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MARRIAGE AND THE HEREAFTER IN THE KITIUL YANSI

A PSYCHO - RELIGIOUS AND MISSIONARY ANALYSIS FOR

INCULTURATION IN AFRICA

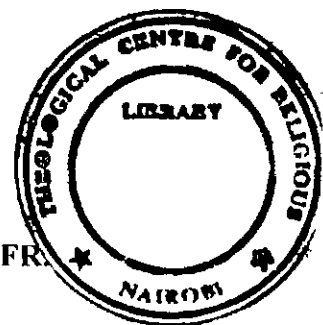
**ESSAY SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
BACHELOR OF ARTS IN RELIGIOUS STUDIES**

BY

JEAN-MARIE KIKASIDI EBUL BUL, SVD

MODERATOR: Dr. AYLWARD SHORTER, M. AFR.

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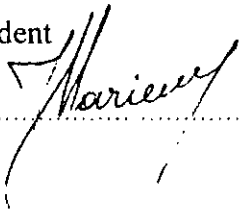


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STUDENT' S DECLARATION

I hereby undersign and declare that this work has never been presented for any academic purpose. This entails that it is genuine and has its originality from my own reflection with the help of my moderator.

Student


.....

Moderator

.....

DEDICATION

To
My Father, KIKASIDI NSINGA PETE Lievin
and
My Mother, NGAZEBE DIAKA Cecile
both
Kitiul Husband and Wife,
Example of *kitiul* Marriage,
Fountain and stimulus of my inspiration to this essay.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Looking at our society, we see that marriage has become an overarching institution that needs particular attention. Many are lost in the modern society concepts of marriage. Some strongly declare marriage of man and man or woman and woman which loses the ontological meaning of it. Some others prefer a society of single women and men with its individualistic and materialistic concordances. The Church strives to contribute her share in consigning and updating a true meaning to marriage in all cultures. It is my share as a Christian to give hands to the Church in this work.

This work is genuinely a communitarian enterprise, a reflection of what we are as fruits of marriage. Thanks to professors, fellow students, confreres, parents, relatives and friends, this undertaking has taken shape. I wish to register my heartfelt gratitude for them all. I am deeply grateful to Fr. Aylward Shorter for his prompt availability and friendly admonitions which orientated this essay.

My esteem and gratitude are also recorded to SVDs who put their thoughts and hands together to build a Common Formation Centre in AFRAM zone and this is one of the first two essays emerging from it. Credit is given to all my confreres in CFC-Nairobi for providing me a family atmosphere in the completion of this work. All my family members, especially my parents, brothers and sisters, cousins, uncles and aunts deserve appreciation and praise for giving me new *kitiul* insights through their marriages. I feel indebted to my cousin Sr. Georgine Mpimbwele, CP for her courage to challenge *kitiul* custom and pursue religious vocation. Her informations as well as those of Fred Kama-Kama helped me to make constructive and critical evaluation on this research.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CCC: The Catechism of the Catholic Church

EA: Ecclesia in Africa - The Church in Africa

EN: Evangelii Nuntiandi - On Evangelisation in the Modern World

GS: Gaudium et Spes - Pastoral Constitution on the Church in Modern World

ICEL: International Commission on English in Liturgy

LG: Lumen Gentium - Dogmatic Constitution on the Church

RM: Redemptoris Missio - The Mission of the Church

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INTRODUCTION

Today more than ever in the past, clan structures in which marriage took roots are disintegrating. The *kitiul* system is one of the matrilineal customary forms of marriage that still prevails. It portrays the communal continuance of the family lineage and the preservation of the unity of the visible and invisible families within an anthropology of clan relatedness. Captivated by the psycho-religious, theological, missionary, pastoral and soteriological questions that it raises in the Church, I selected this topic of marriage and the hereafter. Aiming at an inculturated form of marriage for Yansi Christians, our methodology will be expository, deductive, analytical and comparative. It dwells upon socio - anthropological field research already done by others in the African context. That is, as source, we made moderate attempt to consult quite an amount of French and English literature on different fields of marriage and salvation.

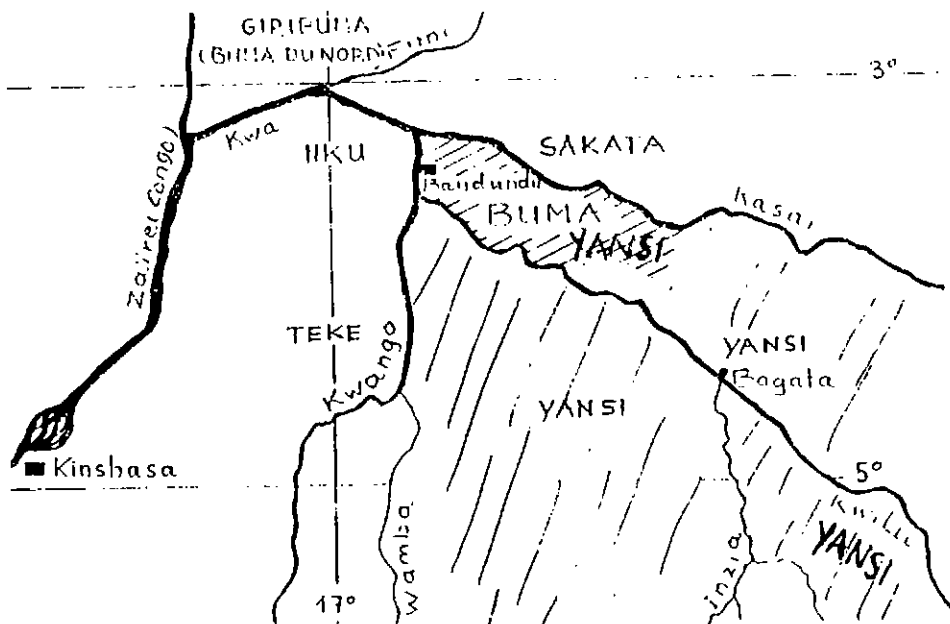
However, the scope of this study remains that of *kitiul* customary marriage in the Yansiland so to come up with a contextual idea of inculturation. The scheme of our essay follows the different chapters purposely organised. They develop and separate the intertwined themes conveyed in this work. The first chapter much longer than others intends to narrow down the presentation of the Yansi location, their system of marriage based on their world - view, and the socio-religious function of the *kitiul*. The second chapter sketches out the Church teaching on marriage and the presents the sacramental life of these people in their pastoral milieu. The third one assesses and discusses critically church and *kitiul* traditions on marriage and pave the way to the fourth chapter that deals with inculturation. All together, this essay modestly tries to analyse the marital situation among the Yansi in order to implement properly the teaching of the Church; to empower her people and promote better communal life in a Church known as a family.

CHAP. I. THE *KITIUL* CUSTOMARY MARRIAGE IN THE YANSI TRADITION

I.1. YANSI SOCIAL STRUCTURE AND WORLD-VIEW

I.1.1. GEO - HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL NOTES

There are stories that make all the Yansi believe that they all came from the same ancestors as given by God, *Nziam*. This is proven by the fact that all the Yansi followed more or less the same tradition. Their historical migration brought them to Bandundu region where they are settled now. The region of Bandundu is located in the lower part of the river Kasai in the Democratic Republic of Congo, the former Zaire. The map below illustrates the Yansi location in DRC¹.



According to the cultural and linguistic classification given by J. Vansina, the Yansi belong to the Yans - Ding group². This group comprises the following tribes: the Yans, the Ngul, The Lower

¹ Hohegger, H., Normes et Pratiques Sociales Chez les Buma, Bandundu: CEEBA Publications, 1975, p.3.

² For historical information, see Vansina J., Les anciens Royaumes de la savane, 2^e éd Kinshasa: Presses Universitaires du Zaïre, 1976. pp. 77-87, and Kingdoms of the Savana

the Ding, the Tsong, the Mput, and the Mbuun. Despite some varieties, these people share many traditional practices as far as marriage is concerned. They also present many other cultural similarities.

I. 1. 2. SOCIO-POLITICAL ORGANISATION

The Yansi as a matrilineal society are organised with a political structure based on clan grouping. The clans are subjected to the reigning clan of the nobles, *bamwil*. These *bamwil* legally rule politically over *bansan*, commoners in one chiefdom, settlement. The common clans are *Amwil*, *kimpil*, *kindia*, *kingom*, *kinsie*, *kindal*, *kimbie*, *kimwankie*, *kimway*. Each clan *nsan*, in its ancestral territory is master of the spirits of nature that dwell in there³. Their life can hardly be understood if one misses to clutch the *kitiul* system based on the relationship between grand parents and grand children. Marriage is initiated from this relationship. This system itself is followed by the entire tribal group, regardless the existing tribal sub-divisions such as *Abwal*, *Anyar*, *Ayey*, *Bimbay*, *Bimban*, *Biokuy*, *Bimbiem* and their different dialects or denominations.

I. 2. YANSI MARRIAGE FROM A NATURAL POINT OF VIEW

The clan community is of great importance on marriage celebrations of its members. Marriage is a crucial instance in the Yansi society that provides more security and strength in the lineage. Being a decisive social instance, for the Yansi as well as for many Africans, "one of the paramount aspirations is procreation as the ancestors recommended it. Thus, a man who dies without progeny falls, in a way, into oblivion"⁴. Such an individual will have no memory which is an essential

London: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1966, p. 110. . See also, van Naemen, "Migration des Bayanzi". In Congo, 1934, 1, 2, 189-196.

³ Thiel J. F., La Situation Religieuse des Mbiem, Bandundu: Ceeba, 1972, p.9.

⁴ Bujo B., African Christian Morality at the Age of Inculturation, Nairobi: Paulines

key issue in relation to the African eschatology in this essay. Hence, having an ancestral and eventually a divine origin, marriage has been customarily arranged among the Yansi under the *kitiul* system.

I.2. 1. THE *KITIUL* SYSTEM IN YANSI TRADITION

Basically, *kitiul* is a relationship that involves grand parents and grand children of both sexes. Once this relationship is established, the grand children become by the same token *batiul* to all relatives within the matrilineal extended family of the grand parents.

Within the *kitiul* system, "there is a stated preference for marriage with the daughter's daughter (*ketiul*), but in practise the maternal grandfather cannot marry his grand-daughter and instead allocates his daughter's daughter among the men of his clan, usually his matrilineage, his sister's sons"⁵.

Fundamentally, this feature is known as *ebal'etiul*, *kitiul* matrimony. It is also the legal and appropriate form of marriage that still prevails among the Yansi. Traditionally, marriage permeates all life and there is little room, sometimes even not, for personal choice or other vocational pursuits. This is similar to the following assertion: "In Africa there is no place for the single woman, or the single man. The woman cannot ultimately refuse marriage and there is no tendency for men to flee from women and create their own bachelor society"⁶.

Naturally, marriage, far from being seen as the modern society trifle, stands for an institute fundamental human vocation to be achieved in the *kitiul* Yansi. Marriage as in most African cultures is a central *rite de passage* in which every member of the society had to go through and no

Publications, 1990, p. 108.

⁵ Mubuy M. M., "Dreams among the Yansi" In: Jedrej M. C. & Shaw R., eds., Dreaming Religion and Society in Africa, New York: E.J. Brill, 1992, 100-110.

⁶ Shorter A., African Culture and the Christian Church, London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1973, p. 162.

optional⁷. One wonders why so. All certainly emanates from the world-view they hold and the legacy of their ancestors.

1.2.2. *KITIUL* MARRIAGE AND WORLD-VIEW

The entire world is concerned with the questions of meaning and values as two main cultural patterns which enlightened relationships, communication, interpretation and understanding of realities. It is within this realm of reality that antivalues, complications and exaggerations and strangeness derive from. Values and meanings are contextualised and expressed according to a certain world view. All in one, the traditional idea behind a world view denotes the search for the meaning of existence.

This is the general notion given by Luzbetak: "A world view represents the deepest questions one might ask about the world and life, and about the corresponding orientation that one should take toward them. More concretely, the world view provides answers to such basic questions as: Who or what am I? Why am I in the world? What is reality? How do humans differ from nonhumans (animals, objects, the invisible beings)? Who belongs to the invisible world and what are the invisible forces in the world? What is the proper orientation to time and space? What about life after death? What in life or the world is desirable or undesirable, and to what degree?"⁸

All these questions are answered by various world views generally classified in four categories: Idealistic, materialistic, common religious view and incarnational. They reveal deepest beliefs and basic assumptions about reality, for instance the reality of marriage.

In corroboration, all these views are regarded in Hierbert words as "the foundations on which a culture is built, it is hard to change them. Many non-western world views are closer to that of the Bible than is our modern, secular world view. They

⁷ See Waruta D. W., "Marriage and Family in Contemporary African Society: Challenge in Pastoral Counselling" In: Waruta D. W & Kinoti H. W., eds., Pastoral in African Christianity Nairobi: Acton Publishers, 1994, 87-102.

⁸ Luzbetak L. J., The Church and Cultures, New Perspectives in Missiological Anthropology Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1988, p.252.

understand the tribal ties and rituals of the Old Testament and are more aware of the spirit world."⁹

I. 3. THE YANSI WORLD-VIEW

The Yansi world view is inscribed within the broad context of traditional African religious world view. This religion is endowed with the belief in a cosmo - dualistic relationship between two world namely, the invisible world which is spiritual and the visible world which is material. The content of the invisible world is the Supreme Being, divinities or spirit, ancestors and occult forces whereas, the visible world is that of man and his environment. It is only within the framework of this belief that marriage and other rites of passage draw their real meaning in life. Here we may add that "every traditional African is, and becomes, religious to the extent that each of his actions is a part of his religious belief"¹⁰. According to the African world view and, despite the vast diversity of matrimonial practices in the continent, Mbiti notices that "marriage is the focus of existence. It is the point where all members of a given community meet: the departed, the living, and those yet to be born"¹¹. This idea connects with the practice of *kitiul* marriage among the Yansi which is also grounded on the communal relationship between the living and the dead, *ankiak*, precisely, the ancestors. All of them form one family as far as those dead are remembered by the living ones. Tokunboh quoting Placide Tempels says that " the dead constitute the invisible part of the family, clan or tribe, and this invisible part of the family is the most important"¹². Culturally speaking, certain

⁹ Hiebert P. G., Anthropological Insights for Missionaries, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1985, p.212.

¹⁰ Bahemuka J. M., Our Religious Heritage, Nairobi: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd, 1982, p. 40.

¹¹ Mbiti J., African Religions and Philosophy, London: Heinemann, 1969, p. 133.

¹² Tokunboh A., Salvation in African Tradition, Nairobi: Evangel Publishing House, 1979, p. 63.

things are integrated through relationship. So is the eschatological dimension of matrimony in the *kitiul* Yansi and its link to the belief in after life.

I. 3. 1. DEATH AND THE BELIEF IN HEREAFTER

It is very common and acknowledgeable that Africans believe in a life after death. In fact, this belief tends even more to undermine death and value life in the sense that death becomes only a displacement from earth. Thus majority of African people hold that "the dead are not dead". It is also well established that human existence here on earth is a gift of God, the Supreme Being. Immortal, the *Muyansi* as a human person belongs to God and is constituted by three elements, namely, the body, *nur*, in Yansi language, the breath, *mwe*, and the "ghost" of the person, *enini*. *Mwe* is an immortal element. According to this conception of displacement, it is believed that marriage once sealed here between two parties will continue also in the next world. Eugene Hillman quoting Bishop Sarpong nods his approval on this belief among the Asaman noticing that "the chief here is a chief there, a farmer here is a farmer there"¹³. So to say, my wife here is my wife there.

I. 3. 2. BELIEF IN LIFE AFTER DEATH

From the various literature consulted on this topic and from our own experience and knowledge, it is quite remarkable that Africans believe strongly that their lives are partially destroyed by death. This is only a kind of disruption but life will always continue somehow somewhere. It is advocated by African scholars that for Africans, majority admit that human life follows a natural rhythm which starts from "birth, puberty, initiation, marriage, procreation, old age

¹³ Hillman E., Towards an African Christianity, Inculturation Applied, New York: Paulist Press, 1993, p. 88.

death, entry into the company of the spirits"¹⁴. The question involved in this conception contains of course the worries of what becomes of man or woman after the actual life. Hence life and moral behaviour is affected by the world - view held.

In the African search of what becomes of a human person appears a storage of myths about the origin of death. Along with Marriage, African Traditional Religion reckons death as a rite of passage and with this regard is very important. Joseph Healey and Donald Sybertz counsels that "death is very important and influential in the African worldview"¹⁵. This belief in immortality and that of the other dimensions of life are all of immense significance in the Yansi tradition. The poetic sequence of Birago Diop quoted by J. Healey and D. Sybertz retraces the same thought that the dead are never dead. It depicts the African world view of the beyond and also "it portrays the enduring relationship between the living and the dead:

Those who are dead have never gone away.
They in the shadows darkening around,
They are in the shadows fading into the day,
The dead are not under the ground.
They are in the trees that quiver,
They are in the woods that weep,
They are in the waters of the rivers,
They are in the waters that sleep.
They are in the crowds, they are in the homestead.
The dead are never dead"¹⁶.

As the other part of the family continues to live in the other world, one of the important and valuable thing is to keep the memory of them. From both family duties and obligations are expected. In this regard, marriage, being the institution from which the family emanates, is naturally respected for the conservation, the continuity of the living family and the remembrance of the departed family.

¹⁴ Tokunboh A., op. cit, p. 63.

¹⁵ Healey J. & Sybertz D., Towards an African Narrative Theology, Nairobi: Paulines Publications, 1996, p. 207.

¹⁶ Ibid. p. 212.

1. 4. *KITIUL* MARRIAGE IN PRACTICE: INHERENT IMPLICATIONS

The *kitiul* marriage follows a strict clan exogamic form. This acknowledged form of clan unit mating is virilocal and is normative in principle. A twofold general norms govern the whole celebration of marriage according to the Yansi customs. The first stipulates that a man and a woman of the same clan can't be married regardless the degree and depth of the clan or kin relationship. Such a marriage is regarded as incestuous as affirmed in this: "*l'inceste est condamné sans recours*"¹⁷. So to say, no close consanguine marriage, *ebal mun nzo* is accepted. This exists from a natural and mystical wisdom of the common ancestor basis, biologically called the law of heredity. The second norm prescribes marriage between two members of two different maternal clans. This is the *kitiul* selection which we will see how it came into existence and its implications in customary legislation in the Yansi marriage ordinance. Endogamy in this case constitutes an absolute impediment.

1. 4. 1. SOCIO - JURIDICAL EXISTENCE OF THE *KITIUL* MARRIAGE

Two principles support the foundation of *kitiul* marriages as marriage *de jure* or legal customary marriage. One is the principle of participation in the mystico - ontological growth of the clan community. The other is the principle of vital recapitulation or the theory of alternated generations¹⁸. Vital recapitulation indicate in the Yansi psychology that grand children, *atiul*, recapitulate their grand-parents, *ankiak* and therefore alternate their generation. That is, the grandson is the "copy" of the grandfather. The granddaughter is the "copy" of the grandmother. Because, grandmother is the wife to grandfather, granddaughter, being the copy of grandmother is a potential wife to grandfather. Grandfather is then an hypothetical husband to granddaughter. So is grandson, a potential husband to grandmother and the latter would be an hypothetical wife to grandson. It is so in

¹⁷ Matadi L., "Fiançailles et Stabilité Matrimoniale Yansi". In: *Zaire - Afrique*, 1974, 90, 612.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 614.

the Yansi mentality so that so grandfather can call granddaughter *okiy' ame*, my wife and grandmother can call grandson *odim'ame*, my husband. The principle of participation in the growth of the matrilineal clan is founded on the biological dialectic between lost and gain in the clan sum up in the rule of filial piety, *ofur akil*. A man of a certain clan who marries a woman of the other clan loses in his own clan but increases people in the clan of his wife. As a consequence of this rule, his grandchildren will one day contribute to his maternal clan by means of *kitiul* marriages.

All these concepts of clan participation, filiation, vital recapitulation, hypothetical and potential wife and husband with the clan relations between the four grandparents resulted in three betrothal forms and three forms of marriage. The three forms are all legally preferential at their basis. They are concretised by the juridical customs of the *Kitiul* Yansi in terms of right and obligations.

I. 4. 2. PREFERENTIAL PATERNAL FORM OF ENGAGEMENT AND MARRIAGE

This form of marriage concern the relation between grandmother and grandson. Being son of grandmother, the father of grandson presents to his son one of the young girl of his lineage as an eventual potential wife. This derives from the right of eventual hypothetical wife that the paternal grandmother has on the grandson. Because, she cannot marry this grandson, she passes this right to the female members of her clan according to the clan solidarity principle. These female members, *etwan' ata* must be safe from consanguine union which is investigated by, *nsa ebal* the marriage tribal committee of the settlement.

Matadi affirms that "selon la solidarité clanique, les droits et obligations d'un membre du clan sont ceux de tous les membres du clan. Par conséquent, le droit de la grand mère dans le cas qui nous occupe passe a son clan, c.a`d aux membres féminins de son clan... Du coté paternel donc le garçon se trouve devant plusieurs épouses potentielles."¹⁹

¹⁹ Matadi L., *op. cit.* p. 616.

This is no longer practised severely as it was in the old age because preferential maternal betrothal has got more solid degree of juridicity than the paternal one.

1. 4. 3. PREFERENTIAL MATERNAL FORM OF ENGAGEMENT AND MARRIAGE

This form of marriage concerns the relation between grandfather and granddaughter²⁰, following *mutatis mutandis* the principle of recapitulation and filial piety. In this case, The young girl is placed in front of several potential legal husbands from the maternal clan of the grandfather. These latter are called potentially *nga'etiul*, meaning the possessors of the *ketiul*. But, in normal circumstances, the girl is chosen right from the day of her birth for the future legal companion by the niece to grandfather, mother of the boy. She gives a coin to the mother of the girl and points out that the girl belongs to her son, the proper *nga'etiul*. As grandfather calls the girl, *okiey'eme*, my wife, so will she be called by the *nga'etiul*²¹. On the other hand, the girl will call grandfather as well as each of the potential husbands, *odim'ame*, *mudim'ame*..., my husband.

From this type of relation derives the successoral norm of *kitiul* customary marriage: All potential husbands are "successors in title" to the girl. Hence, every new born in the clan is either potential husband or wife to somebody. Marriage or not, the norm remains inviolable. This maternal preferential form of marriage is the most predominant form of the *kitiul* that is on the scene today. It really exists as sine qua non condition if the maternal grandfather of the girl is at the same time *nga-nzo*, literally, the household who is the maternal uncle of the boy²². However, the successoral

²⁰ She is sometimes called *mbanda*, rival to the grandmother.

²¹ Sociologists, ethnologists, Anthropologists and missionaries prefer to use kikongo translation of the words or ideas under scrutiny because of the major linguistic variety of Yansi dialects. But the stem of the words remain radical to all dialects in the case of *etiul*.

²² de Quirini, "Les fiançailles de droit chez les Bayansi". In: Congo, 6, 5, mai 1952, 499-504, p. 501.

norm is an affirmation of the legitimisation of *kitiul* marriage but is not the act of will fulfilling the right itself. It gives also room in the understanding of remarriage *mortis causa*.

I. 4. 4. LEVIRATE AND SORORATE, *EBAL NKWA*

These exists only in cases of death of either partner. It has psychological reasons at its foundation, namely the fear of having one of the clan member roaming around, a street child for instance. The clan is responsible of its members regardless their age and sex. Children are not orphaned if they lose either of the parents because of the clan-parents. To assure their protection and education and arising from the rights and obligations of the clan community, one can remarry the widow of the deceased brother or sister in the family. This is done only after the funerals cleansing of the deceased. It is wished, desired in intention but is not forced in principle.

I. 5. PSYCHO - RELIGIOUS DYNAMIC AND THEOLOGICAL PREOCCUPATION ON *KITIUL* MARRIAGE

A certain number of problems both traditional and ecclesial as well as theological concerning marriage in Africa in the global context have been already examined by theologians and missionaries²³. Notice that each tribe in Africa has its own particularities as in the *kitiul* marriage and its meaningful socio-religious dimension for inculturation.

²³ See, Hastings A., op. cit. See also the publication about the CROMIA project, Kisembo, B. et al., African Christian Marriage, 2 ed., Nairobi. Paulines Publications Africa, 1998.

1.5.1. CELEBRATION OF CUSTOMARY MARRIAGE AMONG THE YANSI

Apart from the *kitiul* marriage, there are two other forms. The ordinary form is when any young man ask to marry a young Yansi woman. He pays the *efule*, little money, to the girl for her consent. Because of the binding with a male *kitiul*, *Nga'etiul*, she must be liberated, *owiya okar*. During the liberative palaver, the bridewealth, *oter* which goes to *nga'etiul* through *nganzo* is fixed. Once the *oter* is given, the girl receive the blessing from the legal family as the ancestors are informed and is freed for her future bridegroom. The parents of the girl must receive the *zyr* and *odiyi*, the gifts without which the validity of the marriage is questioned. By then, they both receive proper blessing and proceed to the *os'onzo*, the coming home preceded by a traditional wedding celebration.

The second form is a kind of elopement, seen as stealing the wife. The girl, being the wife in title to someone may have been impregnated by someone else during premarital sexual relationship. The illegal man is taxed with *nketian*, heavy fine, consisting of goats, chicken, cloth, blankets and money by the legal engaged man and the family of the girl. It is more heavier in the case of a legal wife of a reigning clan, *Amwil*. At this instance, Marriage depends on the consent of the two troubled people. But, this will not be possible lest the *nga'etiul* agrees to liberate the girl through the ritual of *obiey*²⁴. The rest then continues from the ceremony of *owiya okar* as in the previous form for the validity of the marriage.

Nevertheless, the process of *kitiul* marriage starts from birth to the time of *os'onzo* according to the *kitiul* law. Albeit done according to the custom, the *kitiul* engagement is always orally confirmed at the age of puberty under the initiative of the boy. Marriage is consented by both the girl

²⁴

Simon J. & B. Schweizer B., "Les Fiançailles et Mariage chez les baYansi" In: CEEBA, Le Mariage, la Vie Familiale et l' Education Coutumière chez diverses Ethnies de la province de Bandundu, 1966, 1, 24-31, p. 29. See, M. A. Mufwene: Le mariage Yansi (section Babwal).

and the boy. In some cases, the man is far older than the woman. In this case, if one of the two withdraws their consent, there will appear the legal engagement dissolution and *obiey and owiyi okar*, to liberate the girl. It might happen that they are forced to get married depending on the judgement and the consent of the community of elders. Before marriage, the girl confesses, *otar* all her premarital sexual encounters with other men in front of the paternal aunt. This is very crucial lest she will have problem in giving birth, where she will say everything she kept hidden. All the men cited will be fined, *ofur akur*. Paternal aunt will collect some money and a cock which the future husband will enjoy. This is common to every Yansi girl in every form of marriage. To the parents of the girl, the *kitiul* husband gives some gifts in modern item, suit, belt, blankets to the father; piece of imported cloth, scarf... to the mother. The bridewealth in this case is very little but symbolical and significant.

I. 5. 2. PSYCHO - RELIGIOUS DYNAMICS

Among many African people, bridewealth is substantial for the validity of marriage. It is also considered as assurance to the durability of marriage. Among the Yansi, in case of marriage outside *kitiul* bondage, its significance goes beyond normal consideration. The absence of its payment is a serious dereliction of duty which creates emotional, psychological and even biological complications to the family. The wife might remain childless until the dowry is paid. Sickness, failure, bad luck are also thought to be caused by such dereliction since the *nga'etitul* always claims his fundamental right on the bride.

For those among the Yansi who do not accept *kitiul* marriage, mostly educated people, either for fear of consanguine union or other vocational choices, a liberative ritual must be performed. If this is not observed, then the individual may run into trouble. Cases of trauma have been registered

mostly for sisters who joined their congregations without fulfilling all the traditional requirements. Their troubles never ended till they went back to solve traditional problems of the *kitiul*. Beside this, there is a lot of fear of *mwim*, sorcery or witchcraft associated to the right of the *kitiul* partner. In the mentality, one might be cursed or bewitched and meet death if headstrong against the custom which apply to every *Muyansi*. In addition, the rapid change in modern world and the possibility of a wider inter-marriage unions have created awareness of free choice for partner yet forced the Yansi to transact commercially their daughters, *batiul* with heavy bridewealth. This create more psychological crises in families already facing severe economic problems.

I. 5. 3. SOCIO - RELIGIOUS FUNCTION OF THE *KITIUL* YANSI

It is crucial to notice at this stage the importance of *kitiul* system in the society today. Nowadays with the rapid social changes that are taking place in the world, so to say modern world, traditional values are weakened and slip away. Many have come to realise that even "the family, long regarded as a critically necessary, core social institution, today has become a matter for controversy and discussion. Women going outside the home to take job rather than staying at home with children, young couple living together without the formality of marriage".²⁵ Socially and morally speaking, there is edification of an individualistic culture aiming at isolation of the weak, mostly children, women and elders from the support of the community, the kin or clan. To this phenomenon, the *kitiul* system thrives to fend the family within the clan structure or the community through reinforcement of the matrilineal line. The matrilineal clan constitutes a strong bond of social relationship and mutual support. This bond is continuously kept from generation to generation as the

²⁵ Haviland, A., Cultural Anthropology, 5th ed., New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winton, Inc 1887, p. 202.

clan females from their marriages bear children and generates the *batiul*. Here, the continuance of the lineage, the clan solidarity, and the social responsibility of individuals to co-operate and caring for sick, weak, elderly people, aid for education and orientation of children are very much emphasised. Hence, the stability of marriage taught from ancestral wisdom is protected. Cases of divorce in *kitiul* marriage are rare due to the fact that mutual respect of spouses correspond to the respect each one owes to grandmother or grandfather. Divorce-threat is generally uncommon since in principle, nobody think of refunding heavy bridewealth or other issues along the line.

This is forwarded with the exception of the Yansi marriage outside the bondage of *kitiul* law. The *kitiul* law exercises control over marriages under a certain psychological caution: the awareness that marriage is a clan community affair protecting personal and communitarian interest. One has either to follow the traditions or bear all the consequences of its refusal. The socio - theological significance of a clan community is crucial in the *kitiul* Yansi. The idea of clan-family as basic-large-community, at a grass-root level itself is geared towards the benefits of individuals to reach growth and maturity. This is beneficial for efficient interaction with wider communities in the world and starting point for the building of Christian communities as well as marriage in the Church.

CHAP. II. THE CHURCH TEACHING ON MARRIAGE AND PASTORAL SITUATION IN YANSILAND AS MISSION LAND

II. 1. CHURCH AND MARRIAGE

Christianity, capturing reality in the light of the history of salvation with a more incarnational vision has founded theological doctrines and juridical principles for the discipline of marriage in the Church. Along with the evangelising mission of the Church, missionaries have carried out instructions, rules, regulations and practices concerning marriage in the world. Marriage has since been indicated adjectivally as "Christian" for the baptized and generally defined as "the union, permanent at least by intention, of a man and a woman for the purpose of procreation and rearing of children and mutual companionship and assistance"²⁶. Tackling the marriage issue, it is worth mentioning without going into details what the Catholic Church says on the institutions related to marriage such as family and the conjugal home. The Church admits that in every society family and conjugal life are crucially founded on marriage. The family is considered by the Church as "a privileged place for evangelical witness, a community which believes and evangelises, a community in dialogue with God and generously open to the service of humanity"²⁷. Marriage then functions for the well-being of the person, the family and the community, the Church²⁸. But all these instructions result from a very long historical process.

²⁶ Hastings A., Christian Marriage in Africa, London: SPCK, 1973, p. 27. There is an argument on this definition, mostly from Waruta D. W, op. cit., p. 88. who sees it as suggestive of monogamous western form of marriage.

²⁷ E.A. 92.

²⁸ G.S. 47, 2

II. 1. 1. HISTORICAL CONCEPT OF CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE

The original challenge that the Church was in its beginning facing was the relationship between faith and cultures. Since the origin of humanity, every culture has its own way of celebrating marriage. Marriage being, a natural value, has been acknowledged by the early Church as natural as it was in every tradition and culture. Nevertheless, in every tradition, values have their own meanings, the same value of marriage had different connotations. Marriage was associated with myths and other cults, such as fertility in the so called "pagan world". In Hellenistic world, it was confronted with philosophical ideas grounded on matter and spirit. Matter was considered bad and spirit was good. In the sphere of philosophical schools like Gnosticism and Manicheism, marriage was seen as a bad thing and its ontological goodness was totally denied.

Looking at this, the Church sought to demythologise it and give a true meaning to marriage in the light of the Scripture as a sacred symbol. That is, the work of inculturation in this arena of matrimony is as old as the Church itself. In the course of this general work of inculturation, the Church through its theologians conceived the idea of elaborating a unitary matrimonial ordinance from natural values and theological acquisitions.

It is noticeable that "in the earlier Christian communities, marriages of the faithful continued to be governed by existing local customs and laws so far as they did not conflict with the tenets of Christianity. From the earliest years the Church admonished its members to contract their marriages publicly under the supervision of the Church in order to ensure and preserve the integrity and dignity of the sacred contract. The earliest known reference to this is found in a letter written to St Polycarp by St. Ignatius shortly before the latter's martyrdom around the year 107"²⁹.

In this context, marriages which were not professed before the Church were clandestine and incurred the danger of being viewed as adulterous. Later on, this insinuated to Church's authorities to issue conciliar norms and pontifical decrees which prohibited clandestine marriages in the Latin Church.

²⁹ Loftus W. A., "Form of Marriage" In: New Catholic Encyclopedia, Vol. IX, New York: McGraw-Hill Company, 1967, 276-280.

Marriage became an issue of concern in the west while, ecclesiastical and civil laws expanded. Questions of validity and invalidity, divorce and indissolubility of marriage were probed up. It was only in 1563 that the Council of Trent through the enactment of its *Tametsi* decree " declared marriages invalid unless contracted in the presence of the bishop or the parish priest or another priest authorised by either of them, and in the presence of at least two other witnesses"³⁰. Because of its imperfections concerning the directives on ministers of the marriage, the lack of universal binding and uniformity, non-exemption of heretics, the *Tametsi* decree was forced to be reviewed in the course of history. Centuries after, in 1907, Pius X issued the *Ne Temere* decree made effective in 1908 and universally binding. Its provisions appeared in the Canon Law of 1983. Much of the Church theological teaching on marriage today is based on Trent and the theological insight of Vatican II with its juridical provisions in the New Code of Canon Law where Christian marriage is *ipso facto* sacramental.

II. 1. 2. THEOLOGICAL CONCEPT OF MARRIAGE ACCORDING TO VATICAN II

Starting from the point of view of sacramentality, the Church considers marital life as a sign of God's love manifested in the life of the couple and conferring on them the grace necessary for their relationship to God and others, care for their family and children. Grounded on the Sacred Scripture and the teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ, It follows the order of creation and the traditional teaching that has been handed down from the past. Along the order of creation which was distorted by sin and restored through Christ, marriage is taught as matrimonial covenant. Here is the biblical summary of it.

"Holy Scripture affirms that man and woman were created for one another: it is not good that a man should be alone, Gn 2:18. The woman, flesh of his flesh, i. e.

³⁰ Loftus W. A. op. cit., p.277.

his counterpart, his equal, his nearest in all things, is given to him by God as a helpmate, she thus represents God from whom comes our help. Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife and they become one flesh, Gn 2:24. The Lord himself shows that this signifies an unbreakable union of their two lives by recalling what the plan of the Creator had been in the beginning: So they are no longer two, but one flesh, Mt 19:6³¹.

Emphasis is repeatedly put on conjugal love stemming from the model of Christ's union with the Church, in the Council's teaching³². This idea refers to the marriage pedagogy of nuptial covenant between God and Israel portrayed by the prophets in the Old Testament, Hos 1-3; Is 54, Jer 2-3; Ez 16; Mal 2:13-17. There are key points of Church doctrine that offers guidance to missionaries. "Conjugal covenant of irrevocable personal consent", makes marriage come into existence. Marriage is ordained towards the continuation of the human race, personal development, the eternal destiny of individuals, dignity, stability, prosperity, peace of the family and the society as a whole. Together with conjugal love ordained towards the procreation and education of children as supreme gift to this institution³³. The council's teaching appears at last to be summed up in the teaching of Jesus that what "God has joined together, let no man put asunder", Mt 19:6; added to this is the canonical form of the unbreakable and sacred character of marriage in terms of indissolubility and unity for the baptised persons, Can. 1055, 2.

Therefore for two baptised persons, engagement is distinct from marriage. Consent ratifies real marriage, *ratum* and sacramental marriage. Consented marriage but not consummated, although sacramental can be dissolved. After consummation, sacramental marriage is absolutely indissoluble. The aim of this marriage according to the teaching of the Church is naturally ordered towards the good of the spouses, procreation and the education of the children as offspring of their union³⁴.

³¹ CCC, 1605.

³² Cf. GS, 48.

³³ GS, 50.

³⁴ Cf. LG, 11 and GS, 48.

Morally, marriage is for the good of man and woman and fosters the dignity and freedom of the persons³⁵. Attached to all these elements is also the liturgical celebration of marriage during which the free consent of the partners must be expressed exclusively before the deacon, priest or bishop according to the Canonical form, Can. 1108. This canonical form of marriage has raised some major problems among the Yansi as we shall see it.

Before that, it is worth remembering that for the first Christian generations, the intervention of clergy in marriage was somehow limited. K. Ritzer communicates that "si des parents mariaient leurs enfants d'après des principes Chrétiens, l' évêque ou le presbytre n' avait aucune raison d' intervenir"³⁶.

II. 2. IMPLEMENTATION OF CHURCH'S TEACHING ON MARRIAGE IN THE YANSILAND

II. 2. 1. CHURCH TEACHING AND CUSTOMARY MARRIAGE

From the summary of the Council's teaching given by the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, it is stipulated that " since marriage establishes the couple in a public state of life in the Church, it is fitting that its celebration be public, in the framework of liturgical celebration, before the priest (or a witness authorised by the Church), the witnesses, and the assembly of the faithful"³⁷. Let us bear in mind that in the Yansiland, marriage is done under the governance of the *kitiul* customary law. As it might be the case in many cultures, with missionary encounter and evangelisation, substantial influence crops up in the customary and traditional way of life of people. This always results in reactions and resistance and persistence mostly on the side of the concerned culture . In the case the

³⁵ Humanae Vitae, 11-13.

³⁶ Ritzer K., Le Mariage dans les Eglises Chrétiennes du Ier au XI siècle, Paris: Cerf, 1970, p. 84.

³⁷ CCC, 1663.

kitiul system of marriage faced with missionary teaching, to my knowledge, two major problems step beyond the three attitudes mentioned above the line. The first is grounded in the conviction inculcated in the mind and mentality of my people that marriage not contracted and celebrated in the Church is sinful and bad. This sounds very Manichean and unworthy of a well structured traditional way of marriage which affects both educated and uneducated people, baptised or non-baptised. Such a conviction is reinforced today by the pastoral question which I call "vacuum in sacramental life of Christians". The Church recognises the marriage of two Christians as sacramental. But we observe in practice that two Christians who were able to receive holy communion will cease receiving the sacrament of communion when they marry traditionally. This cessation can be partial or total depending on the length of time taken for the regulation by canonical form of their marital situation viewed as sinful. Receiving again the sacrament of communion often appears only at old age. So to ratify Legrain's observation which considers Christian marriage as "sacrement pour les cheveux blancs"³⁸. Meanwhile the couple leave in total compunction since the delay for church celebration is due to various factors either traditional or economic.

Traditionally, we must acknowledge that majority of Africans including the Yansi sustain the theory of the first-born-child as basis for the assurance and stability of Marriage. That is, "man and woman become marriage partners properly only after the birth of their first child"³⁹. Even though marriage in the *kitiul* Yansi is by intention monogamous and life-long, fertility reviews its constitution and can allow polygamy. Marriage is not contracted in the Church if details of its traditional stages are not yet achieved. It is economically affected if there is financial inability to pay dowry or other items required for the validity of the marriage which can be done any time in life.

³⁸ Legrain M., Mariage Chrétien modèle unique? Question venue d'Afrique, Paris: Chalet, 1978, p.11.

³⁹ Bujo, B., The Ethical Dimension of Community, Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 1998. p. 95.

The second problem is more psycho-theological and is dealt with the understanding of marriage and the Church. One understands the Church well if the covenantal bridal relationship between Christ and the Church is well understood. How can people understand the Church if the marital model ensured by the Church does not help people integrate it within their own tradition. If all the stages of *kitiul* or any well structured African traditional marriage are still viewed as sinful or worthless. This view leaves people without anything to hold on. What is then the meaning of the sacrament of Marriage to them? Unfortunately, this is what is going on in regard with marriage celebration in the Church of Africa on top of which lies the problem of mobility of pastors due to degradation of roads and socio-political and economic conditions. All these have a serious impact on the psychology of people and the life of the Church. In this sense, even two baptized people who marry customarily according to the *kitiul* law must be remarried in the Church so to make their marriage sacramental and ensure its validity⁴⁰. Once the Church has accepted the validity of customary marriage for unbaptised people, why should we dig around looking for juridical questions such this of validity? It is necessary for Christian to witness their faith, i. e. accepting the consequences of one's faith. This refers explicitly to the mystagogy of Jesus Christ⁴¹. Being baptised, one has duty and obligation to witness to their faith by affirming their commitment publicly in front of others. However, should the venue, the witnesses, their number and their qualification hinder the possibility of the act, then the Church must review the matter. For genuine witness in Christ, the traditional milieu is more suitable for the marriage of Africans. Jesus Christ himself said " for where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them", Mt 18:20.

⁴⁰ The term remarriage is used in the sense of duplicating matrimonial consent, preparation, and wedding celebration.

⁴¹ It is the procession from the visible to the invisible, from the sign to thing signified, from the "sacraments" to the "mysteries. Cf. CCC, 1075.

Looking at this, I tend to think, that marriage instructions in the Church must follow community cultural guideline posited in favour of people. So to facilitate the deeper meaning of it in as simple way as Jesus sums it up in the above teaching.

II. 2. 2. PASTORAL SITUATION

On marriage, Church teaching and missionary work suffer a lack full implementation and simplicity. A clear example is the pastoral situation within the Yansiland where mobility of pastors and missionaries seems to hinder the efficiency of their work. In practice, it has become daily bread to strongly attach the validity of marriage for christians with marriage in the Church in the presence of a priest. It looks as if without a priest, there is no marriage at all. Consequently, the majority of the baptised remain for years without marriage since in most places, the only priest appointed for a big area does not often reach his outstations due to technical problems of mobility. In addition, even if this problem of mobility could be solved, there is still a lot to improve on the question of marriage of Christians vis a' vis *kitiul* customary marriage. For instance to consider the stages of preparation, traditional prayers and all the wedding ceremonies that evolved towards its realization as part of catechism. In many cases, the teaching that is transmitted to people about marriage does not fit to the needs of local Church and jeopardises community and cultural values. That is, not only the teaching but also the whole concept of Church marriage in certain circumstances of space and time become irrelevant and unhelpful.

In this sense, we strongly support the idea that " the real celebration of marriage is the social celebration in the community itself, not the ritual conducted by the priest or pastor in the Church building. The Church is conducted in unimpressive circumstances a handful people, and it apparently bears no relation to the customary celebration which follows it. Quite clearly, majority of African Christians regard the Church marriage

ceremony as meaningless preliminary which must be gone through in order not to incur displeasure of the Church authorities."⁴²

Beside, the fact that missionaries and local clergy sustain a marriage teaching intimately associated with Church marriage ceremony fashioned in the dogmatic and canonical model, a certain number of different teachings also come to the forth from other denominations. All these teachings are imposed on the same customary system which formulate a clash-behaviour and foster different attitudes in the community as we shall see it . More observations are to be intercepted in the African general context set here about.

II. 3. ***KITIUL* MARRIAGE AND GENERAL OBSERVATIONS ON MARRIAGE IN AFRICA**

In Africa, the school of traditional and customary law on marriage has been recorded with its many juridical forms, practices and celebrations. Many theologians, bishops, pastors and lay people have already remarked that since about a century of evangelisation in Africa, marriage has ever been an issue of debate and discussions. The general impression given as a last expedient is that Christian model of marriage steered from a Western horizon does not work for Africans. New marriage pastoral and catechesis is needed as well as a new missionary venture that seeks to clear the old mentality and renew the work of evangelisation and Christianity. The Christian model of marriage reflects the teaching of certain theological and juridical schools of the past and the results of their rational and theoretical controversies where Aristotelico-Thomistic view appears.

Considering Christianity, with its philosophy and doctrinal theology in the Catholic Church relevant research have been achieved much in a theological level but also in other fields of marriage in Africa. These researches have helped to clear the way for the serious implementation of an African

⁴² B. Kitembo, et al. *op. cit.*, p. 213.

way of marriage in the Church. People like Bujo and so many others have expressed the necessity of shaping a pastoral policy on marriage in Africa in order to integrate African values and consider marriage in stages as part and parcel of Christian marriage⁴³. On Christian marriage, light is shed by the research made by CROMIA (the Churches' Research on Marriage in Africa). This gives a broad understanding of the variety of practices and celebration of marriages in different ethnic groups within Africa. It also tackles the problem of sacramentality of marriage in Churches, its stability, divorce as well as polygamy. Many other socio-religious issues are theologically treated in connection with traditional marriage according to either African matrilineal or patrilineal system. It is in this same line that the *kitiul* marriage is addressed as a theological problem to be studied in consideration of its psycho-religious and social articulations. Diving into the deep of the matter, to the Yansi as well as for many ethnic groups in Africa, Church marriage is too rationally oriented towards philosophical concepts and much dogmatico - theological than a sacrament at the service of human person in the search for integral salvation in Jesus Christ. What marriage operates or should operate in African life is vital for the concretisation of a sound society able to produce good people for the building of God's kingdom.

II. 4. *KITIUL* MARRIAGE BEFORE MISSIONARY ERA

Considered as part and parcel of their tradition, the aim of marriage was procreation among the Yansi. Procreation is substantial to marriage to the extent that it fulfils the existential requirement of life. It is to be noticed crossing by here that "African Marriage is regarded as a source of life"⁴⁴.

⁴³ By marriage in stage, we consider only the crucial moments where rituals judged morally valuable are performed. For instance at the birth of the girl, the boy's mother gives a coin to the girl's mother as sign of their union. This can be a time for Christian to awaken the sense of marriage in Christ.

⁴⁴ Bujo B., op. cit., p.95.

Life given by God, *Nziam* passes ipso facto through marital union within the line of the ancestors. As we observe it, procreation was the main reason for marriage because everything else was connected to it through that same source of life. Hence, every *okiay' etiul or kitiul* wife must have a womb, the "capacity to bear children" understood as *zuum*, or *nkweb* which definitely depends on her fertility. But, fertility was not yet understood biologically; so together with barrenness, *okob*, it had to do with ancestral respect and practices which are still well considered up to now to a great degree. As seen before, certain moral conducts, failure to pay bridewealth and other requirements for valid marriage, disrespect to customs and ancestors plus bewitching, *kindoki*, *mwim* are also believed to be source infertility and parameters contributing to barrenness. The last factor has ever bore a negative appraisal to the Yansi and bitter result on social development. Claiming to contain otherworldly powers, it destabilised their marriages and hindered their growth. The few divorces that might occur in the *kitiul* marriages are proportionally attributed to *mwim* and its injurious effects.

That is, with a glance to human participation in the work of creation, Christianity had an imperishable mission to vitalise *kitiul* marriage in the light of the Gospel. See that in the *kitiul* system, procreation is decisive to the survival of the clan and the community.

Moreover, "in the African context, to die without children is to have perished for good; at the same time damage has been inflicted upon the lineage. The religious background of this attitude is eschatological,... Only the person who has left offspring behind will be able to enjoy complete life. He or she survives in the offspring"⁴⁵.

The necessity of offspring did not denote at all any idea of immorality, debauchery or any libertine outlook to have children anyhow but conveyed the idea of successful marriage that keeps the memory of ancestors through *kitiul*. Successful marriages were up to now conducted traditionally according to the customs of the *kitiul* Yansi. But as new ideas and Christian teaching had entered the

⁴⁵ Bujo B., *op. cit.*, 1998, p.95.

society, things changed both negatively and positively. Statistics would show that ruining of marriage attains an alarming measure.

II. 5. *KITIUL* MARRIAGE IN MISSION AD GENTES AND CONCILIAR ERA

In the entire Yansiland there was hardly any place where marriage were celebrated in total ignorance of the Gospel after the Council of Vatican II. In its contact with evangelisation, the *kitiul* system of marriage conserved its anthropological dimension. New converts were faced with a new reality, their traditional marriage required a Christian liturgical celebration with the canonical form. More and more, the teaching of the Catholic Church on marriage was penetrating the life of people with the emphasis on the free consent of individuals for its existence and validity. That is, marriage in the Roman Catholic Church is strictly based on the theological principle of sacramentality with its lawful understanding of marriage indissolubility and monogamy. As result, there are juridical restrictions imposed to Christians of all cultures, time and space.

Nevertheless, for the Yansi the question of validity of marriage implies also all the *kitiul* customary procedures. All the stages forwarded in the first chapter must be fulfilled and once done one may conclude a lasting marriage. Beside those stages, the assurance of fecundity and progeny must be guaranteed. But the great concern of missionary work of the conversion of individuals prevailed on the tribal structures to the extent that certain missionary attitudes could be spelled out as response or reaction to the problem posed by the *kitiul* marriage and clan structure.

CHAP. III. IMPACT OF CHRISTIANITY ON *KITIUL* CUSTOMARY MARRIAGE

III. 1. MISSIONARY ATTITUDE TO *KITIUL* MARRIAGE AND CONSEQUENCES

Total ignorance of the problem: Many missionaries, catholic and Protestant have crossed Yansiland and have known nothing about the *kitiul*. In this case, wittingly or unwittingly, they couldn't help any Yansi on their marriage difficulties whether in the Church or customarily.

Hostility to clan structure: It was and is still quite easy for any missionary formed in the vision of nuclear family as the basic of the society to ignore the so-called clan structure. To abolish it completely would seem normal so that the only familial structure remains the nuclear family that suits the Church teaching on marriage.

*Acceptance of the *kitiul* Yansi and clan structure:* With the aid of sociologists, ethnologists, some Church agents took a more realistic stand. Though not yet endorsed by the Church as fundamental marriage regime to be celebrated once, they recognised *kitiul* as valid customary form of marriage. None of the matrimonial customary systems in Africa is best but as for the *kitiul* Yansi, they have their own values which must help pastors. Pastorally speaking, the situation of Christians now vis a vis the sacrament of marriage in the Church is quite alarming. Joining the global context, Michel Legrain observed already the situation in 1987 and expressed in terms of "beaucoup de baptisés et peu de mariés"⁴⁶. The same problem has been examined and edited under the title of "Church Marriage Rates and Contrasting Concepts of Marriage"⁴⁷. Marriage in double or triple regime: customary, civil and ecclesial might be historically evident for a Western mind which separate analytically religion from politics, state from Church. But to an Africans like the Yansi, this tends to split their sole view where the sacred and the profane are integrated to the benefit of human

⁴⁶ Legrain M., *op. cit.*, p.9.

⁴⁷ Kisembo B., et al., *op. cit.*, p. 25.

person. Even for cradle Christians and converts, marriage in the Church is not one with customary marriage. One is Christian and the other pagan; a very schizophrenic construction in the mind that produces a double standard of social behaviour, Church behaviour and customary behaviour. Sarpong observes that this fact of double belonging is an eloquent testimony that "Christianity has not sufficiently taken root in the African religiosity. Christianity is not yet at home completely with the African culture"⁴⁸. Resistance to the attitude of deliberate neglect of the clan structural form of parenthood has created such a double allegiance.

On one hand, the Yansi point of view denotes a total conviction that the *kitiul* system of marriage is legacy from their ancestors as God wished it. They will never abandon. So they stick to it. On the other hand, there is a wedding in Church and Christian marriage which tend to undermine traditional ways. It requires a "pompous feast" unaffordable to everyone, yet gives the impression of being as important as the celebration in the Church. So no marriage in the Church if there are no funds for the festival. Better to remain in the customary form or postpone Church marriage until the shining days of financial grace which do not easily occur in African countries due to the untrustworthy political and economic systems. Mainly, postponing marriage *in facie ecclesiae* has a lot to do with indissolubility. Many like to be sure before concluding such an issue. That is perhaps why we get a chaotic situation in the sacramental life, a statistic disproportion between the number of baptised and married people in the whole Church which defeats its mission among the people of God. Moreover, the willingness to remain good Christians in face of the true and great sense of traditional values creates psychological feelings of sadness and guilt, anxieties and stress among Christians. Let alone the sophisticated and remarkable emphasis on same-sex relationships in the media. Many young

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 74.

girls or boys feel free to marry or not. They can have children and remain single but enjoy sexual life, which show a real turmoil and confusion in marital life.

With such an unwarrantable dichotomy, in Africa, precisely among the Yansi, the impact of Christianity and contemporary social influence risk to leaving a *vacuum of values*. Some already can no longer see marriage as a valuable thing for family unity, a sign for the manifestation of God's love to them as it used to be. Nor can they fully participate in Church celebrations or living the sacraments due to the confusion in grasping their marriage situation vis à vis the Church. Yet, they are regarded as "cut off from the Church" or "fallen Christians". It is therefore "a challenge to preserve African values in a Christian context". These values as seen in the social function of *kitiul* are intended for the full integration of individuals to the local community and the building of an healthy Christian community, the Church and empower its mission.

III. 2. MISSIONARY DIMENSION

Two other problems are linked to the question of marriage and mission. The first is that of indifference towards the Church. Here, indifference has to do with the degree of receptivity of the message of the Church. For instance, two Christians married in the *kitiul* traditional way who continue to postpone their wedding in the Church for some good reasons become first "cut off from communion"⁴⁹. Though the Church cares for them, as the delay continues, they regard the Church with indifference. This vexing indifference leads to the second problem, that of apostasy, abandoning their faith on the ground of their marital status.

⁴⁹ The reason for such a delay may include anthropological and economic factors, the assurance to beget children, the completion of bridewealth, Christian marriage is indissoluble, so they remain unwed until everything is totally assured for a lasting marriage as said before.

It is the duty of missionaries, local clergy and Christians to look into this problem. If any African society characterised by matrilineal descent, and here the Yansi have it that *kitiul* customary marriage is a natural and normal valuable tradition, monogamous by intention, religious and sacred in essence, link to a wide-range familial structure, where individuals feel incarnated in a communitarian society, Churches must help them to extend these dimensions to a more universal level.

Apparently, what prevails among my people nowadays is a dichotomy between Christian marriage and the traditional one. This is destructive of the mission of the Church, be it *ad intra* or *ad extra*. In the past, the task of missionaries in Yansiland sounds appreciative though missionaries of the colonial epoch are viewed with a pessimistic opinion. They provided education, medical care, means of transport, defence of human right, and even food, no matter the price of mutual suffering. Their suffering also included illness, cultural and linguistic misunderstanding, and poor mission methodology, so to express the difficulty of inculturating their message at the first place.

However, as Buhlmann says, "one cannot blame any Christian for not thinking before the Second Vatican Council and before the world Conference of the World Council of Churches at Uppsala in the same way that people began to think and to act after these events. Similarly, it would be just as wrong to blame the Churches for the fact that Vatican II did not take place until the early sixties and the Uppsala until 1968 as it would be to blame any one for the fact that, 50 years ago, penicillin was unknown and that jet-travels and T.V.-satellites were not being used for communication"⁵⁰.

This thought conveys that different exhortations on missionary work and various currents of theological thoughts and reflections gathered ad momentum find their full expression in the Second Vatican Council. New ideas about inculturation of marriage are proposed under the probation of the conciliar understanding of the evangelising mission of the Church. The Church no longer follows the narrow view of mission of saving the souls of pagans, but the salvation of the whole human person .

⁵⁰ Buhlmann W., The Missions on Trial, Middlegreen, Slough: St. Paul Publications, 1978, p. 72.

the bringing about of the kingdom of God in its yet and not yet twofold aspects. The building of the kingdom of God is a polymorphic reality which is foremost Salvific and liberative. To liberate people from all the psycho-anthropological and social burden engaged by marital issues is part and parcel of this mission. That is, justice and peace, ecological issues and all that runs the course of history are instrumental to the proclamation of this liberating salvation⁵¹. In this line, inculturation steered by a communitarian perspective and holistic vision of salvation is a sign of time which integrally partake in the work of mission.

III. 3. INHERENT THEOLOGICAL QUESTIONS

III. 3 1. CONSENT AND BRIDEWEALTH FOR VALID MARRIAGE

According to Catholic doctrine, mutual consent sufficiently makes marriage, but marriage in *feri*. The mutual consent in the African traditions implies alliance between clan as seen in the *kitiul* Yansi. Thus marriage in *facto* exists only with the consent of the clans so to avoid any misconception of marriage itself. There is no denial of personal freedom in this matter but as known, marriage is a well protected and controlled institution in any society. Care must be continually taken in order to avoid deviation as already happening nowadays. In addition, freedom is fragile. it needs to be guided and in this way the individual consent must come to agreement with the community consent. This is an anthropology of relatedness in the community which battles against the modern individualistic view. *Kitiul* marriage does not militate in this matter against Christian Marriage. To the Yansi, the *kitiul* marriage is simply a natural form coming from God through the ancestors. That is, the community consent is prevalent on individual consent. Emphasis is put on community life in the clan. Life in the clan implies the preservation of the lineage through marriage which is intended to last long

⁵¹ Cf. Paul VI, E. N., 9.

lest one of the partners dies. It is customarily monogamous and bridewealth is a sign for clan alliance. But polygamy is understood in the context of infertility and childlessness. It is the mission of the Church to enlighten people faced with misuse of bridewealth and assign to it a commercial function. "Many young people in Africa are unable to marry in the Church since the dowry is often too costly for them"⁵².

III. 3. 2. SACRAMENTALITY OF MARRIAGE

As explained in the second chapter, marriage is sacramental because it builds upon the bridal relationship between Christ and the Church. For Africans, with their integrative thinking, as well as for any believer as Yansi, "everything is a symbol of a higher reality, a sacrament of God. The sacramental character of the created order is found especially in those human realities which people experience as central to their whole existence, realities such as birth, death, eating and drinking, marriage... These are so-called "natural sacraments" which become experiences for salvation of mankind. Marriage, then, is one of these natural sacraments understood according to the general dimension of all human relationships"⁵³.

In traditional *kitiul* marriage as *officium naturae* and sacrament in broader sense, what is more stressed is relationship and communion, which are ontologically sacramental. Knowing that the sacraments are for us and for our salvation, by incarnating Christ's model in the heart of this tradition, the Church can only bring to light those two dimensions and help people trespass clan boundaries, overcome unnecessary anxieties in life and families, bring the newness of life in Christ through the mission of salvation⁵⁴.

⁵² Bujo B., *op. cit.* 1998, p. 98.

⁵³ KISEMBO, B. et al., *op. cit.*, p. 41-42.

⁵⁴ John Paul II, *R. M.*, 20.

III. 3. 3. CELEBRATION OF MARRIAGE

One of the impacts of Christianity on traditional marriage is the desire to celebrate it as Christians in the modern world. Christians themselves are subjected to multiplication of celebrations, traditional and expensive festival ceremonies that follow the Church celebration. Non-Christians find themselves in a syncretistic type of celebration. Since the Council of Vatican II, stimulated by diverse initiatives, Church's way of celebrating different events have changed. Traditional African Marriages also have undergone serious metamorphosis. Some Christian elements, for instance, the way of praying, blessing, celebrating, perhaps unconsciously or by living with Christians, have entered the customs of traditional people. The danger that both Christian and non-Christian face is that of double allegiance and syncretism which require solution.

III. 3. 4. MARRIAGE, MORALITY AND WITCHCRAFT

In the Yansi tradition, there is no marriage without the blessing, *okiak* or *mukiak* of parents *ata* and *ama*, uncles *ampe*, and the whole family, *ndwo* which cares for moral life of the young couple. The ritual includes the psycho-religious and mystical visit of ancestors, mistaken by many the visit has been considered as partaking in witchcraft while it refers to the ancestral community bond. The dead in African tradition are part of the invisible family. To this family belong the ancestors, *ankiak*. Their blessing is crucial to the couple for their life, their children, their work, their protection and their welfare. Without the assurance of their blessing, the whole family feels psychologically perturbed. The assurance of the ancestral blessing emanates from the ritual performed near the grave of the elder chief of the bride's clan. A rooster or a he-goat is killed, cooked or roasted and the meal is shared there. This psycho-religious ceremony serves to appease the presumed anger of the ancestor in case of their neglect. However, there is always a tendency to

associate this ritual with *mwim*, witchcraft, sorcery. This last has a bad effect on people. Unless used for the protection of the family in God's name through ancestors, it is useless and harmful. The practice is still in vogue even among Christians. They are sometimes criticised by members of different sects of belonging to demons and talking God which is immoral. But their criticism falls into the category of misconception and misunderstanding of the ritual. They can only be right if the ritual itself serves wrong purposes as witchcraft than intended. Here is where Christians are caught once more in a double allegiance. To this extent, catechesis must be based on the biblical model. At Corinth, St Paul treated the problem of double adherence with this warning: "...you cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons", 1 Cor 10:21. This blends with any attitude that gathers two opposing religious principles. Not every traditional principle harmonises with Christian principles in all respects. But here, *kitiul* marriage principles do not contend morally those in Christianity.

From a moral point of view, advice is given to young people to refrain from premarital sex. Though the society has changed, the Yansi have even a puritanical concept of sexuality along with the idea of taboos which always "helped in maintaining the purity of individual and the family"⁵⁵. This reduces prostitution and seems realistic considering the rapid spread of AIDS. Sex out of the marital bond is shameful and painful because of *Otar*, confession concerning the number of men with whom the woman had sexual intercourse before marriage as mentioned already. Psychologically, she cannot refuse to confess, everyone knows the pain that she might endure during labour period which may extend to four or more day until she has confessed properly. A man is not sanctioned this way but he pays a fine that the close paternal aunt of the woman collects from his parents with his full

⁵⁵ Bahemuka J. M., op. cit., 1983, p. 136.

knowledge . Moral conduct is also grasped as a step to future nurturing of children, raising good family and good ancestral life to come in the proximity of God.

Nevertheless, marriage aiming at procreation among the Yansi reduces the chances for other vocational options. It discourages mostly the pursuit of religious vocations and priesthood that require celibacy, since everyone is a born potential wife or husband to someone. It is interesting to mention that among the Yansi, *Babwal* section, I will be the first priest since many years of evangelisation. Before I Joined the Society of the Divine Word, a ritual was performed to free or to be freed from my legal *kitiul* wife in front of my deceased uncle Justin KIKABWIDI. The ritual of blessing of ancestors was also performed in the cemetery at the grave of MAFU, our elder uncle. Well, up to now I felt at ease with the whole family. On the contrary, due perhaps to social pressure, those who intentionally and by force entered religious life without any traditional arrangement were caught up in either sickness or psychological troubles. Everything was referred back to *kitiul*, mostly for sisters. They had to deal with the family before proceeding to serve the Church in the work of salvation of humankind. Not every traditional principle harmonises with Christian principles in all respects. But here, *kitiul* marriage principles do not contend morally those in Christianity.

III. 3. 5. MARRIAGE AND AFTERLIFE

The hereafter is the conception of life after death, the relationship to the other family and remembrance of ancestors. Both traditionally and theologically, we are diving in the depth of an important question of salvation in terms of eschatology and the final goal. In marriage, the question of the Yansi's destiny partially answered but that of salvation becomes more and more complex and needs to be clarified. For instance how to deal pastorally with the Yansi belief in the continuity of marriage after this life. In practice, husband and wife are buried close to one another so that their

conjugal life may continue. The biblical concept of the resurrection of the married is not corroborated by this African belief. The question asked by the Sadducees about seven brothers who married the same woman and died childless one after the other imparts knowledge about the belief in marriage hereafter. But Jesus' answer was "... those who are considered worthy of a place in that age and in the resurrection from the dead neither marry nor are given to marriage... because they are like angels and children of God, being children of the resurrection", Lk 20:35-36.

However, in the convictions of people, the belief in the death and the hereafter has its own value in the African religions. No matter, what the belief is, "religion is about fidelity and conviction"⁵⁶. The Yansi share the African common belief that the hereafter is the "*carbon copy* of the present life"⁵⁷. As far as salvation is concerned, African theologians, mostly South Africans highlight a threefold aspect of salvation: "salvation as wholeness; salvation as life and salvation as relatedness"⁵⁸. Salvation as wholeness portrays a situation in which harmony, freedom, justice and peace in the community, all aspect of good life in sharing is manifested. In this case, "any liberating experience can be called salvation"⁵⁹. Salvation as life is all about our being as the presence of God in us. Salvation as relatedness is based on a relationship that depicts moral values such as kindness, compassion, service, honesty, respect for elders, parents and the other sex. In African tradition, this aspect is extended to the whole cosmos. As we can see, marriage and the hereafter is an essential part of the African worldview as it involves morality and salvation. Salvation in terms of eschatology is finally a divine prerogative and concession. One of the first of the baptised in Karimu confessed

⁵⁶ Sarpong P. K., Desunity in independent Africa and Role of religion. In: *AFER*, 26, 4, 1984 213-22.

⁵⁷ Cf., Mbiti J., African Religions and Philosophy, London: Heinemann, 1969, p. 211.

⁵⁸ Stuart C. B., Evangelisation in the South African Context, Rome: E. P. U. G., 1991, p. 51.

⁵⁹ Tokunboh A., op. cit., p. 59.

that: "According to our tradition, we believe in God (Ngai). Therefore God has always been alive for us and he is the same God preached by the missionaries. But we did not know that the Son of God had become man, had redeemed us and made us also sons of God. We did not know about the resurrection of Jesus Christ and of how our soul would survive after death. Now we have also learned the commandments and we know that if we follow them, we should have a beautiful life after death"⁶⁰.

As final, "it is therefore constitutive of the Christian faith that salvation is brought about in Jesus Christ, that in him God realised his Salvific plan and that this plan affects all creation and all men of all ages"⁶¹. Hence dialogue, between African tradition and Christian faith in theory and practice on the question of marriage and hereafter is an imperative to be dealt with in the process of inculturation. Inculturation is seen here as a healing process since many Africans live in a double allegiance which has "presented a constant fear to the Church in Africa, and serious efforts are being made for adequate means of inculturation in order to avoid a return of full scale superstition, or irrelevance of Christianity"⁶². As the question of marriage and the hereafter presents to the Church a challenge as far as inculturation is concerned, we shall now attempt to resolve it.

⁶⁰ Battignole S., Kikuyu Traditional Culture and Christianity, Nairobi: Heinemann Educational Books, 1984, p. 74.

⁶¹ Brennan J. P., Christian Mission in a Pluralistic World, Middlegreen, Slough: St Paul Publications, 1990, p. 31.

⁶² Nwaiwu F. O., Inter-Religious Dialogue in African Context, Christianity, Islam and African Religion, Kinshasa: African University Studies, 1990, p. 74

CHAP. IV. INCULTURATION OF *KITIUL* MARRIAGE

Inculturation might be as old as the Church. It has never ceased but becomes more and more urgent. Since its historical beginning, Christianity has ever encountered cultures. This encounter opens doors for practical as well as theoretical ways of incarnating Christ's message in any cultural context. But costly effort girdles such a reality when it comes on implementing inculturated theories contextually. It is quite evident that "inculturation has precious little to do with liturgical vestments and musical instruments but rather with very basic world views, with basic human values and indeed with the sharing of power"⁶³. Now, *kitiul* marriage is here one of analysed and accurate cultural world views in missionary context that have ever persuaded the Church as a biblical, magisterial and traditional to promote inculturation.

IV. 1. INCULTURATION OF MARRIAGE IN THE YANSI CONTEXT

Marriage in the Yansi as well as in African tradition is the central element of the cultural matrix that can bring Anthropology in the African context and the contemporary theology of mission together. Based on the continuity of the same consent of partners and community, *kitiul* marriage as a customary form deserves to be solemnised in the Church⁶⁴. This assertion is based on the implicit psycho-religious, socio-cultural and theological content of the *kitiul* marriage emerged in this paper. Solemnising customary marriage dwells upon the revised directives given by the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council on the rite of marriage with the title:

⁶³ Smith S. E. on appreciation of Eboussi Boulaga's book, Christianity without Fetishes, An African Critique and Recapture of Christianity. See E. de Rosny, *Healers in the Night* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1985), Other Orbis Titles, Item 432.

⁶⁴ Cf. KISEMBO, B. et al., op. cit., p.47.

"Right to prepare a completely new rite". It states: "Each conference of bishops may draw its own marriage rite suited to the usages of the place and people and approved by the Apostolic See. A necessary condition, however is that the priest assisting at such marriages must ask and receive the consent of the contracting parties and the nuptial blessing should always be given" ⁶⁵.

The statement is quite explicit in theory but widely unseen in concrete from the pastoral point of view. Moreover, it is not just a question of marriage form. We are dealing with the reality of marriage as such and the salvation of people. Pastorally, in Yansiland, the Roman rite read as it is given contributes very little to the understanding of marriage. To sum up in few words, it does not solve complications and ramifications that the *kitiul* marriage incur. The only solution is a truly sound inculturation of the rite of marriage: "the Yansi rite of Marriage in the Catholic Church". This intends to cope with the religious mentality of people and do away with all "cultural domination and alienation"⁶⁶. Actually, the rite must be geared and rotate around important themes associated with marriage and all its stages. As seen in this study, themes like the hereafter as well as salvation must be indicated and taught in the entire process of marriage. The process is a catechism in itself. It implies automatically that inculturation of marriage in Africa is a Christian initiation to marriage for Africans.

This model would be part and parcel of an African world view. Indeed, "the world view of a people is really the only medium through which a society is able to understand anything, including the gospel message and anything else that the Church may wish to communicate. It is the main measuring-rod of a people used for evaluating the gospel message, and humanly speaking, it ultimately determines what will or will not move a society to accept and live the gospel"⁶⁷.

⁶⁵ I. C. E. L., The Rite of the Catholic Church, vol. I, see the revised Introduction on Marriage n. 17.

⁶⁶ Shorter A., Towards a Theology of Inculturation, London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1988, p. 37.

⁶⁷ Luzbetak, op. cit. p. 284.

IV. 2. INCULTURATION AND *KITIUL* NOTION OF COMMUNITY

Inculturation strives to foster true Christian faith in which morality and worship draw strength from a model of Communion and clan-relatedness and solidarity as in the *kitiul* marriage. God himself through all creation called people to communion with him so that we all share in his divinity through Christ in the paschal mystery. The death and resurrection of Christ has already given a new and different meaning to the concept of hereafter among African Christians. However, the idea of communion with the ancestors is fundamental as a starting point for dialogue between Christianity and African traditional religion. Inculturation develops from this dialogue and assigns a true sacramental meaning to African life. In this sense, it "penetrates the life of individuals and their primary communities"⁶⁸. It is a must since on the one hand, the traditional way of marriage is claiming its historical dignity and on the other, as Father Shorter determines it, "all histories meet in Christ and have a future in him"⁶⁹. It is the same Christ whose message the Church has put together in the form of doctrines and theological teaching.

Actually, the theological teaching of Vatican II is widely open to the question of inculturation of marriage. If we were to assemble literature that allow the practice of inculturation in Africa, we could easily set a remarkable and respectable library around. But in concrete practical experience it is insignificant. Given the seriousness of the matter in the Church, mostly when it comes on the question of sacrament, marriage, the psycho-religious impacts of Christianity and modern society's approach to traditions, we assert that inculturation is an urgent need. It becomes thus a healing process and will foster maturation of African Christianity. That is Church and people in their tradition must consider each other seriously⁷⁰.

⁶⁸ E A, 87.

⁶⁹ Shorter A., op. cit, 1988, p. 97.

⁷⁰ Cf. Shorter A., "New Attitudes to African Culture and Religions" In: Shorter A. et al., Towards African Christian Maturity, Kampala: St Paul Publications - Africa, 1987, p. 28.

IV. 3. INCULTURATION, HEALING AND LONG PROCESS OF MATURATION

Inculturation must therefore be global, starting from superficial aspect of culture to the mentality of people and let them grow mature and capable of taking up their responsibilities. Responsibility implies dynamic creativity which moves persons away from being passive recipients of historical happenings. Involvement of local people in this process is essential if cultural healing is to be attained. Time has already been consumed in the maturation process of two challenging items in Africa. Of course, "the challenges in Africa consist of two values of inculturation and liberation to which many scholars are addressing themselves now for some 50 years"⁷¹. What is needed now at the dawn of the year 2000 is concrete action of inculturation that may put the theoretical theology of inculturation into practice. There are practical reasons that touch this point as far as matrimony is concerned, especially in the Yansi context. These are few but basic reasons:

1. To avoid the rise of more arrogant syncretistic movements or sects with a mix up of Christianity and traditional practices and the breaking away from the Church.
2. To bring theological doctrines and traditional structures and systems together.
3. To free the Yansi from the tyranny of witchcraft, *mwim* and to develop trust in God.
4. To revive natural and cultural, moral values that promote the community bond, a bond of unity.
5. To recapture the notion of salvation within one inculturated Christological thought pattern.
6. To correct dissatisfaction with the so-called Western Christianity.
7. To heal the so - called "cultural schizophrenia"⁷².

⁷¹ Byaruhanga A., ed., African World Religion, Grassroot Perspectives, Gaborone: Printworld Ltd, 1995, p. 111.

⁷² Used by Crolius A. R., "The Meaning of Culture in Theological Anthropology". In: Waligwa J. M. et al., Inculturation: its Meaning and Urgency, Kampala: St. Paul Publications- Africa 1986, 47-65.

8. To establish a local community with a healthier sacramental life.
9. To elaborate an appropriate catechism of marriage that contains the fundamentals of Yansi.
10. To restore a home-grown, authentic, local Christianity that reflects their mentality where they feel at home.

Against the background of this rationality, inculturation of *kitiul* marriage does not deny the universality of the Church. In effect, "Authentic inculturation, then will always foster the universal dimension of the local Church which is the gathering together of one, holy, Catholic and apostolic Church"⁷³. However, diversity of cultures urge inculturation to be contextual. This is the process and task awaiting all missionaries, pastors and Christians in Yansiland.

IV. 4. INCULTURATION AND MISSION IN *KITIUL* MATRIMONIAL CONTEXT

While paying reverence to missionary dedication in the first evangelisation of Congo (1483-1835), It has to be admitted that the effort of the first missionaries ended in a failure humanly speaking⁷⁴. Inescapable sickness, abrupt and heavy mortality rates, poor means and missionary methodology were the causes. These were partly solved during the second evangelisation from 1865 onwards with modern technological discoveries and modern health care. The 1960's were certainly filled with momentous events as far as mission is concerned: independence, heightened sense of cultural identity and esteem. Moreover the advent of the ecumenical council of Vatican II was a tremendous help to evangelization. In Yansiland, many things altered as well as in the whole country. Christian villages or settlements that existed before and were already "systematised by the Jesuits in

⁷³ Pazhayampallil T., Pastoral Guide, Sacraments and Bioethics, vol II, Bangalore: Kristu Jyoti Publications, 1995, p. 1017.

⁷⁴ See, Bontinck F., L'Évangélisation du Zaïre (Congo), Kinshasa: Editions Saint Paul Afrique 1980, p. 37.

1895, who called the system chapel farms (*fermes chapelles*)⁷⁵, gave way to centres called hitherto "Catholic Missions". The first converts were educated, baptised and married in these missions such as Wombali, Yasa, Djuma, Beno and stress was laid on nuclear family. Today, marriage in the "mission" is matter of nostalgia where some lips can only confess the "in our time..." On the other, cultural structure claims its right to existence as part of the identity of people. Hence, the right method of evangelisation seems to be the inculturation that is a strict necessity of evangelisation following the footsteps of Vatican II.

If *kitiul* marriage is the matrix of the Yansi culture, then inculturation must start right there. Notice that *kitiul* marriage is not an imposed form but a legitimate one. Hitherto, it is not contracted in one hour, one day or one ceremony. It is a dynamic process as seen in this essay. It involves stages, rituals and other symbolic acts, indispensable for the success of marriage.⁷⁶ Each stage needs to be inculturated and become an occasion of a Christian small community meeting for prayer and sharing life in Christ. This is to be conducted at home⁷⁷. Nevertheless, the formulation of the liturgical rite is left to experts in liturgy but those well informed on cultural matters and to the Episcopal Conference of the Democratic Republic of Congo. This because the task of inculturation in general must not be superficial. Its efficiency and positive impact in the life of people rely much on its foundation. In particular, as initiation to marriage, inculturation encompasses the educational system. Thus, the wedding rite must show that a Christian marriage is a vehicle of salvation in Christ.

⁷⁵ Vansina J., "Western Equatorial Africa" In: Olivier R. & Sanderson G. N., The Cambridge History of Africa, vol. 6, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994, p. 348.

⁷⁶ Cf. Bujo B., op. cit., 1998, p. 94.

⁷⁷ Cf. I. C. E. L., op. cit., n. 18.

IV. 5. INCULTURATION OF MARRIAGE AND EDUCATION

In October 1980, the Synod of bishops declared that African matrimonial and familial values did not need to be extirpated from their proper universe in order to be christianised. It is within their conceptual horizon that they must be transformed and find life in Christ⁷⁸. To be transformed or to be inculturated, people must be well acquainted with their own values. In the *kitiul* context, mostly in rural areas, one cannot deny the awareness of cultural values of marriage and family. However, many young people are being educated in schools where they find themselves uprooted from their own traditions, especially in urban centres. The only thing that they learn after completing their education and in a short time before their marriage is marriage *in facie ecclesiae*. But soon after this, they refer to their parents in the village to find a wife for them or simply seek for their advice. Then all the traditional arrangements and procedures come to the fore. After this, then all the consequences follow as already detected in this work. Marriage *in facie ecclesiae* can then intervene any time if they were Christians. This dynamic is unsuitable for the dignity of any marriage. In addition, no practical programme is issued in schools about marriage and the catechism on marriage given in parishes are insufficient.

The inculturation of marriage advanced here demands that instructions should be carried in school depending on the level of students. To university students, mostly in Catholic institutions, a course on traditional marriages is *ipso facto* to be elaborated. This will help to carry on the research on inculturation and the possibility of implementing a sound and contextual inculturation in the midst of African people. To conclude this work, we urge our theologians, bishops, pastors, missionaries, and all Christians of good will to give hands to this important task in order to build a truly mature African Church.

⁷⁸ Cf. Cheza M., et al., Les évêques d' Afrique Parlent (1969-1991), Paris: Le Centurion, 1992, p. 157.

CONCLUSION

As we have just made an appeal to help building the Church in the last words of the last chapter, we will conclude this undertaking by asserting that building the Church is founding Christian communities. But any community evolves from the togetherness of individual members of the family and families are built upon marriage. Due to the difficulties people face concerning traditional and Church marriages, it is obvious to start fostering a catechesis of healthy and long-lasting marriages in the Church. This will help founding Christian communities ready to carry out the mission of evangelisation. To attain this goal, we have proposed in this essay a contextualised inculturation as means. In this work, *kitiul* marriage shows a great deal of African traditional marriages. Its analysis in relation to the Church marriage has provided socio-anthropological, psycho-religious, moral, pastoral and theological materials for critical discussion and evaluation.

At the end of our discussion, we see that if *kitiul* marriage is a natural institution, it is also a natural sacrament according to the world view of people. But natural sacraments differ from Church sacraments. Church sacraments transcend natural bonds. They are based on the mystagogy of Christ and give the grace necessary for the salvation of the person who receives them. Therefore, Christians have the duty to marry in the Church as a consequence of their baptism. However, for Africans, as for the Yansi, there are values attached to their marriage as seen in this work. Because of these values and the Church principles, many tend to live in a double allegiance. It is therefore the task of Church agents to promote an inculturated form of marriage that includes their cultural values in the line of Vatican II teaching. This will help them feel one and at home with Christianity.

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