

CONTEXTUAL FAMILY THERAPY AND COUNSELLING FOR MARRIAGE AND
FAMILY LIFE AMONG THE TRADITIONAL GUMUZ AND
THE GUMUZ CHRISTIANS OF THE ETHIOPIAN
EVANGELICAL CHURCH MEKANE YESUS (THE EECMY).

by

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BA (Hons)

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
OF MASTER OF THEOLOGY (MTh) IN THE SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY, UNIVERSITY
OF NATAL, PIETERMARITZBURG.

NOVEMBER 1996

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the whole of this thesis unless specifically indicated to the contrary in the text, is my original work.

Signed .. *Jabana*

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my parents; my mother Kanatu Damera who died in 1989, and my father Gobana Sarda who died in 1996.

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ABSTRACT

The Gumuz society in Ethiopia has been neglected and almost forgotten by the previous rulers of Ethiopia. It is not surprising therefore to see that the majority of the population of Ethiopia have no knowledge about the Gumuz society. This society was not exposed to education until the arrival of the missionaries at the end of 1950's. When Christianity was introduced, the Church did not do enough in helping Christians to distinguish between the Gumuz traditional and the Christian marriage practices, the former which denies some male members of the community the possibility of getting married.

Marriage is contracted by exchanging girls. Thus, unless a man has a sister to exchange he is not going to get married. There is an assumption that a man may get a girl from one of his extended families, but that is not always possible. He may or may not get a girl. Therefore the man will end up without getting married. The introduction of Christianity made it possible for every member of the Gumuz people to get married by allowing them to marry from the neighbouring tribes. However, it introduced another side effect. Christians were not able to differentiate between the Gumuz traditional and Christian marriage practices. This dissertation studies the traditional and the Christian marriage practices of the Gumuz society and of the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (the EECMY).

According to the Gumuz society, marriage is believed to be (*Okka*) God given. To get married is to obey *okka*, to accept what God has given, and to have as many children as possible in order to increase the population of the Gumuz tribe. Failure to get married is a crime against traditional beliefs and practices.

Furthermore, this dissertation provides the way the Gumuz society understands divorce. Among the Gumuz society divorce does not concern only one family. Both family members and extended families are affected. Since marriage is performed as indicated earlier on by exchanging girls, if a person divorces his wife he has to expect that his sister will divorce her husband which will disturb the whole extended family relationships. Realizing the risk, every married persons in the Gumuz society is conscious about divorce. This attitude brings the rate of divorce to a low level.

This dissertation sees the need for counselling and appeals for a therapeutic approach by putting emphasis on contextual family therapy, a therapeutic process which is constructed with maximal concern for its relevance to the cultural context in which it occurs. For example, the problems related to exchanging girls, marriage between the Gumuz and the neighbouring tribes, the issue of divorce, and so forth, are not problems which can be discussed only with individuals or a family member, it needs the inclusion of extended families as well as multigenerational processes.

This therapeutic process is capable of providing a contextual approach by looking at the system of the family. I recommend the therapists to have a grounding in the general principle of family life and to get familiar with the way families operate as a social system. The dissertation hopes to create awareness among therapists with basic theories of family systems which enable them to get knowledge of a causes for dysfunctional behaviour within the families, and to equip them with therapeutic skill. This is paramount.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My sincere thanks and gratitude are due to all students and the manager at the Lutheran students residence at 29 Golf Road Pietermaritzburg, Margaret Reynolds for proof reading the manuscripts and Arden Strasser for the final lay-out of the thesis.

I am particularly indebted to Miss Edwina Ward who selflessly offered herself to supervise my work. I acknowledge her scholarly thoughts and guidance which greatly helped me during my research and writing.

My special thanks to the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (the EECMY), for the study-leave she granted me and for recommending me to receive the scholarship, and to the Lutheran World Federation for granting me the scholarship. Finally, but not least, I owe special thanks to my beloved wife Bethlehem G/Mariam and our children: Ruth, Saron, Henok, Nahom, Tsion, and Jedidiah, for their special support and for taking on the burden of separation due to my further studies in South Africa.

Pietermaritzburg, November 1996.

CHAPTER ONE

1. Introduction.

Towards the end of the 1950s there was a great increase in modern influence upon the Gumuz people of Ethiopia. They have experienced the consequences of foreign political, religious, and cultural influence plus various other factors which have shaken the foundation of community life. There resulted a widespread disintegration of the relationship between parents and children. Many factors in the process of cultural change have already attracted the attention of sociological enquirers. Above all, there is one particular field of investigation which must receive the special attention it demands, namely the effects of modern contacts on the Gumuz marriage customs and the family system.

The family is the most important feature of any African society, and the process of disintegration is nowhere more apparent than in this central institution. The process of development of any society's life will depend to a large measure upon the successful maintenance of the solidarity of the family unit in the course of the modification of its role under modern conditions. Within this general setting of the problem, it is important to note that foreign influence is sometimes ill-adjusted to the Gumuz customary law in relation to marriage and kindred matters. There is a great problem in the rules made by indigenous rulers and in the practice of marriage contract with respect to marital issues. Large Christian populations and the Christian Churches themselves suffer exceptional difficulty owing to the fact that the law regulating the status of persons contracting marriages under Christian rites often pays insufficient regard to the conditions of Gumuz social life.

For an adequate understanding of the urgency and character of practical steps desirable to secure the orderly development of the Gumuz family life, an inclusive assessment of the present position is required. Such an appraisal demands, in the first

place, an impartial survey of the very considerable material of scattered and largely unassimilated material on the sociological, legal, administrative and religious aspects of this problem. It is accordingly proposed that an investigation needs to be undertaken of the effect of modern contacts on Gumuz marriage custom and the maintenance of family life. This should include a particular study of the influence exerted by the neighbouring societies. But the question is, who will take the initial responsibility to rescue the Gumuz society from the dysfunctional marital and family life? Let me quote a statement of Jesus Christ and see the objectives of his mission.

Jesus says:

"The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me,
because the Lord has anointed me to
bring good tidings to the afflicted;
he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,
to proclaim liberty to the captives,
and the opening of the prison to those
who are bound; to proclaim the year of
the Lord's favour, and the day of vengeance
of our God; to comfort all who mourn;"

(Luke 4:18-19, referring to Isaiah 61:1-3)

Jesus applied this to himself. God called Jesus Christ to deliver his people. In the same manner in which God sent Jesus Christ to deliver his people and Moses to deliver the people of Israel from the bondage of Egyptian slavery, he also called the missionaries to deliver the Gumuz society from poverty, lack of education, lack of proper medical service, and from spiritual darkness. After the missionaries introduced the above mentioned basic needs including Christianity, some of the Gumuz Christians were not able to differentiate between the Christian marriage and the customary marriage.

As God called Moses to help the people of Israel when they had problems in the wilderness, today the challenge is on the shoulders of each one of us. There is a need to help this society differentiate between the customary and Christian

marriage practices. The marriage and family life of this society is complicated because of its culture and traditional development. In order to help it to differentiate between the customary marriage and the Christian marriage, counselling needs to be introduced. This will help us to make an assessment of some of the theories of family, and contextual family therapy. Contextual family therapy is developed in such a way that it coincides with, and honours, the past generations. This is because the problem of the traditional Gumuz society is not a recent development, it has a long historical background.

Therefore the concept of family and family therapy as a system, particularly with an emphasis on a "circular" rather than a "linear" model, led a number of therapists to clarify, consolidate, and contrast their methods (Gurman & Kniskern 1981:159). This paper will not compare the specific methods, but will attempt to investigate the theory of "family therapy and contextual family therapy", which was clarified by therapists, such as Gurman and Kniskern (1981), Nagy, Geraldine, and Spark (1973), Goldenberg (1985), Minuchin (1974), and others.

There will also be an investigation of Gurman and Kniskern's assessments of the theory, which has an explanation of family therapy. I will then describe some of the terms which are also associated with contextual family therapy. To enable therapists to render their therapeutic assistance, the therapists need to know the person's traditional and cultural behaviour. To utilize the contextual family therapy methodology, since we are focusing on the Gumuz society, it is wise for the therapists to know the Gumuz society, and the pattern of its traditional marriage and of the Christian marriage. Therefore, this dissertation will inquire into the traditional marriage practices and modern Christian marriage practices with special reference to the Gumuz society. It is obviously impossible for this short dissertation to represent adequately a wide area of information and experiences. As mentioned above, the aim of the dissertation is to introduce contextual family therapy and counselling for the

traditional and the Christian marriage contract and marriage practices among the Gumuz society.

1.1 Limitations

This dissertation embodies five chapters, of which the first is the introduction. In this chapter, I will introduce the Gumuz society with a brief description of the geographical, cultural and historical background. I shall also include the motivation and the methodology I am intending to follow. I am referring to the geographical and historical background, because a therapist who wants to render therapeutic assistance, has to know the background of those whom he/she wants to assist. In chapter two I will attempt to trace the background of the traditional Gumuz society's understanding of marriage, since the objective of the thesis focuses on marital counselling. Chapter three will observe the development of how the Gumuz Christians are handling marriage and its practices after accepting Christianity as their religion. After investigating the traditional and Christian marriage practices and some of its consequences, chapter four will introduce the therapeutic method of contextual family therapy to assist the marriage and the family life of the Gumuz society.

I will try to describe the theory in terms of Ethiopian context specially referring to the Gumuz Christians. Hopefully at the end of this attempt the concept of contextual family therapy will be understood as an important therapy useful to maintain the family life of the Gumuz Christians effectively. Chapter five will be the conclusion.

1.2 Motivation

Before the Marxist regime came to power in Ethiopia in 1974, I had a dream to write down the anthropological background of the Gumuz society. My main concern was the historical, sociological, cultural, and ritual ceremonies which used to take place during some events in the life of individuals, in the families, and in the community. However during the Marxist regime, since there was religious persecution in the country, it happened that I was

jailed. Due to the imprisonment, my house was searched by the security and police officers, which led to the disappearance of my research paper from my house. It was never returned. This caused me to wonder why they did not return it after I was released. Secondly, the anthropological, sociological, political, economic, religious, and some other accounts of the African tribes have been written by many African, European, and South and North American scholars. I only know one person, a Swede, who has made an anthropological study of the Gumuz tribe, in the Swedish language. Surprisingly, not even the missionaries have written anything.

This tribe is one of the Nilotic tribes which was forgotten and neglected by the Ethiopian rulers and even subjected to slavery until the arrival of missionaries. In order to preserve some of the cultural, economic, political, and religious practices something needs to be done; this is my contribution towards that. Another thing is, since the counselling system was not developed, after the introduction of Christianity, those who became Christians continued with the traditional marriage practices. Polygamy, divorce, marriage by elopement, pregnancy before marriage, is still the practice. The Gumuz society is similar to most African societies. It has some important cultural practices which can be contextualized and can be implemented in the Christian tradition. But now there is no clear demarcation between the traditional and Christian Gumuz society's marriage practices. Therefore these and some other reasons which will be explained later motivated me to do research on marriage and family counselling which could be applied to the family system in this society, and if possible to propose how to contextualize the traditional and the Christian marriage practices. All these factors motivated me to write something related to this tribe to introduce it to the rest of the world.

1.3 Methodology

This thesis will adopt two forms. As mentioned above, since no one has attempted to write anything related to this tribe, there exists no document to refer to. Since I was born and brought up in this tribe, the first part of my research will depend much more on my personal experience. The second part will depend much more on accounts or books written on African traditional and contemporary Christian marriages and families, counselling, religious aspects, cultural aspects, anthropological and sociological aspects. I have discovered that these authors have preserved the history of Africa and Africans in all aspects.

1.4 Anticipated problems

Generally I have anticipated two problems. As I mentioned in my methodological approach, since no one has written anything related to this tribe, there exists no literature to refer to. Also I am very far from the Gumuz society to use anthropological methods, such as, interviews, field work and questionnaires.

1.5 A brief geographical and historical background of the Gumuz society.

Ethiopia is a very old country situated in north-east Africa. It is generally known as the " horn " of Africa, because of the horn shaped tip of the continent that marks off the Red Sea from the Indian ocean. Its neighbouring countries are the Sudan in the west and north, Kenya in the south, Somalia in the south-east, Djibouti in the east, Eritrea in the north, with the Red Sea in the north-east and north.

Ethiopia has been known by the name of Abyssinia, originated from the name " Habashat ", one of the tribes that occupied the Ethiopian kingdom before the period of Christianity (Zewde 1991:1).

Like many other African countries, Ethiopia accommodates nationalities speaking many languages. Linguists have classified these languages into four groups, three of them

tracing a communal lineage to an original dialect named proto-Afroasiatic. From this parent language sprang not only the languages spoken in Ethiopia, but also a number of languages spoken in the northern half of Africa and in south western Asia.

The three language groups of the proto-Afroasiatic family spoken in Ethiopia are known as Cushitic, Omotic, and Semitic. The Semitic languages are the most recent. The fourth group of languages belongs to an independent family of tribes known as Nilo-Saharan, one of them is the Gumuz tribe. The Nilo-Saharan are situated in a more or less continuous line along the western fringes of the country. Further south in one of the provinces called Matakka in western Gojjam, we find the Gumuz, and they spill over into the adjoining region of Wollega, one of the provinces. The southern end of the Nilo-Saharan passageway is composed of the Majangir tribe, on the escarpment leading from the Oromo-dwelling highlands to the Baro plateau, and the Anuak and Nuer tribes, who dwell in the plains (Zewde 1991:5).

The western border of the country following the same route to the northern province is the home of the Gumuz which used to be called Benishangul, and Benishangul used to represent this area and the area next to the Sudan. The people who lived there used to be called " *SHANQELLA (SHANQILA, SHANGALLA)*". This name is an Amharic expression employed in a negative way to characterize the Hamitic-Nilotic citizens with dark skins, thicker lips, and kinkier hair, in general the name agreed upon to call people with negroid characteristics apart from the other tribes living in the country. They were characterized as " *SLAVES* " (*BARYA*), by invaders on both sides of the Sudan - Ethiopian fringe. Several Benishangul and other Nilotic peoples were transported to the governmental seat as bond servants, since the slave trade was a commerce to people in these countries of Ethiopia and the Sudan (Prouty & Rosenfeld 1994:275).

From November 1991, Ethiopia has been divided into 12 self-governing regions, and region six (6) is situated to the east of

the boundary with Sudan. (see map of Ethiopia - Appendix 1). Region six includes the Gumuz, Koma, Berta, North Mao, and Shinasha tribe (Africa South of the Sahara 1995:374).

Gumuz society is one of the forgotten Nilotic tribes in Ethiopia. Research is still needed to determine the tribe's origin, but the tribe claims to be descended from the southern Sudan, and it occupies the lowland as well as some parts of the highland.

Since the society was considered to be subhuman by the previous kings and rulers, its people were forced to occupy the valley and the lowland. As mentioned above, the people were sold by slave traders from the Sudan and neighbouring tribes, such as the Oromo and Amhara tribes of Ethiopia. However, this was subsequently forbidden by the late king of Ethiopia, Haile Selasie. Until the arrival of missionaries at the end of the 1950's, there was no real infrastructure between the Gumuz tribe and the central government. One contact which existed via the tax collectors who were sent by the government to the people to collect taxes. There were no necessary developmental organizations, such as schools, hospitals, and other similar institutions.

While the lowland and the valley in the western and northern part of the country originally belonged to the Gumuz society and other Nilotic tribes, recently some neighbouring tribes have invaded this area, forcing the Nilotic tribes to leave their home land and go as far as the Sudanese border. This is in brief the geographical and the historical background.

1.6 The cultural background.

Like other tribes of Africa, Gumuz society has its own culture, custom, beliefs, and traditions. The belief of the tribe is centred in God, God who is a sky God whose eyes are the moon and the sun. This God is believed to be the creator. Besides God, the society believes in spirits of trees, rivers, mountains,

hills, stars, rainbows, and of some animals. These spirits take care of the trees, rivers, mountains, hills, stars, rainbows, animals and humankind. The traditional society depends on hunting, fishing, and agriculture for survival. The main crops are corn (maize), sorghum, millet and cotton. The society eats meat, fish and vegetables. Since the area is in the lowland and savanna grassland, there are many diseases which kill domestic animals, thus only some of these are bred, such as goats, sheep, chickens and dogs. To cultivate the land the people use hand hoes and digging tools. Ploughing with cattle and machinery was foreign to Gumuz society until the arrival of missionaries around the end of the 1950's. The staple food of the society is porridge called *INGA*.

Gumuz society is divided into clans, with many different kinships and lineages. Traditionally this tribe is trying to make itself superior to other tribes. The tribe does not allow the daughters and sons of its society to be married to those of other tribes.

The tribe has its own language, and use the Amharic script which is the script of the national language of the country Amaringa.

Having said this I shall now try to describe the traditional understanding of marriage and the modern or Christian marriage practices among the Gumuz society.

CHAPTER TWO

2. Aspects of marriage in the traditional Gumuz society.2.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with the understanding of marriage in traditional Gumuz society. In it I shall attempt to relate some of its trends to a number of social features also found in other tradition of some African countries. The primary focus will be to describe the historical views of marriage, the process of marriage, the marriage ceremony, and deal with problems which can disrupt the marriage life such as polygamy, divorce and so forth. Finally I will examine the influence of religion, law and society on the traditional marriage.

2.2 Marriage2.2.1 Definition of marriage.

There are many varieties of marriage practices in Africa as well as Western Europe. Marriage includes a variety of kinship relations, rituals, moral attitudes and social responsibilities. Ables and Brandsma define marriage as a relationship which moves from an extreme, preoccupation period to a problem-solving one. This includes the spouses' capability to adjust, and ensure that they are obliged to each other in a long-lived affiliation (1977:2). In agreement with Ables and Brandsma, Cunard states that in marriage partners must please each other's biological, emotional and existential wants for loving, intimacy, security and interdependence and in so doing strengthen their own self esteem and security. But he is uncertain about the stability of marriage. He believes that there is no regular or normal marriage, as marriages are in a state of fluctuation; adapting, developing and maturing. He argues that married people can become happy or unhappy in different circumstances. Some wives and husbands are similar, but some are not. What makes one spouse incompatible makes the other compatible. Happiness in marriage depends on people's aims, wants, values and fears (1982:8).

Hastings also indicates another definition of marriage. For him, marriage is the union, intentionally performed by man and woman for the purpose of procreation and rearing children and mutual companionship and assistance (1973:28). In African traditional societies the stress is laid in marriage upon the producing of children rather than upon the inter-personal relationship.

Hastings points out that the propagatory purpose of marriage has been seen much more in relationship to the wider unit—the "extended family" (parents, children, grand parents) or lineage towards ensuring the continuity of clan and village (1973:28). From this understanding he draws some points: a) When planning whom and when the young persons are to marry, the senior member of the kindred is consulted; b) There are clear rules as to which kindred children of the union will belong since marriage links people of two different kindred; c) For the member who is taken from the family there are some ways of compensating the other kindred; d) As marriage is related so closely to the continuance of society, childlessness is particularly serious and may be provided against institutionally; e) As the production of as many children as possible is a primary aim, and the contribution of women to society is seen above all from this point of view, the presence of unmarried women in a group would be anomalous and, where there is a majority of marriageable women, some measure of polygamy is likely to prevail (1973:28).

Thus for Hastings marriage is seen more in terms of the group than of nuclear family. In many cases the choice of the partner is made largely by parents or other senior relations; the marital transfer of cattle or other goods is of great importance among many people; that childlessness was often a reason for either taking a second wife or for dissolving the first marriage; that polygamy is still widely practised and still more widely admired, being indeed the norm for the powerful and the rich. Hastings argues that the above mentioned characteristics of traditional marriage in Africa are also characteristic of

traditional marriage in Europe and other parts of the world. For instance he found out that the young from the upper class in England had very little say as to whom they were to marry for many centuries. Marriage was not intended for inter-personal love but it was for the continuance of the lineage and the accumulation of property. The bridewealth of Africa is equal to the "weotuma" of the ancient English which continued after they become Christians. Hastings continues and asserts that in the fifteenth century wife purchase was still practised in Denmark, and was succeeded by customs of dowry and property settlement, which continued until the nineteenth century (1973:29).

Without my going further with this, one can see that there are similarities between African and European traditional marriage practices. As a matter of fact, as Christianity has struggled with traditional African marriage, it had also struggled with and modified traditional European marriage for many years past. As in other societies, marriage in Africa is probably the most important public event in common life (Moyo 1992:52). African marriage comes into being through a series of meetings and negotiations between the two families and through ceremonies.

2.2.2 Historical view point

According to Cunard after the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in Europe and America, marriage was viewed by the society as an institution of property, in which a girl was obliged to stay at home and await marriage which would be supervised by her father. A custom of presentation or dowry was a normal transaction which took place between the parents of the bride and the bridegroom. Social restrictions limited the choices of young people and made them wait for marriage to be approved by parents. Strict moral codes were propounded wherein sexual purity of the woman was sought and valued. Thus, marriage remained an institution which was established according to a social and economic rationale. This tradition did not last long, as a new concept of marriage evolved with the industrial revolution which brought a change in society. There was a

paradigm shift from rural to urban settings. Increasingly skill was more admired than strength and was socially valued (1982:7).

According to Paolino and McCrady there was male domination in this traditional "agrarian society". However this rural agricultural society has now given way to the equality of the industrial society. The spouses were being socialised by their family to fit the traditional roles of husband and wife, but now improvements in communication and the increase in mobility has placed an irreversible pressure on traditional marriage.

The paradigm shift of traditional marriage began in the 1960's when the struggle for liberation of women and all the oppressed people started. The issue of freedom for blacks and women, sanctions on sexuality, lack of control by parents and so forth caused the loosening of the rules which regulates many people in traditional marriages (Paolino and McCrady 1978:5). These authors also understand that the philosophy in which individuals were anxious about their own achievement was generated in 1970's. This obligation to the self which was once regarded to be selfish had now been given the new name of self-actualization with parents losing the right to control their children (1978:5). This was a change which was also identified by Mace and Mace (1976:4). For Mace and Mace marriage, which was considered to be disciplinarian, very institutionalized, strict, customary, very ritualistic and patriarchal, has changed from its traditional form to the modern form which upholds self-actualization as its aim (1976:4).

2.3 Understanding of marriage

2.3.1 African perspective.

Generally speaking, societies have certain laws or norms which regulate sexual practices. Many African communities including Gumuz regard sex as the most important element in marriage and therefore priority is placed on virginity. Usually in the Gumuz society, girls at marriage are expected to be virgins and are rewarded for it. This was observed widely by Ayisi where he

points out that in some African countries mothers are rewarded if their daughter is found to be virgin. The bride bleeding and soiling the bed at the first intercourse is indicative of the girl's virginity. It has become rare today because pre-marital sexual intimacy is no longer discouraged in many African countries. There is a prohibition on sexual intercourse before initiation for girls. Besides this, sexual intercourse between the nearest kin is also prohibited. There are rules which prescribe the social boundaries within which sexual intercourse is regarded as incestuous. This encourages exogamy (marriage outside of kin). For Ayisi the relationships within which sexual intercourse is not permitted or is considered incestuous are those of parents and child or brother and sister (1972:6).

Marriage is the means by which a man and woman come together to form a union for the purpose of procreation which is the focus of African marriage. From this stand marriage without children will be meaningless. To avoid disruption certain requirements have to be followed to legalize marriages. Otherwise in the process of seeking children, husbands will divorce their wives. Ayisi points out that in many African societies, all unions between men and women are legalized by the exchange of gifts and payments in kind by the groom's people to the bride's people (1972:7).

Ayisi argues that there are three important aspects of marriage which are of great significance. The first one is where the couple live. A marriage known as *matrilocal* or *Uxorilocal* requires the man to go and stay with his wife's people and work for his parents-in-law. Sometimes there is a situation which forces the wife to go and stay with the future husband's people and this is called *patrilocal* or *virilocal*. When the partners prefer to stay on their own it is called *neolocal*. Secondly marriage grants specific rights to the wife and parallel ones to the husband. The man acquires rights after he has performed all the necessary customs or presentations and they are divided into two parts. The first one is rights in uxorem. This means he has

a right over a woman as a sexual and domestic partner, and secondly, rights in geneticem, the rights over a woman as a mother. This obliges the man to feed and protect the children and the wife. The third aspect is the marriage between families, that is between the two persons and the relatives of the immediate partners which is called *affinity*. Since everyone is involved in this marriage to maintain the solidarity of the relationship special rules of conduct are expected between affine and in some cases a discreet social distance is maintained (1972:8&9).

The African marriage patterns are oriented to the lineal (extended) family. They are dynamic, diachronic, and the consent of partners is made as members of a group. There is growing stability in the union of marriage for which children are essential. Otherwise there would be dissolution of the union or the introduction of polygamy. There is less equality between the partners, recognition of dissolubility; polygamy often is seen as the ideal, and is generally permitted and even encouraged even by the women involved in the union themselves. Another point of difference between the Western and African concepts and practices of marriage according to Owan is the stress on the four main composed principles of the African family: the prohibition of sexual intercourse between two persons closely related; the tracing of descent of the parents and children; the residence of either one or both of the spouses with the parents before, during or after marriage, and the fact of male domination (Sept 1995:8-9).

2.3.2 The Gumuz perspective.

In Gumuz traditional society, marriage is believed to be God given. Being married is to obey God, to accept what God has given, and to have as many children as possible in order to increase the population of the Gumuz tribe. Mbiti points out that marriage has several meanings and purposes. Marriage fulfils the obligation, the duty, and the custom that every normal person should get married and bear children. Failure to

get married is like committing crime against traditional beliefs and practices. It is a uniting link in the rhythm of life. All generations are bound together in the act of marriage (1975:104).

This has also been stated by ma Mpolo and De Sweemer. They point out that it is expected that the sexual relationship between husband and wife will result in the procreation of children. The fact that in every society the children are taken care of proves the importance of children, not only because of the natural relationships that exist, but also because of the need for the survival of the group. From a biblical perspective the function of procreation commended to the family reflects the image of God in men and women and also the commission that God gave them to fill the earth and subdue it (Gen.1:26-28), (1987:4).

It means that procreation is not only a biological function for the human race to continue, but also a spiritual function by which the person collaborates with God in the continued creation of life in this world. Marriage is also the union, the coming together of two different families as well as clans into a new relationship, creating a new lineage of kinship. It is compulsory and normal for everybody to be married. This is not a temporary matter. It is a life long institution. There is an understanding from the Gumuz that, let alone human beings, even animals can not live without the intimacy of sex. Therefore marriage is one of the most important relationships which God created for human beings.

Anyone who is not married among the Gumuz is believed to be breaking God's law. If a person acts against the will of God, the ancestral spirits will be angry. There is also a belief that if a person is not interested in marriage he or she might have been cursed by one of his family members. If any of his/her family members did not curse him/her, it may be that either his/ her mother or father was cursed and this might have appeared in their child transgenerationally. To sort out the

matter and enable the person to marry, elderly people from the family, the abstainers, and the parents discuss and resolve the problem. Whatever the problem may be, it must be sorted out. If it is the problem of "lobola" (the Zulu bride price), it is the responsibility of the family, and they will be urged to do the best they can. If the case is related to curses and ancestral spirits, the ritual ceremony will be performed to release the person from the curse or from whatever the problem may be. When marriage is taking place among the Gumuz society, it is the union between the two families and the clans as well. Clans which might have been far apart appear to be coming together and forming a new covenant of relationship.

Richards points out that the Bemba society considers married life as the only possible existence for a normal man and woman, and in this belief the Bemba and the Gumuz resemble each other closely as well as other peoples of the continent. Men and women alike desire children passionately, but apart from this craving for off-spring, sexual intercourse is itself considered necessary for normal well-being, and a pleasure to which all are entitled. To produce and possess children is one of the strongest ambitions of Bemba life. Through children a man builds up a family, and acquires labour. When it comes to the question of those who abstain from sex, he asserts that purity in the sense of complete sex abstinence is not a recognised ideal at any stage of life, whether before or after marriage. Sex taboos are kept only by those passing through an abnormal state or by those wishing to acquire abnormal powers (1969:15-17).

Hastings gives a similar opinion to Richards, he describes the motives behind marriage in Africa. For Hastings the concept of African marriage is the union, permanent at least by intention (purposely), of a man and woman for the purpose of procreation and rearing of children and mutual companionship and assistance. He goes on to say that there is inevitably within it an enduring tension between the purpose of relating two people through love

and mutual help and the purpose of producing and educating children. He points out that in African traditional society, the stress was laid in marriage upon the production of children rather than upon the inter-personal relationship (1973:27-28).

Bourdillon also identified that for the traditional Shona society marriage is a contract between the two families (1982:33). One can see that Bourdillon identified a similar relationship to that which was identified by Richards and Hastings, when he describes that it is the coming together and the joining of two new families to a new relationship with the increasing extended family relation (Bourdillon 1982:33). One is in agreement with Hastings when he also looks at the general picture for the purpose of marriage here he indicates that the propagatory purpose of marriage should be seen much more in relation to the wider unit, which applies to the extended family or lineage (1973:28).

2.4 The process of marriage.

The process of marriage as a human experience is one which certainly takes time weeks if not months in the course of which it could indeed be interrupted. When the consent is fully manifested, the gifts exchanged, the blessings pronounced, and bride and groom officially bedded in a hut together, then the marriage is traditionally in being. The union would certainly be under strain and might indeed be dissolved if a child is not soon conceived and born in some societies (Hastings 1973:30-31). According to the tradition of the Gumuz society, marriage is allowed for boys after circumcision, and for girls after their first menstrual period. If the boy is not circumcised girls will not approach him, because he is not considered to be eligible for marriage and he is not a man. For girls there is no circumcision either in the traditional or in modern Christian society. Circumcision of the boys and the first menstruation of girls have got their own ceremonies and rituals. To explain it in brief, according to the Gumuz, the first flow of the blood or menstruation of girls usually takes place between the age of

thirteen and fourteen. For the family it is bad and good news to hear that the girl is in a menstrual period. It is bad news, because this is the first manifestation of separation for girls from the whole family which will be followed by marriage.

She is going to be away for at least three months for the liminal (separation from family) period and as mentioned above, a ritual ceremony will take place. This is to reunite her with the family and the community. Then she is going to be married and be away for the rest of her life except when coming home just as a visitor. After circumcision boys also pass through three months of the liminality period which is accompanied by a ritual ceremony. The ceremonies are acknowledged by the public. When boys and girls pass through all these processes, their capability for marriage is thus publicly acknowledged.

Premarital sex is totally forbidden and is illegal, but sometimes it does take place, although not a large scale. But if those involved are found guilty, the boy's family will be taken to the under tree court to be charged or punished. Either they pay compensation or the boy marries the girl. The same court procedure is followed for a premarital pregnancy.

After circumcision and first menstruation, boys and girls begin to go to gatherings of unmarried people, like dancing and singing in the evenings. There are lots of other opportunities to meet possible marriage partners, for example when boys go to the market, they wait for girls along the river and ask for water like Isaac and Rebecca (Gen 24).

Girls after the first menstruation are slowly taught in matters of love and sexuality by their older friends. For a young man it is very important to learn the behaviour of courting from his elder brothers or friends, especially how to communicate during the courting procedure or session. After passing through the processes and becoming eligible for marriage in terms of maturity, before he asks for marriage in the family there are

more conditions which he has to fulfil. Traditionally, male children stay with their parents in the same house till they reach the period of circumcision. After the time of circumcision, they build their own small hut and leave their parents' house and start to live alone, though they still eat food together.

Before asking for marriage the boys have to have their own field, their own guns, and different types of grain stores. This is the transition from being dependent on their parents, to show that they are adult enough to ask for marriage. According to Gumuz traditional society, marriage is accomplished by exchanging a sister. This is explained in sub topic 2.5. Before the boy asks for marriage he has to be sure that he has got at least one sister for exchange, if he does not have a sister he has to take the matter to his parents and will discuss how to get a girl for exchange. The parents will include all the extended family members and discuss the way the family wants the marriage to be successful. This is because traditionally if one of the family members has got a son and does not have a daughter for his son to exchange with, there is a system of lending one's daughter to the one who does not have a girl for exchange. Therefore the extended family members discuss all these matters and find the solution. The family who borrows the daughter will return the favour in the future when any of them gives birth to a daughter.

This is the accepted norm of the traditional society, and it does still appear in some groups of modern society. If it proves difficult to get a girl for exchange, the family of the boy who married will say (ZAYECH ALOCKA) which means wait for the Lord which implies that if there is any woman in the extended family who is pregnant, then the two families may agree that if the new born child is a female after birth she will be given to the family of the woman who was married. In this regard, we see that according to the traditional Gumuz society, the issue of marriage does not belong to the parents only. It

includes the whole family and the extended family. Sometimes it can involve members of the clan. All these arrangements have to be completed to make sure that the marriage process will take place smoothly.

After all these stages are taken care of, the boy discusses the procedure with his father. After discussion with his father, some people will be assigned to assist him to look for a wife. The assigned person and the boy go to the clan within the tribe where marriage relationships are allowed to take place (*BITTA*) to look for a girl for marriage.

When they come across the house where the boy has seen girls before and is interested in marrying one of them, the uncle, or the older brother if there is no uncle, will go before them and put green grass on the roof of the house and lay his spear against the outer wall. This is the sign of peace and the sign of a request to have marital relationship. The green grass signifies a new relationship, and laying of the spear means peace. They stand outside till they are welcomed into the house. The parents will automatically know that the people are coming with a marriage request.

After going in, they present their request and another appointment is arranged; they then go home and report to the father of the boy. For the next appointment senior people from the two families will come together and discuss. A series of meetings and negotiations will take place before the marriage is performed. When all the necessary agreements are completed, the date for the marriage is decided.

The girl's family can refuse to give their daughter if they have already been requested by someone else, but, if the girl is legitimized for marriage and if no one has asked for marriage, traditionally they cannot refuse.

2.5 Marriage ceremonies

As indicated before the marriage is contracted by exchanging girls. To make it clear let me give an example: when Mr A wants to marry the sister of Mr B who is Miss C, Mr A must give his sister who is Miss D to Mr B for exchange. Marriage ceremonies are based on the relationships already strengthened since the beginning of negotiations by the elders from the two families. The date for the marriage itself is decided by the elders of the two families because ceremonies are organized at the two homes by the two families. For at least two weeks before the day, girls gather every evening and dance until midnight. They may even stay the whole night. They are joined by boys and dance together. On the agreed date, ceremonies are performed at the same time at the two homes. At the beginning of the ceremony beasts are slaughtered for the period of feasting and dancing.

The handing over of the two girls (Miss C and Miss D) begins with blessings from father, mother, grandfather and grandmother of the two families. This handing over ceremony takes place at the same time in the two families. After the blessings, the two girls are handed over to the elders from the families of the husbands, who carry them on their shoulders. After taking the girls the two groups must meet half way along a small river on opposite banks.

If one is quicker than the other, they have to wait for one another before they cross the river. When they meet they exchange gun fire to show their joy and happiness, and then they cross. Before they had guns, they would slaughter beasts before crossing the river. They would dip their hands in the blood of the beast, then at mid-river they would shake hands to the new blood relationship. When they reach home they hand over the girls to the mothers of the boys who are about to be married. The invited guests and those who brought the girl get on with the feast, eating, drinking and dancing.

The girls stay with the mothers until five o'clock the next morning. Then the mothers in their turn hand over the girls to

their sons with a blessing. At five o'clock in the morning the two couples get married. The reason for the early marriage is that it is believed that the man will get an erection already in the morning to have sexual intercourse with the virgin.

When he finds out that she is a virgin, he announces it by shooting gun fire and immediately he goes away for hunting or fishing. Before they had guns, often it was necessary to have a witness sitting at the door in the next house watching the son when he comes out of the hut. The witness is usually one of his best friends, who then testifies that the act had been completed. He tells it to the women, and the women rush into the house and start singing and dancing.

Dancing is also an important element in the ceremony of marriage. The dances and their accompanying songs expressed the expectation of the community in respect of the marriage. If he finds out that she is not virgin, he does not shoot the gun fire, he calls one of the best friends (the witness) and informs him about the matter. With the help of silence, (no crying or no gun shot) and the report from the witness people will realize that the lady is not a virgin, and there will not be any dancing or ceremony. The full ceremony takes place when the woman is married for the first time, if she is virgin, this does not happen for divorced women. This is one way of marriage.

The Gumuz have another way of marriage, which is by capture or elopement. This occurs when the man knows that because he doesn't have girl for exchange, the family of the girl will not allow him to marry his loved one. The planning takes place by both (the man and his loved one). This does not imply that a sexual relationship already exists. If the parents find out that the girl is in love with the man, negotiation will take place between the two families and this will lead into an agreement so that if the first born of the new couple is a female, she will be given as an exchange for her mother. When this child reaches adulthood and is ready for marriage one of

her mother's family will exchange her with another girl from another clan and marry. If the first born is not a female they will wait until a female is born. Not having a girl for exchange will not lead to divorce. Let us see the attitude of the traditional society towards divorce.

2.6 Divorce.

2.6.1 Definition of divorce

According to Hunter divorce refers to the process of dissolving a marriage by severing the spiritual, emotional, physical, and legal covenant between marriage partners (mostly European definition). Nevertheless divorce has the capacity to encourage and stimulate growth and to become a creative opportunity for personal reassessment and redirection (1990:292).

2.6.2 General observation of European marriage.

When describing European marriage, Gibson and Mitchell point out that although the marriage vows read "until death us do part", the high divorce rate in the world indicates that thousands of couples have decided they cannot wait until their entry into eternity to part. Thousands of couples suffer through phases of their marriage and seek adjustment to marriage difficulties by means other than divorce. There is statistically proved evidence indicating that family discord and divorce is continuing to increase. The stress of the actual divorce process for spouses and children and the later adjustment requirements for all involved are well documented and include such problems as the feelings of failure that often accompany divorce (1986:97).

One can ask why divorce or separation takes place. Oates (1976) reveals some important points which those who are intending to get married do not take into consideration. He points out that most people build their marriages on similarities in age, religion, education, social class, interests and vocational commitment. People are not fully aware of their differences and

will learn from each other's differences. What should be understood is marriage begins with a wide views of separateness between the two persons regardless of how "alike" or together they may feel (1976:22-23).

According to Cunard divorce involves a series of stages and points out the three phases of divorce.

1. Pre-divorce - a time of deliberation.
2. During divorce - the time of legal involvement.
3. After divorce - a time of exploration, re-equilibration and restabilization (1982:40).

For Cunard during the pre-divorce the couples deliberate over their disillusionment and lack of capability to fulfil their expectations. In the following step the spouses cannot tolerate the marriage and the partner. Cunard also compares divorce and separation to the loss of a parent through death. In this situation the separated person goes through the stage of the Kubler-Ross (1970) "grief model" of death and dying, which is, 1. Denial; 2. Anger; 3. Bargaining; 4. Depression; 5. Acceptance. The partner who is separated is usually going through the process of the feeling of guilt. The third step in the divorce process is the legal divorce when the level of animosity escalates and grief and mourning continues (Cunard 1982:40).

2.6.3 Divorce in the Gumuz society.

When one assesses the traditional Gumuz society, divorce is a very rare matter. Divorce does not concern only one family. It affects both family members and extended families. As indicated before, marriage is accompanied by exchanging sisters. When one person divorces his wife, he has to know that his sister is going to divorce her husband too. This also applies to the female, if she decides to divorce her husband. She has to be sure that the wife of her brother will do the same and divorce her husband and come home. When divorce takes place, the relationship between the two families, the extended families, and the clan will also be affected.

Divorce does not take place simply because of problems such as childlessness, sexual misbehaviour, adultery by men and women, and so forth. No husband or wife wants to divorce and dissolve his/her marriage because of such problems. The matter which leads to divorce must be something above human control. For example, divorce may be considered if one of them is connected with extremely bad influences such as sorcery, evil eye, or cruelty. Divorce may also take place if disagreements between the two different clans involved in the marriage.

There is a possibility of having some cruel husbands who simply send their wives home, which leads to the payment of an additional charge. Sometimes the interference from parents may lead to divorce, but if the woman is strong enough and confronts her parents, divorce will not take place. A husband will not divorce his wife because of childlessness. If the wife is found to be barren, the husband and wife should discuss the matter and she can allow her husband to marry another woman.

Adultery is not accepted in the community. It often leads to loss of life. If a person finds out that someone has committed adultery with someone's wife, the husband will kill the adulterer. If the person escapes the killing, the husband whose wife was abused will get compensation. If that is not possible he can take revenge through rape or seduction and commit adultery with the wife of the person who committed adultery with his wife. But he has to know that if he is found he too will be killed by the husband. Therefore he has to prepare himself for the battle.

Mary Douglas explains how the Nuer tribe in Ethiopia deals with adultery. She points out that Nuer people do not take adultery and negligence so tragically as some other people with agnatic lineage systems in which paternity is established by marriage. A Nuer husband can spear his wife's seducer if he catches him red-handed. Otherwise, if he learns of her infidelity, he can only demand two heads of cattle, one for compensation, and one

for sacrifice. If the wife of a Nuer is widowed her husband's brothers have the right to marry her to raise seed in the dead man's name. But if she doesn't choose to accept this arrangement, they cannot force her. She is left free to choose her own lover (1966:143).

While the Nuer and the Gumuz tribes have similarities in understanding adultery they differ in some points. The Gumuz tribe take adultery and negligence very seriously. If a Gumuz husband catches someone committing adultery with his wife, he can spear both the wife and the seducer. It would be a miracle if the husband did not kill his wife when the seducer escapes. It is shameful for the Gumuz male and female to be caught committing adultery as it is legally forbidden.

Regarding the widowed, the two tribes have common experience in that the husband's brothers have the right to take her for marriage, to raise seed for their brother who is dead. However according to the Gumuz, the widowed women must join their husbands' brothers when their husbands die. The dead husband's wife cannot refuse to be married to one of her husband's brothers. Let us now analyze the effects of polygamy on marriage contracts.

2.7 Polygamy.

The term "Polygamy" means precisely "manifold marriage". In real usage, it denotes having more than one wife within a family. According to Owan the term "polygamy" comes from two Greek words *polus* meaning "many/much" and *gune* meaning "woman/wife". This shows that in as much as polygamy is very popular as a form of marriage among traditional Africans, it was practised of old by many peoples of other cultures including the Israelites. Polygamy is the most popular form of traditional marriage among Africans. From the practical point of view, "polygamy" refers to the marriage of many wives by one man at the same time, either successively or simultaneously (Sept 1995:9).

For African marriage and family, Owan points out that there are advantages and disadvantage of polygamy. The disadvantages are far less weighty than the advantages. Polygamy serves the prosperity and growth of the extended family and provides status and support for women in societies where they have no vocation other than marriage and child bearing for the husbands' lineage. It provides the wife with companionship at home. It helps to solve the problem of promiscuity and prostitution (Sept 1995:9).

The polygamous pattern of African marriage is not merely a matter of loose sexual relationships. It provides for simultaneous stable unions contracted under a form of law, recognised as marriage and provides both a permanent home and legitimate status for the offspring. According to Owan, there are disadvantages of polygamy. There is a disruptive potential of the system in some families. Polygamy increases the cost of living and the cost of bride wealth. Polygamy creates a family of considerable legal complexity by lessening the educative influence of the father on the children. It creates tension and jealousy among the wives and children and the members of the extended family system. Lastly it is irreconcilable with the educational and economic emancipation of woman and the desire for woman to play independent roles in the society (Sept 1995:10).

Polygamy seems to have been practised by the majority of peoples since the Old Testament. Polygamy in the Old Testament and New Testament was practised for various reasons. For example, Sarah gave her maid Hagar to Abraham to be the second wife in order to have a child since she was not bearing a child (Gen 16:3).

Jacob also worked for seven years to marry his first wife Rachel and again he was obliged to work for another seven years to marry Leah when she was imposed upon him by her parents. The reasons behind polygamy, are love and desire, the wish for

children and comfort, according to the norms of the community. For tribes depending on agriculture, having many wives creates an enormous labour force for the field and for other work. The practice of marrying a deceased brother's wife initially promoted polygamy, as the levirate (the person who is going to marry his dead brother's wife) might himself already have a wife before marrying his dead brother's widow (Arthur 1962:280).

Among the traditional Gumuz society, polygamy is not considered a sin or a crime. The traditional society has many reasons for polygamy:

1. As mentioned above, since marriage is contracted by exchanging sisters, if it happens that there are more daughters than sons in a given family, these boys will be forced to marry two wives each.
2. The chiefs and the rich are free to marry more than one wife, as there is no law which binds people to have only one wife.
3. To have many children.
4. In case one wife falls sick, the husband can seek sexual satisfaction from the other wives who are not sick.
5. One with many wives and children is appointed as head man (position of power).

The association of polygamy with sin came to the society with Christianity. This will be discussed in the next chapter.

2.8 Religious aspects.

It is not the aim of this dissertation to describe comprehensively the religion of the Gumuz society. However this religion does affect marriage and family life. Before presenting this, it is necessary to briefly outline elements of African traditional religion.

According to Makhubu African people are very religious. They cannot live without worshipping something. It is believed that even before Christianity began, the African people knew God.

God was called different names by different ethnic groups. God was known to be the unseen creator, who gives life, rain, crops, everything (1988:59).

Mbiti agrees with Makhubu, and points out that our fathers developed spiritual beliefs, and they attended religious rites and liturgy. African religion provides a feeling of safety and security for women and men, married couples and the family as well. All Africans believe in God the Almighty. This belief is taken for granted. It is at the nucleus of African belief and controls the entire faith (1975:40).

For Middleton God is remote from human beings, omnipotent and timeless, and ultimately responsible for events that befall mankind. Between God and people there are thought to be other powers beyond everyday control, such as ancestors and ghosts, various refractions of divinity such as nature and water spirits, heroes and so on (1970:189).

When one observes the traditional Gumuz society, one can see that like other African countries, God (*OKKA*) is the central part of the religion. But the interpretation of God even though there is similarity to some extent, is not quite the same as that of Christians. Gumuz believe that God is the creator of heaven, earth, human beings, animals and all that is found in this world. The sun (*OKKA*) and Moon (*BIDJA*) are God's eyes. The sun has the same name as God (*OKKA*). God is associated with places or objects such as trees, mountains, junctions, big rivers, floods, lakes, rocks, hills, moon, sun, stars, thunder, rainbow, and so forth. Mbiti calls them earthly and heavenly objects (1970:129,144).

When people pass by these objects, they bow their heads, make a short prayer, meditate and pass. They believe that if they don't perform this, something bad will happen to them, which they consider to be punishment from God because of their misbehaviour.

There is also much stress on other spirits and the ancestral spirit. According to Middleton ancestors tend to be worshipped when living human beings realize that only with the help of the ancestors they are able to control their environment and lives. Nature and water spirits are worshipped when natural forces seem to take control of human affairs. The situations for sacrifice and worship are, as might be expected, those of misfortune and social stress, although periodic rites are widespread that are performed on set regular occasions (1970:189).

For the Gumuz every place has its own spirit. There is the spirit of the farm land, the spirit of the river, the spirit of the house, the spirit of hunting. The spirit of rain brings rain when it is communicated with by the community through the rain maker. Mbiti identifies Nature spirits and the Human spirits. He points out that both have two types.

1. Nature spirits;

a) the sky spirit, which includes sun, moon, stars, and so forth. b) the earth spirit, which includes earth, hills, mountains, rocks, and so forth.

2. Human spirits;

a) The long dead (ghosts), and,

b) the living dead (the recently dead) (1975:65).

The ancestral spirits (*FAHTSA*) or the living dead are powerful members of the community who, when they become angry, can bring untold suffering upon their descendants. Traditional Gumuz believe in survival after death, and believe that ancestral spirits affect the welfare of the living.

The spirit which can possess only a male, (*GAHEYA*) plays a great role in bringing back the spirit of the deceased person into the family. Gahaeya is a person who has gift of identifying other spirits. We may call him the doctor of spirits. He is a diviner. He differentiates between the spirits. He knows which spirits are good and bad. When a person puts something bad into the bodies of other people, Gahaeya is the one who identifies it

and takes it out of their bodies. The elder in the family or extended family is responsible for taking care of the ancestral spirits. That includes checking whether or not respect is paid to the ancestral spirits and whether sacrifices and feasts are made as deemed necessary in their honour.

Once my father told me that a long time ago, when a person became very old and unable to move, they used to have two ways of helping him/her to die. One way was to bury him/her alive, and the other way was to invite an elderly person from one of the clans with whom the marriage contract is performed, identified as *BITTA* to twist the neck of the old person to kill him/her.

The implication is that the family does not want their family member to suffer because of old age. Death is believed to be a rest and a transition to another world to live again. After reaching that world, the old person will become young again. Therefore when a person dies, some items are buried with him/her, such as bones of animals (legs of goats, sheep, chicken), pipe for tobacco, spear for hunting, bow, knife, vessels, axe, etc. The legs of animals will be transformed into animals and the person will rear them and use them during his/her stay in that new world. The other materials are also to be used there. From this understanding we see that the traditional Gumuz society believes in resurrection, in the life after death.

The spirits of the ancestors from the new world come regularly and visit their families who are here in this world. When sacrifice is given, beer is brewed or coffee is boiled and a small amount is poured on the ground or parts of the tree as an offering. The traditional Gumuz society believes strictly that God (*OKKA*) is the only creator, that He created all spirits. The ancestor spirits (*FATSA*) and small spirits (*MUSSA*) do not create, but provide what is already created by God (*OKKA*). The small spirits have got their own duties. There is the spirit of the house which is called (*MUSSA METSA*). This spirit takes care

of the house and all the activities in the house. There is the spirit of the farm land (*MUSSA LIGICHA*), which takes care of all the grains in the field. There is also the spirit for hunting (*MUSSA GEBAHA*) which helps hunters to kill during hunting. The spirit of rain (*MUSSA DEMA*) is responsible for bringing rain when it is necessary. These spirits are working in collaboration with the ancestor spirits.

All these spirits need sacrifice. Apart from the spirit of the house (*MUSSA METSA*) other spirits are taken care of by the community. However each individual is still responsible for living in harmony with all spirits. Dreams have got a very important place in the religious life of the Gumuz traditional society. Dreams are means of communication between the living and the living dead (the ancestors).

Many people are informed through dreams by the ancestors' spirits when to present their sacrifices. These beliefs have an implication on marriage. All spirits including ancestral spirits must be communicated with and entertained accordingly. Before the family agrees on the matter of looking for a wife for the boy in the family, consultation of the spirits must be made. This is to make sure the ancestors will understand whole process.

Traditionally the Gumuz tribe is committed to consulting the ancestors and other spirits before they take a variety of actions, including hunting, fishing etc, let alone marriage. Otherwise the ancestors can cause problems or endanger the fertility of the couples, causing childlessness.

Therefore the consummation of every marriage, or first coming together of the man and woman as husband and a wife, is often ritualized. The whole community celebrates the marriage rituals, and these in varying ways, reflected the communitarian character of customary marriage at family and local community level. Customary marriage is accompanied by a ritual process,

lasting for weeks or months. It has the form of a series of rites, negotiations and feasts.

2.9 The legal aspects and its implication on the Gumuz traditional marriage contracts

When it comes to the legal aspects of marriage contract African peoples have some common features. Since the main focus is on the Gumuz society, I am not going to discuss the African perspective. I will describe the implication of the legal system on Gumuz traditional marriage contracts.

The political organization of the Gumuz tribe is totally unformulated. They have no explicit institutions of government and administration. The only principle of any firmness which gives form to their tribal life is the principle of genealogy. The social structure of the Gumuz tribe rests on the series of legal marriage established by exchanging of girls. The court matters are held under the trees or in a small hut built just like a tent, near the house of the chief of the community. Traditional Gumuz society does not have district courts. If the case is not solved in the village by the representative of the chief, the matter goes to the village chief court. All the court matters have to be completed in the village court, which is situated under the tree.

The court matter is called *TEMBA*. Temba usually deals with family disputes, marriage and divorce matters, and homicides. According to traditional Gumuz society, even for homicides the village court doesn't impose death sentences. What happens is that when someone commits a homicide, the person responsible goes to the chief, reports the matter, and confesses that he has committed a homicide, and then, based on this, the chief calls the village court (*TEMBA*).

The punishment for the one who committed that homicide is to give a girl for compensation to the family of the deceased as replacement for the dead. The handing over of the girl is

performed after a beast is slaughtered and the two families wash their hands with the blood of the slaughtered beast, and shake hands. This shows real reconciliation and finally the handing over of the girl takes place. This is the case for justifiable or accidental killing.

For court cases other than homicide the punishment can be money, cattle, or guns, depending upon the level of the crime. Traditionally, there were no thieves within Gumuz society. At the beginning of 1972, the state farm was established by the government. Because of the state farm, many people moved to the area to seek employment. The movement of these people was accompanied by a new culture. The new culture brought robbery, stealing, rape, killing, population growth. This situation created anxious discomfort within the society. The court case procedure is always in public and any adult male is allowed to attend. Females are not allowed to attend the court case, unless they are brought for the court case. It is a place where young males were educated and learned about court and legal matters.

As described earlier, the main system in the marriage is exchanging girls, therefore lobola is not significant among the traditional Gumuz society. However a small amount of money is given and put under the main pillar in the big house, which is a sacrifice for the spirit of the house (*MUSSA METSA*), in the process of handing over the girl on the marriage day.

When we come to the question of inheritance, legally women can inherit the properties of their parents in the same way as men and also that of their husbands as well as men.

Like the Bemba, Ndebele, and Shona tribes, in traditional Gumuz society, the administrative importance is not on the individual family, but the village. Every village has its own headman (*DANFEGA*). The headman is answerable to the chief of the community (*TISA*). The headman doesn't need to belong to the lineage which controls the larger tribe. He is selected from outside of the lineage of the chief or can be chosen by the

chief and be assigned. With the introduction of the education system and other developmental organizations, the court system which was performed under the tree by the headman (*DANFEGA*) remained under the tree. The one which was performed by the chiefs (*TISA*), has moved to the court system of the district (*WORADA*). Small disputes, divorce, marriage problems and land problems are still brought to the headman (*Danfega*) to be discussed and sorted out. If the *Danfega* is unable to solve it, it is transferred to the district (*Worada*) court.

2.10 The social status of traditional marriage.

Marriage puts the individual and his family on the social, religious and physical map of his community. Every one recognizes that the individual is a full person when he or she is married and has children. The life of the individual is extended beyond death by the fact of being married and bearing children, because these children survive him/her and remain as constant evidence that their father and mother once existed.

The more children a person has, the higher his/her status in the society. Without marriage a person is only a human, which means if he/she dies, with out having children he/she will not be remembered (Mbiti 1975:106). In traditional Gumuz society, people experience the same. He/she is not a full person unless he/she is married. Everybody will mock him/her.

Legally, women and men are equal, but when it comes to the distribution of duties in the families, women are subject to men. Gumuz believe women are created for men, and men are created for women. During the religious and sacrificial practices there is also a clear demarcation between men and women. There are aspects of religious worship and of sacrifice which are meant only for women. Legally it is not allowed for men to mistreat women. It is a crime to mistreat women. It can lead to divorce. If the family and the chief find out that a woman has been mistreated by her husband or any adult, the matter will be taken to the court and he will be punished.

Women have a very important identity or role in the social life of the Gumuz people. For example, when people cross the river it is not allowed for a male to cross the river before a female. The priority is always for the female. Even when drinking water it is forbidden for a male to drink water before the female drinks. When people are going somewhere, and when there is a need to cross a road, women are the first to cross. The role of women in the society is to rear children and to work in the house, which includes preparing or cooking food, fetching water from the river, and collecting fire wood.

The field work is mainly for men and work in the house is mainly for women, but that does not mean that women are not allowed to work in the field. There are several evident similarities throughout societies of sub-Saharan Africa in the traditional division of labour by sex and the husband-wife relationship. Men clear the bush and do other heavy manual tasks, while women have the larger share of routine cultivation. Women carry the heavy burdens, usually on their heads and shoulders, while male activities are much more prestigious and require less routine physical labour.

In husband-wife relations, the male is ideally dominant. Middleton points out that:

African women have less prestigious occupations than their husbands and are often subordinate to them in the family as a consequence of polygamy, patrilocality, and the ideal of male dominance; nevertheless, women play essential and semi-autonomous roles in the labour force as producers and distributors of goods. Furthermore the traditional African woman thinks of her self as a cultivator as well as wife and mother; her role is part of her self-image. Since her occupational involvement is so great, it might be expected that changes in the economy would affect her behaviour in the family role (1970:175).

Therefore there is no restriction on women working in the fields

like men, although they have to give priority to the work in the house, and after finishing the work at home they must join their husbands. Females were not allowed to go to school throughout the community for many years. But now the case is changed. Ninety percent of male and female children are now going to school.

2.11 Summary.

In these chapters I have elaborated upon the cultural mechanisms that the Gumuz deploy when they deal with marriage contracts, the performance of rituals that form the core of this contract and the married life lived out. I have included certain common experiences of some other African countries. I have also made a short analysis of the religious, social, and legal implications in the process of marriage.

An aim of this chapter has been to show briefly the way the Gumuz society understands and experiences marriage. When a Gumuz person says he or she is married, what does he or she mean? How do they see and respond to the term " marriage " in their traditional thinking? What is the essence of marriage for the Gumuz person? I have tried to answer and elaborate on all these questions. The next step is to consider the development which is taking place within the traditional marriage contract with special reference to the modern Christian marriage and the relationship between the two understandings.

CHAPTER THREE

3. Christian marriage practices among the Gumuz society of the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus.

3.1 Introduction

The second chapter focused on an aspect of marriage in the traditional Gumuz society, but now let us look at the Christian marriage. The Christian marriage is a new marriage practice which has taken place since the missionaries came and preached the gospel to the Gumuz society. The missionaries brought the gospel to the Gumuz society at the end of 1950s. When the missionaries introduced Christianity with the help of the gospel, some changes took place within the culture of the society, such as marriage contracts, the attitude towards polygamy, the customary and Church marriage, and so forth. So the question would be what effect did Christianity bring to the marriage practice of the Gumuz society? We will observe the effects of Christianity on the traditional way of contracting marriage.

3.2 Development from the traditional practices

To be in a position to understand the present situation, we have to look into the past, to the history of the Gumuz tribe. When we speak about the new, I hope we are thinking about the old too. To plan the new project, the old performance is evaluated. From mistakes and successes the new step is developed. Likewise when we think about modern society, it is wise to consider the old traditional society. To make the old new and the traditional modern, something has to take place. A change is taking place, and for this change there must be an agent or a cause, or a reason to initiate the change. This change can come from outside or inside. For example let us say we have cold water and we want to change it to hot water. To heat it we need heat or fire. Our agent to boil the water is heat or fire. All of us know the world and also the influence which this world imposes on our thinking, the rapid social changes of our world

today.

The Gumuz society did not escape from this social reality. To this society, the change came from the outside: it was the arrival of missionaries to the area which brought education. This enlightenment was accompanied by changes in the social, economic, political, and psychological thinking of the society.

The coming of missionaries brought education, health care, Christian religion, roads and the construction of bridges. These made access to the people possible. Christianity changed the religion from paganism and worshipping spirits to worshipping God. Children were educated which changed the sociology of the people. This motivated young people to demand change, which resulted in the change of custom, culture, tradition and religion.

Shorter points out that Change can come from inside or outside a society, but it is usually external contact with people belonging to other groups and cultures which gives the potential agents of change within the society their opportunity. To give the impression, however, that Africa had to wait for the coming of Europeans for any social change to take place would be wrong. African societies experienced structural change by which the structures or patterns, of a social relationship and social facts were transformed as a result of interaction between different groups and influences external to the tribe (1973:16).

The Gumuz society experienced the same transformation. As mentioned above, the arrival of missionaries was one of the agents which brought about change in the society. The development of the area in relation to medical, communication and other agricultural developments caused the migration of other neighbouring tribes to the area. This movement enforced the change which helped the interaction and mutual influence of various social units and systems on each other. Of course the

continual migration of people to the area was causing detribalization, with a new culture arising where the traditional culture was being destroyed and replaced by the surrounding tribes' culture.

Among the cultural values which were affected by the change that took place within the society was the marriage practices of the society. Marriage in any culture has rites and survives with them; it has responsibilities, and moral principles of a certain tribe and manners (Kisembo, Magesa, and Shorter 1977:139).

Traditionally, the Gumuz tribe is a tribe which tries to make itself more important than other Nilotic tribes in the area. One can ask the question, why is this tribe making itself more important ? There are some sociological reasons to be mentioned. First of all, the Gumuz tribe is situated between some other tribes. Among these are tribes called Komo, Wutawut, Oromo, and so forth. These tribes have got their own traditions. Leaving one's own farm and going to work for another person to earn money is not the accepted norm of the Gumuz society. The Gumuz society believes that working for some one else to earn money is undermining oneself. Such a person is neglected and looked upon as a slave. Among the above mentioned tribes, people practise a method of earning money which is not accepted by the Gumuz society. Also the Gumuz believe that working with cattle is a sign of weakness. Strong people must work in the fields by hand, not with cattle. Of course this is the traditional thinking. These are some of the reasons why the traditional Gumuz society thinks that its tribe is more important than other tribes. Because of its feelings of superiority, the accepted style of marriage was homogamous, which means marriage does not take place outside of the tribe, also the tribe does not want its young people to be married by other surrounding tribes. This is identified by Kisembo, Magesa and Shorter, when they describe that in Africa the accepted style of marriage is endogamous with definite implication to

national organization (1977:141).

The new developments among the Gumuz tribe changed the barrier of not having inter-ethnic marriage. Now inter-ethnic marriage is increasing and developing. The starting of inter-ethnic marriages has a positive value and makes a contribution in the building and developing of the custom, family life, and culture as a whole. The interaction with different institutions such as schooling, working and living together, with more development of inter-communication, inter-ethnic marriage is having a positive implication in the strengthening of relationships with neighbouring communities. This growing relationship is very helpful for the Christian ministry in the neighbouring tribes, which has an impact on the Christian marriages. The conclusion is that the arrival of Christianity in the Gumuz society at the end of 1950's gave a chance for the community to get education and improve the social, economic, and the religious life of the people. Next let us observe the Christian marriage and what it is all about in relation to the Gumuz society.

3.3 Christian marriage.

3.3.1 General point of view.

When one speaks about Christian marriage, and problems encountered in it, it motivates one to look into the historical perspective of Christian tradition in general. What does it mean? what is the historical perspective of Christian tradition? According to Hastings, the most important issue when one speaks about marriage in Africa is really that of the ecclesialistical absolutization of marriage norms which had developed in the course of the centuries in the Western Church and were now being applied in such a very different social and cultural context. In this perspective three things can be taken into account: absolute monogamy, absolute indissolubility, and the celebration of marriage by Christians in a form recognized by the Church. The implication is that monogamy was characteristic of the marriage of Christians from apostolic

days; indissolubility is clearly called for by Jesus' strong condemnation of divorce; the ecclesiastical approval of marriage was already recommended by Ignatius of Antioch at the beginning of the second century. Hastings argues that it is not true to say that polygamists were not accepted into the early Church, the obligation to dignify one's marriage before a priest was only laid down after many centuries (1973:5-6).

For Hastings the foundation of the modern Church in Africa was laid in the nineteenth century where the Roman Catholic Church and the Church of England had accepted a clear and inflexible position upon marriage for the twentieth-century Church in Africa. It is obvious that the question of polygamy is frequently raised in African contexts where polygamy is widely practised. But in general the Christian Church grew up within a predominantly monogamous world. When one looks back into the Jews' historical background one can see that the Jews had practised polygamy to a considerable extent which was allowed by the Mosaic law and was not condemned in any biblical writing. In the Old Testament the polygamous marriages of David, Jacob, and Solomon were also not condemned. However at the end of Solomon's life, the scripture tells us that his former wives turned him from worshipping God to worshipping idols (IKings 11:3-6) (1973:6).

The New Testament, for example in Paul's marriage teaching, presupposes monogamous union. In I Cor 7:4, there is no explicit treatment of what a person with two wives should do if he wants to become a Christian. The only indication is when Paul speaks about the qualification for a bishop and elder that he be faithful to his one wife (I Tim 3:2; Titus 1:6). From this standpoint three points can be drawn: a) The teaching about Christian marriage was understood from the beginning in terms of monogamy; b) neither in the Old Testament nor in the New Testament is there any clear condemnation of polygamy; c) in the apostolic Church there was very little if any polygamy, but in the following generations there was no polygamy at all.

Hastings argues that while legalizing concubinage and divorce, Roman and Greek society of the first century were by law monogamous. The majority of the people of north and eastern Europe were also monogamous while kings and chiefs had secondary wives (1973:8). From this observation one can understand that the issue of polygamy cannot be addressed specifically only to Africa. It is an international issue.

The symbol of Christian marriage is a wedding in the Church. Although this was acceptable to Africans, the majority of Church marriages have been preceded or followed by a customary marriage for the transference of bridewealth or other gifts. The indication is that the Anglican and the Roman Catholic Churches were not willing to acknowledge those who were not married in the Church. This is one of the factors which injected conflicts between the Christian community and the traditional community. But of this varies from place to place, in some areas a high proportion of African Christians have been willing to marry in church, while in other areas the contrary (Hastings 1973:45).

I certainly agree with Hastings when he points out that some Christians are not marrying in the Church. In the Lutheran Church in Ethiopia, some Christians are not performing their marriage ceremonies in the Church. The reason is clear. During my ministry in my congregation in Ethiopia, I have dealt with many couples who performed their marriage at home in the traditional way because of financial problems. To get married in the Church one has to invite as many people as possible. To entertain the invited people, a lot of money must be invested on the soft drinks and cookies, expensive cars must be hired for the bride and the bridegroom, a suit and a dress must be bought, and so forth. Because of these complicated problems some Christians prefer to get married at home in the traditional way. But even though others performed their marriage in the Church, this Church ceremony is only after the traditional ceremony. However it does not mean that those who perform their marriages traditionally are the one's who break their marriage. Many

whose marriages break down had married when they were very young, hardly grown up or knowing one another. Hastings asserts that in most African parishes there are some or even many Christians who are really active Church members, believing and practising Christians, who are nevertheless permanently cut off from communion because of their marriage (1973:59).

3.4 Customary Marriage and Church Marriage

From the standpoint of Hastings in the first centuries of the Christian period, Christians did not have a special way to marry. The customary forms of marriage among the Jews, Greeks, Romans, and every other people, provided the marriage forms for Christians. Blessings from the bishop or Church elders during and after the ceremony was very much valued even though it was not looked at as a regular part of the procedure. A wedding was a family, civil, or secular matter and it was accepted by the Church as having the deepest religious and moral implications. As late as from the end of the third century onwards the priestly blessings of marriage started to be implemented on a regular basis in the west and in the east and was followed by the marriage liturgy which was a part of post-wedding blessings and which did not include the wedding. But after one thousand years a liturgy developed which could really be said to include the wedding itself and was performed at the church door (not in the church) until the end of the Middle Ages. The performance of this liturgical ceremony was not considered to be necessary for the validity of a marriage, but the validity of marriage depended upon the consent of those taking part and the customary and traditional marriage ceremonies of the people involved. Christians preferred to have the Church's marriage liturgy as it provided the explicit blessing of God upon the union and instructed them in the duties they were taking on (1973:65-67).

According to Hastings, the local life of the people in western Europe centred upon Church in the following generation where the customary marriage procedure was integrated with the Christian ones. In northern Europe the customary marriage had two parts;

the espousals and the wedding. Espousals were not a public engagement, it was a private family activity which constituted the marriage agreement in which the handing over of the bride was done in the later wedding ceremony. A wedding became a Church ceremony composed of both customary and ecclesiastical elements.

But the situation in Africa was very different because in Africa, customary marriage was still in its full strength. It has got a mass of ceremonial rite which is fully public and decisively important in people's eyes. The Anglican missionaries have adopted the tridentine (an Orthodox Roman Catholic Doctrine) approach towards customary marriage in Africa. The reason for this Anglican tridentinism in Africa has often been that customary marriage could not be accepted because it is potentially polygamous and potentially dissoluble (1973:69).

Hastings argues that the population of Anglican Christians in Africa today seems to be caught up between three options in relation to those who have undergone customary marriages and been baptized. First, they can to acknowledge the customary marriages and admit those partners to communion. Second, they can recognize such unions as marriage. Thirdly they can refuse to recognize such unions as marriage. He asserts that the imposition of the tridentine rule in Africa by both Catholics and most Anglican was mistaken and it had serious consequences; the consequences were a) this is the imposition of a completely dualized pattern of marriage, which does indeed exist in many places today; b) it is bringing a wider marital instability which can lead to the destruction of customary marriage; c) the Church marriage and Christianity are being rejected by those thousands who are deprived of communion for having no valid marriage (1973:70).

But usually if two Christians voluntarily perform a recognized form of marriage theologically it must be acknowledged as

marriage. As mentioned above, with the domination of the influence which came from Western Europe, today the great majority of Christians prefer to keep the accepted Christian form of church marriage in most places. Hastings points out that there is an interpretation of customary marriage as a marriage where cash payment is performed by the bridegroom to the bride's father. Of course there are places where the customary marriages are accepted in the way that the Church of England accepted civil marriage (1973:70-71).

From this understanding, I would like to conclude the issue of the customary and Church marriage by suggesting three different possibilities which the Church could take towards the customary marriage. The first one would be to enable the Christian formulas and a blessing to be inserted within the customary ceremony at the home of bride or bridegroom with the priest or with another representative from the Church. The second one would be to fuse the customary marriage with the Church service and perform it in the Church. The third possibility to give the blessing to the couple without the form of marriage in the Church or even in their homes. Therefore whatever method is used the acknowledgement of marriage must not be only based on the blessing from the priest.

If it is entertained in this way the basic nature of marriage as a covenant entered into by the two people themselves, and which they essentially have the freedom to do, will be more respected by most of the Christian community.

On what basis does the Gumuz society fix its marriages? Is it customary marriage or does it follow the Christian tradition, which is the Church marriage? Next we will look at the understanding of the Gumuz society.

3.4.1 Understanding of the Gumuz society.

When one observes the marriage practice of the Christians among the Gumuz society, one can see that there is division between Christians themselves on the issue of the Church and customary marriage. One group prefers to get married in the Church by not wanting anything related to the customary marriage. Another group prefers to have Church marriage. The third group prefers to have customary marriage as well as Church marriage so not losing the traditional identity of seeking blessing from parents as well as blessings from the priest in the Church. In another development the young generation is leaving the homogamous marriage practices, that is mainly marriage within one's own tribe and moving into inter-ethnic marriage practices. The argument is that marriage should be according to each individual's will.

Traditionally there was no marriage between Gumuz and the high land dwellers, but now the highland dwellers can marry from the Gumuz tribe and the Gumuz from the highland. It was very difficult for highland men to convince a Gumuz girl for marriage because of their light colour which the Gumuz people do not like. If they succeed in convincing the Gumuz girl they will not agree to give their sisters for exchange because that is not their custom. The Gumuz do not give lobola, the Zulu term for the bride price. As the Gumuz tribe is not accustomed to giving bride price, they will not accept it either. "Lobola" according to Collins Concise English Dictionary is an African custom by which a bridegroom's family makes a payment in cattle or cash to the bride's family shortly before marriage (1992:773). Payment in cash or cattle to the brides family is not accepted by the Gumuz society. The Gumuz custom is to exchange sisters rather than to pay bride price. Since it is not a "payment", Gumuz society does not call it lobola, they call it *GANGIYA* which means exchange.

However the modern generation which includes the Gumuz Christians is moving away from the previous exchange system and

is adapting the *lobola* system from the neighbouring tribes. Exchange has not totally disappeared but it is dying out. Currently, Christians seem to entertain both the exchange system as well as the *lobola* system even though they meet resistance from the old parents. The interference of Christianity and the modern generation's opinion has opened a way for those who do not have sisters for marriage. When they marry, those who do not have sisters can give guns, money, cattle, or there is still the possibility of waiting until the married ladies give birth to daughters according to the traditional way. If the child happens to be a daughter, the family of the woman can take the daughter of their daughter in exchange for her marriage.

While paralysing traditional practices, the modern aspects and the Christians have brought a bright matrimonial future for those who do not have sisters and also gives room for inter-ethnic marriages to the surrounding tribes. This reminds me of what happened in my area when I was a boy. A man from the highland, of light complexion, eloped with a girl from the Gumuz tribe. This was an insult to the Gumuz father. All the family members went in search of them in order to kill the "kidnapper", because they wanted to preserve the complexion of its tribe as black. The modern and Christian ways are good because they allow inter-ethnicity or colour. These days there is no more killing if a girl falls in love with a stranger. Likewise the Gumuz male can choose and marry a foreign girl.

In conclusion, one can see that the majority of the Gumuz Christians are caught in between two lines. They have to make their choice as to which marriage pattern they will adopt. But as mentioned above there is the possibility of integrating the Church and the customary marriage practice in order to make the Church marriage acceptable to the majority of Christians.

3.5 The Theology of marriage.

According to Hastings marriage is a natural and human reality. He indicates that "marriage existed already at Cana when Jesus comes to bless and beautify it with his presence" (1973:61).

Marriage exists with the custom, the obligations, the ethical standards of a particular people and culture. Jesus and Paul have taught on the subject of marriage structures and marriage ethics. According to Paul the Church has the duty to offer guidance in the field of marriage (I Cor 7). From the very beginning the scripture tells us that marriage is outlined in Genesis, for the purpose of procreation: "Be fruitful and multiply". It also manifests and institutionalizes the unity of man and woman: in marriage they become "one flesh", "one body" or "one person". It describes that a man leaves his father and mother and joins himself to his wife and they become one flesh" (Gen 2:24). The Bible hints that the unity of husband and wife is somehow stronger than that of man and his kindred which is the greatest challenge to African and European societies.

In a strong sense the Old and New Testament use the image of marriage to explain the relationship of God and his people as a covenant relationship. The teaching of the New Testament about marriage stresses the reciprocity required within a true covenant relationship of human beings, between whom there is finally no difference (Gal 3:28). This was done within a society in which there was still a deep lack of reciprocity. While contemporary society did not admit that a husband could commit adultery against his wife, the gospel makes no difference between the two. The obligation of husband and wife is the same (Mark 10:11-12). According to I Cor 7:3-4;33-34, the wife cannot claim her body as her own, it is her husband's. The husband cannot claim his body as his own, it is his wife's. This means a husband must give his wife her full due, she must give her husband his full due. With this indication one observes that the trust within the Christian marriage vision is towards recognizing equality in right and duty, towards reciprocity, towards mutual service: "Be subject to one another" (Eph 5:21) (Hastings 1973:64). In another way when one reads Eph 5:23-24; and ICor 11:1-3 one can see that Paul admitted some structural inequality between husband and wife, and indeed built upon it in his theology of Christ and the Church. In this understanding,

Paul reflects the standard of contemporary society and the lower status of women as well as the status of slaves. Hastings asserts that based on the teaching of Jesus, where he says marriage is a covenant for life, the Christian marriage teaching challenges the Jewish and Greco-Roman practice of divorce (1973:64).

To summarize one can conclude that within the community of Christian believers, the enduring relationship of love and fidelity, the covenant of marriage, takes on a still more profound significance: it is "sacrament", that is to say, it is a major occasion of divine blessings in the life of those Christian entering into it, being the specific sign of something still greater beyond itself—the covenant relationship of God and his people, of Christ and the Church (Eph. 5.32).

3.5.1 Polygamy.

The problem for traditional Western theologians was that of whether polygamy is a sin, which is alike to fornication. It is a common form of marriage, not considered sinful where it is the custom but, according to the Christian belief, it is sin. Hastings has pointed out that a Christian can consider polygamous marriage in four basic ways.

1. If it is compared with adultery, polygamy is a sin.
2. Where it is a custom, polygamy is not a sin, it is an inferior form of marriage unacceptable for Christians.
3. Polygamy is a form of marriage inferior than monogamy and which is opposed to the spirit of Christian marriage. Obviously in certain circumstances some Christians are caught up with it.
4. Polygamy and monogamy are different, each has advantages and disadvantages. They are suitable for certain societies. The Church is not be responsible to make any judgemental decision between the two forms of marriage (Hastings 1973:73).

Hastings asserts that the Church must leave the choice to those in or entering into polygamous unions. He is saying that in the

Anglican Church in Africa, the wives in polygamous marriages are allowed to be baptized and often to communion, but men are not permitted. Hastings appears to give assent to the state of affairs and gives the polygamous marriage of Solomon as an example in the Old Testament for justification (1973:74).

My feeling is that this approach by the Church is opposed to the spirit of Christianity. The Church must have a clear stand on this issue. It must not stand between the lines, if it believes that polygamy is sin, the Church must say so clearly. There can be no compromise with sin. Not taking a stand is putting Christians in confusion. The polygamous life of Solomon as mentioned above was not without consequences. According to IKings 11:3,4 he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines, and this scripture points out that they turned away his heart from God. "For it was so, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned his heart after other gods; and his heart was not loyal to the Lord his God, as was the heart of his father David" (V4). But when one looks into Proverbs (the book which was written by Solomon) on seven different occasions Solomon addresses the danger of adultery. Four times he gives repeated, extended emphasis to it (Proverbs 5:1-23; 6:23-35; 7:1-27; 9:13-18). Three other times the same thought is expressed (22:14-23; 23:27; 30:20). Sex can be wonderful in marriage (Proverbs 5:15-19), but taking what is not yours is like setting yourself on fire (6:27). From this understanding, one can compare sex with alcohol, heroin, or cocaine. Sex does not respect anyone. It has no discrimination of its own, and would just as soon destroy you as satisfy you. Whether the father is a king or rich or what so ever, it will consume you if you choose to put yourself in its control. Therefore the situation of David, Jacob, and Solomon cannot be a justification to have as many wives as possible. One has to know that there is a danger of turning hearts to have many wives if one wants to live according to the scripture. One will not be equal love for many wives.

In the New Testament there is one sentence of Jesus which is reflected in Mark 10.7, where it says "the two shall become one flesh". Hastings stand is not clear here. He speaks as if he is supporting polygamy and as if against it, but this cannot work for the contemporary society because one cannot find a single text from the scripture where polygamy is forbidden and monogamy is prescribed. Hastings also points out that there is no indication which points out that Jesus ever condemned polygamy, but his own teaching and that of Paul directly presupposes a monogamous norm, which quickly became a definite presupposition within the Christian Church. When one studies the history of Israel in regard to marriage, the concept of the covenant is completely key to the religion of Israel. The covenant which is between God and his own people (Israel) is constantly illustrated in terms of human marriage. But according to the New Testament teaching of marriage, there is a fundamental thrust towards equality, towards full mutuality. This is the very heart of the Christian vision of marriage rooted in the New Testament, and which consequently evolved through centuries of Christian experience (1973:74-75).

Furthermore different aspects of Christian witness appear more relevant in different situations. For instance in the state of modern Africa the witness of Christian monogamy has a very high priority because of two reasons. The first reason is that African women are becoming aware of the structural inferiority of their past condition and are revolting against it. Secondly there is instability in marriage in Africa as elsewhere. The Church cannot remove this instability, but must be sure that its own witness is intelligible and inspiring. After all what is then polygamy? According to Hastings, polygamy is in itself essentially "a responsible, caring, legal, public, and enduring relationship, and it is accepted as such in the judgement of people in many parts of the world. It is a marriage" (1973:78). But the Christian marriage is monogamous. The commitment in the first marriage is explicitly to a monogamous relationship. The social and economic pressures in Africa today are not so

overwhelming that one needs to take a second wife. In this case the general decisions of the Church have to be related to the general development and future needs of society.

3.5.2 Polygamy in the Gumuz society.

For the Gumuz traditional society, since the people did not even know what sin itself is, polygamy is not a sin for them. So there is nothing wrong for the Gumuz person to marry many wives. According to the tradition, if a person has got many children among them many daughters, he may be able to marry more wives by giving those daughters in exchange. There is no rule which prevents a man from marrying many wives.

This creates an understanding for the traditionalists to believe that nothing is wrong with polygamy, because it is God who gives many children. When He gives many children he is permitting people to marry more than one wife. It is a blessing, it is a pleasure to have many wives. According to the understanding of modern society, to denounce polygamy means to act against God's will. As it was mentioned by Hastings, some of the Gumuz Christians try to quote from the Old Testament about the lives of Abraham, King David, Jacob, and King Solomon to legalize polygamous marriage (Gen 16.1-6, 1 Samuel 18).

But whether Abraham, King David, Jacob or Solomon were adulterers and polygamous, without qualification the Bible says that adultery is sin. It sees it as a deliberate violation of the moral law of God and serious in His sight. Let us see what the Bible teaches. In the book of Moses for example the Ten Commandments expressly forbid it. It says: "You shall not commit adultery" (Exodus 20:14; Deuteronomy 5:18). In the book of Leviticus 20:10, we read that adulterers were to be put to death. When one reads the New Testament, Jesus Christ said "You have heard that it was said, "You shall not commit adultery". But I say to you that every one who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart"(Matthew 5:27,28). I am stressing on adultery because according to my understanding after marrying a wife if a person brings another

woman and sleeps with her, that is committing adultery. I am looking at it in terms of polygamy.

In Paul's letter to Galatians, he calls adultery one of the "works of the flesh" (Galatians 5:19), and links it with other serious sins mentioned in the ICorinthians 6:9-10 and Colossians 3:5. Therefore there can be no other conclusion; adultery is Wrong. It is sinful in the sight of God, whether it is blatant or secretive. It is wrong because it is an attempt to carry on a dual intimate relationship when God has called for one man and one woman to be one flesh (Genesis 2:24). It is wrong also because it makes temporary what God declared to be permanent (Matthew 19:6). Always it involves deception. The violator not only deceives his mate, but he also deceives himself.

One can ask a question. Why do people then become involved in an extramarital relationship? When one analyzes this time this century is a sex-stimulated century. A man or a woman may become involved in an extramarital relationship for a number of reasons.

Let me describe what I have noticed since I came to South Africa. For example there is pressure from the society. When one looks at the magazines, books, television, advertisements, home videos, they all highlight the romance and excitement of sex, often in provocative and explicit terms. One can call it sexual bombardment on our society. Fidelity and commitment are seen as old-fashioned. For instance young people say: my sex life is nobody's business but mine; as long as nobody is hurt it is okay; it is not that big a deal; it must be right- we love each other so much and so forth. Self-centredness is also one of the problems. Sometimes a marital partner will justify an affair with selfish statements such as: I desire a better partner; an affair might stir up our marriage, and so forth. But what one should know is that Satan loves to turn the vague dissatisfactions that often come into marriage into excuses for sexual unfaithfulness. When dissatisfaction creeps into marriages, with the passing of the years people may begin to

feel that they are missing something or that life is bypassing them. They start to believe that their marriage has become stagnant; that they are being taken for granted or are unappreciated. They may be looking for a deeper intimacy. Meanwhile the sexual bombardment of a sensual age continues.

To get rid of all these complications Christians must:

- a) Commit themselves to their spouses without reservation.
- b) Dedicate themselves anew to God and His moral law.
- c) Declare their unwavering love and loyalty to Jesus Christ.
- d) Stay away from all compromising situations.
- e) Take positive steps to improve their marital relationship without delay.

3.5.3 Divorce and marital breakdown

From the understanding of the New Testament teaching and the witness of the Church, marriage is a lifelong relationship.

A Christian must enter into marriage with the understanding that to cause one's own marriage to break is sin. But when one observes the marital relationships today one can see that several marriages are breaking down. Why? What causes the marriage to break apart or what causes separation? Even though there are some reasons for the break down of marriages, such as separation by war or migration, or the behaviour of one or other of the partners makes it difficult to continue living together, Oates identifies certain stages of separation (1976:24).

3.5.4 Stages in separation

3.5.4.1 Unilateral decision making.

In every home decisions are a part of every day life. Whether these decisions are related to work, money, sex, social activities, or the care of children, they usually involve scheduling of time, the utilization of leisure, the investment of energy. When decisions in a home are made without mutual consultation, and contacts come to be made individually, then that is the beginning of separation (Oates 1976:24).

3.5.4.2 Mutual deception.

Whether it is within the Christian or traditional pattern of marriage, from the religious point of view human relationships are based on clear covenants openly arrived at and expected to be kept faithfully. From the time the couple start to deceive one another the result leads to the use of distance-making tricks. Indeed the aim of the game is to create separation or distance on the basis of secrecy and being clever. The threat to the marriage covenant begins to show up. The element of trust is the most important ingredient of love and when a person starts lying deliberately for whatever reason, then the developing separation will be without an end (Oates 1976:24).

3.5.4.3 Withdrawal into despair.

When the spouses give up on each other, each starts to experience a sense of misfortune and hopelessness. Both begin to experience the feeling of being trapped. The resultant distress may find expression in various addictions, of which the most common are the overuse of drugs, overeating, overdrinking, and overwork. It may also lead to physical illness, the most common of which seems to be generalized gastro-intestinal disorders, upper respiratory problems, and disorders of the genito-urinary system, which can include the freezing of sexual desire. The sexual relationship has either ceased or is very rare when separation has reached this stage.

The habit of attachment, locating, tracking with one's eyes and ears, reaching out to touch, hold, caress, etc will be replaced by an almost opposite set of rituals. At this moment no one knows where the other is, each is withdrawing from bodily contact, pushing the other away, tricking in rage, avoiding the sight and sound of the other continues to widen. If this separation takes place in the African culture the problem becomes a family issue. A ritual for the ancestors will be performed. According to Oates, if the problem cannot be solved, the husband's or wife's family gets custody over the child or children. Mostly the wife stays with her in-laws. Some times

the husband, who is the family's own son can be chased away from home because of his irresponsible attitude towards his wife and children (Oates 1976:24-25).

3.5.4.4 Social involvement.

Coping with the situation is very difficult because of the burden and the stresses encountered within it, and this makes it easy to involve others in the problem, for example close friends of the same sex, relatives, and possibly professional counsellors. Close friends tend to be the first to be involved and then professional people. Many times close friends are empathetic, nonpossessively warm and genuine. Parents who take care of their married sons and daughters know whether their children feel happy or unhappy. Brothers and sisters also trust in each other (Oates 1976:26).

In this social involvement it is risky if a person of the opposite sex acting as a counsellor may be more interested in having an "affair" than being a trustworthy confidant. Usually an affair aids and encourages a separation process that otherwise might collapse. There is also danger in choosing a new partner with a similar personality to the spouse one is leaving. Second, there is a problem of entering a new relationship without working through and completing the grief process involved in the separation and divorce. According to Oates a person should wait at least a year after the legal termination of divorce proceedings before starting another set of marriage intentions, and these should preferably be with someone not intimately involved in the process of separation and divorce (Oates 1976:26). Third, there is the risk of mistrust built into the new marriage from the outset; if the marital partner chases away his/her spouse in order to form an affair with someone else, this may create suspicion later on.

At the stage of social involvement pastoral care and counselling calls for two important procedures: first the pastor should learn through direct questioning to whom the spouses have

talked, and secondly, the pastor should ask what kinds of advice and counselling they have received, what kinds of promises and agreements they have made with others, both individually and as a couple. Usually this is best done in separate interviews with each spouse rather than with both of them together (Oates 1976:25-26).

3.5.4.5 Physical and social separation.

When the couple reach the stage of physical and social separation, it is known by their friends and relatives that they are already separated from "bed and board". There is a step which may be called the chaotic separation in which one or the other moves out in the middle of a raging argument or quarrel. Impulsive separations of this type tend to be short-lived. Tempers cool and spouses often come back together again and this can take place repeatedly. To prevent further hurt a pastoral counsellor can suggest a planned separation to test a couple's threats of divorce. Some couples can also leave on a legal separation basis where a lawyer can draw up separation papers to legalize the divorce. People can also separate on a biblical basis for a short period of time for the sake of prayer as individuals before God (Oates 1976:27-28).

One can give many different and tangible reasons which cause the marriage of beloved partners to break down or which can cause separation. But how can the Church approach these marriages and render effective healing? Without referring to the scriptures, Hastings points out that there are two usual ways of approaching a marital union which has now broken down: the first one is by way of annulment to consider the first marriage as not the real marriage and allow those who were involved in it to remarry freely. The second one is to dissolve the real marriage by way of divorce, which involves legal intervention.

When he does refer to the scripture, I see that he agrees with the statement from the gospel of Mark where Jesus was tested and was asked whether it was lawful for a man to divorce his wife.

Jesus asked in return what Moses commanded them. They answered, "Moses permitted a man to divorce his wife by note of dismissal". Jesus said to them, " It was because you were so unteachable that he made this rule for you; but in the beginning, at the creation, God made them male and female. For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother, and be made one with his wife; and the two shall become one flesh. It follows that they are no longer two individuals: they are one flesh. What God has joined together, man must not separate. When they were indoors again the disciples questioned him about this matter; he said to them, "whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her: so too, if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery" (Mark 10:2-12). Hastings indicates that the implication of marriage being a sacrament of the unbreakable love of Christ and His Church (1973:72-74). Paul offers no possibility or separation of divorce within Christian marriage (I Cor 7:12-16). This comes about as a moral fact through the unbreakable loving fidelity that, with the grace of God, steadily binds together a husband and wife who have truly accepted and lived their marital vocation in the spirit of Christ.

In Matthew 5:32, 19:9 Jesus says "I tell you, if a man divorces his wife for any cause *other than unchastity* and marries another, he commits adultery". The stand of Jesus and Paul has been accepted by Eastern Christians and many protestants as justifying divorce on the ground of adultery. If this is the case what should be the position of the Church on the issue of divorce?

According to Hastings the Church's position should be the following:

- a) Christians must always enter marriage with the intention of a lifelong union; not to do so would indeed nullify the marriage.
- b) There is no single ground whatsoever in justifying the breaking of such a union, if the union be otherwise

maintainable. One or the other of the parties can never rightly decide to set about "dissolving" it. Adultery is not an adequate ground for divorce. The proper Christian approach is always one of forgiveness, forbearance, and renewed love.

c) The duty of the Church is to do all it can to help Christians understand this lifelong character of marriage and to produce a pastoral service to assist marriages which are at risk.

d) If the marriage has broken down, the Church's first duty is to see whether the bond can be restored, especially if there are children. However, it has also to recognize that separation can be a lesser evil than some others, even for the children. Marital stability is not the only quality of marriage, and there are limits beyond which living together can no longer be urged.

e) If a marriage has so completely broken down that there is no hope left for its restoration, procedures, civil and religious, can be followed for bringing it to a legal end.

f) Following such procedures it should be open for a Church member, who has seriously pondered Christian teaching and his or her past experience, and is undertaking all the responsibilities surviving from the first marriage, to enter upon a new one which can be blessed by the Church.

g) The public blessing of the Church on a second marriage should not be given unless the local Christian community is satisfied that this is right (1973:87-89).

These are very important points. Christians must understand what they are doing and realize that any action they are taking has consequences. To this teaching to the Christians is the responsibility of the Church. In addition to these points I recommend that any measure to be taken must be according to scripture, which will be a helpful way to give further explanation when necessary.

3.6 Morality among the Gumuz society.

Before I describe the morality of the Gumuz society, I will describe the morality of Africa in the past and at present. I want to start by asking questions. What is morality? According to Mugambi and Nasimiyu-Wasike morality is often associated with action and belief with theory. Morals are seen as obvious actions of humans which shapes one's personality. It also deals with internal factors of action with the inclusion of faith and belief (1992:85).

What was the morality of Africa in the past and at present? Mugambi and Nasimiyu-Wasike assert that African traditional societies had their own moral code and conduct. The moral code governed human behaviour in society (Mugambi and Nasimiyu-Wasike 1992:85).

As a result of modernization, there has been an erosion of moral standards in Africa. The traditional African world-view is holistic and does not separate the spiritual and material aspects. But the Christian moral education has not fully incorporated the integrated world-view as the basis for the revival of the moral order in contemporary Africa (Mugambi and Nasimiyu-Wasike 1992:91). Instead the Church allowed itself to be hijacked by the powerful ruling elites. In its theology the Church could not do better than the legitimating of the social, political and economic interests of the dominant groups. For Mugambi and Nasimiyu the Church has been alienated from the poor and the oppressed. It even began to glorify and spiritualize poverty (1992:110-111). With modern life, people are individualistic and materialistic, especially under the influence of Western cultures, and are not ready to be hospitable, welcoming, giving and helping others or being honest. Modern life is so expensive that people feel that they cannot be generous.

Mugambi and Nasimiyu-Wasike argue that historically, religion, belief and morality are closely related to one another in theory

and practice. However, morality and belief depend on religion and are part and parcel of one another. Morals and beliefs can be considered to lie partially in the human realm, religion is directed to someone, some being, some reality that is more than human (1992:86). But the moral bankruptcy of the West uprooted the social, economic, and political systems of Africa and restructured them to meet the needs of the West (1992:108). In Africa today in terms of everyday conduct for individuals and communities there is uncertainty, disillusionment and even despair. There is much complaining and crying. People cry and complain because they possess some knowledge of traditional African morality which ensured the well-being of communities and individuals alike. That morality has been superimposed, and in certain respects rudely crossed, by other influences of the day and age in which we find ourselves. Elderly people cry daily that they are seeing behaviour that shocks them: sexual immorality, scepticism about religious matters, and many things which hasten the old to their graves. The middle-aged people lament about children they fail to control and the youth complain of lack of example from the older members of society. African traditional values and virtues of charity, honesty, hospitality, generosity, loyalty, truthfulness, solidarity, respect for elders, respect for nature and respect for God are fading away. Generally African traditions and morals have been undermined by modern life (1992:92).

For Paul, ethical or moral behaviour is a consequence of the right relationship with God. Christian behaviour consists of walking in obedience to the spirit of God. Therefore, morality and spirituality are interwoven. The spiritual aspects of morality come out, as is stated in Galatians:

But, I say, walk by the Spirit, and do not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh; for these are opposed to each other, to prevent you from doing what you would. But if you are led

by the Spirit you are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are plain: fornication, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, anger, selfishness, dissension, party spirit, envy, drunkenness, carousing, and the like. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God (Gal.5:16-21).

From this understanding we learn that God has provided morals to Christians already in the scriptures. Therefore this statement correlates with African traditional belief which points out that morals were and are God-given.

Like some other African peoples, the Gumuz society has suffered a major cultural disruption, being in a state of chaos in the realm of morality. The erosion of morality came to the Gumuz society along with the construction of roads and bridges, building literacy schools, medical institutions and so forth. The construction of roads and bridges made access easier for the neighbouring tribes to get inter-relationship with the society. This inter-relationship included trade and other business. The building of schools and medical institutions mentioned in the Gumuz society using the same school and medical institution with neighbouring societies. The other factor was the introduction of a state farm by the government. When the government introduced the state farm in the valley the domain of the Gumuz society, people from the highland who were already exposed to education and modern style of life came with their culture which included religion, way of living, political, economic aspects and so forth. This uprooted the social, economic and political system of the Gumuz society.

In the Gumuz traditional society, sexual morals were very important. These include the value of virginity, protection of premarital sex, faithfulness in marriage, few illegitimate children, incest taboos, no prostitution, no sex abuse, no rape. Those involved in any negative sexual activities faced severe

punishment. Human sexuality was looked upon as sacred by the Gumuz society. Any deviation from sexual taboos led to heavy punishment since it was a form of sexual conduct. The code determines the time and manner for having sex and also the person with whom one may or may not enter into sexual relationship. It was a shame for the Gumuz girl to become pregnant before marriage. This situation is similar in some African countries. Mugambi & Nasimiyu-Wasike point out that several ethnic groups in different countries of Africa considered sexual purity an honour of family, virginity the glory of a young woman and community, and faithfulness the crown of a married woman or man to the whole clan. They continue and argue that modern society is more "liberal" in sexual matters, therefore less moral than the society of the past (Mugambi and Nasimiyu-Wasike 1992:93). Thus it is normal for girls to become pregnant before marriage nowadays. It is a personal matter, it does not concern anybody else. She or he has got freedom to become what she or he wants to become. It is obvious that in modern days, when one is unable to keep the moral code of the society, one claims liberty and freedom. One example is sexual immorality. As mentioned above there is no respect for parents. Parents are unable to control their children. Therefore it is clear that breaking of sexual morals, loss of virginity is proof of bad a relationship between parents and children, which leads to lack of moral upbringing in the family.

The disintegration of moral sense in the Gumuz society manifested in giving and receiving bribes, parents neglecting their children, adult children abandoning their aged parents, stealing and violent robberies, failure to show respect for one another, immoral conduct, having no will for work. Also it created a feeling of scepticism in regard to the efficacy of spiritual realities, disregard for authorities, and the absence of accountability. From this understanding I see that the Church must re-evaluate its teaching to reinstate the fragmented morality of the Gumuz society, because the society thinks that the way it is walking now is the right one, but it is not.

3.7 Applicable comment for the Gumuz society.

My general comment will mostly be based on the scriptures. The Gumuz Christians need to know that marriage is not human made. Marriage was made in heaven. It all began in paradise. God saw that man's aloneness was not good, so He made him a helper like him. When God brought the woman to him, the first marital relationship began. Adam and Eve shared the wonderful garden of paradise which God had created for them as husband and wife. In Genesis chapter two the Lord God said:

"It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him... And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place. Then the rib which the Lord God had taken from man He made into woman, and He brought her to the man." (Genesis 2:18-22)

Eve was made to be Adam's comparable helper. As his helper, she was given to him to help him find fulfilment. The word helper refers here to someone who helps another find fulfilment and to someone who comes to the rescue of another. When one looks at Adam and Eve's first marital relationship, the woman was brought to man to fulfil him, in a sense to rescue him from his aloneness. As a comparable helper, Eve was Adam's qualified corresponding partner. God made her a suitable companion to the man He had made. That is how God began it all in Eden.

Still in Genesis (2:24-25) there are four facts which God mentions at the beginning of marriage to make marriage meaningful. First of all God said "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother". This shows that the marital partners must be cut off from their parents. The second thing is "And be joined to his wife." The picture of the first marriage includes the idea of forming a permanent bonding. Thirdly, "And they shall become one flesh". They are united, the two are to see themselves as one. The old family units are broken and a new one begins. Fourthly, "And they were both naked... and they were

not ashamed". Their absence of self-consciousness enabled them to enjoy one another and to meet each other's needs without any sense of embarrassment or rejection.

When God made marriage, He gave the command to Adam and Eve to replenish the earth, and insisted that marriage be a lifelong relationship. He did not leave His people on their own, He told them how to make their marriage work. In order for the man and woman to make their marriage work, they were to make a lifelong commitment. When a man and woman decide to marry, they are at the same time committing themselves to remain married until one of them dies. The Lord Jesus said:

Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning made them male and female, and said, "For this reason a man shall leave his mother and father and be joined to his wife, and the two shall be come one flesh?" So then they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate (Matthew 19:4-6).

Then, in reply to a question about divorce, Jesus proceeded:

Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, permitted you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and whoever marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery (Matthew 19:8,9).

The marriage vow, therefore, is the expression of a lifelong commitment. The meaning of the vow "From this day forward" extends throughout one's lifetime, it is a vow that is not to be broken (Ecclesiastes 5:4). As mentioned above in order to see their marriage working, husband and wife of the Gumuz Christians must see themselves as one. After marriage no longer is it a man living his life for himself and a woman living hers for herself. There is now a new union, a new family, a new unit.

Adam expressed this shared identity when God brought him the woman. He said:

This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man (Genesis 2:23). The next verse concludes with the words "they shall become one flesh" (v.24).

Of course often it is not simple to live out that oneness in everyday life. It is obvious that husband and wife have different habits, different backgrounds, different parents, different education, different personalities, and different emotional scars. Besides, Eve was not a clone of Adam. She was unique, as every human being is unique. She did not come off some assembly line. She was different, both physically and emotionally. She had different needs- needs which Adam alone could satisfy and needs which she alone satisfies. In marriage a man and woman are brought into union. They become one, blending into one another's lives. It is once-for-all, yet it is a process. Time, love, patience, and forgiveness are needed to bring the shared identity of marriage into maturity. It has wonderful results. The man and a woman are no longer alone. They are one, even at a time when he is a thousand miles away, when she is in the pains of childbirth, when he has lost his job, when he has received a good promotion, when she has been offered a new job. Although they are distinct persons with vast differences, they have agreed to walk the path of life as one. They have a shared identity.

Marriage calls for total fidelity on the part of the husband and the wife. They are to be true to one another. There is no variation on this issue from the Bible. The man is to be faithful to his wife, she to him. The writer of proverbs warns and says:

Can a man take fire to his bosom, and his clothes not be burned? Can one walk on hot coals, and his feet not be

seared ? So is he who goes in to his neighbour's wife, whoever touches her shall not be innocent (Proverbs 6:27-29).

The Bible is uncompromising in its demand for sexual fidelity. Paul told Titus to have the older women instruct the younger women in the Church to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste...(Titus 2:4-5). As a woman enters a marriage relationship, she is to be committed to giving herself only to her husband.

Adultery is strictly forbidden in the Bible. The sixth commandment given on Sinai was, 'you shall not commit adultery" (Exodus 20:14). Jesus mentioned this commandment in His conversation with the rich young ruler (Matthew 19:18). And Paul named adultery first in his list of the sins of the flesh (Galatians 5:19). Marital faithfulness is the fulfilment of the vow made before God and man during the wedding ceremony: "And to you I pledge my faithfulness".

Today's society has approached marriage aggressively. One of its attacks is on the traditional roles within the family. The wife is being told that since she has the same rights as her husband, she does not have to submit to anybody. The husband is pressurized to take care of himself and not to worry about her. As a result, husbands and wives need direction. They need answers to basic questions about their specific roles. These responses are given in the Bible. When they are put into practice, marriage will work. The husband's role is clearly indicated in the Bible. The Bible says that the husband is the head of the wife. Paul wrote, "But I want you to know that... the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God." (I Corinthians 11:3) Also, "For the husband is the head of the wife"(Ephesians 5:23)

How does one understand this ? According to Paul, it means that the husband is to provide responsible leadership without being

dictatorial or blindly self-serving. Biblically his leadership is

- to be exercised in love (Ephesians 5:25, Colossians 3:19)
- to follow the example of Christ's love for the Church (Ephesians 5:25).
- to be done with understanding (I Peter 3:7)
- to be done without bitterness (Colossians 3:19)
- to equal his love for his own body (Ephesians 5:28)

Thus, the fact that the husband has been appointed head of the wife does not mean that he is superior.

The same verse which says the husband is head of the woman also says that God is the head of Christ (I Corinthians 11:3). And we know they are equal in nature. Both are fully God. The husband's headship is functional. It helps the marriage work. The husband is to provide loving, understanding, God-honouring leadership. When one observes the role of the wife, she is instructed in the Bible to submit to the leadership of her husband. For example, "Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord." (Ephesians 5:22, Colossians 3:18). Also, "Likewise you wives, be submissive to your own husbands." (I Peter 3:1) Also, "...admonish the young women...obedient to their own husbands." (Titus 2:4-5)

God made man and woman to come together in a fulfilling, satisfying relationship. He made Adam first (I Timothy 2:13), and he made him to be head (I Corinthians 11:3; Ephesians 5:23). Adam was fulfilled in leading; Eve was to be fulfilled in accepting him as her leader (Genesis 2:18; I Corinthians 11:8,9).

A woman who insists on being the decision-maker in the home is placing herself in a position of disobedience. Her determination to have her own way, despite the clear command of God and pattern of Scripture, is a shame to her and a threat to her marriage. The marriage works best when both husband and wife

accept their roles. It is a functional necessity - a necessity exemplified within the God-head itself. Consider these words of Christ: "My Father is greater than I" (John 14:28). Yet He also said, "I and My Father are one" (John 10:30).

Jesus came to earth to carry out in exact detail the will and plan of the Father. Although He was equal to the Father, He submitted himself to the Father's leading. It is similar in marriage. The husband will find fulfilment in headship, the wife will find joy in submission, and the marriage will be blessed of God. For this is the way He designed it. When it comes to the sexual fulfilment, in the garden Paradise where it all began, Adam and Eve shared a wonderful intimacy: "And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed" (Genesis 2:25). Furthermore, the commandment to replenish the earth came before the fall. Intimacy and mutual physical fulfilment, therefore, have always been part of the husband-wife relationship. The husband and wife are to find sexual fulfilment in each other. The following perspectives are given by the Bible: the husband-wife sexual fulfilment is protective. They have to reserve this special intimacy for each other, and they are to give it freely. Paul wrote, "Nevertheless, because of sexual immorality, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband (I Corinthians 7:2).

We are living in a sexually promiscuous age. There are few restraints. Advertisements are lurid. Television scenes are provocative. There is an emphasis on the body. Men and women are more aggressive than ever. A husband and wife who maintain intimacy protect each other from a sexually obsessed society. They protect their own faithfulness.

The other thing is that sexual fulfilment for husband and wife is enjoyable. After delivering a strict warning about prostitution, the author of Proverbs wrote the following words for the young husbands:

Drink water from your own cistern, and running water from your own well. Should your fountains be dispersed abroad, streams of water in the streets? Let them be only your own, and not for strangers with you. Let your fountain be blessed, and rejoice with the wife of your youth. As a loving deer and a graceful doe, let her breasts satisfy you at all times; and always be enraptured with her love(Proverbs 5:15-19).

The sexual aspect of marriage is not a necessary evil to be endured for the purpose of procreation. It was designed by God to bring continuing pleasure - an intimate, exhilarating, renewing part of the husband-wife relationship.

Sexual fulfilment between husband and wife is a pleasure which is expected. When man and a woman come together in marriage, each has a right to expect sexual fulfilment from the other.

Paul says:

Let the husband render to his wife the affection due her, and likewise also the wife to her husband. The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. And likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does (I Corinthians 7:3,4).

Paul goes on to say that if one marital partner decides to abstain, it is first to be agreed upon with the other. Furthermore, the time of abstinence is to be brief.

Do not deprive one another except with consent for a time, that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again so that Satan does not tempt you because of your lack of self-control (I Corinthians 7:5).

Sexual fulfilment is an important part of marriage. Sexuality is not evil. This was not the sin in Eden that brought the fall. It must not be made more important than it is; nor should it be minimized. It is part of the overall picture- an intimate

part of the shared identity of the husband and wife.

Finally, the most important element for the husband and wife marriage to work is to see themselves as spiritual companions. They are making a spiritual journey through life together, walking hand in hand as children of God toward the wonderful eternity with God that awaits them. What a difference it makes when a marriage has a godly husband and a dedicated wife. No one can measure how much they help each other spiritually as they travel life's road together. When Paul wrote about marriage, the spiritual dimension was emphasised. Speaking to husbands about their wives, Paul said:

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the Church and gave himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that He might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish. So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies (Ephesians 5:25-28).

There is to be a purifying, cleansing dimension to the marriage. Just as the Church is made pure because of Jesus Christ, so the wife should be made better by her relationship to her husband. And this can be accomplished as Christ helped the Church: He loved it and gave Himself for it. Love and sacrifice - these set a marriage apart and make possible a true spiritual companionship.

Peter also mentioned the spiritual dimension in his passage on marriage. He closed it by saying ".... that your prayers may not be hindered" (I Peter 3:7). As a husband understands his wife, giving her honour and seeing her as a joint heir of the grace of life, he will be able to pray with power. If he does not, Peter says, his prayers will be "hindered". He will lose the easy freedom of unhindered prayer. As a husband and wife draw close to the Lord through prayer, Bible reading, fellowship, and

submission to Christ, they will also draw closer to one another. Their marital life will work out in a way that will provide them with God's blessing and will be a witness for others. Therefore to have a workable marriage and enjoyable marital relationship, the Gumuz Christians should live in accordance with the scriptures.

3.8 Comparative summary.

Today, when older methods of controlling adolescence socially are breaking down, and when the social order is being transformed, the youth culture tends to be detached from the social system. Although teenagers may not be as well organized, they tend to subscribe to the common values of sexual behaviour and considerable pressure is exerted on the individual to conform. The school is another factor. When those who went to school came back home, what they had heard, seen and practised at school changed their mind and attitude towards traditional marriage performance, which included all processes in the course of marriage. The traditional way of contracting marriage is neglected and looked on as a non-civilized way of living. Since boys had a chance to go to school, this opportunity made them freer than girls. For girls, the constitution of marriage is more important than whom one marries. The great desire of the girl is to get a husband who will be faithful to her, who is educated, who is superior to others, who knows another language besides the tribal one. So most of the marriage rites, which are full of rich and complex symbolism and the first marital intercourse which is usually preceded by ceremonies, lose their identity and value.

Kisembo, Magesa, and Shorter point out that Africa is experiencing revolution and a social change which started a long time ago. The organization of the ancient community has been replaced. Human beings are no longer bound to self-sufficient, similar village localities. The association between societies, various manners, faith, and benefits stir one another and convince one another in this contemporary, transforming

condition. A person is faced with options of action, and he/she is tempted to see his/her life as a purely passing time. The procedure, of course, basically changes persons who were able, through learning or financially, to rise above their own customary surroundings, but those who do not have these means are also convinced by what is going on. The traditions of common people are not only weakened in themselves, but are now mixed with larger-scale organization. They no longer have the reinforced cohesion they had in the past, and they are no longer supporters of social security (1977:186-87).

They argued that even though there are some rural domains where the parentage procedure, initiation rites and celebration of marriage remain basically unchanged from the former times, there are some localities where marriage ceremonies are not influenced in different manners by social change (Kisembo, Magesa, and Shorter 1977:186-187).

These authors found out that Hans Boerakker, in his study of marriage in eastern Uganda, pointed out that in the handing over of responsibility for marriage by the parents to immature young people, a basic transformation has taken place in the character of African traditional matrimony. This progress has had the impact of obscuring the actual character and main point of traditional marriage (Kisemba, Magesa, and Shorter 1977:188,191). Marriage in general means any formal commitment between a man and a woman to cohabit more or less permanently. From my investigation I found out that the Roman Catholics and Anglicans require a marriage ceremony in Church, and most other Christian Churches, even though they may recognize the validity of civil or customary marriage for their adherents, impose certain conditions on them and invite them to ask for the Church's blessing on their marriage.

CHAPTER FOUR

4. Contextual family therapy.

4.1 Introduction

In the previous two chapters I have made an investigation into the traditional and Christian marriage practices of the Gumuz society. According to this investigation, to assist the marriage and the family life of the Gumuz society, contextual family therapy is suitable. In this chapter I will discuss contextual family therapy. But before I do so I shall begin my assessment by describing the family and the therapy. Finally I will try to describe the contextual family therapy in terms of the Ethiopian context especially referring to the Gumuz Christians. Hopefully at the end of this attempt the concept of contextual family therapy will be understood as an important therapy useful for maintaining the family life of the Gumuz Christians effectively.

4.2 What is Family

When we read about family and family therapy, we are exposed to a wide and broad perspective of understanding family. The fact that different family theorists and therapists are eager to point out that the usefulness of psychiatry, and to some extent developmental psychology, from an intra-individual point of view to a view of human behaviour and development in a social context, constitutes one of the most important steps in the systematization of a "scientific revolution" in the understanding of human behaviour (Kuhn 1962:1). According to Kuhn: "Scientific revolutions are taken to be those non-cumulative developmental episodes in which an older paradigm is replaced in whole or in part by an incompatible new one" (1962:1).

Contemporary family researchers and theorists such as Esterson 1976, Jackson 1967, saw human behaviour as adaptive to its context. A family oriented approach is therefore not merely a

new form of treatment or diagnosis, "but is a reconceptualization of the very basis to view human behaviour"(Framo 1972:1). Ackerman in his findings points out that "in their family context, the designated patient's symptoms are seen as an expression of interlocking family pathology" (Ackerman 1958:107), (Goldenberg 1980:81). When he was analyzing the situation of family problems Laing came up with the problem of the definition of the family. He points out:

We speak of families as though we all knew what families are. We identify, as families, networks of people who live together over periods of time, who have ties of marriage and kinship to one another. The more one studies family dynamics, the more unclear one becomes as to dynamics of other groups not called families, let alone the way families themselves differ (1971:3).

Jackson and Satir point out that although it is possible to identify the family in a given case, to describe the various approaches to seeing the family as a unit will enable one to see that "...the language used in theoretical descriptions about family interaction reveals the need to find new and more appropriate terminology that may correctly define the concept " (1961:31). On this issue many studies on families involve only dyadic or triadic interactions, while other therapists for example Bowen 1960 stresses the importance of extended families. Others apply the concept of a family network which may involve nuclear and extended families, as well as other relatives and significant members of the local community who directly or indirectly influence family structure and function (Speck and Attneave, 1973).

For Goldenberg,

Family is far more than a collection of individuals occupying a specific physical and psychological space together. A family is a natural social system, with properties all its own, one that has evolved a set of rules,

roles, a power structure, form of communication, and ways of negotiation and problem-solving that all various tasks to be performed effectively (1985:3).

Goldenberg continues his argument and points out that the main entrance to such an organized system occurs only through birth, adoption, or marriage, and all members of the family share a common household and struggle to engage in cooperative behaviour in order to meet survival and developmental need (1985:3). Hunter has a similar definition to that of Goldenberg, where he says that:

Family is a social institution and a special relationship. As an institution, it locates individuals in a network of responsibility and gives them a role in the transmission of culture. As special relationship, it is part of an individual's identity and character which it both forms and expresses for good or for ill. When it comes to a social institution it regulates sexual intercourse, offspring, lines of descent, property, and inheritance (1990: 406-407).

Having a religious sentiment, Augustine of Hippo shows a slightly different perspective. He points out that family was a social institution ordained by God for the propagation of the race and the containment of sexual lust. Augustine expected three things from marriage and family; new race, faithful marriage, and Sacrament, by which he meant an everlasting sign of commitment and faith similar to the union between Yahweh and Israel, Christians and the Church (Hunter 1990:407).

Clinebell defines family as a social organism or system, where family therapy pioneer Nathan Ackerman suggests that the term Organism, "connotes the biological core of the family, its qualities of living process and functional unity, and its natural life history meaning a period of germination, a birth, a growth and development, a capacity to adapt to a change and crisis, a slow decline, and finally dissolution of the old family into the new." (1966:284)

This social institution and special relationship as Hunter puts it, and social organism or system according to Clinebell, has a hundred percent possibility of being disturbed by any kind of crisis or bad event. A crisis according to Lendman's theory refers to any event or situation occurring in the life of an individual or family that interrupts the homeostatic balance and thus creates a situation in which the habitual problem-solving activities are not adequate and do not lead rapidly to the previous achieved balanced state (Hunter 1990: 247).

The family can be also defined according to structure for example, dyadic, triadic, or according to function such as open system, closed system, random system (Kantor & Lehr 1976:143-149). Healthy family life is very important to the building and functioning of any society.

David C. Korten describes the necessity of the role of the family in a society as the following:

The family is the most basic social unit of human society. It is the building block that is essential to the construction and maintenance of strong integrative social structures. A strong family provides enduring bonds that are the individual's most important sources of economic and psychological security. The family unit is essential to the healthy development and functioning of any society (1990:169-170).

There are almost as many definitions of the family as there are family theorists. Our next focus would be to indicate some of the facts which cause a dysfunctional family system within the family.

4.3 Causes for dysfunctional system.

There are several reasons which cause the family not to function normally. Of these, dysfunctional familial role, split loyalty and the revolving slate are the primary ones. Let me give a brief description and examine how these terms are involved in

the dysfunctional activities.

4.3.1 Dysfunctional familial role

According to Virginia Satir we call an individual dysfunctional when he/she has not learned to communicate properly. Since he or she does not manifest a means of perceiving and interpreting himself or herself accurately, the assumptions on which he or she bases his or her actions will be faulty and his efforts to adapt to reality will be confused and inappropriate. This applies in the same manner to the family in the process of functioning. She argues that a dysfunctional person will manifest himself incongruently, that is he or she will deliver conflicting message, via different levels of communication and using different signals (1983: 119).

To help one understand what role the dysfunctional family plays on children, let me give one example which I heard from a friend. Two children, female and male were playing in the garden, during their game, the boy was collecting sticks. A person passing by saw the sticks in the boy's hand and wanted to know for what purposes he was carrying them. In answering, the boy responded that he wanted to use the sticks to beat his wife when he gets married. This example makes us understand what role a dysfunctional family plays on children. We understand that this boy was brought up in a family where the husband beats his wife. This child has concluded that the beating of wives by husbands is an acceptable form of behaviour.

There are many present day parents who were taken advantage of and abused by their own parents during their childhood. When they grow up and get married they take advantage of their children and abuse them in the same way their parents did to them, consequently manipulating and damaging their children.

To break this cycle of violence, using Satir's family life chronology is very important, for it indicates that the family is made up of parents, grandparents, and children. Each

generation represents a different context at a different time and place. Each family has a unique history with its own meanings and interpretations to each of its members, while each family has its own set of explicit and implicit rules about how to approach life (Satir 1983:146). My understanding from this statement is that, in the process of diagnosis, looking at the three-generational family will automatically identify how these implicit and explicit rules have been inflicted onto the present structure of their family life.

Whatever a person is doing represents what he pays attention to, how he experiences that, how he interprets it, and what actions he associates with that interpretation.

Nevertheless according to my statement above, in the long run those children who were victimized for a long time will accuse their parents for the harm they did to them. And the manipulation, and abuse will pass from this generation to the next generation and they will start to manipulate and damage their children in turn.

4.3.2 Split loyalty and the revolving slate.

The term "loyalty conflict" signifies a violation between a trustworthy filial loyalty and a competing contemporary loyalty. "Split loyalty" indicates originally divided loyalty or trust (Gurman & Kniskern 1981:165). Split loyalty occurs when a child is forced to choose one parent's love at the cost of betraying his or her other parent.

Why do parents create such confusion in the minds of their children? Briefly, this happens when husband and wife mistrust one another. Why is there the absence of trust? For example; a wife decided to leave her husband because their marriage was not according to her wish. From the beginning she was not in love with him. It was either by force or by the traditional way of marriage or for another reason that they married. They had

two sons. When she left and had her own house, the husband wanted more loyalty from the children at the expense of the children's loyalty to the mother, so he prevented the children from having contact with their mother. But in his absence she went and took the children and went home. Imagine what happens to these children, they face conflicting loyalty which continues throughout their life time and will pass this on to the next generation. Conflicting loyalties have a system of replaying or regerminating themselves, Nagy calls this the "revolving slate " (1995:13).

The following is an example from my own experience. One child was brought from a rural area to stay with his married sister. After completing his college studies he was employed. He became a drunkard. He was advised to stop drinking, but he refused. When we investigated his background we realized that his father was a drunkard too. According to Nagy "the breakdown of trustworthiness of relationships through the disengagement from multilateral caring and accountability sets the stage for symptom development. The type of symptom likely to appear is determined by many factors, such as constitutional factors, sibling rank, identification with a parent or relative, death of a family member " (1995:14). According to Hesteness this is what was defined by Nagy as a revolving slate, which emphasises that a child whose father was a drunkard may become a drunkard. There is a possibility that the slate may continue revolving. The coming of the husband from one direction and the wife from another direction opens the way for the child to face split loyalty (Hesteness 1995:14). Having given the definitions and why many families are disintegrating, the need for family therapy and its power in healing the family system will be reviewed briefly.

4.4 Family Therapy.

Psychologists and psychiatrists have sought ways of improving individual and group functioning by therapeutic intervention. Family therapy addresses itself to similar problems, offering a fresh perspective on human behaviour and on a way of helping to achieve constructive personality and behavioral changes in individual clients and in the family as a whole. In systems terms, families are rarely if ever "normal" or "abnormal" (Goldenberg 1980:28).

When Clinebell was dealing with family problems, he realized that in order to accomplish its function effectively the family and the family system needed therapy. This understanding put him in agreement with Goldenberg (1980) and he points out that "to solve the problem of individual or the system the family itself as a whole, and restore the person or families to bring them to the previous balance and constant patterns of coping with life problems as effectively as possible, family therapy is the only possible means (1966:247). Satir, in agreement with Clinebell's statement, points out:

the growing body of clinical observation has pointed to the conclusion that family therapy must be oriented to the family as a whole. This conviction was initially supported by observations showing how family members respond to the individual treatment of a family member labelled as schizophrenic(1983:3).

To understand the basics of Family Therapy, let us look at the origin of systems theory.

4.5 Systems Theory.

A family system is a social system in which members band together, giving up certain individual privileges so as to benefit from the power of the group to satisfy social needs. An awareness of systems thinking was brought to ministers by family systems theory and therapy. Early systems theorists, such as

Batson (1978), Jackson (1978), Satir (1967), gave attention to the communication between family members. According to the theorists the primary focus was on verbal and nonverbal feedback, homeostasis, and the identified patient. Subsequently, systems theorists, such as Bowen (1978), and Minuchin (1976) stressed the character of the family, multi-generational transmission of emotional process, and strategic intervention into family process (Hunter 1990:1250). A system may be defined as a set of interacting units with relationships among them or as a set of elements standing in interaction. This means that a system is an entity with component parts or units that co-vary, with each unit constrained by or dependent on the state of other units. All systems are organized and strive to maintain some kind of balance or homeostasis (Goldenberg, 1980: 29).

This systems theory was first developed in World War II through the development of weapons and material that used computers, radar, and new perspectives for armies, and it was extended in 1968 by Ludwig Von Bertalanffy, being expanded to family systems theory by A.C Robin Skynner in 1976 (Speck and Wynn 1981:28). The theory owes much to Gregory Bateson and his associates at Palo Alto, California. He began to study communication patterns within families in 1952, and after three years he applied some of this communication theory to schizophrenia, to those who have behaviour conflicts (1993:16).

Olsen acknowledged the works of Goldenberg and points out that this theory seeks to understand and explain how a system, whether an ecosystem or a family, regulates behaviour to preserve homeostasis, especially during the time of stress (1993:16).

According to Wynn, Systems theory represents a radical change from a position wherein we considered individuals to be isolated units, to a new position wherein we view those individuals in relation to their functions and to other individuals as a whole (1981:28-29).

When Speck and Wynn explain this concept, they point out that with some of the heat off the individual person, we may be able to view disordered family behaviour as an understandable reaction to a dysfunctional social system. It is a way of seeing and thinking, which insists that the counsellor needs to view each person from the context of the whole unit or system - the family. It also provides approaches which helps to sort out the relationship in order to understand and apply the therapy effectively (1981:28-29).

According to Goldenberg, theorists and academics interested in the development of psychopathology and psychotherapists have all been interested and are aware of the consequences of early family relationships on adult behaviour. But since the time of Freud's early theoretical psychoanalytic formulations, attention has been given to family conflicts and its functional bodies as a contributing factor in an individual's personal growth as well as in any possible signs of later neurotic symptoms (1985:4).

However according to Goldenberg, Freud did not use his awareness of the interactional nature of behaviour in his psychoanalytic treatment. Taking into consideration the influence of family dynamics he preferred to deal with and help individuals resolve their personal, intrapsychic conflicts (Goldenberg, 1985.4).

By producing changes in the person's psychic organization, Freud hoped to summon behavioural changes, including changes in response to others, that would ultimately lead others to change their response patterns to the patient. Because of this attempt Freud refused to see the person's spouse, believing that as the patients behaviour changed, a corresponding change would occur in the spouse and ultimately in the couple's relationship, but that did not work (Goldenberg 1985:4).

In the following thirty years different types of human problems and their alleviation slowly emerged. An individual who exhibits dysfunctional behaviour such as behaviour associated

with anxieties, depression, alcoholism, sexual disturbance may simply be a product of a system that is imperfect or defective. This led Freud and his disciples to conclude that the causes and nature of an individual's problem may not be clear from a study of that person alone, but can often be better understood when viewed in the context of a family social system that is in disequilibrium (Goldenberg 1985:5).

4.5.1 Bowen family systems and marriage.

According to Jacobson and Gurman Bowen family systems theory deals with human ability and functioning, the characteristic of each person, and the relationship between people. Repeatedly it observes what people do, and looks at an individual in the framework of an emotional realm of relationships to significant others. Marriage is one of the relationships in the emotional realm of all people. The character of the relationship between persons defines who each person is, and by the condition of the emotional realm in which the marriage is located (1995:11). Bowen's family systems theory has eight concepts. I will not describe all, but I will use only few of them. It delineates a factor that influences the behaviour of individuals and families. It is very difficult to understand Bowen's family systems theory without the term "emotional system" (Jacobson and Gurman 1995:11). According to Bowen's family systems theory, the emotional system means a process built by evolution which creates involuntary instruction for an organism. The human emotional system is a form of that system found in every species. For example: feeding, mating, resting, and other similar behaviour are decided for the majority of species by the emotional system. Including both the feeling and intellectual system, the major part of human behaviour is controlled by the emotional system. Thus the feeling system and emotional system are related to each other. Feeling system is generated from brain evolution and is not processed by some living things. The intellectual system refers to the ability to know and understand, to reason theoretically, and to disclose difficult concepts. It is used as another option as an instructing system

for the individual. The emotional system affects the surrounding relationship system; for example to counteract their invaders, the emotional system governs the behaviour of the individual ant and that of the colony as a unit. From this one can observe that emotion based behaviour is the common denominator of all living things (Jacobson and Gurman 1995:12).

In the same manner Bowen Family Systems Theory, points out that the link mentioned as marital symptoms reveals the process of the emotional system of each individual and of the whole unit (Jacobson and Gurman 1995:12). Anxiety is also one of the most important element when one is wanting to discuss the eight concepts of Bowen Family Systems Theory. I am not going to discuss the eight concept in this thesis. Anxiety refers to the organism's reaction to actual or conceived intimidation, and also implies to the physiological and psychological variation that happens when the emotional system of the organism reacts to the feeling of the threat. Anxiety is classified in two parts. 1) Acute anxiety, referring to the organism's reaction to a concrete and present hazard, and 2) Chronic anxiety which is long-lasting, is revealed in the fear of unknown problems, and can be physiological and psychological. Anxiety is a powerful symptom of the emotional system. Chronic anxiety particularly has a powerful influence on human functioning (Jacobson and Gurman 1995:12). From a systems theory perspective attention has been given to communication theory, family identity with the emphasis on the family life cycle. All the emphasis is given to the relationship between husband and wife instead of the two as individuals. Thus, systems theory was viewed as a vital instrument to examine the communication between couples (Cunard 1982:12). Cunard points out that "if we wish to understand family dynamics, we must understand both the nature of the family rules and also the internal processes within individuals which will determine the use they make of those rules"(1982:12,13). When he describes the main concept of living system, Cunard asserts that "any functional unit from the universe to an atom can be regarded as a system. They all have

common features" (1982:13). From this stand marriage refers to a system as it is constituted of husband and wife in a harmonious relationship.

4.5.2 Organisation

Steinglass points out that "organisation is synonymous with the concept of a system" (1978:305). When one speaks about organisation, one has to examine it in relation to boundaries. According to Cunard, "the boundary between a family and its environment is described in terms of its permeability" (1982:13). Cunard continues and points out that interaction and communication within a marriage and between the couple and the community may be "open or closed". An open system allows free flow of communication which is direct, congruent and honest. The couple will show respect and sensitivity to the feelings and worth of others. In a closed system members see change as a threat, difference as a lack of love or respect and have fixed unquestionable assumptions about how other family members think, feel and behave(1982:13).

This can create a rigid closed and dysfunctional family system. Communication and the interaction pattern is then controlled by these rigid rules. The maturation of the marital relationship, its method of interaction, communication rules, etc gives a pattern for the couple's family to follow (Cunard 1982:13). Systems are also compartmentalized in hierarchical status (1982:14).

4.5.3 Homeostasis

The existence of homeostasis indicates that the living system is in a balanced state. According to Cunard, "homeostasis refers to the dynamic process in systems that maintain energy balance while adjusting to changes in component characteristics and interaction" (1982:14). An open family system can be an example of a system in homeostasis.

4.5.4 Energy

As indicated above a system can function constructively if there is a balance of energy. This balance can be controlled by stored energy. "The organisation of a system is described in terms of entropy and negentropy. Entropy is the preference of a system for disintegration and loss of power. When a marriage is too entropic it is closed off from energy sources outside itself and becomes rigid, disorganised and disintegrated. Negentropy describes how growth and development lead to greater structure in the system. Information which is energy which reduces uncertainty in a system and improves communication can be an example. When spouses are able to control a rigid behaviour and do not permit information from outside and are unable to communicate smoothly their marriage will be dysfunctional "(Cunard 1982:15). As a conclusion let me mention the four systems theories of marriage, according to Cunard they are:

1. Communication Theory
2. Structural Family Theory as advocated by Minuchin
3. Family Systems Theory described by Bowen
4. Contributions of Family Sociology to the Systems perspectives (1982:15).

4.6 The Gumuz Marriage and Family System.

Based on the description of Goldenberg, one can understand that the primary aim of family therapy is to give effective treatment and healing to the affected family and change the system. The family members characteristic pattern of interacting with one another, their style and manner of communication, and the structure of their relationship will improve. This allows individual family members to experience a new family environment, and a new social context and to begin to change their behaviour in response to such new experience (1985:5). On the other hand John Bradshaw points out that the family systems model shows how each person in a family plays a part in the whole system. Family systems help us understand why children in

the same family often seem so different. Seeing the family as a system helps us to see how the poisonous pedagogy is carried from generation to generation (1988:27). As indicated earlier, to get a girl to exchange for marriage, the Gumuz society goes beyond the nuclear family, extended family, kin, clan, and community. Let me explain the relationship between members of the Gumuz society with an example. Let us say A is one nuclear family, B is another nuclear family, and C is also another nuclear family. All the three nuclear families form an extended family. To have a harmonious relationship, the relationship between the three nuclear families must be in homeostasis. Otherwise the whole system will be disturbed. To counsel a person or a family, the relationship and communication between the nuclear family member within the extended family and between kin and clan must be taken into consideration. The theory of family system can identify the patient within the nuclear families. Bradshaw asserts that "the theory of family systems accepts the family itself as the patient, with the presenting member being viewed as a sign of family psychopathology. The identified patient then becomes the symptom of the family systems dysfunctionality" (1988:27). In the Gumuz society a person can create dysfunction in the system. Marriage can be also viewed in the context of Bowen's family systems theory.

4.7 Contextual family therapy.

One can understand contextual family therapy as a therapeutic process which is constructed with maximal concern for its relevance to the cultural context in which it occurs. In the history of psychotherapy there was a desire to find out a scientific method which treats symptoms that have significant relationships with ethical capability, such as trust building relationships. Meanwhile in his studies Buber (1958) in Gurman and Kniskern identifies the relational reality of human life which was limited to children with psychoses. But still the question remained unresolved for the families. The therapists were not able to treat families. This forced the clinicians to look for another method or solution. In the 1950s the

therapists succeeded in finding another theory which was named "conjoint" therapy. This is the therapy which opened a new way of treatment for the parents and their offspring (nuclear family). In 1957 Nagy and his co-workers presented their family therapy proposal at Eastern Pennsylvania Psychiatric Institute in Philadelphia. This proposal included specifically psychotherapy of hospitalized psychotics (1981:161).

The first presentation of the proposal included psychoanalysis. This was the additional knowledge to their previous practical experience. From this insight an aspect of the integrated method was developed. This method incorporates the preceding generation, which helped to understand the relationship of the family members within the system. In this development there was a concern for all people, the way they communicated, and different forms of conduct.

In conjoint family therapy, the treatment includes non-diagnosed members of the extended family. In addition to this the multilateral therapeutic contract which was ethically accepted was introduced. In the 1960's nuclear family therapy was developed into a form that looked at the records of the preceding generations. Since 1958 the gradual development of contextual family therapy appeared in the following series. First, family therapy, then extended family, and intergenerational therapy. The social background of the therapy was fragmented because of the disconnection in the relationships. With this background the nuclear family struggled to survive. There was already a disconnected relationship between visible relationships and intergenerational rootedness, which led to the disappearance of the ethical aspect. In this social context such ethical issues as loyalty and legacy cannot be reduced to individual awareness (Gurman & Kniskern 1981:161).

According to Goldenberg, contextual family therapy is a therapy which is developed to incorporate the past generation. This approach examines different functions of individual members as well as relationship between members. He continues and point out that each person has a sense of unresolved balance. The basis of this understanding is to make use of ethical aspects for treatment of the relationships. The focus is mainly on responsible, trustworthy actions that accept the fair wish of others as well as own interests (1985:137).

Every family is capable of keeping its own "family ledger", a multigenerational balance system of what is expected from all members of the family (Goldenberg 1985:137). Ledger in this sense deals with "an accumulation of the account of what has been given and what is owed. It is not in a sense of barter, balancing of power alignment" (1985:163). Whenever justice takes place there is a possibility of giving back what is expected from each person. Misunderstandings arise when there is injustice due to lack of trust and when there is imbalance due to unfairness. In order to come up with the response, we have to refer to the past generation, the past family ledger, and identify the debts which are not paid. If someone is born into a family, that brings each person to multigenerational reality and experience. The family legacy then forces unsettled accounts and entitlements, which will create partiality among the family members. Because of such important family relationship Nagy and Ulrich (1981) pointed out that the children are ethically forced to give themselves to their heritage (Gurman & Kniskern 1981.163).

Let me give an example of a child whose familial heritage is one of lying among family members. He never believes his wife. Every time she speaks, he shouts at her thinking that she is lying and cheating him unless he himself goes and hears what is said. With this example I understand that contextual family therapy understands human existence in the context of human relationships, emphasizing the covenantal relationship based on

giving and receiving.

Gurman & Kniskern assert that the circumstances into which a child is born results in him/her owing legacy obligations. Meanwhile, if he is unable to pay what he/she inherited, this will create mistrust in the following generation. Therefore, this leads the marital commitment to be in conflict with loyalty to the family of origin, and motivates it to be in conflict with loyalty to the offspring as the unbalanced relationship ledger seeks to balance itself in the new generation. Vertical loyalty commitments tend always to conflict with horizontal ones, so that the allegiance owed to previous generations such as parents, grandparents, sisters, friends and counterparts, will be in conflict with loyalty owed to a husband or his wife, brothers and sisters, friends and peers. For example: let us take two siblings in the same family. One may become successful in his career and the other one may become unsuccessful in her career. In this family's legacy, the son is entitled to become successful, while the daughter has to be unsuccessful (1981:161)

According to Hesteness "commitment, devotion, and loyalty are factors which influence family relationships". This he sees as the move from the multi-generational structure of justice to indicate the previous duties which used to be between members. In summary he points out that the most important dimensions of close relation systems developed from the multigenerational balance sheets of merit and indebtedness. His focus is not only the present context, but on the present context as its invisibility tied to past generation. His interest in future generations shows his concern for helping people not only in terms of the past legacies, but in terms of present and future generations (1995: 6-7).

I have experienced how the traditional healers are dealing with a family's problem in my country. The healer's first step was to assemble the family members together. Next he/she advised the family to call the extended family together. During this

second session the question of ancestors became an issue. This is because often, as far as traditional societies are concerned if a problem starts in a family, for example if a son constantly fights with his father or with other members of the family and the family is unable to come up with a solution, the expectation is that the relationship with the ancestors might be troubled. Therefore this has to be sorted out to bring about a solution. All family members including extended family members are questioned in order to find out who has unsettled debts. The solution would arise after tracing two or more generations. At this stage the question of trustworthiness, loyalty, justice, accountability and worthiness becomes an issue. The family member who may be found with an unsettled balance has to repay it in order to regain his/her well being. The traditional society doesn't know these terms. They have their own terms and signs which they use in their own context.

The relationships of the family and the extended family members are renewed. To demonstrate the renewal in well-being, a sheep, goat or an ox is usually slaughtered, accompanied by dancing. This comes back to Nagy's view. Reflecting the opinion of Nagy Hesteness pointed out that to consider relational ethics to be a fundamental force, holding family and social relationships together through mutuality and trustworthiness of relationship is very important to share their problems. The relationship which tied them together, brings them together to discuss their problems and helps them to revitalise their relationships with renewed trust (1995:7).

Having explained contextual family therapy, I now move to describe how to utilize contextual family therapy and some of the terminologies in the context of the Gumuz Christians.

4.8 Application to the Ethiopian context: with reference to the Gumuz society.

In the developing countries such as Ethiopia we find very different types of problems which are common in the Third World. The problems are caused by social insecurities, political and economic circumstances, such as unemployment, poor medical services, poor education systems, lack of shelter and so forth. All these account for problematic lives of individuals, nuclear families, and extended families. By family I refer to the definitions of Goldenberg, where he asserts that family is understood to be more than a group of persons inhabiting a certain tangible and emotional room collectively, with its inherited acceptable pattern. It has its own belongings from which it develops different types of regulations, functions, and distribution of duties. It also develops ways of contact, and ways of bargaining as well as how to deal with difficulties so that all activities are accomplished accordingly. As a social organization, everybody incorporated in the family is interrelated with obligations. The members are provided with a position to transfer culture. Once this structure is damaged it spoils the entire power of the structure (1985:3).

In the same manner, Ethiopia where the Gumuz society is situated, is one of the developing countries with different types of problems which show that there is a great need for contextual family therapy.

Then the question will be, how can one apply this therapeutic method to the Gumuz Christian families? As mentioned previously, there are some problems encountered by the Gumuz society as far as contextual family therapy is concerned.

For example:

- a) the problem of exchanging girls for marriage;
- b) the problem of husband and wife dialogue;
- c) the problem of girls' submission to their family members to marry those whom they do not know;

- d) the problem of marriage between the Gumuz and the neighbouring tribes;
- e) the problem of polygamy;
- f) divorce;
- g) physical and mental illness.

To solve the problems encountered in their premises, I found out that the therapeutic treatment method which was identified by therapists above such as Gurman and Kniskern, Goldenberg, Virginia Satir, Nagy and others are very important and applicable in most cases. Let me describe the methods and terminologies which will be useful in applying contextual family therapy to solve the problems mentioned within the marriage contract, families and family systems of the Gumuz society.

4.9 Methods of utilizing contextual family therapy.

4.9.1 Contextual approach

From the experience point of view, Gurman & Kniskern consider the contextual approach relevant to all human issues in utilizing contextual family therapy. It can reach people of "weak ego" at the point where otherwise only supportive help would be possible. Due to its comprehensive, synthetic nature, the approach possesses the combined relevance of psychological and transactional approaches. Therefore they point out that in order for the therapist to give therapeutic treatment, he or she needs to follow certain procedures (1981:158,159).

They need facts or a verifiable truth which will enable them to identify the source of the disease. This is the power that predetermines the course of the event in the life of the persons. It may be a series of events which may appear in the child or in any person who is being diagnosed.

The second aspect would be to look at the person's psychological behaviour, which causes a person to think or act in a certain way. These significant psychological findings or facts will

show whether and how the person and other family members contribute towards a state of dysfunctional part (physical or mental) of the child or the person, if at all he/she is dysfunctional.

Thirdly it would be a great help to know how the people within the family context relate to each other with regard to power distribution in the family. This shows how different family members include and exclude each other. This can point out who speaks and who is listened to. This is the area which mostly coincides with structural family therapy as represented by Minuchin (Gurman & Kniskern 1981:159).

The fourth aspect is the most important one, which is considered to be the nucleus of the assessment and the planning process. It is the ethical question, which determines the point where everyone has to get his or her share of entitlement without discrimination. Everybody is entitled to get what he/she ought to get. Nagy stresses in this regard the principle of multilateral impartiality as essential for a view of healthy relationships as well as being an important principle of therapy (Goldenberg 1985:139, Gurman & Kniskern 1981:160).

Meanwhile Nagy argues, it is important to realize that past "heritage" of the extended family also influences the current context, sense of entitlement, indebtedness and balance between members. In contextual therapy, the therapist becomes a spokesperson. He has to speak on behalf of all members in the family relational context, including the extended family as well as those who are dead. As was indicated earlier, Hestenes asserted that: we consider relational ethics to be a fundamental force, holding family and social relationships together through mutuality and trustworthiness of relationships. According to multilateral logic, the balance of fairness between the people is the most profound and inclusive context. This is the context for which the term contextual therapy applies (1995:9).

To understand it in relation to the human situation, it is good

to examine some important key notions which would be applicable for the problem solving process.

4.9.2 Trustworthiness.

From an ethical point of view, trustworthiness is consistently obtained over the lengthy duration of time by equalizing the importance of give and take between two related and responsible companions. Nagy and Klasner in Goldenberg argues that in order to utilize the therapy to regain the legacy, the therapeutic intervention should be based on the trustworthiness to convince the family members (1985: 139).

Before the therapist starts a therapeutic exercise in the family he/she has to build trust in the family relationships by involving grand parents to enable her/him to understand the past generational background, because every family is part of a multigenerational origin. Each family member is directed to work towards trust, which Nagy and his associates believe to be the ethical dimension (Goldenberg 1985:140).

I would like to present my critique on this issue according to the following example. For one to build trust is like having a plan of a house. Before any building starts there should be a design which guides a person on how to build and what type of a house he/she is going to build and how much money he/she is going to spend. Otherwise the process of building will not go smoothly and the cost involved will not be known. If one does not follow this procedure of building, the whole building process will be problematic. When someone plans to start his/her therapeutic exercise in a family, the first thing to do as mentioned above is to build trust, with is the same as providing a foundation.

From the practical point of view, the problem with some of the ministers in the Lutheran Church in Ethiopia is that they lack the art of building trust which should have been taught in this training. Since they were not trained in this field they only

use their experience. Experience alone cannot work. It should be joined by skill development. Each and every minister must develop his/her skill with the help of training, to be effective in the ministry. To build trust is a process. It takes time. The therapist should know how to keep secret entrusted to him or her, he/she must have time to listen (the most important in counselling) and must show interest towards his/her counselee.

4.9.3 Multigenerational perspective.

In the multigenerational viewpoint of contextual family therapy estimates not less than three generations for treatment. This means that when a person is diagnosed, dealing solely with that person is not effective. The therapist has to deal with the system which includes the person, parents, grand-parents, the extended family, and with the ancestors. This would enable the rescue of the diagnosed individual or family. Whether present or not, grandparents play a significant role in the nuclear family, because of the ties the parents have with them (Hesteness 1995:9). According to Nagy and his colleagues in Hesteness, the present order of transgenerational conduct that has disintegrated due to a lengthy period of time, may sometimes have a veiled active link. As an example: a husband's derogatory actions toward his wife may have far more active connections with a behavioral cycle of thirty years than with her/his performance that influences the abuse today (1995:10)

The term "Legacy" has been proposed to indicate the specific arrangement for desires that are conceived from rootedness and which encroach on the children. We acquire authority and indebtedness due to birth. If one is the child of parents who escaped death in great destruction, there is a responsibility that comes from that fact. If one was accepted at birth that will have connotations with consideration to legacy. It is obvious that the first born child in the African context is the privileged one, since if the father dies he is automatically the successor. The second born will only be a successor if the first born is not alive (Hesteness 1995:10).

In the traditional Gumuz society, the child is responsible for work. All male and female children born in the family are responsible for expanding and improving the farm, for preparing food, collecting fire wood. Fetching water from the river is the duty of female, but both are responsible for keeping the balance of relationships between members of the family and taking care of every member in the family. He/she is obliged to

keep the balance of relationships between neighbour, extended family members, and the ancestors.

When it comes to administration, there is a little difference. If the first born is female she will not be given responsibility in regard to administration. The administration part and the task of representing the family or the clan is given to the first born if the first born is a male. If the first born is female and the second or the third born is male, the administrative responsibility is given to a male whether he is the second or the third born. As he grows up an increasing amount of accountability is expected from him and he becomes someone who is listened to as the male (patriarchal). The male child becomes very responsible for taking action to preserve the ledger balance.

In the contextual approach, the ledger has to do with an accumulation of the accounts of what we have been given and what we owe. Entitlements and debts are dictated by legacy, the other component of the ledger is the accumulation of merit. The accumulation of merit occurs through a family member contributing to the welfare of others, thus a family member who contributes to the balance of others' survival, or relationships, is said to acquire merits. In terms of relational ethics, merit is the unit that counts a great deal. The status automatically obtained due to being born in a particular family, permits and provides authority, but also obligates and dictates deficit upon the person in various ways. The failure of the predecessors can set up the expectation of failure for the offspring (Hesteness 1995:11).

Due to its preventive and curative power for individuals, families and intergenerational families, contextual family therapy is most important. This is because in the Gumuz society as indicated in chapter two, the problems are related to multigenerational and intergenerational perspective, which estimates not less than three generations for treatment.

Therefore to treat a person, the parents, grand-parents, and the ancestors are included in the therapy, and this is the way that the contextual family therapy treats patients. If the therapeutic method is followed accordingly, every person included will get treatment. There is also another dimension of the multidirectional partiality which helps to give effective treatment which cannot be separated from others.

4.9.4 Multidirectional partiality.

Multidirectional fragments is one of the primary view points of therapeutic procedure. In the multidirectional partiality, the therapist becomes a spokesperson for the whole family including the multigenerational extended family as well as for the dead. That means the therapist must not take sides. The therapist must stay away, and must be neutral by controlling his/her emotion and not getting involved. It is the duty of the therapist to treat all concerned without discrimination. Meanwhile Gurman points out that this position is one of the sources of greatest resistance against the contextual approach.

To earn the position of multidirectional support the therapist has to offer his/her commitment to finding and utilizing the resource of trust in that family. For Gurman the devotion is made by acting from the first time with this rejoining goal in mind and by abstaining from any deed that would work against it while allowing family members to gain in multilateral fairness.

To accomplish this the therapist has to give consideration to the interest of all involved in all their dimensions for example to their factual, psychological, transactional and ethical dimension (Gurman & Kniskern 1981:178).

4.9.5 Siding.

For Gurman, siding with each family member will enable the therapist to earn trust and accountability from the person or any member in the family. Effective siding requires

discrimination about ledger balance, for example, if a problem occurs in the family and the therapist sides with the child, Gurman points out that the therapist who sides strongly with the child, acknowledging the child's effort at holding the family together may appear to side against the mother whose attitude to the child is one of complaint, but on the relational level the therapist is still siding with the mother by congratulating her on the quality of her child (Gurman & Kniskern, 1981:180).

My critique here is based on the cultural conflict or difference on the siding with the child. According to my own tradition, one can not side with children. From the European point of view, Gurman is right.

But what is understood in the Gumuz community in which I was brought up is that if the child is the trouble maker, forcing the child to stay in that family where the problem originates, would be siding with the parents. Sometimes siding with the child means encouraging the child to continue to live with such behaviour which would destroy the relationship between the parents and the therapist.

Of course sometimes as far as ministry is concerned it, would be good to be flexible, because perhaps the bad behaviour of the child is connected to bad relationships in the family. The child might have a bad relationship with his/her mother or father which may result in discrimination in the family. But that needs to be looked into carefully in accordance with Gurman's loyalty framing procedure, where one has to frame his/her work to avoid confusion. This will clarify the procedure or steps to follow. Because if one sides with one of the family members spontaneously it will create confrontation between the therapist and the family.

4.9.6 Loyalty framing.

Loyalty framing goes with organizing your work in such a way that you follow a sequence, not to be confused by mixing the methodologies or the process. Before the therapist starts to work with someone he/she needs to frame the work as a process in which loyalties will be respected. When he/she begins the conversation, he/she should not enter into a process of blaming.

He/she should begin by asking questions, which encourage the one who is blamed to give a constructive opinion. Loyalty framing is based on the conviction that to leave the person in a condition of unresolved hatred or resentment toward a parent is damaging to the born child, and can have multigenerationally effect (Gurman & Kniskern 1981:181).

Here we agree with Gurman. Some therapists or counsellors face problems at this stage. If a minister starts his/her ministry by condemning one party and admiring another party, he/she has to realize that he/she is forgetting the aim of his/her counselling ministry. One has to ask questions which will shape the counselling session by focusing on the counselling objectives according to loyalty framing. If one fails one will be considered to be a condemning minister. The counselee will remain with unresolved hatred and bring more damage to the lives of other people. According to Gurman one should not leave a person with unresolved hatred, one has to sacrifice what he/she has, whether it is time, knowledge, money and so forth and resolve the problem to save the person and his/her multigenerational background (Gurman & Kniskern 1981:181).

Traditionally, when problems emerge in the family, one of the family members who is respected is approached and this person calls other elders from the extended families and inform them what has happened in one of their family. Before they start the discussion, they perform a ritual which is usually performed before talking to people who have got problems. After the

ritual they tell the clients that they are not talking to them alone, ancestors are also included in the discussion. Therefore if they neglect what they are told to do, it means they are neglecting the order of the ancestors, so they have to listen to the elders. After a long counselling session the clients will promise to obey the elders as well as the ancestors.

What I see and understand from the traditional experience is that, even though it was not named, I believe that the traditional society was using contextual family therapy. Therefore since the Gumuz Christians are part of traditional society, it is possible to contextualize the traditional method with the academic one and use it to solve their problems. These approaches are very important if a person wants to become a therapist. For me as a therapist it will be important to follow the contextual approach and the procedures mentioned earlier.

4.10 Personal reflection and summary.

To be effective in helping families to change, I believe that therapist must first have some grounding in the general principles of family life. The therapists need to be familiar with how families operate as a social system, how they develop "rules" for living together, and how they deal with the ever-changing tasks that must be met by a family going through its life cycle. Therapists need some basic theoretical understandings of what causes dysfunctional behaviour within families and of how to distinguish those families who are undergoing a time-limited crisis from which they will reorganize and recover independently, from those families who are severely dysfunctional and who will not recover without therapeutic intervention. As mentioned before, there are several problems cultural, social, and political, which arise within the family in the Gumuz society.

According to the problems mentioned in subtopic 4.7, one can divide these problems into two and treat them separately. For example, divorce, economic problems to some extent physical and

mental illness can be treated individually and the rest need contextual therapy. But according to Goldenberg as far as contextual family therapy is concerned it is very difficult to treat an individual alone (Goldenberg 1985:5). For our reflection, in relation to my explanation of my approach when I become a therapist for the problems mentioned above, I would apply the contextual techniques as my guideline.

According to Goldenberg most of the problems are related to multigenerational and intergenerational back-grounds which estimate not less than three generations for treatment. This can be viewed from the understanding of Nagy. According to Nagy and his colleagues, the present order of transgenerational conduct that has disintegrated due to a lengthy period of time, may sometimes have a valid link. For example as stated before, when it comes to husband and wife relationship, the problem does not arise between the two and become very serious. If it becomes serious, there may be something which has to do with parents, family, and extended families. If this is the case, it will not remain there. It will be taken to the two families and discussed to get solution. The relation between husband and wife, a husband's derogatory actions towards his wife may have far more active connections with a behavioral cycle of thirty years, which can influence the abuse at present (Goldenberg 1985:5).

This leads to the understanding that when a person is diagnosed, dealing with that person alone will not be effective. The person, parents, grand-parents, and the ancestors would have to be dealt with.

Since the system of exchanging girls for marriage evolved from generation to generation, a multigenerational perspective model would be used in order to deal with the problem as well as to enable those who do not and will not have sisters, to be married. As indicated earlier when a person is diagnosed the multigenerational perspective allows the therapist to include

the person, parents, grand-parents, the extended family, as well as the ancestors. To include all concerned parties will help the person to obtain a girl for exchange to get married. This is also applicable to other identified problems. In this manner the multidirectional partiality therapeutic procedure is also vital to restore the family. Because, according to Gurman and Kniskern, in the multidirectional partiality, the therapist becomes the spokesperson for the whole family including the multigenerational extended family as well as the dead, even though I am restricted in dealing with Christians in relation to the dead according to the tradition in my Church. The referral procedure can be also utilized. Of course in this approach the therapist has to offer his or her commitment for finding and utilizing the resource of trust in the particular family approached.

The method of Virginia Satir, which is creating a setting in which people can, perhaps for the first time, take the risk of looking clearly and objectively at themselves and their actions can be utilized (1983:207). This will help me to confront the traditional society, by making them look at themselves to see that some of them are married and some of their family members are not married because of the culture which denies certain people the right to get married.

In my assessment I could also use a family life chronology described by Satir. For Satir a family life chronology is essentially a history of the events that took place in both the inner and external worlds of the family. It also reveals how family members interpreted and responded to these events (1983:146).

From this one can understand that the family therapist has to begin the session by assuming that the family has a history. If a therapist knows the historical, cultural, and the traditional development of a family, that can open the way for the therapist to approach the family. In the Gumuz society, all the above

mentioned events have their historical and cultural evolution. To get into the system to give effective therapeutic assistance investigating the anthropological, historical and traditional aspects of the particular family is essential.

Therefore, before a minister begins his/her duty, he/she has to organize himself/herself according to loyalty framing to put the work in order in such a way that he/she follows a sequence to avoid duplication. This is to enable one to know exactly what he/she wants to do, what method and steps to follow and use at the beginning of the session.

To be fair some of the approaches need to be contextualized with some of the methods already used in the community, such as calling together people who are listened to by the community members to counsel the patient.

CHAPTER FIVE

5 Conclusion.

We have examined the need for the Gumuz society (both from the traditional and the Christian perspective) for advice and counsel to understand themselves and their relationships to their fellow human beings, and to recognize and develop their own potential.

The therapeutic treatment approach requires commitment from the ministers. It is a treatment which provides a way of integrating approaches and of building assessment, planning and treatment dimensions. I have tried to propose some important points, such as involving the person, parents, grand-parents, and the ancestors when diagnosing the person in the traditional way. To become a spokesperson for the whole family including the multi-generational extended family as well as the dead is paramount in the counselling process for traditional society. There are many issues which could have been discussed but I limited myself to the points which I believe to be useful for the future ministry. As mentioned above family therapy and contextual family therapy is effective both in treatment and healing for the dysfunctional families who experience problems in Ethiopia.

Most of the pastors or therapists, who partake in this ministry even though they did not undergo any training in this field are trusted by the members of the Ethiopian Lutheran Church. This trustworthiness must be developed through training. It enables most of the members to discuss most of their problems openly with the ministers during counselling. Providing facilities, such as offices to entertain the counselee, clinics to refer the counselee if clinical treatment is needed, counselling centres where we have to find professionals, pastors, as well as medical personnel is highly recommended by this thesis. The Church should facilitate relationships in the congregations through Bible studies, by organizing home-to-home prayer

programmes, by teaching during the worship services, during seminars, and by arranging courses for group leaders selected to help in this regard.

Issues of divorce, alcoholism, mistrust, misbehaviour, unfaithfulness to God and partners guilt should be widely discussed to prevent these problems from escalating. For curative measures, pastors or therapists as well as appointed voluntary ministers who could be given responsibilities in these matters should be trained. Throughout, members should receive follow-up visits or treatment when necessary, with the help of counselling, and teaching. Family therapy and contextual family therapy methods, which include bringing family members as well as extended family members together for diagnosis needs to be developed.

The counselling ministry should be strengthened by creating trust among the family members and by being a spokesperson for every one. To contextualize these methods among the Gumuz Christians, with what is being done now, the Church has to widen its training prospective to accommodate more trainees so that the method is inculcated in the lives of all members. Any organization undergoing the counselling ministry should be responsible for financing the programme. The Lutheran Church in Ethiopia is built on the lay ministry. Mutual care is widely practised. There will not be financial problems if the programme is well organized ahead of time. All financial needs can be met by congregations. Counselling centres should be made available, and all members should be made aware of facilities and how to make use of them. As the past determines the future, it is possible to predict that regardless of scientific and technological advance that await human kind in the generation ahead, many persons, young and old, will search out the counselling and advice of the trained, while others will still seek the solution of their problems themselves.

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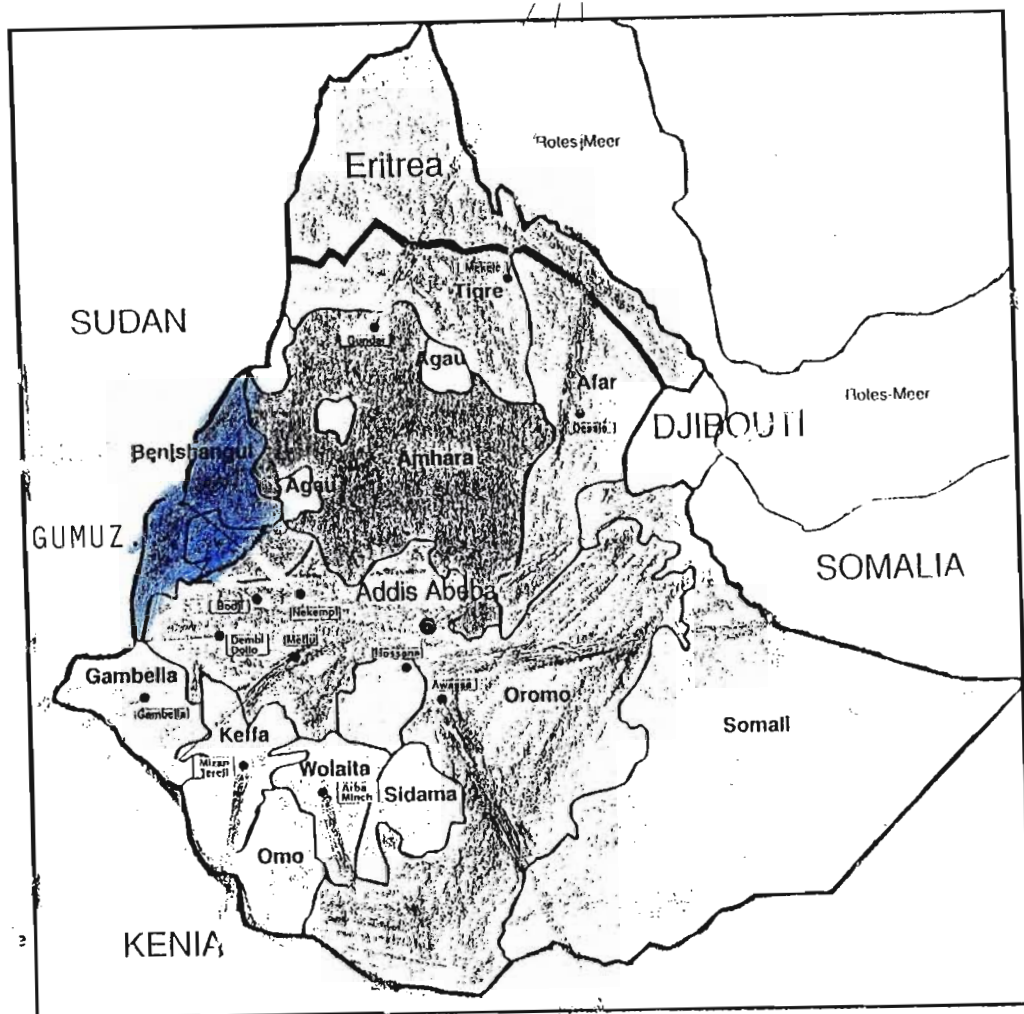
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APPENDIX I



MAP OF ETHIOPIA WHERE GUMUZ TRIBE IS SITUATED.