

PROJECT ABSTRACT

Master of Arts in Pastoral Theology

Adventist University of Africa

Theological Seminary

TITLE: AN ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPACT OF MARITAL CULTURAL PRACTICES ON THE CHRISTIAN MARRIAGES AT MITYANA SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH, CENTRAL UGANDA CONFERENCE

Researcher: Ssenuuni Daniel

Faculty Advisor: Ampofo Akyiano Benjamin, DMin

Completion date: June 2016

The purpose of this study was to assess the impact of cultural practices of marriage traditions and the impact that these traditions may have on Christian marriage among the members of Mityana Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) Church in Uganda. This study was embarked upon because marriage is one of the foundations of the church and society. Therefore, if marriage is not built on strong foundations, the individual, church, and society may suffer. Mityana SDA Church is primarily made up of three tribal groups—the Baganda, Banyarwanda, and the Bakonzo. While there are other small tribes in the church, these three major tribes have distinct cultural marriage traditions and are the focus of this study.

The researcher used a set of questionnaires to collect quantitative data related to the marital status and perspectives toward marriage among Mityana members. It was

found that of the 500 Mityana Church members, 39.4% (197) were married. Of that group, 42.1% (83) of respondents were in marriages that they described as having been approved by the Church, and 57.8% (114) were in marriages that they described as not approved by the Church. Respondents in all age groups expressed that they had challenges with marriage and how to live within Christian standards. Additionally, respondents indicated that following the biblical teachings on marriage was a challenge due to their tribal cultural marriage traditions; that they desired to more closely follow the biblical standards for marriage as practiced by the SDA Church; and that they wanted to learn ways to improve their marriage.

In order to promote a positive impact and assessment, a seminar program was conducted in the Mityana Church based on Christian marriage principles. It was designed to raise awareness among the members. Visitation of married members was done by the pastor and elders, who received special training for visitation to discuss marriage. At the end of the training and visitation program, seventeen couples (14.9%) registered to be married with church approval.

The study concluded that the biblical standard for marriage was desired among the church members in Mityana. It also showed that adequate education could help church members to make better decisions for marriage and provide ways for marriages to be closer to the biblical standard. The study offered recommendations for future study at the end of the paper.

Adventist University of Africa

Theological Seminary

AN ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPACT OF MARITAL CULTURAL
PRACTICES ON THE CHRISTIAN MARRIAGES AT
MITYANA SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH,
CENTRAL UGANDA CONFERENCE

A project

presented in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree

Master of Arts in Pastoral Theology

by

Daniel Ssenuuni

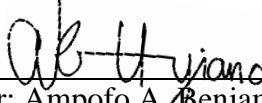
June 2016

AN ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPACT OF MARITAL CULTURAL
PRACTICES ON THE CHRISTIAN MARRIAGES AT
MITYANA SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH,
CENTRAL UGANDA CONFERENCE

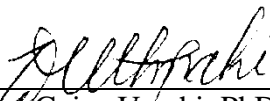
A project
presented in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree
Master of Arts in Pastoral Theology

by
Daniel Ssenuuni


APPROVAL BY THE COMMITTEE:




Advisor: Ampofo A. Benjamin, DMin



Reader: Gaius Umahi, PhD



Programme Director, MAPTh
Davidson Razafiarivony, PhD



Dean, Theological Seminary
Sampson Nwaomah, PhD

AUA Main Campus

Date: July 2017

This research project is dedicated to my dear wife, Hope Ssenuuni, and my six sons, Ssazi, Mwesezi, Tusubira, Kayima, Muwanguzi and Sekyanzi, who encouraged me and provided a conducive atmosphere at home during the time I spent doing this research. It is also dedicated to the Uganda Union and Central Uganda Conference administration who paid for all my studies. Mityana Seventh-day Adventist Church is highly valued.

Finally, I am grateful to my sovereign God.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES	vii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	viii
CHAPTER	
1. INTRODUCTION	1
Statement of the Problem.....	2
Purpose of the Study	2
Significance of the Study	2
Methodology	3
Delimitations.....	3
Definition of Terms.....	3
2. THE THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATION OF MARRIAGE.....	5
Old Testament and New Testament Times.....	7
Ellen G. White Counsel	13
Seventh-day Adventist Understanding	15
Other Authors.....	16
3. A DESCRIPTION OF THE LOCAL SETTING.....	19
Ethnic Groups in Mityana.....	19
Settlement of These Tribes in Mityana.....	23
Territory	24
Occupation of the People of Mityana	24
Social Behaviors	25
Religious Background.....	25
Culture and Traditions of People	26
Marriage in Mityana Church.....	26
Data Analysis	27
4. PROGRAM DESIGN.....	33
Program Development	33
Facilitators.....	34
Program.....	35

Seminar Findings	36
Visitation.....	39
A Comparison of Christian Principles to Tribal Cultural Practices.....	39
Assessment of the Desired Christian Principles	40
Program Evaluation	41
5. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS	43
Summary.....	43
Conclusion	44
Recommendations.....	45
APPENDICES	47
A. QUESTIONNAIRE	48
B. CORRESPONDENCE.....	49
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	51
VITA.....	54

LIST OF TABLES

1. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents	28
2. Number of Approved and Not Approved Marriages by Tribes	29
3. Respondents Who Value Marriage as God's Institution	29
4. Acceptance of Dowry Payment	30
5. Showing Acceptability of Dating for Christians.....	31
6. Elopement is Rampant in the Church	31
7. Church Cares for Approved and Not Approved Marriages	32
8. Attended Seminars of Family Life.....	32

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I thank the Almighty God, the Sustainer of life and all plans, who made this program a success and enabled me to complete the Master's Degree under His guidance. I feel so moved to thank my beloved supervisor Professor Ampofo Benjamin Akyiano, the Vice-chancellor of the Adventist University of Lukanga in the Democratic Republic of Congo, for his acceptance and his efforts during the progression of the work. His positive, systematic and intellectual pastoral handling has yielded good results.

I thank the Uganda Union and the Central Uganda Conference for the financial assistance during my study. My gratitude goes to Mityana SDA Church for being good respondents this made this project a success.

Furthermore, I thank Mr. Magulu Sembeguya for the technical assistance in internet linkages and access. I thank Mr. Ntaganira Peter for his tireless coordination, Brother Ephraim Kaluganda who wrote views in the seminar for each tribe, the Family Ministries leader, Mr. Kazairwe Edward, and the Church Clerk, Gita Joseph. Jeff Wasswa, for encouraging me on matters of research. My best gratitude goes to my beloved wife, Hope Ssenuuni, for her help, assistance, and prayer for the project while she looked after the family.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The Seventh-day Adventist Church of Mityana has believers who have been married not according to the biblical standards in the Church. Some of these members got married without church approval. Because of that, these people marry using their cultural practices that are obtained from their tribes. These marital practices have marriage standards in Baganda, Banyarwanda, Bakonjo and other tribes. If a person reaches a desirable age of marriage and would seek to have a partner, the individual decides to use this channel. Elopement, among other ways, is considered as the easiest way of getting into marriage. In these marriages, there is no church and parental care to set marriage on a spiritual ground.

Mr. Kanyangoga, one of the participants in a seminar on the issue of elopement said that “if one would like to marry, elopement is best, it reduces the cost of paying the dowry.”¹ The marriage record book indicates that in the years 2014 and 2015 among the married believers, 7 and 14 couples were wedded respectively. The total number of wedded couples whose marriages were not approved were 4 by 2014 and 8 by 2015.²

¹ Daniel Ssenuuni, “Seminar Held at Mityana Seventh-Adventist Church,” 2015.

² Mityana SDA Church, “Marriage Registration 2012-2015” (Mityana Seventh-day Adventist Church, 2015).

Statement of the Problem

Cultural marital practices have destroyed the concept of Christian marriage in many churches, including SDA churches. Further, it is believed that following various cultural marital practices, it has impacted Christian faith negatively. This has impelled the researcher to find satisfactory solutions to the problem.

Purpose of the Study

The research was aimed at reducing the non-approved marriages in Seventh-day Adventist Church of Mityana. This will also assist the church members to understand and appreciate the Christian values of marriage. Such traditional marriage practices that sometimes confuse Christians and non-Christian people alike would be better understood. Perhaps one of the most important benefits was that the study may be a means of enhancing relationships between members of the church and build bridges to the community.

Significance of the Study

The study focuses on marriage that seems not to be approved in church and Government, which is under the influence of cultural practices. Other scholars appear to have explored this to address the rampant failures of married persons in the society. However, the suppression of Christian marriage by cultural practices seemed not to have been addressed. This study gives way to approve these marriages to a Christian standard and to benefit the Christian believers of Mityana SDA and the community at large. This is part of the researcher's focus of which, there are areas that have been left unexplored that also need to be addressed.

Methodology

The cultural marital assessment began with a theoretical study of Biblical concepts of the Old and New Testament times. Secondly, it analyzed the data regarding the typical practices Christians have today in marriage. The study surveyed the cultural practices found in the tribes which also the Seventh-day Adventist Christians have adopted in marriage, looking at views about the principles of Christian marriage. An analysis of the data was made to have a comparison of Christian practices to cultural marital practices, design a program, implement and evaluate on the suggested standard to follow as principles in marriage in the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Mityana. It also proposes to introduce programs that may positively impact the marriages of the Church.

Delimitations

This research is delimited to some of the marriage practices prevalent in tribal groups of Mityana, specifically of Baganda, Banyarwanda, Bakonzo, and other small tribal groups.

Definition of Terms

Tribal cultural marriage traditions: These are marriage customs that are tribal in origin and in nature and these traditions generally do not follow the Christian or biblical principles as practiced in the SDA church.

Marriage approved by the church: Marriages that the church gives approval are built on the Christian belief that marriage is:

1. A biblical institution, blessed by God;
2. To be entered into with a desire to please God;

3. A union between one man and one woman who vow to be committed and faithful to each other as long as they live;
4. A ceremony that is performed in the church as a sign of approval and registered with the government as required by law.

Marriage not approved by the church: Marriages that the church does not approve of because they are:

1. Entered into with no regard for Christian or biblical principles;
2. Performed by the government only;
3. Not performed in the church because the union is contrary to church standards.

Elopement: Marriage that is conducted in secret; couples generally leave home, and parental permission are not obtained.

CHAPTER 2

THE THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATION OF MARRIAGE

Marriage is a special institution that God made for humanity right from the beginning of creation. God gave human beings dominion over all creation and blessed them with everlasting union expected to be a lifelong marriage. And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them. (Gen 1:26, 27 KJV). Man and woman were distinctively created specifically different from other creatures. John Walton, discussing the creative activity, says that in the Hebrew language, “bare” (create), carries the same meaning as other ancient Near Eastern verbs to create, it takes God as its subject and therefore must be identified as a characteristically divine activity.”¹ In the same manner, “its objectives are widely varied. Objects include people groups.”²

The creation purpose progressed into God’s goodness which was pronounced by God. “And God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good” (Gen 1:31 KJV). God planned marriage to be good for man, and also man to prosper in life. While other creatures had their “spouses,” man was found to be alone. God brought in marriage as a creation activity to a creature man called Adam. God said, "It is not good

¹ John Walton, *Ancient Near East Thought and Old Testament: Introducing the Conceptual World of the Hebrew Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2006), 183.

² Ibid.

that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him" (Gen 2:18 KJV)" God made a wife for Adam to fulfill His plan and thus approved the marriage ordinance.

The husband had to live together with the woman in an environment of pleasure and close association. Walter C. Kaiser declares that "the theological perspective of Genesis 2 is that God has created a garden for man's pleasure a woman for companionship."³ He made a woman as a helper for man, and these two should live together in a close relationship and responsibility thereby establishing the worthiness of marriage. Again, God ordained man and woman to be in total submission to each other, to enjoy their life and also to follow biblical principles of marriage. Sunny Uwadiae emphasizes that "a Hebrew word 'Ezer' from Ebenezer meaning 'stone of help' is not a subordinate or a menial assistant"⁴ This entertained a marriage fulfillment. Hence, God crowned marriage, and it got approved; as a result, marriage was fully bound to humans and God. Therefore, shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. (Genesis 2:24 KJV).

With the entry of sin, it comes out that, what God purposed that marriage should mean for man was twisted by Satan. It constituted a state of denial in the human race; they eventually undervalued their gift of life. It also robbed them of the blessings. Then biblical marriage, which could have been observed and would have made good experiences from the beginning, has run into controversy up to today. It is along these lines that the lesson of marriage between men and women did not preserve the scriptural

³ Walter C. Kaiser Jr., *Toward Old Testament Ethics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1991), 181.

⁴ Uwadiae Sunny, *Christian Marriage Companion* (Bloomington, IN: Author House, 2012), 30, 31.

standards of marriage. This indicates that marriage compared through the ages can only be sustained by its architect.

Old Testament and New Testament Times

In the Old Testament period, it appears that God preserved marriage along sacred boundaries and it appears that He desired to maintain the biblical principles into Himself. The marriage approval depended on the holiness of God. Because of the holiness of marriage, God protected Abraham's wife against Pharaoh. The bible says, "Why saidst thou, She is my sister? so I might have taken her to me to wife: now, therefore, behold thy wife, take her, and go thy way (Gen 12: 20). And Abimelech said unto Abraham, What sawest thou, that thou hast done this thing? (Gen 20:10). The conduct of Pharaoh and Abimelech was questioned because God preserves the holiness of marriage. The Bible says, "know therefore that the Lord thy God, He is God, the faithful God, which keeps covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations (Deut 7:9 KJV)."

In the same manner, it appears that in Israel, this was a continuous act and practice to marry from the kin group and also the clan or lineage to preserve their originality. "Neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son (Deut 7:3 KJV). It might as well have been a dangerous issue to enter into marriage with no respect for biblical principles. Man and wife, united outside the clan or to give daughters to other tribes would result in the breaking of the covenant relationship, loss of trust and disobedience to God.

At the time of Moses, it is believed that the land of Israel had lost its marital principles. Through such situations, marriage stood on weak ground against its permanence and approval. The husband as long as one got married, it could also be dissolved just by man's desires without a sound reason. This could be noticed on the side of women who endured a great deal. "When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it comes to pass that she find no favor in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house (Deut 24:1 KJV)." It was also burdensome to women as this made it easy for them to fall into adultery, yet it was unlawful to marry a second husband. To do this would be to commit sin which was punishable by death. This constituted a reason why the covenant keeping people devised other means to obtain marriage not approved by God. This tried to withdraw from principles of marriage and God's plan intended for humans.

The marriage for Priests was to be of holiness. The priest was not allowed into office unless there was a true marriage union with the wife. If it was not so, such a priest was removed from the office. "And one of the sons of Joiada, the son of Eliashib, the high priest, was son in law to Sanballat the Horonite: therefore I chased him from me (Neh 13:28)."

Kings also fell into heathen marriages such as "King Solomon loved many strange women, together with the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites (1Kgs 11:1 KJV)." God passed a word of advice to the masses of Israel not to walk in the footsteps of King Solomon. Answering this would make it more comfortable for the Israelites to imitate the heathen behaviors. The Bible

tells us that, “of the nations concerning which the Lord said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall not go in to them, neither shall they come in unto you: for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods” (1Kgs 11:2 KJV). Solomon insisted as in “for Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites” (1Kings 11:5). This introduced idolatry in the marriage that was not sanctioned by God.

In a covenant relationship, it is believed that Isaac followed the covenant and the promises in it. It is indicated that he obeyed God’s commandments and followed biblical principles. God said, “and I will make thee swear by the Lord, the God of heaven, and the God of the earth, that thou shalt not take a wife unto my son, of the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell (Gen 24:3 KJV).” George W. Reid expresses this as, “God’s word is not culturally or historically conditioned, but culturally/historically constituted. It transcends cultures and reaches us today.”⁵ The word of God is structured eternally. It has no distinctions from its originality to today.

With the prevalence of God’s marital standards and values, it appears that the Ancient Greek community teaching seems to have been faithful closest to biblical marriage and its patterns. Because of that, parents of both sides seem to have been concerned for the son and the daughter to enter into the marriage. In Jewish economy, marriage was considered as lasting. As regards to adult male and woman, it is believed that marriage had to arrive at a stage of approval. In so acting, it appears that it embraced the union of the two people to have documents written as a sign of unity, bound without

⁵ George W Reid, ed., *Understanding Scripture: An Adventist Approach, Biblical Research Institute General Studies* (Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2000), 113.

separation. Michael J. Boyde and Michael Ausubel state that, “some of the most significant alteration in the form and content of marriage, such as the emphasis on documents or a switch to monogamy can be understood in this light.”⁶ This means that the documents indicated marriage approval as legal implications and marriage union as well. This made them realize their future lifetime and also bade the onlookers a sign of endorsement and commendation. Michal Shekel declares that “after the ceremony, the Ketubah is read. This appears to have created the religious and the legal aspect of the ceremony.” This, therefore, was close to the biblical ideals and standards of marriage.

Marriage payments were also admitted in the marriage approval, such as dowry. Dowry was a sign of acceptance and was given to the daughter’s parents. Michael Satlow emphasizes that “Marriage payments marked the beginning of the economic relationships.”⁷ People were invited to witness the ceremony which made it honorable. Parents of both parties had to match upon the conclusions needed by their kids. This created for them a program to set up for their children’s wedding. Payments had meaning to the community and also promoted discipline.

In the New Testament time, the central teaching of Jesus on marriage gives a depth of the biblical principles. Jesus cared for marriage approval, especially on the position of women who were at many times left out and often not seen equally significant. Jesus said, “for this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh?” (Matthew 19:5 KJV). Jesus

⁶ Bode, J. Michael and Michael Ausubel, *Marriage, Sex, and Family in Judaism Lanham* (New York, NY: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005), 2.

⁷ Michael L. Satlow, *Jewish Marriage in Antiquity* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001), 191.

stressed the creative act of spousal relationship as found in Genesis, which looked to have been misplaced in many lifetimes. Jesus' teaching and instruction, elevated marriage. Bowden points out that, "Although Jesus was not married, He held marriage in high esteem, as did the Hebrew culture of the first century."⁸ Jesus elevated the sanctity of marriage at the cost of transforming it into holiness. He indicated the events to come, that may also give moral decay as a sign of His coming. David H. Hunter said, "Jesus' teaching on the insolubility of marriage seems to have been closely linked to His eschatological teaching."⁹

He also discussed an exception clause saying, "and I say unto you, whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, shall commit adultery" (Matt 19:9 KJV). Michael Berner in describing this suggests that "Christ deliberately used two different words in this exception statement; He used fornication and adultery"¹⁰ Again to understand the meaning, the World English Bible, uses "except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery. Gaylon West explains that "the New Testament confirms the reality of Porneia's usual multifaceted meaning. It is used broadly to all kinds of sexual immorality"¹¹ It can also be a diverse issue with a lot of questions, but Jesus exposed the seriousness of marriage and also how marriage was defiled by sin. Gaylon West argues that "Porneia is a serious sexual sin which seems to make divorce

⁸ Jim Bowden, *Validating Committed Partnerships: A Still More Excellent Way, A New Relational Paradigm Supported by the High Way of God's Love and Justice* (Bloomington, IN: Trafford, 2013), 144.

⁹ Hunter David H., ed., *Marriage in the First Century* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2001), 3.

¹⁰ Michael Berner, *Brave Marriages* (Chicago, IL: Xulon Press, 2010), 137.

¹¹ Gaylon West, *Marriage Designed in Heaven: For Bible Students and Christian Marriage Counselors* (Auburndale, FL: GW, 2014), 300.

permissible through the dissolving of the bond.”¹² However, this can be overlooked and the reason as to why Jesus used fornication instead of adultery as the exception for divorce. West adds to the answer accordingly that,

Porneia (fornication, harlotry, and whoredom) strongly carries the connotation of a continuous way of life and character, and Moicheia (adultery), on the other hand connotes single acts, and does not carry continuance or character.”¹³

In the New Testament marriage is elevated and combines authenticity from God and is consummated by Jesus. The marriage at Cana is a true sign of Jesus approving it. Watchman Nee emphasizes this, “God initiated marriage, and Lord Jesus Christ approved it.”¹⁴ It is obvious to man and woman who have enjoyed marriage.

Likewise, Paul discussed the issue of marriage as necessary to all believers of that time. It happened when the standards of marriage were corrupted by sin. This took marriage in a way that lowered its standards and spirituality as well. The practices that emanated from the cultural and tribal backgrounds gave Paul a clear view of unacceptable marriages. It seems that he desired to see approved marriage progress. During the time of Paul, his community had grave marital problems.

It appears that fornication became so common, even among believers. He said that “nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband” (1Cor 7:2 KJV). It seems that women are the only persons victimized. Paul commented on it as he said, “but to the rest speak I, not the Lord: If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him,

¹² Gaylon, *Marriage Designed in Heaven: For Bible Students and Christian Marriage Counselors*, 300.

¹³ Ibid 301.

¹⁴ Nee Watchman, *Do All the Glory of God* (New York, NY: Christian Fellowship, 2014), 6.

let him not put her away” (1Cor 7:12 KJV). Paul, in this case, discusses the loss in marriage principles and standards.

In addition, Paul did not rebuke any married people, but he was interested in improving their marriages to achieve an acceptable standard before the Lord. Because of that, Paul’s advice confirmed that they should adopt the spiritual standards of marriage. Marriage, after contracting secret acts like elopement, betrays family behavior and sexual misconduct. Edwin Freed indicates that “although Paul does not forbid marriage, his motive for hesitating about marriage seems to be more for avoiding sexual misconduct.”¹⁵

Ellen G. White Counsel

Ellen G. White confirms biblical marriage as having been mandated principles and likewise important in the marriage foundation. It is, however, an institution under God’s care and also emphasizes the bond of man and womanhood. She reasons, “thus He sanctioned marriage, acknowledging it as an institution that He Himself had established.”¹⁶ The Church could also function to help the family to be closer and lift up its standards. She then continues to say that,

The family tie is the closest, the most tender and sacred, of any on earth. It was designed to be a blessing to mankind. And it is a blessing wherever the marriage covenant is entered into intelligently, in the fear of God, and with due consideration of its responsibilities.¹⁷

¹⁵ Edwin D. Freed, *The Morality of Paul’s Converts* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2004), 129.

¹⁶ Ellen G. White, *Adventist Home* (Nashville, TN: Southern, 1952).

¹⁷ *Ibid*, 27.

Besides this, in the presence of her son, Ellen G. White emphasized the union act of man and the creator as the metaphorical picture which points directly to Jesus and the church. She said that “Christ honored the marriage relation by making it also a symbol of the union between Him and His redeemed ones. He himself is the bridegroom; the bride is the church.” Their marriage takes an image of unity which set a sound example from God. Consequently, marriage unites the church and God.

Furthermore, Ellen G. White warns about the alliance with heathen nations of the ancient times. This also could be the same warning to the Christian believer of today. She points out to Bible men, as examples and also the acts that led the whole nation to fall into idolatry like Solomon. She states that “Solomon became ambitious...that led him to make alliances with idolatrous nations, and to seal these alliances by marriages with heathen princesses.”¹⁸ According to the practices of many ancient eras, godly people have had marriage relationships with people of different backgrounds. This appears to be a heathen practice, and also happen in modern times.

In addition to this, it is believed that centuries back, morals had been so damaged in marriages of different people. The marriage of the God-fearing people did not show the faith they profess. The compromise in spiritual things lowered the standard of maturity in marriage. People marry without definite kind of marriage, and eventually, they bring in their cultural traditions hence the failure of marriages. Ellen G. White says that “a similar state of things exists now in relation to marriage. Marriages are formed between the godly and the ungodly because inclination governs in the selection of a

¹⁸ Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1905).

husband or wife."¹⁹ Then marriage also can be immature when marriage is entered at an early age and without proper knowledge on it. If this occurs, the marriage covenant can be trampled, and evils may also be promoted.

Ellen G. White expresses that, “immature marriages are productive of a vast amount of the evils that exist today. Neither physical health nor mental vigor is promoted by a marriage that is entered on too early in life”²⁰ Ellen G. White affirms the approval of marriage that, “when the sacred nature and the claims of marriage are understood, it will even now be approved by Heaven; and the result will be happiness to both parties, and God will be glorified.”²¹ Tribal cultures often initiate marriages on soft grounds. This may result in failure of abiding with the policies of the Church and the Government. This appears to be situational; marriage can easily be assumed by man and wife. The culture needed, seems to be the study of tribal cultural marriage, gets improved based on the Christian values.

Seventh-day Adventist Understanding

The biblical form of marriage is that God who desires marriage to prosper chose for man and woman to be together in a union. The biblical marriage from the book of Genesis says, “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh” (Gen 2:24).

On the whole, the Seventh-day Adventists take marriage from a scriptural point of view as holy, given from God. These partners grow into the spiritual realms and also

¹⁹ Ellen G. White, *The Bible Echo* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1887), 12.

²⁰ White, *Adventist Home*, 80.

²¹ *Ibid*, 121.

receive trust from God. The need to ascertain marriage from God often goes by the Christian cultural influence. The unity among the two people opens the standard of God's love, vow to be committed and faithful to each other as long as they live. This culture can be found in the Seventh-day Adventist statement of its faith, beliefs, and practices.

Marriage was divinely established in Eden and affirmed by Jesus Christ to be both monogamous and heterosexual, a lifelong union of loving companionship between a man and a woman. In the culmination of His creative activity, God fashioned humankind as male and female in His own image; and He instituted marriage, a covenant-based union of the two genders physically, emotionally, and spiritually, spoken of in Scripture as "one flesh."... Throughout Scripture, the heterosexual union in marriage is elevated as a symbol of the bond between Deity and humanity. It is a human witness to God's self-giving love and covenant with His people. The harmonious affiliation of a man and a woman in marriage provides a microcosm of social unity that is time-honored as a core ingredient of stable societies.²²

The first work of a Christian is to be united in the family. Possibly the Christian marriage is promoted and tied between the Church and family in the community. When marital practices are taken care of, it will form the wellbeing of spiritual standards. Thus, marriage takes the best regard under the approval of the Church and the Government. This is endorsed and approved because the two are fulfilled.

Other Authors

Again, some authors look at the marriage institution and have also claimed it to be so important to the side of covenant relationship. It was stipulated, the covenant of grace that is connected with marriage covenant. Fanny A. Cuyos Edens states that marriage is a

²² General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists Administrative Committee, *Statement on Marriage* (Silver Spring, MD: ADCOM, 1996).

“covenant of love.” It is a unique sacrament in that it is built into the very human reality.”²³ Love is our affinity to one another.

From the Hebrew marriages to the medieval period, women seem not so much to have been considered in the breach of the covenant. Philip J. Long indicates that “given the practice of ancient cultures, the reaction of the faithful spouse to the breach of marriage vows is often brutal and frequently described in scholarship as misogynist.”²⁴ In this event, it seems to constitute the use of law as a practice. Then, watching what is occurring between man and woman in marriage, women had to face laws. To some extent, the marriages may have been with a lot of difficulties since the characters are not mentioned as causes for the breach of marriage.

On the other hand, in the medieval periods, marriage was also taken care of by the Church leaders. It is believed that the two parties had to process their marriage right from their parents. It was also important that the marriage be officiated by the priest before its consummation. Frederik Pedersen indicates that,

Where marriage negotiations had taken place. It was agreed that the bride should bring dowry of twenty marks and the groom swore that he had not contracted a marriage with any other woman and that he did not want any other woman marriage. Later at an unspecified date, banns were read and the two married in *facie ecclesie*...the parties called another priest to prompt the exchange vow *verba de futuro*. The priest prompted the parties and marriage was celebrated some weeks later.²⁵

²³ Fanny A. Cuyos and Juanillo Edens, *Journey with Jesus: God Builds and Unites His People: Teacher's Manual in Christian Living for Second Year High School* (Philippine: Rex Book, 2004), 70.

²⁴ Phillip J. Long, *The Origin of the Eschatological Feast as a Wedding Banquet in the Synoptic Gospels* (San Jose, CA: Pickwick, 2013), 470.

²⁵ Pedersen Frederik, *Marriage Disputes in Medieval England* (Grande, OH: Hambledon Press, 2000), 106.

This indicates that the marriage approval was honored and also that people accepted a marriage that was done according to the plan of God. Further, John David Clark agrees that “a marriage joined together by God is a marriage that God approves of, and there are many marriages performed by ministers that do not have God’s approval.”²⁶ It is also important to see a difference between God approved, and Man approved in time and the process of the marriage. Man’s approved may be a short-lived marriage and also may be that it is based on contemporary ideals.

²⁶ John David Clark, *Marriage and Divorce: What Does The Bible Really Say?* (Burlington, NC: Burlington Press, 2005), 11.

CHAPTER 3

A DESCRIPTION OF THE LOCAL SETTING

Ethnic Groups in Mityana

Mityana Seventh-day Adventist Church is an organized Church with a membership of 500 as of May 2014. The Church was organized in 1950, and it currently has 13 branches. This Church is one of the historical Churches, according to Elder Simeon Senoga from Kigalama Church District who still indicates that it was established as a congregation in the early 1930's by the very early Adventist missionaries in Uganda. This Church is currently the headquarter of the Mityana Church District and is part of the sisterhood Church in Central Uganda Conference.

The Mityana Adventist Church with its current companies and Sabbath Schools “covers an estimated area of 8.1 square kilometers,”¹ with an estimated population of 1559 people. The general population of the area and the surrounding communities in Mityana in “the two sub-counties Busimbi and Mityana Town Council is 76752,”² generally mixed with various ethnic tribes composed of tribes such as the Baganda, Ugandan Rwandese Bakonzo, and other tribes. Keefa M. Otiso indicates that “there are 19 major ethnic groups in Uganda. In order of national population size, Baganda takes

¹ Wikipedia, “Mityana Town Council Square Kilometer,” *Wikipedia the Free Encyclopedia*, accessed December 29, 2014, <https://www.wikipedia.org/#q=mityana+town+council+square+kilometers>.

² UBOS, “Census Tabulations Centable,” November 2014, *Uganda Bureau of Statistics*, accessed December 29, 2014, http://www.ubos.org/onlinefiles/uploads/ubos/census_tabulations/centable.

17%, Ugandan Rwandese 6%, and Bakonzo 2%.”³ While these people groups live together as a community, they have notable’ cultural practices which form the way they live.

According to Fergus Sharman, Bantu people originated in the Cameroon in West Africa, and migrated across Congo basin into southern and East Africa.”⁴ It appears that, among the characteristics, writing shows their former existence may have had a connection to the neighboring countries like Sudan and Egypt. Sharman also indicates that “batu or Bantu means people.”⁵ In addition to this, Baganda came from Bantu people. Bisase contends that “a Ganda is a language which means relation”⁶ The tribe connects its language to the folkways, also legends and myths that form its culture. Its heritage is still remembered under a powerful tribal leader called Kabaka (King). The first King was Kintu, who is also remembered as the founder, the focal point of culture and customs.

Baganda tribe appears to have been heightened as people who respect their leadership. These also give honor to the power of ancestors. It appears that culture and traditions came from these systems and seem to have been as core values in life. Christianity stood for change, and people liked it, but it looked as if none wanted remain into a single faith. Prudence Dailey admits that “of course the huge task of turning a whole society to the Christian way remained; it was aided by a new literate elite and the

³ Keefa M. Otiso, *Culture and Customs of Uganda* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 2006), 3.

⁴ Fergus Sharman, *Linguistic Ties between Ancient Egyptians and Bantu: Uncovering Symbiotic Affinities and Relationships in Vocabulary* (Boca Raton, FL: Boca Raton Universal, 2014), 36.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid

borrowing of the old clan systems for new Christian affiliations.”⁷ In addition to that, marriage appears to be borrowing the cultural marital traditions giving it a priority. Marriage in Baganda tribe was done according to customs. This appears as a manner to preserve their identity, although it did not forbid them to marry from other folks.

On the other hand, large requests of dowries seem to set a high standard in marriage processes. It appears to have left these people unable to engage in matrimony. Consequently, it seemed that, practices like elopement of young daughters and traditional introduction. These too took styles of introduction; contrary to church standards. It could be observed that marriage with Christianity started to shrink. The Baganda don’t often use marriage approved by the church and the Government. It seems that they adapt to cultural marriage.

Bakonzo tribe has been linked to the history of its origin, Derek R. Peterson states that “the Konzo life history research society showed the Konzo and Amba people to be autochthons, natives who had inhabited the Ruwenzori Mountains since ancient times.”⁸ Ruwenzori founders had to work to make their polity distinct, visible, and worthy of attention. They had that to manage their people’s culture.⁹ The practice of traditional marriages may be slightly similar to other tribes but not holding the front line. Bakonzo tribe appears to be with tradition marriage similar to Baganda. It is believed that Bakonzo

⁷ Prudence Dailey, ed., *The Book of Common Prayer: Past, Present, and Future: A 350th Anniversary Celebration* (New York, NY: Continuum, 2011), 179.

⁸ Derek R. Peterson, *Ethnic Patriotism and the East African Revival: A History of Dissent, C. 1935-1972*, (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 269.

⁹ *Ibid*, 268.

tribe had been conservative to marital practices. These may have been the better way to be recognized in society.

Similarly, Bakonzo tribe had moved from the mountains and occupied places in Buganda region and also continued to have intermarriages with other tribes. However, before these people came to settle in Buganda, it is believed that it seems these cultural marital practices helped them to be closer to other cultures. Otiso expresses that, “marriage was [not?] recognized until a dowry was paid. Dowry served as a traditional marriage seal besides compensating the girl’s family for the loss of labor.”¹⁰ Besides that, marriage was also concerned with looking after the young girls to keep their virginity. It appears that tribal custom directed for punishment for those who did not maintain this marital status. Otiso adds that “among the Bakonjo – Bamba ... virginity was so valued that pre-marital pregnancy was punishable by the girl’s death, usually by abandonment in a deserted forest.”¹¹

According to the history, it has also been noted that the tribe of Banyarwanda makes a tribal group of the people of Uganda. Mohamood Mamdam expresses that, “as speakers of the language Kinyarwanda, they constituted the sixth largest group within Uganda, according to the 1959 census.” It is believed that internal conflicts had been supported under the umbrella of tribalism, and it appears that many lives were destroyed.

On the other hand, Banyarwanda found a place to feel at peace and also came within religious faith backgrounds, political and also economic preferences. In addition to that, Banyarwanda first stayed in refugee camps and also were allowed to settle with the

¹⁰ Derek, *Ethnic Patriotism and the East African Revival: A History of Dissent, C. 1935-1972*, 87.

¹¹ Otiso, *Culture and Customs of Uganda*, 85.

people, maybe they loved them, and it was believed that “the inclusion in the 1995 Constitution of the Banyarwanda as one of the indigenous tribes of Uganda automatically canceled their refugee status.”¹² The Banyarwanda passed through a difficult time but later, were confirmed to the tribal groups in Uganda. The marriage practices still had to be done in the local places where they settled. It also defended them to relate their practices to the indigenous tribes found there.

Settlement of These Tribes in Mityana

According to historical background, the Baganda are the indigenous people living in Mityana and also had a distinctive land ownership, either from Mailo land or land on lease basis. These people had the fertile land in Buganda and also the spirit of hospitality to other tribes. Land attraction to other tribes made them settle in Buganda region. It is believed that Banyarwanda came to Uganda and settled in Mityana. These immigrants were favored by the environment. They took part in land acquisition and also were easily assimilated into the cultures of the Baganda. Mahmood Mamdam argues that,

From the standpoint of Rwanda, however, they constituted the Banyarwanda in the diaspora within Uganda... The largest single group of immigrants were from Rwanda. By 1990, many estimated that a quarter of the population in central districts in Uganda; such as Luweero, Mityana, Mpigi, and Mukono were of Banyarwanda origin.¹³

It is believed that the Bakonzo people joined the region because of their conflicts with the Toro kingdom. Godfrey Mwakikagile argues that “they suffered discrimination

¹² Admin, “Is Banyarwanda a Tribe in Uganda Consitution,” March 3 2009, *Ugandans Travel Guide*, accessed February 17, 2016, <https://ugandansatheart.org/category/banyarwanda/>.

¹³ Mahmood Mamdam, *When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism, and the Genocide in Rwanda* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001), 161, 163.

under Toro for years, and demanded to have their own separate territory.”¹⁴ From these conflicts, they appear to have dispersed and settled near the boundaries of Buganda in neighboring Districts of Mubende and Kiboga. This shows that these tribes have interrelations in marriage because they have been living near.

Territory

Mityana is a town that has been raised to a Municipality of Administration. It is at the center of Mityana Political District. It has a small water body called, Lake Wamala in the west which is shared with Gomba and Mubende Districts. The town has neighboring trading centers and also passable feeder roads. This helps people daily work and make transport easier.

Occupation of the People of Mityana

The people of Mityana entirely depend on agriculture. Maize is the principal cash crop grown which is also the second food crop to bananas. The people there do some little trading, and some farmers appear to have traded on a local basis. This is done by carrying their produce from the nearby villages to Mityana town. The produce is also sold to towns to feed the urban centers of Kampala.

More cash crops like coffee with fruit trees have been pushed by the Government to increase on an individual's income. These crops are highly grown on the fertile soil in this area. The weather supports these crops, and the place has abundant rain throughout the year. The peoples' needs, can be met from the toiling done in farming to receive

¹⁴ Godfrey Mwakikagile, *Uganda: A Nation in Transition Post-Colonial Analysis* (Dar es Salaam, Tanzania: New Africa Press, 2012), 23.

money. This is achieved until harvest time. On the other hand, people have animals like cows, goats, and some rear pigs on a small scale and also birds (mainly chickens). In addition, Mityana town has markets and shops where also people work to earn a living.

Social Behaviors

Accordingly, the people of Mityana make football the most liked game in their liveliness. People have clan teams for football tournaments for Kabaka (King) of Buganda and are most liked. People enjoy music. Entertainers often gather people for shows; others meet in places like beaches for amusement.

Sorrowful time can also be one manner of socializing. This is found within the family in attending funeral rites of the departed ones. It also gives family members a platform to feel that they belong in that household. Families share issues that bring them together, know each other and work out their problems. Food is always prepared for these ceremonies, and in most cases, these ceremonies consume time and large quantities of money. The non-Christian families endeavor to perform some rituals, which would appease their ancestors.

Religious Background

People in this town adhere to their respective faith persuasions, and these bring them together for worship and impact their behavior and religious practices. From this background, many denominations appear to have long histories. According to the national population census of Uganda that was provided, Seventh-day Adventists constitute 1.7%, Anglican Church 32.0%, and the Pentecostals 11.1%. And to the religions that are common there, Roman Catholics constitute 39.3%, Muslim 13.7%, Orthodox Christians 0.1% and Traditional 0.1%. The other Christians percentage seems

not to have been provided. According to membership of the Mityana SDA to the Town Council population in 2014, Seventh-day Adventists constitute 2.0% only.

Culture and Traditions of People

According to the traditions, it is believed that some people have secret magic herbs that are bought to obtain the blessings. This also puts people to live a fearful life. The game produces a state of feeling and observing ancestors coming to either bless or destroy lives. It is a way for losing or getting jobs. For instance, to put up a building, the owner has to slaughter a rooster so that the construction goes on well without any problem.

On the other hand, cultural practices like dowry payment seem to have been loved for those who have girl children to give into marriage. Often the Baganda people wanted “omutwaalo” (ten thousand) as a sign of gratitude to the parent. Today it needs to pay good money in order the parents to accept the groom. Banyarwanda people give three to ten cows while Bakonzo gives ten goats as a sign of gratitude to parents. It appears that these tribes have closer cultures and traditions that seem to be loved most.

Marriage in Mityana Church

According to the people in all the tribal groups, to have marriage is another blessing today. Parents used to search for their daughters men to marry them. This took a course agreement on the dowry to take for parents. It is also different today. As a matter of fact, Church member could see the process and decide to use their own way. The introduction as a practice used to incur too much expense. The practice is basically cultural driven. Meanwhile, there is no set Christian standards in this practice. For example, the introduction ceremonies have in the meantime adopted traditions in terms of

comedian. The introduction function is usually full of dancing and music of praises to the bride and the groom. These do not build the spiritual growth in believers; it's for amusement only.

Data Analysis

The questionnaire was distributed among Mityana church members sampling the tribes of members: Baganda, Banyarwanda, Bakonzo and other mixed tribes. In this study, 100 sets of questionnaires were distributed to the respondents, and all were returned. The questionnaire looked at marriage values and knowledge about the prevailing situation. Following this, tribes were grouped according to their respondents with gender, marital status, and education backgrounds. The marriages that were sampled were also administered. And the analysis was made, and table 1 represents the gender distribution among the Baganda, Banyarwanda, Bakonzo and others in Appendix A.

The table 1 below indicates the demographic characteristics of the respondents in all tribes; the highest is female gender with 28 of Baganda and 3 of females to others. One respondent was missing. Age group 26 – 40 had the highest number compared to age group 15 – 25 of two and 41 and above. Concerning marital status, Baganda had 25 singles higher and divorced, had 2, the lowest respondents. On education, Tertiary and Secondary levels have similar numbers, 17, as the highest and Banyarwanda had 12 in the primary school.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

		Tribe	Baganda	Banyarwanda	Bakonzo	Others
Characteristic	Category	n	n	n	n	n
Gender	Male	16	10	14	7	
	Female	28	17	4	3	
	Data Missing	0	0	1	0	
Age range (yrs)	15 – 25	12	7	6	4	
	26 – 40	21	8	8	4	
	41 – Above	11	12	5	2	
	Data Missing	0	0	0	0	
Marital Status	Married	19	13	9	7	
	Single	25	10	10	3	
	Divorced	0	2	0	0	
	Widowed	0	2	0	0	
	Data Missing	0	0	0	0	
Educational Level	University	8	0	3	3	
	Tertiary	17	2	3	4	
	Secondary	17	13	10	3	
	Primary	2	12	3	0	
	Data Missing	0	0	0	0	
Total Number of respondents*	*Total Church membership: 500	172	208	72	48	
	Number of respondents: 100	44	27	19	10	

The approved marriage of Baganda is 26.5%, and the not approved married people are 25.4%, which shows a need for reducing the impact of tribal cultural, traditional marriages. The tribe of Banyarwanda has 48.1% approved marriages and 45.6% not approved marriages, and both indicate the high rate of traditional marriage. Bakonzo has 21.6% legal marriage, and 20.1% are not approved. Others 3.6 and 8.7 this indicates that culture has a high frequency of not approved marriage, as seen in Table 2.

Table 2. Number of Approved and Not Approved Marriages by Tribes

Tribe	Approved Marriage	%	Not Approved Marriage	%
Baganda	22	26.5	29	25.4
Banyarwanda	40	48.1	52	45.6
Bakonzo	18	21.6	23	20.1
Others	3	3.6	10	8.7
Total	83		114	

According to the table below, Baganda has the highest respondents, 95.4%, followed by Bakonzo 94.7, Banyarwanda 92.5%, and other tribes 6%. All of these answered yes. For those who answered No, Baganda had 4.5%, Banyarwanda 7.4%, Bakonzo 5.2% and others had 0.4%. This indicates that most respondents believe in marriage as God's institution and have known the practice for some time, but are still remaining in the traditional practices.

Table 3. Respondents Who Value Marriage as God's Institution

Tribe	Value Marriage	F	%
Baganda	Yes	42	95.4
	No	2	4.5
Banyarwanda	Yes	25	92.5
	No	2	7.4
Bakonzo	Yes	18	94.7
	No	1	5.2
Others	Yes	6	0.6
	No	4	0.4

In Table 4 below the respondents who accept that paying dowry to parents are 95.4% in Baganda, Banyarwanda 92.5%, Bakonzo 89.4% and other tribes who said yes were 80%. Those who said No in Baganda were 4.5%, Banyarwanda 7.4%, Bakonzo

were 10.5%, and others were 20%. Respondents who said, “I don’t know” were only in Bakonzo and accounted for 5.2%. Even though elopement is rampant, but to the people, this not good for Christians.

Table 4. Acceptance of Dowry Payment

Tribe	Value Marriage	F	%
Baganda	Yes	42	95.4
	No	2	4.5
Banyarwanda	Yes	25	92.5
	No	2	7.4
Bakonzo	Yes	17	89.4
	No	2	10.5
	I don’t Know	1	5.2
Others	Yes	6	0.6
	No	4	0.4

The table below indicates how respondents know about dating. Baganda people who said yes were 75%, Banyarwanda 74%, Bakonzo 47.3% and other tribes 80% and the highest. For those who said No, Baganda was 25%, Banyarwanda 25.9%, Bakonzo 52.6%, and others 20%. Those who said yes have assimilated this into their culture, and it impacted behaviors. And those who said no dislike the change from good related culture to westernization.

Table 5. Showing Acceptability of Dating for Christians

Tribe	<i>f</i>	%
Baganda		
Yes	13	75
No	11	25
Banyarwanda		
Yes	20	74
No	7	25.9
Bakozzo		
Yes	9	47.3
No	10	52.6
Others		
Yes	8	80
No	2	20

Table 6 shows the magnitude of elopement to why it is too much. Baganda, with 15 respondents said there is no need for an inquiry, it's the culture today. Banyarwanda had 13 said that this is today's culture. Bakozzo had 10 who said that they look for a partner. Then others had 4 that said, one who cares. On the last, it means that to get children is a coincidence. So today to marry a wife is taken as normal marriage in tradition than sacred as in Christians.

Table 6. Elopement is Rampant in the Church

	Baganda	Banyarwanda	Bakozzo	Others
One who cares	11	8	6	4
To get a partner	14	3	10	3
To have children	3	3	-	1
Today's culture	15	13	3	2

Table 7 below indicates that Baganda answered yes with 61.3%, Banyarwanda 70%, Bakonzo 42% and other tribes 60%. On the side of No Bakonzo was the highest with 57%. This shows that there is little caring for these illegally married people.

Table 7. Church Cares for Approved and Not Approved Marriages

Tribe	<i>f</i>	%
Baganda		
Yes	27	61.3
No	17	38.6
Banyarwanda		
Yes	19	70.3
No	8	29.6
Bakonzo		
Yes	8	42.1
No	11	57.8
Others		
Yes	6	60
No	4	40

Table 8 indicates those who attended the seminar. Those who had the highest number were 36% in all tribes had never attended any seminar on marriage. Baganda had two times, and the highest number was 15. Banyarwanda and Bakonzo had only one time highest in attendance. Marriage was lost in their knowledge, so they need seminars.

Table 8. Attended Seminars on Family Life

Number	Baganda	Banyarwanda	Bakonzo	Others	Total	%
1	3	17	10	3	33	33
2	15	-	-	-	15	15
3	3	3	-	-	16	16
None	9	10	10	7	36	36

CHAPTER 4

PROGRAM DESIGN

According to the results obtained in this study, the Mityana Seventh-day Adventist Church has an impact on tribal marriage tradition of Christian marriage which stands as a problem. To reach this goal, marriage training should be provided for church leaders, and the not approved marriages in the church should be reached.

Program Development

Following this, the major task was to reduce the existing not approved marriages which were found so threatening to those in Christian faith. There are constant marriages to young people which have increased this impact. The acts like elopement were done in a silent mode. However, the designed work which educates all Christians in Mityana church focused on the reduction of such marriage practices done on traditional grounds. The Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual indicates that,

For the Christian, a marriage commitment is to God as well as to the spouse and should be entered into only between partners who share a common faith. Mutual love, honor, respect, and responsibility are the fabric of this relationship, which is to reflect the love, sanctity, closeness, and permanence of the relationship between Christ and His church.¹

¹ General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist, *General Conference of Seventh-Day Adventists, Ministerial Association, Seventh-Day Adventist Minister's Handbook* (Silver Springs, MI: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2009), accessed March 21, 2017, [http://ministerialassociation.org/store/products/ministers-handbook-\(pdf-download\)](http://ministerialassociation.org/store/products/ministers-handbook-(pdf-download)), 149.

The researcher, in this program, conducted seminars and visited homes in order to have results after the program. There are three types of not-approved marriages:

1. Marriage of a believer and an unbeliever.
2. Either a husband in church or a woman being in church alone.
3. Eloped believers, man, and wife.

The people who are this situation saw their good luck to come out of their bad situation. The training was done in four areas:

1. Pre-marital counseling,
2. Making a visitation program,
3. Doctrine of marriage and family and
4. Cultural practices.

Twenty-three elders were trained in a one-day workshop to go for visitation and continuous help to young people looking for marriage. Objectives of the workshop included:

1. To have more knowledge on cultural marital practices
2. To educate on pre-marital counseling skills
3. To educate people how to visit and conduct sessions on marriage issues
4. To teach Bible doctrine on marriage and family

Facilitators

Pastor (Dr.) Israel Kafeero Executive Secretary Uganda Union Mission Pastor.

Background: D-min (Pastoral Theology) Andrews University.

Jeremiah Alisengawa, Executive Secretary Central Uganda Conference of Seventh-day Adventist Church. MA Leadership and Management, Counseling and 24 years of service.

Program

A post- assessment included a workshop, survey and seminar findings, which gave issues to the problem. Conducting the workshop Appendix D.

8:00 – 8: 20 Arrival & Registration

8: 20 – 9:00 Breakfast

9:00 – 9:20 Welcoming & Introduction

9:20 – 10:00 Devotion

10:15 – 10:15 Overview of the topic and expectations

10:15 – 11:15 Presentation on tribal Practices

11:20 – 12:20 Presentation on Premarital counseling

12:20 – 1: 00 Bible doctrine on marriage

1:00 – 1:40 Lunch

1: 50 – 2:50 Presentation Visitation

3:00 – 4:00 Grouping 6 elders in 4 groups for discussion

4:00 – 11:00 Reports and brainstorming

11:00 – 11:30 Resolutions

11:30 – 6:00 Prayer and end of the program

The workshop had a good learning environment. It increased their work skills to the office of a leader/Elder in particular. Participants learned what to say during the time of assistance to the couples who would like to get their marriage approved. The

participants found out the neglected group of members as those who have no approved marriage. Steps had been taken for the holy matrimony. The lukewarmness of a person in a spiritual affair. Mainly not approved married couples, have a negative perception and sometimes backslide due to this problem. Participation in all church activities confuse these members. However, many people didn't start from the same point.

Seminar Findings

A sensitization seminar was done under the church leadership of the entire congregation, and it was done after preaching the sermon. The congregation was recharged for marriage that all who gathered to see an impact of traditional cultures over Christian marriage discussions. The tribes under group discussion were put in place to discuss and submit the ideas on traditions and how a person would deal with them as a Christian to such cultures. The 4 leading questions helped to bring important issues that show culture today. From the discussions, ideas were given and contributed to how the prevailing situation in these tribes and the church can be dealt with.

Marriage in Baganda was looked at from its own view. The Baganda seemed to have clans which help to put marriage matters of culture in place. Families have an organized mode on passing on their tradition to its members. Households receive wealth from the in-law through negotiation. Dowry payments may be set aside and be accepted by daughter's parents. This contributes to the wellbeing of parents who have daughters. The parents get respect among the society and also the daughter becomes an example to others. For those who did not follow this, still were not performing the real marriage.

Marriage and culture of the youths have also an impact on the Christian values. The virginity works as being faithful. If missing, it means that parents lose honor; maybe,

they didn't do their part. Their daughters used to have sexual relations with men. This showed that knowledge of culture and Christian values were not served. Culture and tradition education could highly be advocated more and has the biggest audience. This also adds similar modern cultures which have been applied today. It appears that parents experience no time set for the young people. Because of that, parental instruction is lacking. This produced a gap to a child - parent relationship. It is said that there is little love between parents and their kids. Thus, parents had destroyed the young generation by not turning over to be exemplary. It was alleged that parents were reluctant about the behaviors of their children.

The Christians who were in this state had no church discipline taken. These decided on their own to plan for marriage and often followed the tribal cultural traditions. There was no guidance, followed by the lack of teaching the Biblical principles about marriage. On the other hand, the Baganda used taboos in tribal traditions to stay in the marriage. For instance, for a woman to stay in marriage she has to have had sexual intercourse before.

Banyarwanda discussed these issues as well and also gave what was beneficial to them. Parents had to erect a house for their son. It was meant as working together, even before they start thinking or start preparing the son to have marriage. It was for them to accept responsibility for marriage. Parents also looked for a good family where to marry from. Future dowry preparations were possible to the parent's input and were considered as a major issue in marriage.

For today, it was stated that the youth don't inquire from their parents. To some extent, there is discrimination in and outside the tribe in terms of wealth. Big requests of

dowry become a stumbling block to teenagers who wants to marry. Over ten cows to be accepted. Then education standards may also be necessary when making choices. But parents would still want to sell their daughters without having their selections. Besides that, the youths instead do elopement.

Bakonzo also mentioned some important issues concerning the impact of tribal cultural traditions on Christian principles of marriage. Similar issues obtained in other tribes today. It appears that girls decide their future marriage by looking for their husbands and elopement seems to be one way of getting into marriage. For parents, they had to go and discuss the dowry issue from the side of the boy with 12 goats. Marriage was to have the wedding held at the church, taking the initiative to approve the marriage.

It was important for marriage in Bakonzo to give the opportunity to elders and Christian leaders to carry out and prepare for their children. The parents would prepare an allocation to the son and the daughter of where to set a home. Child relationship that is already under tribal traditions makes the parents lose trust in their son and daughters today. Today there is no exact permanent place.

Further, parents are not involved in marriage matters which give or does not give Christian standards. Because of that, understanding of marriage had to do with love for the approved marriage. It is the counseling in marriage that produces mature marriage. Then lowered Christian standards meant to have tribal cultural marriage practices like picking a wife alongside the road. The assimilation of behavior from other tribal marital practices without considering the Christianity entered. A simple way of marriage is the elopement of girls as the easiest way to obtain marriage there. In a nutshell, the tribal

traditions provide easy and cheap walk into marriage. This still demanded to have approved marriage for living within biblical principles.

Visitation

The members were visited in their homes for the establishment of their marriage in holy matrimony. A total number of 20 homes were visited and had 17 members which is 85% of those who filled the form for marriage registration as it is in Appendix E. This can be compared to the entire 114 not approved marriages which is 17.5% of the total members of this marriage. The mass marriage ceremony was directed for the couples who had shown to bless their marriage. These couples have a common ground for coming out of these not approved marriage.

A Comparison of Christian Principles to Tribal Cultural Practices

The traditional culture has had a foundation in tribal grounds. The youths right from their childhood, base their ideas on the culture of their tribe. Towards the adolescence period, these already have the culture and embraced it. Then, they compromise Christian values of marriage after conversion into the church. Because they look into the culture first, they are tempted to remain in its boundaries.

Marrying from one's own tribe had good results in a family, but, cross-cultural marriage lessened all these cultures. Since cross-cultural marriage is the way, youths and all marriages have combined these cultures into one unknown tradition. Sincerely, elopement is made from the non-Christians. It is an influence on the side of Christians as well where cultural marital practices have been blended into Christianity because of the critical copied marriage behaviors.

The Christian culture as compared to the indigenous tradition has a higher state of holiness. In this assessment, the values of marriage have been made secondary, with lots of compromises resulting in the downfall of Christian standards. Because of no measurable standards laid on marital practices, Christians have been influenced by the lineage, clans, and surroundings. This seems, in most cases influenced by western through technology.

It was observed that some believers whose marriages are not approved by the church, often become rebellious to the ministry. Some may acquire heresies and become fault finders. These may not serve in positions of leadership unless they are approved.

Christian culture has been corrupted by the opinions that came in through marriage relations. Merely it is significant that, though downtrodden, still Christian values bind the marriage institution.

Assessment of the Desired Christian Principles

Marriage is a blessed institution and is holy. It should be in principle, of gaining it right with God. Consequently, best practices portrayed from the Bible conform to God's sacred law of man and wife. Marriage has a guiding aspect from parents like Abraham, to Isaac his son (Gen 24:3, 4 KJV) Samson's marriage is despised before God because it lacked parents' guidance. (Judges 14:1-4 (KJV)). So, parental guidance is required.

God follows the clan or tribal lineage in marriage to keep the spiritual standards (Deuteronomy 7:1-6 KJV). It is also important to the church members to marry within the church to preserve His promises. Marriage as a gift should have dowry gifts to be given to parents as a sign of appreciation. (Genesis 24:3 – 10 KJV).

It was a shame for daughters of Israel to elope like Dinah (Gen 34:13 KJV). Therefore, no one should marry in a pagan manner. This is a starting point to alienate from God because this is instruction from God (Deut 7:3-4).

Marriage introductions have a spiritual meaning to the sacredness of God (Gen 24:60 KJV). Let all who desire to marry be registered for the marriage. These should be prepared to repeat the marriage vows (Gen 2:23-24 KJV). Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge (Hebrews 13:4 KJV).

The bible says, “who so finds a wife finds a good thing, it is prepared by God Himself (Proverb 18:22 KJV).” Malachi describes the validity of marriage right from its youth (Malachi 2:14) because it is a covenant relationship done by God. The church’s practice today does not depend on either tribal or church decisions, but on what God had already laid (1Corinth 3:11 KJV) which is Jesus Christ. It is also critical to observe the civil law of marriage; it becomes properly confirmed and approved by the government.

Program Evaluation

After the seminar, there was a change in marriage and understanding people’s attitudes, and it was a love that originated from the knowledge of Christ and also it was the change in their practices of approved marriages. It is noteworthy that 17 out of 114 respondents registered (14.9%) for holy matrimony on May 2016. This was the first group for the approval, but another group (13 members or 11.4%) was registered and approved during camp meeting in September 2016. It is progressive with the hope that in the next two years, it will reach 78.9%.

Visitations also made it fruitful to meet people where they are and have issues that come as direct concerns to the side of approved and not approved marriages. These do not serve and have no recognition in the Church. If Christian marriage had been embraced, then tribal marriages would have been left out after recognizing its holiness.

Leaders that attended the workshop also increased their skills of administering the not approved marriages to get approved and also the shortcomings that these not approved face before they do it. Finally, it was a learning experience in progress and practical guide to other members of the Church and other Churches.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

In the assessment done, marriage has changed from the Christian perspective to cultural works. Following the modern world view, there are so many marital transformations done around tribal groups in Mityana. Marriage in the current form does not reflect the image that God created man for it. It is favored by culture in a traditional background, and this has also been helped by cross-cultural interactions in marriage. Many Adventist families have experienced the pressure of the culture. This should be care to any event that is connected to marriage. This downplays the Christian standards, hence the poor relationship with God.

In as much as this is looked at, the most vulnerable age is the youth who enter into marriage without a clear understanding. The elopement as a practice among others seems to have been used as a norm in marriage. This caused unfaithfulness within the believers. The impact is found to be inbred but needs to be driven out from peoples' minds. Then by so doing, effective spiritual programs in marriage shall reach a sacred obligation to holiness. Trained elders and ministers also need to deliver a clear goal to live a positive life and help to curb the problem.

Conclusion

According to the assessment, marriage under the theological perception is still upheld by the hand of God. It is for God's glory. The cultural marital practice impacts the entire marriage institution. These practices, in the long run, bring the fall in the Christian values. The tribal groups in the Seventh-day Adventist Church of Mityana, still have to make good choices when getting into marriage. This will also help people in the community, to see the Christian marriage as valued than any other traditional marriages.

The assessment involved Baganda, Banyarwanda, Bakonzo groups and other tribes. Marital practices are generally a cause for so many marriage failures, and this becomes a disease and becomes a challenge to Christian marriage.

The people in these tribes have no age limit when it comes to getting into marriage. The only way regarded is to use modern fashion which seems to disintegrate the marriage value. Beside this, Mityana can change after a thorough education that calls for revival.

Youth are the target group to help the new marriages and the most suffering are to be directed to fear God, to the maximum of living a holy life by joining in pre-marital counseling. Parents though, seem to have forgotten their work; it is still their obligation for the transformation and instilling good values in their children.

Since the church had been for a long time with members having marriages that are not approved, it still remained its concern for marriages to be sanctioned. Leaders of the church have to do their part on the awareness of marriage in the church. Although the cultural practices seem to be there, it does not stop the convenient service of the members to come out of this problem. It also requires constant seminars for believers on marriage. Practices, like elopement and others, can be directly be disciplined to impart the Christian

behaviors in church members. Finally, marriage, today, needs proper attention if it aims at getting good results. Therefore, it's a delayed but a resurrected ministry to equip saints to be ready for His second coming, without a wrinkle." That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish (Ephesians 5:27 KJV). But ready for being ushered in the kingdom.

Recommendations

The assessment looked for the beneficiary and ought to give the recommendations to you that this work will cause a straight path to reach God's set standards.

1. There should strictly be seminars and workshops to educate both the members and leaders of the church. It should be carried out on a quarterly basis.
2. Christian values should be taught as a priority to all Christians to reduce or avoid ignorance and marital problems.
3. Cultural practices among tribes need to be taught and be explained as they differ especially on marriage issues.
4. The youths should be encouraged, advised to join their peer group clubs in their local churches in order to have better Christian training for their present and future safeguard.
5. Strictly the local church leadership should exercise disciplinary measures to the eloped members without covering up their sin that is bringing reproach to others. Seminars should frequently be held to help the members get rid of elopement.
6. Frequent visitation should be organized for the couples that have practiced elopement or did not follow the bible and Christian values and guidelines before entering into marriage.
7. The annual action plan of each local church department of family life should be well organized to prepare interesting, effective topics for marriage programs by targeting and reaching the members, families, homes, and individuals that have the same problem in the district and outside it.

8. There should be obligatory pre-marital counseling session of at least six months for couples preparing for marriage. This should be done by any pastor willing to officiate at marriages.
9. The local church boards should approve and vote the proposed marriage if possible.
10. A veteran, married couples should set good examples for the younger generation to follow and also by counseling them individually and collectively from time to time.
11. At least once per quarter, there should be a sermon on marriage, its holiness, joy, advantages, and also approve marriages to wean them from their traditional practices to the Christian standards.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
QUESTIONNAIRE

Adventist University of Africa
MA Pastoral Theology

DEAR SIR / MRS.

I AM A STUDENT OF ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY OF AFRICA DOING A RESEARCH ON: AN ASSESSMENT OF CULTURAL MARITAL PRACTICES AND THEIR IMPACT ON CHRISTIAN MARRIAGES IN MITYANA LOCAL CHURCH IN CENTRAL UGANDA CONFERENCE.

This is a requirement of the course. Masters of Art Pastoral Theology. For this reason, I kindly request you to fill in the following questionnaire. Please don't put your name.

Kind regards

Researcher: Ssenuuni Daniel

SECTION A

Personal information: Kindly tick in the appropriate box on the data below:

Your age range Gender

1. 15 – 25 Male

2. 26 – 40 Female

3. 41 & Above

4. Marital status: Married Single Divorced Widow/Widower

5. Tribe: Muganda Mukonzo Munyarwanda Others

6. Education: primary Sec Tertiary University

SECTION B

1. Respondents who value marriage as a God's institution.

Yes No

2. Acceptance of dowry payment

Yes No I don't know

3. Acceptability of dating for a Christian? Yes No

4. Why is there too much Elopement for young people?

One who cares

To get a partner

To have children

It is the culture for today

5. Church cares for approved not approved married people

Yes No

6. A number of seminars attended on marriage Yes No

7. How many times? 1 2 3 None

APPENDIX B
CORRESPONDENCE



CENTRAL UGANDA CONFERENCE
Kireka Hill 2km off Jinja Road

P.O. Box 22
Kampala - Uganda
Tel: 0414 662974
www.cucsda.org

Our Ref:

Date:.....

Your Ref:

April 12, 2016

The Church Board
Mityana District
MITYANA

Dear Members,

Re: **PASTOR DANIEL SENNUNI**

Greetings to you all in Jesus name.

I am writing to introduce to you Pr. Daniel Sennuni, a Masters student at Adventist University of Africa Nairobi. He has requested the church to allow him to conduct his research in the Adventist Church at Mityana in the areas of Marital.

I request you to assist him get his needed information for his dissertation which will also be helpful for the church.

God bless you.

Yours sincerely,


Alisengawa Jeremah
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

c.c. CUC Officers

MITYANA SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH
P.O BOX 58 MITYANA

21st May, 2015

THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY
CENTRAL UGANDA CONFERENCE
P.O.BOX 22, KIREKA

Dear Sir,

CARRYING OUT RESEARCH IN MITYANA SDA

In regard to the above subject, it is my pleasure to submit an official request to you, as a student from Adventist University of Africa. I study M.A Pastoral Theology course. In order to fulfill my requirement I chose Mityana SDA church as a case study for my research work. Topic: An assessment of cultural marital practices and their impact on Christian marriage in Mityana SDA CUC. Therefore this is to request your office to endorse my study for open concerns to the members and any other useful work for me.

Hope from your office

Yours faithfully



PASTOR SSENSUUNI DANIEL

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Admin. "Is Banyarwanda a Tribe in Uganda Consitution." March 3 2009. *Ugandans Travel Guide*. Accessed February 17, 2016.
<https://ugandansatheart.org/category/banyarwanda/>.
- Berner, Michael. *Brave Marriages*. Chicago, IL: Xulon Press, 2010.
- Bode, Michael, and Michael Ausubel. *Marriage, Sex, and Family in Judaism Lanham*. New York, NY: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005.
- Bowden, Jim. *Validating Committed Partnerships: A Still More Excellent Way, A New Relational Paradigm Supported by the High Way of God's Love and Justice*. Bloomington, IN: Trafford, 2013.
- Clark, John David. *Marriage and Divorce: What Does The Bible Really Say?* Burlington, NC: Burlington Press, 2005.
- Cuyos, Fanny A., and Juanillo Edens. *Journey with Jesus: God Builds and Unites His People: Teacher's Manual in Christian Living for Second Year High School*. Philippine: Rex Book, 2004.
- Dailey, Prudence, ed. *The Book of Common Prayer: Past, Present, and Future: A 350th Anniversary Celebration*. New York, NY: Continuum, 2011.
- Freed, Edwin D. *The Morality of Paul's Converts*. New York, NY: Routledge, 2004.
- General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist. *General Conference of Seventh-Day Adventists, Ministerial Association, Seventh-Day Adventist Minister's Handbook*. Silver Springs, MI: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2009. Accessed March 21, 2017. [http://ministerialassociation.org/store/products/ministers-handbook-\(pdf-download\)](http://ministerialassociation.org/store/products/ministers-handbook-(pdf-download)).
- General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists Administrative Committee. *Statement on Marriage*. Silver Spring, MD: ADCOM, 1996.
- Hunter, David H., ed. *Marriage in the First Century*. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2001.
- Kaiser Jr., Walter C. *Toward Old Testament Ethics*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1991.
- Long, Phillip J. *The Origin of the Eschatological Feast as a Wedding Banquet in the Synoptic Gospels*. San Jose, CA: Pickwick, 2013.

- Mamdani, Mahmood. *When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism, and the Genocide in Rwanda*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001.
- Mityana SDA Church. "Marriage Registration 2012-2015." Mityana Seventh-day Adventist Church, 2015.
- Mwakikagile, Godfrey. *Uganda: A Nation in Transition Post-Colonial Analysis*. Dar es Salaam, Tanzania: New Africa Press, 2012.
- Otiso, Keefa M. *Culture and Customs of Uganda*. Westport, CT: Greenwood, 2006.
- Pedersen, Frederik. *Marriage Disputes in Medieval England*. Grande, OH: Hambledon Press, 2000.
- Peterson, Derek R. *Ethnic Patriotism and the East African Revival: A History of Dissent, C. 1935-1972*. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2012.
- Reid, George W, ed. *Understanding Scripture: An Adventist Approach, Biblical Research Institute General Studies*. Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2000.
- Satlow, Michael L. *Jewish Marriage in Antiquity*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001.
- Sharman, Fergus. *Linguistic Ties between Ancient Egyptians and Bantu: Uncovering Symbiotic Affinities and Relationships in Vocabulary*. Boca Raton, FL: Boca Raton Universal, 2014.
- Ssenuuni, Daniel. "Seminar Held at Mityana Seventh-Adventist Church," 2015.
- UBOS. "Census Tabulations Centable." November 2014. *Uganda Bureau of Statistics*. Accessed December 29, 2014.
http://www.ubos.org/onlinefiles/uploads/ubos/census_tabulations/centable.
- Walton, John. *Ancient Near East Thought and Old Testament: Introducing the Conceptual World of the Hebrew Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2006.
- Watchman, Nee. *Do All the Glory of God*. New York, NY: Christian Fellowship, 2014.
- West, Gaylon. *Marriage Designed in Heaven: For Bible Students and Christian Marriage Counselors*. Auburndale, FL: GW, 2014.
- White, Ellen G. *Adventist Home*. Nashville, TN: Southern, 1952.
- . *The Bible Echo*. Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1887.
- . *The Ministry of Healing*. Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1905.

Wikipedia. "Mityana Town Council Square Kilometer." *Wikipedia the Free Encyclopedia*. Accessed December 29, 2014. <https://www.wikipedia.org/#q=mityana+town+council+square+kilometers>.

VITA

Personal Identification

Name: Daniel Ssenuuni

Date of birth: 23th August, 1965

District: Rakai – Uganda

Sex: Male

Marital Status: Married

Wife: Hope Ssenuuni

Languages: Luganda, English

Nationality: Ugandan

Email: ssennunid@gmail.com

Education

2013 – 2016 Adventist University of Africa – Nairobi

MA in Pastoral Theology

2007 – 2010 Bugema University: Bachelor of Arts in Theology

2000 – 2005 Ministerial Diploma of PIATM at Kireka

Work Experience

1996 – 2005 Ssese District Pastor

2006 – 2009 Masaka District Pastor

2010 – 2013 Bukuya District Pastor

2013 – 2016 Mityana District Pastor