural distance long enough to host the dance; besides, the hosting cost for the occasion was rather forbidding. Our focus here is not on the *Ivom* or *Dam* marriage dance. We are concerned only with *kwasekuhan*, the marriage dance performed immediately a bride was brought to the house of the groom's age mate¹⁴⁵ or the groom's house.

The *kwasekuhan* dance was the most common and the most important. Whoever married and did not host it was usually disregarded in his community. Besides, the dance was also an honour to the bride. It was an artistic way of welcoming her to her new home and getting her acquainted with the environment. Thus, "failure to host a marriage dance for a bride was a shameful thing for her"¹⁴⁶ It disabled her from holding her head high among her fellow women. This dance was therefore a necessary and important tradition. Indeed, it was impossible to think of marriage without it.

This marriage dance is described vividly by Moses Tsenongu thus:

¹⁴⁵ Age mate or age grade in Tivland was/is considered something very important. It is a social reality that brings the age grade group together to perform social functions together to bring home social values of the Tiv people.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid. 137.

The dance usually took place at two settings. First, it was done in the house of an age mate or distant relation of the groom to whose house the groom took his wife for that purpose. The bride passed the night there, but hardly slept at night because singing and dancing were on until dawn. There was more singing, drumming and dancing when the bride was, in the evening of the following day, taken to the groom's house. Brides were customarily brought home at evening, when people had taken their dinners and were relaxing outside to while away time before going indoors to sleep. This was when the *angwe*, a proclamation was heard at the top of the announcer's singsong voice.¹⁴⁷

The *angwe*, "having fixed wordings with only the names of the persons mentioned in it changing to suit different marriage situations was nuptial news stating who had married."¹⁴⁸ It was the Tiv traditional system of mass communication specifically for marriage. So, the *angwe* [tidings] announcer always went slightly ahead of the party coming with the bride. The following were the words of the *angwe*: as describes by Moses Tsenongu.¹⁴⁹

Tiding! *gbeee*...tidings!
Chief! Tidings *ooo* Tidings!
Whose tidings is it?
It is the tidings of Tako Gbor Ndor Kunya!
It is the tidings of Achulu Gbor Ndor Kunya!
Whose tidings is it?
It is the tidings of Iornenge Akpa!
Tidings walk about *gbee ... gbee ... gbee ...*
Ululations

¹⁴⁷Moses Tsenongu, "Nuptial Poetry among the Tiv of Nigeria," In *Tydskrif vir Letterkunde*. 48.1 (Autumn 2011): From Literature Resource Center. http://www.letterkunde.u.p.ac.za/english/Default_eng.htm

(Accessed October 15, 2015), 133.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.* 137.

¹⁴⁹ Moses Tsenongu, "Nuptial Poetry among the Tiv of Nigeria," In *Tydskrif vir Letterkunde*. 48.1 (Autumn 2011): From Literature Resource Center. http://www.letterkunde.u.p.ac.za/english/Default_eng.htm

(Accessed October 15, 2015), 133. *Angwe* is the tiding that announces the coming /arrival of a new wife in the community. It tells of the one who has married. It also tells of the names of the elders whose son has married. The clan where he has married. It also touches on the age grade to show superiority and fame.

The ululations concluding the announcement were usually done by the group (made up mostly of women and girls) escorting the wife, a bit in front of whom the tidings-announcer was going. This group would usually start performing some nuptial poems on the way. People from surrounding compounds now rushed to the road where the *angwe* was heard and joined the party. Others went to the house of the groom and waited there, singing and dancing. They knew the groom by the names in the *angwe*. For example, lines 4, 6, and 8 above contain the names of elders whose son has married. It would therefore not be difficult to trace the groom's house. In some places, there were no musical instruments at all but in others, the following made up the nuptial musical ensemble: "the *indyer* or *ilyu* (jumbo or medium-size) slit-log drums, the open-ended *gbande* drum, the double-ended *genga* drum, the *kwen* metal gong, the *gida* woodwind, the *tsough* rattles etc."¹⁵⁰ These instruments notwithstanding, singing, and not musical instrumentation, was the most important aspect of the Tiv marriage dance.

The marriage dance among the Tiv in this first part is a very social event. It brings joy and happiness in the family and the society at large. This happens mostly when someone marries from a distant tribe. When a Tiv marries a wife from another district, there is usually a series of celebrations. There is first, a marriage dance organized by the immediate family. This may last for about a week. A goat or a sheep is killed and a lot of pounded yam is prepared. Then members of the *Ingyor* unit arrange another marriage dance. They drum and dance throughout the night at the home of the bridegroom. Several

¹⁵⁰ Tsenongu, "Nuptial Poetry among the Tiv of Nigeria," 137.

animals are slaughtered and there is a lot of eating and drinking. This type of dance is called *Tsa-u-tu*, which means, stay the night.

In the second part, the oldest male member of the extended family organizes a bigger and more prestigious dance, which normally includes many young men who have married from other districts or other ethnic groups. The *paterfamilias* also invites the best minstrel in the area to compose songs in his honor and in honor of his son and his bride and other men and women who are included in the feast. A song is also composed in praise of the important men in the families of the brides and bridegrooms. There is also a song of praise to the age mates of all those included in the dance.

A very high mound of clay is prepared in the home of the organizing elder. In the evening of the feast day, everybody dresses in their best clothes. The marriage dance was a very colorful occasion to which all invited guests are supposed to come dressed appropriately. It was regarded as the most significant occasion of their life. It was an occasion that brought all the married couples together to unite in one big family.

The dance songs are sung, and it is announced that everybody should sit down. When all is still, the dance drums begin in perfect rhythm. The young men in whose honour the feast is celebrated, come out with their new wives and dance two by two in turn. When the dancing is over, feasting begins.

The extended family whose members unite to celebrate such a marriage feast is known as *mba ve koho Genga mom*, those who beat the same drum. The marriage dance unit comprises many *angor* (exchange wards) families. In fact, the *Genga* dance could well

be described as a dance of unity, whereby extended family members unite to celebrate the marriage feast.

2.9.3 *Virginity*

It was believed that virginity had a positive influence on unity, harmony, stability and peacefulness of the marriage. Virginity increased mutual goodwill, understanding, tolerance, trust and cooperation. It sustained mutual love and caring. It facilitated integration and blending of body and spirit. The couple became emotionally attached to each other. All these elements were attributed largely to the fact that the woman got married as a virgin. Thus, “virginity was seen as the basis for marital faithfulness and obedience on the part of the woman. These benefits doubled if the husband also was someone who had not had sex before marriage.” The case of the husband was confirmed by administering a ritual oath. Failure to tell the truth amounted to a fine and in some cases community work.

Tiv had very high regard for virginity. Tiv did not expect their daughter to have sex before marriage. In every marriage, the husband expected his wife to be a virgin.

In Tiv classical culture, the integrity of the family in general and of the girl, the new wife, was measured by the virginity of the newly married woman. For Tiv culture, in every marriage, “the husband expected the wife to be a virgin.”¹⁵¹ She was expected to be someone who had never had sex/sexual intercourse with any man. It was believed that a woman who had never had sex before marriage would not be easily penetrated by her husband’s penis during intercourse. Thus, the first penetration of the woman’s sexual organ by the penis would cause some tearing of the membrane, blood stain and pain. These signs

¹⁵¹ Ibid. 112.

during the first night's sexual intercourse proved beyond doubt, that the woman had never had sexual intercourse before she got married. The following morning, the man's parents would privately ask their son what his findings were about his wife's virginity. The parents would be happy if their son's new wife was found to have been a virgin, but they would become cold if she was not a virgin.

2.9.4 *Incest*

Tiv also frowned at immoral acts like incest. Oke defines incest as "illegal sex between close relations."¹⁵² All blood relations within the extended family are not allowed, by cultural ideals and religious laws, to engage in sexual activity and childbearing. When two close relations engage in sexual relationships, "the guilt is cleansed by offering a burnt sacrifice which signifies that the act of incest has been burnt and the dignity of their sexual status is restored lawfully and morally."¹⁵³ In Tiv culture and tradition, sexual intercourse between any two closely related persons is illegal and abominable. These include "father or mother, daughter or son, uncle or aunt, niece or nephew and relations or relatives."¹⁵⁴ All blood relations within the extended family are not allowed by cultural ideas and religious laws to engage in sexual activity and child-bearing. Thus, sexual intercourse between any two of these closely related persons is not a normal sexual intercourse.

In Tiv culture "It is illegal, and therefore an immoral, sexual intercourse which has breached the law of the deity known as *Itimbe-mku*."¹⁵⁵ The guilt of sin, of incest is

¹⁵² Oke, E.A., *An Introduction to Social Anthropology* (London: Macmillan Education, 2002), 96-97.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.* 116.

¹⁵⁴ Dzurgba, *On the Tiv of Central Nigeria*, .116.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.* 116. Also see Akiga, *Akiga's Story: The Tiv tribe*, 211-213. Itimbe means temporally grass hut, and is now represented by sword-grass bound a piece of wood, which was once presumably the mku emblem. Mku seems originally to have been an ancestral cult of some importance but is now the name of a rite only

cleansed by the two offending relations coming to the shrine of *itimbe-mku* and offering a burnt sacrifice by the roadside. On more serious cases, both culprits are put in the same shrine and set on fire, making them to escape through different sides of the shrine. This indicates separating the blood tie of the two. They are no longer considered blood relations but not in the sense of being allowed to get married. This is only a symbolic way of cleansing their period of sexual encounter which should not have taken place as blood relations and were barred from doing it again. Sexual immorality like incest and adultery were considered crimes in Tiv society.

2.9,5 Adultery (*idya*)

Tiv society had very high moral standards on sex ethics. For, instance, adultery was a serious crime that was handled with seriousness. Tiv understand adultery as sexual intercourse between a married man and a married woman who is not his own wife or her husband. For a long time *Idya* (adultery) has been a serious crime in Tiv culture/society. The criminal nature of adultery remains unchanged till today. The offenders in the crime of adultery were brought to the Council of elders for trial. When a case of adultery was known and was taken to the Council of Elders in Tiv society, the adulterer was reprimanded by the elders for breaching an ancestral law on marriage and sexual conduct.

Having ascertained the breach of the customary law, “the man was given penalty of a live goat, a he-goat (*nom-kpev*) or a she-goat (*ngo-ivo*).”¹⁵⁶ The goat was slaughtered and shared by members of the Council who presided at the jury. In addition, Akpenpuun

observed on the occasion of war, mishap and other calamities. The *itimbe-mku* is a hunting Akombo, but the *mku* itself is a rite which is observed by a person who has committed an abomination in the land.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 117.

Dzurgba elaborates on the punitive measure, an adulterer “brought the cloth called *ityoakpem* which was handed to the oldest elder, and the woman was dressed in public view of those present at the court *ate jir*.”¹⁵⁷ The man had to give the elders a beautiful cloth which they would give to the woman as a sign of clothing her dignity. In essence, the adulterer had to symbolically dress up the woman whose nakedness he had seen during the adulterous sexual intercourse.

On the part of the woman, she was fined a chicken (*ikyegh*) which could be a hen (*ngo-ikyegh*) or a cock (*nom-ikyegh*). The chicken “was given to the elderly woman in the community to slaughter and share with the women folk.”¹⁵⁸ Secondly, the husband personally took his wife to her parents whose responsibility it was to discipline their daughter for gross misconduct. The parents, their children and the son-in-law sat together and held a meeting behind a closed door. The father was the chairman who directed and facilitated the discussion. At this sitting, “[t]he son-in-law presented his case by narrating the story of his wife’s infidelity stating the events or the times or periods the wife committed adultery after which the wife was called upon to respond to the husband’s accusations.”¹⁵⁹ This procedure demonstrates that even before the advent of Christianity, the Tiv society already knew and practiced forgiveness. If the wife was found guilty, “she would express remorse before her parents and the entire family by apologizing to the parents and her husband with a promise that she would stop such misbehavior. The family’s problem was peacefully resolved, and reconciliation achieved.”¹⁶⁰ In some cases, “when

¹⁵⁷ Akpenpuun Dzurgba, *The Tiv and Their Culture* (Ibadan: John Archers, 2011), 68-69.

¹⁵⁸ Dzurgba, *On the Tiv of Central Nigeria*, 117.

¹⁵⁹ Dzurgba, *The Tiv and Their Culture*, 84.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.* 70-71.

an adulterer was unable to pay the fine, s/he was sent to prison.”¹⁶¹ Also in some cases, the culprit was made to do community work as a form of punishment.

These severe punishments were supposed to help remove suspicion, distrust, hatred, conflict and the possibility of stabbing with a sharp knife. Adultery related tensions, quarrels, threats, fears and even murders are still witnessed in Tiv society today. Some causes of divorce today arose from men’s anger against their wives in cases of adultery.

In conclusion, the concept of marriage among the Tiv People is very complex. One would have to study the Tiv cultural and historical vales to know how marriage and family functions in Tiv society. A thorough study of the Tiv cultures and values will certainly lead to a more holistic understanding and appreciation of marriage among the Tiv. An honest appreciation of this fact will also help in the inculturation process of marriage in the Tiv Catholic Church.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 150

CHAPTER THREE

SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS VALUES BEHIND TIV TRADITIONAL MARRIAGE SYSTEMS

3.1 Introduction

The social and religious values behind the Tiv traditional marriage are based on the segmentary lineage model. The Tiv social organization revolves around the absence of state formation. what I mean by state formation here is different from the western notion of state. In the western state formation, there is a strict structured pattern with organs either elected or appointed like the prime minister, presidents and governors *et cetera*. This scenario was very shocking and interesting to Charles Forbes Gordon, “who in 1907 was the first to British official to travel extensively in Tiv country, was impressed by the lack of real authority among the Tiv, though he noted that it was possible to call together many Tiv in a short time.”¹⁶² In his word as reflected by Adrian,

The clans are divided into sections in which there is one who is spoken of as the headman, but his position is to a great extent honorary, and unless popular or feared, has little authority in the section outside his own cluster of villages...In their relations, however with government, the recognized headman of the section has generally been pushed forward, but it is seen apparent that he is only there as a figure head, and that each individual (the only unit) may hear what is going on but not bind himself, in spite of their representative having seemingly done so.¹⁶³

The earliest British officials, “notably Abraham (1940s), Downes (1933), depicted Tiv society as a gerontocracy with certain amount of ritual specialization, into which

¹⁶² Adrian Campion Edwards, “Seeing, Believing, Doing: The Tiv Understanding of power” In *Anthropos*, Bd. 78, H. ¾, 460 accessed 07-03-2017 www.jstor.org.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*

chieftaincy had come as an alien and inappropriate transplant.”¹⁶⁴ The Tiv from the onset had no organized state formation as the western and other groups. Part of the reason for this situation is to be found in MacBride’s remark, “The Tiv have many heritages, the function and relative importance of which are not immutable.”¹⁶⁵ There is no one strictly marked out path to leadership. However, the Tiv give esteem to men of standing much more readily than they give obedience. Though, due to western influence, the idea of organized leadership and authority is now gradually being introduced and practiced in Tiv land. In real situation, “the Tiv are a classical example of a segmentary society which the basic political units are grouped and contraposed around a genealogy.”¹⁶⁶

The Tiv social structure is built upon and welded together along blood lines that keep evolving. This elementary unit grows into a family, and the family grows into a community, and the conglomerate of various communities give rise to the emergence of the social cultural ethnic group, called Tiv. Marriage is the most important unit of Tiv society, spanning years of expansion into the Benue valley, accompanied by rapid population growth, wars and proximity to commerce (all those features, which are usually held to explain the formation of the state) apparently left the Tiv an uncentralized yet strongly self-conscious ethnic category.

According to Ralph Baker, “The Tiv are in a Family State ... we see the family in its various stages from the immediate progenitors to the patriarch of his family group, and from him to the kindred group, which is an original family group split up into lesser family

¹⁶⁴ Ibid. 461

¹⁶⁵ Ibid. 461

¹⁶⁶ Ibid. 464

groups...”¹⁶⁷ The aforementioned explanation in relation to Tiv cosmology of other states, for example, are not determined geographically: states, counties, townships, cities, villages. The divisions of Tivland are determined genealogically: clans, sub-clans, kindreds, family groups, and households. Every village contains a family group. Several villages are joined in a wider family group. Several sparsely populated family groups make up a hamlet, several hamlets make up a kindred, and then, several kindreds then clan. The clans trace their origin back to the father of the tribe, Tiv. The people are very conscious of their relatives and can trace back their ancestry for several generations. The word ‘brother’ or ‘sister’ has a much wider reference and entails a much more complicated social relationship among the Tiv. Baker thus describes the Tiv as “clannish in the most elementary sense.”¹⁶⁸ Tribal loyalty or loyalty to one’s clan is the most fundamental feature of the Tiv social organization. It emphasizes the fact that, “blood is the basic tie among the Tiv, everyone knows.”¹⁶⁹

This attests to the fact that, all Tiv believe themselves to be descended from an eponymous ancestor located some fourteen to seventeen generations back in their genealogies. Legends of origin and the cultural and linguistic homogeneity of the Tiv tend to add credence to such a view in broad terms. Most Tiv groups, for whatever purpose they are formed, are defined in the idiom of common descent. Three distinct forms of grouping are distinguished by their different appeals to the Tiv genealogical charter.

¹⁶⁷ Ralph, David Baker. "The Evangelization of the Tiv Tribe." *Reformed Journal* 8, no. 10 (November 1958), 15-20.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

3.2 The three distinct forms of Tiv groupings

The first Tiv grouping to consider is the *nongo*, literally 'line' or 'queue', which, 'may be used to enquire after or describe the component segments of any lineage. The span of the 'line' to which *nongo* refers, can only be determined contextually. The concept manifests the quality of total relativity of the classic segmentary lineage model. The Tiv describes the *nongo* relevant in a specific context by citing the name of a prominent man of the grouping involved. Richard Fardon in his book, *Tiger in an African Palace, and Other Thoughts about Identification and Transformation* gave an elaborate account of the Tiv groupings based on *Nongo*. According to him,

Nongo refers to span rather than depth, to living members of the group rather than to the ancestor who defines the segment in opposition to a similar segment consisting of the descendants of his brother. This designation lends the *nongo* referent an ambiguity with respect to the descent groupings, defined ancestrally, and the political groupings, defined territorially.¹⁷⁰

In collaboration to this position, Laura Bohannan explains, “this ambiguity gives an idiomatic appearance of unity to the lineage and politico-territorial segments” and is “essential to the strength of Tiv political loyalties.”¹⁷¹

The second group according to Fardon is agnates. He asserts, “agnates are significant for a particular group called his *ityo*. The referent of *ityo*, like that of *nongo*, is defined contextually. The *ityo* differs from the *nongo* in being defined by depth rather than by span.”¹⁷² In the words of Bohannan, its usage is further restricted since:

¹⁷⁰ Richard Fardon, *Tiger in an African Palace, and Other Thoughts about Identification and Transformation* (Langaa RPCIG (June 12, 2014), p. 24.

¹⁷¹ Laura and Paul Bohannan, *The Tiv of Central Nigeria*. (London: Hazell, Watson & Viney, Ltd, 1953), 42.

¹⁷² Richard Fardon, *Tiger in an African Palace, and Other Thoughts about Identification and Transformation*, p.24.

“... ityo cannot be used to describe the component segment of a lineage It is a personal and particularist (hence exclusive) term of identification, stating some individual's place among the Tiv by identifying that lineage, filiation to which gives him his political citizenship, his rights to land and residence, delimits those persons who may bewitch him and whom he may not marry, and appoints the place of his memory after his death. Only his being sold into slavery can sever him from that place.”¹⁷³

The third set of categorizations of the Tiv groupings refers to the “spatial and social arrangements of political segment”.¹⁷⁴ Fardon maintains that in this arrangement, “two concepts are involved: the segment, *ipaven*, and the land which it claims, *tar*. *Uipaven* (Plural); *Ipaven* (singular), are minimal lineages segments which they also depicted as forming increasingly larger lineage segments up to the apical ancestor of all the Tiv.”¹⁷⁵ Thus, he concludes that,

The segment, *ipaven*, is distinguished from the local descent group, *nongo*, in two ways: it appeals to political rather than lineage values and it does not segment continuously. Below the level of the minimal *tar*, or discrete territorial unit, Tiv usually claim that the *ipaven* does not segment. The term *nongo* may be applied within the minimal *tar*, but it need not refer to a territorially discrete group, and it is unlikely to do so. The *ipaven* must always be represented territorially through its occupation of a *tar*; the relation between the minimal segment and the minimal territory is one-to-one.¹⁷⁶

To explain further the challenging position of the Tiv groupings, Fardon elucidates,

¹⁷³ Laura and Paul Bohannan, *The Tiv of Central Nigeria*. 38.

¹⁷⁴ Richard Fardon, “Sisters, Wives, Wards and Daughters: A Transformational Analysis of the Political Organization

of the Tiv and Their Neighbours.” Part I: The Tiv”, In *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute*, Vol. 54, No. 4 (1984), 2-21,88, accessed February13, 2016. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1160393>.

¹⁷⁵Richard Fardon, *Tiger in an African Palace, and Other Thoughts about Identification and Transformation*, p.24.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

The *nongo* referent's ambiguity is in part responsible for masking this disjunction between the two modes of genealogical reckoning. It allows contextual adjustments and compromises to be made, which ensure that the substantive and ideological relations between the segments remain aligned. The three sets of categorizations thus depend to different degrees on the pure concept of descent: the *ityo* is the closest to an ideal descent group, the *nongo* additionally recognizes the factor of personal influence, and the *ipaven* considers occupation of an exclusive territory.¹⁷⁷

Ethnographically this outcome is quite unusual. Despite the challenge, this grouping is still being practiced among the Tiv.

Fardon further elaborates that,

These complex homogeneities of Tiv culture and persistence of Tiv identity are quite remarkable features, considering their decentralization and the high degree of differentiation found among Tiv. The segmentary lineage model might suggest that Tiv exclusiveness is an expression of the lineage system at full strength, opposing all Tiv to all others. This is undeniably true, but it only illustrates one bit of Tiv ideology in terms of another bit. More persuasively, Tiv exclusiveness can be seen as a by-product of the practice of marriage by exchange of women. Marriage by exchange of direct sisters could be interpreted as a form of descent through both the men and women of the patrilineage. Substantively, marriage by exchange ensured that Tiv society was endogamous with respect to its own women.¹⁷⁸

To give a details explanation of these complex homogeneities of Tiv culture and persistence of Tiv identity Fardon collaborated with the views of Akiga, one of the Tiv renowned historian and cultural study states,

¹⁷⁷ Ibid; also see Richard Fardon, "Sisters, Wives, Wards and Daughters: A Transformational Analysis of the Political Organization of the Tiv and Their Neighbours." Part I: The Tiv", In *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute*, Vol. 54, No. 4 (1984), 2-21,88, accessed February13, 2016. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1160393>.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

Recounting an early movement away from the 'bush tribes' (the small tribes to the south and east of present day Tivland) prior to the eruption of the Tiv into the Benue plains, Akiga vividly describes the refusal of the Tiv to recognize reciprocity in women with non-Tiv, and the fracas that resulted. The Tiv married women from the neighbouring bush tribes, and had children by them, both sons and daughters. When their sons grew to manhood and their daughters reached puberty, the Bush People cast their eyes upon them, and demanded that the Tiv should now give them their daughters to marry in return. When they refused to do this, the Bush Men were angry.' What!' they cried.' Why are these Tiv becoming so assertive? We used to give them our daughters to marry, thinking of our children who were yet unborn; why will they not give their daughter to our sons?'¹⁷⁹

Fardon and Akiga collaborated that, "further movement by the Tiv away from the *Ugbe* and *Iyonov* which were considered as bush people elicits only the phlegmatic remark from Akiga that it was occasioned by trouble over the question of women."¹⁸⁰ Fardon and Akiga in separate works maintains that, "it is almost unknown for a Tiv woman to marry outside the tribe, although men, especially in the border clans, will take non-Tiv wives."¹⁸¹ For emphasis, Fardon reiterated that "Laura and Paul Bohannan record a similar phenomenon in the former, Eastern Region of Nigeria, where Tiv had expanded and settled among the Ogoja tribes (known to the Tiv as Udam). Although Tiv men "usually married Udam women, they refused to allow their women to marry Udam men."¹⁸² Tiv women

¹⁷⁹ Richard Fardon, "Sisters, Wives, Wards and Daughters: A Transformational Analysis of the Political Organization of the Tiv and Their Neighbours." Part I: The Tiv", In *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute*, Vol. 54, No. 4 (1984), 2-21,88, accessed February13, 2016. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1160393>; also see Benjamin Akiga, *Akiga's Story: The Tiv Tribe as Seen by One of its Members*. Trans Rupert East (London: Oxford university press, 1965), 21.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid

¹⁸¹ Richard Fardon, "Sisters, Wives, Wards and Daughters: A Transformational Analysis of the Political Organization of the Tiv and Their Neighbours." Part I: The Tiv", In *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute*, Vol. 54, No. 4 (1984), p. 9-10; also see Benjamin Akiga, *Akiga's Story: The Tiv Tribe as Seen by One of its Members*. 49.

¹⁸² Richard Fardon, "Sisters, Wives, Wards and Daughters: A Transformational Analysis of the Political Organization of the Tiv and Their Neighbours." Part I: The Tiv", In *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute*, Vol. 54, No. 4 (1984), p. 9-10; also see Bohannan, and Bohannan, *The Tiv of Central Nigeria*, 5.

were enjoined to marry within the tribe, but Tiv men married women from non-Tiv tribes when the opportunity presented itself. In short, Tiv expansion was in part fueled by drawing in women from their neighbors, while Tiv exclusiveness was maintained by endogamous marriage for their own women.

Fardon therefore gave an elaborate summary of the Tiv organization and exclusiveness maintained by endogamous marriage thus:

The generation of a form of endogamy assures exclusiveness at the level of the tribe, while equality is maintained through a fluid system of social inequality, which is normally inheritable for a maximum of three generations. By allotting to a rival patrilineal category the role of *igba*, the extent of hierarchization within the *ityo* is severely circumscribed in the sense that the woman has a recourse to the *igba* that empowers her, and inequality is made a transient phenomenon while the major struggle is to maintain equality. The simplest way in which the system could be centralized would be through monopolization of rights in women, as happened in some systems akin to that of the Tiv. Indeed, we may suppose that at the borders of expansion against foreign tribes, the taking of female prisoners or purchase of foreign wives temporarily may have permitted such a process. Moreover, institution at the micro-level systematically turned over such advantages through a definition of quintessential Tiv-ness based on marriage by exchange, which was the sole means to means to acquire, for the child of the marriage, the support necessary for full participation in the supernatural side of prestige-seeking.¹⁸³

Despite the obvious variations in the Tiv traditional marriage systems (some of which have been considered in the previous chapter), Akawe Torkula insists, “these marriage systems were held together by a very complex system of values all of which were internalized and accepted as part of the Tiv world view.”¹⁸⁴ He also contend that, “though

¹⁸³ Richard Fardon, “Sisters, Wives, Wards and Daughters: A Transformational Analysis of the Political Organization of the Tiv and Their Neighbours.” Part I: The Tiv”, In *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute*, Vol. 54, No. 4 (1984), p.20.

¹⁸⁴ Alfred Akawe Torkula, “A survey of the marriage and Burial institutions amongst the Tiv of central Nigeria,” in a dissertation submitted in partial requirements for the award of the degree of Doctor of philosophy, accessed 14/9/2018 <http://studylib.net/doc/14283454/>

it has not been possible to articulate all these values, the following were the most dominant and having the most impact on these Tiv Marriage systems.”¹⁸⁵

3.3 Marriage Practices

3.3.1 Ishior (courtship)

Courtship arrangements in Tiv society proceed cautiously, and often slowly. Great care must be taken that all goes according to the prescribed tradition. Among the Tiv, the marriage event does not take place at one moment of time. The period of courtship may not only be long; it must also be accompanied by careful procedures and negotiations. Moreover, that one has married and brought home one’s wife, does not mean that everything is over. Since marriage in Tiv society is alliance between two families, it is only sensible that the alliance is kept alive by mutual relationship and concerns.

Courtship in Tiv traditional society usually goes on for months. The would-be husband visits his *wonov* (in-laws) from time to time, taking gifts for his *ngokem* (mother-in-law), and *terkem* (father-in-law). These gestures are meant to cement the relationship and to help make the negotiations easy for the would-be husband.

Due to the sensitivity and importance of marriage arrangement in Tiv culture, a man does not just go out in search of a woman to marry. According to Shagbaor Wegh, “a man is often shown his future wife by a friend, or a member of his family, in most cases a

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

sister.”¹⁸⁶ In Tivland, eighty percent of the men married their wives on the recommendation of friends, or members of their families.

As the *ishioor* (courtship) progresses, the two families also try to see that there are no impediments to the marriage. Wegh, insists that “[t]hey have to ascertain that the marriage will take place according to the Tiv exogamous principle.”¹⁸⁷ For if it is discovered later that the marriage took place within the forbidden degree of consanguinity, it would be declared invalid, and both parties would have to appease the community. Thus, owing to the communitarian aspect of marriage, and the desire to avoid endogamy, when a man, and a woman meet far away, from their homes, marriage may not take place until their two families get, to know one another, and normal procedure is followed.

During courtship, the father of the woman has the responsibility of making sure that his daughter does not only have the security of physical sustenance and happiness where she is to be married, but also protection against those who may have evil intention towards her. For this reason, every woman about to marry has her *tien* (paternal uncle) whose duty it is not only to act as a go-between, but also as a protector of the woman. She is also provided with a *ishuur* (literally: guarantor; he is the man on whom the woman leans, turns to for support and protection). The *ishuur*, according to Wegh, “actually acts as the father’s representatives.”¹⁸⁸ Based on the religious and social intricacies involved in the marriage

¹⁸⁶ Shagbaor F. Wegh, *Between Continuity and change: Tiv Concept of Tradition and Modernity* (Enugu-Nigeria: Snapp Press Ltd, 2003), 101.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.* 102

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 103.

affairs, the Tiv consider that a youth does not stand alone and make final decisions about marriage.

3.3.2 *Bride price or Bride wealth*

In Tiv culture, like any other African culture, one of the most important aspects of marriage transaction is that of marriage payment, which is made by the bridegroom or his family to the family of the bride. In Tiv culture, “this payment does not imply chattel status for women as it has been misinterpreted by many groups. Among the Tiv this payment is best understood as bride wealth.”¹⁸⁹ Marriage payment in whatever form it takes in Tiv culture does not represent the woman as exchanged commodity. Bride wealth in Tiv culture is to show the woman dignity in her new home, the home of the bride. According to Wegh, one of the renowned Tiv scholar,

Bride wealth is the appropriate term employed to explain the Tiv understanding and situation about marriage payment. Since the Tiv themselves avoid regarding their marriage payment as a commercial transaction, bride wealth as a term does a lot in downplaying the commercial element in the marriage transaction.¹⁹⁰

The Tiv are very careful to avoid using the kind of language that would suggest in a marriage payment setting that a woman is being bought. In Tiv culture, one does not buy a wife. One must *kem* one’s wife; literally, one should accumulate one’s wife through a gradual process of negotiation. That is why in Tiv culture, bride wealth is not paid once and in entirety. It is an ongoing process; bride wealth is negotiated and set. It is regarded as a point of equilibrium between the two families, who have formed an alliance.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid. 107.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid. 107

The function of the bride wealth in legalizing marriage in Tiv traditional society is so important that no one considering marriage imagines he can do without it. It may be postponed, but never dispensed. It provides a kind of social security for the children born in that marriage union. Furthermore, it renders legitimacy to the children as belonging to the family that paid the bride wealth. In a long run, bride wealth helps in the stabilization of family alliance between the two families.

3.3.3 *Ivaa Paven (divorce)*

Ivaa paven, literally means ‘the dissecting of marriage.’ It designates the final process in which marriage is terminated. However, in Tiv practice and understanding of marriage, divorce is quite difficult. There is separation between husband and wife. This could happen for various reasons. Divorce in Tiv is never an easy and clear-cut affair. Marriage in Tiv society is not just a man and woman affair. It is not based on a purely personal matter. It is a communitarian affair. By marriage, two families are brought together in a bond of friendship. Commenting on this understanding, Wegh attests, “for the Tiv say that when you marry, your wife’s people become your own people and this saying applies to the woman as well.”¹⁹¹ So thinking of divorce will amount to undoing the bond of friendship which the two families have nurtured for many years. It may also mean that children will also be left behind without a mother’s care which is crucial to their physical and emotional development. As stated earlier, Divorce is rare in Tiv culture, however, whenever there is divorce, the children are left under the custody of the father.

¹⁹¹ Ibid. 112.

3.3.4 Family [Extended family]

While for Mbiti “death takes life while marriage creates life,”¹⁹² another Tiv proverb says, “A man without a wife is like a vase without flowers.” This articulation puts marriage not only at the center of human life, but also creates the impression that being unmarried is both a taboo and disgrace, not only for the immediate family but also for the whole clan and community. In ensuring the survival of the marriage, Tiv marriage is characterized among other things by extended family interventions. Married life for Tivs is communal. It is geared towards building a large extended family system. Marriage in Tiv culture certainly promotes family/ extended family system. Elijah Magezi Baloyi, observes that, “one of the causes of the escalation of marital problems in an African context currently is neglect or ignorance of the tradition of extended family relationships.”¹⁹³ Among other things, traditional African marriage customs are characterized by the relatives of the husband and of the wife establishing close relationships. That is why Mbiti argues that “marriage in the traditional African view is an affair involving more than two people.”¹⁹⁴ An understanding of the origin of many customs (including marriage) of the Tiv as well as other African people is to understand what communalism is all about. The Tiv as well as other African people cannot live in isolation, hence the saying “I am because we are” has not only been popularized but has become a reality of everyday life.

¹⁹² John.S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy* (New York: Doubleday, 1970), 105.

¹⁹³ Elijah Magezi Baloyi. "The Impact of the Extended Family on One's Marriage: An African study." *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 148, (March 2014): 18-32. *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost* (accessed February 14, 2016).

¹⁹⁴ John S. Mbiti, *Introduction to African Religion* 2nd edition (Sandton: JHB Heinemann, 1991), 108

The family map is an essential building block in Tiv culture. The most important aspect of family in the culture is the extended family system. According to Dayo Olupade, “this extended “family” phenomenon is particularly useful in the absence of a government safety net.”¹⁹⁵ She contends, “As we will see, horizontal networks in and across the Africa can save lives, build businesses, and light the darkness. The African family also includes its vast diaspora—an important asset for financial innovation, and influence.”¹⁹⁶ This position truly captures the Tiv understanding of family and extended family systems.

Family, loosely defined, in Tiv understanding carries built-in incentives and efficiencies. It is both a weapon and shield; and luckily, it is abundant and free.

Though *Family* is a term of art¹⁹⁷—certainly not limited to blood relations—“the family map of Africa defines and supports life without a state safety net.”¹⁹⁸ Olupade Dayo, contends, “it anchors diverse development solutions, from health care delivery to off-grid energy sales.”¹⁹⁹ She reiterates, “the first feature of Africa’s Family map is not charity, but solidarity. Family is grounded in positive affiliation—recognizing yourself in those around you. Such solidarity transforms identity into action.”²⁰⁰ For example, in Tiv culture, one of the essentials of a customary marriage is the consent of the in-laws to hand over the girl for others to receive her. In Tiv custom, immediate parents are not allowed to

¹⁹⁵ Olupade Dayo, *The Bright Continent: Breaking Rules & Making Change in Modern Africa*, (Boston: Mariner Books), 2014), 70

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁹⁷ Family as a term art implies that a family is a system bringing all the component together of father, wife, and children in to a wider extended family system which eventually leads to hamlets, kindred, and clan.

¹⁹⁸ Olupade Dayo, *The Bright Continent: Breaking Rules &making Change in Modern Africa*, 70

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰⁰ Ibid, 70.

hand their child over in marriage themselves, but someone from the family would hand over the girl which is a good sign that not only the parents agree with the marriage but that it also has the consent of the whole family. This brings about the solidarity element in Tiv culture. It indicates that Family intervention is an African tradition which had been in practice and is continuing to be practiced by some even today.

The birth and raising of children in the family: The Tiv traditions and customs of raising children in the family context can be summed up by Mbiti in Masango: “It takes a village to raise a child.”²⁰¹ Mbiti’s idiom matches the Tiv: “*Wan ka u tyo*”, literally meaning “a child does not belong only to his or her biological parents.” The implication of these sayings is that once a child is born, he or she must belong to a family, clan or community. Since in traditional society African people never left anything related to family to an individual, children were also believed to belong to the community. Hence every elderly person in the community was responsible to ensure that children in that community were raised to respect community values. Thus, in Tiv cultures, and because of extended family, there were no street children or homeless children in Tiv tradition. Every child belonged to a family or community. Among other things, this meant that even children in a single parent’s family would enjoy the benefit of having other extended parents in the community. The love for one’s fellows and respect for identity are therefore the two main natural characteristics of extended family relationships.

This type of family map expands the definition of caregiving, which helps in solidarity. Along with solidarity and communal intelligence, a third aspect of the family

²⁰¹ M J S Masango, “African Spirituality that Shapes the Concept of Ubuntu”, In *Verbum et Ecclesia* 27, no 3 (2006), 930-943.

map is reached. The microscopic connections that link Tivs together in towns and compounds also support extended kinship networks that span the entire globe. When there is no appropriate intervention from the extended family networks, some marriages experience separation cases because of barrenness.

The case of barrenness and a second marriage(s): It is noteworthy that initially the requirement of motherhood came from the family. It is a traditional family and community concern that if one is barren, there will be pressure from the family and the community. According to Tiv tradition, it should be the same people (members of the extended family) who were sent to pay *kem* (bride price) who should now be sent either to arrange for the second marriage or for the goods to be returned if the wife has not borne children, and the marriage contract is being dissolved. This must be understood from the African context where women are usually to blame for barrenness even when medical tests have not yet been done.

In this way, we also learn that even the decision about separation or second marriage was supposed to be a collective one rather than being the decision of the husband and his wife or the couple. The influence of the elders in this regard would carry more weight than the couple's decisions. Although this was logical in view of their influence when the marriage was arranged, this was another form of dictatorship which would not allow the couple to face their own challenge/ Rather, they would sometimes be told what to do against their will.²⁰²

²⁰² Here this work argues that the family should only advise, not decide or dictate, because of the possibility that the husband will marry a second wife not for love, but for childbearing. Husbands crave for children especially male children whom they believe would continue the family lineage and inherit their property.

Inheritance of property: Among the Tiv like most African tribes, decisions about inheritance of the deceased person's belongings should never be an individual responsibility. The elders of the extended family, even the clan itself, are part of the decisions about who should inherit what in the family. It is a consensual agreement. Here certain widows lose what belongs to them if jealous family members do not support the widow for some reason. The belongings of the deceased are confiscated until everyone is present before the family albeit community decides on how an inheritance is shared among the beneficiaries. It is my belief that this practice also helps to avoid tension and fights among the remaining members of the family. However, it is important to note how traditional collective decisions are sometimes not only used for self-enrichment, but also to selfishly betray and subject other people to suffering. This attitude should be discouraged to promote social justice and equity.

3.3.5 *Polygamous values*

Polygamy in Tiv culture was/is very meaningful for various causes. According to Akiga, "the Tiv practice of having several wives may be due to a variety of causes, but there is one main reason, namely the desire to find a family."²⁰³ In Tiv culture, however successful in life a man may be, "if he has no heir to his house, to the Tiv he is a useless person and a standing butt for their scorn....so also a woman, if she does not bear children, falls in Tiv esteem, however excellent she may be in other ways."²⁰⁴ Children are very

²⁰³ Akiga, *Akiga's Story: The Tiv Tribe As Seen By One of its Members*. (London: Oxford university press, 1965),312.

²⁰⁴ Ibid. 312

important in Tiv culture; because they are there to carry on the family line after the death of the father.

In Tiv society men may have many wives at the same time and all of them will live in one compound, although they would be in their separate houses. However, two wives do live together in one house. In the past, a house was a round hut, with one room or two rooms. Today, a house is a modern building with several rooms, and several wives can live together in one house having one husband. In Tiv society also, there are some men who are monogamists for certain reasons while women are monogamists naturally. Thus, a young woman gets married to a polygamist or a polygamist without prejudice, and willingly too. According to Dzugba, “she is happy to get married to a man who has already married even four wives.”²⁰⁵

In Tiv culture, polygamy as an institution of marriage was considered important as a source of manual labor for the production and distribution of goods and services. The wives engaged themselves in childbearing to increase the manual labor force of the polygamous family. Thus, the man’s wealth or economic prosperity and a high social status or social class is measured by the number of wives and children as well as the large farms which produce large quantities of foods and various types of vegetables. He is then, “associated with money, property, power, nobility, honor, respect and reputation.”²⁰⁶ In Tiv language, “the man is simply referred to as *shagbaor or zegeor* (“the great man”). His first wife also occupies a high-class position and she is referred to as *shagbakwase or*

²⁰⁵ Akpenpuun Dzugba, *On the Tiv of Central Nigeria: A Cultural perspective* (Ibadan-Nigeria: John Archers Publishers Limited, 2007),108.

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

zegekwase (“the great woman”).²⁰⁷ In this context, the institution of marriage in Tiv culture is socially, economically, and politically important, giving credence to polygamy as a credible system of marriage in Tiv culture.

3.3.6 *Non-Materialism*

Non-materialism is one of the most obvious beginning of the value chain running through most of the different traditional systems of marriage in Tivland. According to Torkula, “exchange marriage in spirit and content de-emphasized materialism since the crucial thing in the marriage was the simple exchange of sisters by the two men connected to the exchange.”²⁰⁸ This became evident even after the introduction of marriage by capture and marriage by bride price (*kwase ngohol* and *kem*), no man could legitimately be said to have married unless, he also gave his sister to his in-law in exchange for his wife. Due to this very reason,

no man could purely because having paid the bride price on a woman, ever hope to keep her (and her children) unless and until he had given his sister in exchange for the wife. This had the tendency of playing down the significance of *kem* (whether in cash or kind) and the value (in material terms) placed on the head of the woman by the father. Virtually anything could be accepted as *kem* including “*ijov*” (mushroom).²⁰⁹

Thus, “husbands could hardly regard their wives as mere objects (or slaves) and each strived to give her the best of treatments in the fear of a parallel retaliation against his sister.”²¹⁰ This point cannot be overemphasized, if we note that some women under

²⁰⁷ Ibid.

²⁰⁸ Alfred Akawe Torkula, “A survey of the marriage and Burial institutions amongst the Tiv of central Nigeria,” in a dissertation submitted in partial requirements for the award of the degree of Doctor of philosophy, accessed 14/9/2018 <http://studylib.net/doc/14283454>

²⁰⁹ Ibid.

²¹⁰ Ibid.

persistent scorn from their colleagues for the inability of their husbands to complete and seal their marriages through exchange had sufficient reasons to desert their husbands irrespective of whether material things could have gone into their marriage.

3.3.7 *Chastity and Fidelity*

Traditional Tiv society places a lot of importance on the virginity of the woman before marriage. Care was taken to ensure the virginity of girls. A girl who married without virginity attracted shame not only on herself but the parents. Pre-marital sexual life was strictly condemned and looked upon as an abomination. In the past, “the ‘*ingbianjov*’ (virginity guardian) ritual was often performed on daughters.”²¹¹ This involved tying of beads of snail shell on the waist of all daughters. Therefore, in Tiv culture, an unmarried woman wore *ikyoor* (the shell of a snail) on her neck as a sign of her virginity and chastity. With this, “a young man would be afraid to have sex with her. Any man who had sex with girls who undertook the virginity guardian ritual would presumably become impotent or sterile.”²¹² In Tiv tradition, Men values their potency and were always afraid to come near girls who had virginity rituals. It was then very unusual to find a girl who had sex before marriage. The husband was always the first to sleep with the girl and break her virginity. The snail shell could only be removed by her husband after consummation of marriage. According to Wegh, “if the husband found that he was the first to know his wife, he took a she-goat known as *ivo akoor*(goat-snail) to his *ngo-kem* (mother-in-law) in appreciation

²¹¹ Dennis A. Ityavyar, *The Changing Socio-Economic Role of Tiv Women*, (Jos-Nigeria: Midland press Ltd, 1992),35.

²¹² Ibid. 35

of the mother's role in bringing up her daughter.”²¹³ With this strong sense of sexual morality, most people still have poor understanding of the Tiv cultural norms.

Many of the popular views regarding fornication and adultery in Tiv society are based on a poor understanding of the deep-rooted values of chastity and fidelity underlining the Tiv cultural moral norms. But from the above, it is quite clear that chastity was/is a cherished value here. There were also “clear incest taboos that set the boundaries within which sexual relationships were allowed or sanctioned. Details of these boundaries have been clarified that every breach of incest was sanctioned ranging from the ritual of burning to stigmatization.”²¹⁴

Similarly, Akawe explains that,

even where incest boundaries were not of the essence, stiff sanctions existed against rape and fornication. Each girl at puberty underwent the “*ikyoor*” ritual to forestall rape and ensure chastity. In the event of rape (or fornication) the “aggressor” was required to propitiate the *ikyoor akombo* without which, he runs the risk on the one hand, of persistent ill luck while the woman (victim) on the other hand could have problems ranging from irregular menstrual circles to inability to conceive.²¹⁵

Consequent upon these sanctions, “prior to the actual exchange process, each woman was given the opportunity to confess whether she had been sexually violated to set the records straight and get the “culprit” to propitiate the *ikyoorakombo* and cleanse the woman before marriage.”²¹⁶

²¹³ Wegh, *Between Continuity and Change: Tiv Concept of Tradition and modernity*, 119.

²¹⁴ Alfred Akawe Torkula, “A survey of the marriage and Burial institutions amongst the Tiv of central Nigeria,” in a dissertation submitted in partial requirements for the award of the degree of Doctor of philosophy, accessed 14/9/2018 <http://studylib.net/doc/14283454>

²¹⁵ Ibid.

²¹⁶ Ibid.

The same exemplary level of faithfulness was expected of the woman in marriage. According to Akawe, she was expected to “abstain from both *ijimba* (loose manners) and *idya* (adultery).”²¹⁷ Akawe elaborated further on this issue that,

There existed stiff sanctions against infidelity and no man could violate the chastity of his neighbor’s wife and still expect the approval of the society, since such violation was capable of killing friendship and undermining filial love. Age grades had strict codes against members caught in compromising situations with the wives of other members. The culprits were heavily fined (and asked to “*wua tia*”) and stigmatized. As a way of reinforcing sanctions against adultery, it was believed that if an adulterous person was wounded in a hunt or war, his friend (or brother) whose wife, he had, had an adulterous relationship with, attempted to help, instead of surviving, he would surely die.²¹⁸

Though, all these were effective deterrents, aggrieved individuals probably not satisfied with these sanctions, still went as far as poisoning or stabbing those going out with their wives.

3.3.8 *Respect for Elders*

Elders had a pride of place in all Tiv traditional marriage systems. They were “saddled with the responsibility of distributing *angor* to their children and brothers. Young men literally depended on elders for wives and no person could separate himself from the authority (of elders) and obligations imposed on him by the society and hope to get away with it.”²¹⁹ Though the youths resented the pride of place of the elders, charging it was being misused, it proved to be an efficient social control value ensuring stability and intergroup harmony.

²¹⁷ Ibid.

²¹⁸ Ibid.

²¹⁹ Ibid.

3.3.9 Fairness (Principle of Equalization)

The Tiv's main purpose of marriage is procreation. In the old days, it was almost impossible for a childless marriage to continue. This was most common with the exchange marriage. Commenting on this arrangement, Akiga said, "the most probable explanation of the Tiv exchange marriage is that it represents an unconscious attempt to reconcile the patrilineal and matrilineal principles of equalization."²²⁰ Akiga contends that, "this law of equalization is the logical corollary of the theory each of the exchanged woman bears children on behalf of the other."²²¹ Akawe insists, "Fairness as a core value of Tiv pre-colonial marriage systems was reflected in the essence of exchange marriage itself."²²²

The whole idea of marriage was to retain the reproductive force within the community and there was no better way of doing this efficiently than through the exchange of sisters. In the rare cases where one couple involved in the exchange had fewer children, it was mandatory for the couple with more children to give those with less, a daughter who was used to exchange a second wife for the man. This process of equalization according to Akawe, "also applied on the death of one of the women to a particular exchange arrangement and any man resisting it ran the risk of having his wife and children recovered by an aggrieved "*tien*" (exchange partner)."²²³

²²⁰ Akiga, *Akiga's Story: The Tiv Tribe as Seen By One of its Members*. (London: Oxford university press, 1965),103.

²²¹ Ibid. 103

²²² Alfred Akawe Torkula, "A survey of the marriage and Burial institutions amongst the Tiv of central Nigeria," in a dissertation submitted in partial requirements for the award of the degree of Doctor of philosophy, accessed 14/9/2018 <http://studylib.net/doc/14283454>

²²³ Ibid.

This principle was so rigorous that, if one of the exchange women bore more children and the other remained barren, the family into which the latter was married had the right to annul the contract and demand the return of their daughter together with her children! This problem was sometimes amicably resolved by giving another girl to the community, which had a childless wife.

Furthermore, if one of the women bore more children than the other, another solution was to be found. The community with fewer children asked their brother-in-law to give them one of the daughters to exchange for another wife. The request was willingly granted. The law of equalization was applied only when the number of children was excessively unequal. If one of the women bore six daughters and two sons, and the other bore three sons and two daughters, the law was enforced. More emphasis was laid on the number of daughters, because the community, which had more daughters, would certainly have more wives in the future, and increase at the expense of the other. The Tiv word for the practice is *dugh*, which literally means to deduct or subtract. An equalization daughter still belonged to her biological father. Her father retained the right to perform fertility *akombo* for her. At her husband's home, she was called by her paternal clan.

3.3.10 *The Igba Factor*

The *igba* is the son of any female married outside the kindred. He is a non-agnate. In the words of R. M Downes, "he has a peculiar position due to the fact that he is the closest relative from outside the kindred and is safe from the machinations of witches in these kindred, as a witch can only work amongst the family spirits."²²⁴ He is thus used in all rites

²²⁴ R M Downes, *The Tiv Tribe*, (Kaduna-Nigeria: Government printer, 1933), 22.

and other actions where another might run a risk of pollution. The position of the *igba* in Tiv culture has a lot of advantages. Downes contends, “He may take, by day, what he wants from the house of his mother’s relatives and will not be interfered with.”²²⁵ However, he will never interfere with any woman in his mother’s relative’s compound. The *igba* factor sets the parameters of good relationship between the two families.

As pointed out earlier, within the *igba*, the children of an exchange marriage were considered more important than others. They could “aspire to positions of temporal and spiritual leadership and were the only legitimate heirs of their parents, with a voice in the assembly of their father’s kinsmen (*ityo*).”²²⁶ In time of stress and conflict, “they stood as bridges between their father’s kinsmen and their mother’s kinsmen. They also acted as emissaries.”²²⁷ These children could thus forestall crisis and begin to take those steps that bound communities and neighbors together because of marriage.

3.3.11 *The Widow’s Factor*

Protection for widows was a core value of the Tiv world view. After the death of their husbands, “they had the latitude to decide who amongst the eligible children (brothers) of his deceased husband was to be her new husband.”²²⁸ Once the person she preferred also

²²⁵ Ibid. 22

²²⁶ Alfred Akawe Torkula, “A survey of the marriage and Burial institutions amongst the Tiv of central Nigeria,” in a dissertation submitted in partial requirements for the award of the degree of Doctor of philosophy, accessed 14/9/2018 <http://studylib.net/doc/14283454>; also *Ityo* in the first place refers to the patrilineal relations. In this sense *Ityo* means members of any extended family who have a common male ancestor. *Ityo* is also used in a wider context to imply kindred, clan, district and even all the Tiv people. We also use *Ityo* to differentiate patrilineal from matrilineal kins. Every Tiv has *Ityo*. When a Tiv says, ‘*Ityo Yam*’, he means that he is a son of Tiv. If a Tiv is speaking to a group of his fellow Tiv, he simply addresses them as his *Ityo*. He does not make any difference in this case even if his maternal relations are in the group.

²²⁷ Ibid.

²²⁸ Ibid.

consented, “he becomes obligated to protect the widow (and her children) working towards their welfare all in furtherance of the interest of the deceased.”²²⁹ Within the Tiv culture, “all the children, the widow delivered after the husband had died would still be considered the children of the late husband.”²³⁰ The essence of this was to continue the family line of the deceased brother. However, a widow who did not wish to marry his late husband’s brother or son (from another wife) would be allowed to return to her parents and remarry whoever she desired.

As can be seen from the varied social factors above, marriage among the Tiv, bears a lot on social and religious values. It is defined within the totality of the Tiv worldview. Marriage union among the Tiv is much more than a union between a man and a woman. To prove this point, late paramount ruler Alfred Akawe Torkula (Tor Tiv IV) insists, “though in some societies, marriage is acknowledged to be in existence once there is both sexual and economic cooperation (union) between people of the opposite sex, and even same sex, amongst the Tiv, such union does not necessarily imply marriage.”²³¹

To fully appreciate the Tiv concept of marriage, one must first understand the way they conceptualize the family. The Tiv word for the family is “*tsombor*.”²³² According to Wagh, ““*Tsombur*” is also the word for the umbilical cord, which joins mother and child before birth.”²³³ Conceptualizing the family as “*tsombur*” is “acknowledging its organic

²²⁹ Ibid.

²³⁰ Dennis A. Ityavyar, *The Changing Socio-Economic Role of Tiv Women*, 38

²³¹ Alfred Akawe Torkula, “The concept of Tiv Marriage,” accessed 30/5/2018. www.Fatyoitiv.org.

²³² Wagh, *Between Continuity and Change: Tiv Concept of Tradition and modernity*, 125.

²³³ Ibid.

unity and the common blood implied in its composition.”²³⁴ Consequently, “the Tiv family which is also the basic genealogical unit can comprise the couple and their children or the man, his several wives, their children including their wives after several generations.”²³⁵

The family is therefore, “theoretically speaking an “endless” line of relations and offspring tracing their descent to a common ancestor.”²³⁶ Waya insists,

Marriage to the Tiv is therefore more than a sexual and economic union. It is also a strategy to perpetuate the family through having more and more children. This strategy also allows the development of complicated group alliances aimed at maintaining societal equilibrium and cohesion.²³⁷

Marriage today among the Tiv is caught between two worlds: tradition and modernity. However, despite the impact of western education and modernity, Tiv traditional marriage remains an indisputable value. Despite the obvious variations in the Tiv marriage systems (some of which have been considered) “they were held together by a very complex system of values all of which were internalized and accepted as part of the Tiv world view.”²³⁸

However, considered, a closer look at the social and religious values behind Tiv traditional marriage system reveals that, marriage is not a one-off process like in some cultures especially the Western European culture. In the Tiv culture, it is a continuous process which brings out the fact that dialogue is very essential. A community of beings

²³⁴ David Waya & Augusta Akanume, “Evaluation of the Tiv and Igbo marriage systems” in *Journal of Culture, Society and Development*, Vol.29, 1917 accessed 30/5/2018, www.iiste.org

²³⁵ Ibid.

²³⁶ Ibid

²³⁷ Ibid.

²³⁸ Alfred Akawe Torkula, “A survey of the marriage and Burial institutions amongst the Tiv of central Nigeria,” in a dissertation submitted in partial requirements for the award of the degree of Doctor of philosophy, accessed 14/9/2018 <http://studylib.net/doc/14283454>

needs to be in constant dialogue so as to enhance continuity and better growth. Marriage goes beyond a bond or a contract between two physical beings. Among the Tivs, marriage is rather a union between two different families which assures a better bonding of the entire society. This puts everybody on alert on the need to carefully nurture and foster union. 'United, we stand.' This principle guard and protect the Tiv marriage institution and values.

Nevertheless, with in Tiv social and religious values, there are some issues that Tiv traditional marriage system needs to address through dialogue with the church and modern society. For example, marriage in Tiv culture is about child bearing. Women should not be subjected or considered a machine for producing children. Marriage in Tiv culture should go beyond this understanding; but should embrace the value of complementarity and wellbeing of the spouses. Also, the gravity of punishment arising from the handling of issues or matters related to the value of chastity and fidelity should be revisited. The element of revenge or vengeance arising from, aggrieved individuals probably not satisfied with these sanctions, still went as far as poisoning or stabbing those going out with their wives should be discouraged or abolished. Forgiveness and reconciliation should be encouraged and promoted.

Lastly, the issues of polygamy in Tiv Catholic church also need to be reexamined. With the advent of Christianity, many Tiv sons and daughters have come to believe that monogamy was the ideal form of marriage, but they also realized that circumstances could make such an idea unrealizable. And polygamy itself may not always be a matter of one's free choice. The socio-economic and cultural circumstances that create polygamy need to be examined with an open and sympathetic mind before one could begin to understand the phenomenon of polygamy in Tiv society.

Overall, it must be noted that the marriage institution like anything else, is not spared from the wave of social change affecting Tivland. In pre-colonial Nigeria, there were several forms of marriage as shown in chapter two. The most common one at that time was the exchange- marriage. This involved people exchanging their sisters for wives. Money or material things were not involved. Now, things have changed as bride price has been introduced in the wake of colonialism. The age at which girls now get married has also changed.

CHAPTER FOUR
MAGISTERIAL TEACHING/UNDERSTANDING ON MARRIAGE SINCE
VATICAN II

4.1 Introduction

Marriage since the 11th century has been an important issue, specifically in the practice of Catholicism, and generally, in the Christian tradition. The Christian tradition has had quite a bit to say on this matter, beginning from Jesus Christ himself through the early Church Fathers to our day. However, anyone who is familiar with the subject of marriage in Christian history and tradition knows as well how complex the discussion on this issue tend to be. This chapter seeks to highlights some of the salient positions on the rich but complex Christian tradition on marriage. The chapter examines the sources of this tradition in the Christian scripture, the official teachings of the Roman Catholic church, and in some contemporary theological discourse. The motif for such exploration is not to provoke unnecessary debate but to present the Church's understanding and position on marriage for the possibility of dialogue between the Church's position and marriage in Tiv culture.

4.2 Contemporary meaning and purpose of marriage

Among most Africans communities, and in classical Christian understanding of marriage, emphasis on marriage was for procreation. Within the new understanding of marriage, the emphasis has now shifted “from procreation to life partner as the goal of marriage.”²³⁹ The goal and purpose of marriage consists in this life partnership. Thus, the

²³⁹Ibid.,337.

emphasis is now on interpersonal love; intimate sexual encounter, and mutual fulfillment of the couple as the new meaning and purpose of marriage.

Marriage is now essentially a “profound I-THOU relation between two individuals.”²⁴⁰ However, there are weaknesses in this form of couple centered type of understanding. Primarily, it promotes individualism of modern times and culture. The meaning of true marriage should not be about individualism. Marriages are not just life partnership, but the bringing together of families, groups of friends, and co-workers. The inclusion of this social and communal dimension helps ensure an adequate understanding of the purpose of marriage.

4.3 The nature of marriage in scripture

4.3.1 Marriage in the Old Testament

Marriage in the Old Testament (OT) is designated by a union of a man and a woman in legal cohabitation that is characterized by intimacy and complementarity. The basis for such union is found in both case of Genesis account of creation (Gen. 2:18 and 2:24). The institution of marriage came way after the creation of other creatures. In the first creation account, God instituted marriage as the pinnacle of creation when on the sixth day God created human being in his image, male and female. He blessed them and instructed them to “Be fertile and multiply, fill the earth and subdue it” (Genesis 1: 27-28). In the second creation account, the complementarity of the created humans was made glaring, “it is not good for man to be alone. I will make a suitable partner for him” (Genesis 2:18). She was made from him and became “flesh of his flesh” (Genesis 2:22-23).

²⁴⁰ Ibid., 337.

The idea of the Old Testament for marriage cannot be separated from a wholesome oneness where the man and the woman fulfill aspects of the same union. The fulfillment of the man is found in total abandonment of self-centered distractions; he shall leave “his father and mother and clings to his wife, and the two of them become one flesh” (Genesis 2: 24). Clearly, the institution of marriage was divinely established for the good of human beings as far as the Old Testament is concerned.

Man and woman from creation had to share in the life of companionship and procreation as the aim of marriage. So, according to Lawler, “from the biblical tradition, therefore, sexuality and marriage are set within two perspectives: in one, the relational, mutual help of the spouses; in the other, their procreative activity together.”²⁴¹ Procreation, Scripture teaches, is a gift from God and must be safeguarded (Gen. 1:28). The United States conference of Catholic Bishops understood the importance of this position. According to the Bishops,

when spouses conceive new life, they participate in the Lord God's creative power. This is a great privilege and sacred responsibility! Over the centuries and through the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the Catholic Church has reflected upon marriage and the gift of creative power that God has endowed humanity with.²⁴²

The Bishop’s statement shows that, “God Himself, wishing to share with man a certain special participation in His own creative work, blessed male and female, saying:

²⁴¹Michael G. Lawler, Todd A. Salzman & Eileen Burke-Sullivan, *The Church in the Modern World: Gaudium et Spes Then and Now*, 118.

²⁴² United states conference of Catholic Bishops, “Catholic teaching” accessed 1/6/2018 <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/marriage-and-family/natural-family-planning/catholic-teaching/>

‘increase and multiply’ (Gen. 1:28).”²⁴³ So, “the sacred Scripture begins with the creation and the union of man and woman and ends with "the wedding feast of the Lamb" (Rev 19:7, 9).”²⁴⁴ Thus, George Willmann contends, “Holy scripture affirms that man and woman were for one another: ‘it is not good that the man should be alone’ (Gen.2.18).”²⁴⁵ This shows that, “woman, ‘flesh of his flesh’ that is his counterpart, his equal, his nearest in all things, is given to him by God as a ‘helpmate’; she thus represent God from whom comes our help.”²⁴⁶ Thus, the Sacred scripture states, “therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh (Gen. 2.24).”²⁴⁷ Willmann also affirms this position and contends, “the Lord himself shows that this signifies an unbreakable union of their two lives by recalling what the plan of God the creator had been ‘in the beginning’: ‘so they are no longer two, but one flesh’ (Mt.19.6).”²⁴⁸ This explains why God created man and woman out of love and commanded them to imitate his love in

²⁴³ Pope Paul VI, Vatican Council II, *Gaudium Et Spes*, December 7, 1965, accessed 29/6/2018. http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_Councils/ii_vatican_Council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html.

²⁴⁴ Sacred Heart Church, Lawrenceburg, “The Sacraments—Matrimony (Marriage)” accessed 21/9/2018 <http://shlawrenceburg.org/Sacraments.htm>. "Sacred Scripture begins with the creation and union of man and woman and ends with "the wedding feast of the Lamb" (Rev 19:7, 9). Scripture often refers to marriage, its origin and purpose, the meaning God gave to it, and its renewal in the covenant made by Jesus with his Church. God created man and woman out of love and commanded them to imitate his love in their relations with each other. Man and woman were created for each other. "It is not good that the man should be alone. I will make a suitable partner for him. . . . The two of them become one body" (Gn 2:18; 24). Woman and man are equal in human dignity, and in marriage both are united in an unbreakable bond; also see “Marriage” from accessed, 21/9/2018 <https://littleflowermemphis.org/sacraments/marriage/> .

²⁴⁵ George Willmann, “The Sacrament of marriage” Series #5 www.frgeorgewillmann.org accessed, 1/6/2018.

²⁴⁶“Catechism of the Catholic Church and the sacrament of marriage” accessed, 1/6/2018. <https://catholicdoors.com/misc/marriage/matri.htm> .

²⁴⁷ The two shall become one: Reclaiming marriage” in *First Things* by evangelical and Catholic Together, March, 2015 accessed 25/9/2018, <https://www.firstthings.com/article/2015/03/the-two-shall-become-one-flesh> .

²⁴⁸ George Willmann, “The sacrament of marriage” series #5; also see Catechism of the Catholic Church and the sacrament of marriage accessed, 1/6/2018 <https://catholicdoors.com/misc/marriage/matri.htm>.

their relations with each other. Therefore, “Woman and man are equal in human dignity, and in marriage, both are united in an unbreakable bond.”²⁴⁹

The Church’s understanding of the sacredness of marriage is therefore, rooted in the creation narratives in Genesis. “The Lord God said: ‘It is not good for the man to be alone’.... That is why a man leaves his father and mother and cling to his wife, and the two of them become one body (Gen. 2.18, 24).”²⁵⁰ The Lord blesses their union and orders them to “be fruitful and multiply” (Gen. 1.28).

The Christian marriage is modelled on the Old Testament principle of love. As the Bible demonstrates, Christian marriage is nourished by love and taught as indissoluble. This truth is deduced from Genesis 2:24. Verse 24 says two things that are important to marriage. First, it asserts that husband would attach himself to his wife. That the two shall become *one flesh* is important in a marriage relationship. It clearly suggests that God intended to establish one form of marriage, which is monogamy. The expression “one flesh” signifies the sexual union that consummates marriage. The wife is appreciated and valued. God designed marriage as the fundamental factor of all human society. It means that “such a union symbolizes the complete identification of two people with one community of interests and pursuits.”²⁵¹

Verse 24 of Genesis further shows that marriage should be permanent. The man “shall cleave to his wife” is important because it demonstrates that marriage should be

²⁴⁹ “Marriage” accessed, 21/9/2018 <https://littleflowermemphis.org/sacraments/marriage/>; also see “Matrimony”, accessed, 1/6/2018 www.stjosephlakeland.org.

²⁵⁰ “Sacrament of Marriage,” accessed, 25/9/2018 <http://www.presentationbvm.org/sacrament-of-marriage/>.

²⁵¹ “Cohesiveness in the marriage union,” accessed, 1/6/2018 www.bible.org.

forever, and nothing shall separate the couples, but death. The Hebrew word (לדבוק) is translated “to cleave.”²⁵² To cleave means to stick, or to glue together. In marriage, the husband and wife are glued together. This suggests permanence. It is like the covenant God made with the Israelites. Marriage, in this sense, is a covenant. However, modern understanding of the church on marriage has moved from covenant to vocation.

Also, marriage in Genesis is intended to be “between a man and a woman – in another word, monogamy (Genesis 1:27-28).”²⁵³ This position is reiterated by Janet S. Smith when she said, “the Church teaches that there is a proper relationship between spouses that is properly safeguarded and nourished in monogamous and indissoluble marriage.”²⁵⁴ This situation according to James Hough, “was prescribed by the Council of Trent whose intention was to refute and anathematize errors and reform practices regarding marriage.”²⁵⁵

4.3.2 *Marriage in the New Testament*

In the New Testament, Jesus deepens the Hebrew concept of marriage, especially on monogamy. According to White Robed, the teaching of Jesus is hinged on the “oneness that exists between the man and the woman. The woman is not to be cast aside at will.”²⁵⁶

²⁵² The word לדבוק is a Hebrew verb which mean to adhere, stick, cling, cleave, join, gum which is translated to define how the relationship between husband and wife is understood in the catholic teaching on marriage.

²⁵³ William P. Roberts, “Christian Marriage”, In Raymond F. Bulman and Frederick J. Parrella, (Edits) *From Trent to Vatican II: Historical and Theological Investigations*, (Oxford: University Press, 2006) 210

²⁵⁴ Janet E. Smith, “Christian Marriage” in *Humanae vitae, a generation later*, (Catholic University of America Press. (1991)) Accessed 21 November 2017, www.jstor.org/stable

²⁵⁵ James Hough “What was NOT a recommendation of the Council of Trent?” accessed, 1/6/2008 www.answers.com.

²⁵⁶ White Robed Monks of St. Benedict, “on the sacrament of marriage,” accessed, 1/6/2018 www.whiterobedmonks.org.

Jesus speaks, therefore, against divorce, so strongly, in fact, that the one who marries a divorced woman commits adultery (Matt. 5.31-32; 19.3-12).

On the other hand, Jesus also consistently regarded marriage as a state in life proper to this world; in heaven there will be no marrying (Mk. 12.25). All of the concerns of marriage must yield to the claims of the second coming (Lk 14. 29; see also Mt. 24.38-39; Lk.17.27). As it can be found in Jesus' hermeneutics, everything is viewed from the prism of eschatology; the kingdom of God.

References to marriage in the New Testament are many. This shows the importance of marriage in the New Testament. As God's son, Jesus would clarify the meaning of marriage in God's mind because Jesus has come to fulfill the law of God, and more importantly, he is the way, life, and truth (John 14:6).

We find in John 2:1-12 for example, the first instance where the evangelists uses the image of a marriage ceremony. Jesus was present as a guest at the marriage feast at Cana, and so was his mother. In the popular event where Jesus changed water into wine through the intervention of his mother, significantly gives credence to the fact that Jesus approves of the of the heterogeneous marriage. The couple were in trouble because the wine was running out. So, Jesus granted the request of his mother by changing the water into wine so that the celebration will not cut short. There are numerous potential lessons from this wedding ceremony, where Jesus performed his first miracle of turning water into wine. According to W. A Criswell, "Jesus' miracle demonstrated that we are now in a new era, a new dispensation."²⁵⁷ The changing of water into wine signifies the arrival through

²⁵⁷ W. A. Criswell, "The miracle of Bethlehem" in Sermon Library (Homily of 14th December 1969) accessed, 1/6/2018 www.criswell.com.

Jesus of the new messianic age. Supporting this view, Saint Paul stated, “The old things have passed away, behold, new things have come” (2 Corinthians 5:17).

There is also another implication to Jesus’ attendance at the wedding ceremony. Jesus could have decided not to attend the wedding ceremony. By participating actively in the marriage ceremony, Jesus indirectly approves of marriage in the New Testament. He did not come to condemn the Old Testament God’s law on marriage but to fulfil it.

Saint Paul provided pragmatic teaching on marriage. Ephesians 5:21-23 contains Paul’s theology on marriage. His teaching on marriage in this text is Christological. Rachel Held Evans states, “Paul compares marriage to Christ’s love for the church.”²⁵⁸ He says,

Wives should regard their husbands as they regard the Lord...husbands should love their wives just as Christ loves the Church and sacrifices himself for her to make her holy... Each one of you must love his wife as he loves himself and let every wife respect her husband. (Cf Ephesians 5.21).²⁵⁹

This text is important to Christian marriage. First, it shows the ecclesiastical significance of Christ’s self-sacrifice. The husband is hereby challenged to do all within his power to sacrifice for the wife. The most endearing sacrifice the man will make is to love and provide for his wife. This is the type of love Christ had for his church. In any Christian marriage, love is not an option, but a requirement. Women, on the other hand, were challenged to respect their husbands. Respect is crucial in any Christian relationship. Some wives, due to their economic status, have failed to respect their husbands. Paul was

²⁵⁸ Rachel Held Evans, “Is marriage really an Illustration of Christ and the Church?” accessed, 1/6/2018 www.rachelheldevans.com.

²⁵⁹ The New Community Bible: Catholic Version, Gift Edition Dulux, (London: St Paul’s publishing, 2008).

correct when he admonished wives to respect their husbands. However, respect is reciprocal, as seen in Ephesians 5:21. Husbands are bound by love to show respect to their wives.

4.4 Marriage according to Catholic Church teaching and tradition

The Catholic teaching on the sacrament of marriage seems to be very clear and precise. It is based first and foremost on scripture, sacred tradition, magisterium and then backed up juridically by canon law. The canon law gives a broad and elaborate treatment on marriage within the catholic tradition and understanding. The 1983 Code of Canon Law title VII: On Marriage (Canon 1055-1165) deals exclusively on marriage in the Christian church. It defines marriage as,

a covenant by which *a man and a woman* establish between themselves a partnership of their whole life, and which of its own nature is ordered to the wellbeing of the spouses and to the procreation and upbringing of children, has, between the baptized, been raised by Christ the Lord to the dignity of a sacrament.²⁶⁰

Article 2 states, “A valid marriage contract cannot exist between baptized persons without it being by that very fact a sacrament.”²⁶¹ Thus, Canon 1056 places “the essential properties of marriage as unity and indissolubility, which in Christian marriage they

²⁶⁰ Code of canon Law, 1055 §1 accessed 27/9/2018 http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG1104/_P3V.HTM also see Robert Vasoli, What God has joined together: The Annulment crisis in American Catholicism, (New York: Oxford university press, 1998), accessed 25/9/2018. <https://epdf.tips/what-god-has-joined-together-the-annulment-crisis-in-american-catholicism.html> accessed 25/9/2018 & Catholic Teaching and Public Statements on Marriage, accessed 25/9/2018. <http://www.cccb.ca/site/Files/Churchteaching.html>.

²⁶¹ Code of Canon Law, 1055 §2.

acquire a distinctive firmness by reason of the sacrament.”²⁶² Canon 1061 also places “consummation and ratification as necessary conditions of a valid marriage.”²⁶³

The Catechism of the Catholic Church’s definition of marriage which is based on the Code of Canon Law, further attests, “the Catholic Church based its teaching on the sacrament of matrimony on two sources: the Scriptures and the Code of Canon law.”²⁶⁴ It argues “that the sacrament of matrimony signifies the union of Christ and the Church.”²⁶⁵ The union of Christ and the church is significant because, it gives meaning to the idea that Christ and the Church are spouses to each other. Christ is the bridegroom and the Church is the bride. Such marriage is based in the free sacrifice of Jesus and a free response from the church. This explain why in the mind of the Church; fruitful love can only be achieved through monogamous union. Thus, it affirms that true unity, that is, “indissolubility and openness is essential to marriage: Polygamy is incompatible with the unity of marriage; divorce separates what God has joined together; the refusal of fertility turns married life away from its ‘supreme gift,’ the child.”²⁶⁶ It also elucidated further that the re-marrying of persons divorced from a living, lawful spouse contravenes the plan and law of God as taught by Christ. They are “separated from the Church, therefore they cannot receive Eucharistic communion.”²⁶⁷

²⁶² Ibid, 1056.

²⁶³ Code of Canon Law, 1061.

²⁶⁴ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2nd edition, 400

²⁶⁵ “Catechism of the Catholic Church and the sacrament of marriage”, accessed 25/9/2018 <https://catholicdoors.com/misc/marriage/matri.htm> ; also see Marriage-queen of Apostles, accessed, 1/6/2018 www.queenofapostles.org .

²⁶⁶ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2nd edition, 414-415; also see “Catechism of the Catholic Church and the sacrament of marriage”, accessed 25/9/2018 <https://catholicdoors.com/misc/marriage/matri.htm>.

²⁶⁷ Ibid.

4.5 More current teaching on marriage: Vatican II Council

The current magisterial teaching on marriage is heavily enshrined in the documents of the Church, most especially in *Gaudium Et Spes*. Many would argue that *Gaudium et Spes* is the most modern of the documents of Vatican II. It explicitly addressed itself to the task of “reading the signs of the times and of interpreting them in the light of the gospel.”²⁶⁸ Thus, Janet Smith attests, “the document is concerned both to make an evaluation of modern society and to restore some of the fundamentals of the Christian faith that those living in modern times most need to hear.”²⁶⁹ The Constitution is divided in two main parts: one deals with “the Church and man’s calling” (Article 11-45); the other, with “some problems of special urgency” (Article 46-90). This second part deals exclusively with “the dignity of marriage and the family.”²⁷⁰ The chapter on marriage and the family begins with a statement of purpose: “the Council intends to present certain key points of the Church’s teaching (in a clear light); and it hopes to guide and encourage Christians and all others who are trying to preserve and to foster the dignity and supremely sacred value of the married life.”²⁷¹ This position, William P. Roberts argues,

²⁶⁸ Pope Paul VI, Vatican Council II, *Gaudium et Spes*, Sec. 4

²⁶⁹ Janet E. Smith, “Christian Marriage” in *Humanae vitae, a generation later*, (Catholic University of America Press. (1991)) Accessed 21 November 2017, www.jstor.org/stable

²⁷⁰ Pope Paul VI, Vatican Council II, *Gaudium et Spes*, sec.46-52

²⁷¹ *Ibid.* 47 emphasis added.

immediately signals a stark contrast with Trent's treatment of marriage... while Trent's purpose was to refute and anathematize errors and reform practices regarding marriage, Vatican II is interested in shedding new theological light on the meaning of this sacrament.²⁷²

It explains this meaning first by referring to marriage as an "intimate partnership of life and love, which is rooted in the couple's irrevocable personal consent, by which they mutually surrender themselves to each other."²⁷³ The purpose of marriage in this new understanding Roberts contends, "is perceived in the context of its existential meaning, 'an intimate partnership of life and Love.'"²⁷⁴ With this thinking, couples marry "in order to growing a unique way in mind, heart, soul and body through the mutual sharing of their lives. Children may or may not flow from their marital union."²⁷⁵ The emphasis here is generous self-giving to each other in all dimensions of their being. The emergence of children from this self-donation may well be a matter beyond their control.

The importance is to trace the origin of marriage to God Himself who shares his divine life with humanity in an unbounded way. For God, the Council Fathers says,

is the author of marriage and has endowed it with various values and purposes: all of these have a very important bearing on the continuation of the human race, on the personal development and eternal destiny of every member of the family, on the dignity, stability, peace, and prosperity of the family and of the whole human race.²⁷⁶

However, the institution of marriage and married love is ordered by its very nature to the procreation of children and education of the offspring and in them finds "its crown

²⁷² William P. Roberts, "Christian Marriage", In Raymond F. Bulman and Frederick J. Parrella, (Edits) *From Trent to Vatican II: Historical and Theological Investigations*, 213-14

²⁷³ Paul VI, Vatican Council II, *Gaudium et Spes*, 48.

²⁷⁴ William P. Roberts, "Christian Marriage", In Raymond F. Bulman and Frederick J. Parrella, (Edits) *From Trent to Vatican II: Historical and Theological Investigations*, 217.

²⁷⁵ *Ibid.* 217.

²⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

of glory.”²⁷⁷ Thus, “the couple help and serve each other by their marriage partnership; they become conscious of their unity and experience it more deeply from day to day.”²⁷⁸ The intimate “union of marriage, as a mutual giving of two persons, and the good of the children demand total fidelity from the spouses and require an unbreakable union between them.”²⁷⁹

Furthermore, the Council describes some of the sacramental dimensions of Christian marriage as being blessed by Christ himself. The Church asserts, “Christ has abundantly blessed marital love, which is rich in its various features, coming as it does from the spring of divine love and modelled on Christ’s own union with the church.”²⁸⁰ Christ abide with the married couple so that “by their mutual self-giving spouses will love each other with enduring fidelity, as he loved the church and delivered himself for it.”²⁸¹ Genuine marital love, the Church continues, “is caught up into divine love and is directed and enriched by the redemptive power of Christ.”²⁸² As a result,

²⁷⁷ Pope Paul VI, Vatican Council II, *Gaudium et Spes*, 48. Also, confer Pontifical Council for the Family, issued February 12, 1997 In Catholic News Agency, “Vademecum for confessors concerning some aspect of the morality of conjugal life,” accessed 21/9/2018 <https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/resources/life-and-family/sexuality-contraception/vademecum-for-confessors-concerning-some-aspects-of-the-morality-of-conjugal-life> .

²⁷⁸ The two shall become one: Reclaiming marriage” in *First Things* by evangelicals and Catholic Together, March, 2015 accessed 25/9/2018, <https://www.firstthings.com/article/2015/03/the-two-shall-become-one-flesh>.

²⁷⁹“Catechism of the Catholic Church and the sacrament of marriage”, accessed 25/9/2018 <https://catholicdoors.com/misc/marriage/matri.htm>.

²⁸⁰ The two shall become one: Reclaiming marriage” in *First Things* by evangelicals and Catholic Together, March, 2015 accessed 25/9/2018, <https://www.firstthings.com/article/2015/03/the-two-shall-become-one-flesh>.

²⁸¹“Sacrament of Marriage,” accessed 25/9/2018, <http://www.presentationbvm.org/sacrament-of-marriage/>.

²⁸² *Ibid.*

spouses are led to God and helped in their parental role. Fulfilling their marital and family role by virtue of this sacrament, spouses are penetrated with spirit of Christ and their whole life is suffused with faith, hope, and charity; thus, they increasingly further their own perfection and their mutual sanctification, and together they render glory to God.²⁸³

According to William Roberts the mutual sanctification of the couples is, “the meaning of grace as God’s self-gift through the ongoing presence of the risen Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit has revealed a much more profound understanding of the sacramentality of marriage.”²⁸⁴ For understanding the sacramentality of marriage in this light, the sacrament of marriage cannot be confined to the church wedding ceremony. A Christian marriage is “sacramental only to the degree that it signifies to the couple the love of God in Christ.”²⁸⁵ This requires the couples’ manifestation of love to one another, and faith in the God of Jesus Christ.

This sacramental dimension of Christian marriage explains the many questions raised and answered on the ends of marriage. Besides, on the ends of marriage, the Council taught that “both the institution of marriage and the marital love of the spouses are ordained for the procreation and education of children and find in them their ultimate crown.”²⁸⁶

The stress is on fostering the nobility of marriage and the family in a very broad sense. The “well-being of the individual person and of human and Christian society is intimately linked with the healthy condition of the community produced by marriage and

²⁸³ Catholic News Agency, “Vademecum for Confessors concerning Some Aspects of the Morality of Conjugal Life : Pontifical Council for the Family,” Issued February 12, 1997 accessed 25/9/2018, <https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/resources/life-and-family/sexuality-contraception/vademecum-for-confessors-concerning-some-aspects-of-the-morality-of-conjugal-life> .

²⁸⁴ William P. Roberts, “Christian Marriage”, In Raymond F. Bulman and Frederick J. Parrella, (Edits) *From Trent to Vatican II: Historical and Theological Investigations*, 218.

²⁸⁵ Ibid. 219

²⁸⁶ Ibid; 48

family.”²⁸⁷ Hence, “Christians and all men who hold this community in high esteem sincerely rejoice in the various ways by which men today find help in fostering this community of love and perfecting its life, and by which parents are assisted in their lofty calling.”²⁸⁸ Those who rejoice in such aids look for additional benefits from them and labor to bring them about.

To this end, they set forth a Christian understanding of marriage that emphasizes the centrality of conjugal love and of the concept of a covenant relationship between two persons. The Christian marriage is, “seen moreover as a reflection of the loving covenant uniting Christ with the Church.”²⁸⁹

Gaudium et spes further develops the meaning of married love to reflect the love covenant uniting Christ with his Church. It is understood as,

an eminently human love because it is an affection between two persons rooted in the will and it embraces the good of the whole person; it can enrich the sentiments of the spirit and their physical expression with a unique dignity and ennoble them as the special features and manifestations of the friendship proper to marriage.²⁹⁰

The sacramentality of this love brings together the human and the divine, and “leads the partners to a free and mutual self-giving, experienced in tenderness and action, and

²⁸⁷ Pope Paul VI, Vatican Council II, *Gaudium et Spes*, “Fostering the nobility of the marriage and the family,” accessed 1/6/2018, www.usccb.org;

²⁸⁸ *Ibid*; 47; see also “Catechism of the Catholic Church and the sacrament of marriage”, accessed 25/9/2018, <https://catholicdoors.com/misc/marriage/matri.htm> .also see Full text of "Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the modern world" accessed 25/9/2018, https://archive.org/stream/pastoralconstitu00vati_0/pastoralconstitu00vati_0_djvu.txt

²⁸⁹ *Ibid*; 49

²⁹⁰ Pope Paul VI, Vatican Council II, *Gaudium et Spes*, “Fostering the nobility of the marriage and the family,” accessed 1/6/2018, www.usccb.org; also see John L. Allen, “Amoris Laetitia, Chapter 4—Love in marriage,” in *Crux* <https://cruxnow.com/church/2016/04/08/amoris-laetitia-chapter-4-love-in-marriage/> accessed 25/9/2018; & Pope Francis, *Amoris Laetitia* , accessed 26/9/2018, <https://www.catholicculture.org/culture/library/view.cfm?recnum=11217> .

permeating their entire lives; this love is actually developed and increased by its generous exercise.”²⁹¹ Besides the sacramentality of Christian marriage, the Bishops speaks of sexual intimacy in marriage and marital love. They reiterate that marriage and marital love are by nature ordered to the procreation and education of children. According to the Bishops,

without intending to underestimate the other ends of marriage, it must be said that true married love and the family life that flows from it have this end in view: that the spouses would cooperate generously with the love of the creator and saviour, who through them will in due time increase and enrich his family.²⁹²

In fulfilling the mission of procreation and education of children, *Gaudium et spes* asserts that the couple needs to take into consideration,

their own well-being and the well-being of their children already born or yet to come, being able to read the signs of the times and assess their own situation on the material and spiritual level, and, finally, an estimation of the good of the family, of society, and of the Church. It is the married couple themselves who must, in the last analysis, arrive at these judgements before God.²⁹³

The bishops were careful, however, to keep this mission of procreation and education of children in the context of the total meaning of marriage:

²⁹¹ Pope Paul VI, *Vatican Council II, Gaudium et Spes*, “Fostering the nobility of the marriage and the family,” www.usccb.org accessed 1/6/2018; also see Pope Francis, *Amoris Laetitia*, accessed 26/9/2018, <https://www.catholicculture.org/culture/library/view.cfm?recnum=11217>.

²⁹² Catholic News Agency, “Vademecum for Confessors concerning Some Aspects of the Morality of Conjugal Life : Pontifical Council for the Family,” Issued February 12, 1997 accessed 25/9/2018, <https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/resources/life-and-family/sexuality-contraception/vademecum-for-confessors-concerning-some-aspects-of-the-morality-of-conjugal-life>.

²⁹³ Pope Paul VI, *Vatican Council II, Gaudium et Spes*, “Fostering the nobility of the marriage and the family,” accessed 1/6/2018; <http://www.cccb.ca/site/Files/Churchteaching.html>.

But marriage was not instituted solely for the procreation of children: its nature as an indissoluble covenant between two people and the good of the children demand that the mutual love of the partners be properly expressed, that it should grow and mature. Even in cases where despite the intense desire of the spouses there are no children, marriage remains its character of being a whole manner and communion of life and preserves its value and indissolubility.²⁹⁴

The Council concludes its treatment of marriage and family in *Gaudium et spes* with exhortation:

Let married people themselves, who are created in the image of the living God and constituted in an authentic personal dignity, be united together in equal affection, agreement of mind and mutual holiness. Thus, in the footsteps of Christ, the principle of life, they will bear witness by their faithful love in the joys and sacrifices of their calling, to that mystery of love which the Lord revealed to the world by his death and resurrection.²⁹⁵

Apart from this detail presentation on marriage, the Council Fathers also laments on the challenges of married and family in modern times. They contend that, “excellence of the marriage institution is not everywhere reflected with equal brilliance, since polygamy, the plague of divorce, so-called free love and other disfigurements have an obscuring effect.”²⁹⁶ In addition, “married love is too often profaned by excessive self-love, the worship of pleasure and illicit practices against human generation.”²⁹⁷ Besides, “serious disturbances are caused in families by modern economic conditions, by influences at once social and psychological, and by the demands of civil society.”²⁹⁸ And married love is often

²⁹⁴ Ibid; also see The Catechism of the Catholic Church: “Catholic Teaching and Public Statements on Marriage” accessed 25/9/2018, <http://www.cccb.ca/site/Files/Churchteaching.html>.

²⁹⁵ Ibid; also see, “Rob Notes for Joined & Sealed” accessed 26/9/2018 <https://marriagepreparation.com/page/?pg=138> .

²⁹⁶ Ibid; also see *Gaudium et Spes* "pastoral constitution: on the church in the modern world (Only the Sections that apply to the Sacrament of Marriage.) accessed 26/9/2018 <https://catholicdoors.com/misc/marriage/gs.htm> .

²⁹⁷ Ibid; also see Full text of "Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the modern world" accessed 27/9/2018 https://archive.org/stream/pastoralconstitu00vati_0/pastoralconstitu00vati_0_djvu.txt .

²⁹⁸ Full text of "Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the modern world" accessed 27/9/2018 https://archive.org/stream/pastoralconstitu00vati_0/pastoralconstitu00vati_0_djvu.txt .

demanded by selfishness, pleasure-seeking and wrongful practices against having children. In addition, modern economic, socio-psychological and public conditions are seriously disrupting families, and in some regions, the problems arising from increasing population are causing anxiety. The Council Father asserts, “all these factors are disturbing the conscience of the people.”²⁹⁹ Yet, “the power and strength of the institution of marriage and family can be seen in the fact that time and again, despite the difficulties, the profound changes in modern society reveal the true character of this institution in one way or another.”³⁰⁰

Still, it should be noted that the holiness of marriage and the family is firmly rooted in the “intimate partnership of married life, and love has been established by the Creator and qualified by His laws, and is rooted in the conjugal covenant of irrevocable personal consent.”³⁰¹ Hence, by “that human act whereby spouses mutually bestow and accept each other a relationship arises which by divine will and in the eyes of society too is a lasting one.”³⁰² For the good of the spouses and their off-springs as well as of society, “the existence of the sacred bond no longer depends on human decisions alone.”³⁰³ Pope St. John Paul II attests to this divine mandate when he said, “the covenant, or irrevocable personal consent, of marriage sets up an intimate sharing of married life and love as

²⁹⁹ Ibid;

³⁰⁰ *Gaudium et Spes* (only the sections that applies to the sacrament of marriage), accessed, 1/6/2018, www.catholicdoors.com.

³⁰¹ Pope Paul VI, *Gaudium Et spes*, sec. 48. accessed 21/9/2018, http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_Councils/ii_vatican_Council/documents/vat-ii_cons_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html.

³⁰² Ibid, 48.

³⁰³ Pope Paul VI, *Gaudium et Spes* part II, “some problems of special urgency” accessed 21/9/2018. http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_Councils/ii_vatican_Council/documents/vat-ii_cons_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html .

instituted by the creator and regulated by God's law."³⁰⁴ Thus, "the human action in which spouses give themselves to each other and accept each other results in an institution which is stable by divine ordinance and also in the eyes of society."³⁰⁵ This sacred bond, aimed at the good of the couple and their children and of society, does not depend on human decision. John Paul II, asserts,

It is God who is the author of marriage and its endowment with various values and purposes. All of which are of such vital importance for the continuance of the human race, the development of and eternal destiny of the individual members of the family, and the dignity, stability, peace and prosperity of the family itself and of human society as a whole. This is God's plan for married life.³⁰⁶

Just as God in the past made Himself present to His people through a covenant of love and fidelity, so now the Savior of men and the Spouse of the Church comes into the lives of married Christians through the sacrament of matrimony. (Cf. Matt. 9: 15; Mark 2: 19-20; Luke 5:34-35; John 3:29; Cf. also 2 Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:27; Apoc. 19:7-8; 21:2 and 9). By this sacrament, "as spouses fulfill their conjugal and family obligation, they are penetrated with the spirit of Christ, which suffuses their whole lives with faith, hope and charity."³⁰⁷ Thus, "they increasingly advance the perfection of their own personalities, as well as their mutual sanctification, and hence contribute jointly to the glory of God."³⁰⁸

³⁰⁴ John Paul II, "To the tribunal of the Roman Rota—1981," accessed 1/6/2018, www.catholicnewsagency.com

³⁰⁵ Peter Ryan & Germain Grisez, "Indissoluble marriage: A reply to Kenneth Himes & James Coriden," in *Theological studies*, June 1, 2011, accessed 1/6/2018, www.highbeam.com

³⁰⁶ John Paul II, "God Himself is the author of marriage," accessed 1/6/2018, www.ewtn.com .

³⁰⁷ Pope Paul VI, Vatican Council II, *Gaudium et Spes*, "Fostering the Nobility of marriage and Family," accessed 1/6/2018, www.USccb.org.

³⁰⁸ Pope Paul VI, Vatican Council II, *Gaudium et Spes*, "The Dignity of the human person," accessed 1/6/2018, www.catholicdoors.com.

Gaudium et Spes points to the centrality of the Bible in the affairs of married people, it notes that the Word of God in the Bible at different points “urges the betrothed and the married to nourish and develop their wedlock by pure conjugal love and undivided affection. (Cf. Gen. 2:22-24, Prov.5:15-20; 31:10-31; Tob. 8:4-8; Cant. 1:2-3; 1:16; 4:16-5, 1; 7:8-14; 1Cor. 7:3-6; Eph 5:25-33).”³⁰⁹ Such love, according to *Gaudium Et Spes*, “merging the human with the divine, leads the spouses to a free and mutual gift of themselves, a gift providing itself by gentle affection and by deed, such love pervades the whole of their lives: indeed by its busy generosity it grows better and grows greater.”³¹⁰ This love is uniquely expressed and perfected through the proper initiative of matrimony that should never be profaned by adultery or divorce.

The Council Fathers argues, “let the spouses themselves, made to the image of the living God and enjoying the authentic dignity of persons, be joined to one another in equal affection, harmony of mind and the work of mutual sanctification.”³¹¹ Thus, following Christ, who is the principle of life,(Cf. Rom. 5:15 and 18; 6:5-11; Gal. 2:20) by the sacrifices and joys of their vocation and through their faithful love, married people can become witnesses of the mystery of love which the Lord revealed to the world by His dying and His rising up to life again (Cf. Eph. 5:25-27). In the mind of the Church, the mystery of love which Christ revealed to the world signifies that, “Marriage is not, then, the effect

³⁰⁹ Vatican Council II, *Gaudium et Spes*, sec. 49; also see "Gaudium Et Spes" Pastoral Constitution: On the Church In The Modern World (Only the Sections that apply to the Sacrament of Marriage.)

accessed 25/9/2018, <https://catholicdoors.com/misc/marriage/gs.htm>.

³¹⁰ Ibid.

³¹¹ Ibid

of chance or the product of evolution of unconscious natural forces; it is the wise institution of the Creator to realize in mankind His design of love.”³¹²

Thus, *Gaudium Et Spes* categorically affirms that,

[Marriage] . . . is an institution confirmed by divine law and receiving its stability, even in the eyes of society, from the human act by which the partners mutually surrender themselves to each other; for the good of the partners, of the children, and of society, this sacred bond no longer depends on human decision alone.³¹³

It further asserts that, “The intimate union of marriage as a mutual giving of two persons, and the good of the children demand total fidelity from the spouses and require an unbreakable unity between them.”³¹⁴

The woman, “flesh of his flesh”, i.e., his counterpart, his equal, his nearest in all things, is given to him by God as a “helpmate;”³¹⁵ she thus represents God from whom comes our help. Therefore, a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh. The Lord himself shows that “this signifies an unbreakable union of their two lives by recalling what the plan of the Creator had been in the beginning: ‘So they are no longer two, but one flesh.’”³¹⁶

Jesus unequivocally taught that the original meaning of the union of man and woman as the Creator willed it from the beginning was to remain as one. The permission given to Moses to divorce one’s wife was a concession to the hardness of hearts. The

³¹² Pope Paul VI, *Humanae Vitae*, sec. 8.

³¹³ Pope Paul VI, Vatican Council II, *Gaudium et Spes*, sec. 48.

³¹⁴ *Ibid.*

³¹⁵ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2nd edition, 1605.

³¹⁶ *Ibid.* 1605.

matrimonial union of man and woman is indissoluble, God himself has determined it: “what therefore God has joined together, let no man put asunder.”³¹⁷

4.6 Magisterial teaching on marriage since Vatican II: The Popes from Paul VI (January 1962 - March 1968), to Pope Francis (March 2013-date)

The post Vatican II Council documents treat marriage in the same light as the Conciliar documents. It gives further insight into the teaching and understanding of the Church on marriage in contemporary world. The emphasis has been on how the Church understands its teaching on marriage in relation to the “world.” Below are some of the post-conciliar discourse on marriage:

*4.6.1 Pope Paul VI, *Humanae Vitae**

Pope Paul VI’s in his encyclical letter on the regulation of birth addresses the sanctity of marriage and the family, with special emphasis on the principal threat against them in modern times: artificial birth control. He sees marriage as an opportunity granted by God to be “responsible collaborators of God the Creator.”³¹⁸ The question of human procreation, “like every other question which touches human life involves more than the limited aspects specific to such disciplines as biology, psychology, demography or sociology.”³¹⁹ The Holy Father argues, “It is the whole man and the whole mission to which he is called that must be considered: both its natural, earthly aspects and its supernatural, eternal aspects.”³²⁰

³¹⁷Ibid., 1614.

³¹⁸ Pope Paul VI, *Humanae Vitae*. 1.

³¹⁹ Ibid.

³²⁰ Ibid. 7

Married love particularly reveals its “true nature and nobility when we realize that it takes its origin from God, who is ‘love,’ -- the Father from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named.”³²¹ Marriage, then, is far from being the effect of chance or the result of the blind evolution of natural forces. It is in reality the wise and provident institution of God the Creator; whose purpose was to effect in man His loving design. The marriage of those who have been baptized is, in addition, “invested with the dignity of a sacramental sign of grace, for it represents the union of Christ and His Church.”³²² Marriage love is above all “*fully human*, it is a love which is *total*, married love is also *faithful and exclusive* of all other, and this until death. Finally, this love is *fecund*.”³²³ It is not confined wholly to the loving interchange, “Marriage and conjugal love are by their nature ordained toward the procreation and education of children. Children are really the supreme gift of marriage and contribute in the highest degree to their parents' welfare.”³²⁴ However, the revised Code of Canon law of 1983 picked up this description and clarify the possible doubt about the wellbeing of the spouses. It picked up the description and repeated it with further clarifications, declaring that,

³²¹ Ibid. 8; also David Trumbull, “Encyclical letter *Humanae Vitae* of the supreme pontiff“ from Agathon Associates accessed 21/9/2018, <http://bostonleadershipbuilders.com/0church/humanae-vitae.htm> .

³²² Ibid.

³²³Ibid, 9.

³²⁴ Ibid.11; also see Catholic Teaching and Public Statements on Marriage, accessed 25/9/2018, <http://www.cccb.ca/site/Files/Churchteaching.html>.

the marriage covenant, by which a man and a woman establish between themselves a partnership of their whole life, and which of its very nature is ordered to the well-being of the spouses and to the procreation and upbringing of children, has, between the baptized, been raised by Christ the Lord to the dignity of a sacrament.³²⁵

With this understanding, the old interpretation that was limited has been broadened to give room to the true essence of marriage. It is now seen as a partnership of love for the whole life of life, ordered equally to the well-being of the spouses and to the generation and nurture of children.

4.6.2 *John Paul II, Familiaris Consortio*

John Paul II's Apostolic Exhortation on the "role of the Christian Family in the Modern World" presents a detail meaning and understanding of marriage and family life in today's world. The Holy Father affirms "the Family in the modern world, as much as and perhaps more than any other institution, has been beset by the many profound and rapid changes that have affected society and culture."³²⁶ And knowing that the Church and the family constitute one of the most precious of human values, he asserts,

the Church wishes to speak and offer her help to those who are already aware of the value of marriage and the family and seek to live it faithfully, to those who are uncertain and anxious and searching for the truth, and to those who are unjustly impeded from living freely their family lives.³²⁷

He contends that the "Church offers her services to every person who wonders about the destiny of marriage and the family."³²⁸ He argues, "the Christian family, in fact, is the first community called to announce the Gospel to the human person during growth

³²⁵ Can. 1055 §1 Accessed January11,2018, www.vatican.va/archive

³²⁶ John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio*.1 accessed 25/9/2018, http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_19811122_familiaris-consortio.html .

³²⁷ *Ibid*; 1

³²⁸ *Ibid*.

and to bring him or her, through a progressive education and catechesis, to full human and Christian maturity.”³²⁹

Addressing the precious value of marriage and of the family, the Pope maintained, “the Church is deeply convinced that only by the acceptance of the Gospel are the hopes that man legitimately places in marriage and in the family capable of being fulfilled.”³³⁰ He reiterated, “willed by God in the very act of creation, marriage and the family are interiorly ordained to fulfillment in Christ and have need of His graces in order to be healed from the wounds of sin, and restored to their ‘beginning,’ that is, to full understanding and the full realization of God's plan.”³³¹ Thus, “the Church perceives in a more urgent and compelling way her mission of proclaiming to all people the plan of God for marriage and the family, ensuring their full vitality and human and Christian development, and thus contributing to the renewal of society and of the People of God.”³³²

Familiaris Consortio describes “the sacramentality of marriage as that which bound the spouses together in a most convincingly indissoluble manner.”³³³ The document notes, “by virtue of the sacramentality of their marriage, spouses are bound to one another in the most profoundly indissoluble manner. Their belonging to each other is the real representation, by means of the sacramental sign, of the very relationship of Christ with the Church.”³³⁴ Pope John Paul II in the document, “The Sacrament of marriage is the

³²⁹ Ibid.

³³⁰ Ibid.3

³³¹ Ibid.3

³³² Ibid.

³³³ Ibid.

³³⁴ John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio*, sec. 13.

specific source and original means of sanctification for Christian married couples and families.”³³⁵ The gift of Jesus Christ is not exhausted in the actual celebration of the sacrament of marriage, but Christian marriage is like the other sacraments, "whose purpose is to sanctify people, to build up the body of Christ, and finally, to give worship to God.”³³⁶

In affirming the Holy Father’s position on marriage, a pastoral letter of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Marriage: Love and Life in the Divine Plan*, (November 17, 2009), “call upon the people of God to stand up against all attacks on marriage and to stand up for the meaning, dignity, and sanity of marriage and the family.”³³⁷ The pastoral letter was an invitation to “discover, or perhaps rediscover, the blessing given when God first established marriage as a natural institution and when Christ restored and elevated it as a sacramental sign of salvation.”³³⁸ Following the definition of marriage in the Code of Canon law, marriage is seen as “a lifelong partnership of the whole of life, of mutual and exclusive fidelity, established by mutual consent between man and woman, and ordered toward the good of the spouses and the procreation of offspring.”³³⁹ It pointed out the two ends or purposes of marriage as “the good of the spouses (unitive), and the procreation of children.”³⁴⁰

³³⁵ Ibid.sec.56.

³³⁶ Ibid.

³³⁷United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Marriage: Love and Life in the Divine Plan*, November 17, 2009, Accessed December 22, 2013, accessed 25/9/2018, <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/marriage-and-family/marriage/love-and-life/> .

³³⁸ Ibid.

³³⁹ Ibid.

³⁴⁰ Ibid.

The pastoral letter also acknowledged the fact that Family life and marriage is undergoing a number of challenges. The Holy Father identified four of the major challenges by marriage in contemporary modern culture. They are “contraceptive, same sex-union, divorce and cohabitation.”³⁴¹ These challenges have immensely impacted and contributed to the dynamics and changes in Catholic models of Christian marriage. The US Catholic bishops’ pastoral letter “enjoins all married couples to not to give up, but to grow in the virtues of faith, hope and charity as they live out their marriage vocation.”³⁴²

4.6.3 *Pope Francis, Amoris Laetitiae and the need for marriage inculturation*

This apostolic exhortation is outstanding for its simple and plain contents that deals with issues of marriage and family life. The seven introductory paragraphs plainly set out the difficulty of the marriage topic as in urgent need of thorough study. Thus, it can be said that, “the interventions of the Synod Fathers make up (form) a ‘multifaceted gem’, whose value must be preserved.”³⁴³ But the Pope cautions that “since time is more than space, not all discussions of doctrinal, moral or pastoral issues need to be settled by interventions of the magisterium.”³⁴⁴ Indeed, the Holy Father maintains, “for some questions, each country or region...can seek solutions better suited to its culture and sensitive to its traditions and local needs. For cultures are in fact quite diverse and every general principle...needs to be inculturated, if it is to be respected and applied.”³⁴⁵ The

³⁴¹ Ibid.

³⁴² Ibid.

³⁴³ Pope Francis, *Amoris Laetitiae (The Joy of Love): post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation on Love in the Family*. (London: St Paul publishing, 2016), 4; also see Summary of Amoris Laetitiae: On Love in the Family, accessed 25/9/2018, <https://rorate-caeli.blogspot.com/2016/04/summary-of-amoris-laetitiae.html>.

³⁴⁴ Ibid. 3

³⁴⁵ Ibid.3

principle of inculturation is designated here to mean that Christian message should be “adapted, indigenized, contextualized, incarnated and inculturated.”³⁴⁶

The thoughts of the Holy Father on the need to inculturate the idea of Christian marriage was further elaborated by Denis Doyle. He explained further, “inculturation is the term that catholic leaders and theologians have used in recent decades to denote a process of engagement between the Christian gospel and a particular culture.”³⁴⁷ This term if properly understood and applied, is intended to conceptually and effectively both to safeguard the integrity of the gospel and to encourage sensitivity to various cultural contexts. This principle of inculturation applies to how problems are formulated and addressed and, apart from dogmatic issues that have been well defined by the Church’s magisterium, none of this approach can be globalized. In his address at the end of the 2015 Synod, Pope Francis said very clearly,

what may seem normal for a bishop from one continent, is considered strange and scandalous—almost! —for a bishop from another; what is considered a violation of a right in one society is an evident and inviolable rule in another; what for some is freedom of conscience is for others simply confusion.³⁴⁸

The Pope clearly states that we need above all to avoid a “sterile juxtaposition of demands for change and the general application of abstract norms.”³⁴⁹ He writes:

³⁴⁶Justine Ukpong, “African Theologies Now: A Profile” (Eldoret: Gaba Publications, Spearhead, 1984) no. 80.

³⁴⁷Dennis M. Doyle, “The Concept of Inculturation in Roman Catholicism: A Theological Consideration” in *U.S. Catholic Historian*, Vol. 30, No. 1, Inculturation (Winter 2012), 1 accessed, 31/01/2018, www.jstor.org/stable .

³⁴⁸Summary of the Post-Synodal apostolic exhortation The Joy of Love (Amoris Laetitia) 8th April 2016” in Jesuits Pastoral Conference, 2017. P.9.

³⁴⁹ Ibid.

the debates carried on in the media, in certain publications and even among the Church's ministers, range from an immoderate desire for total change without sufficient reflection or grounding, to an attitude that would solve everything by applying general rules or deriving undue conclusions from particular theological considerations.³⁵⁰

Deriving undue conclusions from particular theological considerations according to Pope Francis is not the right attitude for the Church. Thus, at the beginning of his pontificate, he “rejected the museum-piece Catholicism and has, in the same way let fresh air into the Church.”³⁵¹ In his thinking, “mercy should be performed not based on the old teaching which is focused on the Church magisterium and teaching.”³⁵² For him, “we are called to a diverse model of the Church—to be genuine Catholics in faith and practice.”³⁵³ This is evident in his recent apostolic exhortation *Amoris Laetitia* which is dedicated to issues of marriage and family life. He calls for a rebuilding of a family which is humanizing institutions for humanity and preserving all human and family values. He argues that such disposition will amount to pursuing unity in plurality that is faith based. In paragraph 298 of *Amoris Laetitia*, Pope Francis declares: “The divorced who have entered a new union...can find themselves in a variety of situations, which should not be pigeonholed or put in to overly rigid classifications leaving no room for a suitable personal and pastoral discernment.”³⁵⁴ In paragraph 305, he adds:

³⁵⁰ Ibid.2

³⁵¹ Christopher Lamb, “A shepherd clearly steering the flock” in *The Tablet*, December 10, 2016, 4.

³⁵² Pope Francis, *Amoris Laetitia*, 4

³⁵³ Ibid.

³⁵⁴ Pope Francis, *Amoris Laetitia*, 298.

A pastor cannot feel that it is enough simply to apply moral laws to those living in ‘irregular’ situations, as if they were stones to throw at people’s lives. This would bespeak the closed heart of one used to hiding behind the Church’s teaching, sitting on the chair of Moses and judging at times with superiority and superficiality difficult cases and wounded families.³⁵⁵

In paragraph 299, the pope states, “it is important that the divorced who have entered new union should be made to feel part of the Church. They are not excommunicated and ...remain part of the ecclesial community...they should be encouraged to participate in the life of community.”³⁵⁶ The Holy Father reiterates that, “each case is different; distinguishing them requires discernment.”³⁵⁷ The holy Father asserts that in this pastoral discernment, there is need “to identify elements that can foster evangelization and human and spiritual growth.”³⁵⁸ Relatedly, the editorial of Tablet Magazine claims that, “Not to do so is to throw stones.”³⁵⁹ It thus affirms that, *Amoris Laetitia* “urges us to adopt a new attitude, not to be shrill or hard-line judgmental, but always to reach out with God’s mercy, to show compassion, to include not exclude, to foster growth and discernment.”³⁶⁰ This position is far better than sticking to laws and regulations that does not help those in need of God’s salvation and personal encounter with Christ.

³⁵⁵ Ibid. 305; also see The Sorrow at the Heart of “The Joy of Love” in *Inside the Vatican* accessed, 31/01/2018, <https://insidethevatican.com/magazine/editorial/dossier/sorrow-heart-joy-love/> & *Amoris Laetitia* <https://www.catholicculture.org/culture/library/view.cfm?recnum=11217> .

³⁵⁶ Ibid. 299; also see Nicholas Austin, ‘Discernment charged with merciful love’: Pope Francis’ *Amoris Laetitia*, on Love in the Family in *Thinking Faith*, 8th April 2016, accessed 25/9/2018, <https://www.thinkingfaith.org/articles/discernment-charged-merciful-love-pope-francis%E2%80%99-amoris-laetitia-love-family-0>.

³⁵⁷ Ibid. 293

³⁵⁸ Ibid.

³⁵⁹ Editorial, “Barred from Worship: The Church Should Not Throw Stones,” *Tablet*, December 10, 2016,2.

³⁶⁰ Ibid.

Above all, the constant theme that seems to run across the entire document is personal encounter with Christ. Its emphasis is on what Christians can bring to the world and the person. When people encounter Christ, they do not think of creeds, authority, but intense Christological encounter which is mercy based. Thus, in paragraph 309, the document says, “the Church is commissioned to proclaim the mercy of God, the beating heart of the gospel, which in its own way must penetrate the mind and heart of every person. The bride of Christ must pattern her behavior after the son of God who goes out to everyone without exception.”³⁶¹

This position is the sure way to bring joy and peace in the Church. That is why, at the beginning of the apostolic exhortation, the Pope Francis said, “the joy and love experienced by the families is also the joy of the Church.”³⁶² This joy according to the pontiff, “is best experienced in a renewed awareness of the importance of marriage and the family.”³⁶³ Thus he stated, since “‘time is greater than space,’ ... it is not all discussions of doctrinal, moral or pastoral issues needs to be settled by intervention of the magisterium.”³⁶⁴ He emphasized that “each region or region, moreover, can seek solutions better suited to its culture and sensitive to its traditions and the local needs.”³⁶⁵ He asserts

³⁶¹ Pope Francis, *Amoris Laetitia* 309; see also *Amoris Laetitia* accessed 27/9/2018, <https://www.catholicculture.org/culture/library/view.cfm?recnum=11217>

³⁶² Pope Francis, *Amoris Laetitia* 1.

³⁶³ Ibid.

³⁶⁴ Ibid.3 ; also see Nicholas Austin, “Discernment charged with merciful love: Pope Francis’ *Amoris Laetitia*, on Love in the Family” in *Thinking Faith* , posted 8th April, 2016 accessed 21/9/2018, <https://www.thinkingfaith.org/articles/discernment-charged-merciful-love-pope-francis%E2%80%99-amoris-laetitia-love-family-0>.

³⁶⁵ Ibid.

that “cultures are in fact quite diverse and every general principle...needs to be inculturated, if it is to be respected and applied.”³⁶⁶

Moreover, owing to the Pope’s intervention, it is necessary for the Church to renew her magisterial teaching or position with regard to the issues of marriage and family life. The time has come for the church to adopt a new attitude, not to be hard-line judgmental, but always reaching out with God’s mercy, to show compassion, to include not exclude, to foster growth and discernment. Discernment on issues takes time and openness. The Church need patience to be the minister of the grace of marriage and family—love is patience. Love works in a generosity of grace. The heart of this is forgiveness and hope. *Amoris Laetitia* gives us a model of operation which is love—the actual key to marriage and family. *Amoris Laetitia* offers us a generous human feeling that is good for marriage and family. The holy Father asserts, “the grace of the sacrament of marriage is intended before all else ‘to perfect the couple’s love.’”³⁶⁷ Here too we can say that, “even if I have faith so as to move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give all I have, and if I deliver my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing” (1 Cor. 13.2-3).³⁶⁸ This understanding of love provides intergenerational security, total care for each other in marriage and family. Thus, Pope Francis asserts, “this trust enables a relationship to be free.”³⁶⁹ This is certainly the way forward on issues bordering on marriage and family in the Catholic Church.

³⁶⁶ Ibid.4.

³⁶⁷ Ibid. 89; also see John L. Allen, *Amoris Laetitia*, chapter 4 – Love in marriage in *Crux* accessed 25/9/2018, <https://cruxnow.com/church/2016/04/08/amoris-laetitia-chapter-4-love-in-marriage/>.

³⁶⁸ John L. Allen, *Amoris Laetitia*, chapter 4 – Love in marriage in *Crux* accessed 25/9/2018, <https://cruxnow.com/church/2016/04/08/amoris-laetitia-chapter-4-love-in-marriage/>.

³⁶⁹Pope Francis, *Amoris Laetitia*, 115

The eighth chapter is devoted to “guiding, discerning and integrating weakness.”³⁷⁰ This chapter is therefore an invitation to mercy and pastoral discernment in situations that do not fully match what the Lord proposes. The Pope uses three very important verbs: “guiding, discerning and integrating, which are fundamental in addressing fragile, complex to irregular situations in the Church.”³⁷¹ The Chapter has sections on the need for “gradualness”³⁷² in pastoral care; the importance of discernment; norms and mitigating circumstances in pastoral discernment; and finally what the Pope calls the “logic of pastoral mercy.”³⁷³ It means that in all situations, the Church would need to find “a constructive response seeking to transform them into opportunities that can lead to the full reality of marriage and family in conformity with the Gospel.”³⁷⁴ These couples need to be “welcomed and guided patiently and discreetly.”³⁷⁵ Consequently, there is a need “to avoid judgements which do not take into account the complexity of various situations.”³⁷⁶ Thus the Holy Father asserts, “in considering a pastoral approach towards people who are divorced and remarried, or simply living together, the Church has the responsibility of helping them understand the divine pedagogy of grace in their lives and offering them assistance so they can reach the fullness of God’s plan for them.”³⁷⁷ This approach will always be possible by the power of the Holy Spirit. However, the Holy Father argues, “for

³⁷⁰ Ibid, 295.

³⁷¹ Barbara Coupar, “The Joy of love—Summary” in Scottish Education service, accessed 4/6/2018, www.sces.org.uk

³⁷² Pope Francis, *Amoris Laetitia*, 295.

³⁷³ Ibid. 307

³⁷⁴ Ibid. 294

³⁷⁵ Ibid.

³⁷⁶ Ibid. 296

³⁷⁷ Ibid. 297.

this discernment to happen, the following conditions must necessarily be present: humility, discretion and love for the Church and her teaching, in sincere search for God's will and desire to make a more perfect response to it."³⁷⁸ For is this reason, " a pastor cannot feel that it is enough simply to apply moral laws to those living in 'irregular' situations, as if they were stones to throw at people's lives."³⁷⁹ Discernment must help to find possible ways of responding to God and growing in the midst of limits. For by thinking that "everything is black or white, we sometimes close off the way of grace and of growth and discourage paths of sanctification which give glory to God."³⁸⁰ The church must therefore learn how to apply the law of charity in every situation when dealing with those who have difficulties in living God's law to the full. The pastors of the Church must therefore "in proposing to the faithful the full ideal of the Gospel and the Church's teaching, must help to treat the weak with compassion, avoiding aggravation or unduly harsh or hasty judgements."³⁸¹ This will certainly promote a good spirit in the Church and her teaching.

4.7 Nigerian Catholic Bishops' teaching on marriage

The position of the Nigerian Catholic Bishops is not different from the universal Church's magisterial position on marriage. However, the Nigerian Bishops are influenced to take cognizance of the local culture and customs of their local church. This is particularly with regard to inculturation. To this end, it has become very challenging for them to propagate apposition on marriage different from the Church's position vis-à-vis the cultural values of their locations. They seem to be more comfortable in maintaining the official

³⁷⁸ Ibid.300

³⁷⁹ Ibid. 305

³⁸⁰ Ibid.

³⁸¹ Ibid.308

Church's position on marriage. Thus, as it is said locally, the Nigerian Catholic Bishops are more "Roman... than Rome." They fully adopt the Church's position on marriage as it is enshrined in the Code of Canon Law and other Church documents.

Obianuju Ekeocha, the Founder and President of Culture of Life Africa commenting on the position of the Code of Canon Law and other Church documents wrote, "it will not come as a surprise when I say that most of our African priests and Bishops are clear and unambiguous in explaining the loving (and sometimes difficult) positions of the Church on important issues that concern the sanctity and dignity of human life and sexuality."³⁸² According Obianuju, "in Nigerian Church, it is rare to find people openly dissenting or opposing the Church in her teaching authority on issues such as abortion, contraception, cohabitation and divorce."³⁸³ No wonder that Francis Cardinal Arinze, the former prefect of the Vatican Congregation for Divine Worship, has been recently quoted as saying: "By African standards, 'I'm not conservative, I'm normal.' I believe that is because of this unflinching fidelity to the teaching authority of the Church in Africa that the Church in Africa has flourished."³⁸⁴ He sees total fidelity to the Churches teaching authority as the norm for being normal in the practice of the faith.

A similar view was expressed recently by John Cardinal Onaiyekan when he spoke to *Crux online newspaper* during a four-day summit of African Catholic leaders in Rome sponsored by the center for Ethics and Culture, and titled "African Christian theology:

³⁸² Obianuju Ekeocha, "A thriving Church amid the tragedy of Nigeria," in *Catholic Herald* (Issue 6807, April 7, 2017), 21.

³⁸³ *Ibid*,

³⁸⁴ *Ibid*. 21.

memories and mission for the 21st century.”³⁸⁵ In that interview, Onaiyekan told *Crux* that there is no “big debate” in Africa over Pope Francis’ document *Amoris Laetitia* and the issues of communion for the divorced and civilly remarried Catholics, because people broadly accept the Church’s traditional ban.”³⁸⁶ He emphasized that, “in Africa, for Catholics and non-Catholics, we just believe that there are certain rules you must follow.”³⁸⁷ This type of understanding has placed the African Church in a position that would hardly grant an atmosphere of dialogue and openness to inculturation. Below are some of the official positions on issues of marriage in Nigerian Church.

Some of the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of Nigeria (CBCN) positions on marriage are contained in the pastoral letters and communiques of the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of Nigeria 1960-2002.³⁸⁸ In its inaugural response to the issue of marriage and family in 1978, the Bishops encapsulate their reflections in a pastoral letter titled, “Save the Family”³⁸⁹ on married life and family. In the pastoral letter, the Bishops treated the family, its problems, their remedies and nation building. They stressed that “the individual is born into and grows up into the family. He never grows out of the family.”³⁹⁰ They argued, if the family is in disarray, the nation is likely to be in disarray. For them, each family is in itself a symbol of unity, a veritable nucleus embracing home, mother, father

³⁸⁵ John L. Allen, Edit. “Key African Cardinal on Aids, Amoris, Trump, Francis and more.” accessed 25/3/2017 www.cruxnow.com .

³⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸⁸ Peter Schineller, SJ, ed., *The Voice of the Voiceless: pastoral letters and communiques of the Catholic Bishops’ conference of Nigeria 1960-2002* (Ibadan-Nigeria: Daily Graphics Nigeria Limited, 2002).

³⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 80-84.

³⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 80.

and children. Thus, they insert that, “the family is the only natural foundation upon which the nation can build.”³⁹¹

However, the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of Nigeria (CBCN) cited family erosion as a description of the problems and abuses that threaten the family. They state, “there are erosion of family-ties of family-life and of virtuous home life.”³⁹² They went further to cite abuses “like drug addiction and sexual promiscuity.”³⁹³ In order to save the family, the Bishops approved Catholic religious syllabus for use in secondary and primary schools in Nigeria and called for a new evangelization in this direction. According to the Bishops, “true evangelization ensures evangelization of all cultures.”³⁹⁴

Reflecting further, the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of Nigeria (CBCN) consider: in their 1981 pastoral letter titled, “The Christian family: A divine vocation” of 1981, recognizes that “God’s first call for the building of his people is to the family.”³⁹⁵ They outline four obstacles to true Christian family life as “polygamy, divorce, abortion and promiscuity.”³⁹⁶ They see these as “contradicting God’s loving and purposeful law.”³⁹⁷ Concisely, the Bishops outline the obstacles to true Christian family life in the following words:

³⁹¹ Ibid.

³⁹² Ibid., 81.

³⁹³ Ibid.

³⁹⁴ Ibid., 83.

³⁹⁵ Ibid., 102.

³⁹⁶ Ibid., 103.

³⁹⁷ Ibid.

- A. Polygamy: The Catholic Bishops of Nigeria see polygamy as “incompatible with the divine intention of the relationship of ‘two in one flesh’ between equal children of God.”³⁹⁸ In their reasoning, “the marital union of man and woman is likened by scripture to Christ’s union with his Church: clearly the idea of one head with several bodies must be seen as monstrous and untenable.”³⁹⁹ For the Bishops, “clearly, there cannot be complete Catholic communion between polygamy and the Christ who said, ‘for whoever does the will of God, he is my brother and sister and mother.’”⁴⁰⁰
- B. Divorce: The Catholic Bishops’ Conference of Nigeria (CBCN) acknowledges that divorce “is a most serious pastoral problem which comes largely from inadequate preparation for marriage and unrealistic expectations from it.”⁴⁰¹ The bishops call upon parents’ and parishes to see such education and preparation as part of their “own holy Christian ministry to the Church; to society and to the young.”⁴⁰²
- C. Abortion: The Catholic Bishops’ Conference of Nigeria emphasizes, “there can be no Christian compromise with the deliberate killing of innocent human life whether within or outside the womb.”⁴⁰³ They see this as the violation of the most fundamental human right, the right to God given life. They insist, “there would be

³⁹⁸ Ibid., 104

³⁹⁹ Ibid.,104

⁴⁰⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁰¹ Ibid.

⁴⁰² Ibid.

⁴⁰³ Ibid., 105.

no disposition to abort of the children God used their God-given sexual power responsibly and lovingly.”⁴⁰⁴

- D. Promiscuity: This, according to the bishops is an abuse of marital power, whether before marriage or outside marriage. There could be no excuse for promiscuity. Subtle excuses should not be advanced to justify promiscuity. Thus, the bishops advocate that even barrenness or childlessness should be viewed as a sharing in the cross of Jesus. They encourage couples “to choose and vow fidelity to one another; breaking apart repudiates God’s vocation.”⁴⁰⁵ They further teach that “those who insist on pregnancy before marriage witness neither to God’s loving providence nor to a chaste preparation for sacramental marriage.”⁴⁰⁶
- E. Traditional rites: on this issue, the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of Nigeria acknowledges the traditional rites but; feels they are sometimes at “variance with the Churches teaching on marriage.”⁴⁰⁷ Thus, they advocate for “husbands and wives to be guided together by prayer in determining the extent to which they will allow the social milieu to affect their lives.”⁴⁰⁸

Nevertheless, the differences in positions between the Church and traditional positions are only on these, and the current practices and applications of marriage form that are now in practice worldwide. For example, reflecting on this issue, Chris Anyanwu states,

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁵ Ibid.,107.

⁴⁰⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁸ Ibid.

since the increasing activism about homosexuality, lesbianism as well as bisexual and transgender rights in many parts of the world, culminating in the signing into law by some countries of the West bills which allow same-sex union, there has been also a deliberate attempt by some lobbyists and gay movements to denigrate and malign those countries, groups and individuals, especially in Africa, who hold a contrary view. Those who oppose the same-sex union are now being perceived as ‘enemies,’ because they do not support such a cause.⁴⁰⁹

According to Chris Anyanwu,

It is not surprising that Most Reverend Ignatius Ayau Kaigama, the Archbishop of Jos and the President of the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of Nigeria together with his episcopal colleagues in the conference have been black-listed into a negative category of people and have become the subject of attacks for their uncompromising stand on the sanctity of marriage and family life.⁴¹⁰

At different opportunities, Archbishop Kaigama has clarified the position of the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of Nigeria on this matter. For example, in his opening remarks at the 13th Annual General Assembly of the Catholic Archdiocese of Jos, Kaigama detailed:

⁴⁰⁹ Chris Anyanwu, “Nigerian Bishop’s Conference takes a swipe at media misrepresentation,” accessed 4/6/2018, <http://www.cnsng.org/viewnews.php?tabnews=1347> ; see also Chris Anyanwu, Chris N Anyanwu, “Still on Same-Sex Union and the Stand of the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of Nigeria,” accessed January 1, 2016, <http://www.cnsng.org/viewnews.php?tabnews=1347>

⁴¹⁰ Ibid.

The culture of 'same-sex marriage' is alien to our understanding of the family and should not be imposed on Nigerians. In wrongly reading the letter of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria (CBCN) in January 2015 to President Goodluck Jonathan, some international organizations and the media instead of highlighting our biggest concern that marriage must be BETWEEN A MAN AND A WOMAN, in accordance with our cultural and religious norms, mischievously reduced the CBCN position to advocating severe punishment of gays or lesbians with long prison terms! This is a deliberate distraction and a wicked deviation from what is our primary concern. In a recent statement, 'Our stand on Marriage, Family and Human Society', we re-emphasized our position: No to 'same-sex marriage'. As we say, in Nigeria, 'No shaking'.⁴¹¹

In his opening address on the 13th of September 2015, at the Second Plenary meeting of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria held in Port-Harcourt, the CBCN President noted: "Returning to the encroaching LGBT lobby and the subject of 'same-sex unions', the CBCN has emphatically and repeatedly said that it contradicts our cultural and religious norms of marriage which are defined as the union of man and woman (cf. Gen 2:24)."⁴¹²

Again, in a recent communiqué released from their 2016 Second Plenary meeting in Port-Harcourt, the Bishops re-iterated their position on same-sex union and the need to assist persons with such orientations when they noted:

⁴¹¹ Chris N Anyanwu, "Still on Same-Sex Union and the Stand of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria," accessed January 1, 2016, <http://www.cnsng.org/viewnews.php?tabnews=1347>.

⁴¹² Ibid.

We re-iterate our unreserved condemnation of all acts of homosexuality as sinful and opposed to the natural law of creation. We call on our government to continue to resist the attempt by some external governments and agencies to impose an acceptance of same-sex unions. Nevertheless, we maintain that persons with these orientations should be assisted pastorally, spiritually and psychologically, with respect for their dignity as human persons created in the image and likeness of God.⁴¹³

It is in line with those that the Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria has recently published a document: “Our Stand On Marriage, Family And Human Society” where they reiterated the position of the Church on more recent developments concerning the sanctity and dignity of human life and the institutions of marriage and the family across the world. This borders on the recent rise in Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender activism, the popular vote in the Republic of Ireland and the Supreme Court decision in the United States of America, which is believed will tend to provoke a notable and a rapid shift in public opinion about the nature and meaning of marriage and family as it has been known for millennia. According to them,

this, in many countries, has inevitably led to powerful legislative and judicial manoeuvres to redefine marriage in order to include ‘same-sex marriage’. We wish to state that this is a sad, unjust and lamentable situation based largely upon a distorted perception of natural law, the will of God and human nature.⁴¹⁴

They further contend that “Canada, Spain, France, United Kingdom, Ireland and most recently the United States of America are some of the countries that have gone down this path.”⁴¹⁵ They regret that these “are nations who undeniably have cultural, social and

⁴¹³ Ibid.

⁴¹⁴ Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria, “Our Stand on Marriage, Family and Human Society,” a communiqué, accessed January 7, 2016, <http://www.cbcn-ng.org/docs/g20.pdf>; also see Chris N Anyanwu, “Still on Same-Sex Union and the Stand of the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of Nigeria,” accessed January 1, 2016, <http://www.cnsng.org/viewnews.php?tabnews=1347>.

⁴¹⁵ Ibid.

economic influence upon many African nations including Nigeria.”⁴¹⁶ It is true that our people daily interact with these Western nations mentioned above at different levels. According to the Bishops, “these countries also generate a lot of the media content consumed in our country and continent as well as much of the educational materials used in our schools. They also give generous humanitarian aid to various establishments and projects in our country and continent.”⁴¹⁷

Thus, The Bishops contends that “in these ways, their views, thoughts and trends are easily embedded into the heart of our society and influence many people especially the impressionable young ones.”⁴¹⁸ Therefore,

As Catholic Bishops’ Conference of Nigeria, we are grateful for these interactions and support. We are however also concerned for the influence which some of these trends could have on morality and values. We therefore hereby express our concern with regard to the persistent and continuous propagation and globalization of the homosexual lifestyle and the effort to redefine marriage which is a distorted view of human sexuality, coming especially from the Western world.⁴¹⁹

The Bishops “call on our leaders to be circumspect. Accepting this western trend by officially endorsing homosexual unions or ‘same-sex marriage’ will be devastating and detrimental to our nation, Nigeria as it will lead to the inevitable deconstruction of the family and the society at large with other serious but negative implications.”⁴²⁰

⁴¹⁶ Ibid.

⁴¹⁷ Nigerian Bishops release statement decrying ‘propagation and globalization of the homosexual lifestyle’ in *Catholic world report*, July 10th, 2015, accessed 4/6/2018, www.catholicworldreport.com.

⁴¹⁸ Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria, “Our stand on marriage, Family and Human Society,” a Communique, www.cbcn-ng.org accessed 1/7/2016; also see “Our stand on marriage, Family and Human Society,” accessed 26/9/2018, <http://www.absradiotv.com/index.php/state/59-anambra-central/1080-catholic-bishops-conference-of-nigeria-our-stand-on-marriage-family-and-human-society> .

⁴¹⁹ Ibid.

⁴²⁰ Ibid.

The Nigerian Bishops re-emphasize that “Marriage is the sacred union of one man and one woman for the begetting and care of children. It forms the core of the family, which is the bedrock and foundational cell of our civilization and as such it is sanctioned by God, upheld by our culture, celebrated in our society and protected by our government.”⁴²¹ To the Bishops, the family deserves protection from all civilized institutions as it predates society and is not subject to it. So, the Bishops’ “role is to promote it, protect it and preserve it at a time like this when many countries have unfortunately chosen a different path.”⁴²²

Finally, the Bishops appeal to professionals in the domains of media, music, entertainment, education, medicine, marketing and business to become faithful gatekeepers by protecting the public from the infiltration of this propaganda which is often spread through various media and fora. They prayed that that God will grant us all the courage, integrity and perseverance needed at this time to uphold the unchangeable truth about the dignity of human sexuality and the sanctity of the institution of marriage.

Overall, the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of Nigeria (CBCN) are yet to give a definitive view on the state of marriage in Nigeria Catholic Church that would address the issues bordering on cultural values. They seem to be reflecting on issues that hover around the differences in positions, and the current practices and applications of marriage forms that are now in practice worldwide.

⁴²¹ Ibid.

⁴²² Ibid.

4.8 The Catechism of the Catholic Church

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* expressed this reality in a very dramatic fashion. It states,

The entire Christian life bears the mark of the spousal love of Christ and the Church... the entry into the People of God, is a nuptial mystery; it is so to speak the nuptial bath which precedes the wedding feast, the Eucharist... Christian marriage in its turn becomes an efficacious sign, the sacrament of the covenant of Christ and the Church.... marriage between baptized persons is a true sacrament of the New Covenant.”⁴²³

According to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*,

this unequivocal insistence on the indissolubility of the marriage bond may have left some perplexed and could seem to be a demand impossible to realize. However, Jesus has not placed on spouses a burden impossible to bear, or too heavy - heavier than the Law of Moses. By coming to restore the original order of creation in the new dimension of the Reign of God marriage is restored to its original design.⁴²⁴

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* further teaches that,

It is by following Christ, renouncing themselves, and taking up their crosses that spouses will be able to ‘receive’ the original meaning of marriage and live it with the help of Christ. This grace of Christian marriage is a fruit of Christ’s cross, the source of all Christian life, which shows forth in sacrificial love.⁴²⁵

This is what the Apostle Paul makes clear when he says: “Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her... that he might sanctify her.” (Eph.5.25-26, 31-32). Adding at once: “For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one. This is a great mystery and

⁴²³ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2 edition, 1617; also see “The Catechism of the Catholic Church and Sacrament of Marriage,” accessed 28/9/2018, <https://catholicdoors.com/misc/marriage/matri.htm> .

⁴²⁴ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2 edition, 1615; also see “The Catechism of the Catholic Church and Sacrament of Marriage,” accessed 28/9/2018, <https://catholicdoors.com/misc/marriage/matri.htm> .

⁴²⁵ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2nd edition, 1615.

I mean in reference to Christ and the Church.”⁴²⁶ It does affirm in this sense, that “Marriage bonds between baptized persons are sanctified by the sacrament.”⁴²⁷

Pius XII, in his Allocution to Newlyweds, July 12, 1939, said,

At the base of every Christian family there is a sacrament. This means that it is not a mere contract, a simple ceremony or a purely external rite to mark an important date in one’s life, but a true and proper religious act of supernatural life, from which flows an almost constant right to obtain from God all those graces, those divine aids, which are necessary for, and useful to sanctify married life, to fulfil the duties of the married state, to overcome its difficulties, to maintain its resolves and to reach its highest ideals.⁴²⁸

For the reasons above,

the sacrament of matrimony can be regarded in two ways: first, in the making, and then in its permanent state. For it is a sacrament with similar character with the Eucharist, which is not only when it is being conferred, but also whilst it remains, is a sacrament; for as long as the married parties are alive, so long is their union a sacrament of Christ and the church.⁴²⁹

Although a divine mystery, “Marriage... because it is both the image of the spousal relationship between Christ and his Church as well as the fundamental core and an

⁴²⁶ Ibid., 1616.

⁴²⁷ Ibid., 2360.

⁴²⁸ Pius XII, “Allocution to Newlyweds,” July 12, 1939, accessed December 14, 2015, <http://tedeum.boards.net/thread/1364/pope-pius-allocution-newly-weds>.

⁴²⁹ Hogan, Margaret Monahan, *Marriage as a Relationship*, (Afterword by Sidney Callahan), Milwaukee Wisconsin: Marquette university press, 2002, accessed 21/9/2018 <https://www.scribd.com/document/301529450/Hogan-Margaret-Monahan-Marriage-as-a-Relationship>.

Through analysis of the documents Hogan presents a story of development and change in the Church’s views of Christian marriage. Slowly, the historically conditioned elements in the concepts of marriage are being identified and isolated from what Hogan holds up as the positive permanent elements of the Catholic heritage. Evolution of doctrine comes from changes in ethical insight, changes in scientific knowledge and changes in the understanding of the nature of the marriage relationship. In particular the prejudice and negative bias against sexual intercourse gives way to a positive evaluation. Also see William J. Gibbons, *Seven Great Encyclicals Labor Education Marriage Reconstructing The Social World Social Problems World Peace*, accessed 25/9/2018 <https://archive.org/details/sevengreatencycl013308mbp>.

important factor in the life of civil society, is essentially a public reality.”⁴³⁰ It is supposed to be a public function in which its celebration and conferment of its sacramental effect must be visible to all.

Overall, the Church in her teaching sees and understands “marriage as an original gift from God to humanity. Although sin entered the world damaging the marital relationship, this gift was not lost, but redeemed by Christ and raised to a sacrament (see Eph. 5:28-32; see also Mt. 19:4-6).”⁴³¹

The *catechism of the Catholic Church* teaches that, “The Church attaches great importance to Jesus’ presence at the wedding at Cana. She sees in it the confirmation of the goodness of marriage and the proclamation that thenceforth marriage will be an efficacious sign of Christ’s presence.”⁴³² By their marriage, the couple witnesses Christ’s spousal love for the Church. One of the Nuptial Blessings in the liturgical celebration of marriage reads: “Father, you have made the union of man and wife so holy a mystery that it symbolizes the marriage of Christ and his Church.”⁴³³

The sacrament of marriage is a covenant, which is more than a contract. Covenant always express a relationship between persons. The marriage covenant refers “to the

⁴³⁰ Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Annus internationalis Familiae*, sec.7. A Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church Concerning the Reception of Holy Communion by the Divorced and Remarried Members of the Faithful, September 14, 1994.

⁴³¹ USA Catholic Bishops, “Catholic Teaching” accessed 25/9/2018 <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/marriage-and-family/natural-family-planning/catholic-teaching/>; also all scripture passages are quoted from *The New American Bible* (with Revised New Testament), (California: Benzinger publishing Company mission Hills, 1988).

⁴³² *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2nd edition, 1613.

⁴³³ *The Roman Missal*(English Translation according to the typical edition Italy: Magnificat, 2011), 1195-1196, See also “Matrimony,”(A prayer of nuptial blessing), accessed December 07, 2015, <http://usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/sacraments-and-sacramentals/matrimony/index.cfm>.

relationship between the husband and wife, a permanent union of persons capable of knowing and loving each other and God.”⁴³⁴

4.9. Current theological views on marriage

There are three trending directions in current theology on marriage, namely, the Christocentric view of marriage, salvation-historical view of marriage and anthropological-ecclesial view of marriage.

The Christocentric view was proposed by Karl Barth.⁴³⁵ It places emphasis on the sacramental notion of the body of Christ or the mystical body of Christ as the key metaphor to understand marriage as a sacrament. This means that, the sacrament of marriage entails a further incorporation into the body of Christ. The sacrament effects the graces that draw the couple into a deeper union with Christ. So, in the Christocentric view of marriage, Christ is at the center of marriage. Every couple should therefore emulate the sacramental character of Christ and his Church as the true symbol of Christian marriage.

Salvation-historical view of marriage was proposed by Oscar Cullmann, the Strasboug University Lutheran theological luminary. For him, the nature and meaning of marriage itself have changed with the history of salvation. Edward Schillebeeckx’s interpretation of marriage as a sacrament falls within this basic thesis: “marriage is a secular reality which has entered salvation.”⁴³⁶ For them, “love within marriage is understood not in relation to natural attraction, but also in relation to the historical experience of Jesus’

⁴³⁴ Marriage, accessed 25/9/2018, <https://littleflowermemphis.org/sacraments/marriage/>.

⁴³⁵ Fiorenza F. S and Galvin, J.P., *Systematic Theology: Roman Catholic Perspectives*, Vol. II (Minneapolis: Fortress press, 1991),328.

⁴³⁶ *Ibid.*, 328.

death and resurrection and the understanding of God and of love proclaimed by the gospel.”⁴³⁷ This salvation-historical view emphasized the need for faithful giving of oneself to each other in order to emulate and sanctify that love relationship that is presented in the gospels for the salvation of humanity.

The anthropological-ecclesial view of marriage was put forward by Karl Rahner. This view contributes to the understanding of marriage as a sacrament by bringing together several key ideas of his theology: “God’s universal will for salvation, the fundamental unity of creation and salvation, the idea of a real symbol, and his understanding of the Church as the basic sacrament.”⁴³⁸ In this understanding, God’s love and grace self-bestowed constitute the inner most dynamism of the world and of the history of mankind. Thus, Rahner argues, “it is God’s love that empowers us to love God and to love each other.”⁴³⁹ He concludes that in this context, “marriage is the sign of that love that is open to all.”⁴⁴⁰ He maintains, “this is one of the way in which the unifying love of the Church is made actual.”⁴⁴¹ Rahner’s position on marriage has given a holistic understanding of what marriage as a sacrament is all about, and how the theology of marriage as human sacrament should be formulated and practiced.

Michael Lawler further introduced a variation with emphasis on marriage as a “prophetic symbol.”⁴⁴² Prophetic symbol in his understanding, “is a human action which

⁴³⁷ Ibid., 328-29.

⁴³⁸ Ibid.,329.

⁴³⁹Ibid., 329.

⁴⁴⁰Ibid., 329.

⁴⁴¹Ibid.,329.

⁴⁴² Michael G. Lawler, *Marriage and Sacrament: A Theology of Christian Marriage*, (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1993), 12.

proclaims, makes explicit and celebrates in representation the action of God.”⁴⁴³ The prophetic symbol is a representative action, an action which proclaims and reveals in representation another, more crucial action. Thus, Lawler asserts, “the self-understanding in Israel was rooted in the great covenant between the god Yahweh and the people Israel.”⁴⁴⁴ It is easy to predict that Israelites, prone to prophetic action, would search for such an action to symbolize their covenant relationship with Yahweh. Using the ‘prophetic symbol’, it is just as easy, perhaps, to predict that the symbol they would choose is the covenant that is marriage between a man and a woman. The prophet Hosea was the first to speak of marriage as a ‘prophetic symbol’ of the covenant (Hosea 1.1-3.5). His human action and reaction is prophetic symbol of Yahweh’s divine action and reaction.

Following the classical Roman Catholic definition of sacrament as “an outward sign of inward grace instituted by Christ”⁴⁴⁵; a sacrament is therefore, “a prophetic symbol in and through which the Church, the body of Christ, proclaims, reveals and celebrates in representation that presence and action of God which is called grace.”⁴⁴⁶ So to say that “marriage between Christians is a sacrament is to say, then, that it is a prophetic symbol.”⁴⁴⁷ For Christian marriage proclaims, reveals and celebrates the intimate communion of life and love between a man and a woman. On a more profound level, Lawler asserts that the prophetic symbol model’s proclamation “makes explicit and celebrates the intimate

⁴⁴³ Ibid,

⁴⁴⁴ Ibid. 13.

⁴⁴⁵ Bernhard Haring, *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II* (New York: Harder, 1969) 5:234.

⁴⁴⁶ Lawler, 14.

⁴⁴⁷ Michael G. Lawler, “Divorce and Remarriage in the Catholic Church: Ten Theses,” accessed 4/6/2018, www.newtheologyreview.org. Marriage between baptized believers is a sacrament, that is, a prophetic symbol of the union between Christ and the Church.

communion of life and love and grace between God and God's people and between Christ and Christ's people, the Church."⁴⁴⁸

4.9.1 Sacramental vision and Roman Catholic vision

Sacramentality of marriage in the Catholic tradition views marriage as sacrament, "not number of sacraments; but is the expressing of the Roman Catholic vision of reality."⁴⁴⁹ For Roman Catholic theology, then, the affirmation that marriage is a sacrament is "an affirmation that marriage is not only instrumental or functional, but also a symbol and communicative."⁴⁵⁰ For the Church, marriage is also a symbol that communicates meaning, a meaning articulated in relation to a historical memory and a future hope. It means that marriage commitment is primarily to a community. If we take marriage as a sign or symbol of the new community of Christians under the impact of the Holy Spirit, then we can better understand ourselves as Christians in relation to historical remembrance and history.

4.10 Pastoral-practical issues

Often times, pastoral applications of theological theories are uphill task to meet. Thus, within the contemporary Roman Catholic teaching on marriage, there are three most controversial issues that have continually defy common solution across culture and social orientation. They are: birth control, divorce and polygamy. While the magisterial teaching has "consistently excluded 'artificial means of birth control in marriage,'"⁴⁵¹ the Council of

⁴⁴⁸ Michael G, Lawler, marriage and Sacrament: A theology of Christian Marriage, 14.

⁴⁴⁹ Ibid., 332.

⁴⁵⁰ Ibid., 333.

⁴⁵¹ Ibid., 340.

Trent did also affirm the indissolubility of sacrament of marriage. Yet, the fact is that marriages do fail, and there are prevalent cases of divorce. Divorced and remarried couples wish to participate actively as Roman Catholics in the Church's sacramental life. In traditions where polygamy prevails, not merely for commercial reasons of getting children for economic activities, but for care of widows, the theological basis and restrictions on polygamy raise significant problem in pastoral context.

In the face of the conflict between the religious ideal and the concrete practice, two pastoral solutions have emerged in attempt at solution. Solutions are built around annulment of marriages with cogent reasons, and that remarried couples be included in the practice of sacramental life.⁴⁵² However, the view of Walter Kasper in these regards is significant, he argued,

The Church should act in accordance with God's way of acting and for this reason, it should be possible to admit divorced persons who have remarried to the sacrament on three conditions: 1) when they are sorry for their guilt and have made amends for it as well as they can; 2) when everything humanly possible has been done to achieve reconciliation with the first partner; and 3) when the second marriage has become a morally binding union that cannot be dissolved without causing fresh injustice.⁴⁵³

Kasper's solution seeks to be faithful to traditional teaching as well as to pastoral practice. We should know that love and commitment as abstract terms in marriage are not components upon which we can rely. The mutual commitment in marriage is as much a hope as a faith or trust. It is this hope that the Catholic Church expresses through its teaching and through its celebration of marriage as a sacrament.

⁴⁵² Ibid., 344.

⁴⁵³ Walter kasper, *Theology of Christian Marriage* (New York: Crossroad,1983),70.

Similarly, although the Church has tried to find a middle ground to the issues of birth control and divorce as proposed by Walter Kasper, she has done very little with the case of polygamous unions in the Church. For example, the Church has in some instances allowed natural birth control to be practiced by couples. In some cases, especially of incest and rape, the Church would also allow the cleaning of the womb in which the unborn may be affected. However, the church has continued to see polygamous unions as an aberration to the lawful union between a man and a woman.

Even though Vatican II Council has consistently called for some form of renewal within the Church, little effort has been applied to mend the fence for families who are in polygamous unions. That historical event of the second Vatican Council which concluded a little over 50 years ago, set the Church on the path of reform and unprecedented engagement with the modern world; one in which condemnation was replaced with listening and where those who fall short of Church teaching are offered the medicine of mercy. The papacy of Pope Francis has continued this legacy of listening and mercy of the Second Vatican Council in contemporary Catholicism's definition of openness and mercy.

CHAPTER FIVE

THEOLOGICAL APPRAISAL OF MARRIAGE IN TIV CULTURE

5.1 Introduction

The Tiv are predominantly Christians. The church has a special place among the people due to geographical and historical circumstances. Among other endearing reasons, Christianity was the first foreign religion to penetrate the Tiv society. It also made great impact on the lives of the people especially in education and health services. Nevertheless, such effort is closely associated with evangelization motif and imperial imposition of western civilization. The caveat of evangelism and colonization underplay the authentic recognition of the peoples' family life, culture, and other significant aspect of their everyday living. The prominent outcome of this engagement left the locals with an overt schizophrenic divide between the western culture and the indigenous traditions. This is demonstrated nowhere else more vividly than in the central institution of marriage and family. Tension between the Tiv culture and the church's teaching was bred especially in the area of marriage and family, the central and most intimate aspect of the society.

What underlies this tension is the difference between the Tiv concept of marriage and church's understanding of marriage. The concept of marriage and family with which the church operates has been fashioned in western culture. The church adopts monogamy and condemned other forms of marriages. According to Shagbaor Wegh, "the church condemns

African marriage forms and equates polygamy with ‘the plague of divorce’ and ‘so called free love’ and sees it as one of the blemishes of marriage.”⁴⁵⁴

Theologically, the Second Vatican Council sees marriage as “the foundation for the wider community of the family, since the very institution of marriage and conjugal love are ordained for the procreation and education of children, in whom they find their crowning.”⁴⁵⁵ These same ideas are shared in traditional marriage and are pursued vigorously in the Tiv family system. Tiv society lays emphasis on children, and a large family, and achieves this through polygamy. The western society on the other hand moves in the direction of the individual and monogamous marriage(s). While the latter practice finds expression and grounding in the marriage theology of the church, the Tiv’s cultural traditions which ventilates the polygamy system of marriage is discountenanced.

Tiv polygamous cultural marriage has been a problem for the Tiv Catholic Church and has subsequently caused much resistance to Christianity in Tiv land in the aspect of marriage. The problems that Christianity faces with Tiv marriage is around polygamy, and the so-called ‘trial marriage.’ The Church considers such marriages as sinful. Tiv Christians who are married in the customary fashion are excluded from the sacraments as their marriages are regarded as mere concubinage. This is a major problem!

The individual Tiv person who is a Christian is also the practitioner of the culture with which he/she identifies. To be a Christian in some aspects and claim to be unrelatedly a Tiv person at some other time is unhealthy. The target is to be truly Tiv and truly

⁴⁵⁴ Shagbaor Wegh, F. *Family and the Church in Tiv*, (Nigeria: Makurdi: Dekon computers services, 1994),90.

⁴⁵⁵ John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio*, 14.

Christian. Hence, the need to reconcile the two seeming irreconcilable belief and practice. The interface of Tiv marriage culture and Christianity must necessarily be characterized by profound dialogue for inculturation.⁴⁵⁶ Such dialogue is necessary in order to give Christianity a befitting accommodation in Tiv culture. However, for a good theological appraisal of marriage in Tiv culture, it is vital to give a brief treatment of the theology of inculturation which is at the base of this study. The treatment shall be done in line with the shift in theological enterprise ushered in by the Second Vatican Council to date. Notably, Vatican II Council gave a lot of directions and created several openings as ways forward in solving similar dilemma on conflicting issues in the church's teachings on marriage and the cultural realities of marriage as practiced by the Tiv.

5.2 Overview of the shift in Theological Enterprise (2nd Vatican Council to Date)

There have been shifts in the church's theological emphasis on her guiding principles in the course of history. These have been captured in various images used in describing the point of emphasis. For instance, the church has described herself as both the *Mystical body of Christ* and a composite of a *people of God* at various point in history. The most recent of these shifts was determined at 'The Second Vatican Council,' which addressed the relationship between the Roman Catholic Church and the modern world. In the words of the Holy Father, Pope John XXIII, "it was time to open the windows of the church to let in some fresh air."⁴⁵⁷ Thus, during the Council, he invited not just Catholics, but other Christians outside the Catholic Church to send observers to the Council. The "Protestants

⁴⁵⁶ Inculturation here is referring to the giving of form to the message of Christianity by means of a culture. It is different from enculturation which describes the process of insertion of an individual into his/her own culture.

⁴⁵⁷ Sullivan, M. *101 Questions and answers on Vatican II*, (New York: Paulist press, 2002),17.

and Eastern orthodox churches accepted this invitation.”⁴⁵⁸ Conversations at the Council created a significant growth and development, mostly in the Roman Catholic Church theology. Significantly, methods of theology were shaped, and groundwork to incorporate the diversities in the history of Christian thought, approaches and tasks was established.

With the Second Vatican Council, the need to adapt theological reflections to local circumstances began to receive official support. Documents such as the decree on the churches’ missionary activity *Ad Gentes*,⁴⁵⁹ and pastoral constitution on the church in the modern world *Gaudium et Spes*,⁴⁶⁰ shows that such adaptation received explicit appropriation at the second Vatican Council. In subsequent years, the missionary theology of Pope Paul VI developed this thought, especially in his address to the Bishops of Africa in 31st July 1969. The Pope used the occasion to remind the African Church of her most challenging but vital point in the process of evangelization. He asserts,

a burning and much-discussed question arises concerning your evangelizing work, and it is that of the adaptation of the Gospel and of the Church to African culture. Must the Church be European, Latin, Oriental . . . or must she be African? This seems a difficult problem, and in practice may be so, indeed.⁴⁶¹

He concluded by saying,

⁴⁵⁸ Ibid.21.

⁴⁵⁹Vatican Council II, *Ad Gentes Divinitus*, Sec. 22.

⁴⁶⁰Vatican Council II, *Gaudium et Spes*, sec.2.

⁴⁶¹ Ibid.

from this point of view, a certain pluralism is not only legitimate, but desirable. An adaptation of the Christian life in the fields of pastoral, ritual, didactic and spiritual activities is not only possible, it is even favored by the Church. The liturgical renewal is a living example of this. And in this sense, you may, and you must, have an African Christianity.⁴⁶²

The same was reiterated in the apostolic exhortation, on evangelization in the modern world in 1975, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*.⁴⁶³ Therein the pope explains that the Church must strive to proclaim the Gospel to all peoples and should seek by every means to study how the church could bring the Christian message to modern culture. The Pope expressly states, “the split between the gospel and culture is without a doubt the drama of our time, just as it was of other times. Therefore, every effort must be made to ensure a full evangelization of culture, or more correctly of cultures.”⁴⁶⁴

At the opening of the African Synod, the president delegate, Cardinal Francis Arinze, gave a short opening address which he entitled, “The Hour Has Come.” The hour when Jesus Christ is calling Africa has come and those present must listen to his call and to “what the Spirit is saying to the churches” (Rev 2:29), especially to the churches in Africa.”⁴⁶⁵ It means that African Christians must also have their own way of seeing and living the church. The question, in fact, is: “For you Africans, what do you say the church is? This was the “main question” the fathers of the synod asked themselves: “Church of Africa, what must you now become so that your message may be relevant and credible?”⁴⁶⁶ The bishops point out clearly that inculturation of the Christian message in the African cultures is essential,

⁴⁶² Ibid.

⁴⁶³ Apostolic Exhortation of Pope Paul VI, “*On Evangelization in the Modern World*” (*Evangelii Nuntiandi*), (Boston: Pauline Books & Media, 1990), #.2-3.

⁴⁶⁴ Ibid. #20.

⁴⁶⁵ Cecil McGarry, SJ, et al (Editors), *What happened at the African Synod?* (Nairobi: Pauline publications Africa, 1995) 27.

⁴⁶⁶ Ibid, 33-34.

“is a necessity in the work of evangelization in Africa, as well as an urgent task that has to be assumed by the entire Christian church in Africa now.”⁴⁶⁷ The Synod Fathers asserts, “inculturation is without doubt the light that will guide the church in Africa at the dawn of the third millennium.”⁴⁶⁸

In the light of the synodal position, the fathers made a “fundamental option of the church as family, to drive home the process of inculturation.”⁴⁶⁹ Questions to be asked: “If the Church is the family-of-God, wherein hospitality is offered to all, how then can one justify the exclusion of some members from the sacraments (baptism, eucharist, matrimony,...) for reasons connected with particular problems, for example, of marriage, the decisive moment when the family paradigm takes shape?”⁴⁷⁰

It was in an effort to resolve this challenging situation that Pope Saint John Paul II in his post-synodal apostolic exhortation *Ecclesia in Africa: on the church in Africa and its evangelizing mission*, which was the fruit of the African synod, asserts, “the Church in Africa, having become ‘a new homeland for Christ’, is now responsible for the evangelization of the Continent and the world. As my Predecessor Pope Paul VI said in Kampala: “Africans, you are now your own missionaries.”⁴⁷¹ According to the reflection and intention of the Holy Father,

⁴⁶⁷ Ibid,49.

⁴⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁷¹ John Paul II, *Post-synodal apostolic exhortation: Ecclesia in Africa*: “On the Church in Africa and its evangelizing mission towards the year 2000”, 14th September 1995, <http://w2.vatican.va> Accessed 12/5/2018.

the Special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops was *an historic moment of grace*: the Lord *visited* his people in Africa. Indeed, this Continent is today experiencing what we can call a *sign of the times*, an *acceptable time*, a *day of salvation*. It seems that the "hour of Africa" has come, a favourable time which urgently invites Christ's messengers to launch out into the deep and to cast their nets for the catch (cf. *Lk 5:4*).⁴⁷²

It means that, "all those privileged to be present at the celebration of the Special Assembly for Africa rejoiced to see how African Catholics are assuming ever greater responsibility in their local Churches and are seeking a deeper understanding of what it means to be both Catholic and African."⁴⁷³ To root the evangelizing efforts in Africa, the Synod Fathers and the Pope, calls for the urgent need for inculturation. On several occasions the Synod Fathers stressed the particular importance for evangelization of inculturation, "the process by which "catechesis '*takes flesh*' in the various cultures."⁴⁷⁴ In their deliberations, "they contended that inculturation includes two dimensions: on the one hand, the intimate transformation of authentic cultural values through their integration in Christianity and, on the other, the insertion of Christianity in the various human cultures"⁴⁷⁵

The synod Fathers argues, "Synod strongly considers inculturation an urgent priority in the life of the particular Churches, for a firm rooting of the Gospel in Africa."⁴⁷⁶ According to the Holy Father, "Inculturation is precisely this insertion of the Gospel message into cultures: "*the synthesis between culture and faith is not only a demand of culture but also of faith*", because "a faith that does not become culture is not fully accepted,

⁴⁷² Ibid, #6.

⁴⁷³ Ibid, #11.

⁴⁷⁴ Ibid, #57.

⁴⁷⁵ Ibid, #59.

⁴⁷⁶ Ibid.

not entirely thought out, not faithfully lived.”⁴⁷⁷ The Special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops considered inculturation a priority and an urgent task in the life of Africa's particular Churches. Only in this way can the Gospel be firmly implanted in the Continent's Christian communities.

However, the Holy father also acknowledged the challenges of inculturation. He asserts, “Inculturation is a difficult and delicate task, since it raises the question of the Church's fidelity to the Gospel and the Apostolic Tradition amidst the constant evolution of cultures.”⁴⁷⁸ Rightly therefore the Synod Fathers observed:

Considering the rapid changes in the cultural, social, economic and political domains, our local Churches must be involved in the process of inculturation in an ongoing manner, respecting the two following criteria: compatibility with the Christian message and communion with the universal Church ... In all cases, care must be taken to avoid syncretism.⁴⁷⁹

Consequently, “the Holy Father exhorts the Bishops and to the Episcopal Conferences to take note that inculturation includes the whole life of the Church and the whole process of evangelization.”⁴⁸⁰ It includes theology, liturgy, the Church's life and structures. All this underlines the need for research in the field of African cultures in all their complexity. The importance of inculturation has greatly impacted the Church in her mission of evangelization, especially in Africa. The above efforts by the Church hierarchy shift in position was to create an opening for the Church in Africa to become truly African through the process of inculturation.

⁴⁷⁷ Ibid, #78

⁴⁷⁸ Ibid, #62

⁴⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁰ Anthony Akinwale, “How have we received ecclesia in Africa?” www.tonyakinwale.com accessed 10/7/2018.

The shift in the last century and all efforts at inculturation by the church were geared to show that the theological tasks and its engagement for today's world demand a radical shift. Moreover, this shift that took place in the Roman Catholic Church during the Second Vatican Council, created a space for inculturation to flourish. Consequently, this opening of the window seems only to have let in a little air into the church's understanding of her faith. With the present challenges, there is need also for the Church to open her doors as well. Thus, the contemporary theologians under the umbrella of post-colonial theologians are still knocking for the doors to be opened as well. This yearning for more opening that is hinged on the theological methods and tasks have a lot of relevance for Inculturation theology. They insist that system theology which, was colored by western ideology and categories must be decolonized and contextualized so that systematic theology will strive and flourish.

For post-colonial theologians, theology must develop large ears and open her eyes to the realities around. Realities that are born out of lived experiences of a particular cultural context. Monolithic and monoculture context of the west, which dominated the universalized approach to theology, has become unproductive and meaningless to other cultural contexts. The contemporary theologians have become very critical of the ready-made theology of some westerns scholars that was imported and transported to many cultures of the world. In place of the above, they propose two positions: "pluraversality as opposed to universality, and identity."⁴⁸¹ Thus, in affirmation of this move, Walter D. Mignolo who is considered one of the leading figures of postcolonial thought says,

⁴⁸¹ Banazak, G.A and Ceja L. R, 'The challenge and promise of Decolonial thought to Biblical Interpretation', (Equinoxonline, post script 4.1. 2008),250.

the celebration of bi-languaging is precisely the celebration of the crack in the global process between local histories and global designs, between ‘mundialization’ and ‘globalization, from languages to social movements, and a critique of the idea that civilization is linked to the ‘purity’ of colonial monolanguaging.⁴⁸²

Mignolo further explores the colonial epistemic difference through the possibility of a bilingual or bi-languaging epistemology as the way forward in the study of theology in contemporary contexts. All his efforts were to create location and identity for local histories to become avenues for doing theology. Overall, the ‘postcolonial theory,’ in fact, also challenges any hegemony of Eurocentric high theory, but does so through its positive engagement of the French paradigm. Catharine Keller, and her colleagues, rightly observe that “postcolonial theorists have found in the French poststructuralists a prism for the auto deconstruction of Eurocentrism.”⁴⁸³ Robert Young in his book, *White mythologies: writing History and the west* observes, “deconstruction’ is a deconstruction of the concept, the authority, and assumed primacy of the category of ‘the west.”⁴⁸⁴ By way of seeking for a way forward, in his book, *The Nature of Doctrine*, Lindbeck suggests a “cultural linguistic approach to the study of theology over against propositional and expressive approaches.”⁴⁸⁵ These two positions clearly redefine the approaches and task of theology. He affirms that “there is no preposition about doing theology, theology must be done out of lived

⁴⁸² Walter D. Mignolo, *Local Histories/ Global Designs: coloniality, subaltern knowledge’s, and Border Thinking*, (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton university press, 2000),250.

⁴⁸³ Catherine Keller, etal. *Postcolonial Theologies: Divinity and Empires*, (St Louis, Missouri: chalice press. 2004), 9.

⁴⁸⁴Robert J.C Young. *White mythologies: writing History and the west*, (London and New York: Routledge. 1990), 19.

⁴⁸⁵ George Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine: Religion and Theology in a post liberal age*, (Louisville-Kentucky: Westminster John Knox press. 2009),3.

experience and context.”⁴⁸⁶ All what postcolonial thinkers are saying is that local histories are as good as the civilizing western mode of doing theology.

In the Church of Africa, a flourishing way of doing theology could be through the model of inculturation. The current shift in tasks and methods is therefore hinged on inculturation, liberation and correlational methods as avenues for doing theologies in African context. The basis for this shift is built on scripture and lived experience of the people. Contemporary Christian theology faces challenges that make the constant complexity of theology even more complex. In the light of this, Uzukwu Elechukwu observed that, “the task of theology should be the elaboration of a Christian vision and identity in the face of plurality and unity, rationality, power and oppression.”⁴⁸⁷

The main task of African theology, therefore, should address the issues raised above in such manner as will be consistent with what is truly an African approach to contemporary theology. In this case retrieving, investigating, and articulating theological positions of the African people and their theological responses have become a priority to the study of African theology. This epistemic shift should therefore help the African theologians to formulate their own tasks and methods of theology that will address the African contexts and experiences. Analysis of African contexts must begin with African reality; a reality which is to be located in time and space. The locus of this reality is African history. Thus, the rediscovery of their history deepens the sympathies, fortifies the will, and liberates the mind to engage the gospel with the human condition and the divine life.

⁴⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁷ Uzukwu, Elochukwu. E, *God, Spirit, and Human Wholeness: Appropriating Faith and Culture in West African Style*. (Oregon: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2011). P.2

5.3 Theological endeavor in contemporary Africa: The Inculturation Approach

The enigmatic and perennial question about the relationship of theology and culture within the studies of African theology has been a nagging one for scholars over the years. As Schreiter affirms, "... the gospel does not fall from the sky. Our faith is also a *fides ex auditu*, a faith we have heard from others."⁴⁸⁸ It means that faith must originate from a particular location and base on a particular cultural life's experience of the people in question. Scholars of various faith backgrounds and different religious affiliations during the course of history have attempted to strike a balance between the summons of faith and the respective human responses in culture. Despite the recorded progress that has been made by scholars, probably from the coloniality of power, the problems of theological Inculturation and how it is related to liturgical inculturation remains fundamental in the study of African theology. Peter Schineller in his book, *A Handbook on Inculturation*,⁴⁸⁹ and Schreiter, in *Constructing Local Theologies*,⁴⁹⁰ distinguish the various inadequate and misleading words used to define and qualify the meeting of the faith and with cultures as an imposition, translation, adaptation from more adequate words as inculturation, incarnation and localization. In the words of Schreiter, "Inculturation, as a noun, is often used to designate a shift in the theological process. It refers to the wider process of which theology is an expression."⁴⁹¹ Commenting further on this, Alyward Shorter says, "the term inculturation is often proposed to express the importance of culture in the construction of

⁴⁸⁸ Robert. J Schreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies*, (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1985), 21.

⁴⁸⁹ Peter Schineiller, *A Handbook on Inculturation*, (Paulist press, 1990), 3.

⁴⁹⁰ Robert. J Schreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies*, 1.

⁴⁹¹ *Ibid.* 5.

a true contextual theology.”⁴⁹² Patrick Chibuko states, “theology without inculturation paralyses all efforts to make Christ appear in his entire splendor to the people of each culture.”⁴⁹³ From the ecclesiastical dimension, since the Second Vatican Council, the church has issued documents and pronouncements highlighting positively the question of gospel and culture. Commenting on the importance of liturgical Inculturation, Uzuoku declares,

Our praise or thanksgiving, adoration or contemplation, prayer of quiet or measured, ritual dance, which display the assembled body of worshippers before God or spirits, have meaning within an ethnic group. Christian worship, as a human expression of the encounter with the God of Jesus Christ, must always be local. The Christian faith is one; its expressions are necessarily many. ⁴⁹⁴

Inculturation, as understood in this sense challenges theology to broaden its tasks and scope. In the light of the above therefore, the search for proper hermeneutics and appropriate methodology for retrieving, investigating, and articulating the concerns of the African people and the theological responses given to these concerns will be part of the principles that will be necessary for the constructing of local theologies. Consequently, for African theology to be relevant today, African theologians must have to apply appropriate terms, hermeneutics and methodologies that will concretely qualify and describe with exactness the cultural situation of the theological understandings and the implication of such on their understanding of the gospel. Moreover, local theologies recognize that theology takes shape within a particular context. Theologies are developed in response to

⁴⁹²Alyward Shorter. *Toward a Theology of Inculturation*, (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books.1988),3.

⁴⁹³ Chibuko, Patrick. *Paschal mystery of Christ Foundation for Liturgical Inculturation in Africa*. (Peter Lang, Inc.1999), 2.

⁴⁹⁴ Elochukwu. E. Uzuoku, *Worship As Body Language: An Introduction to Christian worship: An African Orientation*, (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical press.1997), IX.

and within a particular social situation. Understanding the social situation is a necessary condition for understanding the genesis and validity of particular theologies.

According to Gerald Boodoo, “A realistic understanding of contemporary contexts implies that theology is not one, but many theologies. Theology must therefore be open to dialogue with different environments and peoples.”⁴⁹⁵ It means also that if “theology is understood as a people’s attempt to rationalize the breaking into human history by the divine, such attempt as a necessity must address at least the people’s context. It must seek to address the people’s past, present, and their future in such a way that it will create vibrancy and meaning.”⁴⁹⁶

Boodoo further elaborates, “theology is not a historical narrative, it is a lived, living and yet to be lived history that should be context driven and able to accommodate other disciplines for its task and goal.”⁴⁹⁷ A realistic understanding of contemporary contexts, then, will entail a reconstruction of theological method and content, especially the period from Second Vatican Council to date. These challenges guarantee a more realistic growth in tradition to accommodate the growing demand and yearning of how theological tasks could and should be engaged today. This current demand is hinged on contextualization of theology. The basis for this growth should be built on scripture and lived experience of particular people. The future of theology, then, lies in making the gospel adaptable to different contexts, and opening up to other disciplines and cultures. It means that the retrieval of values from these situations becomes the task for contemporary theologian.

⁴⁹⁵ Gerald Boodoo, “Catholic education in the present Caribbean context: Challenges and Opportunities” in *Groundings* 28, (Kingston, Jamaica, July 2012), pp 9-30.

⁴⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁷ Ibid.

It is significant to always have in mind that the particular has significance to the universal. Moreover, “relationship is important in theology; this is what makes theology meaningful to people. God himself exists in relationships... The relationship of the trinity is the essence of the God head.”⁴⁹⁸ Methods in theology must strive to find ways that will help theology move forward. The epistemic location as nuanced through the process of inculturation seems to be the way forward; this will allow identity and knowledge based on experience to propagate enduring theology for the Africans. Theology is not merely past historical narrative. Shreiter argues, “theology is not simply any experience of a community, but that experience of believers coming into an encounter with the scripture and the authentic experiences of the believing community's past and present.”⁴⁹⁹ It means that for theology to be relevant to the Africans, the issue of inculturation should not be taken lightly. Inculturation in dialogue with other methods seem the way forward for doing theology in contemporary times. In our quest, the attainment of theological goals lies in the freeing and overcoming of these challenges in society through inculturation, using correlational and liberational methodology as partners in understanding marriage in Tiv Catholic Church.

In the light of the ongoing, this work intends to emphasize the need for a cognitive shift that fortifies the will, liberates the mind, and engages the gospel in African context; most especially in the teaching and understanding of the sacrament of marriage. This approach ensues from the fact that the bulk of theologies that underlie Christianity as transmitted on the soil of Africa originally were colored by European worldviews. This

⁴⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁹ Robert. J. Schreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies*,19.

perception of Christianity could only be made more enriching and made to speak to the consciousness of the people through a methodology that at once makes the religion and doctrines easily understood by the people. The significant place of inculturation theology is most relevant when it speaks to Christianity and the cultural affiliation of the people to whom the religion speaks. The significant role of the Roman Catholic Church in inculturation theology cannot be over emphasized. It is therefore significant that the rich traditions of the church in these respects be explored and be made to speak as well as listen to the challenging situation of the Tiv Catholic Church. This would inevitably help in the understanding and living the values of marriage in the Tiv Catholic Church.

5.4 Challenges of African inculturation theology today

As good as it may sound, inculturation has in the past, and is still having a lot of challenges. These challenges are based on issues like Roman centralism and lack of unanimity among African theologians, most especially in the area of liturgical praxis in inculturation, fear of syncretism, clericalism and its negative impact on thriving of the basic Christian communities. Furthermore, lack of clearly defined theological boundaries between the local and universal church; lack of humility and fore sight to learn from the experiences of the African Initiated churches; the fear of the Bishops and the nagging issues of overdependence on the church of Rome for the day –to-day running of the African local churches.⁵⁰⁰ This financial aspect seems to be the most challenging.

Apart from these negative factors, there are other challenges that are positive. There is an urgent need to change the Christological centered discourse to a pneumatological

⁵⁰⁰ Similar argument has been emphatically made by Agbonkhanmeghe E. Orobator, “‘After All, Africa Is Largely a Nonliterate Continent’: The Reception of Vatican II in Africa,” *Theological Studies* 74, no. 2 (2013): 284f.

perspective of inculturation in which the Holy Spirit will be in charge, both to renew the faces of mission and reveal itself in the lives, cultures and traditions of our world. The Pneumatologically perspective will free the inculturation process from defined creeds and unchanging, frozen doctrinal positions.

By supposition, if theology is about the human person that relates to God through human experience, then it does not need to be static. It must be dynamic and accommodating in its approaches and tasks. There is no guarantee about the concrete content of theology independent of our lived experiences in various contexts. It is because of this understanding of theology that a theological appraisal of marriage in Tiv culture shall be firmly made.

5.5 Contextual assessment of polygamy in the scripture and among the Tiv people

A closer look at the scriptures shows that polygamy was not only permissible but justifiable (c.f Gen.16,1 ff; Gen.25.1; Gen. 29.29-30; Gen.30.22-24). Abraham was 85 years old and had no child by Sarai. The two of them in consultation devised a plan to realize God's promise. According to accepted legal custom of the time, Abraham would get a child through his maidservant, Hagar, and Sarai would adopt the child (Gen. 16.1). Despite Hagar, Abraham also married another wife named Ketura. She bore him Zimrahn, Jokshan, Midian, Isbak and Shuah (Gen.25.1). In Gen.29.15-30 we see how Jacob had to marry Leah and the sister Rachel. In addition, Leah also gave her maidservant Zilpah to Jacob as a wife to give him a male child (Gen. 30:9). From the preceding citations, children even at the time of Abraham and Jacob were the major justification for polygamy. We are also told of David and Solomon who practiced alliance marriages. (2 Sam.5.13-16; 1king 11.1-3). We also read that Moses did not abolish polygamy, but only issued instructions

which regulated it in a proper manner. For instance, Leviticus 18.18 and Exodus 12.10 made it obligatory for a polygamist to treat his wives with equality and required that the husband provides the essentials of life to his wives.

Polygamy in Tiv land solves several marital problems including childlessness; and divorce is hardly tenable. Although, marriage in Tiv culture is basically for procreation, but a woman who is barren is not divorce on the ground infertility. She is rather made to feel comfortable as member of the family by granting her custody of some children in the family. In this way, she does not feel isolated and bitter about her situation. She is regarded as a full member of the enlarge family--community. However, for the Church, Christian marriage entails that two people surrender themselves to each other. It is therefore unimaginable for the church that married love can be shared in a polygamous set up. This way of thinking runs counter to Tiv idea of marriage. Tiv do not see why marriage love should not be shared.

Traditional pastoral Church practice among the Tiv demands that the polygamist send away all his wives and stayed with only one, before he could receive baptism. "Pauline privilege,"⁵⁰¹ allows the polygamist to keep the wife he prefers. Also, wives of the polygamist are not baptized unless they separated from their husband before they are admitted to the sacraments. Wegh thinks that this is due to "lack of sufficient understanding of socio-cultural circumstances of the polygamy question; a lack of a critical theology of

⁵⁰¹ The Pauline privilege refers to the allowance by the church of the dissolution of marriage of two persons not baptized at the time the marriage occurred. St. Paul's first letter to the Corinthians (I Cor. 7.12-13) is the basis for the Pauline privilege: "*But if unbelieving partner desires to separate, let it be so; in such a case the brother or sister is not bound.*" This statement from St. Paul constitutes an exception to the otherwise universal norm. the Pauline privilege permits "*ratum et consummatum*" marriage to be dissolved, in favor of the faith. The Pauline privilege is only relevant if one of the spouses becomes a Christian and the other does not.

marriage; and, due to a misplaced and misdirected pastoral zeal.”⁵⁰² The church should consider the implications of directing a polygamist to choose one of his wives to marry in the church while at the same time abandoning the others to their fate. This is gross injustice to them in terms of wasting their youthful selves, aging and having no one to marry them again, *et cetera*. This action has far reaching consequences for a whole lot of people: throwing the whole family into confusion, generating bad blood among family members; destroying the mutual friendship of the families, and it could lead to instant prostitution.

In response to the above position, there can be no true renewal in the pastoral care of the family in Tivland without both a genuine inculturation of the church and a rethinking of the entire theology of marriage. The crucial thing is to see marriage as Africans see it, that is, in the context of the family. The pastoral practice of marriage as adopted by the church does not rhyme with Africans’. For the Tiv, marriage is viewed within the framework of the family. They think that there is a necessary relationship between marriage and the family. Marriage is not one thing, and the family completely another.

5.6 An assessment of Tiv marriage culture and the Church’s teaching

Though in some societies, marriage is acknowledged to be in existence once there is both sexual and economic cooperation (union) between people of the opposite sex, and even same sex. Amongst the Tiv, such union does not necessarily imply marriage. To fully appreciate the Tiv concept of marriage, one must first understand the way they conceptualize the family. The Tiv word for the family is “*tsombor*.”⁵⁰³ “*Tsombur*” is also

⁵⁰²Wegh, Shagbaor F, *Marriage, Family and the Church in Tiv*, 99-100.

⁵⁰³ Wegh Shagbaor, *Between continuity and change: Tiv concept of tradition and modernity*. (Lagos, Nigeria: Ovc Ltd. 1998), 23; See also, David Waya & Augusta Okonume, “Evaluating the Tiv and Igbo

the word for the umbilical cord, which joins mother and child before birth. According to Wegh, “Conceptualizing the family as “*tsombur*” is acknowledging its organic unity and the common blood implied in its composition.”⁵⁰⁴ Consequently, “the Tiv family, which is also the basic genealogical unit can comprise the couple and their children or the man, his several wives, their children including their wives after several generations.”⁵⁰⁵ The family is therefore “theoretically speaking an ‘endless’ line of relations and offspring tracing their descent to a common ancestor.”⁵⁰⁶ Marriage to the Tiv is therefore “more than a sexual and economic union. It is also a strategy to perpetuate the family through having more and more children.”⁵⁰⁷ David waya and Augusta Okonume explain further, “this strategy has also allowed the development of complicated group alliances aimed at maintaining societal equilibrium and cohesion.”⁵⁰⁸

However, marriage today among the Tiv is caught between two worlds: tradition and modernity. However, despite the impact of western education and modernity, Tiv traditional marriage remains an indisputable value. Despite the obvious variations in the pre-colonial marriage systems (some of which have been considered) they were held

marriage systems” in Journal of culture, society and development, Vol.29, 2017 www.iiste.org accessed10/7/2018.

⁵⁰⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁸ David Waya & Augusta Okonume, “Evaluating the Tiv and Igbo marriage systems” in Journal of culture, society and development, Vol.29, 2017 www.iiste.org accessed10/7/2018.

together by a very complex system of values all of which were internalized and accepted as part of the Tiv world view.

Though it has not been possible to articulate all the values that defines marriage among the Tiv, the followings are the most dominant principles having the most impact on the marriage systems. The principles include, but are not limited to, non-materialism, unity and group alliance, chastity and fidelity, discipline and respect for elders, fairness and the plight of the widows and orphans.

Pertinent questions must be asked to realize the objectives of this research: what are we to make about the differences between the Catholic, western tradition of marrying and other cultural traditions? How can the Catholic Church continue to insist that the historically recent western tradition is the universal tradition for all? Does marriage between one man and one woman represent theological truths about marriage? Is that how God wants us to live?

It has been argued in previous sections of this work that neither biblical theology, nor the church's spirit of *arrgiornamento* is inimical to a healthy review of Tiv marital arrangement, especially in attempt to make Christianity feel a home among the people. A fresh understanding and practice of marriage in the Tiv Catholic Church would open reception to God's invitation to the grace of the sacraments. Understandably, there is an overwhelming overlap between the Roman Catholic sacramental marriage and Tiv traditional marriage system. Nevertheless, instead of duplicating a rite with little relevance to the Tiv culture, a reviewal of same, which captures the inner logic and practice of Tiv marriage in tandem with the scriptures and established shift in the church's theological

vision towards inculturation becomes imperative. This approach will not only be of economic benefit to the people but will also make the Roman Catholic sacramental marriage more understandable and lived.

Moreover, a critical analysis of marriage among the Tiv has revealed that it shares some striking similarities with the Christian notion of marriage. The Christian marriage and Tiv understanding of marriage share in the procreative and unitive element of marriage. Based on the old Canon law of 1917,⁵⁰⁹ Canon Law 1013 states: “The primary end of marriage is the procreation and education of children. Its secondary end is mutual help and the allaying of concupiscence. The essential properties of marriage are unity and indissolubility, which acquire a particular fitness in Christian marriage.”⁵¹⁰ With the above, marriage in the two traditions shows some form of strong unity of relationships, permanence and is geared towards procreation. The fruit of marriage is seen in both traditions as gift from God and must be cherished and valued. The only difference is that the new Canon Law of 1983 stresses more on the wellbeing of the spouses that emphasizes companionship within the marriage contract. Can. 1055 §1. States that,

⁵⁰⁹ The 1917 Code of Canon Law, also referred to as the Pio-Benedictine Code, was the first official comprehensive codification of Latin canon law. It was promulgated on 27 May 1917 and took legal effect on 19 May 1918. It was in force until the 1983 Code of Canon Law took legal effect and abrogated it on 27 November 1983, accessed 21/1/2019
https://www.google.co.uk/search?source=hp&ei=IxVGXMHDOoiWa93UoLgD&q=canon+law+1917+marriage&oq=canon+law+of+19&gs_l=psy-ab.1.6.0i22i30l10.1590.9745..16777...0.0..0.457.2688.8j2j2j0j3.....0....1..gws-wiz.....0..0i131j0.sr1KJVv_69U

⁵¹⁰ Father Carota, “Traditional Marriage in Canon Law 1917 and New Marriage in Canon Law 1983” accessed 21/1/2019 <http://www.traditionalcatholicpriest.com/2013/09/12/traditional-marriage-in-canon-law-1917-and-new-marriage-in-canon-law-1983/>

The matrimonial covenant, by which a man and a woman establish between themselves a partnership of the whole of life and which is ordered by its nature to the good of the spouses and the procreation and education of offspring, has been raised by Christ the Lord to the dignity of a sacrament between the baptized.⁵¹¹

Apart from this stress on companionship, the rest of the elements of marriage as proposed by Christianity is also shared by the Tiv traditional marriage. Therefore, the three basic theological goods that results from this union called marriage are companionship and conjugal love based on (Gen.2- evil of loneliness); procreation (Gen. 1-command to multiply and fill the earth); and family as the basic unit of society (often overlooked) but is it important in the Tiv traditional marriage system. This emphasis on family, guarantee permanence and indissolubility in Tiv marriage. This explain the reason why divorce is rare in Tiv marriage. Since marriage in Tiv culture is not between two individuals, marriages are safeguarded by the family and clans, even after the death of one of the spouses.

Arguments in the preceding paragraph substantiate the strong need to engage in a meaningful dialogue between Christianity and culture, most especially on issues of marriage. As indicated earlier, the church is central to the reinforcement of many of the new values that have transformed the Tiv cultural marriage system. Despite this, many of the new changes are against the letter and spirit of church tradition. This study recommends an increased dialogue within the Catholic Church in Tivland aimed at finding the core values in the transformation of Tiv society. Such a meeting point will also give them an opportunity to partner with traditional values of the Tiv, most especially on marriage.

⁵¹¹ Code of Canon Law accessed 21/1/2019 http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG1104/_P3V.HTM

5.7 Theological Appraisal of marriage in Tiv Culture

Peoples' lives, and cultures are composed of many overlapping stories. Novelist Chimamanda Adichie tells the story of how she found her authentic cultural voice — and warns that if people hear only a single story about another person or country, they risk a critical misunderstanding of such Other. According to her, “The single story creates stereotypes, and the problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete. They make one story become the only story.”⁵¹² She states, “The consequence of the single story is this: It robs people of dignity. It makes our recognition of our equal humanity difficult. It emphasizes how we are different rather than how we are similar.”⁵¹³ Thus, “it is impossible to talk about the single story without talking about power...how they are told, who tells them, when they're told, how many stories are told, are really dependent on power.”⁵¹⁴

Commenting on the issue of power she explains,

⁵¹² Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, “The Danger of a single story”, http://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story/transcript?language=en (Accessed 12/14/2015).

⁵¹³Ibid.

⁵¹⁴Ibid.

Power is the ability not just to tell the story of another person, but to make it the definitive story of that person. The Palestinian poet Mourid Barghouti writes that if you want to dispossess a people, the simplest way to do it is to tell their story and to start with, "secondly." Start the story with the arrows of the Native Americans, and not with the arrival of the British, and you have an entirely different story. Start the story with the failure of the African state, and not with the colonial creation of the African state, and you have an entirely different story.⁵¹⁵

She reiterates, “when we reject the single story, when we realize that there is never a single story about any place, we regain a kind of paradise.”⁵¹⁶ A paradise that accommodate plurality of cultures, institutions and ideas. Towing the lines of Chimaamanda’ argument on the need to reject the narrative of single story and applying it to marriage and culture in the Catholic Church in Tivland, one will truly appreciate the reality of having and practicing marriage forms that are particular to specific people and context. Moreover, for marriage as an institution in the Catholic Church to be properly understood and lived among the Tiv, it must also create some dialogical points among Tiv culture.

The first step towards an inculturated appropriation of marriage in Tiv culture is a change in narrative as told by the harbinger of Christianity and its marriage ideals. A deliberate and calculated theological efforts that seek to advance another story to complement the Christian story must be told. The emphasis should be to create a kind of paradise for the two stories to flourish. The way forward in this direction is through the inculturation process.

There is now a greater need for the church and Tiv culture to interact to create a good understanding and teaching on marriage in the Catholic Church among the Tiv people. The

⁵¹⁵ Ibid.

⁵¹⁶ Ibid.

Tiv people of Nigeria hold the marriage institution at a very high esteem and realize marriage through significant process and moments that could serve as starting points for a viable theological reflection and inculturation of marriage in Tiv culture. However, Marriage has been the troublesome topic confronting missionaries in the sub-Saharan throughout their process of evangelization. According to Benezet Bujo, “marriage has caused much resistance to Christianity in Black Africa.”⁵¹⁷ As earlier noted, polygamous marriages among the Tiv, as among many other African cultures, has continued to be problematic to the preaching and reception of dogma concerning Christian marriage culture. As Bujo puts it, “Vatican II tries to give it a hearing, but was based on their own terms. Africans who married in the customary fashioned are excluded from the sacraments as their marriages were regarded as mere concubinage.”⁵¹⁸ Nevertheless, for the Tiv, marriage is viewed differently from that of the Catholic Church that is heavily influenced by the western culture. In Africa and to a degree for the Tiv, “marriage is not a private matter, but embraces the extended families of the husband and wife, the living and the dead, and the not-yet-born.”⁵¹⁹ There are no marriages without the divine, the ancestors, and the living family. To overlook this cosmology is to fail to understand that for Tiv a marriage that is not performed according to tradition is no marriage. A marriage that is articulated only or even mainly, through sexuality is repugnant to the Tiv. The community as community is essential to marriage, it cannot be centered on the two main protagonists, no matter how intense their mutual love is. Such love is not considered genuine if it excludes the three-fold community that comes into being only with the birth of the child.

⁵¹⁷Benezet Bujo, *Plea for change of models for marriage*, (Nairobi, Kenya: Pauline publishers, 2009),12.

⁵¹⁸*Ibid.*13.

⁵¹⁹*Ibid.*17.

Affirming this openness of marriage and family to society, Pope John II in his Apostolic Exhortation on the African synod said, “By its nature marriage, which has the special mission of perpetuating humanity, transcends the couple. In the same way, by its nature, the family extends beyond the individual household: it is oriented towards society.”⁵²⁰

The role of the community in marriage among the Tiv is vital; this is seen in the whole process of the preparation for marriage, and most clearly, in the marriage ceremony itself. Marriage is not a matter for the individual. In Tiv culture, true marriage can only be achieved when both the individual and the whole community are integrated following the principle: “I am related, therefore we are.”⁵²¹ In the words of Bujo, “Marriage is in fact, a part of the life of the community and a question of the survival of all: the past (ancestors), the present (the living), and the future (not-yet-born).”⁵²² Marriage in Tiv understanding and practice, is an alliance or covenant, not only between two individuals but between two families, and then into broader community thereby including the connecting two clans or tribes as the case may be. Thus, marriage does not end with the death of the husband. This also explains the reasons for levirate marriages (wife inheritance) among the Tiv.⁵²³ Tiv traditional marriage is meant to be indissoluble up to and even beyond death.

⁵²⁰ John Paul II, *Post-synodal apostolic exhortation: Ecclesia in Africa*: “On the Church in Africa and its evangelizing mission towards the year 2000”, #85

⁵²¹Ibid. 95.

⁵²²Ibid. 96.

⁵²³ The expression “Levirate marriage” is contextual to an understanding of a marriage with a brother's widow. It is a practice that is known among many cultures and given expression in Jewish marital arrangement in Deut. 25: 56 despite the forbidden injunction in Lev. 18: 16, 20: 21.

5.8 Theological implications: Toward the inculturation of marriage in Tiv culture

Marriage is a natural institution and a socio-cultural reality to which each group of people should determine according to their own context. However, the Western European understanding of marriage as adopted by the Catholic Church's Magisterium in her teaching has been presented as a standard for varied cultures and social groups as may exist within the church. This attitude may not allow the church to understand the perception of these groups in their varied contexts. The changing attitude of the church in openness to inculturation is a welcome idea that needs to be explored in its varieties. In the same spirit, the church in Tivland cannot be indifferent to the call to deepen its theology of marriage and *ipso facto* put it into practice.

However, there are implications for either position of Tiv understanding of marriage and the current European influenced Catholic theology of marriage. In this understanding, this work shall consider the pastoral implications of marital concepts in the church's self-understanding in Tivland. It asks, how can the Church address in a persuasive way the dynamics of marriage in Tivland? How would Catholic theology of Marriage be different if it were to attend to the yearnings of Tiv culture? What influence does colonialism have on Catholic theology and her sacraments? Is marriage still the same today in the postmodern world as in the pre-Vatican II era? If the understanding of the sacraments is about celebrating what God is doing in the life of the human person, where does the authority of the church on issues of marriage comes from? There seems to be multiple narratives about marriage. We have many narratives describing the male /female situations across diverse cultures. Marriage, especially in Tivland is not just about love, it is about associations based on extended family and family support systems. Given the importance

of marriage and family life every effort should be made to study and analyze each distinct group practice.

Moreover, from the Council Fathers' definition of a Christian marriage, there are both differences and similarities between Christian and Tiv marriages. For a Tiv person, love is not the primary purpose of marriage (*u eren kwase*), but offspring, who will perpetuate the family lineage. In contrast, love is primary and important for Christian marriages. The similarity, however, is that the relationship is between a man and a woman. Differences between Christian marriage and Tiv traditional marriage explain the pastoral problems that the church encountered regarding marriage among the Tiv Christians. The question, however, remains: what can the Church do in her teaching to help a Tiv person whose marriage is not blessed with children?

Whether the necessary patience and study about inculturating African traditional marriage have been engaged in this area remains debatable. What is not disputable, however, is that inculturating the traditional marriage remains a formidable force in the Catholic Church in Tivland, even after over 87 years of Christian evangelization. Not only has it persisted and lingered on, it has, at times, metamorphosed into forms such as polygamy, adultery, or concubinage alongside Christian monogamy in, especially, in urban centers. Various questions stand out here to confront the situation: Should Tiv traditional marriages be accepted by Christianity as one of the traditional-phase-cultural inevitabilities of the Tiv Christian as they make gradual but steady steps towards Christian maturity? I think yes. Should Tiv traditional marriage be presented to these Christians as the ideal

form of marriage? I think yes. The reason being that Christ himself came not to condemn cultures, but to transform cultures. Should all of them be expected to comply only with the Christian sacrament of matrimony now? I think no. The church in Tivland should find ways to reconcile marriage practices in Tiv culture and the church. I feel mercy and good discernment should be employed in dealing with people who are caught up in this dilemma of marrying more than one wife. Some of them are really committed in their Christian faith but cannot practice in the catholic church because of doctrinal and pastoral practices enforced by the church. Some were pressurized into marrying more than wife for cultural and economic reasons. The Tiv are basically farmers and needs more hands on the farm to feed both the immediate family and extended family. Also, since marriage in Tiv culture is not centered on the individual, families and clan could influence one to marry more than one wife to satisfy the demands of the family and clan. Therefore, there should be dialogue between Christianity and Tiv cultural forms of marriage. A respectable approach to a holistic teaching on the reception of the Sacrament should be ensued; considering the worldview and traditional values of the Tivs. These traditional values can only be suppressed for a time but cannot be totally extinguished. Should those who fail to comply in this matter be denied active participation in the life of the Church [especially attending to the sacraments]? I think no. A gradual accompaniment of the converts should be the guiding principle. Pope John Paul II in his exhortation on the African synod elaborates that,

In Baptism, in fact, we are born anew to the life of God's children, united to Jesus Christ and anointed in the Holy Spirit. Baptism is not simply a seal of conversion, a kind of *external sign* indicating conversion and attesting to it. Rather, it is a *Sacrament which signifies and effects* rebirth from the Spirit, establishes real and unbreakable bonds with the Blessed Trinity, and makes us members of the Body of Christ, which is the Church.”⁵²⁴

He therefore cautions, “a journey of conversion that did not culminate in Baptism would stop half-way.”⁵²⁵ The Journey to conversion is a gradual and continuous one that need care and discernment to allow the spirit to bring about true rebirth in the converts and the church.

When will the demarcating line between tolerance and intolerance come in this encounter? It will come when the Tiv society will have evolved up to a point when the tradition of marriage processes and especially a plurality of wives will no longer make sense within the given new socio-political and economic settings, or when the Holy Spirit will have granted the church better ways of addressing the concerns that are currently being addressed Tiv traditional marriage as a functioning system. This is so because, the Tiv marriage system are also not static. It evolves whenever there is a need for openness. For instance, it evolves from exchange marriage to bride price.

The church in Tivland should heed the position of Post Second Vatican Council documents, especially *Evangelii Nutiandi* and *Redemptoris Missio* which gave credence and elaboration of the Church’s position concerning inculturation. Although *Redemptoris*

⁵²⁴John Paul II, *Post-synodal apostolic exhortation: Ecclesia in Africa*: “On the Church in Africa and its evangelizing mission towards the year 2000”, # 73, <http://w2.vatican.va> Accessed 12/5/2018.

⁵²⁵ *Ibid.*

*Missio*⁵²⁶ uses the term insertion in talking about inculturation, it acknowledges the need to go beyond a monolithic and monocultural expression of the faith. George Worgul articulates the need for inculturation from a very theological perspective:

The Church, whether it admits it or not, participates in culture. It always has, and it always will. At one and the same time, the ecclesial community is a product of revelation and culture, of the divine and the human... moreover “revelation” and belief system of the Christian community are expressed in and through the medium of a culture’s language, patterns of behavior, and social structures.⁵²⁷

Additionally, Worgul argues that, “it is only when we enter freely into the mysteries of the sacraments that we are enriched by their gifts, fruits of the presence of God through his son, the risen Lord, and by virtue of the fulfilling activities of the spirit.”⁵²⁸ It is then possible, at least theoretically, to make a distinction between what is cultural and that which is strictly divine. The church should understand that “cultural change from the “bottom” is more dramatic and painful.”⁵²⁹ He emphasized, “Contemporary culture is concerned with the particular rather than the universal.”⁵³⁰ He further contends that, “contemporary culture envisions reality as dynamic and evolving.”⁵³¹ To this the church must rise to these challenges of change. It must not continue to lay emphasis on her laws which are universally valid and irreformable.

⁵²⁶ The process of the church’s insertion into peoples’ cultures is a lengthy one. It is a matter of purely external adoption, for inculturation means the intimate transformation of authentic values through their integration in Christianity and the insertion of Christianity in the various human cultures.

⁵²⁷ George S. Worgul, *From Magic to Metaphor: A Validation of the Christian Sacraments*, (New York: Paulist press, 1980), 9.

⁵²⁸Ibid. xv.

⁵²⁹Ibid. 7.

⁵³⁰Ibid. 7.

⁵³¹Ibid.9.

The 1983 Code of Canon Law has a lot of legal provisions that give permission to inculturation: “The Episcopal Conference can draw up its own rite of marriage, in keeping with those usages of place and people which accord with the Christian spirit...”⁵³² (Can. 1120). The expression ‘Christian spirit’ can be understood as cultures that are not opposed to the Christian vision of salvation. On indissolubility of marriage the Code further says, “A marriage which is ratified and consummated cannot be dissolved by any human power or by any cause other than death”⁵³³ (Can. 1141). Clearly, ratification and consummation ensure the stability of the marriage institution. To ratify is to sanction and authorize. Marriage in Tiv has authorization of the elders and the community. The Code further defines what it means by ratification: “Only those marriages are valid which are contracted in the presence of the local Ordinary or parish priest or of the priest or deacon delegated by either of them, who, in the presence of two witnesses, assists, in accordance however with the rules set out in the following canon...” (Can. 118, sect.1). This provision gives the value of marriage an elastic interpretation. “In the presence of the Church” does not imply a building, or a locale. Rather, wherever the minister of the church and witnesses are. The existence of the clause *coram cclesiam* (in the presence of the church) as one of the conditions of marriage demands some reflection as it is a potential area of inculturation. Marriage in Tiv can therefore be held in the home of the bride with the priest representing the church since the man and woman are the proper celebrant of the sacrament. Besides, *coram ecclesiam* must not have the same interpretation cross-culturally.

⁵³² James A. Coriden et al eds, *Code of Canon Law: A Text and Commentary*, (New York: Paulist Press, 1985), Can. 1120.

⁵³³Ibid. Can. 1141.

Consummation of marriage as presented in the code of canon law is another moment that is open to rich theological reflection. The code says:

A valid marriage between baptized persons is said to be merely ratified if it is not consummated, ratified and consummated, if the spouses have in a human manner engaged together in a conjugal act in itself apt for the generation of offspring. To this act marriage is by its nature ordered and by it the spouses become one flesh.⁵³⁴

The act of sex in *humano modo*, which implies sex, “in a willing and loving manner on the part of each party, consummates marriage and when the spouses have stayed together after marriage has been celebrated consummation is presumed until the contrary is proven.”⁵³⁵ It is in the Roman Catholic teaching that the ‘sex’ in question is an act open to procreation. If this is the case, it stands to reason that the aim of the sexual act is procreation. So, ones can safely say that marriage must be open to fecundity.

This understanding corroborates the Tiv view of marriage. However, this openness to fecundity assumes a greater dimension in positing the arrival of a child as the fulfillment of marriage. A situation where young man ensures the woman is fit for marriage by only making her pregnant before approaching the sacrament of marriage, unacceptable as it may be, protects the marriage from future pain and misery resulting from childlessness. A situation where marriages are celebrated for expectant mothers call for serious theological and pastoral action. Some of the evangelical and protestant churches in Tivland try to respond to this challenge by having pregnancy tests for the prospective bride before the marriage celebration. This decision does not necessarily solve the problem. Since many men and women live together after the traditional marriage, the church could show its

⁵³⁴ See code of Canon Law, #1061, section 2.

⁵³⁵ Ibid.

presence at traditional weddings and grant such marriages the desired sacramental character.

As the Roman Catholic Church teaches, marriage is an important part of Tiv culture. Begetting children without a recognized father is highly discouraged in Tiv land. The Tiv see children as gifts from God, nevertheless, childless marriages are looked upon with scorn. The sacredness which the Roman Catholic Church accords the marriage institution by designating it as a sacrament is reflected also in Tiv culture. This sacrament therefore, needs serious careful preparation. The result of the act of preparing people for marriage when the choice of the partner has been made be different if some time the preparations were done earlier no matter how minimal as in the Tiv age-grade initiation rites. Hence, marriage preparation as an initiation into the institution of marriage can be combined with the age-grade initiation rite as already narrated. It is not uncommon for spouses to discover that they are practically incompatible only after the marriage has been consummated.

Besides, the definition of marriage as given by the Church, “partnership of the whole of life, of mutual and exclusive fidelity, established by mutual consent between a man and a woman, ordered toward the good of the spouses and the procreation of offspring,”⁵³⁶ has an overwhelming overlap with the Tiv understanding of marriage. The possibility of procreation, which stands as the major element of the marriage union occupies a prominent position in Tiv marriage system. With its strong cultural ethos and process of initiation into adult life (marriage inclusive), certain elements of Tiv marriage process deserve some reinforcement while some others could be repudiated. If reasons for polygamy are not

⁵³⁶ The *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, (Washington DC: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2000), #1601.

based on pure self-gratification of the sensual self, then should be certainly reinforced and encouraged. While, if they are based on sexual promiscuity, then they should be certainly repudiated. For polygamy as practiced among the Tiv is not certainly for sexual gratification but based on Tiv moral values and propagation of life and family.

More so, the Church should reinterpret her position on consent, indissolubility to the point of 'conditional yes' at the wedding until the child is born. The issues of sterility should also be reviewed to be an *impedimentum dirimens*. Marriage should be considered consummated when a child is born. This would help families in Tivland whose primary purpose of marriage is to have children that will continue the family line. The emphasis here is not to bring disgrace and shame to the barren woman; but to solve a pastoral problem that confronts the Church and Tiv cultural understanding of marriage. This position does not address the unforeseen circumstances like death of the children, Health condition, age and the justice issues that accompany the marriage arrangements in Tiv culture.

However, traditional marriage among the Tiv without children is considered as not having been consummated. Consummation in Tiv culture is a gradual process that culminate in the birth of a child. It not a one-off event of a spouse having sexual intercourse after the marital vows have been exchanged and witnessed by the Church. Therefore, the Church's most urgent concerns must be to regard both forms of consummation and child bearing as the same. This would bring some form of harmony in the Church's teaching and practice on marriage in Tiv Catholic Church.

In conclusion, it is obvious that the overwhelming concordance between the Roman Catholic sacramental marriage and Tiv traditional marriage, from the foregoing discussion

presents the need for inculturation. Such significant moments as initiation rite of the age-grades could be utilized by the church in the preparation for the neophytes for the future adult life. Bishop Ephraim Silas Obot of Idah, Nigeria, during the African synod drew attention to the fact that,

various-rites form part of the process that is African marriage. In Nigeria, Catholics perform traditional marriage outside the church and before the reception of the sacrament of marriage. Most Nigerian marriages present a process and at a stage in this process, the church's rite of marriage could be incorporated, thus certain values which enhance the stability of marriage, such as community participation, children, bride-wealth and religion could become part of Christian marriage. Such preparation will help curtail the rising tide of divorce due to inadequate preparation for marriage."⁵³⁷

Again, with the explicit flexibility in the venue of the marriage celebration as demonstrated by *coram ecclesiam*, ministers of the church could witness marriage in the home of the bride at the moment of the traditional marriage.

Moreover, in the Nigerian or Tiv situation as stated above, there is enough opening for inculturation to take place, the "Native law and custom"⁵³⁸ which Bishop mentioned, is the first phase of marriage preparation in the church should be explored to the full to benefit the Tiv catholic Church in her marriage. This law is the primary law that warrant the couple to be, to pay the bride price to the family of the bride. This act gives security to the marriage covenant. Hence Tiv valid customary marriage is contracted and considered legitimate only when the *kem* negotiations and transactions between the members of the *kem*-giving family

⁵³⁷Cecil McGarry, SJ, et al (Editors), *What happened at the African Synod?* p.70

⁵³⁸"Native Law and custom" is a legal document enacted by the Bishop conference of Nigeria for valid customary marriages in Nigerian Church. Marriages are contracted and considered legitimate only when the bride price negotiations and transactions between the members of the bride price-giving family and the bride price receiving family are entered into or completed. It only when this process is completed that Church marriage or wedding would be validly contracted.

and the *kem* receiving family are entered into or completed. The day of the bride price (*Kem*) transactions should be the focal point of Tiv marriage.

Similarly, the speech of the father of the bride at the *Kem* marriage ceremony could be integrated within the homily of the church minister. However, this may not replace the homily since the minister has the theology of the church to communicate for the occasion. There is a need for some flexibility as already foreseen by the church. Homilies are about exhortation and advice on values. The speech of the father to her daughter who is about to be married is all about exhorting her and the virtues that goes with art of marrying.

Another feature of the proposed *Tiv Christian customary marriage* ceremony should be the expression of covenantal faithfulness in marriage. After the *Kem* transactions and other related customary marriage ceremony rituals, the pastor should ask both sets of families and the couple themselves to make a public declaration to indicate the unity of the two families.

5.9 Theological reflection and evaluation of marriage in Tiv culture

It is an uphill task to develop a theology of marriage that would simultaneously validate the practice of polygamy in compliance with the ideals of African value and in consonance with Catholic theology on marriage. One of the punch lines that needs to be established is that polygamy is a cherished value in most African societies. However, it contradicts the monogamous biblical imperative. A general and practical approaches, especially within the Catholic church in Tivland, is that polygamists who come forward to be enrolled as candidates for baptism can receive the usual preparatory instructions but can be baptised only if they put away all but the first wife. The general understanding is that

“polygamy is inherently sinful and that those who contract polygamous marriages live in sin.”⁵³⁹ This position of the Church has undoubtedly confused the entire understanding of the “Pauline and Petrine privileges,”⁵⁴⁰ as practised especially in the Tiv dioceses.

The Church’ policy on polygamy leads to a serious missiological, pastoral and theological problems. One of the major issues associated with the idea is that it creates a class-Christianity. Polygamists are seen as second-class Christians with fewer or no rights and privileges. They seem to be permanently on probation. Obviously, it has created a multiple class Christianity leading most Africans to find a place where they can be at home with their Christian faith and matrimonial situation. The explosive emergence of African Initiated Churches testifies to this reality.

It is therefore right to assert that the multiple class Christianity prevents so many Africans from attaining Christian maturity. If the gospel message can only be effective among a people only through their active participation in the life of the Church, then it is biblically and theologically unsound to evangelise polygamists and then prevent them from participating fully in Christian fellowship. From a common-sense point of view, polygamists do not experience genuine encounter with the gospel.

Sure, we are Christians and we believe and cherish the teachings of the church, but we must advocate for an African gospel that speaks a model that is in context with the

⁵³⁹ Sam Owusu, “Towards a Theology of Marriage and Polygamy” in *Direction: A Mennonite Brethren Forum*, Fall 2007 · Vol. 36 No. 2 · pp. 192–205 <http://www.directionjournal.org/36/2/towards-theology-of-marriage-and.html> accessed 24/9/2018/.

⁵⁴⁰ See Code of Canons 1141-44 & 1150

African values. A gospel that confronts the cherishes beliefs of our people and allows people to approach the process in several ways.

The issue of polygamy, which is common among the Tiv people, deserves more study instead of total condemnation as it is presently done by the Church. Polygamy is not supported by the Church tradition. It seems to contradict exclusivity in Christian marriage. But in fact, it is a communal exclusivity, marriage in Tiv is progressively achieved only being final with a child birth. One might say that, in Tiv tradition, the indissolubility of marriage is conditioned to its fruitfulness. Practical speaking, the birth of a child marked the “consummation” of the marriage. Once a child has been born the marriage is indissoluble. Thus, children become a real external sign of this indissoluble unity. It is important to underline that the main factor behind polygamy in Tiv culture is not sexual incontinence, but the overriding desire and, as it were, necessity of having children. This can be seen, for instance, in the fact that the taking of a second wife is so often the simple consequence of the barrenness of the first.

Given the complexity and intricate theological concerns inherent in Tiv cultural marriage system, and the recognition of the those needs leading to polygamy among the people, a missional theological approach to the problem is suggested. The proposed model would emphasize the principle of ‘Relationality’ and ‘toleration’ as a locus of intervention on polygamy. Using the principle of ‘Relationality’ and ‘toleration’ would give the church an opportunity to explore the communal exclusivity element of marriage in Tiv culture in order to address the issues of indissolubility and consummation in marriage.

This model will bridge the gap between biblical revelation and the human context so as to find an alternative way of dealing with this pastoral situation, especially in the cases of converted Tiv polygamists. This approach is informed by Scripture and the African cultural context. It allows some practical and pastoral alternative ways of dealing with converted polygamists. The missional model requires that we unveil the Western cultural layers and allow the Gospel to encounter the African culture directly.

Moreover, through this process, and as the church has given explicit provision for inculturation as demonstrated through the documents of the church, it is incumbent to toe the path of theological model that is indigenous to the people... It is unjustifiable that inculturation has not gone beyond translation of liturgical rites into local languages/dialects in Nigeria, and particularly, in Tiv land. There is a need for the church to take bold and practical steps in implementing the positive values of inculturation theology through the process missional theological model using the principle of 'Relationality' and 'toleration'. There is a need for the church to adopt the open-ended flexibility that the relational structure of the universe suggests, as a working hypothesis or methodological assumption to engage in theological discussion.

Relationality is the determining criterion of interaction among the many beings that populate the cosmo-religious space. There is thus a complex network of relationships, plurality, interconnectedness and complementarity that constitute the people into a corporate whole with the gift of difference. Put differently, unity and strength lie in the diversity of abilities. This relationality of being remains a potential area of theological interest in relational ecclesiology. To affirm this importance, Elochukwu Uzukwu following the philosophical assumption of Chinua Achebe that is structured around duality

and based on relational terms said: For “when something stands, something else will stand besides it.”⁵⁴¹ This he says, “would encourage flexibility, collaboration, dialogue across religions and cultures and could bring together or correlate the gospel ideal and the ideal of secular humanism.”⁵⁴²

The incarnation of Jesus and his message is a sign that the gospel can and could be incarnated into multiple cultures. Contexts and situations could be utilized as provided by the Canon Law and the new disposition of the church especially from the Second Vatican Council. For true universality is a universality that is achieved through pluriformity and not uniformity.

It is in this line of thought that the Article “Marriage Proposals: From One-Size-Fits-All to Postmodern Marriage” by Barbara Stark addresses this disjunction between a wide range of living experience and the law concerning marriage.⁵⁴³ Part I explains why one-size-fits-all actually fits none and how, in fact, this has already been recognized by all of the states in connection with divorce. Part II suggests approaching the problem through

⁵⁴¹Uzokwu, Elochukwu E., *God, Spirit, and Human Wholeness: Appropriating Faith and Culture in West African Style*, (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock, 2011), 2.

⁵⁴²Ibid. 2.

⁵⁴³ Stark Barbara, “Marriage Proposals: From One-Size-Fits-All to Postmodern Marriage” *California Law Review*, Vol. 89, No. 5 (Oct. 2001), pp. 1479-1548. Published by: California Law Review, Inc <http://www.jstor.org/>. (Accessed 27/02/2014), 1482: This Article addresses this disjunction between a wide range of lived experience and the law. Part I explains why one-size-fits-all actually fits none and how, in fact, this has already been recognized by all of the states in connection with divorce. Part II suggests approaching the problem through what I call 'postmodern marriage law'. By way of illustration, it sets out some modular alternatives - 'Marriage Proposals' - to one-size-fits-all marriage. Marriage Proposals are not simply an alternative to 'regular' marriage, but an acknowledgment that there is no 'regular' marriage. Marriage Proposals are not only necessary at divorce, but during marriage; not simply an alternative for a wealthy few, but for anyone who is married or who is considering marriage. I conclude that postmodern marriage law; that is, marriage law that explicitly contemplates varied, changing, contextualized forms of marriage, may in fact be more compatible with contingent, problematic, but nevertheless enduring human love, than the reified abstraction we now call 'marriage'.

what she calls "postmodern marriage law." By way of illustration, it sets out some modular alternatives-"Marriage Proposals"-to one-size-fits-all marriage.

According to Barbara Stark,

"Marriage Proposals," which serve as modular alternatives to one-size-fits-all marriage that the partners may further alter over time, reflect post-modernism's acceptance of contingency and flux. Second, they share postmodernism's incredulity toward metanarratives, contemplating instead a proliferation of petit narratives, reflecting a wide range of marital objectives and terms. Third, "Marriage Proposals" recognize that couples' views regarding threats to their marriages may be very different, and that even the views of the partners within a couple may be very different. Finally, "Marriage Proposals" recognize that marriage is an economic institution and that partners' choices have economic consequences for each of them as individuals, as well as for the family unit."⁵⁴⁴

For her, "Marriage Proposals are not simply an alternative to "regular" marriage, but an acknowledgment that there is no "regular" marriage."⁵⁴⁵ It means that marriage experience differ from culture, institution and people. She concludes that postmodern marriage law; that is, "marriage law that explicitly contemplates varied, changing, contextualized forms of marriage, may in fact be more compatible with contingent, problematic, but nevertheless enduring human love, than the reified abstraction we now call "marriage."⁵⁴⁶

The notion of alternative forms of marriage has emerged in recent years as a backlash to no-fault divorce. Moreover, for most couples, marriage proposals recognize that there is more than one kind of marriage and by doing so account for far a richer and more useful

⁵⁴⁴ Stark Barbara, "Marriage Proposals: From One-Size-Fits-All to Postmodern Marriage" California Law Review, Vol. 89, No. 5 (Oct. 2001), pp. 1479-1548Published by: California Law Review, Inc <http://www.jstor.org/>. (Accessed 27/02/2014), 1482

⁵⁴⁵Ibid

⁵⁴⁶Ibid.1482

description of the options. They promote fairness, and the perception of fairness, by making expectations about marriage as divorce explicit. Barbara asserts, “that is why most spouses now would probably opt for the form of marriage most protective of the economically vulnerable spouse, at least at the beginning of their marriage.”⁵⁴⁷

Marriage is such an important institution for the church and the Tiv people. From this institution, the church and society acquire membership. To minimize the burden of going through the marriage rite twice (Tiv traditional marriage and the Roman Catholic sacramental marriage), to be recognized as married in the church, in a rite whose significance and inner logic have nothing opposed to each other calls for practical action. The Tiv traditional marriage with its rich theological elements could serve as a starting point for realistic inculturation of marriage in Tivland.

It is only this process of inculturation that can effectively cushion the numerous pastoral challenges emerging from the marriage institution in Tivland. Without an urgent approach to this issue, the current syncretism will make the sacrament of matrimony at best unappreciated and at worst counterproductive. This is an area that theologians and pastors cannot afford to gloss over if the sacrament of matrimony is to endure in other cultures like the Tiv.

More importantly, there is need for more study, research education and even rethinking and reevaluation on part of pastors, theologians and the faithful. This will answer the questions of justice and charity arising from the practice of ‘sending away’ all but one of the wives of a polygamist who would become a Christian. For in this way, the church

⁵⁴⁷ Ibid.

has all too often been seen as an institution who come to break-up the natural family unit and to shatter the existing complex of marriage-related human bonds.

To proffer a solution to this problem, Eugene Hillman in his book, *Polygamy Reconsidered* focuses upon the state of the question of Polygamy, rather than the arguments entailed in the debate, whether or to what extent the monogamy rule of the Christian churches should be modified with respect to the immemorial customs of plural marriage among most of the peoples in Africa south of the Sahara. His presentation is partly autobiographical, and it reflects particularly the Roman Catholic encounter with the question. In his submission, there is no suggestion that polygamy should be introduced into the western world. What is proposed “however, is a fundamental question of conscience for the western Christians: whether we are not guilty of unethical colonialism if we refuse now to make a serious effort to distinguish between abiding orientation of life and culturally conditioned applications, between normative ideas and pastoral or pedagogical approaches.”⁵⁴⁸ The question is, how are we to harmonized culture and Christianity? To this Hillman insists, “what is expected is that the way should be opened for “a more profound adoption of the whole area of Christian life, not only in the outward practices of religion and ecclesiastical organization, but also in the realm of “morality and doctrine.”⁵⁴⁹ Thus, he contends, “the anthropological perspectives of the European middle ages are just no longer adequate, nor are the exegetical methods and the theological arguments of pope Innocent III. A “fresh scrutiny” is long overdue.”⁵⁵⁰ African Christians are still asking some searching questions about the negative attitude of their churches toward this traditional

⁵⁴⁸ Eugene Hillman *Polygamy Reconsidered: African plural marriages and the Christian Churches*, VII.

⁵⁴⁹ *Ibid*, 5.

⁵⁵⁰ *Ibid*, 7.

African conception of marriage. The reality is that, an increasing number of Christian scholars today would recognize that moral questions bordering about marriage will not be solved by logical inferences but by insight and understanding. A meaningful dialogue with respect and honesty would probably be the best way forward.

In his contribution, Hillman warns that, “it is not good to transfer a judgment which is really proper to one society or historical period to another society which is characterized by significantly different social and customs.”⁵⁵¹ Thus, he insists, “there is need for a radical historical-cultural hermeneutic.”⁵⁵² This will pave the way to avoid the use of ethnocentric standards of valuation and promotes genuine dialogue and respect for other people’s cultures. In this way, cultural obtuseness which characterized the missionary project in dealing with peoples of the larger world will be mitigated. In his reasoning, sensitivity to the cultures of other people cannot be disregarded. Thus, he contends, “missionaries should be patient in passing harsh judgement on our traditional marriage customs and ideas.”⁵⁵³ Patient is key in this project. For example, in the words of Hillman, “missionaries and foreign administrators in Africa have long believed that the disappearance of customary plural would be ‘just a matter of time’. But is it clear that polygamous society will not disappear for some time to come.”⁵⁵⁴ It is therefore vital to study the social significance of African polygamy by considering the place and functions of this institution within its own socio-economic and cultural contexts. This will help in creating a good understanding and appreciation of the institution. According to Hillman,

⁵⁵¹ Ibid, 48.

⁵⁵² Ibid, 49.

⁵⁵³ Ibid, 56.

⁵⁵⁴ Ibid, 87.

“getting married to two or more wives is a custom found all over Africa, though in some societies it is less common than in others. This custom fits well in to thinking of the people, serving many useful purposes.”⁵⁵⁵

From the Biblical point of view, quoting Karl Barth, Hillman therefore, insists that, “we can hardly point with certainty to a single text in the New Testament in which polygamy is expressly forbidden and monogamy universally decreed.”⁵⁵⁶ For him, the whole biblical case against the practice of polygamy is developed only by inferences. He therefore, attests that, “it is moreover, demonstrable that all of the positive values urged in the New Testament texts—love, faithfulness, indissolubility and mutual respect for conjugal rights—are capable of realizing within the plural marriage system found throughout sub-Saharan Africa.”⁵⁵⁷ For instance, whatever one may think the meaning of the Exceptive clause, it is by no means evident that simultaneous polygamy came under discussion at all, as it was not part of the controversy into which the pharisees were attempting to draw Jesus. Jesus Teaching was that men may not divide what God has joined—there was no condemnation of polygamy.

Saint Paul in his teaching on marital union which are usually cited as corroborating evidence by those who hold that polygamy were merely tolerated by Moses and finally repudiated by Christ were also not founded on firm foundation. For Hillman, “Paul’s concern for Christian marriage was developed in the context of Greco-Roman world where monogamy was the socially determined form of marriage, while polygamy was legally

⁵⁵⁵ Ibid, 127

⁵⁵⁶ Ibid, 139.

⁵⁵⁷ Ibid, 140

proscribed.”⁵⁵⁸ But from historical and social point of view, this does not amount to a teaching against polygamy.

From the Natural law theory, both Aquinas and Augustine, the majority of Christian theologians have taught that simultaneous polygamy is not in itself evil, “since it was permitted by God under Old Testament revelation, and since it conforms with the natural purpose of procreation within the permanent bond of marriage.”⁵⁵⁹ Hillman therefore, concluded that “polygamy is not at all contrary to the natural law theory.”⁵⁶⁰

Moreover, Hillman argued, “the general conclusion is that the traditional ecclesiastical discipline regarding African polygamy is not as well founded, biblically and theologically, as has been supposed here to fore.”⁵⁶¹ All said and done, polygamy is still an issue for the church in Africa. Thus, he contends,

Evidences still sustains that indicates that this form of plural marriages still sustain important social values in most African peoples in the foreseeable future, it would be morally irresponsible for the Church leaders and theologians to simply ignore the missionary and pastoral implications of such a problematical discipline.⁵⁶²

From the above, there is need for the Church to adopt a new policy of toleration with regard to polygamy. There is also need for change that is consequent upon research, reflection and deliberation by the responsible church leaders with the air of proffering solution to this problem.

⁵⁵⁸ Ibid, 165.

⁵⁵⁹ Ibid, 179.

⁵⁶⁰ Ibid, 182.

⁵⁶¹ Eugene Hillman *Polygamy Reconsidered: African plural marriages and the Christian Churches*, 206

⁵⁶² Ibid.

Furthermore, even if the Church still has difficulties in accepting this undeniable reality, the Church should open her mind and ears to the values that Polygamy is offering. Polygamous relationships in Tiv culture offer a sociological function to the Church and society. It promotes new relationships of social units that make up the family, tribe, and nation. Hence, the fear that a man may die without a surviving male child is one of the factors behind the practice of polygamy. It is also motivated to form alliances between family and clan groups. The church and the western world should learn that polygamy is not just evil; but it also has something to offer in the area of family (extended), and lineage.

5.10 Summary and Conclusion

This work has attempted to document details of Tiv marriage systems and culture. The study was intended to fill part of the gap in the understanding of Tiv culture in addition to bringing out the core values inherent in traditional marriage practices of the Tiv. A further objective was to look at the changes in these two areas of Tiv culture (over time) and ascertain the extent to which they can be argued as "positive" or "negative" in the overall consideration of Tiv cultural heritage. It was further confronted with the Christian understanding and teaching about marriage. The emphasis is to show that through the process of inculturation, marriage in the Tiv Catholic Church would be thoroughly understood. Though the theoretical and methodological approach was for an essentially literature study in utilizing both primary and secondary research methods, we did articulate some basic hypotheses linking the major research problems of the work.

It was found in the study that there was a value system holding the Tiv cultural of marriage systems. Marriage in Tiv culture was not an individual affair but community. It was intended to having children and having large family. This value system has however

been lost (or distorted) because of changes traceable to European contact; this is evident in the approach of the early missionaries in Tivland. Most Christian missionaries from Europe and elsewhere who brought the Christian church in Tivland had no idea about the people they came to evangelize. Most of them that came to Tivland had little or no idea about the Tiv cultural values. Their main occupation was to evangelize and civilized the ‘natives’. They had no plan to study and dialogue with the people that they were evangelizing. This has led to the fact that, it is recognizable that there are some in-built social control mechanisms in Tiv marriage systems which have been broken down because of changes following European contact. Another issue that has come up from this study is the fact that changes in marriage are continuously fostering materialistic tendencies on contemporary Tiv society and most of the changes are perceived by the Tiv as inferior (or negative) in comparison to what was in practice before. People especially those who have acquired western education, and are now living in the cities, no longer feel that marriage is a family and clan affair, but they now have the freedom to choose and marry whoever they feel loved.

This research made a detailed outline of Tiv marriage systems before and after the colonial period. Though the most characteristic of these was *yamshe*, (marriage by exchange) all other systems, especially *Kwase ngohol*, *kem kwase*, (marrying a wife) gravitated towards *yamshe* and were underscored by a common value system reinforced by the *Akombo*⁵⁶³ belief system. With the abolition of exchange marriage in 1927 by the Colonial administration, a forced version of *kem* was "imposed" on the Tiv, thus eroding

⁵⁶³ Refer to chapter 2, footnote 62.

almost all the values that had hitherto underscored their marriage systems. *Kem* (cumulative bride wealth) has been under continuous change up to the present.

Also, from this research, it shows that, understanding the changes in Tiv marriage hinges on Tiv culture. Culture is dynamic and from this study, it is clear that even during the colonial period, the systems of marriage known amongst the Tiv underwent some changes. These changes developed to meet particular needs in Tiv society. Each change was accepted insofar as it did not subvert or distort the core values basic to it. For example, the acceptance of *kem* (cumulative pride wealth) and *iye* (courtship) as alternative ways of marrying was still predicated on taking steps to ensure their legitimization through an ultimate exchange process.

The significance of these marriage values was reinforced by a set of taboos and *akombo*.⁵⁶⁴ Care was taken by everybody in the “marriage contract” to respect these taboos and conform to the marriage norms behind the different marriage systems. The abolition of exchange marriage in 1927 changed all these. For though, the preferred system of marriage (*kem*) marriage by pride price was in all respects not new to the Tiv, it was no longer predicated as a marriage step to be completed at a future date by a full exchange process. Current changes resulting from the contemporary marriage system of the Tiv articulated in the work include, increased tendency towards exogamy and inter-group marriage, increased monetization and materialism in the marriage process, increased parental support for daughters going into marriage, increased church involvement in the marriage process, consideration for women's feelings (and opinions) in marriage, increase

⁵⁶⁴ Ibid.

in the incidence of divorce, diminishing role of chastity, overexposure of widows, increased tendency towards family planning and changes in residency rules. The acceptance of the changes has significantly eroded and distorted the traditional values basic to the previous Tiv marriage systems. A new value system reinforced by Christianity and formal education underlies these changes in terms of direction and content.

Though a residue of the previous values still exists, majority have been discarded. The resultant transformation has always been conceptualized as "bad" for Tiv heritage. This explains the elders' constant charge that "*buter vihi tar*" (the white man has spoilt Tiv country). To the extent that they could not reverse the transformation triggered by the white men (and the missionaries) it was difficult to ascertain the damage and distortions visited on their heritage. The situation has continued to worsen not only in the consideration of marriage but other sub-cultural sectors of their heritage.

5.11 Recommendations and Suggestions

The theological contribution of this work is derived from an attempt at Incarnating Catholicism in Tiv cultural heritage, and inculturation, making Christianity feel at home with the Tiv. The work's aim is to make Christ's proclamation of the reign of God and its sermons radically relevant to the Tiv cultural milieu. Christians are challenged to study in depth the culture of the people as well as the Christian faith, and in the process, allow both the Christian religion and the Tiv culture to interrogate each other.

Therefore, the work confronts the traditional understanding of marriage among the Tiv with the Catholic understanding to access a point of unity that could enrich the Christian message among the people. It identified some elements which Christianity could

adopt or ennoble and purify. The intention is to unlock and explore all areas that are necessary for promoting better understanding of marriage among the Tiv Catholic Christians. The understanding is to begin discussion on the problem of marriage and family life where both aspects are regarded as one. The focus is towards the anthropological fundamental principle of Tiv marriage and family life.

The following suggestions and recommendations are predicated on the researcher as a Catholic theologian who is studying theology in context—Christianity and Tiv culture. While the interest of the researcher include the defense of the culture of the people, which is not inimical to the practice of Christianity, a balanced, functional pastoral theology was also intended. It was recognized that the Tiv culture needs be defended and preserved from destruction, ridicule, abuse and adulteration, with an eye on responsible attitude towards the direction and content of change that would be beneficial to both the Catholic Church and Tiv culture.

Identification and projection of residual values through catechesis

As indicated earlier, this work identifies some traces of the value system basic to traditional marriage practices. These residual values are continuously under attack and some are fast disappearing from the cultural landscape. This is a threat to the entire heritage of the group and all attempts must be made to identify these traces and audit them in each system of the culture for adequate inculturation so that the gospel would be become understandable to the people. This would require increased cultural education and catechesis at the formal and informal levels. Tiv children must be given the opportunity to learn more about their heritage, including the source of the various changes noticeable in

it. Such an opportunity will underscore, traditional values and the importance of using Tiv heritage as the basic building block of their development.

Dialogue and partnership

As indicated earlier, the church is central to the reinforcement of many of the new values that have transformed the Tiv culture marriage system. Despite this, many of the new changes are against the letter and spirit of church tradition. I recommend an increased dialogue in the Catholic Church in Tivland aimed at finding the core values in the transformation of Tiv society. Such a meeting point will also give them an opportunity to partner with traditional structures in finding ways and means to reinforce those values protectives of our heritage.

Identification of "positive" values in the current transformation for increased projection

Though, there is a contention that the “whiteman” spoilt the land (*buter vihi tar*) there is an extent to which we can see changes brought about by colonialism as not totally "negative". We recommend the identification of such "positive" values like education, health care facilities for projection. However, for in the survival of the Tiv heritage attempt must be made to reinforce it with more durable “positive” values from other cultures.

This study attempted to document Tiv marriage practices taking into consideration the various changes that have taken place, especially following the Tiv contact with Europeans; most especially the Christian missionaries. Though the study appreciates the fact that change is inevitable, if people are to survive the “cultural damage” visited on Tiv society, people must seek to understand all aspects of their past in addition to projecting all those values that will strengthen and empower their resolve to live over culture as an

exemplary way of life. Though the study touches only one aspect of Tiv culture, it is hoped that subsequent research will focus on other aspects and that in the very near future, there will be a more comprehensive response to the protection of our marriage systems in Tivland.

A Pastoral-Anthropological response to polygamy

To truly appreciate the unique and valuable position of polygamy in Catholic Church in Tivland, all must return to the light of Christ—the scriptures. This implies going back to Christ’s life, message, and his mission. The whole story of salvation is given in few words of John: “Yes, God so loved the world that He gave his only son that whoever believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. God did not send his son into the world to condemn the world; but that, through him the world might be saved.” (John 3:16-17). By incarnation God radically entered human history through his son Jesus who came not to condemn the world, but to save it. Jesus himself saw his mission in the world as that of reconciling men and women to God. The early church was also very much aware of the cultural differences among the people to whom the good news was proclaimed.

There are issues and questions that need to be addressed by the Church in relation to the issues of marriage in Tivland:

- a) The efforts being made to address the plight of polygamous families in the church are half-hearted, unhelpful, and therefore unacceptable. These efforts are not being directed by the light of grace. There is too much concern with maintaining church discipline and conformity.

- b) To propose divorce on a defenseless people as a gateway to the sacrament is a strange way of preparing for baptism. A suitable and disposed polygamist, should together with his wives receive the sacraments. This is not a new situation. The case of Cornelius who was a gentile is a very good example (Acts 10). When Peter received the vision to go to Cornelius, he was warned against discrimination (Acts 10.34-36). The Holy Spirit also came upon all in the household of Cornelius who were listening to the word. (Acts 10.44-45). Then Peter declared, “Can anyone refuse the waters of Baptism to these people who have already received the Holy Spirit, just as we have?” (Acts 10.47). Indeed, Cornelius and his entire household were baptized not based on any other condition. This was new intervention of the Holy Spirit so that the Church could spread beyond the Jewish world and the gospel could reach the non-Jews, the Gentiles. The Church in Tivland should also be opened to the prompting of the Holy Spirit and careful discernment when it comes to issues of Sacraments; especially, the sacrament of Baptism, marriage and Holy Communion.
- c) It must also be borne in mind that the Church in Tivland has depended largely on polygamous families for her survival. Many Tiv clergy and Religious (men and women) are products of polygamous families. So, to insist then, as the church is doing on embarking on mass divorces of polygamous marriages before the people in such unions are eligible for the sacraments amount to pastoral insensitivity and pastoral correctness. What is important is the faith of the individual and the community. The evidence of a local community should be crucial in deciding who according to the Tiv marital standards, coupled with the demands of the Christian love, should receive the sacraments.

Need for strong catechetical programs

It is unarguably that, the issue of marriage as practiced in the Church is one of the most difficult teaching to reconcile with the Tiv marriage proposal. This is largely due to its uniqueness and openness to polygamy. To respond to the protection of marriage in Tiv culture, there is a strong need for the Catholic Church in Tivland to dialogue with the Tiv culture find ways to reconcile the challenging differences in practice; especially with the issue of polygamy and sacraments. Design and implement comprehensive catechetical programs that would help in the understanding of marriage and how it could best be appreciated for its unique and valuable position in Tiv Catholic Church. I do agree with one of the Synod Fathers Cardinal Thiandoum in his intervention on this issue when suggested that,

a radical reassessment of our pastoral and canonical attitude to some African marriage practices like the role of the extended family in married consent, barrenness as possible ground for nullity, marriage stages and the practice of Levirate marriage or inheritance of widows. The synod is requested to address these issues.⁵⁶⁵

This position is the sure way to bring joy and peace in the Church in Tivland. At the beginning of the apostolic exhortation, the Pope Francis said, “the joy and love experienced by the families is also the joy of the Church.”⁵⁶⁶ This joy according to the pontiff, is best experienced in a renewed awareness of the importance of marriage and the family. Thus he stated, since “‘time is greater than space,’... it is not all discussions of doctrinal, moral or pastoral issues needs to be settled by intervention of the magisterium.”⁵⁶⁷ He

⁵⁶⁵ Cecil McGarry, SJ, et al (Editors), *What happened at the African Synod?* p.71.

⁵⁶⁶ Pope Francis, *Amoris Laetitia* 1.

⁵⁶⁷ *Ibid.*,3

emphasized that “each region or regions, moreover, can seek solutions better suited to its culture and sensitive to its traditions and the local needs.”⁵⁶⁸ He asserts that “cultures are in fact quite diverse and every general principle...needs to be inculturated, if it is to be respected and applied.”⁵⁶⁹ The marriage institution in Tiv Catholic church need to be carefully revisited with the mind of inculturating the marriage form and practice.

Moreover, owing to the Pope’s intervention, it is necessary for the Church to renew her magisterial teaching or position with regard to the issues of marriage and family life in the Catholic Church in Tivland. The time has come for the church to adopt a new attitude, not to be shrilled or hard-line judgmental, but always reaching out with God’s mercy, to show compassion, to include not exclude, to foster growth and discernment. Discernment on issues takes time and openness. The Church needs patience to be the minister of the grace of marriage and family—love is patience. Love works in a generosity of grace. The heart of this is forgiveness and hope. *Amoris Laetitia* gives us a model of operation which is love—the actual key marriage and family. It offers us a generous human feelings/good for marriage and family. The holy Father asserts, “the grace of the sacrament of marriage is intended before all else ‘to perfect the couple’s love.’”⁵⁷⁰ Love and wellbeing of families should be the main concern of the Church. Here too we can say with St. Paul, “even if I have faith so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give all I have, and if I deliver my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing” (1Cor.13.2-3). This understanding of love provides intergenerational security, total care for each other in

⁵⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁶⁹ Ibid.,4

⁵⁷⁰ Ibid. 89.

marriage and family. Thus, Pope Francis asserts, “this trust enables a relationship to be free.”⁵⁷¹ This is certainly the way forward on issues bordering on marriage and family in the Catholic Church, and in particular, the Church in Tivland.

Above all, the main concern of the church’s evangelization must be the salvation of the individual, and not the conformity to canonical norms. Recchoing the message of the Canadian Bishops, “Mercy and sensitivity should be at the heart of the Church’s evangelizing effort.”⁵⁷² In line with this reasoning, the church should recognize, and respect and come to grip with the various socio-cultural circumstances in which her work of evangelization is done.

⁵⁷¹ Ibid.115

⁵⁷² Douglas Crosby, “Toward the future, united in faith and trust,” (pastoral letter by the president of the Canadian Catholic conference of the Catholic Bishops for the 50th Anniversary of Canadian Catholic organization for the development and peace/Caritas Canada), 20th November 2016 www.cccb.ca accessed 10/7/2018.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- “A Pastoral letter of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Marriage: Love and Life in the Divine Plan”, November 17, 2009, accessed 12/22/2013
www.usccbpublishing.org
- Abraham, Roy Clive, *The Tiv People*, London: Crown Agents, 1940.
- Adichie Chimamanda Ngozi, “The Danger of a Single Story”, Accessed 12/14/2015,
http://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story/transcript?language=en
- Akinwale, Anthony. “How Have We Received Ecclesia in Africa?” accessed 10/7/2018,
www.tonyakinwale.com
- Allen John L., ed. “Key African Cardinal on Aids, Amoris, Trump, Francis and more.”
accessed 25/3/2017 www.cruxnow.com
- _____, “Amoris Laetitia, Chapter 4—Love in marriage,” in Crux, accessed
25/9/2018, <https://cruxnow.com/church/2016/04/08/amoris-laetitia-chapter-4-love-in-marriage/>
- Anifowoso, Remi, *Violence and politics in Nigeria: The Tiv and Yoruba Experience*,
New York: Nok Publishers International, 1982.
- Anyanwu, Chris N, “Nigerian Bishop’s Conference Takes a Swipe at Media
Misrepresentation,” accessed 4/6/2018,
<http://www.cnsng.org/viewnews.php?tabnews=1347>
- _____, “Still on Same-Sex Union and the Stand of the Catholic Bishops’
Conference of Nigeria,” accessed January 1, 2016,
<http://www.cnsng.org/viewnews.php?tabnews=1347>
- _____, “Still on Same-Sex Union and the Stand of the Catholic Bishops’
conference of Nigeria”, Accessed 1/9/2016,
<http://www.csnigeria.org/articledetail.php?tab=37>
- Apebo, G .A et al. “The Dilemma of the Taraba Tiv-Taraba Denied Them-Benue Rejects
Them”, Zaki Biam, (unpublished).
- Atel Edward Terkula, *Dynamics of Tiv Religion and Culture: A Philosophical-
Theological Perspective*, Lagos: Free Enterprise Publishers, 2004.
- Austin Flannery, O.P, ed. *Decree on the Church’s Missionary Activity (Ad Gentes
Divinitus)* 7 December 1965, New York, Northport: Costello Publishing Company,
2007.
- Austin Nicholas, 'Discernment charged with merciful love': Pope Francis’ Amoris
Laetitia, on Love in the Family in Thinking Faith, 8th April 2016, accessed

25/9/2018, <https://www.thinkingfaith.org/articles/discernment-charged-merciful-love-pope-francis%E2%80%99-amoris-laetitia-love-family-0>

Baka, Titus, "Untruly African Most Untruly Christian," in *Beyond Frontiers Vol. 2. No.1.* 1989.

Baloyi, Elijah Magezi "The Impact of the Extended Family on One's Marriage: An African study," in *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa 148*, (March 2014): 18-32. ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost (accessed February 14, 2016).

Banazak, G.A and Ceja L. R, 'The challenge and promise of Decolonial thought to Biblical Interpretation', Equinoxonline,post script 4.1., 2008.

Barker, Chris, *Cultural Studies: Theory and Practice* (4th Edition), Los Angeles: Sage Publications, 2012.

Batten, Thomas. R, *Tropical of Africa in World History, Book Three, 4th Edition*, London: Oxford University Press, 1964.

Boer, Jan Harm, *Missionary Messengers of Liberation in a Colonial Context: A Case study of the Sudan United Mission*, Amsterdam: Editions Rodopi N.V., 1979.

Bohannan Paul, *Tiv Economy*, London: Longman, 1965.

Bohannan, Laura and Paul, *The Tiv of Central Nigeria*, London: Hazell, Watson & Viney, Ltd, 1953.

Boodoo Gerald, "Catholic Education in the Present Caribbean Context: Challenges and Opportunities" in *Groundings 28*, Kingston, Jamaica, July 2012.

Bujo Benezet, *African Theology in its social context*, Nairobi: Pauline publishers, 1992.

_____, *Foundations of African ethic: beyond the universal claims of western morality*, Nairobi: Pauline publications, 2003.

_____, *Plea for change of models for marriage*, Nairobi, Kenya: Pauline publishers, 2009.

Catechism of the Catholic Church (second Edition) Revised in accordance with the official Latin text promulgated by Pope John Paul II. Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2000.

Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria, "Our Stand on Marriage, Family and Human Society," a communiqué, accessed January 7, 2016, <http://www.cbcn-ng.org/docs/g20.pdf>;

Cecil McGarry, SJ, et al (Editors), *What happened at the African Synod?* Nairobi: Pauline Publications Africa, 1995.

- Chibuko, Patrick, *Paschal mystery of Christ Foundation for Liturgical Inculturation in Africa*, Peter Lang, Inc.1999.
- Code of Canon Law* (The Holy See archives) accessed 12/16/2013, www.vatican.va/holy
- Coriden James A. et al eds, *Code of Canon Law: A Text and Commentary*, New York: Paulist Press, 1985.
- Coupar Barbara, “The Joy of love—Summary” in Scottish Education service, accessed 4/6/2018, www.sces.org.uk
- Criswell W. A., “The miracle of Bethlehem” in *Sermon Library* (Homily of 14th December 1969) accessed, 1/6/2018 www.criswell.com.
- Crowder Michael, *West Africa under Colonial Rule*, London: Hutchinson & Co., 1968.
- Denga, Daniel I. *Educational Development in Tivland: Problems and prospects*, Calabar Nigeria: Rapid Educational Publishers limited, 1988.
- Descamps A.L, “The New Testament on Marriage” In Odozor, Paulinus Ikechukwu, Editor, *Sexuality, Marriage and Family: Readings in the Catholic Tradition*, Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame press, 2001.
- Downes R. M, *The Tiv Tribe*, Kaduna, Nigeria: The Government Printer, 1933.
- _____, *Tiv Religion*, Ibadan –Nigeria: Ibadan University Press. 1971.
- Doyle Dennis M., “The Concept of Inculturation in Roman Catholicism: A Theological Consideration” in *U.S. Catholic Historian*, Vol. 30, No. 1, Inculturation (Winter 2012), 1 accessed, 31/01/2018, www.jstor.org/stable
- Duffy, A. Regis, “Sacrament in General” In Fiorenza Francis Schussler & Garvin P. John, Editors, *Systematic Theology: Roman Catholic Perspectives Vol. II*. Minneapolis: Fortress press, 1991.
- Dzurgba Akpenpuun, “Biomedicine and Traditional medicine in Nigeria. A comparative Evaluation”, in *African Journal of Biomedical Research*, 1998.
- _____, *On the Tiv of Central Nigeria: A Cultural perspective*, Ibadan-Nigeria: John Archers (publishers) limited, 2007.
- _____, *The Tiv and Their Culture*, Ibadan Nigeria: John Archers publishers, 2011.
- East Rupert, [Translated and annotated] *Akiga’s Story: The Tiv tribe as seen by one of its members*, London: Oxford university press, 1965.
- Edwards, Adrian Campion. “Seeing, Believing, Doing: The Tiv Understanding of Power” In *Anthropos*, Bd. 78, H. ¾, (1980): 459-480.
- Ekewnze Aaron Chira, “Modernity versus Tradition: An Insight into the Cultural Conflict in Some Selected Igbo and Yoruba Literature” in *Igbo scholars International*

Journal, Vol.5; No1, march, 2018 accessed 24/9/2018,
<http://www.igboscholarsforum.com.ng/igboscholars-international-journal-vol-5-no-1-march-2018/>

Evans Rachel Held, "Is marriage really an Illustration of Christ and the Church?"
accessed, 1/6/2018 www.rachelheldevans.com

Falen Douglas J, "Polygyny and Christian Marriage in Africa: The Case of Benin"
Source: *African Studies Review, Vol. 51, No. 2* (Sep. 2008), pp. 51-74 Published by:
African Studies Association Stable URL: Accessed: 27/02/2014,
<http://www.jstor.org>

Fardon Richard, "Sisters, Wives, Wards and Daughters: A Transformational Analysis of
the Political Organization of the Tiv and Their Neighbours." Part I: The Tiv", In
Africa: Journal of the International African Institute, Vol. 54, No. 4 (1984), 2-21,88,
accessed February13, 2016. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1160393>.

_____, *Tiger in an African Palace, and Other Thoughts about Identification and
Transformation*, Langaa RPCIG, June 12, 2014.

Fiorenza F. S and Galvin, J.P. *Systematic Theology: Roman Catholic Perspectives Vol.1*,
Minneapolis: Fortress press, 1991.

_____. *Systematic Theology: Roman Catholic Perspectives*, Vol. II, Minneapolis:
Fortress press, 1991.

Gbenda Joseph S., *Eschatology in Tiv Traditional Religious Culture: An Interpretive
Enquiry*, Nsukka Nigeria: Chuka Educational Publishers, 2005.

Gbor, W. T John, *Mdugh u Tiv man mnyer ve hen Benue*, Zaria NNPC, 1981.

_____, *The Tiv: Are we God's own people?* Abuja-Nigeria: Published by Center for
African Culture and Development, 2010.

Geertz Clifford, (Editor), "Cultural policy in the new States" In *Old Societies and New
States: A Quest for modernity in Asia and Africa*, London: Collier-Macmillan Ltd,
1963.

_____, "The Sacramental Dignity of Marriage" In Odozor, Paulinus Ikechukwu,
Editor, *Sexuality, Marriage and Family: Readings in the Catholic Tradition*. Notre
Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame press, 2001.

_____, "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture," From:
Clifford Geertz [1973] *The interpretation of cultures: selected essays*, New York:
Basic Books,1973, accessed 24/9/2018,
http://www.sociosite.net/topics/texts/Geertz_Thick_Description.php

_____, *After the Fact: Two countries, Four Decades, one anthropologist*, London,
England: Harvard University press, 1995.

- _____, *The interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*, New York: Basic Books, 1973.
- George Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine: Religion and Theology in a post liberal age*, Louisville-Kentucky: Westminster John Knox press. 2009.
- Gerit T. Godfrey, *A History of Tiv Religious Practices and Change*, Makurdi-Nigeria: Aboki Publishers, 2012.
- Gyekye, Kwame, *Tradition and Modernity: Philosophical Reflections on the African Experience*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997.
- Haring Bernhard, *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II*, New York: Harder, 1969.
- Hillman Eugene *Polygamy Reconsidered: African plural marriages and the Christian Churches*, Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1975.
- Himes, R. Kenneth, and Coriden A. James, “Pastoral Care of the Divorced and Remarried” In Odozor, Paulinus Ikechukwu, Editor, *Sexuality, Marriage and Family: Readings in the Catholic Tradition*. Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame press, 2001.
- Hogan, Margaret Monahan, *Marriage as a Relationship*, (Afterword by Sidney Callahan), Milwaukee Wisconsin: Marquette university press, 2002, accessed 21/9/2018 <https://www.scribd.com/document/301529450/Hogan-Margaret-Monahan-Marriage-as-a-Relationship>
- Holland Joe, “Return to Nature: The Evolutionary Journey through Four Eras of Human Culture,” in *Pax Romana Center for International Study of Catholic Social Teaching*, 2010.
- Hough James “What was NOT a recommendation of the council of Trent?” accessed, 1/6/2018 www.answers.com.
- Hudelson Patricia M., “Cultural and quality: an anthropological perspective” in *Oxford Academic: International Journal for Quality in Health Care* (2014) 16, (5): 345-346 accessed 24/9/2018, <https://academic.oup.com/intqhc/article/16/5/345/1822533>
- Ityavyar Dennis A., *The Changing Socio-Economic Role of Tiv Women*, Jos-Nigeria: Midland press Ltd, 1992.
- John Paul II, “To the tribunal of the Roman Rota—1981,” accessed 1/6/2018, www.catholicnewsagency.com
- _____, Post-synodal apostolic exhortation: *Ecclesia in Africa: “On the Church in Africa and its evangelizing mission towards the year 2000”*, (14th September 1995), Accessed 12/5/2018, <http://w2.vatican.va>

- Kaigama Ignatius A. (President, CBCN) & Most Rev. William Avenya, (Secretary, CBCN) “our stand on marriage, family and human society” accessed 1/7/2016, <http://www.cbcn-ng.org/docs/g20.pdf>
- kasper Walter, *Theology of Christian Marriage*, New York: Crossroad,1983.
- Keil Charles, *Tiv Song: The society of Art in a Classless Society*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983.
- Keller Catherine, etal. *Postcolonial Theologies: Divinity and Empires*, St Louis, Missouri: chalice press. 2004.
- Kelly J. N. D., *Early Christian Creeds Third Edition*, New York: David McKay Company Inc., 1972.
- Kwame Anthony Appiah, *In My Father’s House*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1992.
- Lamb Christopher, “A shepherd clearly steering the flock” in *The Tablet*, December 10, 2016.
- Lawler Michael G., “Changing Catholic models of marriage,” In *America* (March 19, 2001), accessed 6/5/2015, www.americanmagazine.org
- _____, “Divorce and Remarriage in the Catholic Church: Ten Theses,” accessed 4/6/2018, www.newtheologyreview.org
- _____, *Marriage and Sacrament: A Theology of Christian Marriage*, Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1993.
- Lawler Michael G., Todd A. Salzman & Burke-Sullivan, Eileen *The Church in the Modern World: Gaudium et Spes Then and Now*, Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical press, 2014.
- Lehmkuhl, Augustinus, “Sacrament of marriage” In *The Catholic Encyclopedia*. Vol.9, New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1910. 26April, 2010. <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09707a.htm>
- Lindbeck George, *The Nature of Doctrine: Religion and Theology in a post liberal age*, Louisville-Kentuckey: Westminster John Knox press, 2009.
- Mbiti John S., *African Religions and Philosophy*, New York: Doubleday, 1970.
- _____, *Introduction to African Religion 2nd edition*, Sandton: JHB Heinemann, 1991.
- McBrien Richard P., *Catholicism, Volume two*, Minneapolis: Winston Press, 1980.
- McCormick, A. Richard, *The Critical Calling: Reflections on Moral Dilemmas Since Vatican II*, Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University press, 1989.

- McKim Marriot, "Cultural policy in the new States" In Clifford Geertz, (Editor). *Old Societies and New States: A Quest for modernity in Asia and Africa*, London: Collier-Macmillan Ltd, 1963.
- Mignolo, Walter, *Local Histories/ Global Designs: coloniality, subaltern knowledge's, and Border Thinking*, Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton university press, 2000.
- Nanevwua Uhondo, *Democratization and Revolutionalization of Tiv Titular system*, Nigeria: Musa Bakare press, 1991.
- Nigerian Bishops release statement decrying 'propagation and globalization of the homosexual lifestyle' in Catholic world report, July 10th, 2015, accessed 4/6/2018, www.catholicworldreport.com
- Nigerian Population Commission: Population Distribution by sex, state and senatorial district: 2006 census priority tables (vol.3), accessed 1/24/2016.
<http://www.population.gov.ng/images/Vol%2003%20Table%20DSx%20LGAPop%20by%20SDistrict-PDF.pdf>
- Obianoju Ekeocha, "A thriving Church amid the tragedy of Nigeria," in *Catholic Herald*, Issue 6807, April 7, 2017.
- Odozor, Paulinus Ikechukwu, (Editor), *Sexuality, Marriage and Family: Readings in the Catholic Tradition*, Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame press, 2001.
- Oduyoye Mercy Amba, *Daughter of Anowa: African women and Patriarchy*, New York: Orbis Books, 1999.
- Ogbu U. Kalu, (editor), *Reading in African Humanities: African Cultural Development*, Enugu Nigeria: Fourth Dimension, 1980.
- Oke, E.A., *An Introduction to Social Anthropology*, London: Macmillan Education, 2002.
- Olupade Dayo, *The Bright Continent: Breaking Rules & Making Change in Modern Africa*, Boston: Mariner Books, 2014.
- Paul II, Familiaris Consortio: Apostolic Exhortation on the role of the Christian Family in the modern world, accessed 3/25/2014
http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_19811122_familiaris-consortio_en.htm
- Phiri, Khofi Arthur, *African Traditional Marriage: A Christian Theological Appraisal*, Nairobi, Kenya: Pauline Publications Africa, 2011.
- Pius XI, "Allocution to Newlyweds," July 12, 1939, accessed December 14, 2015, <http://tedeum.boards.net/thread/1364/pope-pius-allocution-newly-weds>
- _____, Encyclical Letter on Christian marriage Casti Connubii, (31 December 1930), accessed 12/16/2013 [www.vatican.va/holy 31/12/1930](http://www.vatican.va/holy_31/12/1930).

Pontifical Council for the Family, issued February 12, 1997 In Catholic News Agency, “Vademecum for confessors concerning some aspect of the morality of conjugal life, “accessed 21/9/2018 <https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/resources/life-and-family/sexuality-contraception/vademecum-for-confessors-concerning-some-aspects-of-the-morality-of-conjugal-life>

Pope Francis, *Amoris Laetitia (The Joy of Love): post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation on Love in the Family*, London: St Paul publishing, 2016.

Pope Paul VI, *Apostolic Exhortation “On Evangelization in the Modern World (Evangelii Nuntiandi)*, Boston: Pauline Books & Media, 1990.

_____, *Humanae Vitae: Encyclical Letter on the regulation of Birth*, accessed 3/26/2014, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/paul_vi/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-vi_enc_25071968_humanae-vitae_en.html,

_____, Vatican Council II, *Gaudium Et Spes*, December 7, 1965, accessed 29/6/2018. http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html.

Ralph, David Baker, "The Evangelization of the Tiv Tribe." In *Reformed Journal* 8, no. 10, November 1958.

Ryan Peter & Grisez Germain, “Indissoluble marriage: A reply to Kenneth Himes & James Coriden,” in *Theological studies*, June 1, 2011, accessed 1/6/2018, www.highbeam.com

Sacred Heart Church, Lawrenceburg, “The Sacraments—Matrimony (Marriage)” accessed 21/9/2018 <http://shlawrenceburg.org/Sacraments.htm>.

Salzman A. Todd & Lawler, G. Michael, *The sexual person: Toward a renewed Catholic Anthropology*, Washington, D.C: Georgetown University press, 2008.

Schillebeeckx Edward, “The new Testament Moral Teaching on Marriage” In Odozor, Paulinus Ikechukwu, Editor, *Sexuality, Marriage and Family: Readings in the Catholic Tradition*. Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame press, 2001.

Schineiller, Peter, (Ed.). *The Voice of the Voiceless: pastoral letters and communiques of the Catholic Bishops’ conference of Nigeria 1960-2002*, Ibadan-Nigeria: Daily Graphics Nigeria Limited, 2002.

_____, *A Handbook on Inculturation*, Paulist press, 1990.

Schreiter, Robert. J. *Constructing Local Theologies*, Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1985.

Shorter Alward, *The Making of the Modern Family*, New York: Basic Books, 1975.

_____, *Toward a Theology of Inculturation*, Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books,

1988.

Dwane, Sequibo. "Polygamy" in *Church and Marriage in Modern Africa*. ed. T.D. Verryn. Johannesburg: The Ecumenical Research Unit, 2001.

Smith, Janet E. "Christian Marriage" in *Humanae vitae*, a generation later, (Catholic University of America Press. (1991)) Accessed 21 November 2017, www.jstor.org/stable

Stanley Baran, *Introduction to Mass communication: Media Literacy and Culture*, second edition, Mountain View: Mayfield, 2002.

Stark, Barbara. "Marriage Proposals: From One-Size-Fits-All to Postmodern Marriage" *California Law Review*, Vol. 89, No. 5 (Oct. 2001), pp. 1479-1548 Published by: California Law Review, Inc.

Sullivan, M., *101 Questions and answers on Vatican II*, Paulist press, New York. 2002.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church, Washington DC: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2000.

The New Community Bible: Catholic Version, Gift Edition Dulux, London: St Paul's publishing, 2008.

The Roman Missal, English Translation according to the typical edition Italy: Magnificat, 2011.

The two shall become one: Reclaiming marriage" in *First Things* by evangelical and Catholic Together, March, 2015 accessed 25/9/2018, <http://www.firstthings.com/article/2015/03/the-two-shall-become-one-flesh>

Torkula Alfred Akawe, "A survey of the marriage and Burial institutions amongst the Tiv of central Nigeria," in a dissertation submitted in partial requirements for the award of the degree of Doctor of philosophy, accessed 14/9/2018 <http://studylib.net/doc/14283454/>

_____, "The concept of Tiv Marriage," accessed 30/5/2018, www.Fatyoitiv.org .

Tracy, David, *Blessed Rage for Order: The New Pluralism in Theology*, New York: The Seabury press, 1975.

Trumbull David, "Encyclical letter *Humanae Vitae* of the supreme pontiff" "from Agathon Associates accessed 21/9/2018, <http://bostonleadershipbuilders.com/0church/humanae-vitae.htm>

Tsenongu Moses, "Nuptial poetry among the Tiv of Nigeria" *Anthropos institute*, accessed 10/6/2012, <http://www.jstor.org>

Tyu Agbehe, *Affidavits in Tiv politics*, Nigeria: Satos offset press, Makurdi, Benue State, 1980.

- Ukpong Justine, "African Theologies Now: A Profile", Eldoret: Gaba Publications, Spearhead, 1984.
- United states conference of Catholic Bishops, "Catholic teaching" accessed 1/6/2018
<http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/marriage-and-family/natural-family-planning/catholic-teaching/>
- _____, Marriage: Love and Life in the Divine Plan, November 17, 2009, Accessed December 22, 2013, accessed 25/9/2018, <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/marriage-and-family/marriage/love-and-life/>
- Uzukwu Elochukwu E, *God, Spirit, and Human Wholeness: Appropriating Faith and Culture in West African Style*, Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock, 2011.
- _____, *Worship as Body Language: An Introduction to Christian worship: An African Orientation*, Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical press. 1997.
- Vatican Council II. "Gaudium et Spes" in Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents. New rev. ed. Gen. ed. Austin Flannery. Newport, New York: Costello, 1992.
- ____ The Catechism of the Catholic Church. Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2010.
- Vasoli Robert, *What God has joined together: The Annulment crisis in American Catholicism*, (New York: Oxford university press, 1998), accessed 25/9/2018.
<https://epdf.tips/what-god-has-joined-together-the-annulment-crisis-in-american-catholicism.html>
- Walter Abbott, M., (Editor), Second Vatican Council, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (*Gaudium Et Spes* [GS]), In *The Documents of Vatican II.*, New York: Guild press, 1966.
- Waya David & Okonume Augusta, "Evaluating the Tiv and Igbo marriage systems" in *Journal of culture, society and development*, Vol. 29, 2017 accessed 10/7/2018, www.iiste.org
- Wegh Shagbaor F, *Between Continuity and Change: Tiv Concept of Tradition and Modernity*, Enugu: SNAAP Press, 2003.
- _____, *Marriage, Family and the Church in Tiv*, Makurdi, Nigeria: Dikon Computer services, 1994.
- White Robed Monks of St. Benedict, "on the sacrament of marriage," accessed, 1/6/2018
www.whiterobedmonks.org.
- William P. Roberts, "Christian Marriage", In Raymond F. Bulman and Frederick J. Parrella, (Edits) *From Trent to Vatican II: Historical and Theological Investigations*, Oxford: University Press, 2006.

Willmann George, "The Sacrament of marriage" Series #5 accessed, 1/6/2018.
www.frgeorgewillmann.org

Wood John C., *When men are women: manhood among Gabra Nomads of East Africa*,
Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin press, 1999.

Worgul S. George, *From Magic to Metaphor: A validation of the Christian Sacraments*,
New York: Paulist press, 1980.

Young R. J.C. *White mythologies: writing History and the west*, London and New York:
Routledge. 1990.