

TANGAZA COLLEGE
CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF EASTERN AFRICA

ZULU CUSTOMARY MARRIAGE IN RELATION TO CHRISTIAN
MARRIAGE:

Looking at the Values that underlie the institution



Presented by: Innocent Velaphi Mazibuko
Tutor: Fr Edmondo Zagano, c.p.

February 1997
Nairobi

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Long Essay submitted in Partial Fulfilment of
Requirement for Bachelor of Arts in Religious Studies

Presented by: Innocent Velaphi Mazibuko
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STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the material used here in has not been submitted for Academic Credit to any other Institution: All sources have been cited in full.

Signed: |

I. Majibuko.....

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Ukubonga

Ngithanda ukuzwakalisa ukubonga kubo bonke abangisizile ukuba ngiqede lomsebenzi onzima kakhulu. Ngeziyalezo zabo nange mibono yabo. Ngithanda ukubonga umndeni wami ngosizo oluhle kanye naba ningi futhi. Ngesinseke sabo nangeziyalezo.

General introduction

In September 1995, Pope John Paul II came to Africa to celebrate the African Synod on African soil and bring us the fruits of that synod in the Apostolic Exhortation “*The Church in Africa*”. He told us all Christians in Africa “The Synod is over, the synod has just begun. And it is very true!. Again in the words of Luke the Evangelist, the writer sets out precisely the aim of what he wants to accomplish by writing the gospel:

*Seeing that many have undertaken to draw accounts of the events that have reached their fulfilment among us. I in my turn, after carefully going over the whole story from beginning have decided to write an ordered account for you.*¹

*African traditions, judiciously utilised may have their place in the construction of Christian homes in Africa. I am thinking in particular of all the positive values of the family feeling the seriousness of the marital commitment at the end of a long process, priority given to the transmission of life and therefore the importance attached to the mother and her children.*²

The Papal statement has led to many theological reflections into the African marriage. This was not the first attempt by the African theologians. is part of the Church’s broad initiative throughout the centuries. Fortunately Second Vatican Council’s reformulated the nature of marriage in its Pastoral Constitution “**Church in the Modern World**” together with the call to the younger churches to adapt the Christian life to the mentality and character of each culture.

It is in this perspective I would like to situate my long Essay as part of on-going theological reflections in an attempt to inculturate the Christian Marriage. Different Theologians have tried in many ways to put into theological terms the teaching of the Church on marriage as a Sacrament.

*This revelation reaches its definitive fullness in the gift of love which the word of God makes to humanity in assuming human nature and in sacrifice which Jesus Christ makes on the Cross for his Bride the Church.*³

On my part as a starting point, I have taken the marriage ceremony as practised by the Zulu people of South Africa. As a point of methodology the long essay is divided into two sections. The first part looks at the Zulu marriage with all its value system. Given the fact that there are many changes that have affected deeply this institution. The

¹ **Luke 1:1-4**

² John Paul II, *Africa: Apostolic Pilgrimage* in Marc de Muelenaere, **The Bomun Fidei in an African Context: Canonical Significance of Marital fidelity among the Bantu of South Africa.** (doctoral Thesis) (Groenkloof, 1986),p.60

³ John Paul II, **The Church in Africa**, 1995, p.65

social, political, and economical this situation has been aggravated further by the adoption of Western lifestyle.

Africa is rapidly changing and those values that people lived by are no longer practised by the present Africans themselves. I know that what is written may seem to belong to the museum, It is worthwhile venture for African Church and her members in trying to reclaim her values system. Our task is to present this values in a new way. When we accept this task and go back to find out in a more scientific way, so that we may better express them for our people.

The second part deals with the Christian marriage in relation to the Zulu customary marriage. Although the teaching of the Church on marriage has been influenced by the word of God and her doctrinal statements formulated over centuries, to finally acknowledge that it is a Sacrament, a sacred sign, and to clearly express the concept it took time.

The understanding of marriage as pact between the two families is in serious jeopardy, one may conclude that practise of traditional values is gone. The present situation of slums and many families are to live below the poverty line by circumstance:

We have to analyse the dilemma which has come upon African societies that are rooted in traditional solidarity and yet are increasingly exposed to modern change. In this dilemma their foundations of existence and security are shaken and undermined. Africa must now search for new values, new identities and a new self-consciousness.⁴

⁴ John, Mbiti., **African Religions and Philosophy**, (Nairobi: Heinemann Educational Books. LTD, 1969), p. 271

Chapter 1: A VERY BRIEF INFORMATION ON THE

ZULU PEOPLE

INTRODUCTION

The whole section deals with preliminary subjects necessary for the proper understanding of the Zulu people. It describes, in a tentative way their origin. It analyses the family according to the Zulu people. More so looking specifically at their marriage practice, in which we shall describe in greater detail up to its final moment. When the wife is actually accepted at the husband's homestead and also welcomed as a full member of the family.

1. A Historical Movement of the Bantu prior to the emergence of the Zulu Kingdom.

The first section looks at the origin and movement of the Bantu people. This movement had a great impact on the origin of the Zulu people. In our effort we look at the historical analysis done by the historians in trying to analyse their movement. They came up with different theories to explain this phenomenon. They looked at this origin as a problem that is compounded by basic assumption of migration or mass migrations of people from one geographical area to another. Along that line different scholars like Greenberg, said that the origin of the Bantu people is middle Benue region of Nigeria.

Another one was Theal who added that the south-east Bantu (Zulu) must have come from some locality near the Coast of West Africa. So in fact their journey must have laid across the south central tribes on their south ward journey across the central plateau. His conclusion is supported by the fact that in 1498 the first Portuguese fleet that touched the Lympho river, and a translator was sent by the sailors, was able to communicate with some natives on the shore.

Theal concludes that these people that is the natives, must have been the Batonga who on their way across the continent dropped groups of people behind them, especially on the southern bank of the Zambezi river. The descendants can still be found up to this present day. Among those who migrated further down south are the ancestors of the Xhosa people, Phondo people and the Thembu people. When finding the coast as far as Umzimvubu river on their journey they intermarried with the Hottentots. This hindered their advancement. During the fifteenth century a great irruption occurred from the north-west into the lower valley of the Zambezi river. A group of devastating bands, the largest of them was known as the

Amazimba, drove a group of fugitives that were the remains of the tribes they destroyed on the way from the Atlantic. There was another group known as the **Abambo** who, according to the Portuguese were quite different and appeared on the lower valley of the Zambezi river in 1570.

As a conclusion to Theal 's hypothesis we could say that among many bands that had migrated down south and settled down on the south east of Africa. There were the Abambo who came from the north and also settled there:

*The Zulus are therefore, according to Theal, descended from the Abambo and not closely related to the Xhosa.*⁵

*Bryant in his introduction to his Zulu-English Dictionary accepts Theal's theory that the Vambe must have been the same Abambo. But in his later re-construction of the migration into and occupation of South East Africa, he definitely states that the Mumbos who attacked the Portuguese and the Vambe tribe of Natal are not related at all.*⁶

Bryant further states in his introduction that about 900 AD the southern Bantu had become separated into three groups in Central Africa. The Nguni further broke down into three groups: 1/ *eMbo-Nguni*, 2/ *Ntungwa-Nguni* 3/ *Thongwa-Nguni*.

Now the *Ntungwa-Nguni* moved into Natal and settled there:

*They are the purest group of the Nguni and from them the Zulus are descendant.*⁷

The effort of this section has been to establish the general movement of the Bantu. How these Bantu people came to occupy Natal from where they came from, their relationship to each other. The construction of the Bantu migration is not easy. Apart from the native tradition, at its best a very unreliable source, we have to rely on the inadequate account given by the survivors of shipwrecks along the coast of Natal. It is not surprising therefore to find conflicting accounts about the early movement.

Finally studies of the origins of the sickle-cell gene show a movement of the Bantu from East Africa to Central Africa and Southern Africa. From the author's own experience in Eastern Africa and Southern Africa it is clear that among the peoples

⁵ Eileen. J, Krige., **The Social System of the Zulus**, (Pietermaritzburg: Shuter & Shooter, 1950), p.3

⁶ Ibid, p.3

⁷ E.J, Krige., op.cit, p.3

*therein described as Bantu, there exist similarities in cultural aspects of which the marriage aspects form a major area of Bantu life.*⁸

What we have said above concerning the general movement of the Bantu had great influence on the Zulu nation. In a sense that they were just one of the many hundreds of insignificant coastal clans of south east coastal, who had come down from the north in various bands. We shall see later their development from an insignificant clan into a powerful nation.

1.2. The emergence of Shaka and his Reorganisation of the Zulu Kingdom

Who are they?

In 1795, Shaka the great military genius, The great political organiser the great visionary was born. He was son of Senzangakhona, who was the son of Jama a direct descendant of Malandela. The great-grand father of Shaka belonged to the Ntungwa-Nguni. He broke away from that group with his party and they moved into the valley of Mhlathuze.

After his death there was a quarrel between his wife and her elder son Qwabe. So she took her younger son Zulu and they both went to the source of the Mhlathuze. When he became King, Zulu had other children one of them was Shaka's father Senzangakhona. Shaka's claim to the kingship was not an easy task.

Looking at his life as a child, it was filled with troubles, his parents Nandi and Senzangakhona married but then after a bitter quarrel they separated. The wife moved away from the palace and Zululand and this affected her children. In the end, her son Shaka recruited himself into the Mthethwa army. It was here that he was recognised by the King as a young man of great potential.

It was during the visit of his father Senzangakhona that the young man actually excelled himself. The father was confronted with his son for the first time after many years of separation. By this time Senzangakhona had already appointed an heir to the throne Sigujana. Then Shaka waited for the death of his father. He was assisted by Dingiswayo who provided the army for him to stake a claim over the throne. As a new king, he was able to put into practice what he learnt at the military school at the kraal of Dingiswayo.

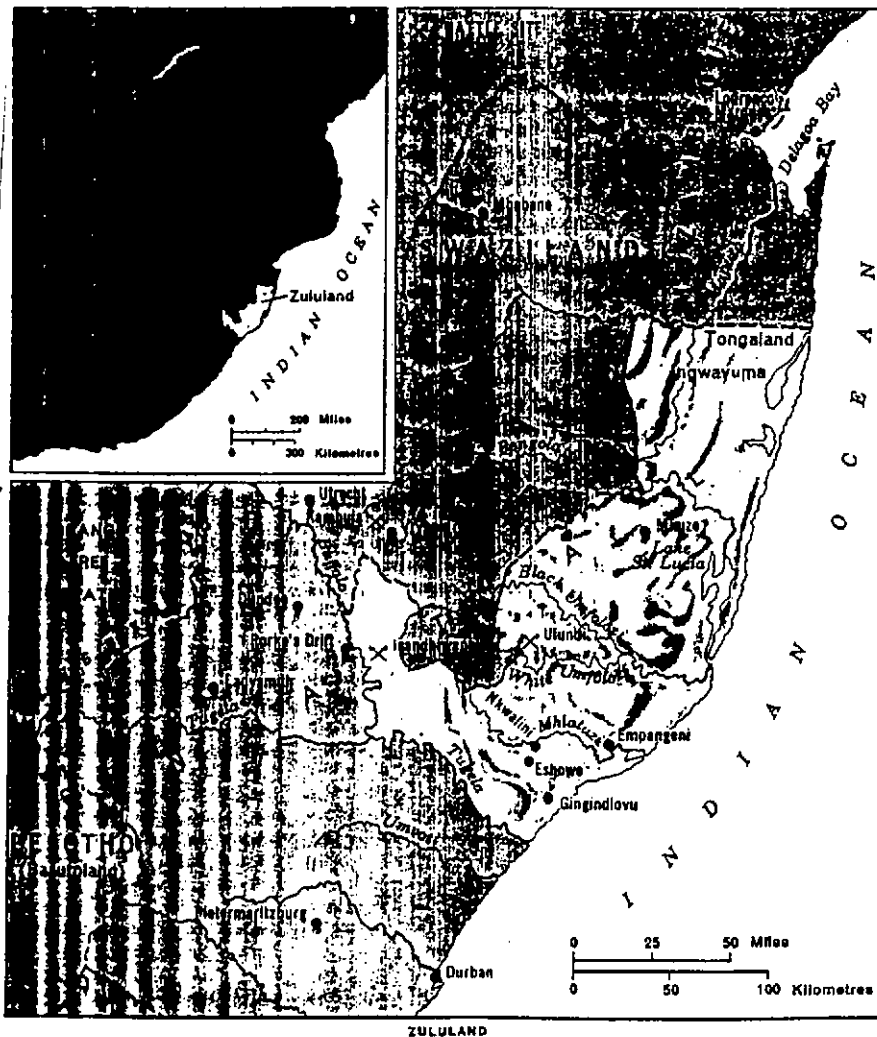
His ideas of preparing an army were quite revolutionary even during his own training, and the generals were displeased with his methods of combat:

⁸ A.B.T, Byaruhanga Akiiki., "*Aspects of Bantu Marriage*" (2) in *Afer* , vol.20, No.5 October, 1978, p.258

At this point he proceeded to introduce one of his most significant reforms, concerned with the formation of the Zulu army; namely the allocation of positions of command by merit rather than by family affiliations or national origins. It was this factor more than any other that demonstrated Shaka's outstanding political genius.⁹

1.3. Where are they

Zululand, a region of south-eastern Africa forming the north-eastern section of Natal province, Republic of South Africa. It is bounded by north by Mozambique, south and Southwest by the Swaziland and Tugela river, east by Indian Ocean, and west by Babanango and Utrecht. Area 10.362 sq.mi (26, 838 sq.km). Zululand is the traditional home of the Zulu people, although they are no longer concentrated in Natal, they are now scattered in other areas of the country in townships like Soweto, Bekkersdal and other places: *See below the tentative Map.*¹⁰



⁹ Mazisi, Kunene., (Translator) Emperor Shaka the Great: A Zulu Epic, (Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers,1993),p.xx

¹⁰ Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1st ed. Vol 23, sv. "Zululand" by J.B.D. McIntyre,p.1023.

2. THE ZULU TRADITIONAL MARRIAGE

2.1. *The idea of a family among the Zulu people*

The Zulus are a nation of Nguni-Speaking people in Natal South Africa. They are branch of the southern Bantu and they have close ethnic, linguistic and cultural ties with the Swazi and Xhosa people. Traditionally they were grain farmers, and also they kept large herds of cattle on the lightly wooded grasslands, replenishing their herds mainly by raiding those of their neighbours. Earlier on they were only one of the many Nguni clans that forms part of a basic unit within the social organisation. They comprised of several patrilineal households, each of these with a right in its own field and herds while being under the domestic authority of a senior man. Now Patrilineal authority is strongly exercised among these people that we may refer to them as a Patrilineal Society. Polygyny is practised as man's wives are ranked by strict seniority under the "Great" wife who is the mother of the heir. Upon the death of the husband they practice Levirate marriage. The brother of the deceased marries the widow upon her consent. Mainly this was the promise to care for her well-being and all her other needs.

Among the Zulu Ideas of kinship and family play an important part in the Zulu society and they ramify through every aspect of their culture. The bonds of kinship are very extensive and they serve to bring together and knit them into a group, that the European society would consider them not related at all. This is done by means of classification system of relationship, thus providing the person with a number of relations starting with parents, tracing the father's line denoted by the age or sex in relation to the parents i.e. father and the mother. In case of relations belonging to the father, it was specified by the *suffix ubaba-omncane (younger father)*. Marriage was another way which relations were extended the brothers and sisters of the mother's family and her relations, *also with the case of the mother's side depending with the sex or age of the person. In the case of the male relation that is malume (uncle) it was to strictly indicate the gender of the person from the mother's side. This was indicated by the ending in the noun to show they are from the mother's relation. Like Malume the first part of the word is for the mother (mama) the last part in this case it is the brother of the mother.*

Individual family within the network of relations still consists of mother and father and must be considered as a unit in Zulu society. Within the Zulu family we find certain behaviours between its individual members which ensure its continuance and smooth working of the whole. The whole network of relations were held together by the custom of *Ubuntu or personhood*. *This was* the mainstay of our Zulu custom in which all the cultural expressions were evident in the person's actions. Those that have been taught the value of **ukuhlonipha-Respect and** what it means to be a Zulu person with all the cultural expressions that goes with it .

The person realised he cannot exist alone because of the others and one of these expression was respect of the hierarchical structure of society. Children are drawn into the community from early childhood and through daily intercourse and example, they are imbued with values of a community and orientated them into the society. These values include respect for the elders, implicit obedience to their authority, generosity, hospitality and a sense of mutual responsibility. Such behaviours permeate in all the members of society. These values were taken to the marriage process up until it is completed. There are accepted ways of behaviour for the bride in front of her in-laws and also for the groom in front of the bride's family and failure to comply with these norms there were penalties to be paid in form of goats. Failure to comply with the accepted norms of behaviour such a person was seen as not having any respect. If a person acted in an ill manner then both families will ask whether bride or the groom has manners seeing how they act. These "**behaviours patterns**" are very important and they vary under the influence of Patrilinearity. Zulu society can be considered as a typically Patrilineal society. In the sense that the father is called **Ubaba** is respected is the most important figure within the family he is feared and his commands are obeyed. One approaches his father with great respect. In the case of the mother it is different although she commands respect one can say what they like to her. If the child is in trouble she could be approached easily and she can use her influence on the father to put the case tactfully before him. Children of the same parents or siblings relate to another with friendliness and co-operation. There are two factors which will influence or create difference in kinship terminology that is age or sex of the person.

2.2. Preliminaries prior to the Marriage ceremony

The Zulus were an organised society in matters dealing with marriage and there were laid down procedures, which were acknowledged by the society at large. In this section I would like to look in a brief way at what actually preceded marriage. Marriage was conceived as both an individual and social act, it involved the young man and woman and their families. How each influenced the other, first of all the recognition of the love as a basis for marriage and the society entered in that agreement through these following persons to approve what the two persons willingly wanted to commit themselves to. We had the leader of the girls who gave the permission to the boy to proceed with the marriage negotiations. If the girl had objected the boy would be told by the leader to forget about the whole thing so he had to look for somebody else. Now following the approval by the leader of the girls and the family of the boy's willingness to take the cows for that particular girl was the indication of approval also on the part of the girl's family wanting to receive those cattle for their girl. The rest was the marriage ceremony to seal the two families in a strong bond.

2.3. Ancestors in the Zulu family and marriage celebration

The ancestors played a vital role in the life of the Zulu society at large and for each individual family. The ancestors are the source of life and they do everything to enhance this life through the community. So much is done to keep a healthy relationship between the ancestors and the living members i.e. through libation for fear of the worst. The common understanding is that the ancestors were deceased family members who died long ago. They are actively involved in the affairs of their children and they are given respect as though they are still with their living members. They were requested to intercede on behalf of the living depending on the nature of the problem. The ancestors took keen interest on their progeny; they guard them from danger and attend to their needs but in return they require to be sacrificed to. The relationship between the ancestors and the living is a mutual one. In connection with marriage ceremonies the ancestors they were informed of what was to take place in the family, they could be requested to go with those entrusted by the family to request good relationship with the girl's family.

During the marriage ceremony we had two families coming together with their own ancestors, it was an important event the coming together of the two ancestral families. The coming together of the two families was very essential and that for everything to go well the ancestors were informed. The girl had to be loosened from her ancestral spirits which had been guarding her since childhood days. They were informed your child is now going to start

a new life somewhere take care of her go with her so that she may have good life there. The boy's family in a similar fashion invoke the ancestors to accept the new bride as a new person who has come into the family. They were requested to look after her at that moment they asked for the blessing of the ancestors of the marriage with children and a good long life in harmony. *The blood of the slaughtered animals was the sign of this union between the two families.* The reception of the new bride by the family of the groom was an important aspect of marriage. Her ancestors were also informed and requested to be with her, as she leaves her family to the new kraal of her husband and she was to be received with opens arms. So that she may be a fruitful wife in the house of her husband. In each step of the marriage processes the ancestors were uniquely involved from the beginning till the last step of this process as we shall see in greater detail in each step.

The ancestors who founded the clan, who were the channels for the propagation of life in the clan are called upon and preside in an invisible manner, over the ceremonies. The Head of the family together with his spouse represents ancestors; he is the one who in their name blesses and sanctions this step of the young ones.¹¹

During the marriage negotiations there were lot of animals slaughtered and the blood was a sign of a deep union; a bond that was irrevocable. It combined the two families together in a deep and sacred way and it strengthened the relationship. The ancestors are known to like bitter things like gall; something was put aside for the them to lick at night; it was placed in the special part of the hut called **emsamo**. And also some portion of the meat were left aside for the ancestors to "eat" it. Before the young woman left her home, it was customary for the father or the elder of the family to inform the ancestors of change that was about to happen or to take place. The father led his daughter by the hand to the house were she would be helped by the older women to get dressed. After this he later would take her to the most important part of the house that is the cattle-enclosure, it was believed it is the sacred place of the ancestors like the temple.

When the bride was about to leave her family a beast known as *Ukuncamisa* was slaughtered for her by the father, it was to be taken from one of the lobola cattle. It was symbolic gesture of saying farewell to her as she goes to her husband's family.

¹¹ Vincent Mulago., Traditional African Marriage and Christian Marriage, (Uganda: St. Paul Publications, 1981),p. 55.

The bride-to-be from her home she was poured with gall from the slaughtered beast, it was the sign associated with ancestors. The ancestors are connected with life that they help their daughter so that she may be able through them to give life in her new home. Like this ceremony of sending off of the bride. The gall of this beast will be poured over the face, arms and legs of the girl and the stomach contents used to cleanse her. The pouring of the gall over the bride is to inform ancestors of the change that is about to take place and very soon. If there was an eloquent man; he will tell the ancestors about the forthcoming marriage stating what the lobola is and invoking their blessing on the girl begging them not to be hard on her for leaving them. Also, with the case of the boy's family they will welcome the young wife to the family ceremoniously. The Ancestors of the boy's were contacted when the family wanted to do something they requested and announced to the ancestors what they wanted to do. Now before the animal was slaughtered, the elder in the family sang the praise-names of the family ancestors their names from the oldest to the last of those who past away. He says the reasons why is he slaughtering the animal and he asks for continued protection over those who are still living.

2. 5. Meaning of dowry (ilobolo) and its importance in Zulu marriage

The practice of ilobolo among the Zulu people was an essential element within a marriage process, it was very difficult to think of a marriage ceremony without taking out of ilobolo cattle-marriage. We start at looking at the word itself in Zulu it is called **ilobolo** even though in English it has been translated a **Dowry**. The English-Zulu dictionary describes the word in following terms:

*It is a complement of marriage by handing over of some goods or of an agreed number of cattle (or money in lieu thereof) on the part of the bridegroom's people to the father of the bride or the guardian of the bride, in order to ensure the right of the bridegroom to any issue of the marriage.*¹²

I would like to limit myself to the actual Zulu word that is **ilobolo** to keep in line with original meaning of the word. Besides the English word has misleading connotation due to lack of knowledge by the missionaries. My first attempt would be to clarify as best as I can the meaning and role of ilobolo within a Zulu marriage. Attempts have been made by other foreign missionaries, like the **Missionaries of Africa** to try and understand this African practice.

¹² C.M. Doke and B.W. Vilakazi, (compilers) **Zulu- English Dictionary**, (Johannesburg: Witswatersrand University Pres,1953), p.460

concerning the customs and traditions. Question 41 of the first section is written in this form:

Is the dowry considered a price or a compensation?. The answer from the two Vicariates of Burundi, Kitega and Ngozi was as follows: The payment of the dowry in this area is in no way to be taken as a business transaction.¹³

The understanding of Lobolo was that it had two roles: first for the family and secondly was the social aspect. The family because: it was strengthening the bond between the two families, and also it was a precious instrument of **Alliance**. It was what brought the two families together.

The Social aspect was that it created stability to marriage and formed a new relationship. Marriage is also a bond that united two families, two clans, even more it introduced them to each other. As a result an alliance was forged between the families. This was misunderstood by the outsiders and improperly calling it **dowry** implying that there was some sort of business transactions of persons. For the Zulus and also for the Africans those in particular that practice lobolo the fundamental principle was that it was a means of establishing a relationship between the two families. It is a sign, the symbol and also the juridical instrument for legally marrying a woman in the Zulu society. This union between families, two clans was a **bond of Alliance**. The first general understanding of ilobolo was that it placed importance first on the girl who was about to be married: it was sign of appreciation from the man's family, and it did not in any way mean to signify buying the person.

The practice of ilobolo involved many things: *1/ The establishment of an alliance between the families. 2/ Creation of friendship since the families were going to negotiate together it was necessary that this was done in a spirit of understanding and friendship. 3/ It was a sign of gratitude towards the girl for behaving well: there was a special cow given for the mother to thank for her great work in moulding the daughter into the person she has turned out to be.*

¹³ Vincent, Mulago., Traditional African marriage and Christian marriage, op.cit.p.59.

Zulu custom

The Zulu people were well-disciplined at marriage and they were very strict in matters of lobola because it hinged on a very important aspect that was the cattle that were given for the future bride. This had a lot implications on the girl's character and critical question of whether she was a virgin or not. This was implied by the fact that the cows were given as ilobolo. In normal situation she was suppose through her family to receive ten heads of cattle, and the eleventh one was conditional; depending on her behaviour. This cow was given to the mother as a sign of gratitude for the well disciplined daughter. This cow was called **inquthu** beast for looking after her daughter. It was a sign of gratitude for teaching and caring for daughter who protected and respected her virginity. This cow was not part of the part of the lobola. This beast was sent with the first cattle during the negotiations it is the personal property of the mother it is usually slaughtered and eaten by the women. This was a special beast in the sense it was for girls who were virgins. Only this was a sure indication to prepare for the wedding after this beast has been handed over to the bride's home. If the beast was not presented, it was a big insult on the girl, unless she was a not a virgin, and this could start a quarrel. There are a lot of ceremonies surrounding the betrothal period prior to marriage.

The whole purpose of these ceremonies or passing of gifts between the home of bride and the groom were just attempts at establishing **Friendship** between the two groups. This was done by means of gifts, of cattle on the part of the boy's people of beer on the part of the girl. Marriage is however, far more than a transition for the girl or boy; it is a gradual coming together of the two families, that of the boy and that of the girl in order to produce feelings of friendship and stability. Not only do the groom's family kraal come to the bride's kraal with lobola at different times in the period between the betrothal and the actual marriage, but there are visits from and the gifts passing from the bride's people to those of the boy. We have thus attempts at establishing good feeling between the two groups by means of gifts. The gift of beer was known as **Umbondo**. This beer is given this name because the bride has been sleeping on a mat which she rolled up at the end of the period. There was a difference in the marriage ceremony of a girl who was a virgin and the one that was already defiled. This was a sign of thanking both the girl and the mother for being so faithful and the

emphasis was thanking the girl for respect for herself till the time of marriage. The bond is above all a symbol: It perpetuate the presence of the girl in her paternal home it signifies the solidarity reigning between the two families and seals the physical and spiritual unions between them. Socially the paying of the lobolo was the warranting of the **Stability of Marriage**. The boy's family showed appreciation of the person with some material gifts and that she has been faithful and respected her body.

The important thing was that the groom would give what he was able to give to the girl's people, and they in return would be able to come to the son-in-law in times of problems. Marriage created a very strict relationship between a man and his wife's people. The cattle make him father of the children whether, or not he is their genitor: and the guardianship of children, hinges on the question of who paid the marriage-cattle for the mother and whether it was delivered. These forms of marriage all depend on the legal consequences which flow from cattle which a Zulu man gives for his future wife. The cattle make him the father of all her children whether or not he is their physical father or not. Another important aspect was the family name of the father that by virtue of marriage-cattle grants him the right to have children being called by his family name. In the case of the man if his family is Dlamini so all his children will be called by that family name and also they will belong to the Dlamini ancestors.

3. THE PREPARATION OF MARRIAGE AMONG THE ZULU

3.1 Remote Preparations: First the Agreement between the boy and the girl.

Among the Zulus young men and women were left free to choose their future partners, without interference on the part of parents from either side. They were only involved if they saw the two persons were totally incompatible and this was done in good faith. The Zulu marriage is a dynamic process in the sense that it is started by the two persons and concluded by the two respective families. This was a tedious task in the sense that there were many factors at play that had to accompany the girl's acceptance of the boy's proposal. This is part of a natural development of a person to assume responsibility and show his or her maturity. A person who decided to get married was very much respected in the society; not only getting married but also running the family well. When a young man decides to marry, it was sign of maturity:

Therefore marriage is looked upon as sacred duty which every normal person just perform. Failure to do so means in effect stopping the flow of life through the individual and hence the diminishing of mankind upon the earth.¹⁴

This is a desire of every normal person to start his own family and also it was the expectation of the society, to each individual member that they fulfil this sacred duty. The boy having indicated his future partner, whom he wished her to be his wife, he then approached the girl concerned and made his proposal to her. This was not an easy task for both of them. He had to show his skills at approaching the girl. At the moment he might not be the only one pursuing her: there might be other boys, but he had to prove that he was the best amongst the others. The agreement between the young people was influenced by many factors. First of all culturally: the girl was supposed to delay the proposal or to act in a most rude way to keep her pride intact. In order to respect her dignity and not to be the laughing of her age-mates. Another thing was that if she decided to accept the young, she had to inform the leader of the girls. The leader was entrusted by the community to be in charge of girls and a go-between the girls and the young men. This was customary role for a girl who excels in good behaviour and she

¹⁴ John, Mbiti., Introduction to African Religion, (Nairobi: Heinemann Eduactional Books Ltd, 1975), p. 107.

was older from her group. The reason was respect she commands from her group so being older made it easier for her as she is dealing with an important aspect of the person's life. This leader had her role given by the community she was called **iQhikiza**. She was a go-between a particular boy and a particular girl that was part of her group:

One of the outstanding features of the Bantu of South Africa is their strong group-consciousness which finds expression in every aspect of the lives. From early childhood they are made aware they belong to a larger society and that their individuality should not transcend its reality.¹⁵

A day was chosen to give the young man concerned the beads. This was a public declaration by the young woman to say she publicly accept this young man as future husband. The young man after getting the beads, it was an indication that he could inform his parents of desire of getting married. This was done in a small ceremony where all the friends of both the girl and young men come together to celebrate. Thanking the girl collectively for accepting one of their own.

The family discussion

The young man after being given the beads by young woman it was an indication that he may proceed with the marriage negotiations. The second step was to inform his family. This was to show the seriousness on his part that he wants solidify the relationship with the young woman as his future wife. At home he informed the mother who will play mediator between the son and the father. At this stage the involvement of the parents will look at many things of the girl concerned. The character and the background of the home she comes from. If she meets their favour, the boy will be called by the father to ask him about his decision to marry. The father was serious in questioning the son; giving of cattle in marriage was a serious issue. Getting a wife was another important aspect in the life of a person. The father would never impose a wife on his son, it was what the son wanted because he loved the woman. The family through father asks the son whether he was aware of what he was getting into. First the looked at the motive why was he getting married. The father maybe

¹⁵ P. Whooley., *"Marriage in Africa: A case study in the Ciskei"*, in T.D.Verryn (ed), **Church and Marriage in Modern Africa**, (Groenkloof: Ecumenical Research Unit, 1975), p. 254.

helped by the elder members of the family in questioning the boy with the intention of certifying whether he knew what was happening. He had to demonstrate before his family that he was ready for this step he was about to take. There were practical ways of testing his maturity: was he responsible with the family property, can he stand alone or he cannot make his own decision for slight problem without taking a chance himself first. It was the father's prerogative to choose whom he trusts as talented negotiators to begin the marriage negotiations.

3.4 Forms of Marriage negotiations

Before the boy will take any step to set into motion the marriage negotiations he must first receive permission from the **iQhikiza**. He will approach the girl for her consent. If she refuses three or four times, she will refer him to the older girls known as **amaQhikiza**. They will grant him permission to approach the girl's parents. There are among the Zulus three recognised forms of marriage negotiations:

I.Ukucela or ukukhonga: (to request)

Here the boy having indicated the choice of a partner, requests his relatives to open the negotiations and formally ask for the hand of the girl. This is the method which has survived for long, and is even applied by the Zulu Christian presently. This is a marriage form that has survived and is used by the Christians these days in the sense that there was a lot of freedom and love involved on both parties. Should she meet their approval, a go-between is appointed who will be their spokesman in all negotiations. This goes on for several months or years to complete and is by continuous exchange of gifts. Ukucela is a normal process for initiating marriage and is designed to establish **friendship between affinal relatives** culminating in the exchange of **lobolo or dowry**.

ii.Ukuganisela (to make a match)

In which the girl's family takes the initiative, having a particularly desirable alliance in mind. This rare procedure would happen only where her family is of high standing like the daughter of a chief of a village. The boy's group would find such a proposal flattering and would appoint the go-between to proceed in the usual way

.iii.Ukubaleka (to run away or to elope)

In which the girl, wishing to avoid a planned match which she feels repugnant, runs away to the one she loves and spends the night at his home. His family can either accept her in which case a mediator is sent to her home to explain her absence and begin marriage negotiations or they can reject her in which case she is escorted home and faces

Another one was known as Ukuthwala (to bear off or to abduct)

In which the boy arranges with his friends to go and carry off the girl with or against her will. If she does not escape within three days, she will submit herself and consent to be married. Then the go-between is appointed to proceed in the normal fashion.

3.5 Immediate preparations: The Marriage negotiations The lobolo (dowry) procedure:

1. The would be bridegroom's lineage group initiate the lobolo procedure by sending a minimum of two emissaries to girl's kraal lineage in order to open marriage negotiations. They do not just state the reasons why they have come. Since the matter is a delicate issue it is handled with great care. The say we have been sent by So and so to come and do him homage on his behalf.
2. The bridal group tries to frustrate and delay the negotiations while the task of the groom's party is to expedite them. It is to make explicit that the bride's people are not ready to part with one of their members, that is the daughter. The father will come and call all the girls to find out if they know the person mentioned by the visitors. They will agree and then be excused from there. In the same way as it is not the parents of the boy or girl who are only concerned when marriage negotiations are taking place, but the whole group, so the individuals who are to be married are always accompanied and given support by their age-mates.
3. The father will now intimate before dismissing the girls whether or not he agrees to accept the proposal when **the abakhongi** (*emissaries*) come again. When they come again after a few days they will repeat the procedure of knocking outside the kraal announcing their presence. After being invited in, the father will call upon them to

Lobola(dowry). It is against the law to announce the cattle at once. The person mentions a few, giving their age, colour and sex. The reason is that it would be insulting to mention all the cattle. It would imply that they are rich, therefore purchasing goods is simple for them. The father of the girl makes himself very angry; it is the emissaries duty to keep calm at this time. They depart without any definite agreement on the cattle.

4. Several visits will be made in an effort to persuade the bridal group to agree on an early wedding date despite the fact that few cattle have been announced. All this is done with outright respect for the bridal group. Whilst the bridal people themselves show no reciprocal difference they treat the visitors with outright rudeness. They may claim that the key kinsman is away, therefore visitors will have to return at a later date.

5. At this instance the groom's party decide to bring the cattle without any formal notice. They will be teased that they have brought calves and skinny cows, they would even beat them. Now a change is seen because the father calls all the men of the kraal and his kinsmen to witness the bridal cattle. The arrangements for the marriage begins. When the emissaries are accepted with their lobolo a big ox or goat is slaughtered for them This is the first ceremony attended by the elder representatives of both sides. From there will be several visits as indicated below.

6. In between the visits various activities take place. They include things like:

A/ Visits to the would be bridegroom, exchange of ceremonial gifts in rituals.

b/ Groom 's party reciprocate likewise

4. THE CELEBRATION OF MARRIAGE

INTRODUCTION

The Zulus, like any of the traditional societies considered marriage as a very serious business with religious, social, and personal consequences: religious because it is the means by which a man's legitimate lineage is continued, an assurance of immortality in the children born of lawful wedlock; Social because it increases the numerical strength of the clan and extends its system of alliances with other groups. Personal because it is the culmination of the individual's development in which he achieves a new status which carries with it maturity and dignity. It follows that marriage affects the quality of life which depends more on one's social relationship than material goods. It is the point where all the members of a given community meet, Particularly the Zulu society. Since for the Zulus marriage is a weighty occurrence which involves the two families rather than just two individuals, it is the object of a long drawn-out negotiations and discussions. Usually spread out over a period of several months or even years. Each step of the process needs some tangible expressions. ¹⁶

4.1 Principles underlying the Zulu Marriage

Marriage among the Zulu people can be called a *rite of Passage*: for the couple concerned it is a means by which both of them are transferred from the group of the unmarried to the one of the married. For the girl, it is a double transition. She has to be loosened from her own group and incorporated into the group of the husband. The awareness that it takes time for the family of the husband to get used to the new wife, she was suppose to respect her relatives-in-laws as a recognition of the difficult position. *Marriage is a gradual coming together of the two families* that of the boy and the girl. We therefore find actions and reactions between the two groups in order to produce feelings of *friendship and stability*. The loss of a member disturbs the equilibrium between the two groups. This has to be set right by giving in return something of great value in the lives of the people. The motive of giving the presents was to obtain the friendship of the girl's family; for giving of the daughter in marriage was not a joyous occasion for the family so many questions had to be asked will she manage there and how will she be treated.

When the consent from the girl's father to marry has been officially obtained, preparations for marriage begins. He orders the girl to put up her hair as a sign that the girl is soon to get married. Also it may be that the girl does it herself. She puts her hair up as a sign that she wants to get married to a man she is attached to. Before the marriage takes place, mats, bead-ornaments, etc. have to be made as presents for the people of the groom's kraal. The father of the bride prepares an isidwaba, i.e. skin dress for his daughter which she will wear on her wedding day. There was also a custom of visiting the relatives trying to get the gift from them. So when the final instalment of the cattle has been handed over, the emissaries will be told to go and prepare beer for the wedding. Preparations will take the form of food, songs, dance and even the professionals may be requested here.

4.1 The different stages: Leaving home: Starting of a Wedding celebration.

There are three important phases in a person's life: birth, marriage and death. In the Zulu culture they were marked by a ceremony. The departure of a young woman from her homestead was the first indication of the beginning of the marriage ceremony. The Zulu had an elaborate ceremony to mark this occasion and the involvement of the ancestors in this departure ceremony.

It was done in this particular fashion: by slaughtering of the beast known as UkunCamisa. This was one of the lobola cattle. One of the eloquent elders of the family introduced the animal to the ancestors and say the reason why the beast was being slaughtered. At that moment they invoked a blessing of the ancestors upon the young woman where she was going. There were many ceremony of loosening the young woman from her own ancestors, it was to inform them of the change that was about to take place in the family and also, requesting them not to be sad for her departure. And they were told she is going to build a new relationship with the new family for them. The young woman was instructed by the elderly women in the family on how to behave with her in-laws. She was told she represents her family there; any wrong doing will be seen as not having been taught any manners from her childhood. Once the ceremony has been done the father led her inside the kraal: they will go around it to inform the ancestors of what is happening since the kraal is the Zulu sanctuary, the holy place where the ancestral spirits dwell. She had to say bye to them also and ask for their blessing in her

¹⁶ Cfr. Marc de Muelenaere., *The "Bomum Fidei"*, op. cit, p. 2

new role as a future mother of children. After all the many small details have been fulfilled she may now depart with a blessing of her family.

The bride was to be accompanied by her party from her home to the groom's homestead. This was to signify the actual separation with the family unless she came for a visit.

4.1.1 The Sending off of the bride

The bride-to be never leaves her family empty handed: she was given something to accompany her for the journey. This was in form presents for the new homestead. To loose a daughter was a painful thing to a family: this created a state of tension in the family about how she will be treated at the her new home. There were so many questions from the two families that is from the girl's family of whether will they treat their child well, also with the boy's family they will be wondering what of a person is she?.

When the bridal party arrives at their destination they were welcomed with joy in the homestead. The bride was supposed to be hidden until the day of the wedding dances. Due to the nature of the celebration normally the party was tired from a long distance . they were given a place for resting, so following day was the appointed day.

4.1.2 The Actual Wedding Day

The wedding day came and bridal party had to prepare themselves in good time. We could say that the celebration was characterised by the following events:

_ The presence of the official from the Chief's office whose duty was to question the couple getting married and seek their consent.

The official was suppose to preside over this part of the marriage ceremony by asking for the consent of the two persons in the following way; firstly he directed the question to the girl and then the boy :

My dear daughter the law asks you: do you love this man? .

She answer yes I do.

My dear son the law asks you do you love this woman? .

He answers yes I do.

_ When both they had given their consent to marriage, it was then the prerogative official then to grant the permission to proceed with the celebration.

_ The father gives his daughter in marriage. Here he was supposed to say anything good or

bad about his child: if there was any sickness, he was suppose to report it:

It is at this instance that the father of the bride stands up to pray. Whilst doing so the whole assembly is silent to give reverence to this prayer. He cries out in this form: This child of so and so naming of the ancestors addressing the Groom's family keep her well. He will say: here is my child keep her for me. If she becomes ill let me know, if she troubles you rebuke her as your own child. If she errs report her to me, if you cannot agree with her and you are tired of her return her to me. Her only ailments are the following. He mentions them all. In this instance he mentions the Lobolo in public and how much is still due. From this point the celebration continued until later in the evening. The new bride had to pass certain ceremonies in order to incorporate her into the new family. Before celebration cattle were brought into the middle of the kraal she will choose from in order to get the milk from.

4.2. The final step of incorporation of the Woman into her New Group

Before a newly married woman can eat meat at her husband's kraal, she is brought a small tray with cow-dung and a knife. She cuts the dung to show she is willing to eat meat. A present of a goat is given to her. This present she takes to her home. The father in return presents the daughter with the gift of the same value. At this moment the woman has been made a full member of the family. She no longer walks behind huts and the husband now gains a new status, and also her husband associates only with the married men who are of his age-set. But to maintain a friendly feeling between the two group that was quite difficult. Gifts were still exchanged long after marriage ceremony. After the marriage ceremony the bride will go home to be shaved on the head, leaving the top knot. Returning from home, she would come with gifts of beer from her parents. Her mother would from time to time send food to her daughter's in-laws the reason was to cultivate a gesture of *Goodwill and Friendship between the two families. This was one of the primary aims (Ukwakha isihlobo esihle, i.e. establishing Good relationship between the families)*. One of the essential aspect in marriage was the creation of goodwill and friendship between the two families. The importance of this aspect was since it in the beginning of the marriage for the young couple family support was very important to make family life possible for the two people. This was done in many ways like the exchange of gifts between the two families, it is this realisation getting to know one another in the family set-up takes time. Also when there was trouble in the spirit of friendship was guiding principle in family mediation. The period of accompaniment was

essential in the sense this was a critical time for the whole families as they await for the birth of the child.

General Conclusion

I hope what I set out to do that is described the Zulu marriage has been accomplished. Seeing values that underlie this institution. As we have in great details how important marriage. The importance that was given to the wife by given something of great value for her respect. Another thing was the seriousness in which the commitment was taken in great regard they knew that the bond was for life especially when the wife has been accepted ceremoniously into the home of the husband. Although at times the wife may not be able to give birth to a child she was not returned home. In agreement with her the younger sister was brought to raise a seed for her. They knew that the young would be compassionate to the older sister's situation rather than bringing a stranger to the first wife who will tease her inability to give birth to child. Again although Zulu marriage was an open ended union they were very strict with the case of polygny. Although wealth was there behaviour was the primary one the ability to treat the woman like the a person realising her dignity

1. ZULU MARRIAGE VALUES AND THE CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE

Marriage as basic institution of Society

Wherever we find a community, no matter how traditional, we find that it is more than just an association of individuals each pursuing his or her own life and possessing his or her own ideas. We find that there is a social pattern a coherent body of customs and ideas. There must be a pattern some sort of a structure or an organised way of doing things. What determines a pattern is the necessary condition of existence of social organism. This necessary condition in which social institution must correspond. Basic to every form of social organisation is the method of obtaining those essential items for human survival.

These necessary conditions of existence shape the relationship of men to each other. Men carry on a struggle against nature and utilise nature to produce the necessities of life not in isolation from each other not as separate individual, but in common, in groups, in societies.¹⁷

A system will be devised to regulate relationship of all the individuals in that society. To make possible an ordered lifestyle. In every human society the union between a man and a woman has been regulated and institutionalised by society. Recognising the fundamental right of each persons to form a life time partnership so the society feels to do everything within its power to see that such an undertaking is done in an orderly manner:

In most African societies all unions between a man and a woman are regularised by the exchange of gifts and payments in kind by the man's people to the bride's people. These goods or payments are prestations and they vary from one society to another. They confer certain rights and duties on the partners of the union.¹⁸

Marriage is an institution of great importance for the society, it has established the norms of how people may get married legally, it has the power to determine those who can get married and impede those that society feels they should not get married like in the case of blood relationship i.e. a brother and a sister. Marriage needs society to guarantee its

¹⁷ John, Lewis., **Anthropology made Simple**, (London: Made Simple Books/ W.H. Allen & Compnay, 1969),p.75.

¹⁸ Eric. O, Ayisi., **An Introduction to the Study of African Culture, (2nd)**, (London: Heinemann Educational Books Ltd, 1979),p.7.

security, stability and the fulfilment of its functions. In a sense it stipulates as to what age the person may enter into marriage. The Zulu society takes marriage a seriously and it has set of norms regulating marriage. Seeing marriage as an important aspect of the person's. It establish the recognisable sign of showing the two individuals they are legally married. For the Zulu people the taking out of cattle for the woman was the recognisable juridical instrument of marriage. Also insisting on the virginity of the woman at marriage.

The Christian understanding of the marriage as an institution is that it is willed by God and that he has a design for it which humankind has to respect. Marriage as we have seen is willed by God as a community of love and as a life-giving community:

*The family which is founded and given life by love is a community of persons: of husband and wife, of parents and children, of relatives. Its first task is to live with fidelity the reality of communion in a constant effort to develop an authentic community of persons.*¹⁹

The Vatican II in the document **Gadium et Spes** was fully aware of the institutional dimension of marriage, was particularly concerned that no split should be accepted between marriage as institution and marriage as a covenant of love. The following quotation are typical:

*By their natural character the institution of marriage and married love are ordained for the procreation of children and bringing up of children; they reach their peak or crown in these activities.*²⁰

The role of the Church is to protect this institution through its laws and style that will make it immediately clear that marriage is for the sake of the true covenant of love and thus only able to fulfil its role for the sake of the Church and the society at large.

¹⁹ John Paul., **Familiaris Conortio**, 1981, p. 31

²⁰ Austin, Flannery., (ed) **Vatican Council II: The conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents**, (Bombay: St. Pauls, 1995), p. 836.

2. Interaction or relationship between the Canonical Form marriage and the Zulu process

On the day of the wedding celebration both parties gathered at the gate of the groom's homestead. Before the celebration started, the official from the Chief office, who also came to the celebration, had a specific purpose within the celebration. His task was to get the consent of those marrying. He ask them on behalf of the chief and also was given the mandate to call off the wedding, if he was not satisfied with the answers he got from those who were getting married. After getting this consent they could joyfully proceed with the celebration. Now he asked them in the following way:

My daughter are you here because you love this man you are marrying today ?

She answers: yes I do

My son do you love this young woman whom you have brought here?.

He answers: I do.²¹

The important thing was to find out really if the young woman was not forced to marry the young man in question. The official was acting on behalf of the Chief and he had his authority to do so. This question was done before the bride was formally received into the family.

The Churches requirement for the Canonical Form was against clandestine marriage at the given period trying to assert her authority as competent in the matter relating to marriage. With the understanding of marriage as a covenant or partnership for life which cannot be broken easily, a provision was made to say that only those marriage that contracted before the ecclesiastical figure they are valid and they cannot be broken:

*# Only those marriage are valid which are contracted in the presence of the local ordinary or the pastor or a priest or deacon delegated by either of them, who assist, and in the presence of two witnesses, according to the rules expressed in the following canons.*²²

This canon explains the meaning of canonical form and role of the Church as an official witness within marriage ceremony. The Canonical Form is distinguished from the

²¹ This was part of the interview that I did with Mr Maseko from KwaZulu-Natal during the long holidays when he told me about the presence of the official at all marriage ceremonies. I thought it would fit here with the question of the Canonical Form.

²² CIC, 1108.

liturgical one, the latter being the rites and ceremonies which accompany the exchange of consent.

*A man and a woman express their acceptance of one another as husband and wife; the canonical form consists of those legal formalities which, if not fulfilled, render marriage non-existent.*²³

*Marriage is realised by the mutual consent of the spouses socially expressed. Hence society, including ecclesial society, has the right to prescribe the minimum requirements for a valid marriage.*²⁴

As will be seen, it is possible to observe the liturgical without observing the canonical form. The relationship that I envision between Canonical and the Zulu process was the fact that requirement of the consent which was suppose to be publicly expressed by the couple to take each other as husband and wife for life was done officially through the presence of official witness within the Zulu marriage. He required the consent of both and receives it on behalf of the chief for the validity of that particular bond. Another aspect within the consent was the desire to bear children although this consent was expressed freely and fully there was this particular obligation to bear a child. Within the Zulu marriage or any of the African marriage, this is the general trend in many traditional marriage. That is although the consent was given to marriage as a lifetime partnership, it had to be qualified in with the birth of a child. We could say that in short the consent was expressed in view of procreation. This is a challenge to the Zulu marriage that is seeing the primary end of marriage as solely in terms of procreation.

*In this sense the woman is first and foremost a partner in marriage. The biblical ideal of the relationship of husband and wife is not so much equality, however, as mutuality, sharing at every level of life. Each of the partners in marriage has value as human person. Like the man and woman has value and importance in her own right and not necessarily in her children. The value of marriage cannot be subordinated to any other purpose.*²⁵

²³ Ignatius, Gramunt et al., Canons and Commentaries on Marriage (Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1987), p.55

²⁴ George. V, Lobo., The New Marriage Law, (Bombay: St Paul Publications, 1983), p.85

²⁵ B.Kisembo et al., "African Christian Marriage" in Marc de Muelenaere, op. cit, p.97

3. Purpose and ends of Marriage in Zulu Culture in relation to Christian Marriage

3.1 African as a personal and communitarian being

The proper understanding of the Zulu marriage needs someone to take into account the society. Like any other African people, the Zulus placed importance on the community for there was never a separation between the individual and the community:

"Any grasp of what African marriage means, implies correct understanding of the basic features of Muntu i.e. the human person as a being that is at once personal and communitarian. He is defined by membership of such and such a lineage or extended family."²⁶

This was very much influenced by spirituality of the African world view which does not involve a dichotomy between that which is spiritual and that which is material. Everything works for the total welfare of a human being. Some traditional greetings for example include the conditions of the weather, the fields, the crops etc. as part of the welfare of a person. In other words, the conditions of the other creatures affects the conditions and welfare of the whole community and the individual. Otherwise the use of everything that is at our disposal affects the prevailing state of the community. The **community** is the core of **African Spirituality**. By community here is meant not only the living but also the ancestors. The living and the ancestors participate in assuring the welfare of an individual throughout one's life but in particular during the major phases of life i.e. birth and in marriage. The neighbours collaborate in doing some major works such as slaughtering the beast etc. The community joins hands in major feasts assisting one of their own.

The emphasis on the community may appear to ignore an individual. The fact is that the individual is also quite important. One cannot deny the importance of community and the role of the individual within the network of relations. There were occasions where the individual was supposed to take an initiative when the person decided to get married. As we have seen in the preparations for marriage the initiators of the process were the young man and the young woman. Both of them agree to be future partners once this has been certified by the leader of the girls. The community enters through the family by preparing for the marriage ceremony. There were other occasions where the individual had to act alone not in

the selfish sense but for the well-being or for the common good of the community. In the famous saying *I am because you are meaning that the person finds his being in the community. He may not exist alone outside his community.*

The individual is expected to be truly human which is not possible without an intimate relationship with the ancestors. Once more the sacred and material are not separated. This relationship can be understood in two ways:

1/ *The relationship between the individual and his/her ancestors which is already established by nature.*

2/ *It is also to be reinforced and sustained through certain rituals right from the birth until death.*

This means that an African is a full member of his family-clan. he/ she does not act outside of his/her clan he/she exercise his freedom within the community. From this we can say that the African is a being who is often absorbed by his clan or community because nothing can be performed by the individual that could not have an effect on the family. From what we have just said it seems that the individual cannot take personal initiative. Those who still hold this position are minimising the individuality of the person. The African is an individual considered as a member of a given society.

The Zulus looked at marriage as a community celebration a pact between two families that also strengthens and extended the family relations. Zulu marriage was never seen as a private matter between two individuals, but also as an alliance between the two families. Marriage fulfils the obligation, the duty and the custom that every normal person should get married and bear children. This is believed to go back to the very beginning of human life. Failure to get married is like committing a crime against the Zulu beliefs and practices the person was seen as blocking the channels of life by not participating in the act of child-bearing. It followed naturally that one of the aspiration of the person in community is the procreation of children as the ancestors recommend it.

Procreation is thus a question not only of the individual survival but also for the community. Africans in general would not conceive of a marriage taking place at precise moment but as a process. Before this process can come to conclusion, one of its capital stages is the verification of its fertility i.e. the conception and bringing to birth of a child.

²⁶ Hata Tsinda M'sanda., "*African Marriage: Personal and Communitarian*" in *Afer.* Vol 23, Feb-

One might say that this is the key element in marriage the ability of the spouses to pass on life to their children. We must note also note that **marriage and procreation** in the Zulu society or among the Africans in general are always a unity which cannot be separated: without procreation marriage is incomplete. Marriage is the uniting link in the rhythm of life: all generations are bound together in the act of marriage: past, present and future generations:

The supreme purpose of marriage according to African peoples is to bear children, to build up a family, extend life and to hand down the living torch of human existence. For that reason, a marriage becomes fully so when one or more children have been born. It is a tragic thing when no children come out of a marriage.²⁷

It was also seen as uniting link in the rhythm of life that is the birth of a new child is born and the death of the old person. The marriage provides for new social relationships to be established between families and relatives involved. It extends the web of kinship socially. Through marriage and childbearing, the parents are remembered by their children when they die. Anyone who dies without leaving a child or close relative to remember him or pour out libations for him is a very unfortunate person.

When a man has finished has completed his work in that he is old and ripe of age, then he is happy because things have gone well with him. He sees that there will be those that will do his work for him (ref. To ritual killing) when he has passed away.²⁸

Therefore marriage is intimately linked with religious beliefs about the continuation of life beyond the grave.

A) Marriage in Africa is linked to Fecundity (child bearing)

The desire for children is often an Absolute for traditional Africa The gospel invites the African today to develop concern for the true education of children. It gives a new impulse to spiritual fecundity; by revealing the fruitfulness of the total gift of self. It highlights the value of the mutual help, support and enrichment of the couple. It calls on the Christian families and couples who experience suffering from sterility, to take up spiritual commitments, because childlessness is a great pain to many Christian couples. As we have seen that great pains were taken to ensure this value was realised by even taking the second

April,1981,p35

²⁷ J, Mbiti., Introduction to African Religion, (Nairobi: Heinemann Educational Books Ltd,1989),p.105

²⁸ Berglund, Axel-Ivar., Zulu Thought-Patterns and Symbolism (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press,1989), p.81

wife. In fact I feel that Christianity has to challenge this thinking the development of mutual help was the first aim in marriage then procreation of children came second. Unity aspect of the marriage bond between the two persons was is to be taught with much care and compassion.

In this part I would like to refer to the intervention of the **African Bishops** at the Synod of 1980 on Family life. Taking into consideration the aspect of fecundity as the essential element in marriage. The pain that many Christians couples experience due to childless and the pressure of the extended family. The Christian ideal of marriage is still a challenge. To be formed into the mind and attitude of Christ.

The Bishops's intervention:

The African Bishops at the Synod asked that married people with a solid and evangelical doctrine by which to learn better what their role is in proclamation. But the emphasis fell almost exclusively on the position of the husband and wife within the extended family and its influence upon them, rather than focusing on the fundamental relationship which should exist between. Similarly **SECAM** made only oblique references to the spouse's mutual relationship while speaking of fecundity. Thus according to **SECAM**, the couple's vocation is to love one another beyond the demands of lineage or the need to continue the family line. While the gospel reveals the value of a spiritual fecundity which lives in total gift of self and is expressed in mutual support and the couple's enrichment.²⁹

Zulu people say that marriage is the measure against the lost immortality which is talked about in so many traditional myths. Through marriage the departed are in effect reborn not in their total being but having some of their physical features and characteristics or personality traits reborn in the children of the family. If no children were born in the family these traits and personality would not be seen in the family. While death takes people away individuals one by one and disperses them, the purpose of marriage is to bring people together to increase them to keep them alive. This is another challenging aspect for Christian to evangelise the African Marriage. Helping the couples to understand that life is a gift from God, they participate in it by making the right decision in relation to the procreation of life. Its occurrence should not be left to chance or blind fate. The decision that is taken by two who are honest with themselves.

B) The community Dimension

²⁹ Cfr, Marc de Muelenaere., op cit,p.98.

The communitarian nature of marriage emphasises a reciprocal responsibility: those who enter in marriage should be well prepared, they show sign of maturity. A person is not alone or a wandering atom with no links or other institution, he lives and is related in solidarity and in fraternity to those who are conscious of the same ancestry.

Marriage is held in great esteem in the Zulu society and within it spouses find fulfilment and assume responsibility with regard to the fundamental task of providing for the survival of the whole group. Marriage puts the individual and his family on the social, religious and physical map of his community. Everyone recognises that the individual is a full person when he or she is married and has children. The life of the married is bearing children, because these children survive him and remain a constant evidence that their father and mother once existed. The son or daughter subsequently keeps up the memory of the parents. The more children the person has the higher the status in his society. A happy married and family life creates other aspects of marriage such as love, good character, hard work, companionship, caring for one another, parental responsibility towards the children. These are the qualities which grow in marriage. Since this benefits the extended family its members both living and the dead have a stake in marriage and are responsible for it. Marriage then needs more just the consent of the spouses to come into being, since the spouse act as representatives of their families The latter's consent is equally necessary to ensure the success and fruitfulness of the of their union. It follows that these kinsmen have to become personally involved and that their advice and co-operation is essential to the establishment of marriage.

The spouses assume a responsibility not only towards themselves but also with regards to the extended family, while the latter become obliged to be supportive of them. In this way the community is continually built up and strengthened. It provides an opportunity for grace. It is best to highlight the human and Christian value of the community, the aim being that to create an environment of peace and stability to protect the couple's stability and help them during the difficult early years. This can be very effective in a well balanced family solidarity which respects the personal autonomy of the couple and yet calls for a reciprocal sense of spiritual, moral, material support.

C) The Dynamic Process of contracting African marriage

The involvement of the extended family in the African marriage accounts for the fact that marriage is progressive. The progressive nature of marriage does not in any way diminish its seriousness. People participate by actively giving advice and approval by voicing their concern and ideas ensuring that all is done well according to the accepted norm. This accompaniment outlasts the wedding day and is important in the formation of a stable marital relationship. Proper understanding of this important aspect of the people's life. The stages fulfil a specific purpose and are together constitutive of the gradual establishment of the marriage bond. The process gives the spouses and their families a chance to express in public and on several occasion the seriousness of their commitment. With the help of the community to trust one another and to develop an ever deeper personal relationship which will enable them to achieve mutual fidelity. The progressive nature of marriage comes into conclusion in the exchange of gifts.

Christian Marriage.

In this section we would like to look at the Christian understanding of marriage. As above we have looked at the Zulu marriage and the values that underlies it. The Christian marriage takes a certain orientation or direction which is both biblical and theological in the understanding of marriage as monogamous union between the baptised persons. This union expresses a human and divine reality which is endowed with a supernatural power because of its sacramental character at the same time. The bible reflects a notable revolution in the Jewish and Christian understanding of marriage. We can trace marriage from the time when early Israel hardly differed from her pagan neighbours down to the momentous connection made in the letter to the Ephesians between marital love and Christ's self-sacrificing love for those he redeemed.

God deals with human beings in a dialogical process that respects their intelligence or their ability to grasp His revelation. The nature of how He reveals himself throughout time and his intention for the human race. This took time more so with the idea of marriage. Our first

attempt would be to look at the biblical foundations for the understanding of marriage. This is a question that may be very fruitful for our understanding of marriage. Both the Israel's belief that everything was created by Yahweh and the prophetic interpretation of the covenant of grace between God and his people in terms of marital human love, together are seen to reveal the essence of marriage in the form which was pleasing to God.

NT teaching is based upon the sayings of Jesus Christ and Paul's understanding of that teaching. The sacrament of marriage is not based on the actions of Jesus as other sacraments are, it originates from his attitude towards this institution. Jesus did not perform marriages nor did he directly commission his disciple to perform them but he left his followers an attitude which made it a sacred reality. A sign of the power of God's love. Both Christ and Paul did not create a new marriage rite but rather affirmed what was traditionally practised by the Jewish society.. As far as the gospels are concerned, everything Jesus had to say on the subject can be found in two passages of Mark. The parallels in Matthew and Luke add nothing of significance.

In Mark we read 10: 1-12 the controversy between Jesus and the Pharisees. We could draw certain lesson from the statement:

1/ He reiterated the divine hatred for divorce 2/ he went back to the original intention of God. 3/ He confirms the equality of male and female within the institution of marriage. We should note that the rejection was upon divorce not on the point of polygamy. The case put forward by the Saducees on the question of resurrection in terms of the leviratic marriage. He replies them that marriage as a social institution does not persist in the Kingdom of God. In St Paul the teaching on Marriage is based upon two letters *1Cor 7 and Eph 5:22-23.*

In the first letter he stresses the following points:

- a/ Legitimacy of marriage: against the ascetical movements which were condemning it.
- b/ Rights and duties of spouses: How should they behave towards each other.
- C/ Indissolubility of Marriage
- d/ perfect chastity
- e/ Marriage between a believer and a non believer.

The other Pauline statement, relevant to marriage, is to be found in **Eph:**

This is a great foreshadowing (mysterion): I mean that it refers to Christ and the church (Eph 5:22 ff)

love helping each other in their complementarily and reciprocity. Together they become a true image of God's fatherly love and an image at the same time of the covenant of love and fidelity between Christ and the Church. This is a challenge for the African Church in the sense I feel the preparation have not yet been enough in this regard to prepare the faithful who are to be God's sign within the community of believers. I think the stress should be laid on preparing elders within the believing community as a sign of discipleship. The married couple as of consequence to their following of Christ they give their life to one another in marital love.

A Christian couple knew that their marriage was more than just joining themselves to one another person. Their commitment to Jesus made their commitment to each other a sacred reality, symbolised his faithful and enduring love.³¹

The Zulu society understood marriage in a sacred way that those who participated in it had to be prepared by the family. It was a transition from one state to another; it was a sign of maturity. They invoked the ancestors to assist the two individuals who are enjoining themselves in marital state. This presupposed a certain behaviour among themselves they had to act in a certain way in order to accomplish their task and this was not separated from the community, it was done in the community. I think Christianity in Africa will have to take this notion of extended family and lobola as sacred symbols something unique in marriage that the two individuals they are cause of marriage, so they cannot do it alone they need the assistance of the Lord and the fellow community of the members. The role of Lobola is to give dignity to the woman as a sign of appreciation. The question of equality in marriage in the African sense is expressed by the groom to exchange something of great value for the person he will like to devote his life to. Lobola was not payment of the person a sign of appreciation of the upbringing of the person has had especially the cow was given to the mother. The question of thanksgiving seeing marriage as a gift from God to the community through the ancestor who are seen as source of life.

3. Marriage properties: Unity and Indissolubility

To say marriage is a salvific representation of the relationship of Christ and the Church means that the couple have both the power and right to act in a way that is revealed in that relationship which is sustained by love. The Church Fathers taught that marriage is a sacrament this was translated from Greek *Mysterion* (μυστήριον) in the

³¹ Paul. A. Feider., **The Sacraments: Encountering the Risen Lord.** (Notre Dame, Indiana: Ave Maria Press, 1986), p.95

Paul says something directly relating to marriage itself in the perspective of this covenant relationship namely **Love your wives as Christ loved the Church**. Paul expresses his view of a Christian Marriage and that was to be to be an example of Christ's love to the Church. These words, like the prophet affirm the witness value of the two people who faithfully love one another in marriage. His teaching makes us aware that Christians entering the sacrament do so not just for themselves but they also commit themselves for their children and the community showing how much God loves his people They are to be living sacraments, living signs of enduring love so that their witness will bring others to know that they are loved by God.. Marriage gains a deeper dimension from the definitive and perfected covenant.

The biblical foundation has helped the Church in formulating its teaching on Marriage seeing it as a permanent and exclusive bond that cannot be broken easily at the will of the spouses. Marriage is a vocation, a stable and permanent way of life with its basic structure determined by God when He created man and woman . That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united with his wife and they become one. A husband and wife are called to love God through the love they have for each other and for their children. Christ instituted a sacrament of Marriage and He is always present among the couples.

The understanding of marriage as a sacrament, although it took time for the Church to finally to formally acknowledge the sacramental character is not that She was not aware of the sacramental nature of marriage as a means of grace. She had to defend the sacredness of marriage against the prevalent attitudes of the time like Manicheistic tendencies of that. It was only centuries later that She formulated perfectly what thought marriage influenced by the Lord's teaching and her tradition She teaches:

The matrimonial covenant, by which a man and a woman establishes between themselves a partnership for life, is by its nature ordered toward the good of the spouses and the procreation and education of offspring; this covenant between baptised persons has been raised by Christ to the dignity of a sacrament.³⁰

The one vocation of all faithful in Christ is to become ever more a visible sign or image of God's love and to guide others towards the same goal . Marriage as sacrament has to be seen in this light, where the two persons become one flesh in a community of life and

³⁰ Gadium et Spes, no.48

older sense it was taken to be a lifelong commitment. it was something that could not be dissolved since. It involved the personal task to live the marriage commitment in such a way that it could not be broken. The indissolubility of marriage was a task which had to be realised personally. These two vision .i.e. sacramentality and indissolubility are mutually implicit as Catholic recognition of marriage is intimately linked related to the Catholic affirmation of its indissolubility.

Jesus' Teaching on Indissolubility of Marriage

Mt. 19:3-8

Some Pharisees came up to him and said, to test him, *'May a man divorce his wife for his any reason whatever ?'* . Have you not heard that at the beginning. Jesus teaching on marriage went contrary to the expectation of his adversaries. In the context of Jesus responding to his adversaries on the question of divorce. He answers them with a revolutionary statement in a sense we could say the background of this particular society was a Patriarchal the wrong doing was done against the man only not the woman and she was seen as part of the man of his property. Generally it was the woman who is to leave her people. Jesus takes it further it is in this case the man that leaves his family to join his wife cutting all those ties that prevent him from fully loving his wife. He says that the person that divorces his wife commits adultery. In the patriarchal culture, it was unthinkable for a man to commit adultery against himself. He has grown knowing all his life that the offence was done on him, if he was the husband or the father of the girl if she was not married.

Christ reverts the thinking goes back to the original intention of God the **idea of equality**. The original plan of God that He created man and woman in His image and likeness.

Paul's teaching

Paul's teaching on marriage is based on what Christ said about marriage. In it he reiterates or follows Christ's dictum the marriage bond was indissoluble between two baptised persons. We find an exception in the case of two persons one is baptised and the other person is not baptised. The beginnings of a Pauline Privilege the dissolution of a marriage bond but only the initiative of separation be taken by the non believing party. The

believing party has to do all within their power to live in peace with the non-believing spouse not creating havoc in order to dissolve the bond on the ground of faith.

From the statement of Christ the Church's developed the teaching on indissolubility of marriage. The two properties of marriage take on a new meaning or understanding with two baptised persons in a sacramental marriage. Although these two properties cannot be justified on the basis of the sacramental nature of the reality. They are founded on the anthropological character of marriage as such. The act in which the bride and the bridegroom give and receive each other has in itself an inner tendency towards definitiveness and exclusiveness. The marital bond of faithfulness is therefore on the basis of its inner disposition to be definitive and exclusive:

The love of spouses requires, of its very nature, the unity and indissolubility of the spouses' community of persons, which embraces their entire life: So they are no longer two but one. The unity of marriage, distinctly recognised by our Lord is made clear in the equal personal dignity which must be accorded to man and wife in mutual and unreserved affection. Polygamy is contrary to conjugal love which is undivided and exclusive.³²

Although the Zulu marriage is by its very nature progressive, fulfilment of the stages leads to a definitive bond which could not be dissolved. Once the bride was accepted at the husband's home it was very difficult to break the bond. Yet the one of the key points was the ability of the spouses to bear a child. This laid a heavy responsibility on the woman to provide the child. The groom's mother expressed this desire by giving the new bride leather skin for carrying the future child. The whole family was involved in a spirit of understanding for this was a delicate matter also respect on the wife. Failure to bear a child was not the reason traditionally to break the marriage bond. The whole family i.e. of the wife and husband after deliberations it was certified that the wife was unable to bear children, the family elders would gather to discuss in great depth the situation.

The decision to take the second wife for the husband was taken in conjunction with the present wife in finding the person who will bear the husband an heir or child. The thing was that she was not to return home she assumed a new role as the Elder wife she was respected. Normally her younger sister was taken in her place for bearing her a child the child was taken to be her own. They knew that the marriage had the religious sense it was the ancestors who gave life to the couple. The woman was poured gall over her such a union could not be broken for respect of the ancestors to chase the wife away would be

³² Catholic Catechism of the Catholic Church, p.386, 1644-45.

disrespectful of them. She has been loosened from her own her ancestors and was welcomed to this new family although in the normal circumstances she would have given birth.

Divorce and Re-marriage in Zulu Culture

In traditional Zulu marriage divorce was never allowed in any circumstance we could speak of temporary separation due to ill treatment by either of the spouses. It was very difficult to divorce wife whom gall had been poured over her such a union was unbreakable it was there for life. The breaking of marriage bond was signifying failure on both families, it was a thing unheard of among the Zulu society. The failure of the marriage was not taken very lightly it involved the whole family in a serious way as we shall see later.

The role of the Family Elders

Marriage disputes were sorted out through family mediation depending very much on the nature of the offence and also on the one that is guilty. The elders were called in when there was a serious quarrel and family life was bitter in the house. And the two could not live peacefully and one of the partners could call a family meeting to mediate on the situation. The seriousness of the family gathering was signified by the presence of the elders, and they were known to be impartial. They called the two persons to state their case before them to find the guilty party and deal with the person at length. In the Zulu society the elders were very much respected

The sanctity of the marriage was understood as a religious act in communion with God and through the ancestors:

*On the other hand, divorce is almost unknown in Zululand. We can say that the marriage has always been a stable in Zululand, and old records on the Zulu indeed affirm that they were a moral people among whom divorce, adultery illegitimacy was rare Zulu marriage thus constitute a long enduring union between the spouses.*³³

It was not precisely put across in theological terms like in Christian thought. The role of the extended family the uncles on both sides played a major role during the misunderstanding between the two partners. In trying to ascertain the mistake to whom it fell, the elders of the two families came together to discuss the issue at stake. One of the

³³ Max Gluckman., *Kinship and Marriage among the Lozi of Northern Rhodesia and The Zulu of Natal* in **African System of Kinship and Marriage**, A.R. Radcliffe-Brown and Daryll Forde (eds), (London: Oxford University Press,1950),p. 184 ff.

principal help was the **culture of respect** that was instilled on the partners when they were young. The elders would speak to them personally advocating the spirit of forgiveness and understanding. The partners had to listen to the warnings and arbitration of the elders, in which they will be told you can not behave with your wife like that or vice versa. Without any argument modern life had a great influence on the Zulu marriage its stability has been challenged a great deal. The colonial system in South Africa especially in Natal came with many laws which were strange to the Africans;

The Natal Code, Section 163, of 1891: enacts that a husband may sue for a divorce on the ground of: *a) Adultery; b) Continual refusal to render conjugal rights; c) Wilful desertion, Etc. The wife in her case may sue for divorce in the case of impotence and he the man for barrenness.*³⁴

The Zulu people themselves did not have provision for divorce because of the religious understanding of marriage and also the family mediation role of the elders helped very much on the situation before the things turned very sour. They would do everything to prevent the breaking of the bond calling of the families even imposing temporary separation for cooling period and until the one of the spouses come to their senses. The wife moved to her home and this was the indication that she did not come with joy and celebration with the case to put forward to the parents and the family elders.

Re-marriage in Zulu Culture

In the Zulu culture the question of Re-marriage was never an issue in the sense that the people knew that a marriage bond was there for life, it could not be dissolved easily. As we have said above once the bride was received formally at home it was quite difficult to separate that union. It was only in strict cases like in the cases of widows, if there were not taken care by the younger brother. The wife may choose to be married some where else the person will have to start the marriage negotiation with the family of the deceased. They are the ones to receive marriage-cattle. The case of divorce where the person has divorce and re-marries as if for the first time and more so there were children involved. Zulu people they knew that the children belonged to the man who paid the marriage-cattle. The role of family mediation in most cases was there to prevent the break down of marriage. It was seen as a family shame for a wife to come from a marriage the whole family was affected by this wondering what is it that they did not do to help. Corporate guilt they would say what is it

³⁴ Cfr, E.J. Krige, **The Social System of the Zulus**, op.cit.p.157

that we could have done to prevent the marriage break down of this bond. What happens to a family member also happens to the rest with the case of a marriage breakdown. It would be taken as bad luck and the ancestors would have to be invoked to seek the remedy to heal this wound.

6. Polygamy, Leviratic Custom, Inheritance of Widows

6.1. Polygamy

Technically the term Polygamy should mean what its Greek components imply, and that is, marrying "*marrying*" (*many, wives, husbands or times*). *When speaking of Polygamy this is a general term which anthropologists says it refers to the situation of either of the partners i.e. male and female having more than one partner at the same time.* The precise term which seems to fit well the African situation will be **Polygny**. A situation which a man has more than one wife living with him at the same time. They maybe married successively in stages. The Zulu customary marriage was an open ended union in the sense it allowed culturally a man to have a second wife while he was still living with first wife. This has been a point of departure between the Christian situation and the African persons whom canonically were considered inadmissible to the sacramental life of the church. Once the person cannot be administered the sacrament of Baptism he/she is automatically cut off from the other sacraments. This has been the position of the Church in meeting the African society. The question of polygamy and marriage by stages has been a sore point for the teaching on monogamous union in Africa. In trying to fully grasp the situation as practised by the traditional Zulu people. There were certain conditions to be fulfilled. To say that Africans are by nature polygamous is erroneous shows a lack of sufficient understanding of the people's marriage system.

The biblical background to the Church's condemnation of polygamy was based on the evolutionary understanding of a monogamous union which was a lifelong commitment which could not be broken. In a sense it renders the new one null and void. The O.T's teaching did not explicitly condemn the practice since the Patriarchs themselves practised it. Although there is no proof whether the people of their time approved of it. Clearly the

Israelite did not deem it wrong to have more than one wife. However as time passed, monogamy did in practice become customary among the Jewish. It seems clear, too that the Jewish Ideal of marriage as a covenant relationship between a couple who are truly partners could only be fully realised in monogamy.

During the N.T. there was no clear reference of anyone with more than one wife. Although St Paul advises that a bishop should be a man who was Faithful to one wife (1Tim 3:2 and Titus.1:6) Here Paul was emphasising the importance of fidelity between marriage partners. Here Paul urged the people to have the mind of Christ and that his attitude conformed to the Father's will the original intention the Father had for the marriage union. He gave no explicit teaching on polygamy. It could be that it was no longer practised by the Jewish people. However we may appreciate his attitude towards the institute:

*The central teaching about marriage which we find in the New Testament is that it is a relationship in which the two partners share equal rights and duties.*³⁵

The Zulu people on the issue of marriage they were very serious to those who took upon themselves this life style. When the community and the family elders felt that the person was already married; and tried to take the second wife and was already showing signs of failure with the first wife. He is unable to manage the family. The family elders would not grant his request. It was a serious issue to take the second wife not all the people were allowed to take another wife. The behaviour counted very much this was an essential issue was the person able to manage himself well failure to do so this constituted an impediment. Another thing was the economic status did he have enough to feed the families of the wives:

*In traditional Africa in most societies one did not lightly become a polygynist. To the reason already mentioned must be added economical ones among others, for numerous offspring was the guarantee of a numerous workforce for better chance of survival. This required, apart from the consent of the first wife essential many traditions that the husband had to be an experienced person able to assume responsibility for many households. Without such a maturity and the necessary means required, he exposed himself to ridicule and contempt of his family and clan.*³⁶

³⁵ Adrian Hastings., Christian Marriage in Africa. (Abridged Edition),(Malawi: Uzima Press Limited,1974),p.23.

³⁶ Benezet, Bujo., African Christian Morality,p.111.

When speaking of polygamy one has to consider the social situation in which this kind of a practice was sanctioned by the society. The cultural aspect that upheld the institution so in the sense that positive values were developed against the marriage irregularities like divorce were non-existent at all like in the Zulu culture. Protecting the value of the women from prostitution. I think also in holding the ideal situation of a monogamous family as the Christian stipulates takes time in which the sense of mercy and justice to deal with the polygamous man at the catechetical level delaying the sacrament to a later stage of his life and help him come to the person of Christ, he would follow and letting him know that there are certain requirements expected of each individual. In a way we can say the traditional provided the means for polygamous family one could say only the rich were allowed many wives. What about the present time economic hardships. The Christian ideal of marriage should be taught without fear: the original intention of God was one person one wife. This is a challenge to the society although the practice may go down but the tendencies may still continue in form of concubinage with the desire of securing of a child. Going back to the African value of appreciating the gift of child bearing from God. The Christian has to add more to this gift does not depend on us. A new catechism for our African couples help them to appreciate and develop other values of marriage the unitive aspect who have to bear the cross of being the laughing stock of their neighbour bearing the burden with dignity.

A new understanding has to first appreciate the value for marriage as the Zulu appreciated it. Our part to visit those values like the importance of our ancestors to the proposal of **Christ as Proto-Ancestor**, a founder of a new family and clan which is the Christian Church:

If this Proto-Ancestor has come to procure life for us a life to the full and if he has made his mission concrete by his solidarity with the weak and marginalised to the point of emptying himself. In Africa in particular, sterility and impossibility to beget can now be seen in a new light of this event of salvation, if we are to be genuine Christians.³⁷

6.2 Leviratic Custom

³⁷ Idid, p. 109

The custom of inheriting a wife of a deceased brother is fairly common among the African peoples. Brother it should be understood to mean not only the son of one's mother but any other close relative. We have pointed earlier on that a person has literary hundreds of brothers due to extensive kinship system found in most African societies. The brother who inherits the wife of the brother performs all the duties of a husband and father. The children born after this inheritance are known or rather belong to the dead. They can inherit what the man owned while he was alive even many years after his death. If the deceased had children with the living wife it was arranged for her the brother he takes care of her. This was done with her consent, she be taken by the brother of the deceased and the elders of the family intervened in the situation to see that the right person was appointed by the family not just a man out of lust may pretend to be the caretaker whilst he knows what he wants. This was what was referred *as raising the seed to his brother by his widow*. First of all the woman had to be cleansed traditionally from mourning her deceased husband after a while when she was released from her husband she was ready to be married by the brother or choose to marry someone else. Theological analyses of this practice puts its at a disadvantage due to canon:

1092# Affinity in the direct line in any degree whatsoever invalidates matrimony.³⁸

6.3. Inheritance of widows

The spirit of inheriting a widow was done in good faith the society was concerned with the well of the person after the death of her loved one. Given the fact that the widow maybe a young woman the family of the deceased did not want to finish the relationship with the death of one of the spouse in this it was the husband. The people had a deep understanding of marriage it had a religious overtone. The continuance of life in those who are alive the brother takes care of the of his brother's wife. It was not much in the sense of inheriting it was in the understanding of taking care of her well-being. A grasp of what the African mean by marriage and we have looked at this above:

According to authentic African tradition, a human being is not an isolated wandering atom with no constitutive links to other persons or communities .³⁹

³⁸ CIC,1092

³⁹ M'sanda,ibid, p35

The African people were pushed by this love of their to take care of their weak members. In the sense that widow was not forced to be inherited by the man it was done with great dignity. Feeling her situation it was not a normal thing to do the person alone as if she has no links or no where to go.

The elders in fact were the ones who decided who should inherit the widow there were qualities that they looked for in the person. His conduct counted very much and if he is already married how is he behaving with the wife that he already has.

Concluding Remarks

Our problem in the whole essay was to look or rather to examine Zulu customary marriage in relation to Christian Marriage. To do this we had to resort to anthropological studies in order to examine and uncover the values appreciated by the Zulu people. According to what I found in essence is that Zulu marriage is not totally incompatible with the Christian marriage only the few areas because due to a certain understanding of marriage as one of its primary aim was procreation. The need to insure the birth of a child it was out this that the man was polygamous. I feel that the Church has great role in catechising and instilling Christian ideals of marriage in view of building up on those values that we have looked at. The Church to teach the sacramental marriage building on the values that they found in the culture already. The elements were the indissolubility of the marriage bond. The appreciation that was given to the woman not as a property that could be exchanged for a number of heads of cattle on her .

As we have seen in details that marriage as a natural institution among the Zulu was a partnership that was made for life. It was the among the primary intention between the persons who got married. It is these values that I feel the Christian teaching on marriage has the power to challenge this type of marriage in to make pure. The elements are already there they need to be purified further. To teach the Christians in being signs and elders within the Christian community.

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