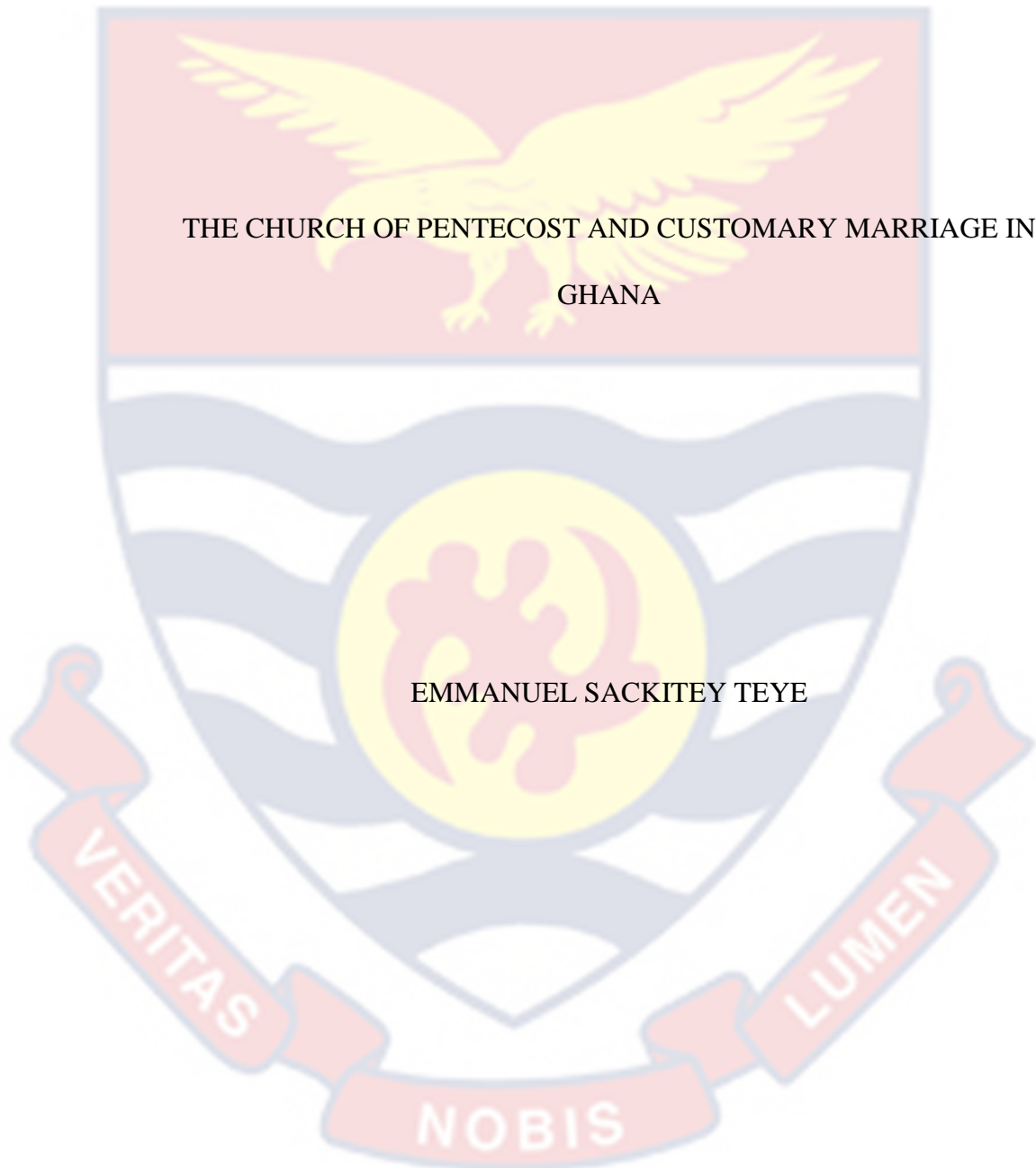


UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST



THE CHURCH OF PENTECOST AND CUSTOMARY MARRIAGE IN
GHANA

EMMANUEL SACKITEY TEYE

2022

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST



THE CHURCH OF PENTECOST AND CUSTOMARY MARRIAGE IN
GHANA

BY
EMMANUEL SACKITEY TEYE

A thesis submitted to the Department of Religion and Human Values, Faculty
of Arts, University of Cape Coast, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for
the award of Master of Philosophy degree in Religious Studies

JUNE 2022

DECLARATION

Candidate's Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own original research and that no part of it has been presented in this university or elsewhere. I further affirm that, all the sources used or quoted have been duly indicated and acknowledged in references provided in this work.

Candidate's Signature Date

Name:

Supervisor's Declaration

I hereby declare that I supervised the preparation and presentation of this thesis in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of thesis laid down by the University of Cape Coast.

Supervisor's Signature Date

Name

ABSTRACT

The researcher investigated the reason The Church of Pentecost prefers ordinance marriage to that of the customary. The researcher observed that some members of the Church preferred only customary marriage, but the Church does not support their position. Although the customary is unarguably, the oldest form of contracting marriage and its practices reflect Ghanaian values and biblical principles, much importance seems to have been given to the ordinance marriage with no stated reasons. The case study approach was used to investigate the problem under consideration. This is due to the large size of the population involved. Mixed method was used to text for convergence or divergence of views of congregants and top leadership view on marriage. Three instruments including questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and documents analysis were used. Although the study revealed that members view on customary marriage deviate with that of leadership, there are significance reasons for these divergent views. For instance, the study uncovered that the polygynous nature of customary marriages pushes top leadership of the Church from fully embracing the customary marriage. Another aspect of divergent view was security; while top leadership sees customary marriage as a type which does not guarantee security to the marriage, most members and lay-officers sees it as the best form to adopt. Again, it was discovered that the position of the Church is not to bless marriages that ends at customary, meanwhile, this has not been effectively communicated to majority of her members. The study further revealed that, most of the churches used as case studies in this study do not have the required registered church buildings to officiate ordinance marriage. The implication of the research is that proper appraisal of the marriage processes in the church should be carried out in order to adopt the best practice for the upcoming generation. Since the study reveals that some of the members are unformed about marriages that CoP accepts, it calls for education of members on marriage issues. Again, a general open forum is recommended for members to share their concerns on the subject. Lastly, it is recommended that the Church should promote the review of the Marriages Acts Law to favour Christian marriages.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Writing a master's thesis with full time pastoral work has been demanding. However, the support and encouragements received from diverse angles has been a motivating factor. I would like to render my deepest appreciation to God for His protection and guidance for this achievement.

I am equally grateful to my supervisor, Dr. Shaibu Adam for his immense encouragement, probity and dedication in the professional guidance of this work. I deeply appreciate your effort.

I cannot forget Dr. Augustine Mensah who on several discussions helped to shape my thesis proposal and constantly inquire my level of progression. Thanks very much in this regard.

The following personalities are highly acknowledged for their diverse contribution: Rev. Seth Amoakohene Addai and wife and Rev. Paul Ordai Laryea for your constant open discussion on the topic and administering some of the questionnaire, Mr. Hayford Yaw Adarkwa and his team for assisting in the data analysis, Irene Sarfoa who devoted some precious time for transcribing the oral interview. The following pastors and wives: Henry Adu Obuobi and Blessing Joseph Quayson, are warmly appreciated for hosting me on countless occasion with regards to this work. All ministers and members in The Church of Pentecost who responded to the questionnaires are deeply appreciated.

Once again, not forgetting my interviewees; Her Ladyship Sarah Bempong, Apostle Philip Osei-Korsah, Ps Kofi Ahenkan (Rtd.) and Lawyer Oladele Kwaku Aribeké, your professional insight to the interview has enriched this work. I am grateful. To the Chairman of The Church of Pentecost, Apostle Eric Nyamekye, I fully appreciate the opportunity granted me to do further studies. My current Area Head, Apostle William Ohemeng-Kwakyé and wife, I thank you for the fatherly support that gingered me at the point of giving up.

My final appreciation goes to my wife and children who have been supportive throughout this work. Your sacrifices and love are highly commendable. I cannot thank you enough.

DEDICATION

To my lovely wife, Diana and children: Caleb, Doreen and Joshua



TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
DECLARATION	ii
ABSTRACT	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
DEDICATION	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vi
LIST OF TABLES	xi
LIST OF FIGURES	xii
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	xiii
CHAPTER ONE	1
INTRODUCTION	1
Background of the Study	1
Statement of the Problem	8
Significance of the Study	8
Research Objectives	9
Research Question	9
Research Design and Methodology	9
Population and Sample	11
Field Data Collection Instruments	13
Data Analysis Procedure	13
Literature Review	14
African Christian Marriage	14
Christianisation of Marriage in Ghana	17
The Bible and Marriage	21

Legalisation of Marriage in Ghana	26
CoP and Marriage	32
Organisation of the Work	33
TYPES OF MARRIAGES IN GHANA	35
Introduction	35
Customary Marriage	35
The Procedure for the Conduct of Customary Marriage Rites in Ghana	36
Knocking Ceremony	38
The Marriage Ceremony / Bride Price	39
Regularisation of Customary Marriage	41
Conversion of Customary Marriage into Mohammedan or Ordinance Marriage	43
Mohammedan / Islamic Marriage in Ghana	44
Marriage of Mohammedans (CAP 129)	44
Bride Price / Dowry / Dower	45
Ordinance Marriage or Civil Marriage	46
Essential Validity of Ordinance Marriage in Ghana	47
Formal Validity of Civil Marriage	50
Ordinance Marriage Contracted under Registrar of Marriages Certificate	53
Ordinance Marriage Contracted under Special License	53
Conclusion	54
CHAPTER THREE	55
BIBLICAL BASES OF CUSTOMARY MARRIAGE	55
Introduction	55
Marriage in the Old Testament: General Overview	55

The Perspective of Marriage in the Wisdom Literature: Proverbs	60
Selection of a Spouse for Marriage in the Book of Proverbs	60
Proverbs and Marital Faithfulness	66
The Ideal Wife	67
The Ideal Husband in Proverbs	71
Summary of Proverbs and Marriage	72
The Gospels and Marriage: Greco-Roman Era	73
Conclusion	79
CHAPTER FOUR	81
THE CHURCH OF PENTECOST AND MARRIAGE	81
Introduction	81
Marriage and Family Life; Additional Tenet of CoP	81
The Church's Response to Contemporary Marriage Relationship: Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender (LGBT).	85
CoP's Position on Arranged and Guided Marriage	88
CoP and Interfaith Marriage	90
The Church and Other Marital Relationships; Child Marriage, Forced Marriage and Co-habitation	92
Marital Processes in CoP	93
The Process of Contracting Marriage in the Church	95
Conclusion	101
REFLECTIONS FROM THE FIELD WORK	103
Introduction	103
Biodata of Respondents	103
Biblical Justification of Customary Marriage	106

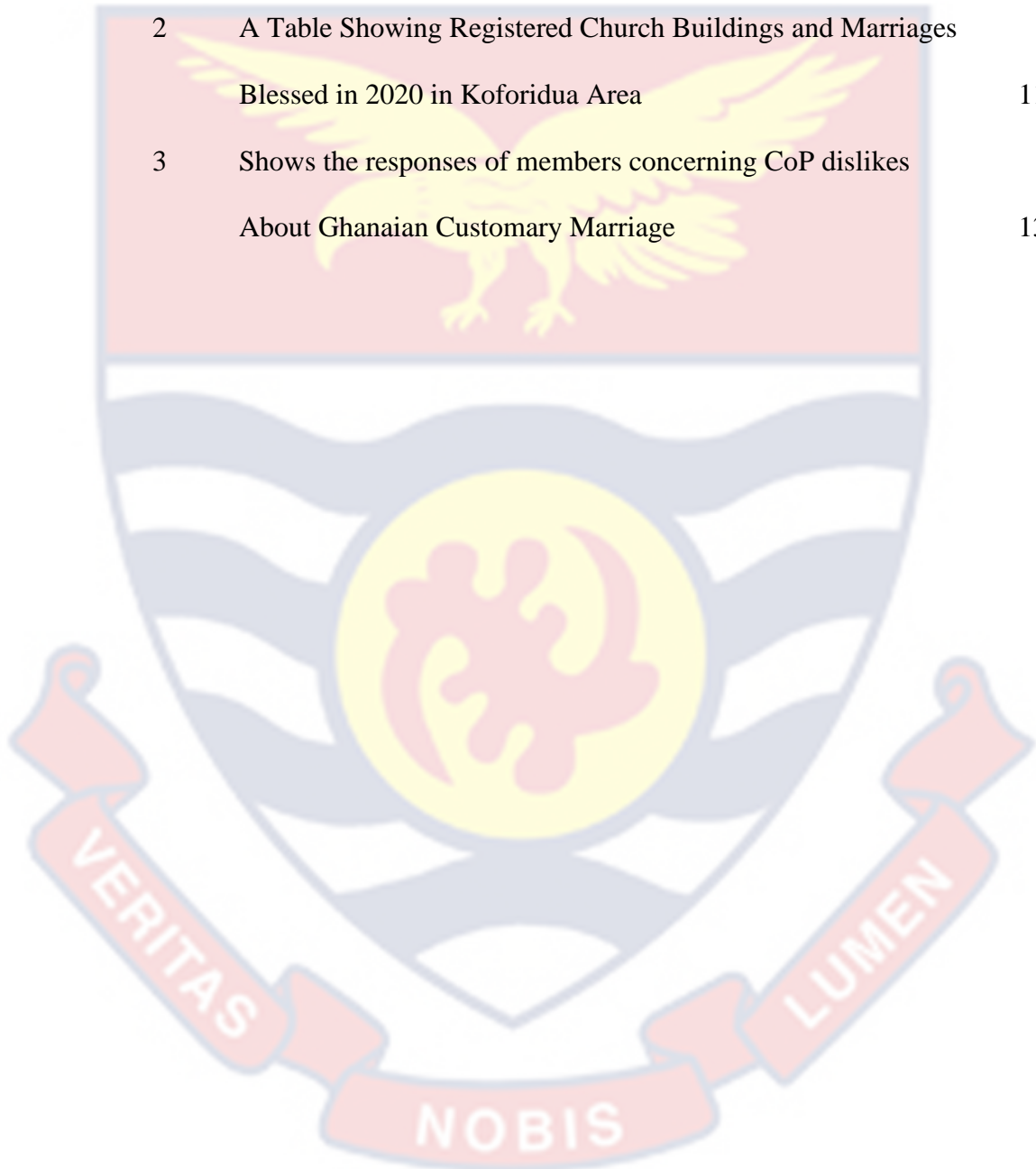
Customary Marriage and Polygamy	110
Marriage in the Church of Pentecost	114
The Type of Marriage CoP Accepts in Contemporary Time	116
Blessing of Marriage versus Officiating of Marriage	117
Marriage Counselling in CoP and Measure of Satisfaction	122
The Best Marriage Type to Adopt in CoP	123
Reasons for Marriage Choices	125
Advantages of Preferred Types of Marriages and Reasons	129
Challenges with Ghanaian Customary Marriage: CoP Perspective	133
Reflections on Findings	136
Conclusion	138
CHAPTER SIX	140
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	140
Introduction	140
Summary	141
Conclusions	143
Recommendations of the Study	149
Providing Education to CoP members	149
Providing Support for Customary Marriage Just as Ordinance Marriage	149
Review of Literature of the Church on Christian Marriage and Strict	
Adherence to the Minister's Manual	150
Registering of Church Building for Celebrating Marriage in Each District	151
Documented Policy on Accepted Marriage Types in CoP	152
Promote the Review of the Marriages Act Law	152
General Open Forum by Leadership of the Church	153

Recommendations for Further Research	154
REFERENCES	156
APPENDIXES	164



LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1 Responses on Participants' Knowledge in the Bible and Concerning Customary Marriage	108
2 A Table Showing Registered Church Buildings and Marriages Blessed in 2020 in Koforidua Area	119
3 Shows the responses of members concerning CoP dislikes About Ghanaian Customary Marriage	134

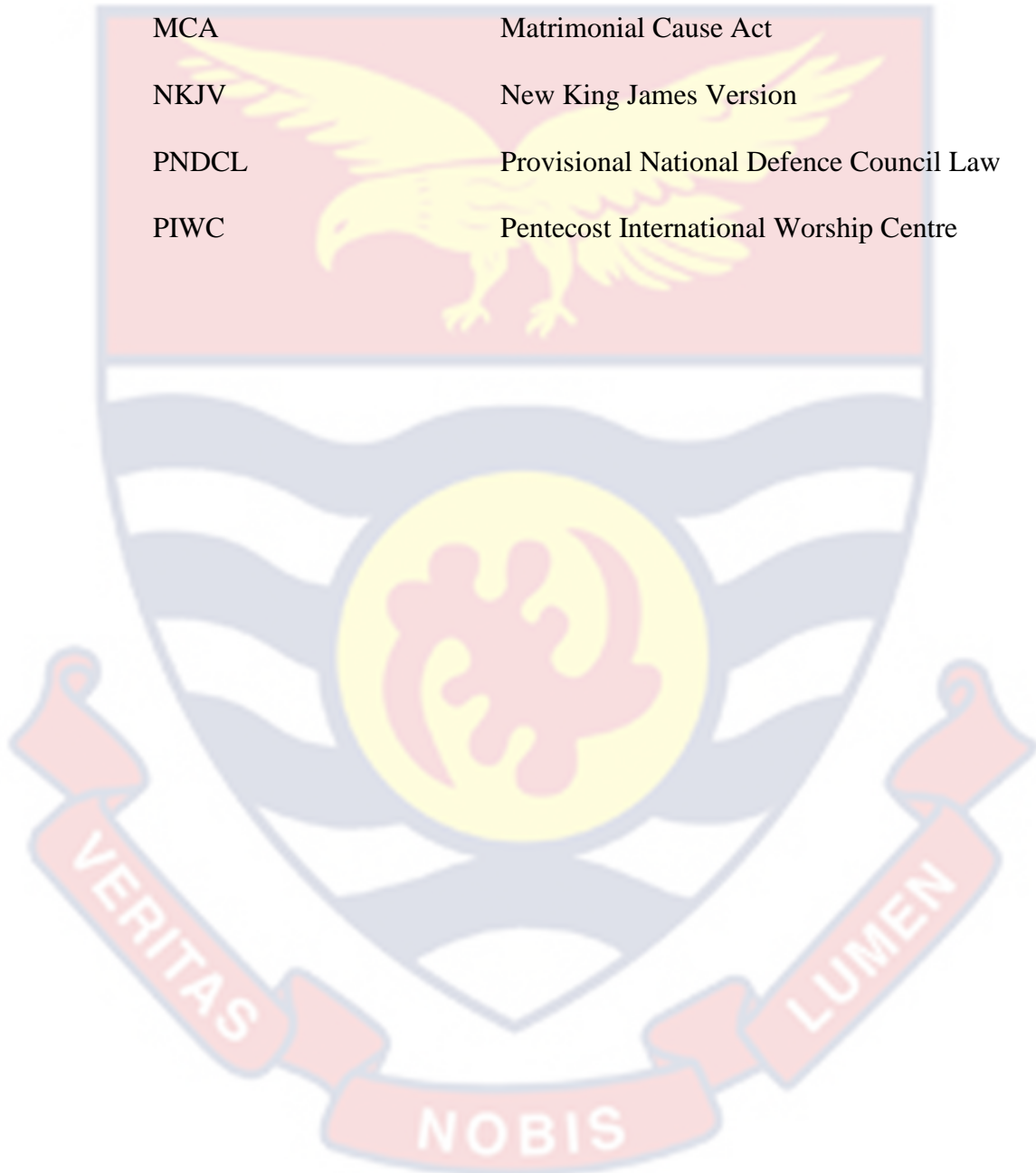


LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
<i>Figure 1: A Bar Graph Showing Biodata of Study Participants</i>	104
<i>Figure 2: A Bar Graph Showing Participants View on Bible and Customary Marriage</i>	107
<i>Figure 3: A Figure Showing Respondents View of More Biblically acceptable Marriage</i>	109
<i>Figure 4: A Bar Graph Showing Respondents Perception on Customary Marriage and Polygamy</i>	111
<i>Figure 5: A Bar Graph Showing Views of State of marriage in CoP</i>	115
<i>Figure 6: A Pie Chart the showing the type of marriage to be blessed in CoP</i>	124
<i>Figure 7: Which of these types of marriage do you consider to be more advantageous to the Christian and what are the reasons for your choice?.....</i>	130
<i>Figure 8: A pie chart showing the most difficult marriage to contract in CoP</i>	135

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ASV	American Standard Version
CoP	The Church of Pentecost
LGBT	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender
MCA	Matrimonial Cause Act
NKJV	New King James Version
PNDCL	Provisional National Defence Council Law
PIWC	Pentecost International Worship Centre



CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Marriage has been variedly defined by different entities, usually, based on social, cultural, religious, legal and personal factors. Societies that embrace same sex marriage will for instance embrace all-encompassing definition of marriage as “a formal union and social and legal contract between two individuals that unite their lives legally, economically and emotionally” (Sheri Stritof, <https://www.brides.com/definition-of-marriage-2303011> accessed 17th May, 2022). Whiles some places emphasis on one aspect of it, others combined two or more of the aspects.

Stone defined marriage as “a personal association between a man and a woman and a biological relationship for mating and reproduction” (Stone, 1939: 18). This definition limits marriage to two persons and is strictly monogamous without recourse to the family as in the case of African society and polygyny in most traditional African societies.

Mbiti, (1969) places emphasis on the economic aspect of marriage. He recognises marriage as a normatively prescribed relationship between at least two persons that designates economic and other rights and duties owed each other and others. He added that, the economic sense of marriage was part of the reason that indigenous Ghanaian marriage was polygynous. The wives and the children assisted the father in farming activities. He further added that the reason for polygyny among Africans was to help each other. He asserted that in case of ill-health the other wives could fetch water from the river or do other jobs for the family. Mbiti again pointed out that, marrying more wives

was necessary due to the cultural demand at the time. For instance, women were considered unclean during their menstrual period. They were forbidden to cook and doing other home chores. The other women could do that in case one is in her menstrual period. Mbiti's definition would satisfy, to a large extent, polygynous community as it is in contrast with that of stone. It is worthy to state that not all people regard polygyny as marriage, especially in most Western cultures.

Traditionally, marriage was defined as a formal commitment between a man and a woman to cohabit more or less permanently (Chapman, 1977). If the two families accepted the relationship, the union qualified to be called marriage. Chapman revealed that, endogamy was permitted in some ethnic groups among the Akans. It is proven to be the oldest form of marriage. He added that the kinship system is among the reason for this form of marriage.

A more encompassing definition of marriage is, "a legally and socially sanctioned union, usually between a man and a woman, that is regulated by laws, rules, customs, beliefs, and attitudes that prescribe the rights and duties of the partners and accords status to their offspring (if any)" (Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia. "marriage". *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 12 Feb. 2021, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/marriage>. Accessed 14 January 2022). This definition recognises the universality of marriage within different societies and cultures attributed to the many basic social and personal functions yet accepts the custom, beliefs, laws and rules. The definition again subtly admits that beliefs, and attitudes could influence what is considered as marriage. Notwithstanding, the definition limits marriage to binary gender thereby excluding homosexuals. For instance, by the year 2000, the

Netherlands became the first country to accept same-sex marriages by legalising it into law on April 1, 2001. In the subsequent years, many other countries like Canada (2005), France (2013), the United States (2015), and Germany (2017) followed suit. (ibid).

It suffices to state that no single definition of marriage will be apt enough to satisfy all group of persons due to diverse believes, customs, practices and laws. The Church of Pentecost, which is the focus of this study, defines marriage as a “union established and ordained by God for the lifelong, intimate relationship between a man as husband and a woman as wife as biologically defined at birth.” (The Church of Pentecost General Headquarters, minutes of the 43rd Session of the General Council Meetings, Pentecost Convention Centre, Gomoa Fetteh, 2nd – 5th May, 2018). This definition has clearly shown that intimate relations between people of the same sex marriage, transgender people and other sexual relations cannot be considered as marriage by the Church. The above definition by CoP is adopted as the working definition in this work. This is so because, the definition reflects the Church’s belief and faith which is crucial to this work. Again, other definitions will not be suitable concerning the fact that the work largely centres on CoP.

However, the definition does not highlight what a Christian marriage is. In other writings, CoP defines Christian marriage as “the blessing of marriage at church by a gazetted minister at a registered church premise” (Pre-marital Counselling Book, 2016: 18). This definition although has limitations, is adopted to be used as what is referred to as Christian marriage in this work for consistency. The limitation is further discussed in chapter four of this work.

One of the institutions that has existed for ages and perhaps associated with the creation of humanity is marriage. Marriage is seen as a permanent, indissoluble and sacramental union among most Christians. In this context, Genesis 2:24 is considered among most Christians the *locus classicus*, an authoritative passage that is often quoted, of marriage; “Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.” (ASV).

Christian marriage has a long historical heritage traceable from Hebrew-Greek-Roman origin (Williamson, 1966 and Swatson, 1997). Williamson noted that, betrothal among the Hebrews consisted of an agreement between the families and generally, supported by monetary benefits and a nuptial was performed a year later. The nuptial consists of a banquet and a procession to the home of the groom. He added that it was basically family and civil affair.

Licht (1932), noted that although Greek patriarchal outlook of marriage is similar to the Hebrew, the Greek’s concept of marriage was more religious. Licht added that family feasting does not appear to have been the custom throughout Greece, rather, sacrifices were made to Hera and Zeus before the act of the marriage proper. As a rule, sacrifice was offered to only Aphrodite on the wedding day, Licht added.

With the emergence of Roman civilisation, the form and practise of marriage were also affected. Marriage ceremony differed according to social class; the regular marriage for patricians and the irregular marriage, reserved for the lower class (Williamson, 1966). The Romans’ form of marriage / wedding had had a greater influence on Christian marriages today. Divorce

was not permitted and because of this, people took great care in selecting a partner for marriage. Parental consent was highly needed in choosing a partner. In ancient Rome, the marriage between a man and a woman was also the joining of two families. Marriage also had to be outside the family and that, one could not marry any relative: not even third or fourth cousins. The wearing of the engagement ring on the middle or long or tall finger, *the digitus medius manus*, on the left, wearing of a special dress, putting on a veil and the element of flowers are all heritages of Roman weddings (<https://rome.mrdonn.org/weddings.html> accessed on 26th July, 2019).

From the above, it can be established that, Christianity influences the cultural milieu of every nation into which it is introduced, and marriage is not an exception. With the introduction of Christianity in Ghana, there have been changes in the practices of marriage. Thus, before the advent of Christianity and Islam, customary marriage was the only known form of marriage in Ghana (Markin, 2019).

Customary marriage is also called traditional marriage. This type of marriage, in Ghana, could either be monogamous or polygynous and is contracted between two families. The consent of both families is crucial. It is one of the requirements for it to be accepted. In contracting customary marriage, a man has to announce his intention to marry by taking the necessary steps to perform the needed 'custom' demands of the chosen woman's kin by asking for her hand in marriage. This custom may involve a relatively inexpensive ceremony of local drinks and gifts to the more expensive ceremony of imported drinks and gifts, depending in most cases, upon the circumstances of the man and his kinsfolk. Once this basic custom

has been performed, several alternatives are open to the couple, and these seem to be more conditioned by means and status rather than any fundamental change in attitude or beliefs on the part of Ghanaian in marriage (Kumekpor, 2009).

It is asserted that the early Christian missionaries were not comfortable with the polygynous nature of the customary marriage and the parental frustrations that prevented their wards from marrying the children of the traditional believers. This led to the promulgation of the ordinance marriage law (Oladele, 2018). This is mistakenly referred to as Christian marriage instead of civil marriage. The Act did not mention any Christian marriage.

Unlike customary marriage, ordinance is monogamous (CAP 127, Marriages Act of Ghana). It is a civil way of contracting marriage which does not involve any custom demands. Unlike the customary marriage and Mohammedan Marriage that have strict custom requirements, ordinance or civil marriage has only legal requirements. First, there must be a publication of banns or filing of notice. Banns are raised if the marriage will be celebrated at the Christian church but notice is filed when it will be officiated at the law court or District / Municipal / Metropolitan Assembly. Certificate of notice must be issued if the notice satisfies the legal requirement. The marriage will have to be solemnised within three months either at church, District Assembly, the court or the registrar's office. The one authorised to conduct an ordinance marriage is a licensed marriage officer. If it is to be done at church, the minister officiating the marriage must be gazzeted and the place it is conducted must be registered as well (Marriages Act, Cap. 129).

The third type of marriage is the Islamic marriage (Mohammedan marriage). It differs from the customary and the ordinance marriage. The District Chief Executive of each District is the registrar of this type of marriage. The method of registration requires the bride groom, the bride's wali, two witnesses to the marriage and an officiating Islamic clergy (Marriages Act, Cap 129). Islam maintains that in order to conclude marriage, the Muslim bride must have a guardian or wali, who is usually her father.

Although the polygynous nature of the customary marriage and its accompanied customs could be a factor of shunning it in monogamous Christian community, the customary marriage still remains the basics for marriage in Ghana. It is even a requirement for ordinance marriage in some churches. For example, during officiating of marriages, it has been the practise of the Church of Pentecost (CoP) minister, to ask the bride's father or his representative if the customary demands have been met. Parental consent is also one of the key requirements in the process of contracting marriage in CoP (The Church of Pentecost: Pre-marital Counselling Handbook, 2014: 14).

It has been a common knowledge that marriage has been in existence for exceedingly long time since human existence traceable from the creation story in Genesis. However, the process of contracting it differs from community to community and from generation to generation. Despite that, there is historical influence of how marriage is contracted especially in the Christian religion. Also, just as religion influences culture and culture also influences religion, Christianity had had a great influence on Ghanaian marriage system, arguably, positively or negatively. Lastly, one will

appreciate that, despite the diverse cultural and religious pluralism in Ghana, there is a Marriages Act that regulate all forms of marriages in Ghana.

Statement of the Problem

Modern Ghanaian Christian marriages have become topical in national discussions in the media nowadays. The Christian churches has been accused by the media of making marriage difficult for would be couples. For that reason, there is general concern that Christian marriages should end in the customary. Most churches in Ghana like the CoP accept both the customary and the ordinance marriages. This church, although has stated its acceptance of both the customary and the ordinance marriage (The Church of Pentecost: Pre-Marital counselling handbook, 16), it is a common knowledge that the Church prefers the ordinance marriage to the customary one; the reason best known to the authorities concerned. This situation has raised concerns among some of its members, and it is against this background that this thesis seeks to investigate the rationale behind the Church's preference for ordinance marriage to customary marriage.

Significance of the Study

Considering the current media discussions on the complexity of Christian marriages, the study is of great benefit to Christians in general and CoP to be specific. First, the study presents a clear picture of the issue under study, thereby, contributing to the understanding of the state of customary marriage in CoP. The work, however, serves as a fulcrum of reflection for scholars the essence of integrating our traditional marriage into Christianity. The study reveals issues of concerns of members concerning marital process in the Church. Again, this study will be of great benefit to any church in

Ghana, especially, CoP, since it can serve as a means of reviewing their marital processes. Lastly, this study serves as a significant reference material for future researchers into church and customary marriage issues. It could be a great benefit to the scholarly discussion of how Ghanaian culture can be modified and preserved in the global world.

Research Objectives

The research aimed at achieving the following objectives:

- I. To provide a general overview of the types of marriage in Ghana.
- II. To provide biblical justification for customary marriage.
- III. To discuss marriage in The Church of Pentecost.
- IV. To investigate issues that CoP has with customary marriage and explore the possibilities of accepting the customary marriage as the main form of contracting marriage in CoP.

Research Question

The following research questions guided the study:

- I. What are the types of marriages in Ghana?
- II. What are the biblical bases of customary marriage?
- III. How is marriage contracted in CoP?
- IV. What are the issues that CoP have with customary marriage?

Research Design and Methodology

The researcher adopted the mixed methods of using both quantitative and qualitative methodology in this work. Creswell (2014) explained that mixed methods involve the collection and ‘mixing’ or combination of both quantitative and qualitative data in a study. In order to ensure that important areas of the study are covered, the researcher used the qualitative method in

selecting people to interview. Using varied methods to collect data on the same subject make the results more credible. The mixed method is used to test whether qualitative and quantitative data converge, this strengthens the validity (Cresswell, 2014). The researcher, therefore, adopted this method to find out whether the data gathered from the congregation and that of leadership would converge or diverge. Since issues related to church could easily be influenced by bias in responses, triangulation (using multiple data sets, methods, theories, and/or investigators to address a research question) is used to conduct the research. Church documents, circulars, manual and other related documents were used to present some facts about The Church of Pentecost and her beliefs in marriage. The literary work used includes the church sanctioned publications applicable to the study and church records. The major source of church records includes annual Council Meeting records, historic data from church archives, pastoral letters, circular letters, conference materials, brochures, and the Church annual report. Quantitative data was gathered from the Church's annual report concerning the number of marriages blessed, the number of church buildings that are registered and those that are not. In addition to books, articles and other research works conducted on marriage, the Marriages Act (cap 127) was a main source of reference in this work.

In addition, a survey was carried out and the results were analysed both quantitatively and qualitatively. Qualitative data was gathered through four persons interviewed with regard to this work. Those interviewed were; two legal professionals, namely: Her Ladyship Deaconess Sarah Bempong, a District Magistrate Court Judge at Nsawam and Lawyer Kwaku Oladele

Aribreke who is in charge of training gazzeted ministers. Two ministers of CoP were interviewed: Philip Osei-Korsah Head of Counselling Unit at CoP Head Office and Emmanuel Kofi Ahenkan, a retired minister of CoP.

Population and Sample

The researcher was interested in conducting a work that would cover The Church of Pentecost in Ghana. Since CoP is widely spread all over the country and because of extraneous factors that hinders such a large population; time, energy, human and material resources, the survey was conducted in Koforidua Area. The Area is made up of 247 churches called Assemblies with total adult membership of 31,953: members who are thirteen (13) years and above (2020 Annual Report of Koforidua Area). The researcher recognises social, cultural and economic factors that are associated with generalising a study. It is important to state that, The Church of Pentecost is homogenous in nature. The practises, regulations and directives regarding marriage are the same except some few variations. This is taken into consideration in the sampling process. For instance, the CoP churches or Assemblies are classified either as English Assemblies, Pentecost International Worship Centres or Local Assemblies.

Two stage sampling technique was used in selecting samples for the quantitative aspect of the study. The population was subdivided into groups and new samples were taken from each cluster sampled. The reason for using this sampling method is that the sizes of the clusters were large, making it difficult and expensive to observe all the units inside them. The churches in the population were grouped into three main strata (churches in rural areas, urban or city churches and Pentecost International Worship Centres and

English Assemblies). The reason is that CoP all over Ghana falls under one of these categories. The socio-cultural dynamism of church practices is the same depending on the category an Assembly falls under.

For the quantitative data, the convenient random sampling was used to select 50 people from PIWC, Worship Centre and English Assemblies. Respondents were randomly selected from PIWC Koforidua, Grace Worship Centre at Koforidua and English Assemblies at Aburi and Mamfe, comprising of 25 officers and 25 members in the entire group. Again, for the city or urban churches, samples were selected from New Juaben, Okroase, Aburi and Koforidua. For rural churches, samples were selected from Pokrom, Mangoase and Adawso. Thirty officers (30) and thirty-one (31) members were selected from these two strata. In all, 18 full-time ministers were selected from all the three strata and questionnaires were administered to them.

In sum, the samples selected were made up of 18 ordained ministers, 85 ordained officers (elders, deacons and deaconesses) and 87 members. The reason for this purposive sampling is to ensure that the findings represent the fair view of all stakeholders of the Church. Fowler (2009) cited in Creswell (2014), revealed the reason with randomisation that, a representative sample from a population provides the opportunity or ability to generalise to a population.

In addition, the purposive sampling technique was used to select four persons that were interviewed for the qualitative data. The interview sessions with Apostle Korsah and Lawyer Oladele were held via telephone and lasted for about an hour, and fifteen minutes respectively, whereas those with Sarah

Bempong (a magistrate court judge) and Kofi Ahenkan (a retired minister) were face-to-face interactions.

Field Data Collection Instruments

With the quantitative data, the researcher used questionnaire to elicit for information from respondents. The questionnaire is included in this work as an appendix and contains both closed ended and open-ended questions. This provided respondents with opportunities to express their views and clarify issues that needed to be explained.

Also, the semi-structured questions were used for the interviews conducted for the qualitative data. Respondents were given the questions and prepared adequately for them. Although, some scholars argue that semi-structured interview affect reliability of the responses, (Creswell, 2014 and Adams, 2015) it is not the case in this work. Responses given were checked with other sources like the CoP documents on marriage and existing legal works. It rather helped in getting accurate responses from interviewees since some of the information demanded facts. Again, participants interviewed provided in-depth information with open-ended responses. The interviews were recorded in audio version and latter transcribed and sent back to the interviewees for their consent before adopting for use in this study. The intention was to check for accuracy of information given.

Data Analysis Procedure

Scholars, generally, consider data analysis as the process of scientifically applying statistical and or logical methods to describe and illustrate, shorten and evaluate data by a way of drawing inductive inference from the data (Shamoo and Resnik, 2003). Since the mixed-method approach

was used in this research, both qualitative and the quantitative data were gathered. Content analysis was used to analyse information from church records whereas discourse analysis was used to analyse qualitative data gathered from the interviews conducted. With regards to the quantitative data analysis, the following tools were used: frequency tables, bar graphs, pie charts and percentiles. The reason of using the tools aforementioned is that it provides the basic features of handy types of data gathered in this work. Therefore, it is easily understood, convenient to use and appropriate to use.

Literature Review

The literature review focuses on relevant literature related to this study. The literature is reviewed under themes including: African Christian Marriage, Christianisation of Marriage in Ghana, The Biblical Perspective of Marriage, Legalisation of Marriage in Ghana and CoP and Marriage.

African Christian Marriage

Church marriage in Africa has generated concerns among some researchers. Ngundu (2010), for instance, wrote on 'Mission Churches and African Customary Marriage: A History of Church Marriages and a Case for an African Christian Ceremony'. His article traces the historical and theological discussions and practice of the European oriented tradition of church marriages in Africa. The writer claims that, Mission organisations imposed such tradition on African Christians through the introduction of Christianity. The effect of this resulted in social and moral dilemmas because of the co-existence of customary and civil systems of marriage practices in Africa. The investigator is with the view that the idea of imposition is not tenable as claimed by the writer. Missionaries did not enact the law of civil

systems of marriage in Ghana but was enacted by Ghanaians, although, arguably, they could have been influenced by their colonial masters. Even if some cultural practices are assumed to have been impositions, Ghanaians, in the era of post-independence could have decided on what is best for themselves. This work will provide empirical record of whether or not, Ghanaian Christians are still interested to contract marriage as assumed imposition or not.

Ngundu attempted to address the theological and pastoral response to the acclaimed dilemmas surrounding African Christian Marriage. He argues that,

At every marriage, every African Christian Couple, especially in mission-founded churches, is confronted with three “worlds” – the world of the traditional culture to which most parents of marrying age children belong; the world of the civil or legal system under which the couple, like other citizens live; and the world of the predominantly westernized culture that prevails in the church, especially in the urban areas within which the couple generally worship (Ngundu, 2010 : 35).

It is undoubtedly factual that, Ghanaian Christians equally find themselves in this dilemma as asserted by Ngundu. Considering how marriages are contracted in Ghana recently, especially Christian marriages, one can attest to the position of Ngundu of the ‘worlds’ of influence: basically, the world of the traditional culture and the world of the legal system or the world of the Church. However, this blame, if tenable, cannot entirely be shifted on the early missionaries as asserted by the writer. For instance, Ngundu maintained that even though African traditional marriage constitutes a genuine marriage contract according to their custom, Western Missionaries and colonial authorities refused to recognise it.

The apparent statement made further liberates Christian missionaries from this blame; “unfortunately, the nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century official missionary attitude towards African customary marriage still remains within the mainline Christian churches in Africa despite the change in leadership from foreign missionaries to African Christians.” (Ngudu, 2010: 37). It is an incontrovertible fact that the destiny of modern-day African Christianity, and for that matter Ghana, is no longer in the hands of the Westerners. Consequently, they could not be blamed for any mishappens to that effect. Pursuant to that, the work being conducted will help bridge the gap to establish if Christians have issues with existing ‘Europeanised’ marriage or are more interested in the Ghanaian customary.

Chapman (1977), on the other hand, revealed that Roman Catholics and Anglicans require a marriage ceremony in the church. It, therefore, suggests that the church does not recognise any marital union that is not celebrated at church. But Caldwell (1982), sharply disagreed with that notion by explaining that there is no Christian marriage since no marriage can be termed unlawful when they are not signed in Church. This investigator is of the view that Caldwell is wrong because his position confused what is Christian to mean what is legal. Whereas Chapman work used Roman Catholic as a focus of his study, this work is concerned with CoP, a largest Pentecostal denomination in Ghana. This will be relevant in generalising of Chapman claim or otherwise.

Hasting (1973) admits that the church marriage is concerned with a wedding or blessing in church rather than with Christian married life. He further stated that the churches regarded a church marriage as a significant

requirement for participation in the communion rites of the Church. In this wise, it can be concluded that church marriage fulfils religious requirement rather than legal requirements. This researcher opines that both the religious requirement and the legal requirements should be taken into consideration.

Major focus and attention should rather be on the issues that Christians seem to have with customary marriage rather than a mere religious or legal requirement. The researcher attempted to fill this lacuna that most writers have not paid attention to.

Christianisation of Marriage in Ghana

Until the advent of Christianity in Ghana, contracting marriage was tailored purely in line with the African traditional culture. By the beginning of the twenty first century, Christianity became the dominant religion in Ghana. The religious outlook of Ghana began to change from traditional religion to Christianity. It is on record that by the end of the year 2021, the Christian population in Ghana was 71.2% including 46.7% Protestantism, 13.1% Catholicism and 11.4% of other Christian. Islam follows with marginal difference of 17.6%, Traditional faiths by 6.2%, no religion, 4.1% and others 0.9% (Source: 2021 Housing and Population Census). It is expected that based on the percentage of Christians in Ghana, the religious outlook of marriage in modern Ghana should be skewed toward Christian perspective within Ghanaian cultural context. However, as expatiated below, one could see that scholars are divided on this position.

Twene (2019), researched into *Christianity and Marriage in Africa: The Perspective of Christian Men in Ghana*. He revealed that despite the fact that Christianity is growing on the African Continent, most Christians prefer

Traditional African Marriage practices to Christian marriage practices. Twene sought to find out the perspective of Christian men on marriage since he deems marriage as relevant to the church's growth. The work concluded that, although most African men identify themselves as Christians, it is incredibly challenging for them to adopt Christian marriage practices. He cited Dominique Meekers that, "despite the leading influence of Christianity in the African Continent, there is no complete abandonment of traditional family norms and convergence towards Western conjugal family as many reports portray but evidence of integration of customary and Christian marriage" (Twene, 2019: 1).

This investigator fully supports the assertion of Twene that, "though Christianity keeps spreading over the continent, some of its practices seem to be dominant practice behaviour of African Christians" (Twene, 2019: 4). The above position should be seen as a positive form of contextualisation of the gospel in African soil whereby things are done to suit the people within a particular context to make it more relevant to them. Quoting Amenga (2012), Twene admits that "the base of the unfulfilled objective of the Church to Christianise the marriage of its members is laid on the fact that, the Ghanaian Church accepts both Customary and Christian Marriage altogether" (Amenga, 2012: 55).

In partial agreement with the position of Twene, this researcher thinks that Christianisation of marriage should not mean to completely abandon all African cultural or traditional elements that is associated with marriage. A proper integration of more acceptable and needful ones that pertain to the Christian faith could be maintained and those that are not relevant to the

Christian faith could be replaced irrespective of race or colour. This means that there could be variations in some practices like marriage; from continent to continent, nations to nations and tribes to tribes. One agrees with Twene that “the acceptance of customary marriage practice by the African churches could be the relevance of the value for religion or Christianity” (Twene, 2019: 5). Moreover, Twene’s work benefit African Christians at large and Ghanaian Christians to be specific, the work largely centred on Roman Catholic Christians. A work of such nature will add to the existence knowledge that has been established concerning other church denominations.

It was established in Twene’s work that, most Ghanaian Christian men prefer customary marriage to Christian marriage due to the following reasons; there are different traditions with regards to marriage among Christian denominations in Ghana, such as the Roman Catholic Church and The Church of Pentecost. Again, there is flexibility of customary marriage as opposed to Christian Marriage. Huge cost involve in Christian marriage was another reason for most Christians’ preference for Customary Marriage. Since Twene’s work did not focus on a single denomination but more than one, it is worth investigating exclusively a particular denomination so as to establish more conclusive evidence to that effect.

Owusu-Boateng (2015), elaborates on the impact of Christianity on customary marriage among the residents of Yeji in the Brong Ahafo Region of Ghana. He, like Twene, equally emphasised that, the traditional marriages are the most common type of marriage contracted and surpasses Christian/Ordinance and Islamic marriages in number. Eduafo-Abraham (2019) added that Christian/Ordinance marriages are almost always preceded

by a traditional marriage referred to as the 'engagement', but in essence it is a traditional marriage.

Marriage, as an institution, has undergone several changes with the introduction of Christianity and formal education. Traditional marriages are seen to be infused with modern Christian practices. Owusu-Boateng contradicts Twene in his admission that, Christianity has greatly influenced traditional marriage. Owusu-Boateng cited the following areas as case in point to buttress his assertion;

- The ring as a symbol of marriage has been adapted into customary marriage.
- That little attention is given to extended family in modern day marriage.
- Modern marriages have become expensive due to the influence of Christianity; customary marriage is performed before the Christian wedding.
- With the introduction of Christianity and the teachings of the Bible, divorce rate has decreased in the area the study was conducted.

Notwithstanding, Owusu-Boateng was biased in insisting that there is a need to pay attention to the customs that Christianity is influencing in the traditional marriage and attempt to sort out the issues that Christianity has with those things they influence. The underlying reason for the influence is worth researching. It was, thus, deemed worthy to conduct a study in this regard to ascertain the issues that a particular denomination has with customary marriage that gives room for the infiltration of the practices of type of marriage. This work investigated the issues that the Christian church, CoP, has

with customary marriage and ascertained whether or not, it could be given same attention as the ordinance marriage.

Adding his voice to the debate, Perkins (2003), maintains that marriage should not be regarded as religious activities. Citing Satlow, Perkins revealed that, “marriage is not a peculiarly religious activity or ceremony in the Jewish community until a much later period – perhaps in response to Christian development” (Perkins, 2003: 4). He further added that, the rabbis invented legal forms and ritual for Jewish marriage and then the larger community had to be persuaded to adopt them. He emphasised that, Pauline examples are particularly instructive because of its inclusion of symbolic or ideological commitments.

The uncertainty of Perkins claim makes it difficult to subject it to critical analysis. However, if one admits that legal and ritual forms of marriage was invented as a response to Christian development; it does not overrule its usefulness. Generally, the society response to growing changes that it encounters. It is an unarguable fact that, Christian practices seem to permeate through all milieu of Ghanaian culture. It is, therefore, necessary to do objective appraisal on this change and adopt the one that will seem best to the adherents of the Christian faith. For this reason, this research work appraises the two main marital forms that Ghanaian churches upholds and situates it in a particular denomination to identify concerns that members have with the Ghanaian customary marriage.

The Bible and Marriage

There are varied works on the Bible and marriage. Few relevant ones related to this study are the works done by Vorster (2009), Köstenberger

(2004) and Perkins (2003). The wedding Jesus attended in Canaan is important to consider here.

The work of Vorster (2009) concerns Christian ethical perspectives on marriage and family life in modern Western culture. He insists that, the Western marriages are faced with untenable challenges; growing number of divorces, birth out of wedlock and the absence of fathers because of globalisation, same-sex marriages and cohabitation of people without a marriage contract.

Vorster cited that, “the phenomena of the modernization and globalization are at the root of these disrupting forces in the patterns of family life” (Vorster, 2009: 464). Considering the high influence of Western life, will Ghanaian Christians be equally influenced? Are there means to redefine our traditional marriage process to suit Christian principles as thought by the Bible? On that, Vorster rightly pointed out that, the biblical perspectives offer a clear indication of healthy marriage and family life and can serve as a remedy for the damage caused by the new trend.

Vorster agreed with Köstenberger’s approach to biblical marriage; he used the revelation – historical way of reasoning as opined by Köstenberger, (2004). On that note, he expatiated that the biblical idea of marriage and family along the revelation-historical way of cogitating has the creational order as its foundation. He maintained;

The narrative in Gn 1-3 can be seen as the prototype of marriage and although other forms of marriages are described in the Bible, a revelation-historical survey of the biblical data regarding marriage reveals that the creational order should remain the ultimate test for this relationship. Both Jesus and the apostles refer to this order in their

teachings about the essence of marriage and the responsibilities of husband and wife (Vorster, 2009: 466).

Some of the principles summarised by Vorster are further abridged as follows:

- 1) God establishes marriage as a heterosexual monogamous marriage – an exclusive relationship between one man and one woman. Although polygamy was a custom in the Old Testament times as it is evident in the lives of Lamech (Gen. 4:19), Esau (Gen. 26:34), Abraham, David and Solomon, monogamy was the creational order.

In that instance, he pointed out that the historical account of polygamy must be seen as descriptive; it was introduced as a result of the fall. However, he maintained that monogamy is introduced as prescriptive; it is the will of God. Hence, the creational order excludes the idea of polygamy or same-sex marriages. From that perspective, Vorster subjected biblical marriage into two simplistic perspectives as indicated above. Accepting that fact as closed argument, it rather generates many unanswered questions than ever. The creational order does not have anything to do with human culture to infer from. It is God and humankind. Culture has evolved and there is the need for holistic approach to examine biblical basis of customary marriage in order to make a reasonable inference. The works cited above did not focus in the area of establishing a biblical support for customary marriage. A work of this nature will contribute to knowledge in that, Christians who uphold customary marriage will have strong empirical reason to infer from.

The call to have a relook at customary marriage in CoP is not to suggest that the process should be embraced hook line and sinker, but with recourse to biblical principles.

- 2) The purpose of marriage is primarily mutual help and guidance (Eph. 5:23-25), physical and spiritual fulfilment and the prevention of immorality (1 Chr. 7:1-7). Whiles Köstenberger (2004) maintains that procreation was considered as an integral part of God's creation. Vorster posit that, procreation is a secondary importance because, a childless marriage can also be a blessing. The researcher sees both assertions as complementary but not contradictory as Vorster seems to suggest.
- 3) Christian marriage is not seen as a mere sexual union but a deep spiritual relation. He maintains that it is a triangular relation between man, wife and Christ (Eph. 5:21-23). It is further a covenant between man and wife before God.
- 4) Marriage grows out of love between husband and wife and is maintained by love and faithfulness. He debunked the idea of arranged marriages since it cannot grow out of love. On that note, Voster (2009), maintained that, arranged marriages occurred in biblical history but it was never as prescriptive material for marriage ethics.

Vorster assumes a controversial position that calls for investigation; "the family does not belong to the state or any other institution. Marriage and the family relations should not be controlled by other societal spheres such as the civil authority, the church, the extended family or the tribe" (Vorster, 2009: 473). He was, however, quick to add that, "while the family is a sphere of authority in its own right, it functions within the boundaries of the laws of the civil authority" (*ibid*). This means that, although the family should be seen as independent, it can never be above the law. In short, the family should also be regarded as a public institution. This stated position is contradictory in itself.

Since family emanate from marriage, it is equally important to look at it from a broader perspective as institution as indicated in other biblical passages.

Perkins wrote on Christian Marriage in the New Testament with a focus on 1Thesalonians 4:4. His work centres on the early Christian marriage in the New Testament. He indicated that, Jewish marriage was as a matter of legal contract and social custom like their non-Jewish contemporaries. He pointed out that, Pauline letters provide a peek of how Christians began to redefine marriage. Referring from the scriptures (1 Cor. 7:12-14), Perkins asserted that, Paul made an unusual move when he characterises the unbeliever married to a Christian and the children of such relationship “made holy”. Meanwhile, he did not expatiate what he term as unusual. Again, the work was concerned with the hermeneutical dimension of the text rather than a research work that aims at coming out of principle of practise or understudying what is wrong with a particular way of contracting marriage.

He maintains that with the case of 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8, moral exhortations from most of New Testament writings were focused on sexual purity and divorce rather than directing how marriage should be contracted. It is unarguable that, Pauline letters aimed at addressing issues that were confronting juvenile church rather than a developed church. The challenges might not be the same. So, the fact that Pauline epistles did not address the issue of contracting marriage does not suggest it could not be done in this era. Perhaps the church has grown pass battling with regulating sexual purity as in the days of Paul, but what might be needed is contracting marriage. For instance, 1 Thess. 1:9-10, Rom. 1:24-26 and Rom. 12:1-2, emphasised that marriage is a matter of holiness rather than a legalistic or ritualistic or

traditional demand (1 Cor. 7:1; 1 Cor. 5:1-5). Perkins position could hardly be applied to the Ghanaian context since it leaves the Christian church in a dilemma because the church is part of social life of many people in Ghana. Woefully enough, Perkins did not appreciate that the totality of a Christian life encompasses what is considered holy, legal, ritual and traditional as well. It is, therefore, necessary to conduct a work of this nature to ascertain whether or not practicing what could be termed as 'legalistic,' 'ritualistic' or traditional could have an impact on what the Christian considers as 'holy.'

He further insisted that, "the New Testament does not provide a solution for how to put the pieces together that will provide a transformative vision of Christian marriage for the 21st Century". Jesus' tradition and Pauline directives has to do with ethical and not legal regulation. Due to the complexity of human life in this century coupled with the centrality of the role of religion, especially Christianity, there is the need to delve into the issue of marriage and find more appropriate way of contracting Christian marriage. A wholistic approach of seeking the views of the laity and the clergy is the best way as undertaken by this research work.

Legalisation of Marriage in Ghana

Vorster (2009) indicated that in most Ghanaian churches, the process of contracting marriage is highly influenced by Western laws and principles. Meanwhile, before the advent of the ordinance marriage law, Christians mainly contracted customary marriage. The legal dimension of marriage in Ghana was made popular in 1971 after the introduction of the Matrimonial Causes Act (Act 367). Kumeckpor wrote:

The most significant change brought about by the Matrimonial Act of 1971 is the fact that it seeks to make possible the dissolution of marriage on grounds other than 'fault.'

Its major contribution is that it makes provision for the use of customary practices in reconciling and remedying marital discord. (Kumekpor, 2009: 135).

He further pointed out the defect in the law that stipulates six conditions that makes divorce legal. He maintained that the essential subject is that some of these conditions are extremely nebulous and vague. The consideration of the Act 367 was basically divorce.

The need to amend the Act 367 brought the Marriages Act Law of 1984 - 1985. This law classifies marriage under three main types; customary marriage, Marriage by Mohammedans and the Ordinance Marriage. The requirements, procedures and the divorce procedures are clearly defined in the Act 367. The law introduced two additional forms of marriages to the existent customary marriage, namely: ordinance marriage and Islamic marriage. Whiles the former takes much consideration to secular and Western culture, the latter is purely religious with Islam in focus.

With regards to customary marriage Act, the law makes provision for one to marry customarily before he proceeds to register the marriage. The parties to the marriage apply to the registrar of marriages in the district by filling a required form (Marriages Act, Cap. 127). The customary marriage law permits marriage by proxy and conversion of the customary to ordinance. This is not so with the ordinance marriage; it cannot be converted to customary.

Also, the Mohammedan marriage law is preserved for Islamic marriages. The District Chief Executive is the registrar for Islamic marriages. The bridegroom, the bride's wali, two witnesses to the marriage and licensed Islamic Priest are to attend such a function.

However, the ordinance marriage is not simply regulated as the one stated above. Section 41 of the Marriages Act authorised three different instruments as evidence of the solemnisation of the ordinance marriage. These include:

- I. Marriage Officer's Certificate,
- II. Registrar of Marriages Certificate or,
- III. Special License from the Registrar.

The challenge with the law regulating ordinance marriage is that the procedures to follow depend on the authorising officiating officer of the marriage. Marriage by a special license from the registrar is given preference to by the law than the other two; it can be contracted anywhere anytime. One needs to study and be well informed of the legal rudiments engulfed in the marriage in order to make it valid. This researcher is with the opinion that it is too complex and too demanding to be desired. The second requirement is that the venue where the marriage is to be contracted is to be a licensed place though there is no stated reason for that.

One of the unconfirmed concerns that makes most churches prefer ordinance marriage to customary marriage is the problem of spousal property right. Acheampong (2008), therefore, authored an article titled *Matrimonial Property Division at Marriage Breakdown: The Way Forward*. The work focused on matrimonial property division upon marriage breakdown in Ghana from 1959 - 2004 from a gender perspective.

The researcher presumptively maintained that wealth that spouses generate in marriage involve the contributions in different forms by both spouses to the family. Contemporary concept of gender equality seems to

defy traditional Ghanaian concept of marriage which recognises the man as superior to the woman. Acheampong (2008), defines gender equality as, “recognizing and giving similar significance to each spouse’s contribution (whether by money or work or otherwise in the context of the matrimonial relationship) to the acquisition of property of the marriage” (Acheampong, 2008: 3).

Largely, women are disadvantaged when it comes to distribution of spousal property acquisition, especially, when the marriage contracted is not regularised. Could it be the reason most churches would prefer marriage under ordinance to customary marriage since one cannot contract ordinance marriage without regularising the customary marriage? This is not so with customary marriage; it can be contracted without registration.

However, Ghana’s matrimonial property law on property distribution during marriage breakdown is not dependent on the type of marriage contracted; it is same with customary marriage, Mohammedan marriage or ordinance marriage. The provisions on spousal property rights in relation to Matrimonial Causes Act 1971 (Act 367) are summarised below:

- I. A spouse shall not be deprived of a reasonable provision out of the estate of a spouse whether or not the spouse died having made a will.
- II. Parliament shall as soon as practicable after the carrying into force of this constitution, enact legislation regulating the property rights of spouses.
- III. With a view to achieving full realization of the rights referred to clause (2) of this article,
 - (a) Spouses shall have equal access to property jointly acquired during marriage;

(b) Assets which are jointly acquired during marriage shall be distributed equitably between the spouses upon dissolution of the marriage.

Acheampong's work partly draws attention to the (MCA) Law that applies to customary marriage and Islamic marriage. Citing Section 41 (2) of the Matrimonial Cause Act, the following provisions apply to marriages other than a monogamous marriage

- a) The court may have regard to the peculiar incidents of that marriage in determining appropriate relief, financial provision and child custody arrangements;
- b) Grant any form of relief recognised by the personal law of the parties to the proceedings, either in addition to or substitution for the matrimonial reliefs afforded by this Act.

Acheampong (2008) revealed that, the first rule on spousal property rights for those married under customary law was established in the case of *Quartey V. Martey* in 1957. He added that, Ghanaian judges have not solely applied the MCA as the governing law on matrimonial causes, rather, they have developed what he termed 'substantial contribution' principle. This means, a spouse should be able to provide a proof or evidence of contribution towards the acquisition of property, such as direct financial improvements, renovations, extension or applying her income or time for the benefit of the family in order to enable the other spouse to acquire the property in question. Could this be a reason one will prefer ordinance marriage to customary marriage? The mere fact that ordinance marriage is contracted does not provide in itself enough evidence of contribution of acquiring a property as the case may be.

Citing Offei in his family Law in Ghana, Acheampong, (2008) touched on the plight of “poor wives” in this statement;

It would thus be noted that in the customary law case of Quartey V. Martey and Annor and the Marriage ordinance cases of Bentsi – Enchill V. Bentsi – Enchill and Clerk V. Clerk- the principle was the same. In all three cases, the wife did not contribute materially towards the acquisition of the property acquired by the husband during the marriage, and the court held that, the wives had no share in the property (Acheampong, 2008: 90).

Notwithstanding this discouraging trend, Acheampong was apt to add that, judges now recognise not only the direct substantial contribution but also indirect contribution to matrimonial property. He cited one Justice Hayford as saying indirect contribution is difficult to quantify in monetary terms and consequently held that, “the wives combined direct and indirect contribution entitled to her as an equal share of the house with the husband.” With this position, the researcher believes spousal property distribution should not be a factor of abandoning customary marriage to embrace ordinance marriage.

Conclusively, Acheampong realised some lapses in the matrimonial property law. He, therefore, made these three recommendations:

- 1) Adoption of a presumption of equal contribution in the law.
- 2) Comprehensive provision of matrimonial property division.
- 3) A single law, gender sensitive law governing matrimonial property division.

In effect, wives in Ghana are at risk of making indirect contribution in the marriage since most of them render services instead of monetary contribution.

If this affects customary marriage largely, it will have direct implication on the type of marriage that any enlightened institution like a

church must support. Since there was no finding in his work to buttress this point, it will be considered a hasty generalisation if one assumes such position. This work will cure this mischief by providing findings to that effect. Again, Acheampong work did not focus on the reason a particular denomination would give preferential treatment to ordinance marriage over the customary as reflects in this study.

CoP and Marriage

Although some scholars have written extensively on CoP, for instance Leonard, (1989), Markin (2019), Ntummy (2019), etc. none of their works related to marriage of CoP. While marriage is a critical factor in CoP, extensive study has not been conducted in that area as compared to the historical trajectory of the denomination. Until 2019, few publications on marriage in CoP could be found fragmentally in her circular letters and ministers' manual. A seemingly detailed position on marriage is found in The Tenets of The Church of Pentecost , (2019: 595–451) which treats the Tenet of Marriage and Family Life. Biblical position of marriage in both Old and New Testament is discussed and divorce and remarriage in the Biblical perspective is discussed.

Generally, the publication on marriage with reference from the CoP Tenet explains the stated position of the Church based on its conviction of scripture. Nevertheless, the interpretation of such scriptures is deemed questionable. It does not outline a clear-cut policy and stand on acceptable marriage forms the Church upholds. Some of the practices lack the merit of scientific study for a pragmatic decision to be arrived at. Moreover, there is no reference to a study conducted to support the Church's stand or one to

determine members' understanding or appreciation of the forms, processes and position of the CoP on marriage. A study conducted in this direction will help to evaluate and inform the Church of the success of her position or otherwise.

Organisation of the Work

The work is structured in six chapters. Chapter one focuses on the introductory chapter of the work. The chapter covers the background information to the entire study, the research problem, significance and objectives for the work, research questions, design and research methodology, population and sample, literature review and the organisation of the work.

Chapter two discusses Types of Marriage in Ghana. This is under three main thematic areas. First, the customary marriage is treated under various sub-headings; what it means, the procedure involved: knocking and bride price and legal dimension of customary marriage. The second theme is captioned Islamic or Mohammedan marriage; the bride price or dower and CAP 129 of the Islamic Marriage Act were considered. Finally, the chapter ended with ordinance marriage with its sub-theme: essential validity and the formal validity.

The third chapter looked at Biblical Bases of Customary Marriage. The General overview of marriage in Old Testament perspective is discussed. The chapter further focuses on marriage in the wisdom literature (the book of Proverbs). In the same chapter, the New Testament perspective of marriage in the Gospels is discussed.

Chapter four highlights the CoP and Marriage. The chapter singled out the eleventh tenet, Marriage and Family Life, with the aspect on marriage, being the focus of this study and treated in detail. Contemporary marriage issues

arranged and guided marriages and marital processes in CoP have been discussed extensively in this chapter.

Chapter five of this work is largely centred on presentation of data, analysis of the data and discussions of findings. This chapter presents findings of this study and discusses them.

The last chapter, six, presents the summary of the work, conclusion, recommendations and suggestion for further researchers.



CHAPTER TWO

TYPES OF MARRIAGES IN GHANA

Introduction

Marriage in Ghana today has taken different forms. Economic, social and religious factors have influenced the nature of marriage. The religiosity of Ghanaians has classified marriage into three main categories. These are customary marriage, otherwise called Traditional Marriage, Mohammedan or Islamic Marriage and Ordinance Marriage or Civil Marriage ignorantly called Christian Marriage. Kumekpor (1975), asserts that it is comparatively difficult to brand Ghanaian marriage under one set of procedures because marriage customs and laws vary from group to group, and may show substantial disparities even within groups. He, however, maintains that it is possible to analyse those aspects which are common to most marriages, whether contracted under customary law, Church marriage or ordinance marriage.

In this chapter, customary, ordinance or civil and the Mohammedan types of marriage are discussed. Although there are differences even in each type in terms of how they are contracted, there are commonalities in terms of procedures and laws which regulate them. General principles and procedures under each type are discussed in this chapter.

Customary Marriage

As the name implies, it takes the form of a custom of a particular group of people. It is otherwise called Traditional Marriage. It can be defined as marriage in accordance with the custom or tradition of the parties involved. It is largely practised in the global world. Oladele assented that, “customary marriage was the only form of marriage that was known to the indigenous

people of Ghana before the advent of any foreign influences, that is, Christianity, English law and Islam.” (Oladele, 2018: 82). He further opined that, it is still the type of marriage contracted by the majority of Ghanaians despite the seeming foreign influence.

Legally, customary marriage is defined as marriage “contracted when a man and a woman agree to marry each other and the requisite formalities are carried out in accordance with customary law” (Oladele, 2018: 83). Marriage by customary law is a union of the families of the man and woman who intends to marry. Customary marriage law is classified into two types, namely; living customary marriage law and official customary marriage law. The former is concerned with living marital law of a particular community. These laws may not necessarily be regulated by statutory enactments. The latter is concerned with legislation of these living laws. They are laws that are carried out in courts in accordance with statutes such as the recognition of the Marriages Act Law in Ghana. The official customary marriage law was introduced in Ghana in 1984-1985.

The Procedure for the Conduct of Customary Marriage Rites in Ghana

Marriage customs and laws vary from one ethnic group and community to another. Despite the difficulty in categorising these variations under same procedures, some researchers (Bawa, 2015; Forkour, 2018; Voorhoeve, 2012, etc.), however, agree that there are some commonalities or accepted procedures that permeate all cultures across the globe. Generally, they agree on the following procedures as what constitute customary marriage;

- 1) Consent of the two parties; In this regard, both the man and the woman must agree to stay together as man and woman. Their affirmation to marry

must be made public before the two families: the family of the man as the bridegroom and the family of the woman, the bride.

2) Consent of the two families; With regards to customary marriage, the agreement of the two families: the man's family and the woman's family, is paramount. Traditionally, it is the family of the man that formally goes to make their marriage intention known. Formerly, and even until today, both the nuclear and extended families consent is sought since customary marriage is contracted between two extended families. In short, marriage was essentially based on the agreement between two clans. In this regard, Schapera (1996), opined that, rift between two parties or clans could nullify a marriage between two parties no matter the amount of cordiality or love between the to be bride and groom. Societies that uphold this principle in high esteem do have regard for one another. The reason is that, disregarding a particular clan will have a dire consequence even on future generations since their descendants could be prevented from marrying each other.

Prior to the family of the bride to accept the proposal of the would-be groom, an investigation is conducted to find out if there is no chronic sickness in the groom's family. Again, they investigate if the family is not noted for brutality or hostile to women or not known for any mental sickness.

In some societies, the parents and relatives of the man could arrange for the marriage for their son. Mbiti (1969), revealed that, the man is not involved in the marriage arrangement but is informed when the procedure has ended. Therefore, the man's rejection for the girl arranged for him to marry is equal to disgracing the parents and insulting the entire family. It must be admitted that such arranged marriage is still common in some parts of modern-

day Ghana, especially, in parts of Northern, Upper East and Upper West regions.

3) Consent of the woman's family that the woman should have the man as her husband; "this consent too may be actual, i.e., where the family of the woman accept drinks offered by the family of the man, or it may be constructive, i.e., by acknowledging the man as husband of the woman and admitting him and his family to perform customary rites for their family" Oladele (2018: 85). The affirmation of the woman needs to be done in public: thus, before the man's family. This would have been preceded by enquiring privately from the woman.

4) Consummation of the marriage by cohabitation; Consummation means the completion of a thing. In the context of marriage, consummation means the actualisation of marriage; it is the first act of sexual intercourse after marriage is contracted. Ofei posits that "consummation of a customary marriage by cohabitation is not an essential of that marriage" Ofei, (1998: 29). Again, Oladele added, "a marriage is said to have been consummated as soon as the parties have had a satisfactory sexual intercourse after conclusion of the marriage" Oladele (2018: 103). He explained satisfactory intercourse as the full penetration of the groom's reproductive organ into that of the bride. Usually, consummation is supposed to start after the marriage ceremony. (*ibid*).

Knocking Ceremony

The first rite performed in the customary marriage rite is the Knocking. It is a mandatory marriage rite performed by almost all ethnic groups in Ghana. The Knocking emanates from the Ghanaian customary way of

knocking at the entrance of someone's home before entering the house. It simply implies knocking at the door. The purpose is to formally announce the intention to marry. The groom visits his potential in-laws accompanied by his own family. It could be anyone from his parents or a senior uncle or brother in his family.

The groom and the family present items traditionally required for the Knocking ceremony. In some cases, the knocking could be done without the participation of the groom. In most cases it is done by his uncles. The items presented varies from family to family and ethnic group to ethnic group. The bride's representatives then ask the bride to affirm her consent or otherwise. In some cases, the items are received by the family and the consent of the bride is sought later on. Traditionally, the Knocking ceremony is observed separately from the marriage ceremony. Sometimes, it is at the Knocking ceremony that a convenient date for both families is fixed for the celebration of the marriage. Sometimes too, at the knocking, the groom to be family enquires about the necessary rites to be performed. They then go back, prepare and later give a date for the celebration of the marriage.

The Marriage Ceremony / Bride Price

It is required that the customary marriage be celebrated. This usually takes place in the bride's house or a place selected by the bride's family. The extended families of both the bride and the groom attend in their numbers as well as friends from both sides. Unlike the Knocking ceremony, the marriage ceremony is always attended by larger number of people.

The Ceremony begins with the payment of bride price which is an essential element in customary marriage. In Ghana, just like other nations, the

groom's family (Marriage Laws around the Globe, accessed 11th December, 2019) pays the bride price. Bawa (2015) assents that in India it is the bride's family that pays the dowry.

All over the world, the cost of bride price varies from country to country, ethnic group to ethnic group and from family to family. For instance, the Zulu and Xhosa of Southern Africa use cows as bride price as is the case of some ethnic groups in Northern Ghana and Upper East. Other tribes use items or money for the bride price. The minimum number ranges from ten cows to a maximum of sixty cows. The case in Ghana is not different although there are variations in the cost of bride price. According to Farkuor et al (2018), the cost of bride price in Ghana also varies with men in the matrimonial societies paying a smaller amount compared to men in the patrimonial societies. However, with the demands of modernity, coupled with westernise influence on Ghanaian marriage, Farkour position could not be wholly accepted.

Bride price is paid in cash or kind or both. Derry (2015) pointed out that in Northern Ghana, bride price is paid in the form of cowries or livestock or both as custom requires. On a similar note, Brown and Wright, (2017) reveals that modernity has made it possible for all such items to be quantified into cash value in some societies. Korah (2014) added that, the scarcity of cowries nowadays among the Dagaba, a patrimonial society of North Western Ghana, has resulted in the use of cash. Meanwhile, he revealed that, those further North in Nandom in Ghana still use cattle for payment of bride price (*ibid*).

Scholars have elaborated the cultural significance of the customary marriage. For instance, Sarpong (as cited by Farkour et al, 2018) identifies some reasons for the payment of bride price. First it ratifies the marriage, giving some degrees of self-respect to both husband and wife. Again, it entitles the husband to adultery fees in event of unfaithfulness by the wife. It is also legitimises the children in the union. Despite the above significance, Matembe (2000) argues that the payment of bride price leads to a perception of wives as exchange commodities, and often leads to spousal abuse and separation. The focus of this session, however, is not to seek justification of payment of bride price or not, rather, to highlight on the required procedures and rites.

Notwithstanding, the bride price has been commercialised in recent Ghanaian communities. The social status, the educational status or the economic status of the bride largely determines the bride price to be paid by the prospect groom. Farkour et al (2018) added that, young men and women cohabit while looking for money to legitimise themselves as spouses due to high price paid as dowry or bride price.

It can be said and maintain that bride price has been affected greatly in modern times due to factors associated with modernity.

Regularisation of Customary Marriage

Before the introduction of the Marriages Act Law in Ghana in 1984, customary marriage was not regularised by law. However, on the commencement of the Marriages Act, a marriage contracted before or after the commencement of the Act may be registered in accordance with CAP 127, Marriages Acts 3(3). This law came into force on 14 June, 1985. According to

the Act, the following shall be the requirement for the registration of the customary marriage under the customary marriage law.

1) Either party to the marriage or both parties may apply in writing to the registrar of the district in which the marriage was contracted for the registration of the marriage in the register of marriages. A marriage form obtainable from the registrar is filled. The following particulars are to be filled; name of parties, their ages, date and place of marriage, place of residence, existence marriage (thus the man), whether the woman is a spinster or a divorcee and the signature or thumbprint of the parties.

2) A statutory declaration made by the parties shall be attached to the application for registration stating:

- a) The names of the parties to the marriage.
- b) The places of residence of the parties at the time of the marriage.
- c) That the condition essential to the validity of the marriage in accordance with the applicable customary law have been complied with.

Oladele highlighted that, “because of the anomalies and lacuna in the Customary Marriage and Divorce (Registration) Law 1985 (PNDCL 112), the Law was amended and replaced with Customary Marriage and Divorce (Registration) Amendment Law 1991 PNDCL 263”, Oladele (2018: 124). This is a new law which was enacted and came into force on 20th August, 1991. Unlike the PNDCL 112, this law does not make it compulsory to register a marriage contracted under customary law before or after the introduction of PNDCL 112. This posture makes the customary law more flexible and not formal.

According to Offei (as cited in Oladele, 2018), the word 'shall' in the previous law was amended to 'may'. Thus, whilst Section 2(11) of PNDCL 112 states that, marriage contracted under customary law shall apply to the Registrar for registration of the marriage, Section 2(a) of PNDCL 263 postulates that either party 'may' do so.

In this regard, registration of a customary marriage is not the only evidence of it being recognised by Law. Oral or documentary evidence is equally regarded as evidence that a customary marriage had been validly contracted. Hence, any customary law benefit could be applied to the marriage of this nature.

Conversion of Customary Marriage into Mohammedan or Ordinance Marriage

It has been established in the Marriages Act that, a man who marries a woman under customary law can marry the same woman under the tenets of either Mohammedan or ordinance marriage but not vice versa. However, Offei (as cited by Oladele, 2018) reveals that, a situation where a man had married more than one wife as permitted by the customary law, such man cannot marry one of them under ordinance.

Oladele (2018) added that unless that marriage is properly dissolved, any claim of a conversion of the customary marriage into monogamous marriage is considered invalid and illegal. Nevertheless, Oladele agreed with Offei that where an effort is made to convert the marriage and it fails, the earlier marriage subsists. Failure is said to arise if the necessary formalities for the conversion of the said marriage were not complied with.

Mohammedan / Islamic Marriage in Ghana

Islam is a religion that recognises the value of marriage. Fyzee (as cited by Oladele), legally defines Islamic marriage as “a contract for the legalization of intercourse and the procreation of children... It is an institution ordered for the protection of society and in order that human beings may guard themselves from foulness and unchastity”, (Oladele, 2018: 126). It is generally accepted in Islam that the primary cause of marriage is to establish a conjugal family of procreation. According to Abd al ‘Alti (1977), Muslims have deduced the Quran to mean that, marriage is a religious obligation and is, therefore, a moral safeguard as well as a social necessity. He further added that, Islam favours marriage as a means to emotional and sexual gratification.

Marriage in Islam is based on the Quran. According to Quran 7:107, it was Allah who created mankind out of one living soul and called that soul a spouse. To the Muslim, therefore, marriage to this effect is guided by Quranic injunctions. On that note, some Muslim scholars argue that marriage in Islam is seen as a sacrament on one breath. Thus, Abd al “Ati” (1977) posits that, the impression of sacrament implies that, marital partners are bound together by a sacred bound and that they are equally endowed with sacred and moral capacities. He emphasised the Qur’an describe marriage as a solemn covenant between Allah and the human parties and between the parties themselves.

Marriage of Mohammedans (CAP 129)

There are essentials of Islamic marriage. These principles as cited by Oladele), is established by Mulla as Principle of Mohammedan Law;

It is essential to the validity of a marriage that there should be a proposal made by or on behalf of one of the parties to the marriage and an acceptance of the proposed by or on behalf of the other, in the presence and heavy of two male or one male and two

female witnesses who must be same and an adult Mohammedans. The proposal and acceptance must both be expressed at one meeting; a proposal made at one meeting and an acceptance made at another meeting do not constitute a valid marriage. Neither writing nor any religious ceremony is essential. (Oladele, 2018: 127).

The Islamic marriage is regularised at the District / Municipal / Metropolitan Assembly. The first requirement is that there should be a valid Islamic marriage contracted by a couple. According to the CAP 129, the District Chief Executive is the registrar of the marriage. The following are the summarised legal procedure for the registration of the marriage.

1. The bridegroom, the bride's wali, two witnesses to the marriage, Mohammedan priest and two witnesses who were present at the marriage ceremony.
2. After the required forms are filled and signed by the parties aforementioned, they further sign the register and the certificate for that purpose. These make the marriage valid according to Mohammedan Law.
3. After the certificates have been issued to both the bride and the groom, the marriage is supposed to be registered within one week, else it will be deemed void.
4. Failure to meet the one-week deadline, then either the bride's wali or the bridegroom may make an application supported by an affidavit stating the reasons for the delay.

Bride Price / Dowry / Dower

Payment of dowry in Islamic marriage has been in practise for many years. Generally, two types of dowries are identified. Firstly, that which is paid by the groom or his family to the bride or her family. Secondly, there is a

type which is paid by the bride or her family to the groom or his family. In Ghana, however, the former is practised. The dowry in Islam is referred to as dower. It is paid in cash, property or movable object, Abd al 'Ati' (1977). He further highlighted that, sometimes it is made up of gifts which are offered by the groom's party and may or may not be reciprocated by the brides' or it could be services rendered by the groom to the family of the bride.

The significance or justification of the bride price is not the focus of this study. However, 'Adb al 'Ati' cited contemporary anthropologist's view on the origin of dower in Islam. The young girl was seen as an economic asset of her father's family and her departure was seen as an economic loss to the bride's family. Procreative reason was also given as a factor that the father not only loses a daughter but also all her future property.

In Islam, dowry is what a Muslim groom gives to his prospective bride. The bride has a power to waive, reduce or return to the groom if she is displeased with it. It is generally accepted in Islamic marriage that dowry could be as simple as small service rendered to the pleasure of the bride. It is divine injunction rather than custom demand. Adb al 'Ati' (1977), added that, the overall principle is that dowry should be estimated according to circumstances with emphasis on moderation. He maintained that there is no minimum or maximum fixed on dowry in Islam.

Ordinance Marriage or Civil Marriage

As stated in the previous chapter, ordinance marriage is referred to as civil marriage. In contrast with customary and Islamic marriage, ordinance marriage is monogamous. Ordinance Marriage is a civil way of contracting marriage. This is governed by marriage laws of a particular nation. In Ghana,

for instance, ordinance marriage forms part three of the Marriages Act (CAP 127). According to Adinkra (1980), the introduction of the ordinance marriage dates back to 1957 although it became a full Act in 1984. He stated that, its intent is to enable the people of Gold Coast (now Ghana) to contract marriages of the type which prevail in Western societies, although not devouring them from contracting customary or traditional marriages. He further highlighted that, the intent of enacting the law was to change social behaviour of Ghanaians. The social behaviour the law was intended to change was not specified.

Per The Marriages Act (CAP 127), there are three valid forms of contracting ordinance marriage. All the forms are, however, guided by two main legal requirements: the essential validity and the formal validity.

Essential Validity of Ordinance Marriage in Ghana

Essential validity of ordinance marriage is determined by the law of matrimonial domicile *lex domicile*, (Oladele 2018). This requires that, the parties to marry must meet certain essentials to make the marriage valid; an agreement to marry, capacity to marry (legal ability) and freedom from legal prohibitions (see for instance, Oladele 2018 and Offei 1998).

Firstly, the CAP 127 of the Marriages Act requires that no one should be coerced to marry else the marriage would be considered as null and void. There must be a consensus between two adults; a male and a female. Unlike customary marriage, parental consent is not needed when contracting this type of marriage. Marriage under stress, undue influence or fraud is not accepted as essentially valid.

It is equally required that, parties that marry voluntarily must be biological male and biological female. It implies that, they must be either male or female by birth and thus, transgender do not fall under this category. Oladele (2018) quoted the judgment of one Justice Ormrod on her position of what constitute biological sexes; in the case of *Corbette V. Corbette* (1971); the biological sexual constitution of an individual is fixed at the birth and cannot be changed either by medical or surgical means. Section 104 of the Criminal Offences Act spelt out that, it is an offence for people to indulge in unnatural carnal knowledge. Hence, same sex marriage is not recognised by the marriage law in Ghana either.

Justice Ormrod further upholds that, operation cannot therefore affect the true sex of a person, but concluded that, three determinant tests are required to determine one's sex; the chromosomal, gonadal and genital tests and if all three are congruent, it determines one's sex, ignoring any surgical intervention.

The second factor is the legal ability or capacity to contract marriage. It is required under the part three of CAP 127 of Marriages Act of Ghana that, parties intended to marry must be of sound mind and of legally accepted age. Age of maturity is determined by Acts of a particular nation and is subjected to change per the laws of that nation. For instance, until 1998, in Ghana, a person of 16 years of age could marry under ordinance. Nevertheless, with the introduction of Children's Act, 1998, (Acts 560), the minimum age of marriage of whatever type is eighteen years. This explains that any marriage contracted by a party who is below eighteen years lacks the legal capacity to marry, hence the marriage becomes null and void. Oladele (2018) carefully

distinguished between the age of consent for marriage from the ages of consent for sex. He stated that, the age at which a person can give agreement for any sexual act in Ghana is sixteen (16). He carefully expatiated that, by the laws of Ghana, a child over the age of sixteen (16) can give consent for sex; he or she cannot give consent for marriage. Personally, this Act is inconsistent with its position. One cardinal reason that authenticates marriage is consummation of the marriage by sexual penetration of a male reproductive organ into a female one, as already discussed. If the age of consent to sex is sixteen, then the age for marriage should equally be sixteen. And if the age of sixteen is seen as an immature age to marry, then it is unreasonable to fix the age of consent to sex at sixteen years.

The third element of essential validity of ordinance marriage is freedom from legal prohibition. There are diverse legal prohibitions of civil marriages as directed by the marital laws of a particular nation. One of this prohibitions in Ghanaian civil marriage is consanguinity and affinity. These terminologies are defined as, “relationship that proceeds from a common ancestry or blood relationship. Affinity, however, is the relationship formed through marriage as opposed to blood relationship” (Oladele, 2018: 153). He quickly revealed that, consanguinity and affinity is ethnic determined. For instance, he asserted that among the people of Navrongo, a town in Upper East Region in Ghana, a man could marry the wife’s sister while the wife is alive.

To highlight further, since ordinance marriage is strictly monogamous, it is sternly forbidden for either of the spouse to legally marry another of a person under the ordinance when a marriage subsists. Until the death of a

spouse or the marriage is legally dissolved at a court of competent jurisdiction, the marriage remains valid.

Also, ordinance marriage cannot be converted into customary marriage or Mohammedan marriage. Equally so, if a man who is already married under customary law marries another person under ordinance, the man is guilty of bigamy under Criminal Offence Act (Act 29).

Formal Validity of Civil Marriage

The second legal requirement for the validation of ordinance marriage is the formal validity referred to as *lex loci celebrations*. This is a law governing where the marriage is to be celebrated. It requires that, in addition to the essential validity, certain forms and ceremonies should be observed for the marriage to be valid.

Firstly, part three of CAP 127 formally makes provision for three different authorities to officiate or solemnise ordinance marriage:

1. Marriage by a Marriage Officer's Certificate.
2. One by a Registrar of Marriages Certificate.
3. And marriage by a Special License obtainable from the Registrar General.

Most marriages in Ghana, however, are contracted by marriage officiated by marriage officers. Perhaps, since all marriage officers are gazetted ministers of the gospel, coupled with majority of Ghanaians being Christians (see for instance the 2021 population census) many people prefer their marriages officiated by the marriage officers. The following formal procedures shall apply to marriages officiated by marriage officers.

The marriage officer must be a gazetted religious leader authorised by the state to perform the marriage. Any marriage officiated at church under the ordinance Act by an ungazetted minister, it is considered *void ab initio*; it is null and void. The procedure that needs to be followed to be gazetted as a marriage officer is spelt out in the Act.

The other formal requirement is that the venue for contracting Ordinance Marriage should be licensed or registered for that purpose in order to make the marriage valid. On this, Oladele highlighted;

If the venue is not licensed, any purported marriage under the ordinance at such venue is null and void. However, where parties went through ceremonies under customary law before performing the ordinance marriage, the customary marriage holds but the ordinance marriage is nullity because ... the venue was not licensed. The mere intent of the parties contracting marriage under ordinance is not enough; the formal requirement must be complied with. (Oladele, 2018: 158).

Publication of banns to marry is also required. It is demanded that the following particulars must be contained in the notice of publication of banns;

- 1) Names of the parties to the marriage.
- 2) Their conditions at the time of notice; whether bachelors, spinsters, widowers, widows, or divorcees.
- 3) The occupation of the parties.
- 4) The age.
- 5) Place of residence.

Section 48 of the Marriages Act spells out other details for the notice of banns. Section 54 of the Marriages Act reveals that, if a particular marriage is not solemnised within ninety days of the last day of publications of banns, such marriage and all its proceedings are considered null and void.

During the publication of the ban, caveat could be raised if there is any known legal justifiable cause to prevent the marriage. In case there is a caveat raised against the publication of the banns, no certificate is issued until the case is resolved. Oladele (2018) commented that, caveats are removed by a court of competent jurisdiction. He added that, the court upholds caveat on legal grounds and not merely on moral ground. For instance, he explained that, when one has a child with a party or having been impregnated by a man is no legal ground for objection to a marriage. He further stated the law cannot force a man to marry a lady on the ground of pregnancy. The court will only give order for maintenance of the child.

From Section 62 of the Marriages Act, the Ordinance Marriage can be carried out within the hours of 8 O'clock in the morning and six O'clock in the evening. At least two witnesses in addition to the officiating minister is part of the formal requirement. The witnesses do not necessarily have to be relatives of the parties of the marriage. Any marriage contracted outside the stipulated time is considered null and void even if it meets the other requirements.

It is important to state that, from the standpoint of the law, the exchange of the vow or the taken of the oath and the signage of the marriage certificate or the marriage register is what constitute the solemnisation of the marriage. These are to be performed within the stipulated time to validate the marriage. All other things like dancing, singing could be done outside the stipulated time without any opposing consequence on the legal or formal validity of the marriage.

Ordinance Marriage Contracted under Registrar of Marriages

Certificate

It has been stated that, ordinance marriage can be contracted under Registrar of Marriages Certificate. Section 42 of the Marriages Act requires that one of the parties intended to marry under this condition formally writes to the registrar stating their intention to marry within three (3) months. The formal requirement of such marriage differs slightly from the marriage officer's certificate. The only particulars required to be entered in the notice are; names of the parties, conditions (bachelor or spinster), occupation, age and place of residence. After 21 days, the registrar of marriages issues them a certificate of notice.

Section 68 of the Marriages Act stipulates that, the parties after the issuance of the certificate of notice, could contract the marriage before any registrar. The ceremony must be witnessed by at least two persons and should be conducted in the registrar's office between the hours of eight in the morning and four in the afternoon during any week day. Such marriages are not to be conducted on public holidays or Saturday and Sundays. This is in sharp contrast with the provision of marriage under Marriage Officers Certificate where the marriage could be officiated on any of the days and between 8am to 6pm.

Ordinance Marriage Contracted under Special License

The final aspect of Ordinance Marriage to be considered is Marriage by Special License. This special license is issued by the Registrar General of Marriages after a lawful proof is produced by the parties of absence of impediment. Section 55 (1) further elaborate that, the registrar may grant the

license authorising the celebration of the marriage between the parties named in the license by a registrar or by a recognised minister of a religious denomination or body. Again, the Act permits that, the marriage may be celebrated in a place other than a licensed place of worship or a registrar's office if the Registrar so authorises. Not everyone is permitted to marry under such circumstances; unless the parties provide a reason for their inability to go through the twenty-one (21) days' notice or publication.

Conclusion

It has been established in this chapter that, the processes of contracting marriages differ among nations. In Ghana, in particular, there are three types of marriages namely: the customary marriage, ordinance marriage and Islamic marriage (marriage of Mohammedans). All these have processes to follow depending on the type of marriage to be contracted. The chapter reveals that, customary marriage, primarily, follows the customs or traditions of a particular tribe or community. Islamic marriage on the other hand, adds to the customary marriage, the Islamic faith and practises in contracting the marriage. Finally, the Ordinance Marriage otherwise called the civil marriage has two main requirements: essential validity and formal validity. It was established that, although the ordinance marriage does not require payment of bride price, the practise that one performs all the customary marriage rite before proceeding to contract ordinance marriage has remained the norm in Ghana.

CHAPTER THREE

BIBLICAL BASES OF CUSTOMARY MARRIAGE

Introduction

Marriage is one of the major themes in the Bible. Both the Old Testament and the New Testament talk about it. Though no single book of the Bible is dedicated wholly to marriage, many of the books touch on aspects of marriage and family life. The general overview of marriage in the Old Testament, specifically, the book of Proverbs is given special attention in this chapter. This is because, it offers a comprehensive view of Hebrew's perspective on marriage beginning with the sage's view on the selection of a spouse to marry and the importance of making the right choice in choosing both the right woman and the right man (Swatson, 1997). Guidelines for finding a good wife or a good husband and what the sage identifies as an ideal wife or husband are all treated in the book. It further provides more extensive biblical admonitions on marriage. The issues raised in the book are similar to Ghanaian customary marriage practise. The chapter ends with the New Testament account of marriage as recorded in the Gospels. This also throws light more on Christian perspective of marriage in contemporary Ghanaian society.

Marriage in the Old Testament: General Overview

Christians believe that God instituted marriage and was the first institution He created. Vorster (2009) referred to the Genesis account as the creational order of marriage. He emphasised that it is the prescribed form of marriage endorsed by God and should be the standard. The creation accounts in Genesis 2:18-23 states;

And the LORD God said, "It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him." Out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to Adam to see what he would call them. And whatever Adam called each living creature that was its name. So Adam gave names to all cattle, to the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper comparable to him. And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place. Then the rib which the LORD God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man. And Adam said: "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man" NKJV.

Vorster made the following deductions from the passage:

1. Marriage was instituted before the fall of humanity.
2. God originated it because it was not good for the man to live alone.
3. The type of marriage instituted by God was monogamous – Adam and Eve.
4. The marriage was between a biological man named 'Adam' and a biological woman named 'Eve.'
5. The purpose of marriage include: providing a suitable helper, to deal with loneliness, to rule the earth and fruitfulness (procreation).

Vorster's position is contested by scholars such as Coontz (2005) who asserts that, the matter of whether or not the earliest societies had monogamous or polygamous marriage, practised sexual restraint or sexual freedom were much argued among social scientists. However, Vorster maintained that the Bible is clear on the matter; polygamy was introduced after the fall. Thus, just after Genesis chapter 3, Lamech took two wives; Genesis 4:19 "Then Lamech took for himself two wives: the name of one was

Adah, and the name of the second was Zillah NKJV.” Again, Vorster rightly pointed out that, polygamy is descriptive type of marriage; it explains one of the things that happened when humanity lost God’s glory as the result of the fall.

On that same note, Adam Clarke in his commentary on marriage, equally maintained that it is clear that, in the Old Testament times, polygamy is identified in the cases of Abraham, Jacob, the judges, David, Solomon, etc; it was predominant in Issachar as noted in the book of Chronicles;

The sons of Issachar were Tola, Puah, Jashub, and Shimron-four in all. The sons of Tola were Uzzi, Rephaiah, Jeriel, Jahmai, Jibsam, and Shemuel, heads of their father's house. The sons of Tola were mighty men of valor in their generations; their number in the days of David was twenty-two thousand six hundred. The son of Uzzi was Izrahiah, and the sons of Izrahiah were Michael, Obadiah, Joel, and Ishiah. All five of them were chief men. And with them, by their generations, according to their fathers' houses, were thirty-six thousand troops ready for war; for they had many wives and sons. (1 Chronicles 7:1-4 NKJV).

He added that it was also common among the middle class as in the case of first Samuel;

Now there was a certain man of Ramathaim Zophim, of the mountains of Ephraim, and his name was Elkanah the son of Jeroham, the son of Elihu, the son of Tohu, the son of Zuph, an Ephraimite. And he had two wives: the name of one was Hannah, and the name of the other Peninnah. Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children. (1Sam. 1:1, NKJV).

But it is treated, even in the Old Testament, as incompatible with the Divine ideal as indicated in Genesis; “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh” (Gen. 2:24, NKJV), and its origin is traced to a wilful parting from the perfect form

of monogamy. He added that kings are cautioned against it (see Deuteronomy 17:17; Genesis 29:31; 30:1-43). Noah, Isaac and Joseph all had one wife respectively. It could be deduced that, anytime that the Bible portrays of domestic happiness it is always associated with monogamy (2Kings 4:1-44; Psalm 128:1-6; Proverbs 31:1-31).

Meanwhile, critics of polygamy less comment on discourse on polygamy in second Samuel; “I gave you your master's house and your master's wives into your keeping, and gave you the house of Israel and Judah. And if that had been too little, I also would have given you much more!” (12:8, NKJV). In the narrowest interpretation of the above text, one could conveniently conclude that God endorses polygamy. However, in a broader context, it is not so. Troy (2020) beautifully interpreted the text that God talked to David more about the throne and its authority He had given him than endorsing polygamy. He further expatiated that, it was common, at the time of David, to either appropriate the wives of a former king into the royal harem or, to kill them together with their children, especially, when their children were much older. This is done to prevent other claim on the throne in case the children grow. Troy further asserted that Nathan communicated the Lord's message to David; how the Lord gave the wives of Saul to David. The words God communicated through Nathan in 2 Samul 12 suggested that God spoke to David concerning the throne and its authority than about wives.

From the forgone analysis, one can say that marriage in the Old Testament were both polygamous and monogamous just as Ghanaian customary marriage is. The issue of its justification for practise in modern Christianity or otherwise is not the focus of this study.

Another revealing aspect of marriage in the Old Testament is its consanguineous nature. Consanguinity is a consensual relationship between family members. The Patriarchs married their family relations; Abraham married his cousin, Sarah; “Then Abram and Nahor took wives: the name of Abram's wife was Sarai, and the name of Nahor's wife, Milcah, the daughter of Haran the father of Milcah and the father of Iscah” (Gen. 11:29); Isaac married Rebecca, his cousin; "But you shall go to my country and to my family, and take a wife for my son Isaac” (Gen. 24:4) and Jacob wives: Rachel and Leah were his relatives (Gen. 29:15-30). As already stated elsewhere in this work, consanguinity is ethnic dependent; its limit is determined by the culture of communities that practises it.

Additionally, in the Old Testament, arranged marriage was practised just as it is in most parts of Africa. Parents or relatives contracted marriage for their Children and this was not limited to only men but women and suitors as well. For instance, Hagar took a wife for the son, Ishmael; “He dwelt in the Wilderness of Paran; and his mother took a wife for him from the land of Egypt” (Gen. 21:21, NKJV). Abraham equally asked his servant to look for wife for his son (Isaac Gen. 24) and Laban arranged marriage for his daughters; Rachel and Leah (Gen. 29). Sampson asks his parents to get him a wife he had seen; (Judg. 14:2). In most cases cited above, the agreement or the approval of the groom was sought for in those regard. This reflects a case in Ghanaian customary marriage where arranged marriage is contracted with or without the consent of the parties involved.

The Perspective of Marriage in the Wisdom Literature: Proverbs

The value of Proverbs, generally, is that it provides wisdom to direct us in our daily living in all the realms of life (whether the physical or the spiritual or both). It gives inspiration to enable one to walk in wisdom. The book of proverbs provides such guidance; it gives advice on family, business, social or spiritual relationships, marriage, etc. (See https://www.tyndale.com/sites/unfoldingfaith_blog/2019/09/12/why-the-proverbs-are-so-important/ accessed on 9th December, 2019).

Again, Proverbs are culturally significant; they are viewed as one of the utmost ancient and treasured manifestations of human culture. Usually, they use laconic and sharp language to express commonly held ideas and beliefs about a group of people or person's geography, religion, institution, history, social views, attitudes, etc.

We are likely to come across many themes in the book of proverbs – notable among such are themes of wisdom regarding friendship, family, work, speech, alcohol, money, marriage etc. This section seeks to examine wisdom in the book of Proverbs concerning marriage. The lessons espoused are cross-cultural and is in direct linkage to Ghanaian customary marriage.

Selection of a Spouse for Marriage in the Book of Proverbs

First, the author of the book of Proverbs offers the Hebrew's view on the selection of a spouse, its importance and guidelines to select a wise spouse.

Generally, the book admonishes a person not to rush in taking a decision; "Ponder the path of your feet, and let all your ways be established" (Prov. 4:26, NKJV). Murphy (1998) maintains that there are four 'women' found throughout the book of Proverbs. The most projecting woman figure is

Woman Wisdom who is found in Proverbs 1:20-33; 3:3-20; 4:5-9; 7:4; 8:1-36; 9:1-6; 30:10-31; whereas her converse, Woman Folly, is only found in Proverbs 9:13-18. He added that there is also, someone's wife that is mentioned in 5:5-19 and lastly, the figure of the 'stranger' who is found in Proverbs 2:16-19; 5:1-14; 20; 6:24-32; 7:25-27.10. Murphy revealed that, the author recommends the woman wisdom. Getting the woman wisdom, he said, will definitely require a careful decision making so that one is not deceived by the woman folly.

Similarly, in Ghanaian customary marriage ceremony, both the bride and the groom are advised proverbially to show that wisdom is needed in marriage. Among the Akan, proverb *Awareε, yεware no εba nyansafoε* (literally, marriage is for the wise) serves as an advice to someone who has choose a marriage partner.

Hess (2008), a feminist theologian, claims that the woman wisdom in Proverbs (also known as lady wisdom) is a personified wisdom. The woman mentioned in the book is regarded from the literal perspective in order to make it relevant to the topic under discussion. The underlying factor here is that the writer reveals that much happiness in life depends upon making the right choice – thus getting the *chayil 'ishshah* (noble woman). “An excellent wife is the crown of her husband, but she who causes shame is like rottenness in his bones” (Prov. 12:4, NKJV). It is often said, a good choice greatly enhances the life of marriage whiles the wrong choice can destroy a person inside out. With regard to where to get a prudent wife, or the woman of wisdom to marry, the sage pointed that they are from the Lord; “houses and riches are an inheritance from fathers, but a prudent wife is from the LORD” (Prov. 19:14, NKJV).

Also, Proverbs adds that, “he who finds a wife finds a good thing and obtains favour from the LORD”, (Prov. 18:22, NKJV). In this case, marriage will be viewed by Christians from the biblical perspective since that is the belief of God’s written word.

Conversely, men are warned in selecting strange women as wives; a foreign seductive woman to be more precise. Priority is not to be placed on good looks; “Charm is deceitful and beauty is passing, but a woman who fears the LORD, she shall be praised” (Prov. 31:30, NKJV). There are various interpretations as to who this ‘stranger’ woman is. Crook (1954) for instance, proposes that the woman could be a foreigner who was a follower of the goddess Astarte (the Greek name of a goddess from the Eastern Mediterranean who is connected with sexuality), who had her sexual cultic type role described in Proverbs 7. Others are with the view that the ‘stranger’ woman could be an adulteress woman (see for instance Dell, 2006; and Hess, 2008).

Tentative view on this also suggests that she was someone who came from the outside, who threatened to disrupt the orderliness of the society (Whybray, 1965). All the views expressed apply here; in selection of a wife, there is the need not to build the marriage on physical attractions but wisdom – the woman who fears the Lord (Prov. 31:30). Again, one should not be deceived by the sexual prowess of the adulteress woman nor the charming of the ‘strange’ woman since they are temporarily. It could be deduced that Hebrew traditional marriage was more concern of the fear of the Lord rather than the mere marital contract. Adultery is frowned upon culturally among the Hebrews as indicated above. In the same way, Ghanaian customary marriage frowns on adultery, especially, on the part of the woman.

Men are warned in selecting the woman folly or the woman stranger as a wife. According to Murphy (1998), the chapter 9 of Proverbs links the Woman Stranger and the Woman Folly. He stated that chapter 9 shows a symbolic identification of Woman Stranger with Woman Folly, and this figure is opposed to Wisdom. He noted that 'stranger' is identified with 'smooth talk' (Prov. 2:16; 5:3; 6:24; 7:5, 21) and is also witnessed in Proverbs 9:17. The mention in Proverbs 9:17 of a 'bread eaten in secret is pleasant' alludes to a sexual type of seduction. (<http://www.biblicaltheology.com/Research/VentureyraS01.pdf>).

The picturesque descriptions of such a woman that men are to avoid choosing as marriage partners are found in Proverbs; "a foolish woman is clamorous; She is simple, and knows nothing" (Prov. 19:13, NKJV) and "a continual dripping on a very rainy day and a contentious woman are alike; whoever restrains her restrains the wind, and grasps oil with his right hand" (Prov. 27:15-16, NKJV). The sages concluded the matter that it is better to live in the desert than to marry or stay with this type of woman (Prov. 21:19). Customarily, no man would be permitted to marry a contentious wife.

In this wise, let us begin to explore the advice that the writer of the wisdom literature of Proverbs has concerning choosing a man as a spouse. Although the type of man to be selected for marriage is not stated explicitly in the book of Proverbs, there are descriptive indications of type of men that the writer considers as wise and those he considered as foolish. Several types of men are mentioned in the book: the wise man, the fool, the sluggard, the riffraff, the perverse, the prudent and so on.

The author, therefore, suggests some ways to learn about a man to know if he is wise or fool. Some of these are; how he treats animals (Prov. 12:10), how he listens to advise of others (Prov. 12:15), the type of company he keeps (Prov. 12:15), his temperament – whether he is quick tempered or a person of understanding (Prov. 14:29) or even how he makes money (Prov. 15:27). He further reveals that how the person talks (Prov. 17:27-28) and his compassion for the poor (Prov. 21:23) shows that he is a wise man (http://www.ccel.org/contrib/exec_outlines/pr/pr_02.html), and by extension, a woman could accept that man as a husband. The wisdom taught here is applicable cross-culturally. Japanese for instance have a saying that goes like, “When the character of a man is not clear to you, look at his friends” ([When the character of a man is not clear to you, look at his friends. - Japanese Proverb - Quotespedia.org](#) accessed 4/03/2022).

Typical to Ghanaian customary marriage, especially, among the Akans, a relationship is accepted for marriage only when the family of the bride has investigated the ‘would be groom’ to ascertain if there are no adverse character traits in the family like absence of pandemic, good moral character, etc. Just like the books of Proverbs, contracting marriage demands studious work of finding out the attitude of the person in the home first before marriage is permitted. Without due diligence there is the tendency of marrying a ‘useless’ person as the Akan proverb suggest; *kɔfiri kwan so na ɔware te-man-mu-hunu*. To wit, he who marries someone by the ‘roadside’, ends up marrying a useless person in town.

One of the cardinal proverbs that the Akans especially, the Ashanti, usually use to counsel spouses who are entering into marriage is *Ayɛnko bɔne*

nti na aboa akoto annya tire (The crab is headless because of bad company).

Both sexes are however warned against bad friendship just as in the case of the author of Proverbs.

The book does not only teach about the way to learn about the wise man, but further highlights the consequences of being united with the foolish man. Women are, therefore, cautioned to avoid a womaniser (or flirter) since he could destroy himself and hurt all those involved (Prov. 6:27-29). A quick-tempered man should equally be avoided because uniting with him makes one become like him and one ends up destroying herself as well (Prov. 22:24-25). Lastly, a drunkard must be avoided; he eventually ends up in poverty (Prov. 23:29-30).

The implication of this lesson to Ghanaian customary marriage is that marriage is not something that one has to rush into; premium should be placed on character rather than physique. The Akan has a proverb that is similitude with what the sage proposed; *woreko awadee a bisa*, meaning, inquire before you enter into marriage. This suggests that there is the need to be circumspect in choosing a person as a marriage partner which is in line with the sage's principle in the book of Proverbs. Again, Akans believe that marriage is not something that one has to play with and hence the saying goes; *awadee ennye nsafufuo na yeaka ahwe*. To wit, marriage is not like the palm wine that needs to be tasted before it is purchased. The belief that one enters into marriage ones and for all until death, is very prominent among the Akans' customary marriage.

The above discourse reveals the premium that the Hebrews place on carefulness in the selection of a spouse. The similarities in Ghanaian context

have equally been espoused. It is worthy to note that, the condition precedence in selection of a spouse as the sage has outlined so far are very much similar to those of the Ghanaian customary marriage.

Proverbs and Marital Faithfulness

The sage calls for faithfulness in marriage in Proverbs 5; thus, marriage relationship is to be exclusive and fulfilling:

Drink water from your own cistern, and running water from your own well. Should your fountains be dispersed abroad, streams of water in the streets? Let them be only your own, And not for strangers with you. Let your fountain be blessed, and rejoice with the wife of your youth. As a loving deer and a graceful doe, let her breasts satisfy you at all times; and always be enraptured with her love. For why should you, my son, be enraptured by an immoral woman, and be embraced in the arms of a seductress? (Prov. 5:15–20, NKJV).

From this text, it can be concluded that marriage in the Hebrew culture, according to Proverbs, is one man and one woman, for life, as is referred in the creation account (Gen. 2:23–24). A man should be satisfied with his own wife and not to be led astray by the deceiving pleasures of adultery. The sexual intimacy described in these verses is said to be ultimately relational one, and not to be shared with strangers. Proverbs further says, “Let them be only your own, and not for strangers with you,” (Prov. 5:17, NKJV). It is clear from the narrative of chapter 5:6-23, how the adulteress set her trap and how the young man (foolish of course) falls into it (verses 6–23). Dell (2006), intimated that she dressed to seduce, she meets him in the street and calls him home for ‘dinner’. Drinking water from one’s own cistern will help the young man to avoid this trap.

The shameless adulteress woman is noted for immodest, smooth-talking and immoral life. The foolish young man, lacking judgment and seduced by her promises and his own desires, he follows her ‘like a deer stepping into a noose;’ his own iniquities entrap him and caught in the cord of his sin (Prov. 5:22). The sage reveals that adultery leads to death, but walking in the way of wisdom leads to life. It could be deduced from this concept that it is better to be faithful with one’s partner than to walk the adulteress path and invite troubles.

Again, the Ghanaian proverb in Twi equally warns; *wobekum trɔmo na woadware sasaduro deɛ, gyae no na ɔmfa ne mmusuo nnante ne kwaɛ ase*. Literally explained as, it is better to quit an action that will bring you dangerous consequences than to venture it. By implication, walking the adulterous path is dangerous at the end no matter the seemingly joy in the process. Marriage couples are, therefore, required to be faithful to each other in order to avoid any adverse consequence afterwards.

It will be great misjudgement to associate marital unfaithfulness to type of marriage contracted, especially, attributing it to customary marriage. Proverbially, marital couples are advised with proverbs during the celebration of the marriage. A common proverb among the Akans that suggest the need for marital faithfulness is *wo dwonsɔ faako a na ɛtwa ahuro*. Its dynamic equivalent is *a running stone gathers no morse*. In effect, an adulterous person hardly becomes successful in life.

The Ideal Wife

The book of proverbs does not only give us a clue on whom to select as marriage partner but who the ideal wife and a good husband is. In some

cases, ideal wife is the one the sages describe as a noble woman or the ‘wife of noble character’ (Prov. 31:10–31). As it has been discussed earlier in this chapter, the noble wife is considered by the sage as the woman wisdom and she is difficult to find; her worth is far above the most precious stone ‘rubies’.

The virtues of the noble wife are discussed from general to specific – thus her general virtue in the home is revealed in the text below:

She seeks wool and flax, and willingly works with her hands. She is like the merchant ships, she brings her food from afar. She also rises while it is yet night, and provides food for her household, and a portion for her maidservants. She considers a field and buys it; from her profits she plants a vineyard. She girds herself with strength, and strengthens her arms. She perceives that her merchandise is good, and her lamp does not go out by night. She stretches out her hands to the distaff, and her hand holds the spindle. (Proverbs 31:13–19, KJV).

Her virtue is further expanded to the larger community as follows:

She extends her hand to the poor, yes, she reaches out her hands to the needy. She is not afraid of snow for her household, for all her household is clothed with scarlet. She makes tapestry for herself; Her clothing is fine linen and purple. Her husband is known in the gates, when he sits among the elders of the land. She makes linen garments and sells them, and supplies sashes for the merchants. Strength and honor are her clothing; She shall rejoice in time to come. She opens her mouth with wisdom, and on her tongue is the law of kindness (31: 20–26, KJV).

Finally, the sage returns to the home once again; “She watches over the ways of her household and does not eat the bread of idleness. Her children rise up and call her blessed; Her husband also, and he praises her: Many daughters have done well, but you excel them all.” (Prov. 31:27-29). In marriage, she brings good to her husband and has earned his complete trust; “The heart of

her husband safely trusts her; so, he will have no lack of gain” (Prov. 31:11, NKJV).

In the home, she is seen as an inconceivable manager; very hardworking, competent, well organised, particularly good planner, economist of time etc. It appears that the wife was in charge of the home providing everything. The qualities that are provided in this text are similar to that which are required in Ghanaian customary marriage where the woman is admonished to be the home keeper. It is believed that this good-looking depiction of a beautiful wife is considered and drawn in harmony with the customs of Eastern nations. It needs no arguments to prove that women, even of the highest ranks, among the Greeks, Romans, and Israelites, do various kinds of work to support their families.

Another unique feature that the writer revealed about a good wife or the virtuous woman is her impact in the community she lives in. This noble woman is praised for her charitable act, she makes her husband popular, her husband and children recognise her abilities and praise her key role in their family. At the end of the discourse, a good wife is seen as a woman with wisdom; “She opens her mouth with wisdom, and on her tongue is the law of kindness” (Prov. 31:26, NKJV). The expected role of average Hebrew wife in the home and the community is similitude to that of the average Ghanaian traditional wife. Among her core duties in the home is to be the manageress in the home who takes care of the children, performs house chores and responsible for training of the children.

It is equally believed as the author of the Proverbs has suggested that a good woman is not known only to her household but in the community she

lives in. Just as the noble woman is praised for her charity in the community, they would have known if otherwise. This is coordinated with customary requirement of investigating the background of a person even in the community before a marriage proposal is accepted.

It is important also to reflect again on who a good wife is as described in the book. The author in verses 27-29 takes us to the home again. This time not the core duties of the woman but her oversight responsibility in the entire household especially her children. She is generally, referred to as a moral manager. She ensured that all family members under her behave themselves well. She observes that that none of the children keeps bad company or contract rancorous habits. Although the moral qualities of the woman described above is applicable in all climes, it is practically, seemingly impossible to find a wife who possesses all these virtues in the exact measure as the one described.

The adverse attitudes that the writer abhors concerning a wife are firstly, a contentious wife and angry wife (Prov. 21:19) and a hateful woman (Prov. 30:21-23a). He advises, it is better to live in the desert than to stay with such a wife. Milton, on that note admits that one of the most striking contrasts between this poem and a more modern portrait of a woman is in her combination of industry and mercy; “She stretches out her hands to the distaff, and her hand holds the spindle. She extends her hand to the poor, yes, she reaches out her hands to the needy” (Prov. 19-20, NKJV). The description focuses on the worth of the wife and her devotion to her husband and then on the domestic work that she does. However, she is also involved in wider administrative concerns, such as the buying of a field and the planting of a

vineyard. Similarly, traditional women are expected to play all these roles just as is spelt out in the book of Proverbs. Searching for all these qualities in a woman definitely will make finding a good wife very tedious.

The Ideal Husband in Proverbs

Little is said about the ideal husband explicitly except the appropriation of the few advises given to men in general. The previous discussions have already thrown light on the type of men that women are to avoid as posited by the writer. One key element is how the ideal man values the wife; he places a prudent wife far above riches. He contrasts between a man's gift - riches, and the Lord's gift – prudent wife; “Houses and riches are an inheritance from fathers, but a prudent wife is from the LORD” (Prov. 19:14, NKJV). Similarly, it is not only the man's family that investigate the background of the woman. Before a customary marriage's proposal is accepted, the lady's family would have to ensure that the groom is not the brawling type, criminal, womaniser, etc.

The model husband portrayed here equally gives his wife her due although this due is not mentioned (Prov. 31:31). He praises his wife and will not take her for granted; “Many daughters have done well, but you excel them all” (Prov. 31:28b – 29, NKJV). He has a high trust for his wife and overlook her transgression; “The heart of her husband safely trusts her; So he will have no lack of gain” (Prov. 31:11, NKJV). The man is satisfied with his wife's love as well (Prov. 5:15-21).

Of course, one will agree, as Akans will say, *obiara nkyiri fa woasempa kɔ do* (no one will say go away with your good news), nothing will

be expected from a husband who has this ideal wife to marry than to praise her and love her. It will be one of the heart desires of modern-day young man.

Summary of Proverbs and Marriage

The discussion affirms the popular notion of Ghanaian customary marriage that there are more to a marriage than four bare legs in a bed and there is more to a marriage than spouses. It is equally written in Ecclesiastes 9:9, that “live joyfully with the wife whom you love all the days of your vain life which He has given you under the sun, all your days of vanity; for that is your portion in life, and in the labour which you perform under the sun” (NKJV). The book serves as a guide in developing wholesome marriage life.

It is striking to note that what the Hebrew view concerning choosing a wrong partner like the contentious, angry and a hatred woman is similar to what pertains in other cultures especially in our modern days. The Akan will say *ntakra bone deƐ fanyinam kwaterekwa* (a bird without feathers is better than one with bad feathers). It is better to be single than choosing a wrong partner.

Hard-work, moral integrity and a discerning wife is cherished by every society since women seem to be in charge of the home. The author admonishes men to look for virtue in women they want as wives rather than charm and beauty since *ahofe ntua ka* (beauty does not pay debt). The sage seems to promote monogamy and warns the man against adultery and idiomatically advised men to drink water from their cistern and equally beware of women with sweet words. The author affirms the popular saying that, good wine and a pretty woman are two sweet poisons to a man, hence the man is cautioned from foreign woman or the strange woman.

Although the wife figure here has, in scholarly study, been seen as an allegory of the figure of Wisdom, especially as portrayed in Proverbs 9:1–6, it has a great deal for arresting our conscience. She is a real worker, one who sells merchandise and works at night, helps the poor, sews and sells her products and, perhaps most important of all, in verse 30, she fears the Lord. The aim of this unit is listing the qualities in a woman that a man ought to look for when choosing a wife (Dell, 2006).

McCreesh (1985) noted that the ideal figure goes beyond what any real woman could aspire to and so might be personified Wisdom herself. Notwithstanding, there are close links with the portrayal of Wisdom in Proverbs. Whichever way one will agree, it is not far from reality that the picture portrays is not far-fetched from a real rich family which has attained wealth and stability over more decent and authentic hard work (Whybray, 1965). In effect, the wife is seen as the one that makes the marriage home survive. This posture is perfectly exemplified in Ghanaian customary marriage.

The Gospels and Marriage: Greco-Roman Era

In the gospels, the term marriage and wedding are used interchangeably. Williamson (1966) noted that the Greek term *gamos* is used to mean wedding or marriage and it implies marriage, nuptial or wedding. He elaborated further that historical consideration concerning wedding is examined along these lines; wedding is considered as a monogamous heritage from Hebrew-Greek-Roman origin. In the Hebrew community, marriage was arranged by the father, when the child was at legal age of marriage (Matthew 22). Williamson noted, according to the Talmudic law, twelve years was

accepted for the female and thirteen for the male. He reveals that betrothal among the Hebrews involved agreement between the families, mostly supported by monetary benefits, and the nuptial was performed a year later consisting of a banquet and a procession to the home of the groom. He maintained that it was essentially a family and civil affair.

The first ceremony was the wedding procession and was ostensibly an artifact of marriage by capture. The bridegroom's 'friends' went, usually by night, to fetch the bride and her attendants to the home of the groom. John's gospel affirms, "He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. Therefore, this joy of mine is fulfilled", (NKJV). The cheerfulness of it all is witnessed by the "voice of the bridegroom" and the cry, "Behold the bridegroom cometh!" (Rev 16:23). The procession to the celebration is done by night (the parable of Jesus in Matthew 25 explains the process). It is least suggested that wedding among the Hebrew was a religious act. The social element is highly held in esteem (Dodd, 1963).

Matthew's account reveals that although the betrothal is not the final stage of the marriage process, it is legally considered as marriage. This explains why Joseph wanted to divorce Mary after realising she was pregnant;

Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly. But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. (Matth. 1:18-20 NKJV).

In the Lukan narratives, he highlighted the nuptial ceremony. It was a ceremony accompanied with banquet and the procession to the groom's home as evident in the statement; "And you yourselves be like men who wait for their master, when he will return from the wedding, that when he comes and knocks they may open to him immediately" (Luke 12:36, NKJV). As Matthew highlighted the betrothal, Luke highlighted the nuptial ceremony.

Licht (1932) maintained that the Greek patriarchal outlook of marriage is similar to the Hebrew. However, he added that the Greeks' concept of marriage was more religious in nature. There was a public ratification of contracting marriage, however, Licht asserted that, family feasting does not appear to have been the custom throughout Greece. He further noted that, sacrifices were made to the divinities who were believed to be protectors of marriage; Hera and Zeus, were usual before the act of the marriage proper. As a rule, sacrifice was offered to only Aphrodite on the wedding day. In certain parts, they are required to go to the temple of Eros to bless the wedding.

The Greeks' concept of blessing of marriage in the temple had had a great influence on marriage cross-culturally. In Ghana today, many people prefer that their customary marriages are blessed either at the temple or blessed by a priest in the home.

In ancient Greece, the parents of the intended bride and groom arranged marriage. Financial arrangement was made between the families in the form of a dowry. Girls married between the ages of fourteen to eighteen, while typically, men married in their twenties or even thirties. It is on record that, Spartan men continued to live in the barracks, even after the wedding,

until they reached the age of thirty when they could move home with their wives.

Priests did not direct weddings. Rather, they performed a set of rituals, which started with baths, after which the couple lived together. The groom goes to the bride's house in a chariot or a cart afterward. A feast was usually held at the bride's father's house, after which the groom would take his bride back to his parents' house. They were greeted at the door by the groom's parents and led to the hearth. There they were showered with nuts and fruit. The couple then retired to their bedroom. (historylink101.com/2/greece3/marriage.htm accessed on 18th May, 2021).

The above necessitated why the Johannine account attempts to portray marriage as a religious act that Christ placed pre-eminence on. Jesus' presence at the wedding in Cana and performing His first miracle there suggest the importance that Jesus attaches to the wedding. He revealed that Jesus and His disciples were invited to the wedding just like others. "On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Now both Jesus and His disciples were invited to the wedding" (John 2:1-2, NKJV). This is not to suggest that religious role is not needed in contracting marriage in our days. It is with this view that Christian marriages in Ghana now require a religious role by a clergy to make the customary marriage complete.

John's gospel seems to also pick on the ceremonial aspect of the nuptial celebration; the invitation, the merry making and the water pot for the purification. Although Jesus' presence was not to perform a priestly role, His presence was seen as timely to rescue the situation (Lenski, 1943), changing water into wine. "This beginning of signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee and

manifested His glory; and His disciples believed in Him” (John 2:11, NKJV). Similarly, the merry making is similitude to what pertains in the Ghanaian customary marriage.

At a point in time, Jesus compared himself to a bridegroom. He told the disciples that the children of the bride chamber cannot mourn while the bridegroom is there (Matthew 9:15; Mark 2, Luke 5:34). He also compared the kingdom of God to a marriage; "The kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who arranged a marriage for his son," (Matthew 22:2, NKJV).

With the emergence of Roman civilisation, the concept of marriage was also affected. Marriage ceremony differed according to social class; the regular marriage for patricians and the irregular marriage reserved for the lower class (Williamson, 1965). Jesus' allusion in Luke suggests the class of people who are invited to a wedding and paint a picture similar to the class of marriage (Luke 14:8).

The Romans' form of marriage / wedding had had a greater influence on Ghanaian Customary marriages. Divorce was not permitted; therefore, they took great care in selecting a partner for marriage. Parental consent was highly needed in choosing a partner. In ancient Rome, the marriage of two persons was also a union between two families. Marriage also had to be outside the immediate family; one was not permitted to marry any close relative, not even third or fourth cousins.

The major contrast with Roman marriage and Ghanaian customary marriage in terms of dowry payment is that the woman rather brought a dowry into her husband's family among the Romans. The dowry was an important provision for the woman because she would not inherit her husband's property.

The dowry would have to provide for the woman in case of either death or divorce, but it would be managed by her *kurios*, thus, her Lord or master.

Many of the customs that the Romans used for engagement and marriage ceremonies have been carried down to today. The wearing of the engagement ring on the third finger on the left, wearing of a special dress, putting on a veil and the element of flowers are all heritages of Romans wedding. It is noted that, the contracting of marriage was purely ritualistic and religious unlike the ancient Hebrews. They usually got the blessing of a priest of one of the major temples. (rome.mrdonn.org/weddings.html).

In sum, the synoptic gospels attempt to portray marriage as a social activity with some parabolic allusions to the kingdom of God. The accounts suggest that marriage is earthly practised and there will be no marriage after the resurrection; "For when they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven" (Mark 12:25, NKJV). Hospitality at the marriage was seen as sacred, hence Jesus' performing the miracle to save the situation as demonstrated in John 2. Social recognition existed in the Roman's system of marriage and is alluded to in Luke 12:36 "and you yourselves be like men who wait for their master, when he will return from the wedding, that when he comes and knocks they may open to him immediately" (NKJV). John's presentation of how Jesus values marriage by performing His first miracle there takes the marriage to a different pedestal and hence the Christianisation of the marriage process (read for instance the CoP Minister's manual on Blessing of Marriage).

Conclusion

It has been established in this chapter that though no single book of the Bible is devoted entirely to marriage, most of the books touch on aspects of it. Chiefly among the Old Testament books is the book of Proverbs which reflects Hebrews ideologies about marriage. It espouses on selection of a spouse, who an ideal woman or man is, and what to look for in selection of a spouse. In all, one could see similitude in Biblical customary marriage to that of African Customary marriage in general and Ghanaian customary marriage to be specific. Just as parental consent and or arranged marriage was common among the Hebrews, so it is among Ghanaians.

Another similarity observed is that in the Old Testament, marriage was a mixture of polygamy and monogamy just as in Ghanaian context. However, it can be concluded that the latter is projected as the approved way of happy marriage. Moreso, it has been mentioned that those who oppose polygamy hold on to the view that it was introduced after the fall as Genesis account reveals and cannot be accepted as ideal form of marriage. Among all, Old Testament marriage was purely family affair.

In the New Testament however, marriage was more of social activity with religious outlook among the Greeks. Christianity which evolved from the Judaic tradition as seen in the New Testament has some elements of the Hebrew – Greek elements of marriage. Nevertheless, it is worthy to reiterate that the Matthean community, just as the book of Proverbs, endorses monogamy. In this case, biblical marriage should not be subjected to the legal or social requirement only but biblical requirement. If a nation embraces a particular religion, then an important pillar of the religion like marriage should

be incorporated in the laws of the nation. Consequently, if a Christian marries, whether customary or civil, it could be treated as monogamy if the faith of that religious body deems it so.

Vorster (2009) beautifully summarised the concept of marriage in these revealing statements;

While the Greco-Roman culture defines the family within the framework of the state, the New Testament defines the family within the framework of the covenant and kingdom of God. In the Greco-Roman concept, the family exists for the benefit of the state and derived its moral principle from its prerequisite. In the New Testament, the family is seen as part of the kingdom of God and derives its moral basis from God's command. (Vorster, 2009: 472).

For this reason, it will be expedient to state and maintain that Biblical marriage took into account the custom of the people and applied godly principles to it.



CHAPTER FOUR

THE CHURCH OF PENTECOST AND MARRIAGE

Introduction

This chapter focuses largely on an aspect of the eleventh tenet of the Church which talks about Marriage. The chapter also discusses the procedure of contracting marriage in the church and gives a conclusion of the summary of issues discussed in the chapter.

Marriage and Family Life; Additional Tenet of CoP

During the 43rd General Council Meeting held in 2018 at Gomoa Fetteh in the Central Region of Ghana, CoP amended her constitution and added to her tenet, Marriage and Family Life, making it the eleventh tenet of the Church. Prior to that, there were few, but disjointed writings pertaining to marriage. For instance, the issues of marriage and marriage processes was handled by the various teachings and seminars held by the leadership of the Church. Additionally, scanty information was provided in the Ministerial Handbook of the Church. Even so, it has only sanctions that should be meted out to anyone who engages in immoral relationship. In addition to existing work on the topic, the 'Pre-marriage Counselling Book of the Church' has elaborated on few issues. The Church's beliefs and position on issues pertaining to marriage is discussed extensively and systematically in its updated Tenets (see The Tenets of CoP, pages 395- 451). The tenet on Marriage and Family Life asserts:

We believe in the institution of marriage as union established and ordained by God for the lifelong, intimate relationship between a man as husband and a woman as wife as biologically defined at birth. We believe that God instituted marriage primarily for mutual help, fellowship and comfort that one ought to have for the other

and for the honourable procreation of children, and their training in love, obedience to the Lord, and responsible citizenship (Gen. 2:18, 21-25; Matt. 19:4-6; 1Cor. 7:1-2). (The Church of Pentecost General Headquarters, minutes of the 43rd Session of the General Council Meetings, Pentecost Convention Centre, Gomoa Fetteh, 2nd – 5th May, 2018).

From the above exposition, the Church maintains that God ordained marriage. This implies that what the Church assumes as divine principle of marriage is what is accepted. Moreover, the purposes of marriage are revealed in the stated tenet, which are mutual help, fellowship and comfort. Procreation and training of children in godly manner is discovered in the definition too. More importantly, the definition exposed that spouses must be biological male and biological female as defined at birth. It stands to reason that CoP would not recognise same sex or transgender relationship as marriage since they were not assigned male or female at birth at birth. The Church recognises marriage as an institution created by God, where a man leaves the father and mother and cleaves to a woman as a wife (Matthew 19:4-6).

Accordingly, CoP believes that ‘marriage was first ordained for the mutual help, fellowship and comfort that one ought to have for the other in prosperity and in adversity, for the honourable procreation of children and for their training in love and obedience to the Lord.’ (The Church of Pentecost Minister’s manual, 2014: 35). The above definition points to the fact that the Church recognises that marriage originated from God with its aforementioned purpose. In this regard, one would expect that the procedure or method of contracting marriage in CoP must have the Bible as its guide.

The Church espoused monogamous marriage as a principle of biblical creational order inferred from the Bible:

Then the rib which the LORD God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man. And Adam said: "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man." Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. (Genesis 2:22-24, NKJV).

Many Christian denominations interpret this passage to mean that God only approves of monogamy, although it is contentious. There are equally biblical passages that are cited to show otherwise. Although the CoP admits that polygamy was practised by some men in the Bible like Jacob (Genesis 29:12-30), Elkanah (1Samuel 1:1-18), David and Solomon (2Samuel 3:2-5, 1 Chronicle 3:1-3, etc.), it is not recognised as something endorsed by God. To that effect, CoP maintains;

The evil side of polygamy were evident as there were strong rivalries between the wives of Jacob as well as Elkanah. ... The struggle during the life of David for the kingship as demonstrated in the self-enthronement of Absalom as king, and the struggle between Adonijah and Solomon for kinship when David was old, all show the dark side of polygamy. (Tenets of the Church of Pentecost: 2019: 400).

While this assertion contains some element of truth, it is not tenable considering the fact that there are evil things that happen in monogamous marriages, sometimes even worse than polygamous marriages. One may also argue that what if polygamous couples can live in peace without any rivalry? Or, if there are no evil perpetuated in monogamous marriage? On that same note, the Church woefully added that, "God might have permitted it at the time because of human sinfulness" (*ibid*). Humans are still sinful than ever before, so one may ask, if God accepted polygamy then, what prevents Him from

accepting it now? The most seemingly convincing argument, which is affirmed by the church is that “it was not the intent of God for men to marry more than one wife” (*Ibid*:400). This is most convincing yet debatable in that no man/woman could claim absolute knowability of the intent of God and the issue of who determines the intent of God remains an unanswered question.

Köstenberger (2004) response to the rejection of polygamous marriage is apt and straight forward with his historical account of polygamy. He argued that its practise in the Old Testament depicts the descriptive nature of the fall of man. He thinks that monogamy is the prescriptive type of marriage since it follows the creational order. Mathew’s Gospel establishes this position when Jesus Christ affirmed the creational order;

And He answered and said to them, "Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning 'made them male and female,' "and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? (Matthew 19:4-5, NKJV).

The Church’s affront to polygamous marriage as evident in article 24.3 of her constitution stipulates that, “converts who are polygamists shall be baptized but shall not be received into full membership of the Church until they renounce polygamy” is derived or based on the Matthew 19:4–5 quoted above. Consequently, the Church does not tolerate any move that will pre-empt polygamous marriage. In addition, the constitution (Article 25.2), further provides disciplinary sanctions on any member or officer who commits any of the following offences;

1. A man marrying more than one wife.
2. A woman getting married to a married man.
3. The practise of immorality.

An officer of CoP may be removed from office depending on the gravity of the offence. For instance, in 2020, two ministers of CoP were dismissed from full time ministry for immoral conduct (chairman's circular to all CoP Assemblies in April 2020 and 2020 White Paper of CoP respectively). On regular basis, officers and members who engage in immoral (sexual) conducts are disciplined according to the precepts of CoP. Polygamy is considered as one of the sexual perversions by the Church.

**The Church's Response to Contemporary Marriage Relationship:
Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender (LGBT).**

Homosexuality (Lesbianism, gay) and bisexual community is a type of modern trend of sexual orientation. Boss (1999) simply defines the term Homosexuality as a "person whose sexual attraction is exclusively, or almost exclusively, towards members of his or her own gender. A male homosexual is a gay while a female homosexual is a lesbian" (Boss, 199: 487). He further defined a transgender person as "a person whose sexual attraction is attracted to both men and women" (*ibid* 487). It must be noted that the definition given to transgender seem to rather be a bisexual instead. A number of countries around the world are debating whether or not to accept same-sex marriages. Meanwhile, Pew Research Centre published in her webpage thirty countries that have legalised same-sex marriage (see www.pewforum.org/fact-sheet/gay-marriage-around-the-world/ accessed 5th Sept. 2020).

Although same-gender marriage is not legally accepted in Ghana, it is practised in other parts of the world that CoP, as a global Pentecostal denomination, have branches. In response to same-gender marriage, the

Church has clearly stated her opposition in that regard. For instance, CoP maintains that:

Based upon the Church of Pentecost's understanding of marriage as between a man and a woman as discussed above (see also Gen. 1:27-28, 2:18, 2:23-24; Matt 19:4-6), it does not accept the same sex marriage as advocated by the LGBT community. ...

There are also clear biblical passages which consider homosexuality and other related sins as dishonourable passions which are not pleasing to God (e.g. Rom. 1:26-27; 1 Tim. 1:9-10; 1 Cor. 6:9-10; Lev. 18:22; Lev. 18:22), which are detestable to God. (Tenets of the Church of Pentecost: 2019: 403).

From the above context, it is obvious that any union that deviates from what the Church assumes to be the first biblical order of marriage is not accepted by them. Again, they consider other unions aside monogamy as not pleasing to God and is deemed sinful.

CoP further sees LGBT as a sin and an affront to God. He maintains as part of its culture that "Homosexuality, lesbianism and other perverse sexual practices are not permitted in the Church." (Ministers' Handbook of CoP, 2014: 16, Article 3.7.14). This position is in consonance with Saint Augustine's assertion that, homosexuality is a sin that should in all circumstances and situations are hated and penalised (Boss, 1999). Boss further added that, contemporary Judeo-Christian natural law ethicists condemn homosexuality as a violation of natural law. Also, God created male and female as complementary and harmonised natures, which, when united in marriage, constitute a unit that is more well-adjusted and greater than the sum of its part.

Although CoP maintains that any attempt to accept and legalise homosexuality would be an affront to God's command, the issue of interest is

whether they are well positioned to resist future legalisation of homosexual marriage considering the mode of contracting marriage. Islam for instance is clear in its condemnation of homosexuality. They further have Islamic marriage that is recognised by the laws of Ghana (see for instance, Mohammedan marriage discussed in chapter two of this work). Meanwhile, the seemingly Christian marriage law is nothing but a civil marriage. Laws and conditions that support the marriage has nothing that favours Christianity except for the monogamous aspect and the Christian clergy that are permitted as marriage officers. The danger for the Christian church is that, if the state law accepts same-sex marriage, Christians will find themselves wanting since it is the state that mandates the clergy to officiate the marriage ceremony.

Kodua (2019), asserts that homosexual debates have contributed to the fall of Christianity in the West. He added;

The prevailing debate on whether churches should accept homosexuals into full membership is dividing many Western churches to the extent that it is easy to find a typical traditional denomination being divided into two or three because of their positions on homosexual right.” Quoting Zimmermann, Kodua points out that “in the context of the state-church system, pastors in the Swiss Reformed Church may be legally obliged to conduct homosexual marriages. However, the free churches and Pentecostals do not have that obligation.” (Kodua, 2019: 106).

It is important that the process of contracting marriage in the Church should be in unison to the belief and practises of the denomination. From the above assertion, it can be deduced that the Church’s faith and belief was in sharp contrast to what the state upholds. This is a typical case in the Ghanaian context.

During officiating of marriage, the CoP minister quotes: “I, by the powers vested in me by the state and the church as a marriage officer, now pronounce them husband and wife” (Ministers’ Manual, 2016: 38-39). It is necessary for the churches in Ghana to re-think the modalities of marriage granted by the state as Christian marriage. For instance, if the state permits churches to have services in unregistered church buildings, why should marriages not be contracted in those buildings? In future, Christian churches in Ghana may be victim of state policies on marriage that might derail the agenda of Christianity.

CoP’s Position on Arranged and Guided Marriage

“Arranged marriage is the practice where the parent of the bride or groom finds a ‘suitable’ partner for their daughter or son.” (The Tenets of the Church of Pentecost, 2019: 413). Sometimes, professional matchmaker is consulted in this exercise. CoP in her tenets admits that, sometimes family and societal pressures may coerce the groom to accept the suitor, making an arranged marriage an uncomfortable one. The church further admits that some cultures and communities do not allow couples to have a say in arranged marriages. The church rather encourages “situations where the parents or stakeholders provide guidance and dialogue with the couple in the arrangement of marriage.” (The Tenets of the Church of Pentecost, 2019: 413-414). The same page further elaborates the position as follows:

Although the church encourages young people to be given a free hand to choose whoever they want to marry, it does not oppose arranged or guided marriage as long as, the will of the couple is respected, all legal and cultural requirement are met and it is in line with the scripture. However, the church may not be too comfortable with

arranged marriages by unknown or faceless people through the internet or the social media or other means. (ibid: 414).

The above position reveals three fundamental elements with regards to arranged marriage; respecting the will of the couple, legal and cultural requirement and scriptural support. Interestingly, CoP did not highlight what it means to respect the will of the couple in arranged marriages. Again, arranged marriages emanate mostly from a culture of a particular community and it has its requirements which usually are legally accepted. The Church does not say categorically if the three conditions stated above must be met concurrently before the arranged marriage type will be endorsed. Another area of failure is, there is no biblical guideline or admonition of what should be accepted with regard to arranged marriage.

It could be deduced from the aforementioned statements that, CoP does not support arranged marriage. To advocate for dialogue and guide defuse the principle of arranged marriage but apolitically correct way of presenting her displeasure toward the act. When the servant of Abraham was tasked to arrange for marriage for Isaac, there was no dialogue to that effect (Genesis 24). The position should be stated clearly and emphatically.

Vorster (2009) sharply disagrees with arranged marriage in his article, “*Christian Ethical Perspective in Marriage and Family in Modern Western Culture*”. His position is not applicable in the Ghanaian context since it is more situated in the western culture. He insisted that it is difficult to find the practise of arranged marriages for whatever cause on the biblical message. He did again admit that, arranged marriages occurred in biblical history but was not as prescriptive material for marriage. Vorster’s line of argument is inherently contradictory; while insisting it is difficult to find, he provided a

reason for its practise. For instance, Abraham's servant contracted marriage for his son, Isaac (Genesis 24) and Hamor arranged for marriage for his son Shekem (Genesis 34). Moreover, Hagar arranged marriage for Ishmael (Genesis 21), Laban arranged for his daughters (Gen 29) and Sampson requested the parents to contract him a wife (Judges 14). From all these biblical references, the cases differ. There was no consent between Abraham and the son before Rebecca was brought to him. In the case of Hamor, the son, Shekem requested for the woman and the father arranged for him. Again, Laban orchestrated for Jacob to marry Leah at the blind side of Jacob.

On that note, he maintained that it is important to keep in mind that an ethical evaluation of arranged marriages requires hermeneutical distinction of descriptive and perspective material. Since the focus of this work is not to investigate the ethical dimension of marriage, it is expedient to state that issues regarding morality is highly contestable. A future research could be made on the ethical perspective of CoP marriage.

CoP and Interfaith Marriage

Cigdem (2015) opines that, interfaith marriage means, marriage between partners professing different religions. The CoP believes that religion is a way of life and permeates almost everything a person does. Consequently, she discourages its members from marrying people from a different religious faith. The Church, however, interprets 2 Corinthians 6:14, "Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers" (NKJV) to also mean biblical injunction on interfaith marriage. Although this is one side interpretation of the text, Adam Clerke further added that it is a military term which implies to keep in ones' rank. Simply put, do not leave the Christian community to join in that of the

heathens (See Adam Clarke's Commentary on 2Corinthians 6:14, PowerBible CD online version 5).

Beyond that, members of CoP are further advised to be wary about marrying alleged Christians whose churches' doctrines and practices are in conflict with the beliefs and practices of CoP. (The Tenets of the Church of Pentecost, 2019: 414). Meanwhile, there is no strict injunction of sanctions on people who marry outside the Christian faith. Even with those in the Christian denominations, there are diversities in the faith; there are those who believe in polygamy and those who do not. There should be a clear definition of the limitations of interfaith marriage that the CoP considers acceptable.

With regard to those already married, the Church upholds those members to remain in the marriage if the unbelieving spouse is willing to stay with them. This position is anchored in the Pauline epistle in 1 Corinthians as follows:

But to the rest I, not the Lord, say: If any brother has a wife who does not believe, and she is willing to live with him, let him not divorce her. And a woman who has a husband who does not believe, if he is willing to live with her, let her not divorce him. For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; otherwise your children would be unclean, but now they are holy. But if the unbeliever departs, let him depart; a brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases. But God has called us to peace. (1 Corinthians 7:12-15, NKJV).

Although the interpretation of this text has been contested by some scholars like Perkins (2003), CoP accepts it as justification for those already involved in inter-faith marriages (The Tenet of the Church of Pentecost, 2019: 414-415). Paul admitted that he did not receive the instruction directly from

God. A critical interpretation of the text above is necessary, else a particular denomination could make a mistake in its application.

The Church and Other Marital Relationships; Child Marriage, Forced Marriage and Co-habitation

Child marriage is the “situation where an individual is betrothed into marriage at an early age before reaching the age specified as a legal marriageable age” (The Tenet of the Church of Pentecost, 2019: 414). The accepted legal age of maturity differs from country to country. In Ghana for instance, the age of maturity is 18 (see The Marriages Act: 59). The Church upholds that, “since marriage is a life time commitment, the persons involved must reach the age where they are able to decide for themselves” (*ibid*:415). What is not clear in CoP’s position is at what age can a person decide for themselves? Should a child below the legal and accepted age who can decide for him/herself be permitted by CoP to marry? The Church needs to clarify her position on that.

The other form of unhealthy marital relationship the church frowns upon is co-habitation. It is a state where a ‘couple’ decides to live together as spouses without performing the legal requirements. According to a research work, “the share of adults who have lived with a romantic partner is now higher than the share who have ever been married.” (Pew Research Centre; and Demographic Trends published November 6, 2019: 1). The survey further revealed that “most Americans find cohabitation acceptable, even for couples who don’t plan to get married.” Nevertheless, “it finds that married adults are more satisfied with their relationship and more trusting of their partners than those who are cohabiting” (*ibid*: 1).

In the Church's Tenet, members who cohabit are not admitted as full members of the Church; they are not permitted to partake in the Holy Communion. If a member decides to cohabit, they are suspended from full fellowship. In effect, co-habitation is not recognised as marriages in CoP. Children born in such relationship are considered as illegitimate. Per the practise of the Church, "children born out of wedlock are not officially christened at Church but are dedicated later" (Minister's Handbook, 2014: 103). The reason for this is not justified in their writings. It can easily be deduced that it is a means of showing disapproval to the relationship yet accepting the child as not responsible for the 'sins' of the parents.

Marital Processes in CoP

The Church of Pentecost approves of two marriage Laws of the State – Customary and Ordinance. However, the Church does not recognise either as Christian marriage except when either of them is blessed at the Church or a certified place by a gazetted minister of the Church. (See the church of Pentecost pre – marriage counselling handbook, 2014). This position pre-supposes that any Customary Marriage or Ordinance Marriage that is not blessed by a gazetted minister of the Church, that marriage is not recognised as Christian marriage. I find this to be problematic and inconsequential to the practises of the church. The question of how to treat those who contract marriages outside the denomination remains unanswered. There is no documented Church policy to guide or direct marriages blessed in other churches. For instance, one wonders whether such marriages need to be blessed again in the CoP churches before they are officially accepted as Christian marriage as defined by the Church or not. It has always been the

practise that those who contract such marriages are fully embraced by the Church.

Unlike the Roman Catholic Church where all marriages contracted in other Christian churches have to be blessed again in the Catholic Church for it to be accepted as Christian marriage, CoP position is not clear in this regard. For illustration, it has been the practise of CoP that, marriages are officiated and blessed at the place the lady fellowships. In this case, when the lady is in different denomination like Roman Catholic or Presbyterian Church or any other denomination and a male member of CoP intends to marry her, the marriage is fully officiated and blessed at those denominations. The marriage blessed at that place is not blessed again in CoP. What is more confusing is that some of the members that join CoP need to be baptised by immersion before they are accepted into full fellowship. Meanwhile, their marriages blessed are unofficially accepted.

Largely, the marital processes followed in CoP are those accepted by the countries in which the Church is established. It is stated among the tenets of the Church that all her members follow the legal requirements of marriage in their respective countries. This is the case where the legal requirement of some of the accepted marriages in some of the nations, for instance, Ghana, is not fully accepted. Legally, Islamic marriage is accepted in Ghana but not recognised by CoP. However, it is not clear whether if a Muslim couple accepts Christ and comes to the CoP they will be considered as married. The researcher is with the view that, there should be a clear stated position on that.

The above point seems to side with what Offei (1998) stated that a marriage is valid if it is in conformity with all legal requirements of a

particular country. I see the CoP position as dangerous because there are instances in which what is considered as legal may not be accepted as biblical or may be deemed unchristian. For example, the Church admits that “there are three types of valid marriages; customary marriage, marriage under the Ordinance Marriage, 1957 (CAP 127) and Islamic marriage under the Marriage of Mohammedans Ordinance, 1957 (CAP 129)”, only the first two are recognised (The Tenet of The Church of Pentecost, 2019: 417). Even there are issues with the two accepted ones which will be discussed subsequently in this chapter.

The Process of Contracting Marriage in the Church

The Church of Pentecost has outlined various steps to take for prospective couples to get their marriages solemnised. These steps are enumerated in the 2019 revised Tenet of the Church, (pages 416-417) and the Church’s Pre-Marriage Counselling Handbook (pages 14-16). The first step is for the prospective couples to talk to both parents to seek their consent. This condition basically satisfies the customary marriage law in Ghana more than the ordinance marriage. With customary marriage, parental consent is paramount. This is not so with ordinance or civil marriage; what is required is a witness to the marriage which might not necessarily be parents or their representatives.

The second step is for the prospective couple to inform the Presiding Elder (A leader in charge of a local congregation in CoP) for him to also inform the district minister (an ordained clergy of the church). This could be done in verbal or written. It is considered that the leadership of the CoP plays a parental role in addition to the role of the biological parents of the

prospective couples. This condition is neither supported by customary law nor the civil marriage law of Ghana. However, it is in line with customary requirements of African traditional life where the Church is considered as a second family of the would-be couple. It is also relevant in more especially, modern society where religion permeates through all facets of life.

The third step is that the district pastor refers the matter to the local marriage committee to investigate the background of the prospective couples. Upon completion of the investigation, they report back to the pastor. He may decide if the District Marriage Committee will do further investigation. The marriage committee both at Local and District level are responsible to investigate the following:

- 1) Ensure that, parental consent has been fully sought and that both parents have agreed.
- 2) To ensure that, there are no previous or pending customary marriage/s.
- 3) To ascertain whether the couple or one of them is meaningfully employed, that is whether they can financially sustain their home.

From the above functions assigned to the marriage committee, one could conclude that, the marriage committee plays the role of traditional African parents. The disadvantage is that their role is not in consonance with modern trend of human right privacy. The advantage of their role, notwithstanding, cannot be over-emphasised. It ensures that parental consent, an African traditional value, would be sought. Secondly, the committee's work helps the prospective couple to reflect on their decisions since they will know they are not an island to themselves. Moreover, they serve as a bridge to connect the partners to their families. The marriage committee help to settle any

misunderstanding that might exist between the couples and their family before they proceed to the other process of the marriage.

Furthermore, it is required that, prospective couple undergo counselling for some period, usually not more than six months. It is either handled by the district minister or a professional counsellor as the case may deem applicable. The duration of the counselling is subject to the location of the couple and the schedules of the parties involved. Per practise, the counselling takes place at where the lady fellowships except in cases where there is no adequate pre-marital counselling facility there.

There are four outlined requirements that must be fulfilled before a date is fixed for the celebration of the marriage (see The Pre-Marriage Counselling Handbook, 2014: 16).

1. The prospective couple has completed the pre-marital counselling questionnaire.
2. The prospective couple should have undergone a specified period of pre-marital counselling.
3. The prospective couple should have demonstrated commitment all sessions of pre-marriage counselling lessons and have completed all assignments .
4. The marriage has gone through due process of ordinance marriage regularisation.

The outlined conditions seem to be in conflict with already stated position that the blessing of ordinance marriage and traditional marriage qualifies to be called a Christian Marriage. The fourth condition pre-supposes that, only regularised ordinance marriage is blessed by the CoP. This means that the

Church accepts some marriages of her members but do not recognise them as Christian marriage except they meet ordinance conditions and are blessed by her minister. A question that begs to answer by the Church is should a person be accepted as a Christian but allowed to engage in an 'unchristian act' like marrying in an unchristian way?

The Ministerial Handbook of the Church of Pentecost (2018) equally suggest that she does not pay attention to customary marriage as ordinance:

Existing Customary marriages are regularized into ordinance at the Law court / Metropolitan / Municipal / District Councils, also by a Marriage Officer (The gazette and trained Minister of the church) and blessed later at the Mission House or at Church Hall (whichever is registered for marriages). (Ministerial Handbook of The Church of Pentecost, 2018: 133, section 27.3).

In this wise, what the CoP refers to as blessing of customary marriage is rather an ordinance. Regularisation of customary marriage does not necessarily imply converting it to ordinance marriage. Rather, it involves the registration of the marriage which has different procedure as discussed in chapter two of this work. This researcher suggests that the Church should state that ordinance marriages only are blessed or a successful converted Customary Marriage into Ordinance Marriage are blessed.

Again, what constitutes blessing of marriage is confused with officiating of ordinance marriage. Officiating or celebrating ordinance marriage is accepted only when it fulfils the formal legal requirement (see chapter two of this work for details). Blessing of the marriage, however, is the religious pronouncement of blessings by a particular denomination. Such pronouncement does not have any legal binding on the couple outside the religious denominational rules. From the Marriages Act (127), the formal

requirement of ordinance marriage does not include blessing of the marriage, rather celebration of the marriage. For instance, a Christian can contract a civil or ordinance marriage at Court, Metropolitan or District Assembly. Such marriage would not be officiated by a marriage officer, rather, a registrar of marriages or Registrar General of marriages. Oladele (2018) settled the matter;

“In the eyes of the law, what constitute the marriage is the exchange of the vow or oath of marriage and the signing of the marriage register or certificate. It is not the preaching, dancing, music or reception that constitutes the marriage. Hence, the oath and the signing of the marriage certificate should be done between 8am and 6pm. After that, if the parties want to continue the party or celebration till 10pm or day break, they are at liberty to do so.” (Oladele, 2018: 164).

In the view of the researcher, the two should be separated to enable any member who wishes to bless their marriage to enjoy equal right whether ordinance or customary. The Church should therefore dichotomise the officiating of marriage as legal requirement from blessing of a marriage which is religious requirement..

In the Minister’s Manual of The Church of Pentecost, it stipulates how services on marriage should be organised. There are two ways identified as follows:

- a) Blessing under the ordinance.
- b) Blessing of existing marriages.

The preamble to the two forms of blessing raises some confusion.

The first preamble states: “Brothers and Sisters, we are gathered in the presence of God and this congregation to witness the union of this man and this woman standing before you in holy matrimony.” (Ministers’ Manual of The Church of Pentecost, 2014: 34 – 44).

The preamble to the blessing of Existing Marriages states: “We are gathered here today in the presence of the Almighty God to ask His blessings on A and B’s marriage...” (*ibid: 41*).

Witnessing the union is clearly different from blessing the union. Once again, it brings confusion what blessing of marriage actually is. Blessing of a marriage does not have any legal implication by the state as officiating or celebrating of the marriage is since God does not need a gazetted venue before He blesses a union. This position cannot be proven in scripture, neither is there any law in Ghana that bar a Church from doing that. If God blesses people at ungazetted church, why do we need a registered venue; gazetted minister and legally regulated time to bless a matrimonial union? It suffices to say that, currently, Customary Marriage is not blessed in CoP considering the aforementioned discussion.

Customary Marriage can be converted into ordinance marriage when one follows the legal requirement of the Marriages Act. When customary marriage is successfully converted to ordinance, it is no longer considered as customary marriage. If the Church decides to bless only marriages contracted by Ordinance or converted into the Ordinance, the danger is that the state requirements on marriage must be adhered to the letter. Meanwhile, the state upholds independence of religion.

There are instances where religious beliefs and practices may not be in consonance with legal requirements. However, the state upholds the religious independence. Oladele (2018), cited some instances:

Members of the Jehovah Witness are also known to have been up against blood transfusion. Article 30 of the 1992 constitution seeks to strike a balance between adherence to religious beliefs and rejection of medical attention, the said Article

provides that, “A person who for reason of sickness or any other cause is unable to give his consent shall not be deprived by any other person of medical treatment, education or any other social or economic benefit by reason only of religious or other belief (Oladele, 2018: 18).

The above position should inform the Church to advocate for blessing of customary marriage. In this case, if a church that solely believes in monogamy blesses a marriage; whether it fulfils the formal requirement or not, the practices and beliefs of the church should be legally binding on the couple who so profess that faith.

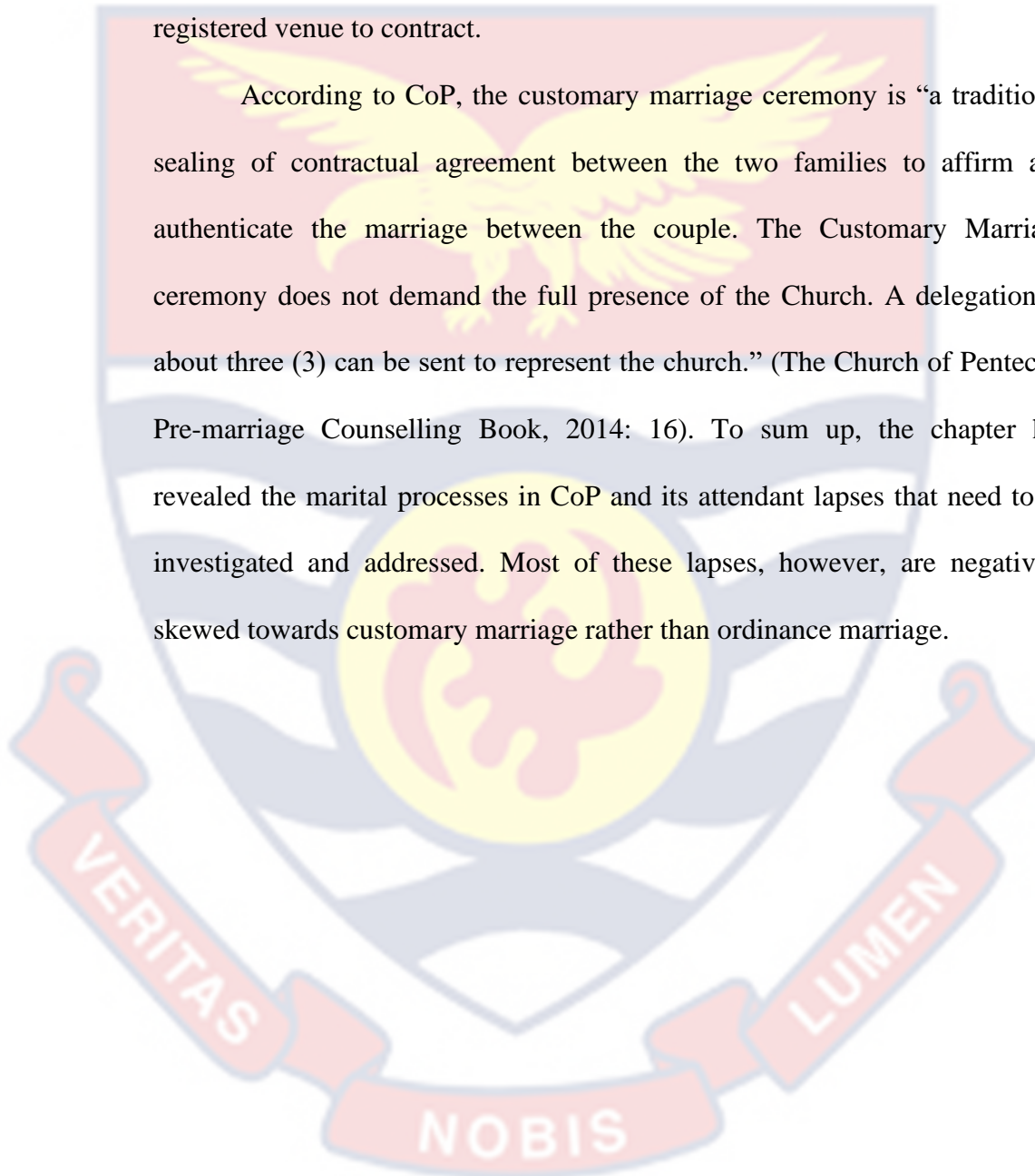
He further expatiated that “a careful interpretation of the constitution indicates that, an adult that is conscious and capable of making a decision can refuse to be administered with any medications by the health provider even if that would affect the chances of survival” (*ibid: 18*). In this case, the type of marriage contracted should equally be measured by the religious belief of the couple. The conflicting position of CoP could be resolved if it is stated that CoP accept both ordinance and customary marriage. The blessing of either of them at designated place by the Church and accredited Christian marriage officer is considered monogamous marriage as taught by scripture.

Conclusion

So far, the chapter has discussed an aspect of the eleventh Tenet of CoP: that the initial Tenets were ten (10) and in 2018, the eleventh one was introduced. Since the latter Tenet, Marriage and Family Life was more related to this work, much attention was given to it. It has been discovered that, although CoP accepts both customary and ordinance marriage laws of the state, none qualifies to be called Christian Marriage. Despite the fact that the Church insists on blessing of marriage at church by a gazetted minister at a

registered church premise before the marriage is accepted as Christian marriage, one can emphatically conclude that only ordinance marriage is blessed. The researcher has maintained that this position seems contradictory since it is only ordinance marriage that requires gazetted minister and registered venue to contract.

According to CoP, the customary marriage ceremony is “a traditional sealing of contractual agreement between the two families to affirm and authenticate the marriage between the couple. The Customary Marriage ceremony does not demand the full presence of the Church. A delegation of about three (3) can be sent to represent the church.” (The Church of Pentecost Pre-marriage Counselling Book, 2014: 16). To sum up, the chapter has revealed the marital processes in CoP and its attendant lapses that need to be investigated and addressed. Most of these lapses, however, are negatively skewed towards customary marriage rather than ordinance marriage.



CHAPTER FIVE

REFLECTIONS FROM THE FIELD WORK

Introduction

This section presents the findings from the field study. It provides a summary of the socio-demographic data of the participants, their perspectives on biblical justification of customary marriage, marriage in The Church of Pentecost and the best marriage form to be adopted by the Church in the sequence of the study's objectives. Further, the chapter presents perspectives from interviews conducted on the legal and religious dimensions of marriage. Graphs, charts and tables are used in the presentation of some of the data gathered.

Biodata of Respondents

Figure 1 shows the results of the biodata of the study's participants. It covers the age of the respondents; number of years they have been members of the Church and the role they play: whether they are leaders or lay members of the Church.

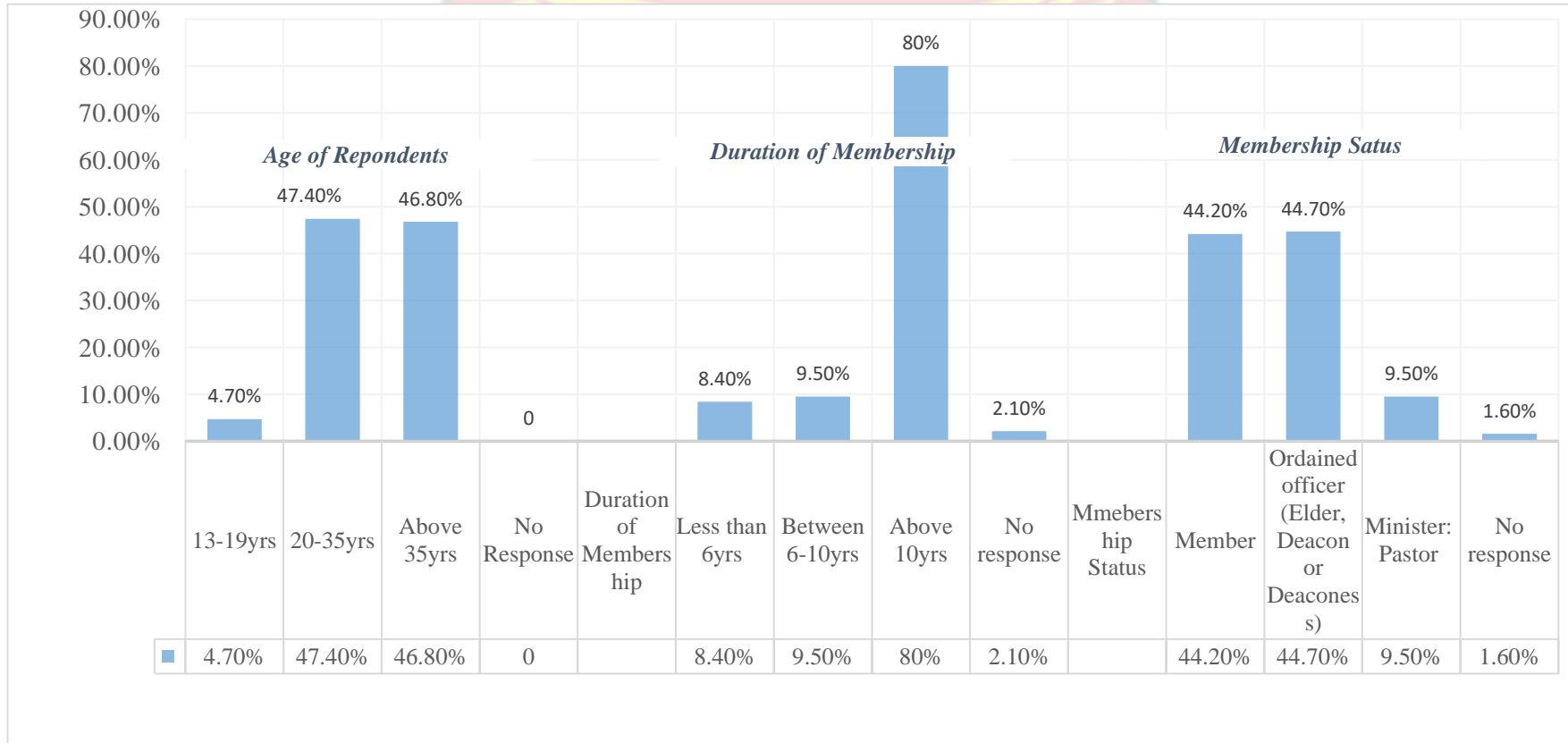


Figure 1: A Bar Graph Showing Biodata of Study Participants
 Source: Field study 2021.

Biodata of Respondents

With respect to age, the proportion of age range (20-35 years) recorded the highest number of participants that is 89 representing 47.4%, followed by the above 35 years representing a percentage of 46.8% with the lowest number of respondents been those between 13-19 years recording a total number of 9 representing 4.7%. Two (2) of the participants representing 1.1% did not respond to any of the options given. Regarding the length/duration of being a member of the Church of Pentecost, it was found out that, out of the total number of 190 respondents, 152 of the participants representing 80% had been in the Church for more than ten (10) years. This is followed by 18 participants who fell within the duration between 6-10 years and representing 9.5% whilst (less than 5 years) recorded the lowest number of 16 representing 8.4%. Four out of the total number of participants representing 2.1% did not respond to any of the questions given. Eighty-five out of the total 190 participants were ordained officers (Elders, Deacons and Deaconess), 84 are members and 18, ministers with various percentages as follows: 44.7%, 44.2% and 9.5% respectively. Three of the respondents representing 1.6% did not respond to any of the questions.

Age is incredibly significant in the determination of the membership states. There are two categories of membership, thus, adult and children membership. For that matter, Article 24.1.1 of the Church's constitution states, "any member who is thirteen years or more and who has accepted the Lord as his / her Lord and personal Saviour and is baptized into the Church becomes an adult member." (See The Constitution of The Church of Pentecost, 2016: 103). This definition is in conflict with the acceptable age of adulthood in

Ghana. As defined in The Children's Act, 1998, Section 1; "A child is a person below the age of eighteen years".

The biodata in Figure 1 fairly covered the entire age category with over 90% of the participants being over the age of 20 years. This means, participants are matured enough to make fair comments concerning marriage. Moreover, it is gratifying to maintain that 80% of the respondents have been in the Church for more than 10 years. This means, they are not novices who might be ignorant of the practises in the Church. The findings, therefore, represent ideas of matured and experienced members of the section of the Church. Moreso, officers of the Church (ordained elders, deacons and deaconesses) are major stakeholders of the Church. For this reason, they represented majority of people that answered the questions.

Biblical Justification of Customary Marriage

The number one Tenet of the Church is the Bible and with ardent believe in its infallibility (See Ministerial Handbook, 2016: 11). A work of this nature cannot be done without reference to the Bible. In view of this, three questions were asked to ascertain respondents' knowledge of texts in the Bible on customary marriage. The biblical justification in that sense is to test respondents' understanding of biblical passage that relates to customary marriage. This is indicated in the cluster bar graph in figure 2.

First Question: Is customary marriage biblical?

Second Question: Give one example of people in the Bible that married customarily.

Third Question: What is the Scripture that is most often quoted in the blessing of marriage in CoP?

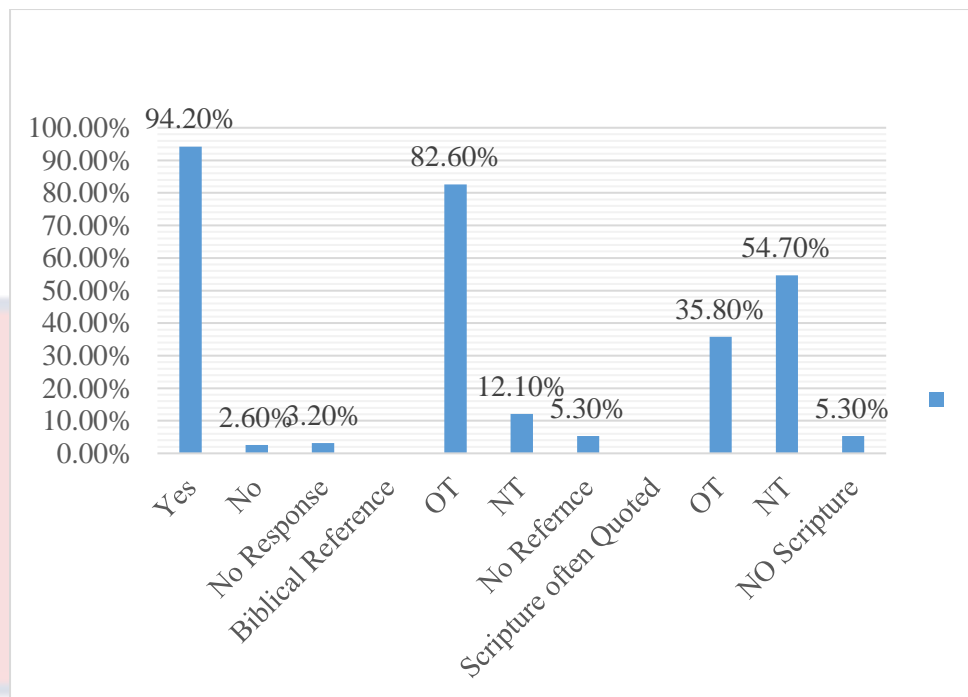


Figure 2: A Bar Graph Showing Participants View on Bible and Customary Marriage

Source: Field study 2021.

One hundred and seventy-nine (179) representing 94.2% of the participants responded 'Yes' to the first question whilst five participants responded 'No' representing 2.6%. In all, six participants representing 3.2% did not give any response to the question.

The second cluster of the graph relates to question two of examples of people in the Bible that married customarily. It was found out that one hundred and eighty (180) of the participants have a fair view of biblical text that support that people married customarily in the Bible. Only ten people representing 5.3% did not respond to the question. This response clearly shows the respondents understood the question asked. It makes the study relevant to the target group since the Church believes in divine inspiration of the Holy Scriptures. It stands to reason that, suggestions and ideas expressed reflected biblical principle, beliefs and convictions of the respondents.

In order to ensure the authenticity of the answers provided, a follow-up question (question 3) was asked, eliciting which scripture is often quoted in the blessing of marriage in the Church. Again, more than 90% of the respondents gave accurate Bible text to ascertain their knowledge in the Bible and customary marriage. These biblical texts given were both from the Old Testaments and the New Testament. Less than 10% did not respond to that question. The ability of the respondents to give accurate biblical references suggest that they are not novice in the Bible. Their responses to issues raised could not just be informed by the socio-cultural influence only as one may argue, rather, their understanding and interpretation of those texts as they would have been taught.

To elaborate further on the accuracy of their responses table 1 provides details of the biblical responses they gave.

Table 1: Responses on Participants' Knowledge in the Bible and Concerning Customary Marriage

	Isaac and Rebecca	105 (55.3%)	
	Ruth and Boaz	21 (11.1%)	
Example of people in the bible that married customarily	Joseph and Mary	23 (12.1%)	<0.01
	Abraham and Sarah	11 (5.8%)	
	Jacob and Leah	20 (10.5%)	
	No-response	10 (5.2%)	
	Matthew 19:6	17 (8.9%)	
	Genesis 2:24	68 (35.8%)	
Which scripture is often quoted in the blessings of marriage	Ephesians 5:22-23	53 (27.9%)	0.023
	Romans 12:10	17 (8.9%)	
	I Corinthians 7:1	17 (8.9%)	
	No response	18 (9.5%)	

Source: Field study 2021

Explanation

From table one, it could be seen that some respondents expressed fair knowledge in the Bible text concerning customary marriage. Old Testament

Scriptures were many. This could be alluded to the fact that the Old Testament has several scriptural references to customary marriage than the New Testament. Again, the Bible texts cited largely relate to customary marriage. All the Bible references given have elements that relates to Ghanaian customary marriage; either polygamous, monogamous, arranged, betrothal, etc. For example, Isaac and Rebecca is a typified example of arranged marriage which has a semblance of Ghanaian customary marriage. Joseph and Mary exemplified betrothal and nuptial payment which is equivalent to bride price and celebration of the marriage in a traditional way. Abraham and Sarah also have elements of same tribe marriage just as is espoused in some Ghanian communities.

On that same note, the researcher investigated the view of respondents on the type of marriage(s) the Church accepts and the one deemed to be more biblical. The response is displayed in figure 3 below.

Question: *Which of the following types of marriages do you see to be more biblical?*

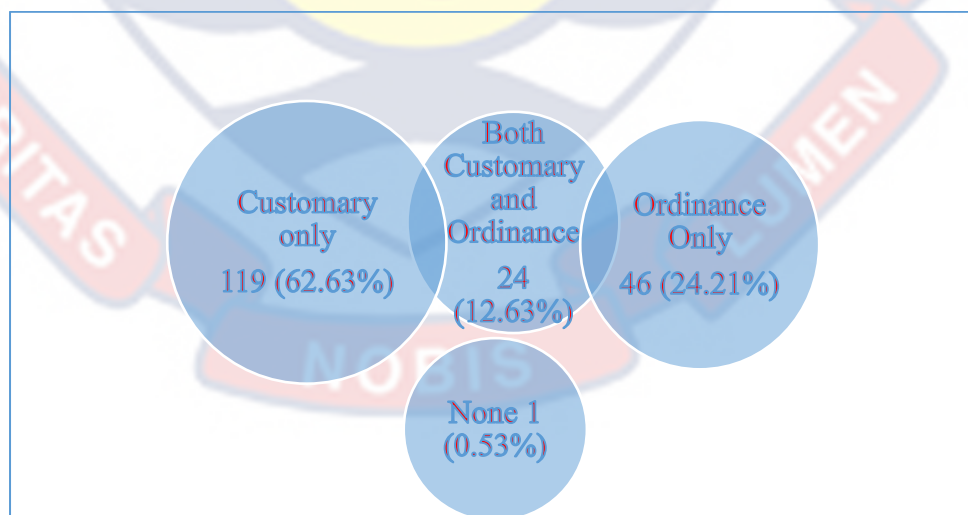


Figure 3: A Figure Showing Respondents View of More Biblically acceptable Marriage

Source: Field study 2021.

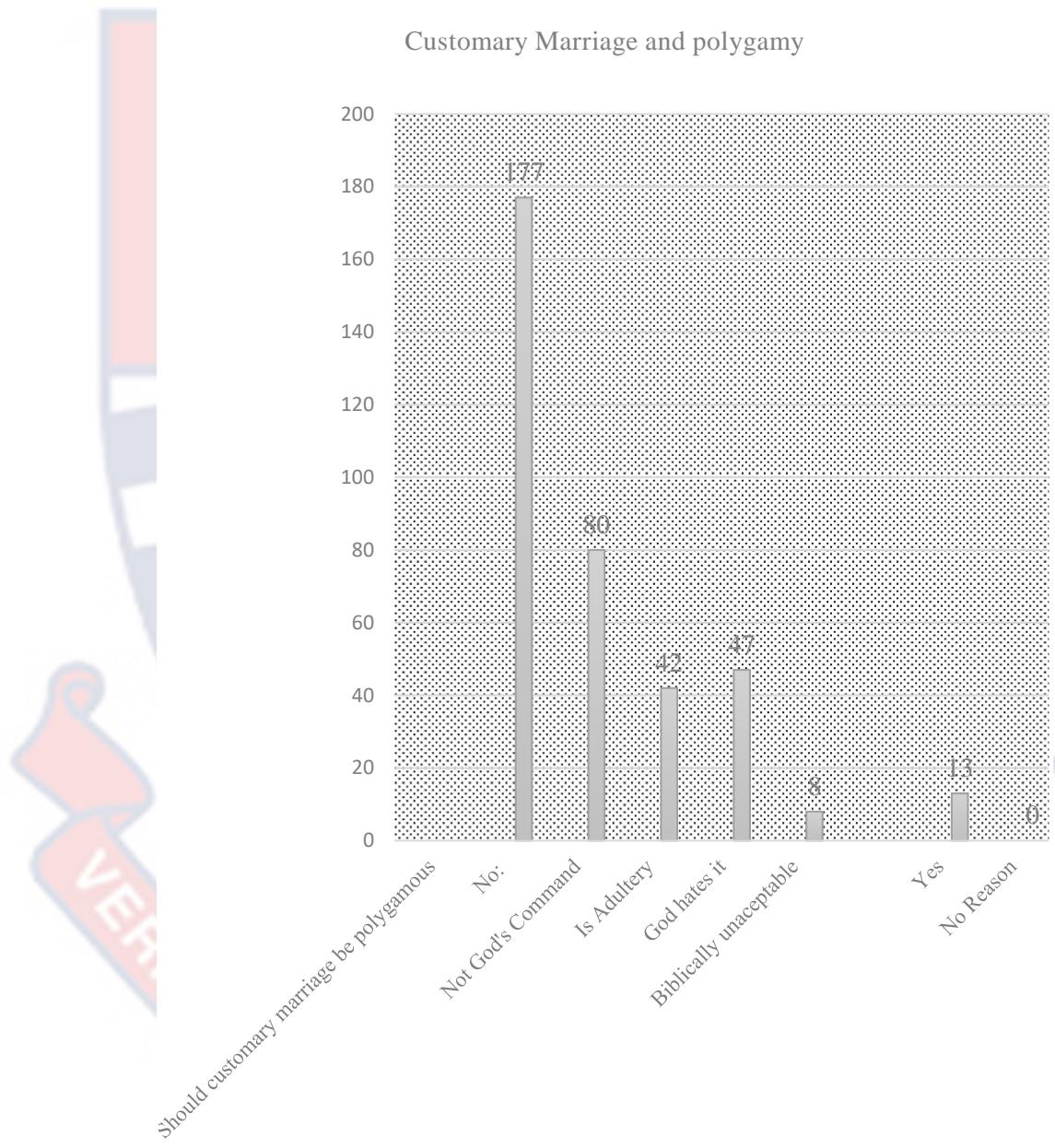
From figure 3, one hundred and nineteen (119) out of the total participants responded to customary marriage only whereas 46 people choose ordinance only. Twenty-four people said both Customary and Ordinance are more biblical, with only one person not responding to the question. In reality, biblical marriages were all customary in practice. There are some principles of ordinance, arguably, which could be inferred from scripture. However, there are most elements of ordinance marriage, on the researcher's view, that are against biblical admonition. For instance, under the ordinance, one could marry without the consent of the parents or any family member. This is against the biblical exhortation of children obeying their parents in all things as espoused in Colossians 3:20; "Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing to the Lord" (NKJV). In addition, in the Bible, all marriages contracted were a sort of exchange of goods, services or both. This is in consonance with Ghanaian customary marriage but not the ordinance marriage. It is expedient to rather work towards the customary marriage that has more biblical basis and agrees with Ghanaian customs and values. Although there are issues with regard to biblical customary marriage which may not be acceptable to practise in contemporary Ghanaian society, those issues should be spelt out and dealt with. For instance, widowhood marriage is not accepted in most Ghanaian societies yet it was practised in the Bible.

Customary Marriage and Polygamy

The rationale here is to find out if the polygamous nature of customary marriage is among the issues CoP has against Customary Marriage. Hence two questions were posed to that effect as follows.

Question: Should a Christian who marries customarily be permitted to marry more than one?

Question: What is your reason for your answer to the above question?



Below is the graphical representation of the various views.

Figure 4: A Bar Graph Showing Respondents Perception on Customary Marriage and Polygamy
 Source: Field study 2021

Whereas 177 people were with the view that customary marriage should be monogamous with various assigned reasons, 13 people, representing 6.8% think that it should be polygamous. They, however, did not indicate any reason for their choice. The responses from participants clearly indicate that there are few members that are with the view that those who marry customarily should be permitted to marry more than one. It has been discussed extensively in the chapter three of this work that CoP is against polygamy and hence will not be repeated here. Reflecting on the above data, it means, there are CoP members that do not side with the belief of the Church on its insistence on ordinance marriage by principle of its monogamy. Since majority of the respondents as indicated in the biodata in figure one are members and leaders who have been in the Church for more than ten years, it calls for serious attention.

In effect, this should inform CoP to take critical look at the issues of marriage in the Church; whether customarily or ordinance so that all members will appreciate the belief of the Church. Since the only way to show one's commitment to monogamy legally is by contracting ordinance marriage, the Church could be right to some extent of her current position of ending marriage rites process at the ordinance level. Tentatively, the fact that one marries under ordinance is not a guarantee of marital faithfulness to only one spouse. It calls for a different approach of handling marriage instead of resorting to only the legalistic approach. This is a languid approach of handling the issue.

In the same Figure 4, majority of the respondents, debatably, abhorred polygamous nature of customary marriage claiming God did not command it;

it is adulterous, God hates it and is not accepted biblically. The respondents to that numbered 80, 42, 47 and 8 respectively. These assertions are unarguably debatable by advocates of polygamous marriage considering the fact that it has been practised in Biblical times. Nevertheless, one may argue that what is practised is different from what is accepted. The circumstances that led to its practise need to be interrogated and explained properly.

What is worth noting is that one's faith informs how the Bible is interpreted. The above given reasons evidently show that members advocating that marriage in the Church should end at customary may be expressing a genuine concern that warrants attention rather than jumping into hasty conclusion of their interest to marry more than one. The reason is that majority of their reasons synchronise with the position of the Church against customary marriage. So, their advocacy that customary marriage should be recognised as legal and fully embraced by the Church is something worth considering. On a similar note, Eduafo-Abraham (2019) and Mair (1974) advocate that Christian marriages should end in the customary.

Furthermore, the findings revealed that what might be considered legal may be interpreted differently by the Church. For instance, Sarah Bempong, a magistrate court judge, admitted during interview session on Thursday 13th April, 2021 that, legally, one could marry as many wives as one wishes under the customary law. Perhaps this could be the reason a church that accepts monogamy would not want to fully recognise customary marriage. On that same note, Philip Osei Korsah, an apostle of the Church and Head of the Counselling Department of CoP Headquarters, contestably, buttressed the views of the respondents by explaining that even if one marries another wife

legally or does not make it official, it also equals to fornication and adultery. It can be deduced that since over 90% of membership according to this study is against polygamy, the Church's reservation towards customary marriage could be as a result of its polygamous nature.

The question that begs the answer is why then will CoP continue to accept both the customary and the ordinance marriage as the two accepted forms of marriage? Korsah intimates that the Church upholds both the customary and the ordinance marriage because both are in conformity with the Church's practises. He explained further that CoP accepts the customary especially on the ground that man will marry one wife, though the customary gives room for a man to marry more than one wife. He emphatically stated that "we are not advocating that the marriages especially in this modern time, go customarily" (personal communication with Korsah on 13th April, 2021). The Church should redefine her position on that subject matter. Once it is said that the Church accepts the two, then it is conclusive to maintain that either of them is fully accepted by the Church. This seem not to be the case; it will be convenient for the CoP to state that they partly believe in the customary marriage and the ordinance marriage.

Marriage in the Church of Pentecost

The work further conducted a search into the state of marriage in the Church. Four clusters of bar graphs display in figure 5 shows the views of respondents' perception to the following questions posed.

Question 1: Which of these types of marriage(s) do CoP accept?

Question 2: Which of these is most often blessed at church?

Question 3: Do couples who marry traditionally only in the Church go through counselling?

Question 4: Are you satisfied with how marriage is handled in CoP?

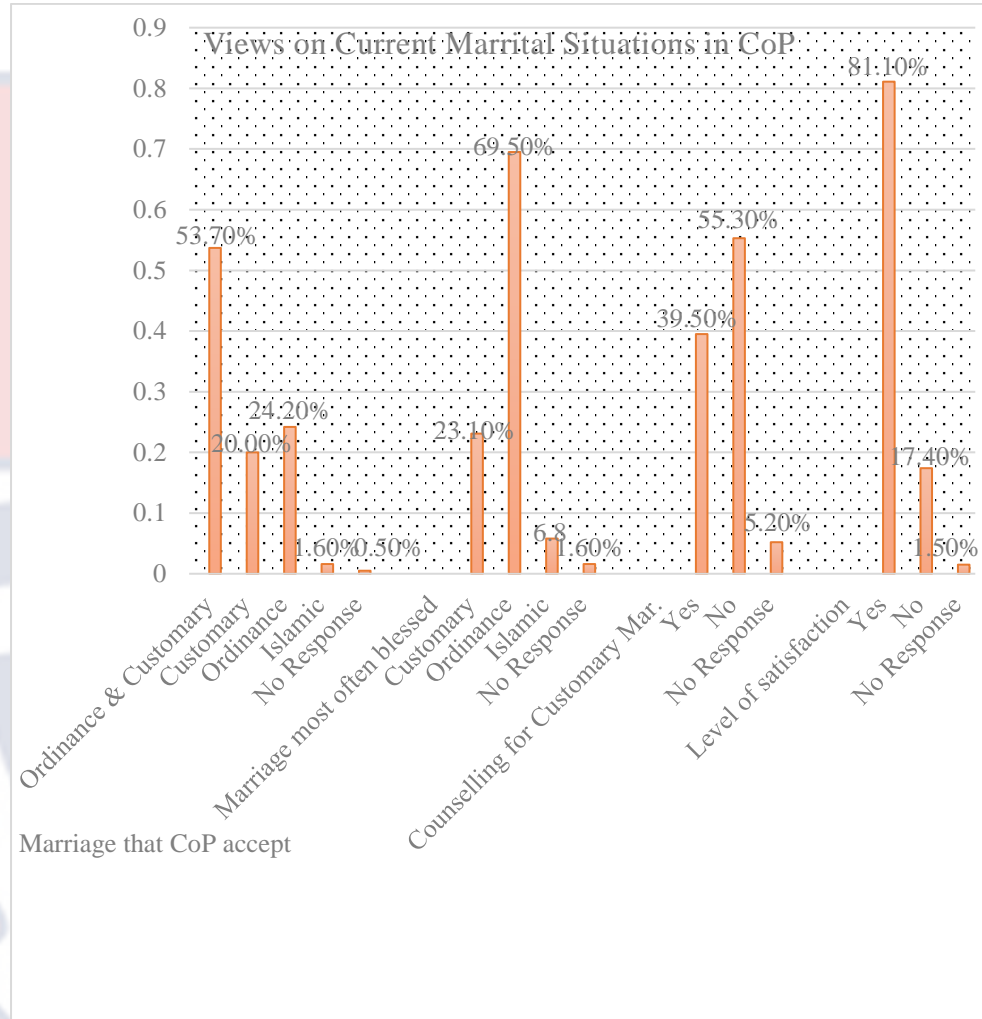


Figure 5: A Bar Graph Showing Views of State of marriage in CoP
Source: Field Study 2021

Among one hundred and ninety respondents, 53.2% were married and 46.3% were not married with only 0.5% who did not respond to the question. Four key areas that were looked at were: first, to test the knowledge of members on the type of marriage that CoP accepts and secondly to find out which type of marriage CoP often blesses. In order to find out if Customary Marriage is given equal attention in terms of counselling just as the ordinance

marriage, a question was posed to that effect. Finally, the graph shows the level of satisfaction of members concerning the current position of marriage in the Church. Majority of the respondents expressed their satisfaction with how marriage is conducted in CoP. However, a significant number of respondents expressed their dissatisfaction to how marriage is contracted. The graphic presentations to the four questions asked in this particular section are shown in figure 5.

It is worthy to mention that there is fair distribution of questionnaires to both married and unmarried persons thereby making the findings devoid of bias in response. The majority of the married respondents enhanced the validity of the work since it emanated from people who have experienced the marital processes of the Church.

The Type of Marriage CoP Accepts in Contemporary Time

The first column bars shown in figure 5 indicate that there are some members of the CoP who do not know the type of marriage the Church accepts. It was established that 102 participants representing 53.7% chose both customary and ordinance as marriages accepted by CoP. However, 46 (24.2%), chose ordinance marriage only followed by Customary/Traditional marriage only with 38 people (20.0%). Meanwhile one (0.5%) respondent thinks that the Church accepts Islamic marriage and three (1.6%) people did not answer that question. This means that some members are not well educated or informed on marriage in the Church. Again, it stands to reason that the CoP is not doing enough for her members to understand an important issue like marriage. When members are not well informed, there is the tendency of conjecturing. There are factors that could account for this

anomaly. First, perhaps the issue of marriage is not extensively taught in the Church. Secondly, it stands to reason that, there is no systematic write up on the said topic that members could infer from.

Blessing of Marriage versus Officiating of Marriage

Again, concerning the type of marriage that is often blessed in the Church, one hundred and thirty-two, which represents 69.5%, out of the total participants responded to ordinance/wedding as the type of marriage that is mostly blessed in the Church. This is followed by customary/traditional marriage which represents 42 (22.1%). Surprisingly, 13 (6.8%) people claimed that Islamic marriage is blessed by the Church. The number of persons who responded that CoP blesses Islamic marriage affirms the conviction that some members in the Church are completely ignorant of the marriage the Church blesses. The lowest frequency representing, 3 (1.6) participants did not respond to the above.

When the question: “Does the CoP currently bless customary marriage that is not converted into ordinance?” to Korsah, he responded; “No”, and explained that marriages have their respective requirements. He emphasised;

At the Customary marriage, per the practises of the church, we know that the two go together. That is, you will do the Customary and then you complete it with the legal fulfilment which is the ordinance. Therefore, if you are doing the customary, it will end up in the church and with the customary, per the church belief, it is done in the home. That is, it is solely the family issue so the church does not take centre stage. How can you bless something that does not belong to you? And you blessing it is like completing your school; you need to authenticate it with a certificate. And here comes the case the person did not attend your school but rather completed his/ her schooling in his/ her father’s house, how can you issue a certificate for someone in a different school? You cannot issue a certificate there. You can issue a certificate when it comes

into your domain. And every marriage that is celebrated, there should be an authentication of the issuing of the certificate and it should be issued at the church premises. (Source: Telephone Interview with Philip Osei Korsah on 15th April, 2021).

The issue of blessing of marriage seems debatable since it is mostly confused with legal requirement of marriage. The Church has not clearly defined what blessing of marriage is. In most cases, it is confused with the ordinance requirement of marriage. During the interview session with Sarah Bempong, she was asked whether there is a law in Ghana that prevents a minister from blessing unregistered customary marriage. She responded,

No, there is no law. Blessing of marriage is a religious affair that does not have any legal requirement. But the point may be that some churches that ascribe to monogamous marriage will hesitate to do that because the blessing of the marriage does not have any legal binding on the couples” (Source: Personal Interview with Sarah Bempong on 13th April, 2021).

On similar note, Oladele added that “blessing is religious pronouncement on marriage” and does not have any legal requirement (Interview with Former Registrar of Marriages, Lawyer Kwaku Oladele Aribike on 4th May, 2021).

The assertion of Korsah is highly debatable since there are occasions that ordinance marriages are completed at court with certificate issued to the couple, yet they are blessed at church with only church certificate issued to them. In this case, the activities that take place at the Church after the legal fulfilment at the law court has no legal or formal requirement according to the Marriages Act Law except the religious requirement. Same provision could be given to customary marriage.

Moreover, before ordinance marriage is contracted in the Church, the premise should have been registered legally and the minister gazetted. This is

not however, the case at some CoP church branches in Ghana. Table 2 shows a data on the CoP's buildings registered and qualified to bless marriage.

Table 2: A Table Showing Registered Church Buildings and Marriages Blessed in 2020 in Koforidua Area

No.	Name of District	No. of Assemblies	Assemblies Registered for wedding	Marriages Blessed by the end of year 2020
1.	Koforidua	11	1	11
2.	New Juaben	9	4	20
3.	Adweso	7	3	12
4.	PIWC	2	1	9
5.	Aburi	7	0	2
6.	Akropong	7	2	6
7.	Two Streams	13	1	6
8.	Adukrom	12	1	1
9.	Amanfro	15	1	5
10.	Mampong	7	1	5
11.	Grace Worship Centre	2	1	6
12.	Old Estate	6	1	7
13.	Adawso	14	1	6
14.	Tinkong	16	0	10
15.	Nkurakan	19	1	7
16.	Klo Agogo	17	0	8
17.	Mamfe	9	2	7
18.	Pokrom	14	0	0
19.	Mangoase	14	0	6
20.	Huhunya	10	0	0
21.	Okorase	7	1	8
22.	Kitase	7	0	9
23.	Mile 14	11	0	9
24.	Kwamoso	12	0	5
Total		248	22	165

Source: 2020 Annual Report of Koforidua Area of The Church of Pentecost

Explanation

The statistics gathered from the study population, Koforidua Area in the Eastern region of Ghana calls for serious attention. By the end of the year 2020, the table two (2) shows that out of twenty-four (24) districts (cluster of congregations), nine (9) representing 37.5% had no church building registered

for blessing ordinance marriage. In addition, out of 248 churches in the study's population, only 22 church buildings are registered for that purpose.

From the above, the following could be deduced. Contracting ordinance marriage would be difficult and involve long process. Personal interaction with some ministers in Koforidua area where the study was conducted, they indicated that ordinance marriages are officiated and blessed quite often in unregistered church buildings. In this case, the supposed ordinance is nothing but customary.

Further investigation by the researcher reveals that some members of CoP complete the legal aspects at court and then move to the church for the religious blessing. Other times too, the suppose ordinance marriages contracted forfeit legal requirement and end up, ignorantly, blessing customary marriage. In this case, then the Church needs to state her position clearly that marriage should be blessed at church premise and remove the clause that marriages should be blessed at registered church building. Whereas the CAP 127 of the Marriages Act maintains that Ordinance Marriage should be officiated at registered church, there is no provision of where the marriage should be blessed. Hence, CoP should clearly dichotomise the officiating of Ordinance Marriage from blessing of it.

Much more, there should be clear reason(s) why marriage cannot be blessed at the home considering the fact that Jesus attended wedding at Cana in a home where He performed His first miracle (John 2). Again, if it is the case that all documents are signed in court before the marriage is blessed at church, then the researcher stands to reason with those who argued that blessing the marriage in church will be more costly than ending it in the home.

The reason is that couples will have to travel for the registration, go back again to the court with witnesses to sign the marriage certificate and fix another day for the customary marriage and another day for the church blessing. The process could be deemed simple when church building is registered and publication of ban is also done at the Church. However, this is not the case in Koforidua Area in Eastern region where CoP even started.

It can be concluded emphatically from the forgone analysis that the Church partially accepts customary marriage because of the legal caveat of polygamy. Again, customary marriage is no longer blessed in CoP unless they are converted to ordinance marriage. Korsah again postulated that CoP pastor is not supposed to give out the Church's marriage certificate for a marriage that has not been converted into Ordinance Marriage. He insisted that it should not have been done in the first place, but when it is done, it implies that, the pastor in charge did not know his responsibility. He opined, "ordinance certificate and the church certificate go together. As a minister, you do not have to issue ordinance certificate without the church certificate." (Personal interview with Philip Osei Korsah, 15th April, 2021). He further intimated on that same note that:

Under normal circumstances, the pastor is not supposed to entertain that which will land him into trouble, because the customary and the ordinance go together and then the church respect the two. When you have gone through the ordinance, it means that you have completed the customary and you have regularised it. Then as we are issuing you with the ordinance certificate, you have had the church certificate which shows that, the church accepts what you have done. (*Ibid*).

Meanwhile, on one breath, he admitted that the church certificate does not have any legal implication except in the church. For this reason, it is suited to

say that CoP is more interested in the legal aspect of marriage rather than the religious element. This should not be the case; the latter should precede the former since the Church foremost responsibility is for the spiritual wellbeing of her members. Another revealing aspect is that some of the personal interactions the researcher had with some members show their disapproval for them to move to other registered church buildings to hold their marriage ceremony. They claim they usually do not enjoy support from there; members in their local church do not attend in their numbers, sometimes they are faced with challenges of getting access to some of the church's equipment, etc.

Marriage Counselling in CoP and Measure of Satisfaction

One major requirement of marriage in CoP as discussed in chapter four (4) of this work is counselling. The data from Figure 5 further reveals that 105 signifying 55.3% responded that counselling session is not organised for people who opt to end their marriage rites at the customary level. In this case Korsah suggested that people like that should be taking through a counselling process called cognitive restructuring so that they begin to see things as the Church sees it. If after the whole process they further insist that they prefer the customary only, they should be allowed without the involvement of the Church. This is to submit that the counselling process would be aborted along the way. This, arguably, is disingenuous and unhealthy for the betterment of the marriage if the church deem counselling as a contributing factor of healthy marriage. It affirms Twene's position that Christians are only interested in the end of the marriage rather than the process (Twene, 2019). Such couples are still bonafede members of the Church and the investigator is not convinced why the counselling process should stop since it has no legal tide to the

marriage. In the view of this researcher, it is wrong for CoP to tie the pre-marriage counselling to only ordinance marriage.

More importantly, to say and maintain that there is the need for cognitive restructuring to accept the Church's position on marriage buttress the point that leadership appreciates the fact that members have issues regarding contracting of marriage in the Church but waits until the problem arises before they act. The sage beautifully puts it in Ecclesiastes 10:11 that, "if a snake bites before it is charmed, there is no profit for the charmer" (NIV). There should be a system put in place by the Church to ensure that her members understand its marital process before they even start the process of marriage.

Regarding whether the respondents were satisfied with how marriages were conducted in the Church, an overwhelming majority (over 80%) of the participants were satisfied. Summarily, a reflection on this indicates that although members are satisfied with the way marriage is contracted in CoP, they have their own reservations.

The Best Marriage Type to Adopt in CoP

Figure 6 shows responses for testing the best type of marriage to be adopted by the Church.

Question: Which of these types of marriages would you prefer the Church to accept as the main form of marriage in CoP?

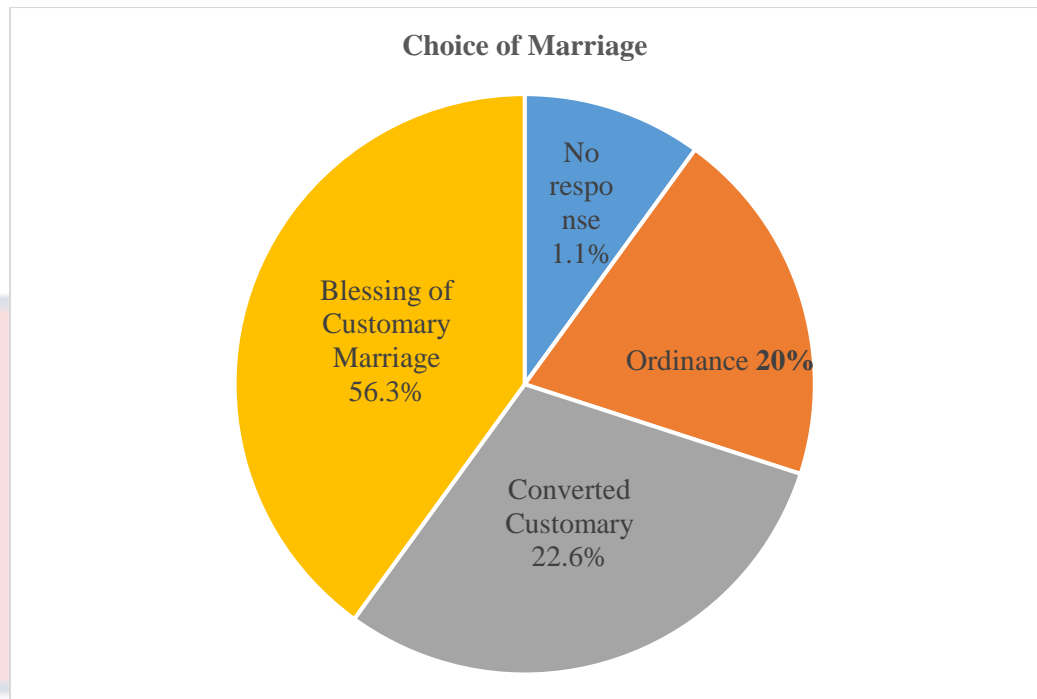


Figure 6: A Pie Chart the showing the type of marriage to be blessed in CoP
Source: Field Study 2021

From the chart, one hundred and seventeen (117) thus, 56.3% responded that customary/traditional marriage be blessed at church. This is followed by customary marriage converted into ordinance marriage before they are blessed at church representing 43 respondents (22.6%) with ordinance marriage blessed at church having the lowest frequency of 38 respondents, which represents 20.0%. The percentage of participants who did not respond to any of the answers were two (2) persons representing 1.1%.

Responses to figure 6 are inconsistent to the responses in figure five. It has been established from the previous discourse that majority of the respondents expressed their satisfaction with how marriage is contracted in the church. Nevertheless, figure 6 proves otherwise. Figure 6 indicates that majority of respondents demand that marriage that ends at customary is to be blessed in the church. This means members are not happy with the position of

CoP not blessing marriage that ends at customary level. Additionally, members are ignorant of the type of marriage rites that are often blessed at church. Cogitating on this also brings to bear that some respondents are ignorant that marriages rites that ends at customary level is no longer blessed in CoP as the study has uncovered.

Reasons for Marriage Choices

Concerning reason for the choice of preferred type of marriage in figure 6, it was found out that over 56% of those who opted for blessing of customary marriage claim it is less expensive and is biblical. Korsah claimed that the assertion that ordinance marriage celebrated in the church is expensive is not tenable. He enumerated the following reasons to buttress his claim:

1. In The Church of Pentecost, the building, instruments and other things are giving out for free for members who wish to celebrate their ordinance marriages.
2. The officiating pastor is not giving any money neither is he supposed to take anything for the officiating of the marriage.
3. If one decides not to pick a car but walk to the church and have their marriage celebrated, it does not prevent the pastor from blessing them.
4. There is no prescribed dress for couples to wear during wedding; implying wedding dresses are solely the choice of the couple but not the requirement of the church.
5. The only requirement which involves cost in contracting ordinance marriage in CoP is registration of the marriage which cost less than GH¢200.00. Even with that, he added, the church offering taking that day is given to the couple; it can be used to pay the debt and partly used as a capital for low income newly wedded couple. He summarised by saying; “those who even advocate for the customary only because they claim they do not have money, they end up spending money more than if they had organised it at church.” They hire canopies and chairs, sound system and pay the one who serves as conductor for the ceremony. All these things are done for free in the church (Personal communication with Korsah, 15th April, 2021).

Notwithstanding the justification given by Korsah, it is expedient to note, as stated by Twene, (2019) that, “marriage in the traditional African society is not just love affair of the couple but a mean to an end for the community”. (Twene, 2019: 24). He further noted that African society is more communal and socially focused, which means how a particular traditional marriage is organised is influenced by what happens in the society. The claim that couples spend more money in traditional marriage than the ordinance in the church was on the basis of the Church plays a passive role when it comes to traditional marriage but takes active role when it comes to the ordinance. The would-be couples are therefore, denied any form of communal support as they would have enjoyed at the church. Supposing the church withdraws the support they give to ordinance marriage, the cost would have been heftier than customary.

However, it is a common knowledge that the cost of traditional marriages is mostly supported by the family of the couples. Mostly, at traditional marriages, special funds are raised to support the couples in modern times. It will be fallacious to state and maintain that traditional marriage cost the couples more than the ordinance marriage contracted at the church. To add up, modernity has influenced how customary marriage is organised in contemporary times. This is making it difficult for families to embrace the concept of simply organising customary marriage as is done in the time past.

More importantly, CoP seems to have forgotten the influence of urbanisation and cross-cultural or inter-cultural marriage. These have influenced how a customary marriage is contracted. Cross-cultural marriage is a union of two persons from diverse cultures and diverse background. Some

people who travel to seek greener pastures in the cities may not have a decent place of abode, making it difficult for them to send friends and family members to those places to contract customary marriage. They then resort to event centres that have been earmarked for such events. Though it will be seen as expensive, there is no better option for that. The only option that the Church offers is the one that favours ordinance marriage but not customary marriage. Members could not be blamed for such unpleasant developments. Mission houses (the house where the pastor stays) for instance, could be made available for members who intend to contract customary marriage but may not have any decent place to host it instead of resorting to event centres. One may argue that such will defeat the essence of contracting customary marriage in the bride's home, some contemporary customary marriages are not contracted at the bride's home.

On that note, the researcher was keen to find out what could account for a CoP member to advocate for customary marriage considering the issues raised. Korsah replied that, it is either ignorance or the couples might have something to hide. Commenting on what they have to hide, Korsah guessed;

Maybe when they started courting and dating, they went ahead to consummate the marriage i.e., they are more or less couples. So, since they know that what they have done is not good, they become afraid and by so doing do not want to come and stand before the Lord. Perhaps they have aborted pregnancies in course of their relationship, they become afraid to come and stand before the Lord. That is also another aspect. (Source: Personal communication with Korsah, 15th April, 2021).

If this claim is true, then the Church has failed to some extent of teaching the biblical truth of the omnipresence of God, thus, God is everywhere and there is no specified place that He ought to be revered.

Johannine gospel affirms this; “God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth” (John 4:24, NKJV). Again, it could be that much emphasis is placed on the church building rather than God. Moreover, Paul affirms that God does not reside in temples built by human hands; “God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands” (Acts 17:24, NKJV).

The researcher queried that, aside some members registering their displeasure towards ordinance marriage they equally preferred the clergy pronouncing blessings on the marriage in the house rather than the church. Korsah sharply maintained that it buttresses the point of having something to hide. He pointed out that members revere the church building as the embodiment of the presence of God and will not be comfortable standing in the temple to pray for God’s blessing knowing that they had engaged in the practise that the Church and for that matter God, frowns upon.

Whiles Korsah’s claim could be true, he did not take into account the theory of how society is constructed. According to interactionism theory, interactions that people have with one another and with the institutions of our society have specific meanings (Cohen, 1985). It will be odd for someone to have a church wedding without a wedding dress or using a car. However, people conveniently do traditional marriage without those things. The position opined by Korsah is a clear indication of the failure of CoP discipling her members to fear God, rather, breeding ceremonial Christians who worship God at the temple only, contrary to the biblical exposition for Christians to be salt of the earth and light of the world (Matt. 5:15–16).

Secondly, those who advocated for the blessing of ordinance marriage only claimed it prevents polygamy and fornication. Partially, this position agrees with the reason for the CoP's advocacy for ordinance marriage. Korsah revealed that the ordinance is there for security. It is a sign or binding commitment to stay with one partner as the Church upholds. However, marital faithfulness is not dependent on the type of marriage contracted but depends on the parties to the marriage. There could be an instance of worse extra-marital affairs in ordinance marriage than in customary marriage. Aside that, maltreatment in such marriages could also be worse than in other forms of marriage. Worst of all, is what Oladele, (2018) described as serial marriage, a situation when someone who marries under ordinance divorces legally and remarry.

Lastly, the proponents of blessing converted customary marriage into ordinance maintained that it would help to protect the couple and prevent divorce. The researcher is with the view that it is not the type of marriage that one contracts that will determine one's sexual behaviour, rather, it is the parties involved in the marriage. Nonetheless, the ordinance provides some assurance of one's commitment to a particular partner.

Advantages of Preferred Types of Marriages and Reasons

It is expected that choices are made based on perceived benefits or advantages. In this sense, the particular marriage type one prefers should be based on the perceived benefits of the marriage. The graph in figure 7 depicts the responses to the two questions asked:

Question: Which of these types of marriage do you consider to be more advantageous to the Christian?

Question: List the advantage(s) of your preferred answer to the question above.

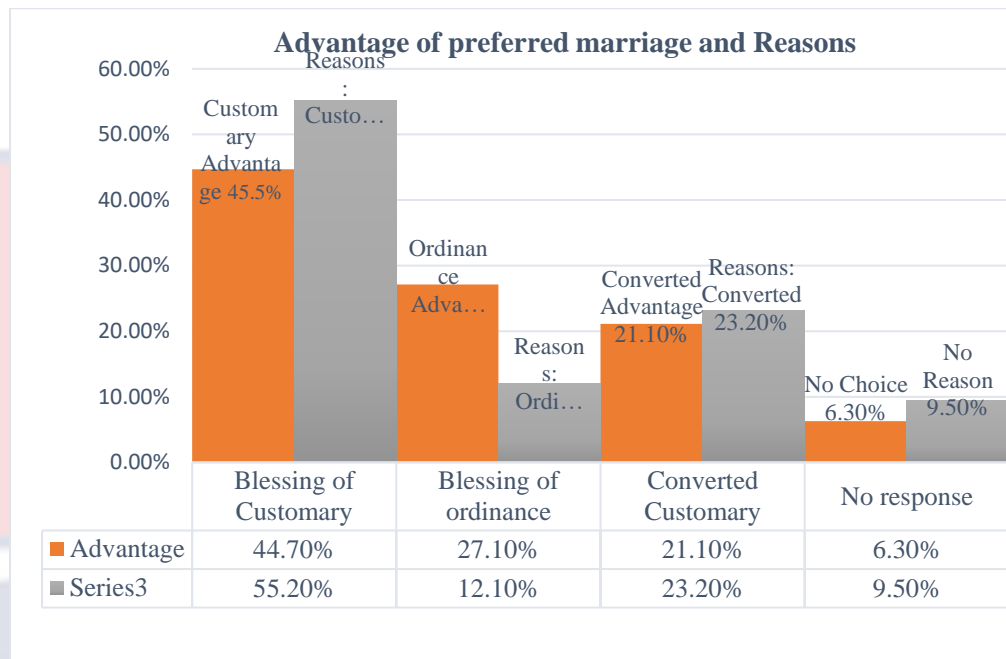


Figure 7: Which of these types of marriage do you consider to be more advantageous to the Christian and what are the reasons for your choice? Source: Field Study 2021

Majority of persons (45.5%) opted for customary marriage as more advantageous (see figure 7 for the results). It has its correspondent higher percentage of various reasons why participants claimed that blessed of customary marriage is more advantageous. It recorded a percentage of 55.2. The ordinance marriage blessed at church is woefully seen as advantageous by respondents. A total figure of 27.1% selected it with only 12.1% able to give reasons for the choice.

Among the reasons why they chose the former over the latter is that the former is less expensive, easy to contract and has the benefit of bringing peace among families and tribes. As it has been established, it is not simple for prospective couple to have much influence over the process of customary marriage. Family influence will cause them to spend much on the customary.

If it is extended to the ordinance at church, any amount will add up to already incurred cost making church ordinance more expensive. Moreover, it is worth reiterating that the flamboyancy that accompanies Ghanaian customary marriage are mostly supported by family members and friends but they do not get same support at church.

On the contrary, Sarah Bempong postulates that she did not see any challenge with ordinance marriage as some claim, because they are simple steps that needs to be followed and they are not difficult to comply with. She said, “missing one step can affect the validity of the marriage. For instance, banns are raised on Sunday for three consecutive times during church service and doing it on other day invalidates the process.” (Personal communication with a Magistrate Court Judge, Sarah Bempong). Oladele also added that there seems not to be no challenge with regard to contracting ordinance marriage at the church. His only concern was that before one can officiate a marriage at church, the minister must have been gazetted. So, if they are not gazetted and the church has also not been licensed and the marriage is officiated, it means no ordinance marriage took place (Personal communication, Oladele).

Considering the aforementioned concerns, it is worthy to say that the seeming challenge of ordinance marriage, one would conclude, should not be a challenge for individual members but to the church as institution since there was no concern raised by respondents with regards to gazetting of ministers nor licensing of church building for marriage. The explanation given in table two points to churches that are not registered but ordinance marriage is officiated there, which have consequences on the members. The researcher can sufficiently say that the reasons could be borne out of presumptions rather than

empirical evidence which is not tenable. On the other hand, too, it could be that indeed members suffer from going to other places to have their marriages officiated thereby making ordinance marriage uncomfortable for them.

23.2% of the respondents were of the view that customary marriage converted into ordinance and blessed has the benefit of preventing divorce. Although this is the type of marriage that CoP promotes in contemporary times, Korsah thinks that the only added advantage is for security and assurance of monogamy. Nonetheless, it does not guarantee a successful marriage. He continued that the 'players' in the marriage determines its successfulness or otherwise but not the means of contracting it. This too does not suggest the Church should be careless about the situation by allowing any member to do what they want.

Advantages of blessed ordinance marriage recorded the lowest response of 12.1% with the claim that it prevents polygamy. It has been argued already that the type of marriage contracted does not guaranteed to faithfulness or otherwise. As stated early on, the civil or Christian ordinance marriage law does not require performance of customary marriage. On that note, Oladele said the customary could be converted as specified in the Marriages Act, CAP 127. But CoP insists that members who want their marriage officiated by the church are to marry customarily before the ordinance. Korsah explained that the Church takes that stand because it is not a Ghanaian culture for someone to marry without the involvement of the parents or the family. For this purpose, the Church blends the two: the customary and the ordinance. This suggests that the Church sees both the customary and Ordinance Marriage laws as incomplete. The best approach for

a lasting solution is rather to advocate for monogamy of all customary marriage contracted by faith organisations that believe so. Performing the customary marriage rites before going ahead to do the ordinance is like marrying the same person twice since each of the marriage type is independent of the other.

There were divided opinions among two legal practitioners interviewed on whether what the Church practises is legally right or not. Sarah Bempong registered her displeasure toward an aspect whereby ministers use the performance of customary marriage rite as a conditional clause before marriage is officiated. She said,

I am not too much pleased with the question that is often asked at church by the minister if the man has performed all necessary customary requirement before they proceed to bless the marriage. It is as if saying 'no' will stop the marriage. Legally, I have said already that it is not a requirement. I wish if that question is not asked at all. (Personal Communication with Sarah Bempong on 13th April, 2021).

Contrary, Oladele stated that "it depends on the denomination: for the law allows the practise of the denomination in marriage. You cannot force a clergy to officiate a marriage against the norm of the denomination." (Personal communication with Oladele). Since the ordinance marriage could be contracted by all irrespective of the faith community of the person just as the customary, it would have been easy if religious practises too are permitted in customary marriage.

Challenges with Ghanaian Customary Marriage: CoP Perspective

It is fascinating to note that although many people prefer customary marriage and want it to be fully accepted and blessed in CoP, they registered

their dissatisfaction about its polygamous nature. Table 3 shows the results of what respondents' dislike about Ghanaian customary marriage.

Table 3: Shows the responses of members concerning CoP Dislikes About Ghanaian Customary Marriage

QUESTIONS	RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE COUNT	P- VALUE
Which of the following do you dislike about Ghanaian customary marriage	It permits polygamy	146 (76.8%)	<0.01
	Customary marriage is not biblical	14 (7.4)	
	It is difficult to contract	20 (10.5%)	
	No response	10 (5.3%)	

Source: Field Data, 2021.

One hundred and forty-six (146) out of the total respondents reiterated their dislike for polygamous nature of customary marriage, followed by twenty (20) people, claiming it is difficult to contract. Only fourteen (14) people stated it is not biblically acceptable, whereas ten (10) did not respond to the question. To say customary marriage is not biblical shows ignorance on some parts of the respondents since all marriages contracted in the Bible basically followed the custom of the people then.

Having established that respondents are more interested in customary marriage than other forms of marriage, the question was asked to ascertain their level of acceptance. It was revealed that, although they preferred customary marriage to ordinance marriage, they still have issues with customary marriage.

Consistently, the issue of polygamy keeps resonating throughout their responses. A whopping 76.8% said they dislike the clause of polygamy

attached to customary marriage. Only 10% claims it is difficult to contract. It stands to argue that if there is a way that customary marriage could be made legally monogamous for those who so wish, perhaps, majority of church members will prefer it to the ordinance marriage.

Another area of interest for the researcher was to find out the type of marriage that CoP members find difficult to contract. The pie chart in figure eight displays the percentages of responses.

Question: Which of the following marriage types do you see to be difficult to contract?

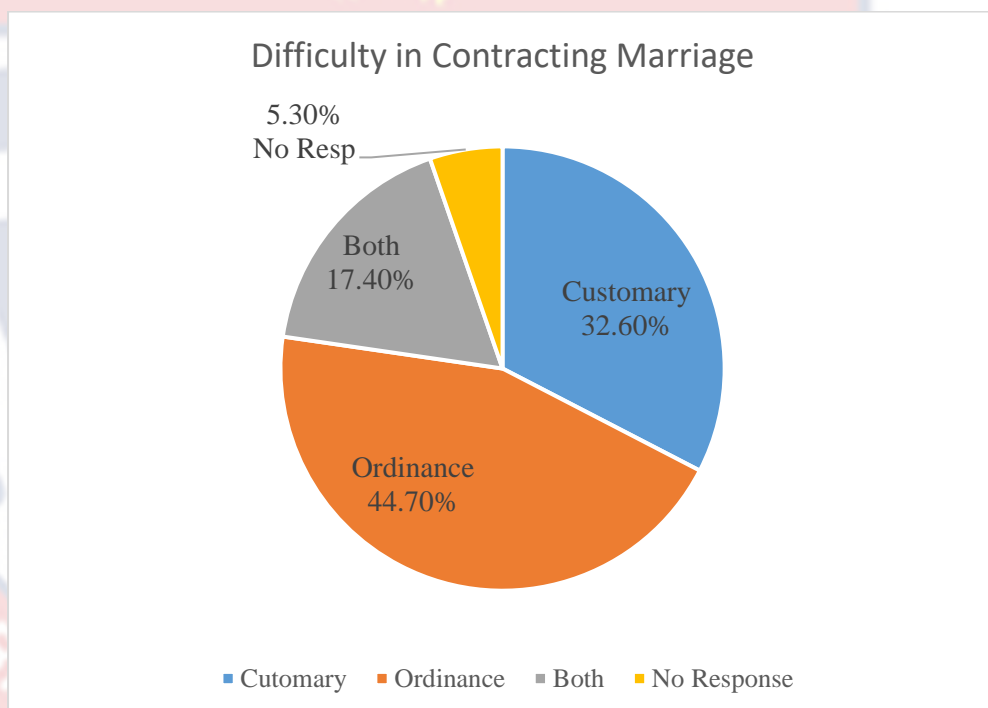


Figure 8: A pie chart showing the most difficult marriage to contract in CoP
Source: Field Study 2021

Ordinance marriage was seen to be difficult to contract followed by customary with eighty-five (44.7%) and sixty-two (32.7%) persons responding respectively. According to thirty-three people (17.4%), both customary and ordinance marriages are equally difficult to contract. Ten people representing 5.3% did not answer.

Inferring from the data, the researcher can validly say that the leadership of the Church sees ordinance marriage differently from how some members see it. The reason is that, while the leadership sees the way ordinance marriage is contracted as simple, majority of the respondents see it as difficult. This clearly shows that, some of the members face certain challenges in contracting ordinance marriage that is unknown or not appreciated by the leadership.

The difficulty in ordinance marriage in the view of the researcher might result from the fact that Ghanaians, generally, do not contract ordinance marriage without first performing the customary marriage. Again, it has become the norm in many communities to celebrate the customary marriage at the home in grand style. When the person is a Christian, and the customary is celebrated at home, it is again celebrated at church as ordinance.

Reflections on Findings

The objectives of the research centred on four already stated areas. The reflections of the field work, however, follow in that systematic order. First, the work provides a general overview of types of marriages in Ghana. Relating to that, the researcher found out that some members of the Church did not know the various types of marriage and what they entail. In this regard, some claimed that Christians could bless Islamic marriage. This seems to suggest that members need to be educated on the types of marriages in Ghana and its peculiarities.

Again, the second objective sought to find out biblical justification of marriage. In this respect, the purpose was to find out if church members have biblical basis for their claims concerning their various marriage choices. Over

90% of the members have a biblical view on that. Although the interpretations of some of the texts are questioned by scholars, majority of their views, nevertheless, reflect the Church's understanding of customary marriage. While the position of CoP's in interpretation of some of the scriptures is questionable, the focus is not to do hermeneutics of the text. Customary marriage in the Bible times was related to a particular context and historical interpretation of the texts is very crucial if one wishes to do hermeneutical or exegesis of the various Bible passages concerning marriage.

Moreover, a deeper reflection of marriage in the church under study, calls for a number of clarifications. Those who opt for customary marriage only are even denied a basic thing like the church certificate that is not legally binding. Again, if the Church is not interested in blessing customary marriage, it should be stated clearly in her writings so that members are not misled. Members are, therefore, confused about the type of marriage that is blessed in the church due to contradictory position of CoP. A clearer position of the Church is necessary.

Nonetheless, the Church should reconsider her position of its insistence on blessing marriage only at church since there is a growing craving for the Church to fully partake in the customary marriages celebrated, usually, in the house. As the Church indicated, the families contract marriage so, playing a passive role when it comes to customary marriage but playing a lead role when it is ordinance marriage deprived members of support needed from the church. Members whose acts do not contradict Scripture or pose institutional challenge ought to be supported fully.

Lastly, it is revealed that the main issue CoP has with customary marriage is more related to the issue that has to do with polygamy and spousal matrimonial cause. This has to do with spouses forfeiting certain properties upon demise of one party. This, in the view of the researcher, is not well understood by most church members. One identifiable anomaly in this regard is the fact that members are not well taught on marriage issues in the church. Also, there is the need to re-examine her stance of not blessing customary marriage since it is much demanded by the members and it is not against biblical principles of marriage. Notwithstanding, members should be educated and encouraged to register their marriages under the ordinance due to the advantages therein.

Conclusion

So far, it has been discovered that CoP used to bless customary marriage in the past mostly because there was no ordinance law. For instance, Annor-Antwi and Onyinah, (2016) revealed that the blessing of Onyinah's marriage was done at a Sunday evening service at Sunyani in February 1976. This was prior to the introduction of the Marriages Act Law. Consistently, the study reveals that although members of CoP embrace customary marriage, they abhor its polygamous nature.

Moreover, the perception of how some members see marriage in CoP as costly and difficult to contract stems from the individual's making since the Church consistently advocate for simple and modest celebration of marriage. As a matter of fact, partying that accompany celebration of marriage could not be attributed to the making of the Church but an individual choice. It should

also not be seen as a modern trend since it has remained in society for an exceptionally long time.

There are instances that people did not do it because of lack of money and others too did not deem it as a matter of importance. For instance, Onyinah had his wedding in 1976 and travelled in commercial vehicle the same day to church for the marriage to be blessed at church (ibid) whereas in 1982, Ntumy, as a young professional teacher, furnished his room, had some members of the Church paying for decoration and wedding dress and a member rendered catering services for the people free of charge including himself and the wife for one week (Ntumy, 2019).

Primarily, the study has established that CoP, although maintain in her books that they accept both the ordinance and Customary marriage; it partially embraces each of them unless the two are done. The reason is that it sees the customary marriage as insecure to the couple and considers the ordinance as more secured yet not culturally relevant. This calls for the reason of embracing the two. This, however, ought to be stated clearly and members should be well informed in order to address wrong perception that her members have about marriage in the church.

Finally, it has been uncovered that, despite the blending of the customary and the ordinance, the church negatively skewed toward customary marriage by denying their support as they do to ordinance. Church marriage certificate which has no legal binding is denied the couple who end their marriage rites at customary, the Church is also not fully represented and religious blessing is not pronounced on it either. These issues must be addressed to avoid future insurgencies of members.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This chapter provides the overview of the entire work of the research conducted. The chapter summarises each chapter vis-a-vis the objectives of the study. The conclusions derived from the study are also highlighted. Moreover, the chapter focuses on recommendations to the various stakeholders of the Church. Finally, new areas identified for further research is suggested in this chapter.

The researcher was interested to find out why The Church of Pentecost supposedly favours ordinance marriage over customary marriage. The work was to determine whether or not this is justifiable enough for the Church to take such a position. This was to enable the researcher to come out with appropriate recommendations and suggestions aimed at making marriage simple to contract in the church. For that reason, the following objectives guided the study:

- I. To provide a general overview of types of marriage in Ghana
- II. To provide biblical justification of customary marriage
- III. To discuss marriage in The Church of Pentecost.
- IV. To investigate issues that CoP has with customary marriage and explores the possibilities of accepting the customary marriage as the main form of contracting marriage in CoP.

In order to achieve the objectives stated above, the following research objectives guided the study:

- i. What are the types of marriages in Ghana?

- ii. What are the biblical bases of customary marriage?
- iii. How is marriage conducted in CoP?
- iv. What are the issues that CoP have with Customary Marriage?

Summary

The researcher employed the mixed-method approach to conduct the study, the reason aforementioned in chapter one of this work. As stated by Creswell (2014), this method provides a stronger understanding of the problem or question than by itself. Qualitative data was gathered through interviews and quantitative data was gathered by administering questionnaires. The data collected from the questionnaire was analysed using bar graphs, tables and pie charts. Quite often, the clustered bar graph was used in the analysis process.

Chapter one of the study was the introductory chapter. The background to the study was done, research objectives, questions and related research methods were discussed. Chiefly in the chapter was the reviewing of relevant literature. It ended with the organisation of the work.

Chapter two dealt with the types of marriages in Ghana. The researcher re-established that there are three valid forms of marriage in Ghana, namely: customary or traditional, Islamic or Mohammedan and civil or ordinance marriage. It looked at the various forms that each marriage takes and how independent each of the type of the marriage is. The customary marriage was seen to be more centred on the consent of the two families and could be contracted without regularisation. One major characteristic of it is its potential polygynous nature identified and the fact that it can be contracted anywhere anytime. With regards to Islamic marriage, it is preserved for those who

profess the Islamic faith. Ordinance marriage, nevertheless, was seen to be more regulated by two main laws: formal validity and essential validity. Also, the ordinance requirements were seen to be more alien to the Ghanaian cultural values. The necessity of it thereby pushes people to practise unofficial type of marriage that in the researcher's view is the fourth type of marriage: blending type of marriage. It is the situation whereby the customary marriage is required as prerequisite of ordinance marriage. One notable issue observed was that the type of marriage contracted determines the number of women that could be married: the customary is without limit, the Islamic permits up to five and the ordinance is strictly monogamous.

The chapter three addressed the third objective, the biblical basis of customary marriage. The general overview of marriage in the Old Testament put into sharp focus and the following elements came out:

1. That biblical marriage was purely customary in nature and the mixture of polygyny and monogamy were practised. However, biblical passages place the monogamy as the best type of marriage that secures peace and tranquillity.
2. That the type of marriage contracted in the biblical era typified the Ghanaian customary marriage: arranged marriage, consanguinity, betrothal, etc.
3. The book of Proverbs largely discusses the theme of marriage and the process of selecting a spouse, what to look for, qualities of ideal woman and ideal man discussed in the chapter is perfect match with what pertains to Ghanaian customary marriage.

The New Testament perspective on marriage was highlighted as well. Since the New Testament was written in the Greco-Roman era, references in the Gospels reflected that culture. It was evident that, the religiosity of marriage in modern Christianity was a heritage from the Hebrew – Greek – Roman origin.

Marriage in the Church of Pentecost was the focus of the fourth chapter. The chapter revealed that CoP started operating in 1937 and there was no document covering the issue of marriage and family life. It recently adopted marriage and family life as part of her tenets during the 2018 General Council Meeting held by the Church. In this chapter, the researcher exposed some lapses in the church's position on marriage. Some of these are:

1. The basis for rejection of polygamy is not convincingly explained.
2. The limitation put on customary marriage is not adequately explained.
3. The marital process in the Church appears contradictory at a point that states that the church does not have influence on the customary marriage but the ordinance. Meanwhile, the ordinance is accepted after the customary is fulfilled.

The chapter showed that the CoP blends customary marriage and the ordinance. Though the Church states that it accepts both, it is not to say that one is fully accepted but the blending of the two.

Conclusions

It was evident from the analysis that the information derived from the congregation and that of leadership do not converge in the sense that the congregation are more interested in customary marriage whereas the leadership are much interested in ordinance marriage. The data gathered generally shows that issues such as the process of contracting marriage and the

type of marriage that CoP upholds is not well taught or well understood by all members. This is evident in the response where some participants believed that the Church blesses Islamic marriage. It is expected that an average new convert should know this fact, but that was not the case even among respondents that have been in the Church for more than five years.

Another anomaly revealed from the study is the Church's unstated position regarding customary marriage. First, any attempt by the prospective couple to stick to only customary marriage rites did not receive any support from the church. The Church certificate cannot be issued by the church to them and are further denied pre-marital counselling. What the Church overlooks is that they still remain full members of the Church and whatever affects them will have effect on CoP in long run. The researcher is of the view that, even if a partner insists to end the marriage at customary, they should be allowed to go to the pre-marital counselling sessions thoroughly. It will serve the church better than to prevent them from undergoing counselling session. The reason is that the purpose of pre-marital counselling, as indicated by the church, is "to help individuals, couples and groups of couples to prepare for and build happy, fulfilling, Christ-honouring, and successful marriages" (The Church of Pentecost, Pre-Marriage Counselling Handbook, 2014: 11). The end of every marriage is not about where it is contracted but what transpires afterwards. Therefore, it is imperative for the Church to reconsider her decision in this regard.

In addition, the claim by CoP that ordinance marriage is for the betterment of the couples involved, especially the woman, but does not benefit the Church, is not clearly understood by majority of the members. This stands

to reason why majority are demanding that marriage rites should end at the customary level. When marriage rites ends at customary, there is much more influence from family than church or law. The only role that the Church plays in terms of customary is an advisory role but not to take a centre stage. I think, it is wrong for the CoP to dissociate herself from the customary marriage since that is mainly the interest of both families. With the vision of the Church to possess the Nations (See Vision 2023 document of CoP), it is untenable to leave customary marriage completely to the family which is the building block of the society. No nation can be possessed without first possessing the home. A passive role with regard to customary will be impossible to affect the home with the values and principles of the kingdom of God, a vision of CoP. (see Vision 2023 document of CoP).

Moreover, the work has revealed that the Church has issues with each of the two forms of marriages that the Church affirms to support, customary and ordinance. The study uncovered the proclivity for polygamy as the underpinning issue for the Church's decision not to end the marriage at the customary level. This was affirmed during the interviews as discussed extensively in chapter five. The relevance of culture to growth and development makes it difficult to do away with customary marriage completely. The researcher is of the view that, the traditional or customary marriage has more relevance to church growth and its practises that are an affront to the beliefs of CoP should be modified rather than an absolute rejection.

Ordinance marriage on the other hand does not appear to completely satisfy the Church's requirement. The Church is against the culturally

unconscionable disregard for parental consent, non-requirement of dowry and the fact that it can be contracted without the involvement of even any family member. Despite these facts, the study showed, in order to fill that lacuna, the Church requires the customary marriage as a necessary part that need to be satisfied before the ordinance marriage is contracted. It can be concluded emphatically that the main reason that ordinance marriage is esteemed so much is its appeal to monogamy.

Another phenomenal issue discovered is that leadership in the CoP have different perspectives about marriage different from their members and lay-leaders. Whiles the former sees ordinance marriage as simple to contract and that with less than two hundred Ghanaian cedis after the customary marriage, the latter see it otherwise. The celebratory aspects bring additional cost to the couple. Leadership must appreciate the fact that the Church belongs to the larger community. Consequently, the behaviour or whatever the society accepts as good influences the behaviour and perceptions of the members. Flamboyancy and merry-making is associated with modern-day marriage, whether customary or ordinance. For the Church to sit and wait at the receiving end, waiting for the customary marriage to be completed before they get involve in the ordinance could be usurious.

It must be indicated that, in this phenomenological study conducted, the researcher has established innovative ideas that in his view affirms existing knowledge he worked on. Some of them are espoused below.

First, as Cohen (1985) posited, society is a structure that needs to be made to function. One of the structures that make society function is marriage. In the church, if this cardinal structure is not reviewed by leadership to curtail

the desire to end marriage at customary, in the future the Church will stand to suffer. Members who are dissatisfied with the marital process either leave the Church or may ignore the Church and contract marriage.

Secondly, the study has revealed that in an attempt to Christianise marriage, it has ended up westernising it by enacting Western laws that did not consider Ghanaian cultural values. The Church over the years has remained silent on this alien marital law that is mistakenly called Christian marriage. The study has unveiled the need to redefine how Christian marriage ought to be contracted in CoP by taking into consideration and modelling customary marriage to suit the Christian faith.

Another important element that the study has brought to bear is that the study has made it clear that the strict social and spiritual sanctions that members face in breaking their marital vow is a factor that members shun the Church's procedure for marriage. This affirms Twene's position on the reason some Christians prefer not to marry under strict marital vows. He highlighted, "the belief and the subsequent fear of social and spiritual sanctions or punishment for breaking religious vows in marriage is another factor for Christians' reluctance to marry under "strict" marital vows" (Twene, 2019: 87).

The most expected challenge of contracting marriage in CoP was not provided by the respondents to the questionnaire. However, Ahenkan intimate that since the Church insists on officiating and blessing of marriage in CoP registered church buildings, one would anticipate that due to the importance attached to marriage, every District (cluster of Assemblies or church branches headed by full time minister) should have at least a chapel registered to

perform marriage functions. (Source: Personal communication with Ahenkan, 16th April, 2021). Unfortunately, this is not the situation on the ground. Report gathered from twenty-four (24) District ministers where the work was conducted painted a rather disturbing picture. Table 2 provided in chapter five buttresses the point. It stands to reason that some members face some difficulties when contracting marriage in such places. The tendencies are that it is partly conducted at the church by way of going through counselling, then the prospective couple register at the court and officiated at the court as well before is brought back to the church. Additionally, customary marriage takes place in the home before church blessing is conducted at the church.

Furthermore, the study revealed that majority of CoP members do not appreciate the role the Church plays in their marriage in terms of free services rendered. This could be due to ignorance or the position taken by the church that does not meet the expectation of members. This conclusion is arrived at based on the fact that respondents saw that the only advantage of ordinance is its stance against polygamy. They did not mention the advantage of security for the spouse at all or the help that the Church offers to the prospective couple.

Lastly, the work clearly demonstrated the answer to why the churches in Ghana, particularly CoP, are accused of making marriage difficult and prolonging marital process. It affirms the point of Oladele that, “almost all Ghanaians who marry under the ordinance marriage (CAP127) first go through formalities which would constitute a valid customary marriage” (Oladele, 2018: 82). The Church of Pentecost is no exception. The study has

affirmed that the customary marriage is not a *sine qua non* to contracting civil or ordinance marriage as Oladele, (2018) postulate.

Recommendations of the Study

The overview of this work points to the fact that marriage, being one of the contributing factors for numerical growth in the CoP (Jimmy, 2019) is fraught with challenges. Therefore, the following suggestions are recommended.

Providing Education to CoP members

Since majority of members of CoP are ignorant of the kind of marriage(s) that the Church accepts, there is the need to educate members with an appreciable level of intentionality. Again, because what leadership perceives to be the great benefit to members is different from what members think, educating them will bring them to understand and appreciate the position of CoP. As mentioned in chapter five, there is the need for church leadership to deliberately teach members on this issue. Additionally, the positions on some conflicting issues should be properly explained to members. For instance, the type of marriage the Church accepts and the reason(s) for its acceptance be made known to members. The conditions of acceptability of the customary marriage should as well be taught. Educating the members will demystify the erroneous notion that some members hold.

Providing Support for Customary Marriage Just as Ordinance Marriage

The researcher recommends that, CoP cannot positively influence marriage when they dissociate themselves from customary marriage. There must be flexibility with regard to blessing of marriage which is a religious ceremony. In this case, a prospective couple who fulfil the legal requirement

of registration of marriage at the court should not be forced to have their marriage to the church to be blessed especially at church buildings that are not registered. The option should be left to the couple since this does not violate any biblical principle. The researcher further recommends that the Church should fully get involved in the customary process in order to impart her positive values in that area. The passive role that CoP plays is not helpful because the actual marriage is what is contracted in the home as they indicate (See Pre-Marriage Counselling Book of the Church of Pentecost). The investigator maintains that the Church should fully participate instead of sending delegates to the customary marriage. Physical support should be giving in terms of donations, for instance, whereas the exchange of vows and prayer for blessing of the marriage could be done at the church if they so wish. With this, marriage at the church will take less than an hour and could be done on Sunday morning without interrupting the main service. This will save cost, time and make marriage simple.

Review of Literature of the Church on Christian Marriage and Strict Adherence to the Minister's Manual

CoP definition of Christian marriage should be redefined to avoid ambiguity. The researcher further recommends that the portion of Marriage and Family Life that is found in the book, Tenet of The Church of Pentecost should equally be reviewed. Certain positions need to be clearly defined with more biblical foundations rather than ordinary suppositions. For instance, the aspect on polygyny must be given special attention with sound biblical and logical suppositions.

Also, the Ministers' Manual, which suggest that CoP blesses customary marriage must be adhered to reflect the reality and practice. As it stands, the aspect that indicates ordinary blessing that was the preserve for customary marriage has lost its relevancy since the church claims that customary marriage is no longer blessed. It must be re-emphasised that when a customary marriage is successfully converted into ordinance the former ceases to exist (Offei, 1998).

Registering of Church Building for Celebrating Marriage in Each District

Since there is a legal requirement for ordinance marriage to be officiated at only registered church buildings, there is the need for CoP to formulate a policy that will compel every District to have at least one registered church building for the celebration of marriages. This will, in a way, make it more convenient for those who wish to celebrate their marriage at those places. This will avert any future legal challenge to marriages celebrated in unregistered churches.

The practice whereby members who intends to marry at church are advised to complete the registration and signing at the court and celebrate it in an unregistered church building should be discouraged since it prolongs the process for them. Also, from personal interaction, members demonstrated lack of interest of moving from one Assembly to the other to have their marriages celebrated. They felt unwelcomed and did not receive the necessary logistical support. To avert this unpleasant situation, this investigator recommends that all assemblies that have their church building completed should be mandated to have those buildings registered for marriages.

Documented Policy on Accepted Marriage Types in CoP

It is clear that CoP upholds chastity before marriage and any member who flout that policy will not have their marriage celebrated by the church and sometimes disciplined accordingly (See May, 2021 Pastoral Letter from Chairman). Nevertheless, there is no clearly documented direction when a member decides to marry outside the prescribed principles and procedures of the church. Moreover, when a married convert joins the church, there is no clear-cut policy of how those converts who are already married legally (either customary, Islamic or ordinance) are handled. The Church should indicate at what point these marriages are accepted as Christian marriage since they were not blessed by a gazetted CoP minister as they suggest. This will help clear the confusion of what marriage she accepts.

Promote the Review of the Marriages Act Law

The study reviewed that the provisions of the Marriages Act 1884-1985 (CAP 127) on ordinance marriage contravenes the culture of Ghanaian, hence it is in the main not fully complied with. There is the need to review the aspect of the law which permits two consenting adults to marry without the support of any of their family members. Since majority of Ghanaians profess to be Christians (See 2020 population and Housing Census), it is recommended that the customary marriage law, on the other hand, be reviewed to give room to religious bodies to practice their faith just as is done in the ordinance marriage. The ecumenical bodies should champion this course. For instance, the law should be amended to include such provisions as; if one professes to a monogamous faith and thereby marry traditionally according to that belief, the marriage should be recognised as such. Or when a

Muslim marries traditionally, the parties are bound by the Islamic marriage law. The ordinance marriage that the churches gravitate towards is purely secular and civil and any civil law could be amended without recourse to the Bible that is deemed a sacred book that informs Christian practices. Again, the clause of celebrating marriages at in registered church building should also be reviewed.

General Open Forum by Leadership of the Church

It is recommended that the Church of Pentecost organises a general open forum for her members to listen to the concerns some of the members have about customary marriage. This will enable CoP to appreciate the genuine challenges that members face in contracting marriage. This is premised on the study which has uncovered what members see as problematic the church's acceptable process of ending marriage rites at ordinance with various assigned reasons. Engaging the members to listen to their concerns will give a clearer picture to CoP to take informed decisions with regards to marriage.

Lastly, the importance of marriage cannot be overlooked in any church. Therefore, I suggest that CoP must include in New Members Manual and New Convert Manual, the process of contracting marriage and the belief and positions of the church on monogamy. To curtail the fear of the laxity of customary marriage, the flexible nature in handling challenges in marriage and the easy way to divorce as opined by Twene (2019), the Church should design a form that new converts and new members be made to sign. This could serve as additional evidence for their commitment to remain in monogamous marriage even if they marry customarily.

Recommendations for Further Research

The nature of the work has made it tough to offer a more general conclusion on issues that other Christian denominations have with customary marriage. Accordingly, the conclusions arrived at are contextually limited to the CoP. This means that the issues that some churches may have with customary marriage may be different as expressed and interpreted in this study. Notwithstanding, marriage issues are concerns of the churches in Ghana because they touch every corner of human and church development (Twene, 2019). Therefore, the following recommendations are made for further studies.

First, it is recommended that further studies be conducted in other denominations to compare results that will be used as the yardstick to confirm or reject the issues raised in this study. Since the study explored issues with customary marriage in The Church of Pentecost alone, it will be exceedingly difficult to generalise it to other denominations considering the differences in faith, beliefs and practises.

Again, it is worthy to research into why Christian churches seem not to be comfortable with only one form of marriage but turn to blend the customary and the ordinance. Almost all couples of Christian marriages first perform customary marriage before the ordinance (Oladele, 2018). Factors accounting for that must be ascertained scientifically. It is evidently clear that the ordinance does not fully and wholly serve the purpose of Christianity as well as customary marriage. Whiles the ordinance marriage hinges on legality, rather than morality, the churches place premium on morality. A scientific study concerning the best form of marriage that will serve the entire Christian community in Ghana will be necessary.

Lastly, the issue of whether or not the type of marriage one contracts has a bearing on the success of the marriage is not clearly established. A research work carried out in this direction will be of great benefit to all.



REFERENCES

- Abd al “Ati”, H. (1977). *The Family Structure in Islam*. Canada, University of Toronto Press.
- Acheampong, E. A. (2008). Matrimonial Property Division at Marriage Breakdown: The way forward. *KNUST Law Journal*,. 4, 1-40.
- Adams, W. (2015). *Conducting Semi-Structured Interviews*. Britain: Jossey-Bass Publishing Company.
- Adam Clarke’s commentary on Power BibleCD Version 4.
- Adinkra, K.O (1980). Ghana’s Marriage Ordinance: An Inquiry into a Legal Transplant for Social Change. *The Journal of Legal Pluralism and Unofficial Law*, 12(18). 1-42.
- Amenga-Etego, R. M. (2012). “Multiple marriage contracts: Christian marriages in contemporarily Ghana”. *Ogbomso Journal of Theology*, 17(3), 133-154.
- Ancient Rome History: <https://rome.mrdonn.org/weddings.html> accessed on 26th July, 2019.
- Annor-Antwi, G. & Onyinah, O. (2016). *Myth or Mystery: The Bio-Autobiography of Apostle Professor Opoku Onyinah*. UK: Inved.
- Bawa, J. A. (2015). Bride Price in Ghana. An assessment of its Social Representatives in Selected communities in Northern Ghana. *UDS International Journal of Development*, 2 (2) 77-87.
- Boss, J.A. (1999). *Analyzing Moral Issues*. USA: Mayfield Publishing Company.

Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia. "Marriage". *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 12 Feb. 2021, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/marriage>.

Accessed 14 January 2022.

Brown, S. L., & Wright, M. R. (2017). *Marriage, Cohabitation, and Divorce in Later Life. Innovation in Aging*, Vol. 00, No. 00, 1–11.

Caldwell, J. C. (1982). *Theory of fertility decline*. London: Academic Press.

Chapman, G. (1977). *African Christian Marriage*. University of California, USA.

Çiğdem, R. (2015). Interfaith Marriage in Comparative Perspective. *Acta Orientalia Academia Scientiarum Hung*, 68(1), 59–86.

Cohen, P. A. (1985). *The Symbolic Construction of Community*. London: Ellis Horwood Limited.

Coontz, S. (2005). *Marriage, A History; From Obedience to Intimacy, or How Love Conquered Marriage*. New York: Viking Press, Penguin Group.

Customary Marriage and Divorce (Registration) Law 1985 (PNDCL 112).

Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks: CA: Sage.

Crook, M. B. (1954). *The Marriageable Maiden of Proverbs 31:10–31*. JNES 13.

Dell, K. J. (2006). *The Book of Proverbs in Social and Theological Context*. New York, Cambridge University Press.

Dery, I. (2015). Bride price and domestic violence: Empirical perspectives from Nandom District in the north western region of Ghana. *International Journal of Development Sustainability*, 4(3), 258-271.

Dodd, C.H. (1963). *Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel*. Britain: Cambridge University Press.

Eduafo-Abraham, R. (2019). *Is 'engagement' a legal marriage?* Retrieved from <https://www.myjoyonline.com/opinion/2019/January-10th/is-engagement-a-legal-marriage.php>.<https://www.amazon.com/Pauls-Macedonian-Associations-Wissenschaftliche-Untersuchungen/dp/3161480740>

Fyzee, A. A. (2008). *Outline of Mohammedan Law*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Forkuor, J. B. et al. (2018). Bride Price and the State of Marriage in North-West Ghana. *International Journal of Social Science Studies*, 6, (9).

Hastings, A. (1973). *African Christian Marriage*. London, Scottish: Theology Press.

Hess, R.S. (2008). "Feminist Interpretation" in *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Wisdom, Poetry and Writings*. Nottingham, England: InterVarsity Press. http://www.ccel.org/contrib/exec_outlines/pr/pr_02.htm historylink101.com/2/greece3/marriage.htm accessed on 18th May, 2021).

Jameison Fausset-Brown commentary on Proverbs 31:10-31 (2005) by Online Publishing, Inc.127 N. Matteson Street PO Box 21, Bronson, MI 49028.

Kodua, A. (2019). *Managing the Decline of Christianity in the Western World: Lessons for Churches in the Developing World*. Mumbai, India: Quarterfold Printabilities.

Korah, G. B. (2014). 'If it's your money, I will pay and go': shifting and contested significance of bride price payment among the Dagaaba of

Northwest Ghana. *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, 49(3), 332-346.

Köstenberger, A. J. & Jones D.W. (2004). *God, Marriage & Family: Rebuilding the Biblical Foundation*. Midwestern Seminary.

Kumekpor, M. L. (1975). *Marriage and Divorce Under the Matrimonial Causes Act, Legon Family Research Papers*. Accra, Ghana: University of Ghana.

Kumekpor, T. K. (2009). *Marriage and divorce under the matrimonial causes act*. Accra: Banner of Truth Press.

Lenski, R.C.C.H (1943). *The Interpretation of St. John's Gospel*. USA: Augsburg Publishing House.

Leonard, C. (1989). *A Giant in Ghana: 3000 Churches in 50 years – The Story of James McKeown and the Church of Pentecost*. Chichester: New Wine Press.

Licht, H Sexual Life in Ancient Greece. London: G. Routledge & Sons, *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 52(2):312-312.

Mairl, L. (1974). *Christian Marriage in Africa*. By Adrian Hastings. London: SPCK.

Markin, A. J. (2019). *Transmitting the Spirit in Missions: The History and Growth of the Church of Pentecost*. U.S.A: Wipf and Stock Publishers.

Matembe, M. (2000). *The relationship between domestic violence and bride price*. Paper presented at the International Bride Price Conference, Kampala, Uganda.

McCreesh, T. (1985). *Wisdom as wife: Proverbs 31:10-31*. *Revue Biblique* (1946-), 92(1), 25-46.

Mbiti, J.S. (1969). *African Religion and Philosophy*. London: Heinemann.

Ministerial Handbook of the Church of Pentecost (2018). Accra, Ghana: Pentecost Press Limited.

Murphy, R. E. (1998). *Proverbs, Word Biblical Commentary 22*. Nashville: T. Nelson.

New King James Bible, soft copy on the Power Bible CD Version4 (All Bible verses quoted are taken from this version unless otherwise stated).

Ngundu, A. O. (2010). *Mission Churches and African Customary Marriage: A history of Church Marriages and a Case for an African Christian*. Dallas, LAP LAMBERT, University of Cambridge: Academic Publishing.

Ntumy, M. (2019). *The Fire Continues to Burn: Autobiography of Apostle Dr. Michael Ntumy*. Mumbai, India: Quarterfold Printabilities.

Offei, W. (1998). *Family Law in Ghana*. Accra, Ghana: Sebewe Publishers.

Oladele, K. A (2018). *Marriage Registration & Divorce in Ghana: Law and Procedure*. Accra, Ghana: QualiType Limited.

Oladele, K.A. *A paper presented at a seminar held for pastors of The Church of Pentecost in Accra, 10th April, 2018.*

Owusu-Boateng, W. (2015). Impact of Christianity on Customary Marriage among the Akans in Ghana: A Study at Yeji in the Brong Ahafo Region, Ghana. *The International Journal Research Publications. Research journal of Commerce & Behavioural Sciences*, 5(1), 107–115.

Perkins P. (2003). *Paul's Macedonian Associations: The Social Context of Philippians and 1Thesalonians*. Boston, U.S.A: Boston College.

Schapera, I. (1966). *Married Life in an African Tribe*. Evanston, U.S.A: North
– Western University Press.

Shamoo, A. E., & Resnik, B. R. (2003). *Responsible Conduct of Research*.
Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.

Stone, H. M., & Stone, A. (1939). *Marriage Manual*; New York, U.S.A:
Simon & Schuster.

Stone J.R. (2006). *The Routledge Book of World Proverbs*. Taylor & Francis
e-Library.

Stritof, S. (2021). *What Is the Definition of Marriage?* Retrieved from
<https://www.brides.com/definition-of-marriage-2303011>

Swatson J. (1997). *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains:
Hebrew (Old Testament)*. Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

Tenets of The Church of Pentecost (Eds.). (2019). Mumbai, India: Quarterfold
Printabilities.

The Church of Pentecost: Ministers' Handbook, (2014). Dansoman-Accra,
Ghana: Pentecost Press Limited.

The Constitution of the Church of Pentecost (2016). Dansoman-Accra, Ghana:
Pentecost Press Limited.

The Church of Pentecost (2014). *Pre-Marital Counselling Handbook*.
Dansoman-Accra, Ghana: Pentecost press limited.

The Church of Pentecost, The Minister's Manual (2016). Dansoman-Accra,
Ghana: Pentecost press limited.

Troy L. (2020) *Does 2Samuel 12 Support Polygamy?* retrieved from
<https://answersingenesis.org/contradictions-in-the-bible/does-2samuel-12-support-polygamy/>

Twene, A. (2019). *Christianity and Marriage in Africa: The Perspective of Christian Men in Ghana*. Norway: Norwegian School of Theology.

Tyndale House (2018). *Why The Proverbs are so Important*. Retrieved from <https://www.tyndale.com/sites/unfoldingfaithblog/2019/09/12/why-the-proverbs-are-so-important/>

Voorhoeve, M. (2012). *Family Law in Islam: Divorce, Marriage and Women in the Muslim World*. New York, London: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd.

Vorster J M, (2009). *Christian Ethical Perspective in Marriage and Family Life in Modern Western Culture*. School of Ecclesiastical Sciences North – West University: Hervormde Teologiese Studies.

Whybray, R. N. (1965). *Wisdom in Proverbs*, SBT 45, London: SCM Press.

Williamson, R.C (1966). *Marriage and Family Relations*. USA: John Willy and Sons Inc.

www.pewforum.org/fact-sheet/gay-marriage-around-the-world/ accessed 5th Sept. 2020.

Ventureyra, S. (2015). The women in the book of proverbs: Woman wisdom versus woman folly. *American Journal of Biblical Theology*, 16 (24), 1-19. Retrieved from <http://www.biblicaltheology.com/Research/VentureyraS01.pdf>

Other Sources

2021 Population and Housing Census in Ghana.

Interview with Apostle Philip Osei-Korsah held on 13th April, 2021.

Interview with Former Registrar of Marriages, Lawyer Kwaku Oladele Aribike on 4th May, 2021.

Interview with Pastor Kofi Ahenkan (Rtd.), A Retired Minister of CoP, on 16th April, 2021.

Interview with Sarah Bempong, a magistrate court judge, on Thursday 13th April, 2021.

Marriage Laws Around the Globe, accessed 11th December, 2019.

May, 2021 Pastoral Letter from Chairman's Office.

PNDCL 263.

PNDL 112.

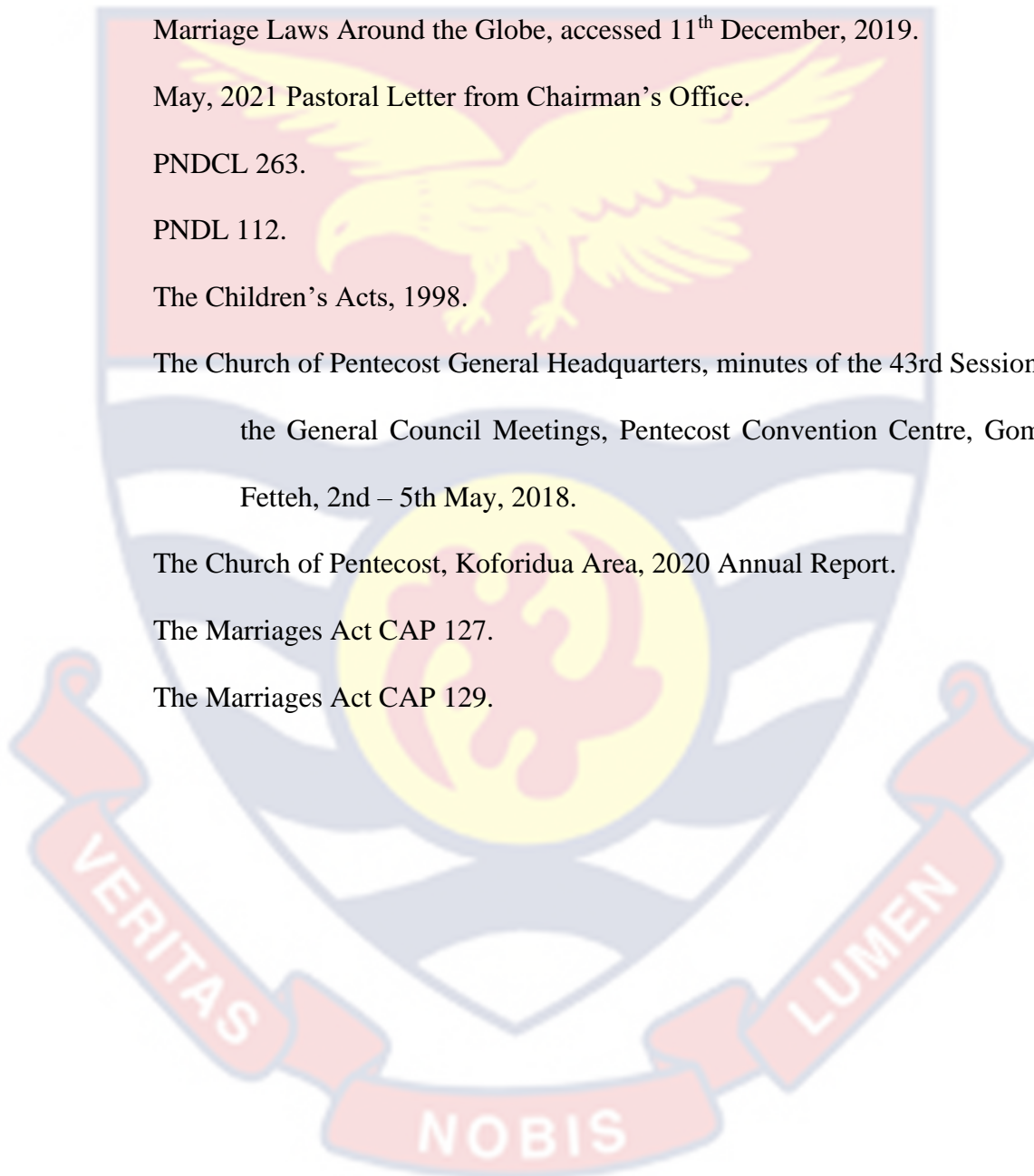
The Children's Acts, 1998.

The Church of Pentecost General Headquarters, minutes of the 43rd Session of the General Council Meetings, Pentecost Convention Centre, Gomoa Fetteh, 2nd – 5th May, 2018.

The Church of Pentecost, Koforidua Area, 2020 Annual Report.

The Marriages Act CAP 127.

The Marriages Act CAP 129.



APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

DEPARTMENT OF RELIGION AND HUMAN VALUES

THE CHURCH OF PENTECOST AND THE CUSTOMARY

MARRIAGE IN GHANA

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR SELECTED CoP MEMBERS / OFFICERS

AND MINISTERS

This questionnaire has been intended to gather information for an ongoing research work to determine the issues The Church of Pentecost has concerning Customary / Traditional Marriage and to determine the possibility of its adoption as the more accepted form of marriage in CoP. It would be appreciated if you could help by providing your honest answers to the questions below. You are guaranteed that your answers will be treated confidential.

1. How old are you? A. 13-19 years B. 20-35 years C. Above 35 years
2. How long have you been a member of The Church of Pentecost (CoP)?
A. Less than 5 years B. Between 6-10 years C. Above 10 years
3. What role do you play at church? A. Member B. Ordained Officer (Elder/Deacon/Deaconess) C. Minister

Section 1. Biblical Justification of Customary Marriage

1. Is Customary Marriage biblical? A. Yes B. No
2. Give one example of people in the Bible that married customarily

.....
.....

3. What is the scripture that is most often quoted in the blessing of marriage in CoP?

.....
.....

4. Which of the following type of marriage do you find it to be more biblical?

- A. Customary B. Ordinance C. Both

5. Should a Christian who marry Customary be permitted to marry more than one? A. Yes B. No

6. What is the reason for your answer in the question above?

.....
.....
.....

Section 2. Marriage in CoP

1. Are you married? A. Yes B. No

2. Which of these types of marriage(s) do CoP accept? Note: You can choose more than one.

- A. Customary / Traditional Marriage B. Ordinance Marriage / Church Wedding C. Islamic Marriage

3. Which of these is most often blessed at Church? A. Customary / Traditional Marriage

B. Ordinance Marriage / Church Wedding C. Islamic Marriage

4. Do couples who marry traditionally only in the church go through counselling? A. Yes B. No

5. Are you satisfied with how marriage is handled in CoP? A. Yes B. No

6. If no to the above question state at least one reason

.....
.....
.....

Section 3. Testing the best marriage form to adopt in CoP

1. Which of these Marriages would you prefer the church to accept as the main form of marriage in CoP?

A. Customary / Traditional Marriage blessed at church B. Ordinance

Marriage blessed at church

C. Customary Marriage converted into ordinance marriage before they are blessed at church

2. Briefly state your reason for your answer in the question above

.....
.....
.....

3. Which of these type of marriage do you consider to be more advantageous to the Christian?

A. Customary / Traditional Marriage blessed at Church B. Ordinance

Marriage blessed at Church C. Customary marriage Converted and blessed at church

4. List the advantage(s) of your preferred answer in the question above.

.....
.....

5. Which of the following do you dislike about Ghanaian Customary marriage

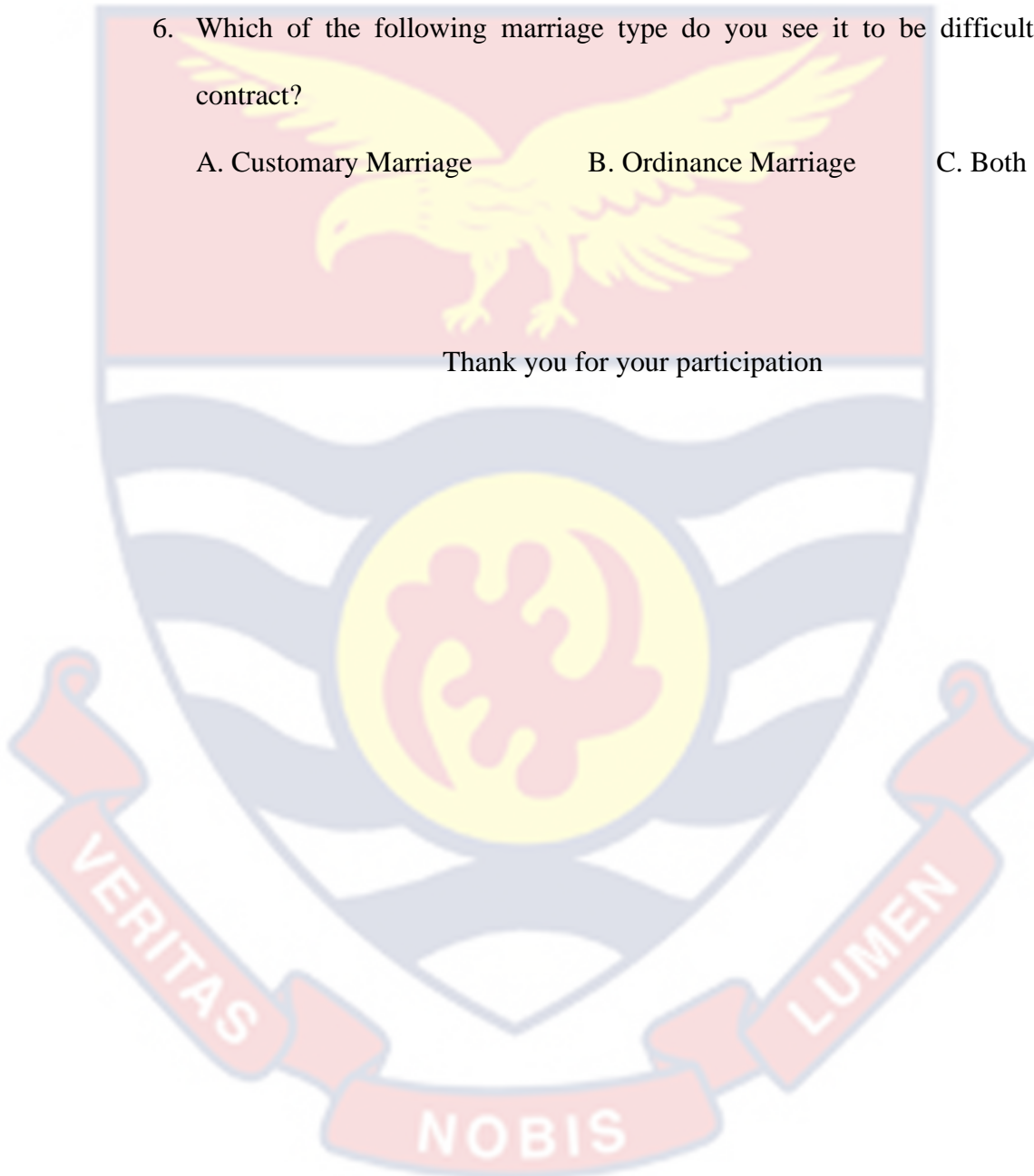
A. It permits polygamy B. Customary marriage is not biblical

C. It is difficult to contract

6. Which of the following marriage type do you see it to be difficult to contract?

A. Customary Marriage B. Ordinance Marriage C. Both

Thank you for your participation



APPENDIX B**UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST****DEPARTMENT OF RELIGION AND HUMAN VALUES****THE CHURCH OF PENTECOST AND CUSTOMARY MARRIAGE****IN GHANA****INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR SELECTED MARRIED PERSON WHO
MARRIED UNDER CUSTOMARY MARRIAGE ONLY**

This questionnaire has been designed as a guide to gather information for a research work being embark on to determine the issues The Church of Pentecost has concerning Customary / Traditional Marriage and to determine its possibility of adopting as the more accepted form of marriage in CoP. It would be appreciated if you could help by providing your honest response to the questions below. You are guaranteed that your answers will be treated with highest concealment.

1. How long have you been married?
A. Less than 5 years B. Between 5-10 years C. More than 10 years
2. Were you a Christian when you married?
A. Yes B. No
3. If yes, were you taken through formal counselling before the Customary Marriage? A. Yes
B. No
4. What type of marriage did you contract? A. Customary and Ordinance B. Customary only?
5. Was the marriage blessed by a minister of the church? A. Yes B. No

6. Do you intend to convert the marriage into ordinance?

- A. Yes
- B. No

7. State the reason(s) for converting the marriage into ordinance.

.....

.....

.....

8. Which of these types of marriage will you prefer that the Church promotes?

- A. Customary marriage Christianised at church
- B. Ordinance Marriage Christianised at church
- C. Customary marriage converted to Ordinance and later blessed at church

9. Which of these marriages do you think is more advantageous to adopt as a church

- A. Blessing of Customary Marriage
- B. Blessing of Ordinance Marriage
- C. Both

10. What are some of the advantages you see for your answer to the previous question?

.....

.....

.....

Thank you for your participation

APPENDIX C

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

DEPARTMENT OF RELIGION AND HUMAN VALUES

THE CHURCH OF PENTECOST AND THE CUSTOMARY

MARRIAGE IN GHANA

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR HEAD OFFICE - COUNSELLING UNIT

This questionnaire has been designed as a guide to gather information for an ongoing research work to determine the issues The Church of Pentecost has concerning Customary / Traditional Marriage and to determine its possibility of adopting as the more accepted form of marriage in CoP. It would be appreciated if you could help by providing your honest response to the questions below. You are guaranteed that your answers will be treated with confidential.

CoP and Customary Marriage

1. Which form(s) of marriage do CoP accepts?
2. What are the factors that motivates CoP to accept those forms of marriages?
3. Were Marriages blessed in CoP before the introduction of the Marriages Acts?
4. Do any of the marriages pose problems for CoP as a Christian denomination? What are they?
5. How was marriages blessed in CoP before the introduction of the Marriages Acts?
6. A. What were the requirements before they were blessed?

- B. What are the requirements of accepting a particular marriage as a Christian marriage in CoP now?
7. A. Do CoP currently bless Customary Marriage that is not converted into ordinance?
- B. If no why?
8. A. Is there any difference between blessing of marriage and officiating marriage as marriage officer in CoP?
- B. If yes, what is / are the difference(s)?
9. What will be the challenge if Customary Marriage is blessed without converting it into ordinance?
10. How do you explain the two provisions in the ministers' manual of CoP caption: "A. Blessing of Ordinance Marriage and B. Ordinary blessing?"
11. Has Customary Marriage posed some threats to the church other than Ordinance Marriage?
12. Does the Church accept into full fellowship, a couple who marry customarily without converting it into ordinance?
13. What will be the church position if a member opts for only Customary Marriage?
- A. What role will the counselling team play?
- B. What will be the position of the minister if he is asked to pronounce a blessing on the marriage?
14. If given opportunity, will you propose any new type of marriage for Christians in Ghana? Why?

APPENDIX D

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

DEPARTMENT OF RELIGION AND HUMAN VALUES

THE CHURCH OF PENTECOST AND THE CUSTOMARY
MARRIAGE IN GHANA**Interview Guide (Marriage Officer & Magistrate Court Judge): General
Overview of Marriage in Ghana**

This interview guide is intended to gather information for an ongoing research work to determine the issues The Church of Pentecost has concerning Customary / Traditional Marriage and to determine the possibility of its adoption as the more accepted form of marriage in CoP. It would be appreciated if you could help by providing your honest opinion to the following interview questions below. You are guaranteed that your answers will be confidential.

1. A. How many types of valid forms of marriages do we have in Ghana?
B. What are they?
2. A. Which of the marriages qualifies as Christian Marriage?
B. What makes a Christian marriage if any?
3. Is it legally accepted to contract ordinance or civil marriage without performing customary marriage?
4. Can customary marriage be registered without converting it to ordinance?
5. Is there a law in Ghana that prevents a minister from blessing unregistered Customary Marriage?
6. What are the main challenges that Christian Marriage faces in terms of legal requirement?

7. What type of marriage is most often registered at your office?

A. Ordinance:

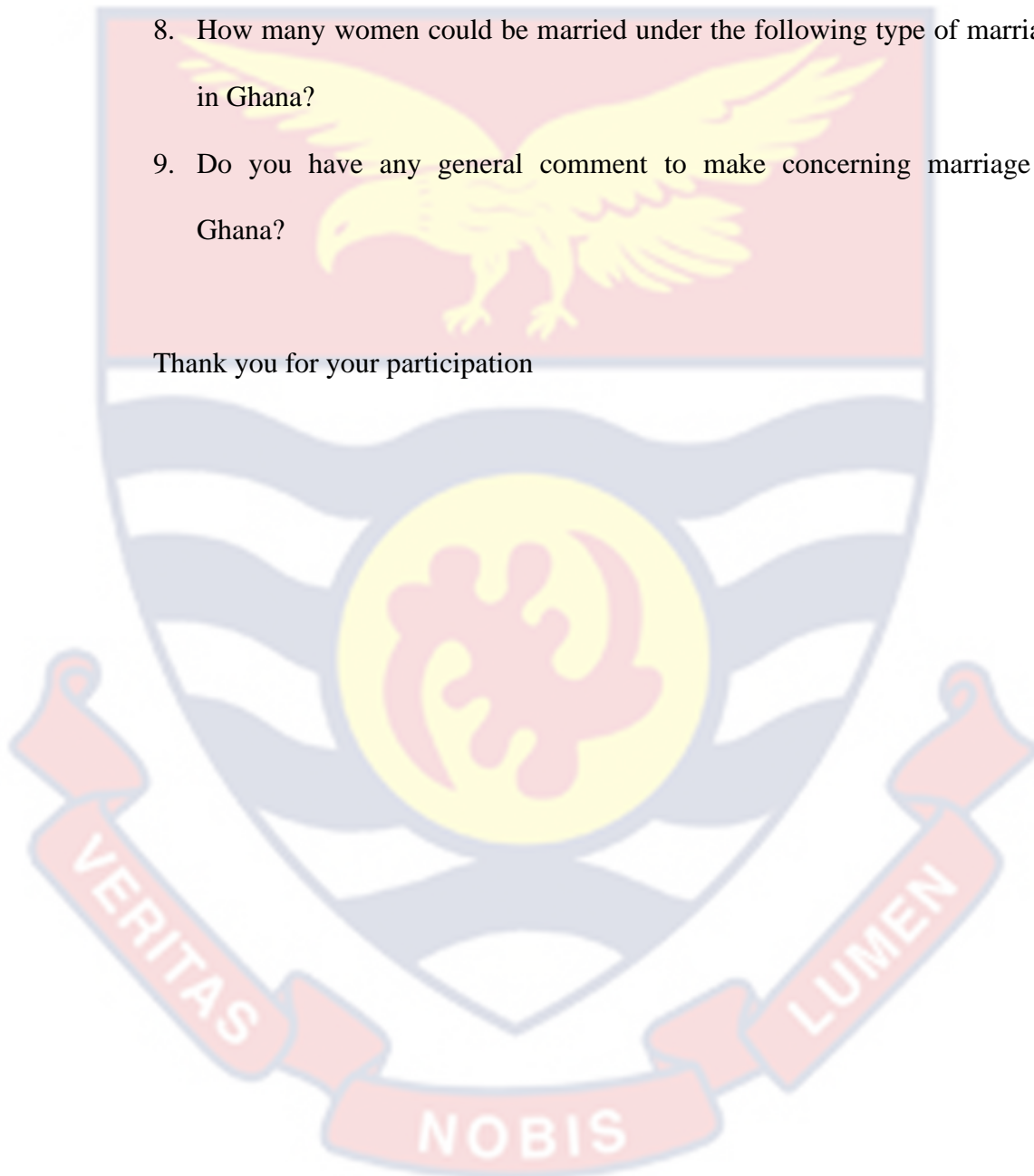
B. Islamic:

C. Customary:

8. How many women could be married under the following type of marriage in Ghana?

9. Do you have any general comment to make concerning marriage in Ghana?

Thank you for your participation



APPENDIX E

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

DEPARTMENT OF RELIGION AND HUMAN VALUES

THE CHURCH OF PENTECOST AND THE CUSTOMARY
MARRIAGE IN GHANA**Interview Schedule (Registrar of Marriages): General Overview of
Marriage in Ghana**

This in-depth interview guide is intended to gather information for a research work being embark on to determine the issues The Church of Pentecost has concerning Customary / Traditional Marriage and to determine its possibility of adopting as the more accepted form of marriage in CoP. It would be appreciated if you could help by providing your honest opinion to the following interview questions below. You are guaranteed that your answers will be treated confidential.

1. A. How many types of valid forms of marriages do we have in Ghana?
B. What are they?
2. A. Which of the marriages qualifies as Christian Marriage?
B. What makes a Christian marriage if any?
3. Is it legally accepted to contract ordinance or civil marriage without performing customary marriage?
4. Can customary marriage be registered without converting it to ordinance?
5. Is there a law in Ghana that prevents a minister from blessing unregistered Customary Marriage?
6. What are the main challenges that Christian Marriage faces in terms of legal requirement?

7. What type of marriage is most often registered at your office?

A. Ordinance:

B. Islamic:

C. Customary:

8. How many women could be married under the following type of marriage in Ghana?

9. Do you have any general comment to make concerning marriage in Ghana?

Thank you for your participation

